



# 2025 BATH TOWNSHIP Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted 5/5/2025

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**BATH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**BE IT HEREBY KNOWN BY ALL THOSE PRESENT THAT ON THE 5<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MAY 2025,**  
**THE BATH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES MET IN REGULAR SESSION,**  
**COMMENCING AT 6:30 PM. IN THE TRUSTEE MEETING ROOM, 3864 WEST BATH ROAD,**  
**BATH TOWNSHIP, SUMMIT COUNTY, STATE OF OHIO**

Mrs. Troike presented the following Resolution and moved its adoption:

**RESOLUTION 2025-20**  
**TO ACCEPT BATH TOWNSHIP'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, in January 1998 the Bath Township Board of Trustees adopted a Comprehensive Plan and subsequently accepted an update to the Comprehensive Plan in March 2011; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan is a planning tool that looks at the various elements of the township and creates a series of broad policies to help guide future decisions about the land use, physical, economic, environmental, and social aspects of Bath Township; and,

**WHEREAS**, in 2023 the Bath Township Board of Trustees appointed 16 members to the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee to review the plan to assure that the Comprehensive Plan reflects the goals and objectives of Bath Township; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee suggested that a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee be formed by the Bath Township Trustees to implement and revise the Comprehensive Plan as deemed appropriate until such time as the Comprehensive Plan is once again reviewed in the future; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, Bath Township Administration and the Bath Township Trustees diligently worked with the consulting firm Envision Group to review and update the 2011 Comprehensive Plan; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Township solicited public comment through public meetings and workshops; and,

**WHEREAS**, the updated plan provides for the Township to maintain a high quality of life standard that the residents of the Township expect as well as recommendations to improve areas of the Township through land use planning, that may face commercial development pressures in the future.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the Bath Township Board of Trustees, accepts the 2025 Bath Township Comprehensive Plan.


**FURTHER**, the Bath Township Board of Trustees appoint a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to implement the Comprehensive Plan in the future, as deemed appropriate for the acceptance by the Bath Township Board of Trustees, until such time as the Comprehensive Plan is once again reviewed in the future.

**FURTHER**, the plan shall be sent to the Bath Township Zoning Commission with our acceptance.

Second by Mr. Gaffney; discussion and roll called:


Mrs. Goodrich, Aye  
Mrs. Troike, Aye  
Mr. Gaffney, Aye

**Resolution Adopted**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura Tuttle  
Fiscal Officer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elaina E. Goodrich, President  
Bath Township Board of Trustees

Date: May 5, 2025

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon A. Troike, Vice President  
Bath Township Board of Trustees

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sean F. Gaffney, Trustee  
Bath Township Board of Trustees

# I. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This comprehensive plan was prepared under the direction of the Bath Township Comprehensive Plan Committee. The members of the committee dedicated hours of volunteer time to the research of planning issues, discussion of Bath Township's future, meetings, and formulation of the policies for the comprehensive plan. In particular, the following Bath Township citizens served on the Comprehensive Plan Committee and deserve much praise and appreciation from the community for developing a plan that will guide Bath Township well into the next 20 years:

## **Bath Township Comprehensive Plan Committee**

JoAnn Alexander  
Melanie Baker  
Jack Baumann  
Tyler Bolanz  
John Chlebina  
Martin Denholm  
Jeff Kerr - Committee Chair  
James McClellan  
Jeff Mockbee  
Steve Moore  
Marshal Pitchford  
Ben Scott  
Norma Shaub

## **Bath Township Trustees**

Sean Gaffney  
Elaina Goodrich  
Sharon Troike

## **Bath Township Administrator**

Vito Sinopoli

## **Bath Township Planning Director/Zoning Inspector**

William Funk  
Nanci Noonan

## **Bath Township Legal Counsel**

Bob Konstand

## **Consultant Team**



## II. INTRODUCTION

**B**ath Township is a unique community. The township offers bucolic views, wooded ravines, rolling meadows, and equestrian trails, all within a few minutes drive of a complete range of urban services, shopping, and restaurants. Like many other communities, Bath Township is dynamic and while positive things have happened in the township since the 2011 Bath Township Comprehensive Plan, the township continues to face a number of challenging issues. Development pressures along the main corridors and from neighboring communities have increased the desire to protect the township's rural character, particularly at SR 18 and Medina Line Road and around the Ghent Road Interchange. Impacts of the global COVID-19 Pandemic drastically changed the way "white collar" workers conduct their work day. Many are now working either part time or full time away from the office. This has significantly impacted occupancy levels in suburban office parks including along Springside Drive. This dramatic shift in work style impacted other uses as well including hotels, and raised significant questions about the viability of future land uses in the area. The desire to develop a central gathering space that is unique to Bath Township was prevalent. Enhancements that improve the quality of place and connectivity were central to recommendations proposed within the hamlet developments of Hammond's Corners and Ghent. Conservation of vital natural resources and the expansion of parks/open space and trail connectivity also continue to be a primary goal and challenge for the township. Finally, Bath Township recognizes they are not a community in a vacuum and that their decisions affect adjacent communities as much as those adjacent communities affect Bath Township. The township continues to strive to find ways to work cooperatively with those adjacent jurisdictions.

This plan is intended to replace the 2011 plan but did not disregard any of the work or recommendations from the plan. The 2011 plan was used as a foundation for the development of this 2025 plan. Readers are strongly encouraged to refer to the township's original plan adopted in 1998 as an initial reference as well as review the 2011 plan as a starting point for understanding the township's initial vision as well as strategies that were deployed throughout the years. This plan expands on the 2011 plan and seeks to provide detailed guidance for future land use, infrastructure, and quality of place recommendations within five focus areas: Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road/Hammond's Corners, Ghent Hamlet, Ghent Interchange, Springside Drive, and SR18/Medina Line. These focus areas were defined by the Comprehensive Plan Committee as areas vulnerable to future development pressures. This plan provides the township with strategies to shape and define future development within these areas all while maintaining the rural character of the township.

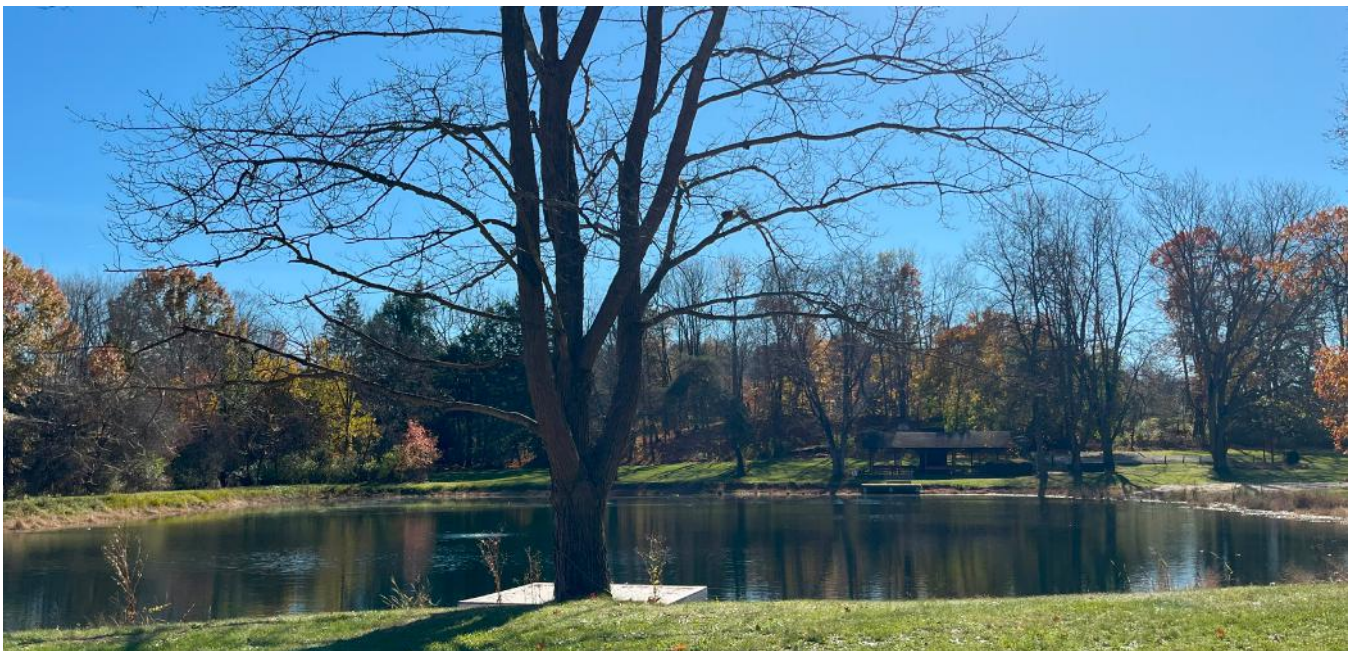
The 2025 Plan also expands upon the implementation of detailed plan recommendations. While this is a comprehensive plan and meant to provide the township with a vision and goals for the future, it should also provide the township with the tools to implement the ideas and recommendations within this plan. The implementation toolkit and matrix provide realistic guidance for the township to carry out desired improvements.

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a planning tool that looks at the various elements of the township and creates a series of broad policies to help guide future decisions about the physical, economic, environmental, and social aspects of the community. Comprehensive plans are general in nature and are purposely long-term, recognizing that some visions cannot be achieved immediately but take years to accomplish. This plan provides broad goal and objective policy recommendations, detailed recommendations within focus areas, and future land use recommendations for the entire township. All were developed to support the overarching vision of the community over the 20-year planning horizon.

In addition to being an important decision-making tool for all of the township's decisions, the comprehensive plan also serves Bath Township as a foundation for zoning, one of the township's primary methods of land use regulation. In the State of Ohio, townships have the authority to regulate the use and location of lots, structures, and buildings for the purposes of public health, safety, public convenience, comfort, prosperity, and general welfare if it is "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." Such purpose of township zoning is clearly established in Section 519.02 of the Ohio Revised Code and is a purpose for which the township currently maintains its own local zoning regulations. This plan will continue to serve as the comprehensive planning foundation of the Bath Township Zoning Resolution.

While this plan serves as a foundation for decisions made by the township regarding zoning, the adoption of this plan does not alter the zoning map or zoning text in effect at the time of the plan adoption. In the future, if the township does undertake changes to the zoning resolution or zoning map, property owners still have all of the protections afforded to them under state law including nonconforming use ("grandfathering") protections that allow the continuation of existing uses legally located in the township.



## *The Vision: Keep Bath Township Rural*

The vision statement of this comprehensive plan update is to “Keep Bath Township Rural.” The desire to maintain the rural character of the township has shaped development throughout the years and this plan further expands upon those aspirations in the future. The open spaces, preserves, parks, and low-density developments within the township are assets that contribute to that character. With that in mind, we cannot ignore the fact that development pressures within and around the township are real and will continue in the future. Knowing this, the focus of this plan is to identify areas where future development is most probable and develop strategies in those areas to limit, control, and shape future growth. By providing these strategies in these areas the township will have tools at their disposal to maintain and enhance its rural character.

### **Defining Focus Areas**

As the overarching mission statement for the township’s comprehensive planning process is to “Keep Bath Township Rural,” a priority of this process was first to determine locations where development has occurred and where it is anticipated to spread in the future. By identifying these areas, the Plan can then develop strategies to control and restrict development to meet the desires of the Comprehensive Planning Committee and the general public.

In December of 2023, the Comprehensive Planning Committee completed a workshop to identify areas within the township they thought were vulnerable to future development. The committee was divided into three groups and each group was asked to highlight areas on the township map in

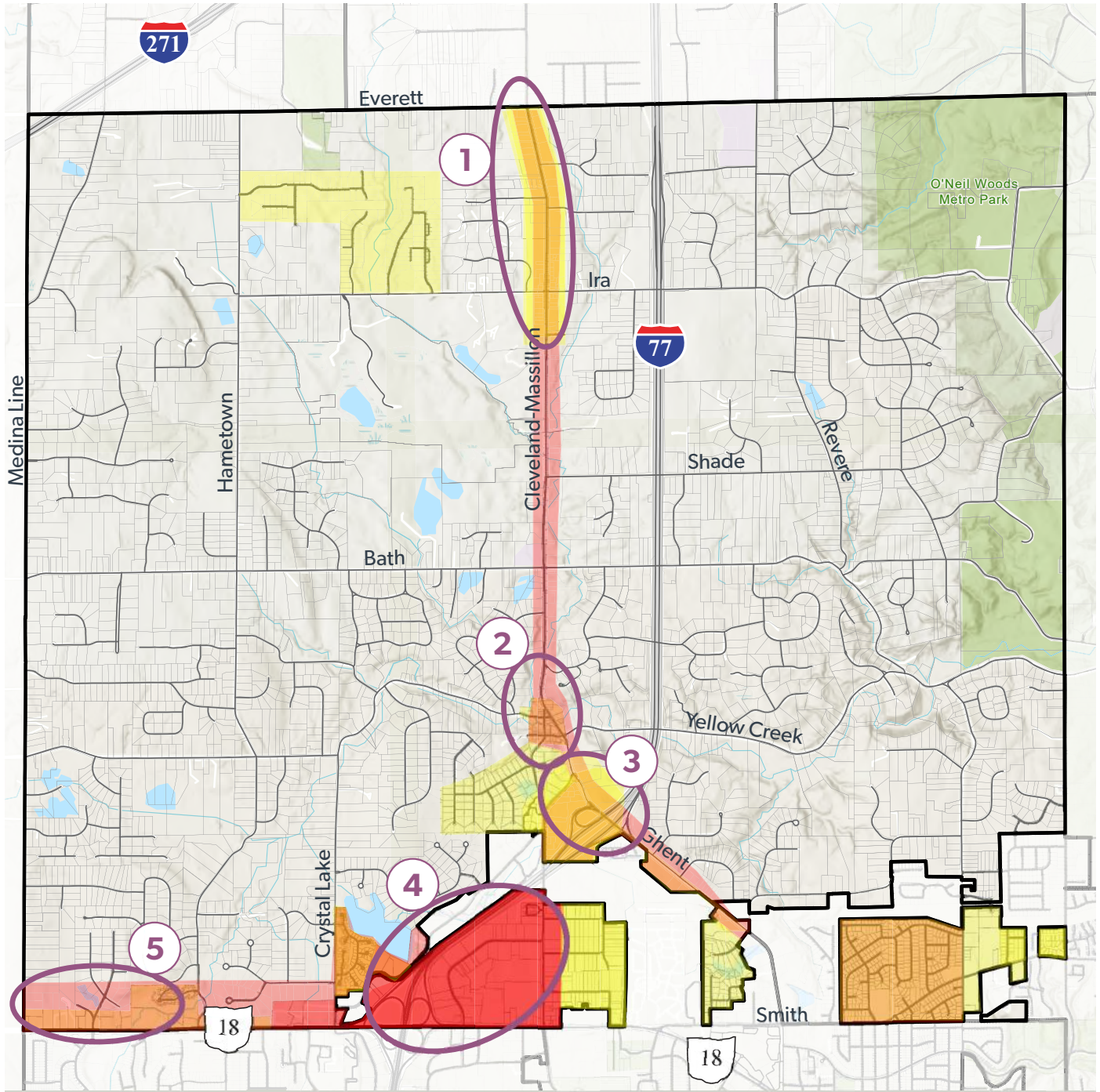
- red that they considered “developed”;
- yellow that they considered “vulnerable” to further development; and
- green that they considered “rural” and did not anticipate future development.

Mapping from this workshop was consolidated and analyzed by the consultant team to identify focus areas for the comprehensive planning process (illustrated on the following page). Five unique focus areas were identified all with distinct characteristics and different development characteristics.

The five focus areas are:

1. Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road/Hammond’s Corners Hamlet
2. Ghent Hamlet
3. Ghent Interchange
4. Springside Drive
5. State Route 18/Medina Line Road

A map highlighting the focus areas is illustrated on the following page. These areas were the central focus of recommendations for this comprehensive plan update.



**Map 1: Focus Areas**  
Comprehensive Plan



- ① North Cleveland-Massillon & Hammonds Corners
- ② Ghent Hamlet
- ③ I77/Ghent Interchange
- ④ Springside Drive
- ⑤ SR 18/Medina Line

- Suburban Areas
- ↓
- Developed Areas (Commercial/Retail)

## Summary of the Planning Process

The plan update was developed over a 12-month period from January 2024 through December of 2024. The planning process was segmented into four phases as illustrated and detailed below. Each phase included extensive stakeholder and public engagement to gather feedback from a wide cross section of the community. As with past planning efforts, Bath Township established a Comprehensive Plan Committee to work with the consultant team to develop the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update. This committee was designed to include a cross-representation of residents, business owners, and property owners from across the township who could provide feedback on various plan elements.



During the Phase I, a stakeholder and public engagement strategy was developed to solicit community preferences and feedback for the entirety of the planning process. The vision for the Comprehensive Plan; Keep Bath Township Rural, was established and defined. To define the meaning of the vision, the Comprehensive Plan Committee completed a mapping exercise to illustrate what areas of the township are vulnerable to future development pressures. Vulnerable areas identified helped to establish the five focus areas of the plan: Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road/Hammonds Corners, Ghent Hamlet, Ghent Interchange, Springside Drive, and SR18/Medina Line Road.

Phase II established an inventory of existing assets/conditions, market feasibility and sociodemographic indicators. All demographic, housing, and employment data were updated from the 2011 Plan to reflect the most recent American Community Survey and US Census Data. Basic inventory maps were updated with the most recent county-level data. Local and regional past planning efforts were reviewed and any relevant outcomes from those plans were incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Phase III established recommendations that supported township-wide goals in the form of broad policy statements, future land use recommendations, and detailed focus area recommendations. Developing recommendations was an interactive process between township staff, the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and the public. Initial draft recommendations were presented to all groups and based on comments revisions were made to better reflect the desires of the township as a whole.

Phase IV created a multi-faceted toolkit to strategically guide plan implementation with specific action items to address planning issues. An Implementation Toolkit was developed that defined various land use strategies, grant funding opportunities, and economic development programs. The toolkit is meant to educate stakeholders and the public as well as provide a path forward for implementation. In addition, an Implementation Matrix was developed that outlined a plan of attack with specific actions, time frames, allocation of responsibility for actions, description of policies, potential funding sources, and procedures public officials may use to monitor and measure the effectiveness of each component of the plan.

## Summary of the Public Engagement

The public and stakeholders were engaged throughout the comprehensive planning process. Below is a description of the various forms of engagement conducted.

### Public Forums

Two public forums were conducted during the Comprehensive Plan Update in April and September 2024. Each one consisted of a brief presentation to summarize updates in the planning process to date. Group questions were taken and then participants were asked to provide detailed feedback at a series of comment boards during the open house portion of the forum. Each comment board asked a different question regarding needs and desires as well as an opportunity to react to focus area recommendations. Feedback from these forums was used to help shape plan recommendations. These forums were highly attended with 49 and 41 attendees respectively.



### Event Outreach

In addition to the public forums, the consultant team attended various public events throughout the planning process to gather additional feedback from a different demographic of residents. Comment boards presented at each public forum were displayed at each event to gather detailed feedback. The consultant team attended both the Spring into Nature and the Fall into Nature events at the Bath Nature Preserve. These events were well attended and provided the consultant team with a wealth of information to inform plan outcomes.



The consultant team also presented at various stakeholder group meetings throughout the planning process including the Bath Business Association and All Township Boards annual meeting.

### Business Interviews

To ensure that feedback from the entire community was gathered, the consultant team conducted 16 one-on-one interviews with local businesses. These businesses ranged from property owners and small, local businesses, to large corporations within the township.

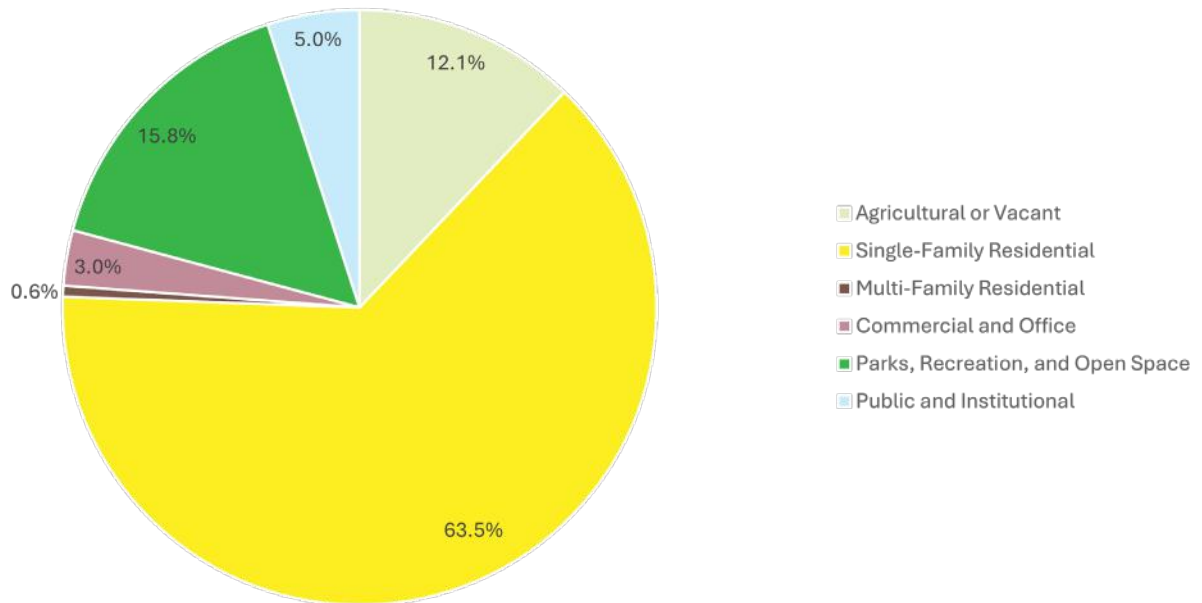
### III. BASIC INVENTORIES

A key component of any comprehensive planning strategy should be an understanding of how the community has grown and developed. Accomplishing this task means evaluating how the township has grown through an inventory of the existing conditions. This creates a foundation on which the township can base decisions on what policies are adequate and what policies should be refined or changed. The following is a summary of the inventories of existing land uses, natural resources, and infrastructure found in the township today.

#### Existing Land Use

An assessment of how the land is currently being used is an important piece of information that must be evaluated in any land use planning effort. Property information from the Summit County Auditor and aerial photography, along with input from staff, helped establish an existing land use map (Map 2). This map classifies property in Bath Township under one of the following land use categories:

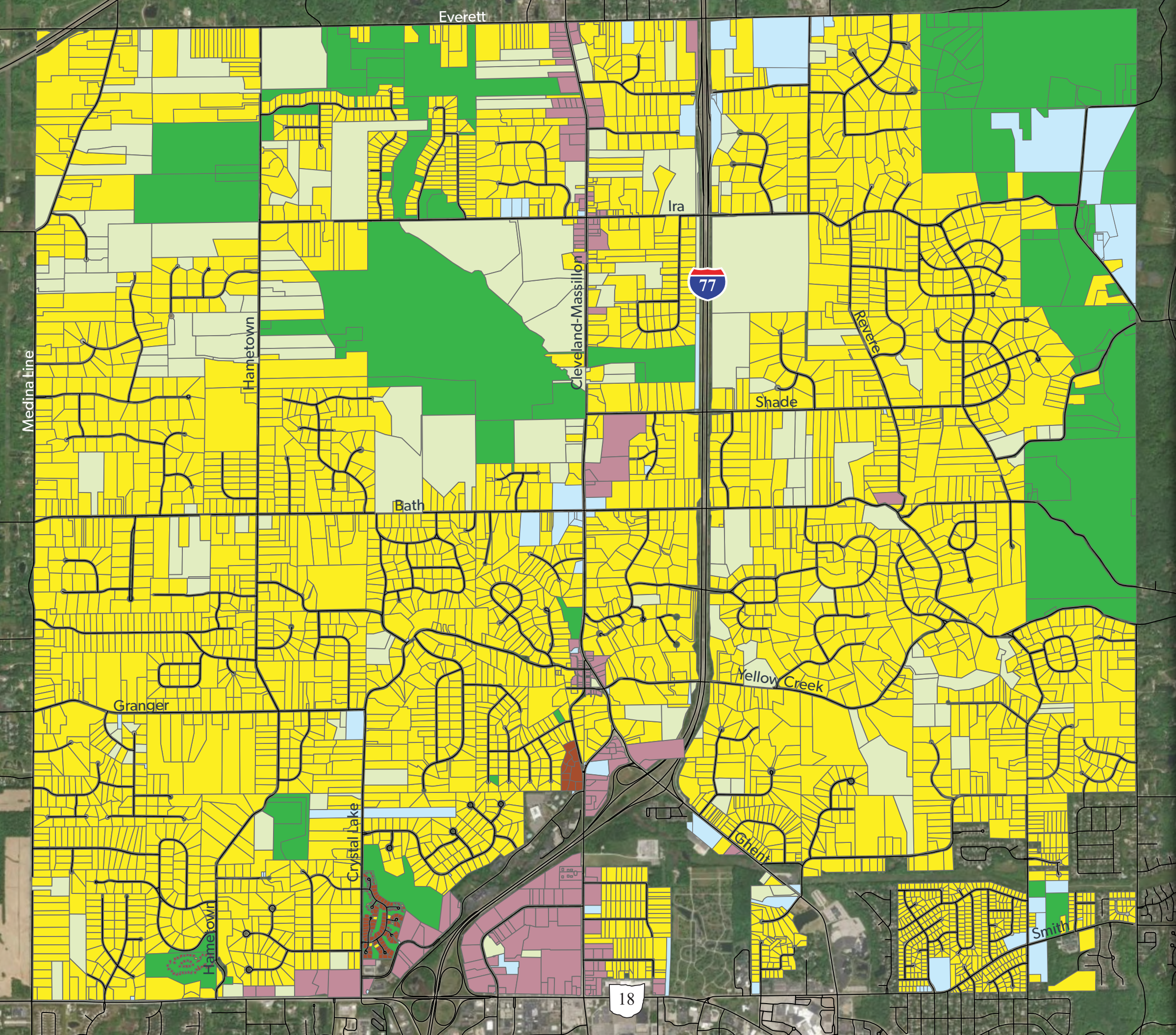
- **Agriculture or Vacant** properties are areas of the township that are maintained as farmland, either for crops or for the raising of livestock, or are properties that are not currently used for any use listed below.
- **Single-Family Residential** uses are those properties with a single detached dwelling unit located on a single parcel.
- **Multi-Family Residential** uses only comprise a small area of the township and are located where there are multiple dwelling units, attached to one another, located on a single parcel. This category may include apartment buildings, townhomes, duplexes, two-family homes, and other attached housing.
- **Commercial and Office** uses cover those areas of the township where the primary use is the provision of goods and services to the general public in a commercial setting or where there are establishments that provide executive, management, administrative, medical, dental, or professional services in either small or large-scale office buildings.
- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space** uses are properties used for public open space and recreational uses such as playgrounds, ball fields, horse trails, open space, and other local or regional park lands. A large portion of the eastern edge of the township is classified as this use because of the presence of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.
- **Public and Institutional** uses are properties and structures used for the provision of services related to the general public (e.g., township offices, public utilities, or fire stations) or institutions such as schools and churches.



**Figure 1: Existing Land Use by Area**

Almost 90% of the land within Bath Township is currently considered developed, with little to no potential for future subdivision. Of that, almost 64% of the land is used for single-family residential uses (there are 3,972 housing units in the township in 2024) and 16% for parks, recreation, and open space uses, all uses that contribute to the township’s single-family, rural character. Approximately 1,700 acres of land (12.1% of the township) remains classified as agricultural or vacant. Much of this land is located north of Bath Road and zoned for residential densities of one unit per 2.5 acres. While this 10% of the township may be subject to future development pressures, much of it is constrained by natural features such as wetlands, floodplains, and slopes or are subject, in part, to the township’s riparian corridor protection standards. All of these constraints will further limit future development potential in the township to no more than 570 additional dwelling units, for a maximum of 4,542 dwelling units at full build out of the township.





**2025 BATH TOWNSHIP  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
UPDATE**

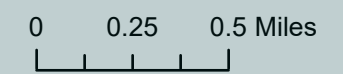
**Map 2: Summit County  
Existing Land Use  
Classification Map**

- Agricultural or Vacant
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial & Office
- Parks, Recreation, & Open Space
- Public & Institutional

Maps are illustrative in nature. Refer to Bath Township's zoning resolution for specific information.

Source: Summit County GIS and Department of Development

Map Date: October 29, 2024



The protection of vital natural resources was a key goal in past comprehensive plans and continues to be a major theme and goal of this plan. As part of both the 1998 and 2011 plans, a Natural Features Inventory and Analysis was prepared by ACRT, Inc. Environmental features such as waterways, floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, non-hydric soils with hydric inclusions, slopes greater than 12%, forest resources, and watersheds were mapped and analyzed. This plan includes updated information on each of these key resources.

## Tree Canopy Cover

Bath Township has a significant amount of tree canopy coverage that spreads out across the community and is a major factor that contributes to the community's rural character and to the township's Heritage Corridors of Bath (See Figure 2 below). The benefits of maintaining tree canopy include, but are not limited to, reducing air and noise pollution, providing habitat for birds and mammals, reducing water run-off and soil erosion, enhancing aesthetic and visual qualities of the community, and providing shade.

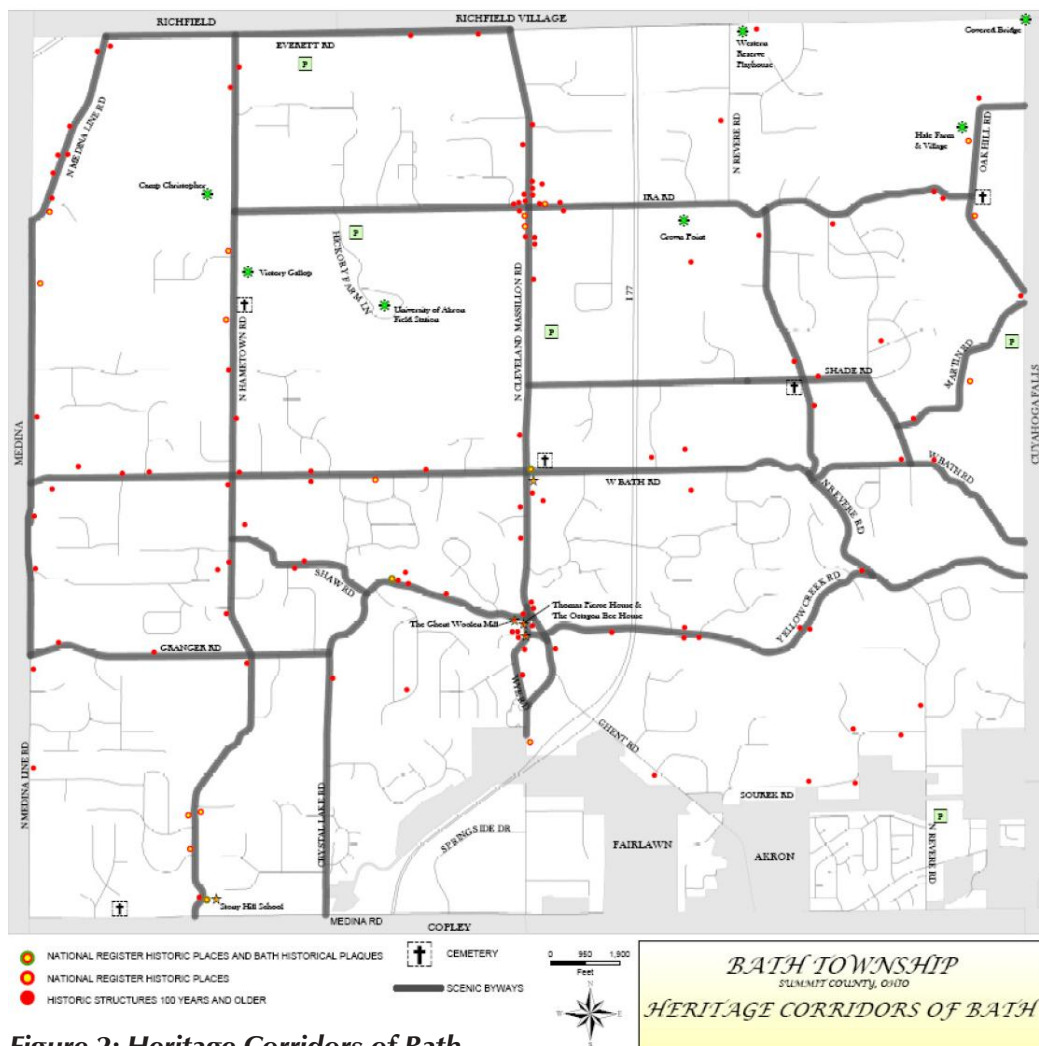
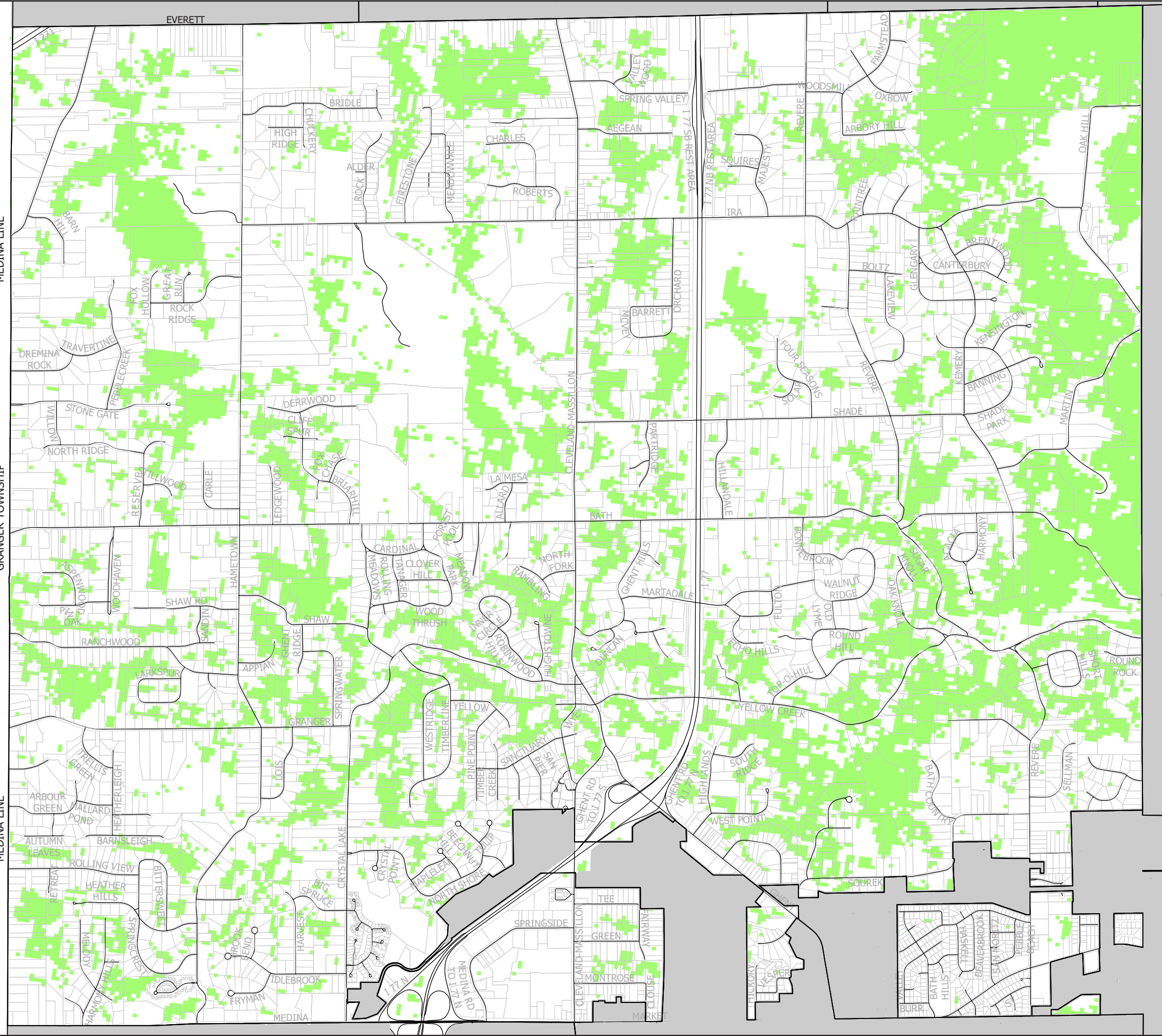





Figure 2: Heritage Corridors of Bath



## 2025 BATH TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

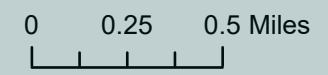
### Map 3: Tree Canopy Cover

-  Bath Township Boundary
-  Neighboring Communities
-  >75% Tree Canopy Coverage

Maps are illustrative in nature. Refer to Bath Township's zoning resolution for specific information.

Source: Summit County GIS and Department of Development

Map Date: July 11, 2024



In the 1998 plan, the Natural Resources Inventory showed that approximately 40% of the township was covered by large areas of woods and tree canopy. Map 3: Tree Canopy Coverage, shows the updated digital information (in light green illustrating areas of >75% tree coverage) provided by the National Land Coverage Database as of 2021. Tree canopy coverage remains strong along the eastern side of the township, within nature preserves, and along riparian corridors. For tree canopy coverage, the precise percentage of coverage is not as important as maintaining as much of the canopy as possible and, if possible, supplementing that existing canopy with the planting of additional trees. The goal of protecting trees and major areas of tree canopy coverage was important in previous plans and remains a primary goal of this plan.

## Topography

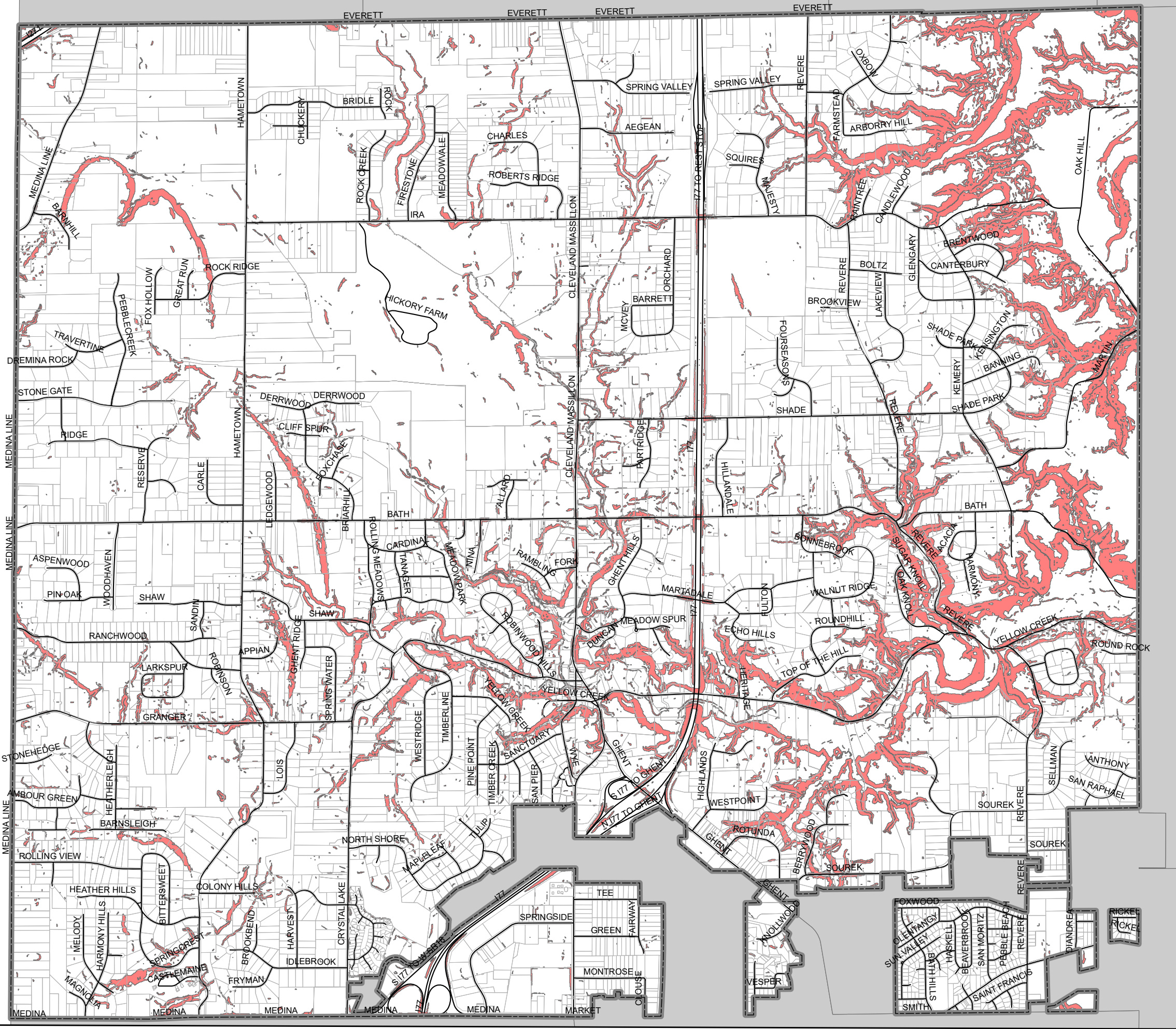
The eastern portion of Bath Township is comprised of a number of valleys that follow Yellow Creek, Cuyahoga River, and their respective tributaries. These valleys have a significant amount of topography with slopes of 12% or steeper. Moderate and steep slope areas are key resources because of their scenic features but also because they can pose potential erosion hazards if not properly protected. Minimizing the disturbance of land, drainage ways, and vegetation on slopes over 18% will help greatly reduce the potential health and safety hazards posed to people and structures by steep slopes. Summit County classifies a steep slope as any slope 12% or steeper, while Bath Township zoning resolution restricts any development on slopes 18% or steeper. Slopes that exceed 30% should largely be left in their natural state with as minimal disturbance as necessary. Natural resource protection, such as the protection of slopes for their aesthetic qualities and safety hazards, was a main goal in previous plans and continues to be in this plan.



Granger Township



Medina County

Granger Township



## 2025 BATH TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

### Map 4: Summit County Topography Map

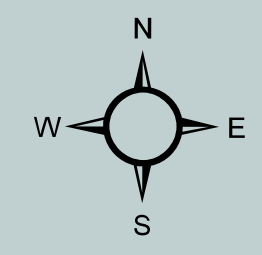
-  Bath Township Boundary
-  Slopes of 12% or Greater

Maps are illustrative in nature. Refer to Bath Township's zoning resolution for specific information.

1 inch = 2,500 feet

Source: Summit County GIS and Department of Development

Map Date: March 21, 2011



## **Floodplains**

Floodplains within Bath Township are mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Floodplains are the areas adjacent to rivers and streams that are subject to frequent or regular flooding and are classified as either a 100-year floodplain or a 500-year floodplain. Due to the chance of flooding, and the potentially dangerous situation this poses to people and property, construction in and adjacent to floodplain areas is highly discouraged, if not prohibited (i.e., in the floodway) both for safety reasons and also to prevent increased flooding downstream of development. In 2016, FEMA undertook a process to update the floodplain maps in Summit County. The 2016 floodplain boundaries are illustrated in Map 5: Floodplains. Two types of floodplains are defined in Map 5, Zone A and Zone AE. Definitions for each are detailed below.

Zone A - Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Since detailed analyses are not performed for such areas; no depths or base flood elevations are shown within these zones.

Zone AE - The base floodplain where base flood elevations are provided and a detailed floodplain study has been completed.

The Summit County Building Standards Department currently serves as the Floodplain Administrator for the township, as is typical for most townships in Ohio. The county also sets the minimal standards for floodplain protection within the county building codes. Townships do have the authority to enact additional standards that will further minimize the disturbance of land in floodplains, including tools such as the riparian corridor protections. The township should continue to utilize tools such as riparian corridor setbacks and open space residential developments as a method of keeping development outside of flood prone areas and, therefore, further protect the health and safety of residents and structures in the township.


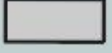


## **Wetlands**

As with the other water features and resources found in the township, wetlands are a vital resource that holds a significant environmental value for the township. Wetlands provide habitat for numerous animal species and are important to flood mitigation, stormwater abatement, and groundwater recharge. Wetlands essentially function as sponges that absorb water, delaying the downstream release, and serving as biological filters of groundwater. Wetlands are divided into three categories; emergent wetlands, forested wetlands, and scrub/shrub wetlands, all of which are shown on Map 6: Wetlands and Riparian Corridors, and all of which should be protected from encroachment from future development.



## 2025 BATH TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

### Map 5: Floodplains

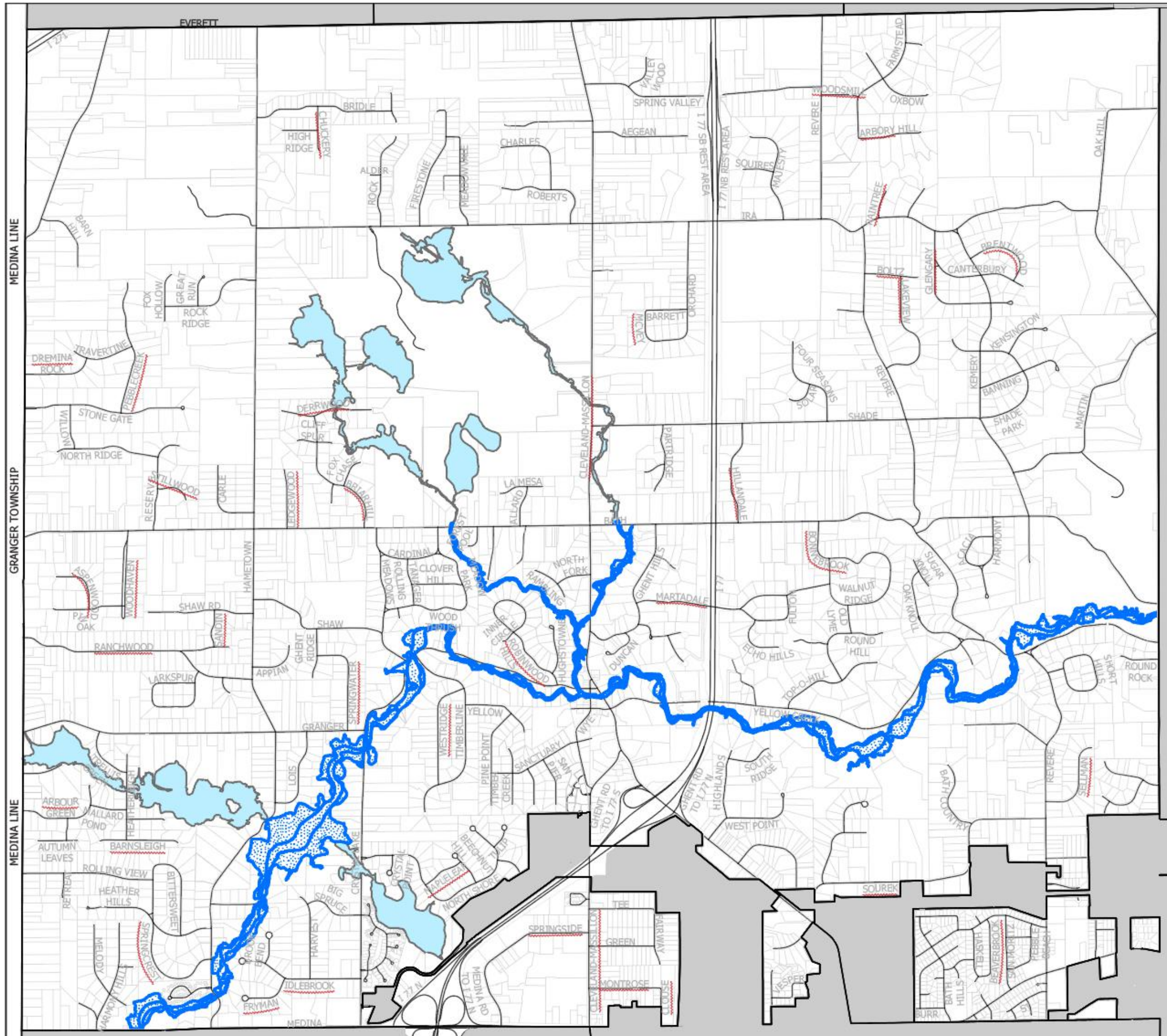
-  Bath Township Boundary
-  Neighboring Communites
-  Base 100-Year Floodplain (AE)
-  100-Year Floodplain (A)

Maps are illustrative in nature. Refer to Bath Township's zoning resolution for specific information.

Source: Summit County GIS and Department of Development

Map Date: July 16, 2024

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



## Riparian Corridors

Another method the township uses to protect both surface and groundwater quality is the preservation of a riparian corridor along Yellow Creek and all of its major tributaries. The protection of these areas is accomplished by minimizing and/or prohibiting certain activities such as tree and vegetation removal, stream crossings, and construction. The width of the corridor is based on factors such as the size of the drainage area for the stream, the percentage of slope, and the presence of wetlands. In Bath Township, the riparian corridors for the eastern portion of Yellow Creek is 100 feet wide on each side of the waterway. The riparian corridor for Yellow Creek's main tributaries, such as the North Fork and the West Fork, are 75 feet wide on each side of the waterways. All other streams and tributaries are protected by a setback of 50 feet on each side of the applicable waterway. The various riparian corridors are illustrated in Map 6: Wetlands and Riparian Corridors. Additional information on the specific requirements and regulations for riparian corridors can be found in the Bath Township Zoning Resolution.





# 2025 BATH TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

## Map 6: Wetlands and Riparian Corridors

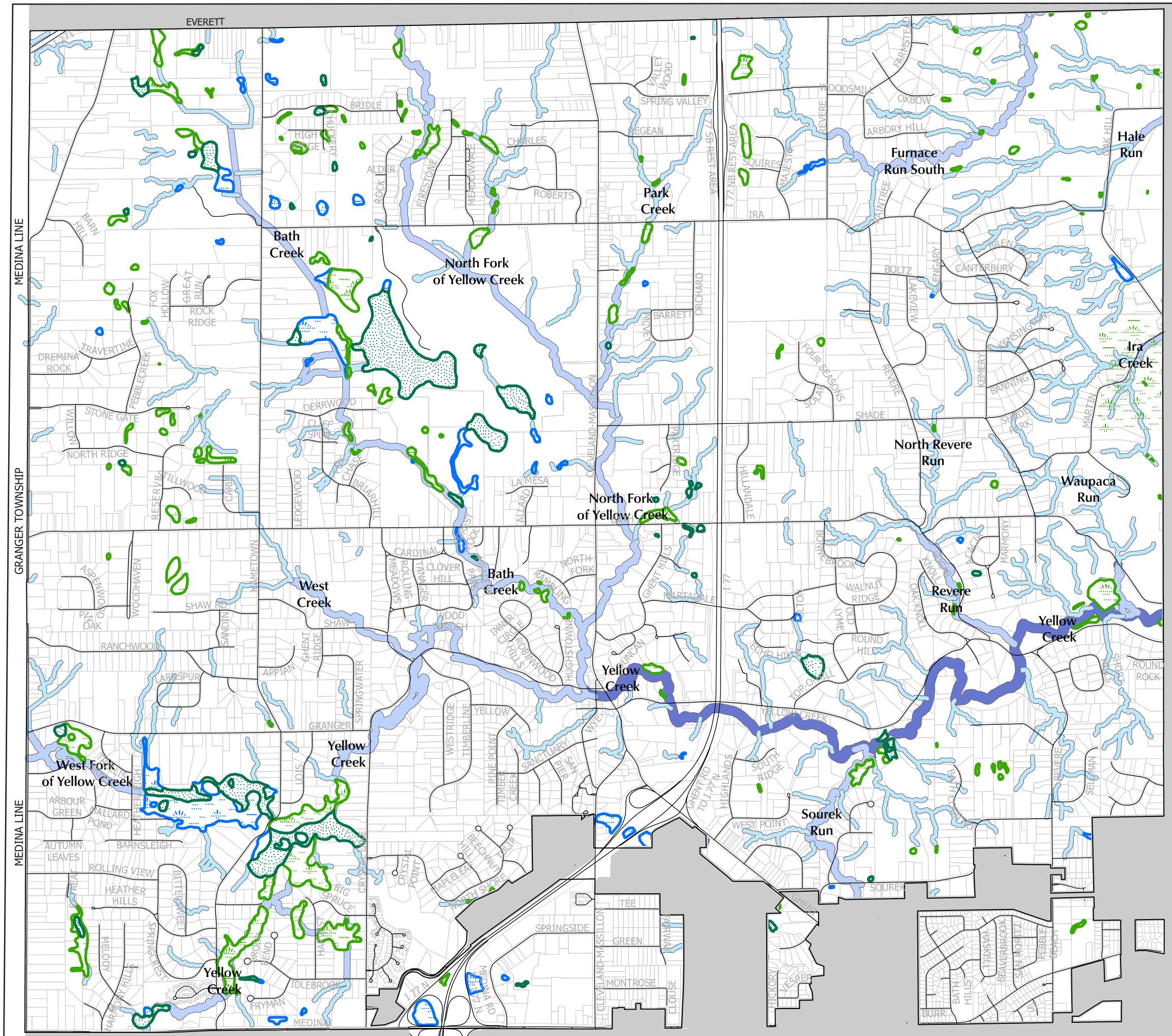
- Bath Township Boundary
- Neighboring Communities
- Wetlands**
  - Emergent Wetlands
  - Forested Wetlands
  - Scrub/Shrub Wetlands
- Riparian Corridors**
  - 50-Foot Setback
  - 75-Foot Setback
  - 100-Foot Setback

Maps are illustrative in nature. Refer to Bath Township's zoning resolution for specific information.

Source: Summit County GIS and Department of Development

Map Date: July 11, 2024

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



## Future Capacity for Development

Taking into account all of the existing land use and natural resource/sensitive areas described previously, the potential for new development in the township is fairly limited. There are approximately 1,617 acres of land that have some form of development potential (agricultural land, vacant residential, or commercial zoned property). Of that, less than 1,500 acres are located outside of areas designated as natural resources (e.g., floodplain, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.). Applying the current zoning to that land shows that there is only capacity for approximately 567 new homes and 64 acres of commercially zoned land, most of it along the northern areas of Cleveland-Massillon Road. This is summarized below in Table 1: Future Capacity for New Growth.

Future Capacity for New Growth			
Existing Use of Parcel	Acreage (Total)	Acreage (Outside of Natural Resource Areas)	Total Potential Buildout
Commercial	71	64	64 Acres
Residential*	1,600	1,418	567 Homes
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>1,482</b>	----

**Table 1: Future Capacity for New Growth**

\* Assumes all residential development will be subdivided onto 2.5 acre lots

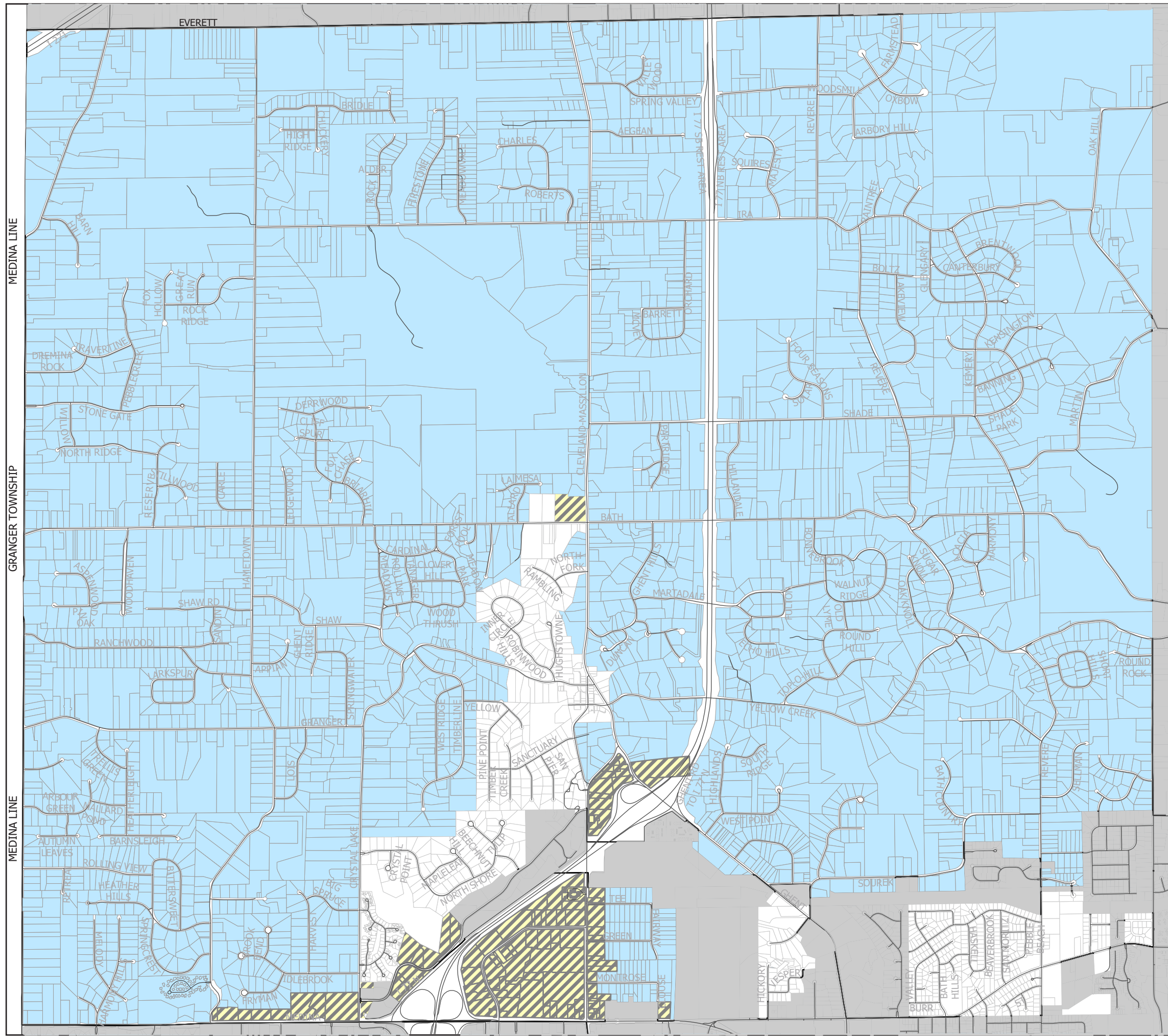
It is important to note that these numbers only show the capacity of existing land in the township to accommodate new growth and are not a population or housing projection of what will occur. For the 560 homes to be built out assumes that all available land, over five acres in size, will have to be subdivided and this is an unlikely scenario to 2.5 acre lots. Some of the land may never be sold for development and some may not be developed to its full zoning potential (i.e., land may be subdivided into five acre lots even though zoning allows for 2.5 acre lots). The purpose of this exercise is to simply highlight how much new growth the township could accommodate if all land was built out.

### Infrastructure

The presence of centralized infrastructure, such as water and sewer, has generally been a driver for increased development pressures. Many refer to this as “development that follows the pipe” as generally speaking, development follows utility patterns. This pressure goes against many of the primary policies of past plans and the direction the public sees for the township’s future in this plan. Fortunately, several actions have taken place that could minimize the extension of water, and more specifically, sewer. First, the township has entered into a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) with the cities of Akron and Fairlawn that 1) established a 2% income tax on all township properties within the JEDD area; and 2) in return, establishes that no annexations will occur at least until 2097, unless the agreement is continued or otherwise modified.






See Map 7: Water and Sewer District Map, (which also includes the JEDD boundaries). This has essentially curtailed unplanned development that would have previously occurred when a property owner requested annexation into one of the cities in order to get the infrastructure and, in theory, a higher price for their land. The area included in the JEDD is already served by sanitary sewer.

The second action, which was a direct result of the 1998 comprehensive plan, was the adoption of the Bath Township Sewer and Water District Plan. This plan sets forth a policy that only wells and septic systems may be used in the Water and Sewer District, which covers all of the areas of the township outside of areas currently served by sewers (See Map 7: Water and Sewer District.). As part of this plan, it is important to understand these dynamics as the implication is that for the foreseeable future, the only major infrastructure improvements that will take place in the township, other than transportation improvements, are those within current service areas. The only exception that the township may consider is the extension of sanitary sewer from Richfield, Ohio, if the capacity can be made available and all appropriate agreements are made, into the northern areas of the Cleveland-Massillon corridor. If such an extension is made possible, it is important to understand that the policy of this plan is to limit service to the very northern areas of the township. No service or utility extensions should be allowed south of Hammond’s Corners.



## 2025 BATH TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

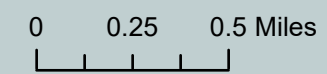
**Map 7: Limits of Bath Twp. Water & Sewer District & JEDD**

-  Bath Township Boundary
-  Neighboring Communities
-  Within Bath Township Water & Sewer District
-  Bath Township Property within the JEDD
-  Bath Township Property not within Water & Sewer District or JEDD

Maps are illustrative in nature. Refer to Bath Township's zoning resolution for specific information.

Source: Summit County GIS and Department of Development

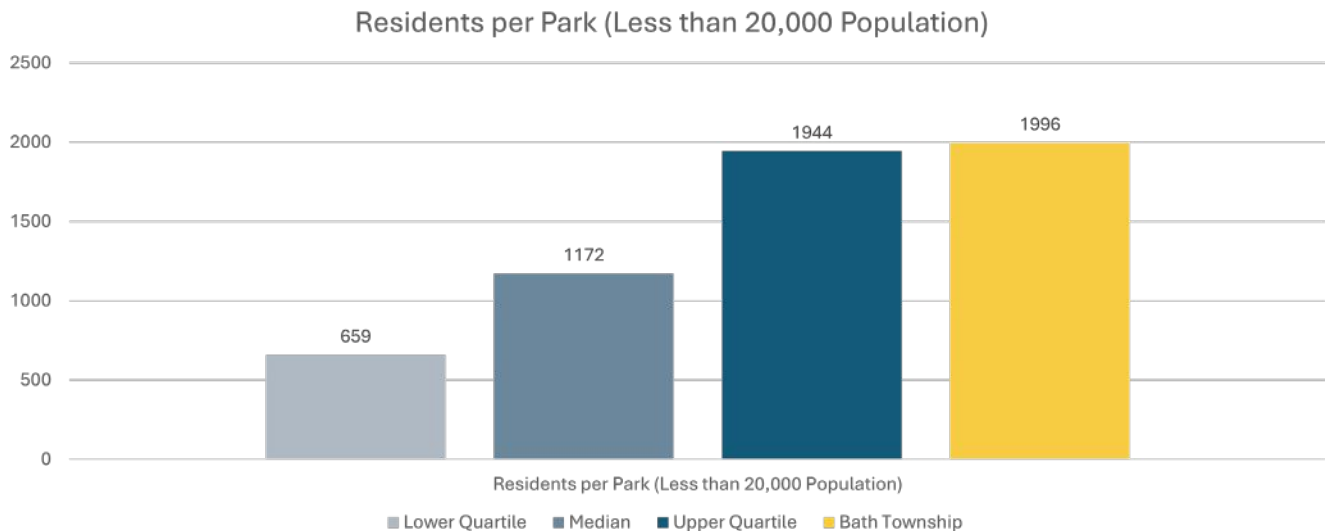
Map Date: July 16, 2024



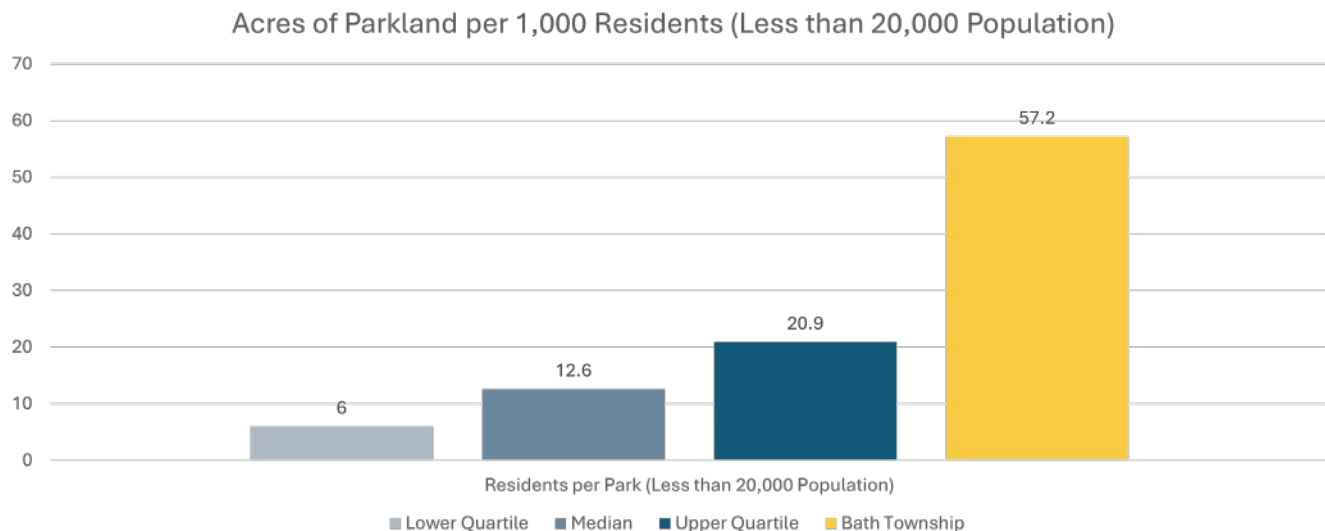
**Parks & Recreation**

Bath Township is blessed with picturesque natural features including rolling hills and wooded valleys. The Township has been an advocate for the conservation of these natural features while also seeking to provide ample park and recreation options for their residents. Since 1997 the Township has gone from a 41-acre park with four baseball fields, four tennis courts, one basketball court, and one soccer field to five parks with over 571 acres of parkland with a variety of recreational options. In addition, the Township is also home to the Summit County Metro Parks O’Neil Woods Metro Park and a portion of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

To gain a sense of how Bath Township compares to its peers, the 2024 National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) Agency Performance Review data was used. The NPRA gathers data annually from park and recreation agencies nationwide to assemble a clear overview of park and recreation agencies’ performance. The purpose of this 2024 NPRA Agency Performance Review is to allow agencies to compare their own performance metrics with those of other U.S. agencies to identify areas of excellence and areas for potential improvement.



**Figure 3: Residents per Park (Source: 2024 NPRA Agency Performance Review)**



**Figure 4: Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents (Source: 2024 NPRA Agency Performance Review)**

Figures 3 and 4 compare Bath Township to its peers based on total population. Since Bath Township’s 2022 population estimate is 9,982, the Township is compared to jurisdictions with populations less than 20,000. As Figures 3 and 4 illustrate, Bath Township exceeds the upper quartile for both Residents per Park and Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents metrics. Since Bath Township has a small number of total parks that are generally larger in area, it is not surprising that Bath Township ranks high when compared by Residents per Park. Many of the peers in this category are small cities and villages that may have a high number of small sized parks. Figures 5 and 6 compare Bath Township to other townships across the United States. When compared in this way Bath Township ranks between the lower quartile and median by the Residents per Park metric. As shown in Figure 6, Bath Township far exceeds its peers when compared by Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents. This speaks to Bath Township’s commitment to maintaining the area’s natural resources and rural character.

It should be noted that both the County Metroparks and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park were not included in the above park assessment.

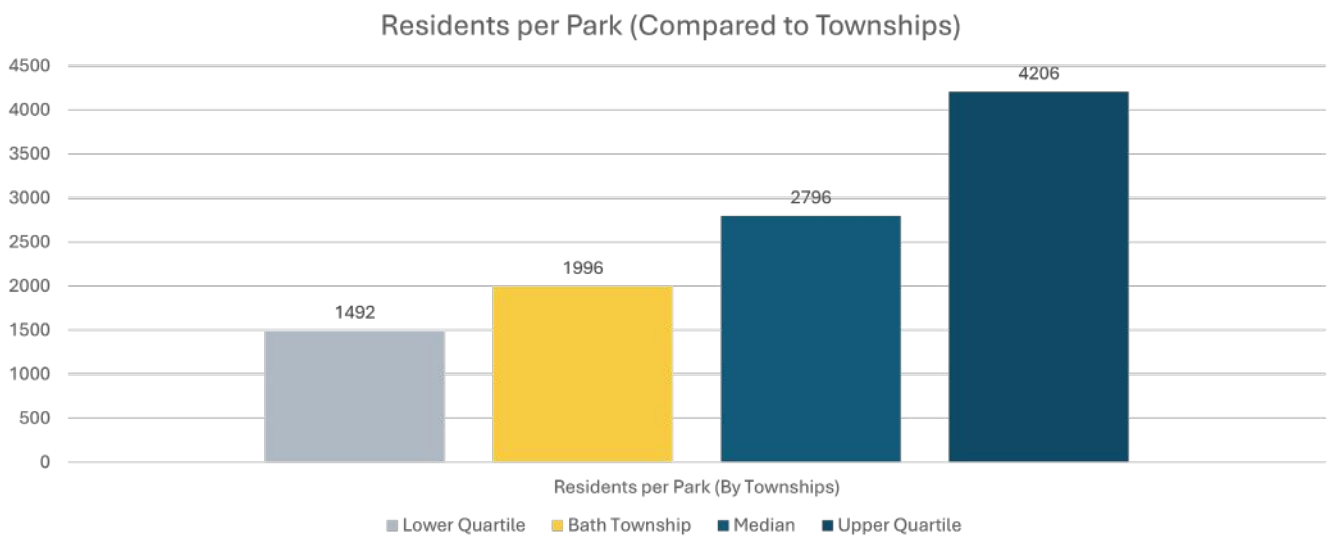


Figure 5: Residents per Park (Source: 2024 NPRA Agency Performance Review)

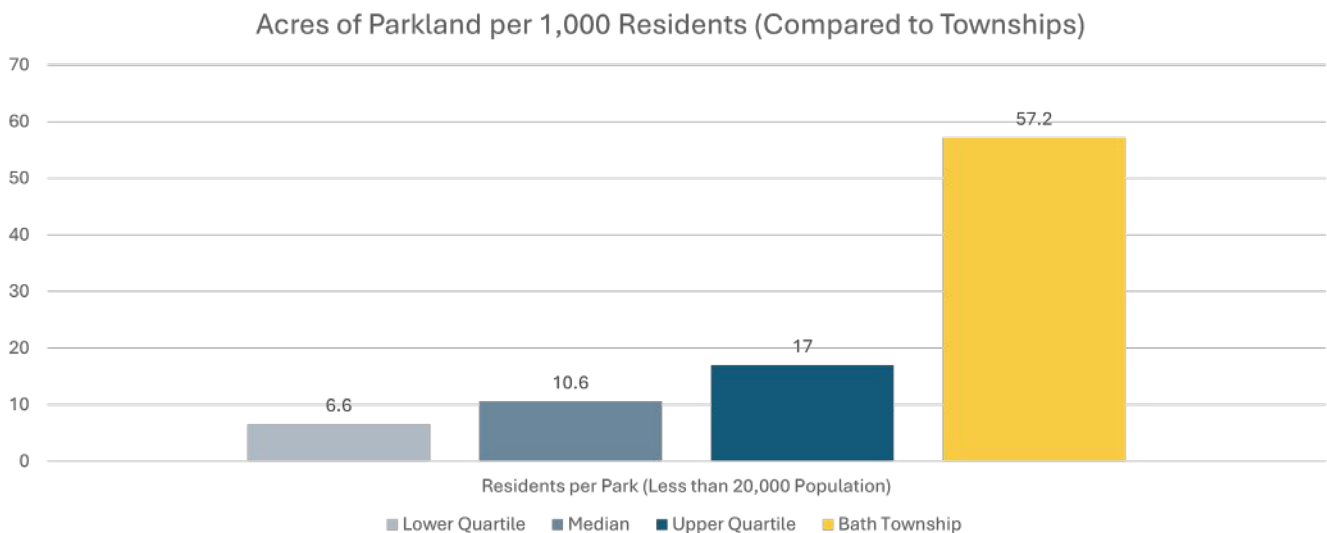


Figure 6: Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents (Source: 2024 NPRA Agency Performance Review)

## IV. POPULATION & HOUSING TRENDS

A key component of any comprehensive planning strategy is an understanding of the demographics of a community and a review of the general trends affecting its future. This type of analysis is useful in answering the following questions which, in turn, provide the basis for making decisions during the development of the comprehensive plan.

- How has the township grown in the past?
- What are some of the changing trends, both in the township and across the nation, that might affect the township’s future?
- How might Bath grow in the future if these trends continue unchanged?

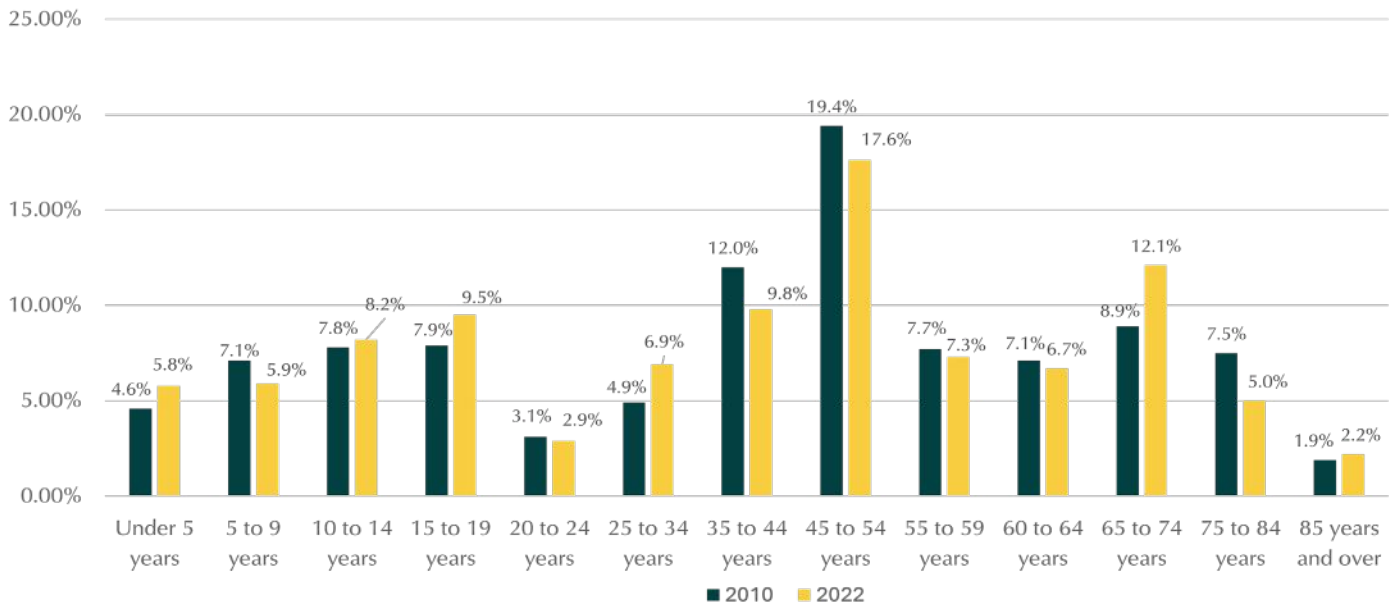
The following sections provide a summary analysis of the demographic profile of Bath Township and the general analysis of trends. These analyses are important to the plan because current trends may bring more or less growth than what the community desires in the future. The purpose of these analyses is to provide a foundation of knowledge of how much growth the township may anticipate in the future if current trends and development policies continue and is not reflective of any recommendations proposed as part of this plan. These analyses also allow the township to tailor planning tools that will guide any new growth toward the community’s vision of Bath Township for the next 10 to 20 years.

### Population

Bath Township has had a relatively stable growth rate since 1970 that ranged from an average growth rate of 0.5% a year up to just over 1% annual growth in population. The township’s major growth surge occurred prior to 1970 when the township nearly doubled in population between 1960 and 1970. The township has continued to see moderate growth since the 2000 Census. Only the most recent American Community Survey estimates for 2022 show a slight decrease in population for the Township. For comparison purposes, Table 2: Total Population by Decade, illustrates the growth rates of Bath Township, Summit County, the City of Akron, and the adjacent City of Fairlawn, Copley, Granger, and Richfield Townships. While the adjacent townships have grown at a slightly higher rate than Bath Township, both Summit County and the City of Akron have experienced a decline in population as residents have moved to outlying neighborhoods such as Bath Township or to areas outside of the region.

Total Population by Decade								
	Summit County	City of Akron	Bath Township	Copley Township	City of Fairlawn	Granger Township	Village of Richfield	Richfield Township
1960	513,569	290,351	4,613	9,656	6,200	1,663	---	----
1970	553,371	275,425	7,552	14,735	6,102	2,142	3,228	1,715
1980	524,472	237,177	8,476	15,910	6,100	2,660	3,437	1,504
1990	514,990	223,019	9,015	11,130	5,779	2,932	3,117	1,893
2000	542,899	217,074	9,635	13,641	7,307	3,928	3,286	2,138
2010	541,781	199,110	9,702	17,304	7,437	4,445	3,648	2,517
2020	540,428	190,469	10,024	18,403	7,710	4,556	3,729	2,708
2022	539,361	190,273	9,982	18,310	7,661	4,559	3,699	2,716

Table 2: Total Population by Decade



**Figure 7: Population Percentage by Age Cohort (2010 US Census & 2022 ACS 5-Year Data)**

One aspect of the population that was a point of concern during this planning process was providing additional options for “step in” and “step down” housing for prospective and existing residents. These types of housing options provide smaller, lower maintenance, and more affordable housing for young people who desire to live in Bath as well as older Bath residents who no longer want to maintain larger properties. This concern is well founded since the fastest growing population in Bath Township are those aged between 65 and 74 years old. This population segment has grown by 3.2% since 2010. In addition, the Township has seen an increase in populations between 25 and 34 years old of 2% since 2010. This increase directly corresponds to the increase in school-aged children that are reflected in the overall population totals but also within the Revere Local School District (See Table 3: Revere Local School District Population). The school district has seen a steady increase in enrollment since 2009-2010, with a current enrollment over 2,900 students. Growth in both of these age cohorts speaks to continued future demands for alternative housing options and services to meet the needs of a varied population.

School Year	District Enrollment
1979-1980	2,990
1989-1990	2,516
2000-2001	2,800
2009-2010	2,651
2019-2020	2,769
2023-2024	2,907

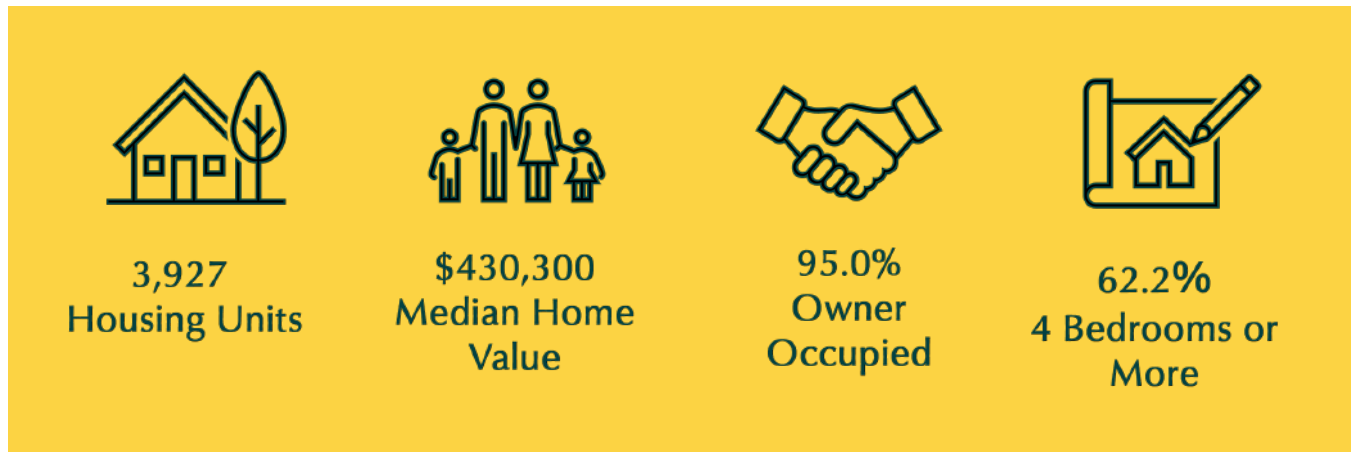
**Table 3: Revere School District Population**

	Summit County	City of Akron	Bath Township	Copley Township	City of Fairlawn	Granger Township	Village of Richfield	Richfield Township
1960	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1970	0.75%	-0.53%	5.05%	4.32%	0.16%	2.56%	---	---
1980	-0.53%	-1.48%	1.16%	0.77%	0.00%	2.19%	0.63%	-1.30%
1990	-0.18%	-0.61%	0.62%	-3.51%	0.54%	0.98%	-0.97%	2.33%
2000	0.53%	-0.27%	0.67%	2.06%	-2.32%	2.97%	0.53%	1.22%
2010	-0.02%	-0.86%	0.07%	2.41%	-0.18%	1.24%	1.05%	1.65%
2020	-0.03%	-0.44%	0.33%	0.62%	-0.36%	0.25%	0.22%	0.73%
2022	-0.10%	-0.05%	-0.21%	-0.25%	0.06%	0.03%	-0.40%	0.15%

**Table 4: Total Population Change (Compound Annual Growth Rate)**

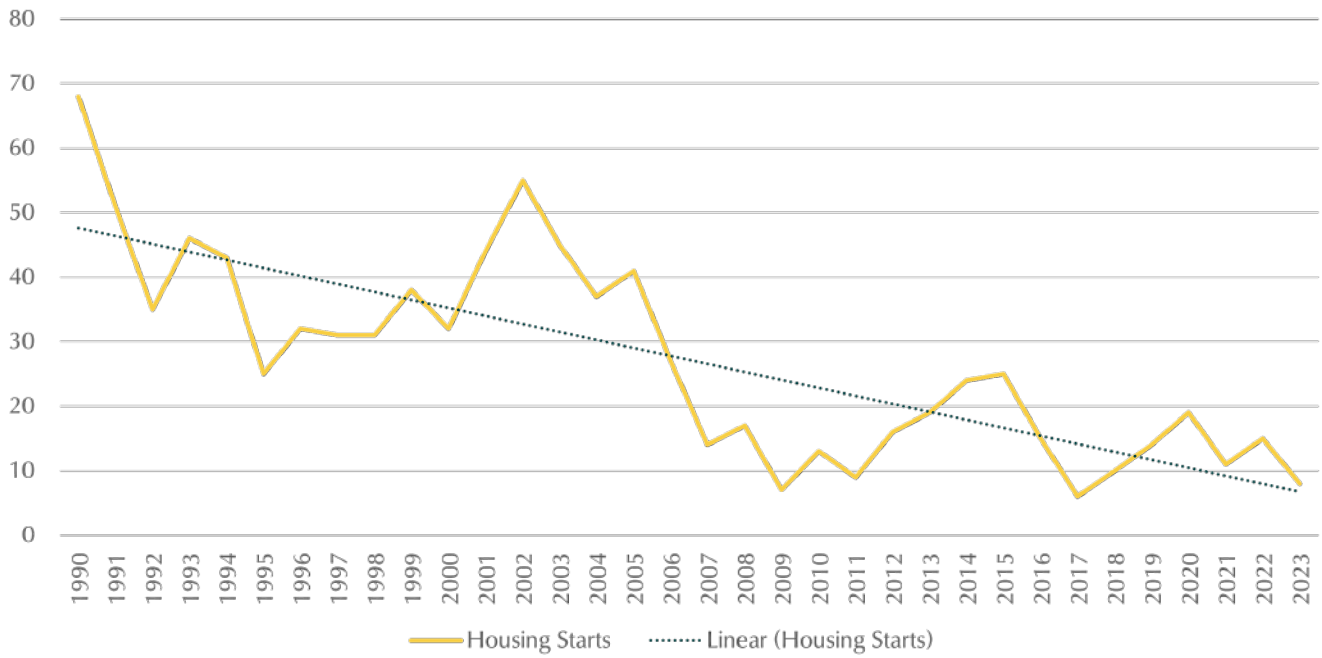
## Housing

Roughly 95% of all housing units within Bath Township were detached, single-family homes. Typical housing units within Bath are relatively large, with 62.2% having four or more bedrooms, and expensive, with median home values of \$430,000. For comparison, these values far exceed the average home size (23.1% four bedrooms or more) and value (\$182,000) within Summit County. These values also far exceed surrounding jurisdictions including Copley (43.4% four bedrooms or more, \$299,700), Granger (48% four bedrooms or more, \$381,000), and Richfield Townships (37.1% four bedrooms or more, \$346,800). This further illustrates the need for varied housing options within the Township.



One additional aspect of the housing stock to consider is the age of dwellings. Bath Township has experienced a dramatic drop in housing starts over the past 25 years. Figure 8: Annual Housing Starts in Bath Township illustrates this drop from 40 to 50 new homes annually throughout the 1990s to under 10 new housing starts in 2023. The drop in housing starts is largely consistent with the relative build-out of the township, as there are limited developable properties that remain. Roughly 90% of all homes in Bath Township are over 25 years old. As the housing stock continues to age, priorities will likely continue to shift toward enhanced property maintenance requirements.





**Figure 8: Annual Housing Starts Bath Township (Bath Township Planning and Zoning)**

## V. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to help guide the future development of the community over the next 10 to 20 years. Central to that guidance are the vision, goals, and objectives, which form the foundation of the next 10 to 20 years. The goals of this Plan mimic the goals from the previous comprehensive plan update in 2011. The goals and objectives are listed below.

### 1. Rural, Single-Family Character

***GOAL: Low-density, single-family land use will continue to be the prevailing pattern in Bath Township, other than in the existing business or hamlet portions of the township.***

*Objectives:*

- Maintain the current gross density of one unit per 5 acres in the park and conservation use areas on the future land use map.
- Maintain the current gross density of one unit per 2.5 acres for the rural estate residential use areas on the future land use map.
- Maintain the existing boundaries of the R-1 and R-2 Residential Zoning Districts except where uses other than park and conservation uses and rural estate residential uses are allowed on the future land use map.

### 2. Protected Natural Resources

***GOAL: The valued natural resources of Bath Township, such as water resources, floodplains, riparian corridors, wetlands, soils, slopes, and tree canopies, will be preserved, enhanced, and mitigated from potential negative impacts of existing and future development.***

*Objectives:*

- Continue to support and pursue implementation of the Yellow Creek Watershed Action Plan.
- Zoning Commission should review annually and strengthen, as appropriate, the natural resource protection standards in the township zoning resolution.
- Develop a strategy, including pursuing grants and other funding opportunities, to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive resources.
- Explore solutions to minimize the impacts of stormwater on the community such as enforcement, education, enhanced regulations, and general stormwater improvements.

- Identify outside agencies the township can work with to purchase, dedicate, or otherwise protect its natural resources (e.g., the Western Reserve Land Conservancy).
- Explore protection of well water/ground water, as well as, septic system controls.
- Provide community education strategies and partnerships on potential environmental concerns (e.g., water testing, radon testing, etc.).

### 3. Open Space, Greenways & Trails

***GOAL: Bath Township will have a connected system of preserved open spaces, greenways, and trails.***

*Objectives:*

- Develop a holistic active transportation plan that links township assets and neighborhoods together and prioritizes trail, sidewalk, and traffic calming improvements throughout the township.
- Seek to expand the existing trail network via publicly-owned land or along roadway right-of-ways to township assets and neighborhoods when practical.
- Create or form an alliance with other partners to promote acquisitions, conservation easements, or other protection strategies (e.g. the Western Reserve Land Conservancy and the Nature Conservancy).
- Coordinate trail planning with an overall corridor and hamlet preservation strategy.
- Coordinate local bike trail planning with transportation plans and improvements completed by the county, state, and AMATS.
- Explore cooperation of adjacent jurisdictions in the development of trails including the National Park Service and the Summit County MetroParks.
- Explore funding strategies for future sidewalk and trail projects.

#### 4. Preserve & Enhance Hamlets

**GOAL:** *The hamlets of Bath Center, Ghent, and Hammond’s Corners will be preserved, enhanced, and developed to have a vibrant historic hamlet atmosphere with enhanced walkability and accessibility.*

*Objectives:*

- Recognize Bath Center, Ghent, and Hammond’s Corners as historical community focal points of activities with a mixture of land uses that are compatible with their historic character and scale.
- Encourage the focusing of activities in the hamlets by permitting a mix of residential, nonresidential (small-scale retail, live-work, office, and restaurants), and public uses that help keep the hamlets vibrant.
- Connect the hamlets with pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure as part of a township and regional-wide system.
- Encourage businesses to develop and maintain sidewalk infrastructure.
- Establish an economic development strategy for each of the hamlets (e.g., capitalize on the quality and types of uses and market each area individually).
- Develop a public gathering space within the hamlets to promote activity and vibrancy.
- Enhance each hamlet’s unique character by developing streetscaping, decorative lighting and signage standards, and promoting on-street or shared parking.

#### 5. High Quality Corridors

**GOAL:** *State Route 18, Cleveland-Massillon Road, and the township’s Heritage Corridors will reflect high design quality in both the public and private realms.*

*Objectives:*

- Preserve the Cleveland-Massillon Road corridor between Ghent and Bath Center, and between Bath Center and Hammond’s Corners, as a rural residential area.
- Review Cleveland-Massillon Road Design Guidelines and update as needed.
- Consider a branding and signage initiative to help identify unique areas of the township (i.e. township hamlets) and to promote a “sense of place” throughout the township.
- Conduct annual Business Retention and Expansion visits with stakeholders of the Montrose business area to ensure long-term economic stability.
- Develop a Planned Residential Overlay District that prioritizes maintaining the area’s rural character through conservation developments, setbacks, and buffering and that allows for increased density of residential uses on the western area of the SR 18 corridor under the conditions outlined in this plan.

## 6. Sustain Neighborhood Values

**GOAL:** *The residential neighborhoods, including those abutting Route 18 along the southern portion of the township, will remain stable and attractive residential environments for families.*

*Objectives:*

- Monitor conditions in township neighborhoods that affect housing stock values.
- Investigate tools for sustaining quality neighborhoods such as property maintenance codes and alternative methods to control nuisance properties.
- Ensure future residential developments within the Township provide adequate access to adjacent developments and/or major roadway arterials to improve connectivity and limit traffic on collector roads.
- Strengthen buffering standards between incompatible land uses to ensure the existing rural character of the township is preserved.

## 7. Sustain Business Vitality

**GOAL:** *The businesses and nonresidential areas of the township will be a prime source of economic development for the community and will contribute to the strong sense of place that is Bath Township but shall be limited to those areas where business uses are recommended in this plan.*

*Objectives:*

- Utilize the unique qualities and attributes of Bath Township as a marketing tool to attract new businesses to the appropriate areas and to attract patrons to existing businesses.
- Prohibit the expansion of nonresidential uses in areas not so designated in this plan to prevent the oversaturation of business activity areas and minimize vacancies.

## 8. Public Facilities that Reinforce Growth Management Goals

**GOAL:** *Public facilities will be provided in a fiscally responsible manner with adequate levels of service and will be coordinated with land use planning and development decisions.*

*Objectives:*

- Continue to offer reliable public services to residents and businesses including police, fire, parks, and maintenance of township roads and other facilities.
- Coordinate with the Bath Township Water and Sewer District on future planning for sewer and water services to foster rural land use patterns and planned densities of the township. The effort should specifically look at areas of potential change such as SR 18 and the northern areas of Cleveland-Massillon Road.
- Work to increase access and improve internet speeds across the township. Consider zoning regulations that promote improved internet speeds such as allowing the use of dishes (i.e. Starlink) on residential properties, so long as it does not degrade the rural character of the township.

## 9. Multi-jurisdiction Cooperative Planning

**GOAL:** *Land use planning and public facilities planning will be reviewed with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies, especially near township borders, to support complementary zoning.*

*Objectives:*

- Collaborate and promote the values of regionalism with local governments on mutual goals and improvements.
- Work with the school system to identify ways in which the schools and township can collaborate to mutually reinforce common interests.
- Work with Richfield Township and the Village of Richfield to develop a small area plan, or similar strategy, for areas that border the northern end of the township, and specifically the Cleveland-Massillon Corridor. Such efforts should address issues such as infrastructure provision, access, land uses, and the joint use of funding and resources, if applicable.
- Work with regional partners, including AMATS and Summit County, to pursue electric vehicle charging station funding through State and Federal sources.
- Collaborate with the Summit County Engineer to encourage safe travel for all road users and promote walkability and bikeability along county roads.

## 10. Sustainability

*GOAL: The township will continue to act as a role model incorporating sustainable practices within the township as well as embracing, educating, and encouraging sustainable development practices throughout the community.*

*Objectives:*

- Update the Bath Township Zoning Resolution to incorporate sustainable development provisions that will promote walkability, enhance energy conservation methods, and reduce impervious surface coverage, amongst other related sustainable requirements.
- Encourage and/or incentivize businesses to minimize surface parking and impervious surfaces by considering shared parking credits, increasing landscaping standards, allowing on-street parking (in hamlets only), or removing parking minimums.
- Enhance existing lighting standards to further minimize light pollution from commercial and retail establishments.
- Promote the use of small-scale solar and wind turbines within large-lot residential properties so long as the improvements do not negatively impact the rural character of the Township.
- Encourage the use of solar-powered and energy efficient lighting and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout the township, to decrease energy consumption and reduce the Township's carbon footprint.
- Work with the Development Finance Authority of Summit County to create an Energy Special Improvement District (ESID) to facilitate future Residential Property Assessed Clean Energy (R-PACE) financing to incentivize private reinvestment in energy efficient repairs/upgrades for single-family homes.

## VI. Future Land Use Recommendations

The 2025 Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is the primary guide to shape future development in Bath Township. The map and its land use designations describe the desired types, intensity, and spatial arrangement of the township’s land uses to achieve the goals of this Comprehensive Plan. The FLUM does NOT change a property’s zoning and is merely a recommendation for how the township would like to see properties used in the future. Map 8: 2025 Future Land Use Map and Table 5: Future Land Use Intent and Uses are illustrated on the following pages.

As illustrated in Figure 9, over 90% of the land area within the 2025 FLUM is designated as either a Rural Estate Residential Use or a Parks and Conservation Use. The high percentage of land area within these designations reflects the vision of the Comprehensive Plan to “Keep Bath Township Rural.” Only 3.2% of the land area is devoted to various forms of commercial retail, office, or a mix of commercial, office, and/or residential uses. Commercial retail, office and mixed-use districts are concentrated in the Montrose area, around the I-77 and Ghent Road Interchange and along portions of Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road.

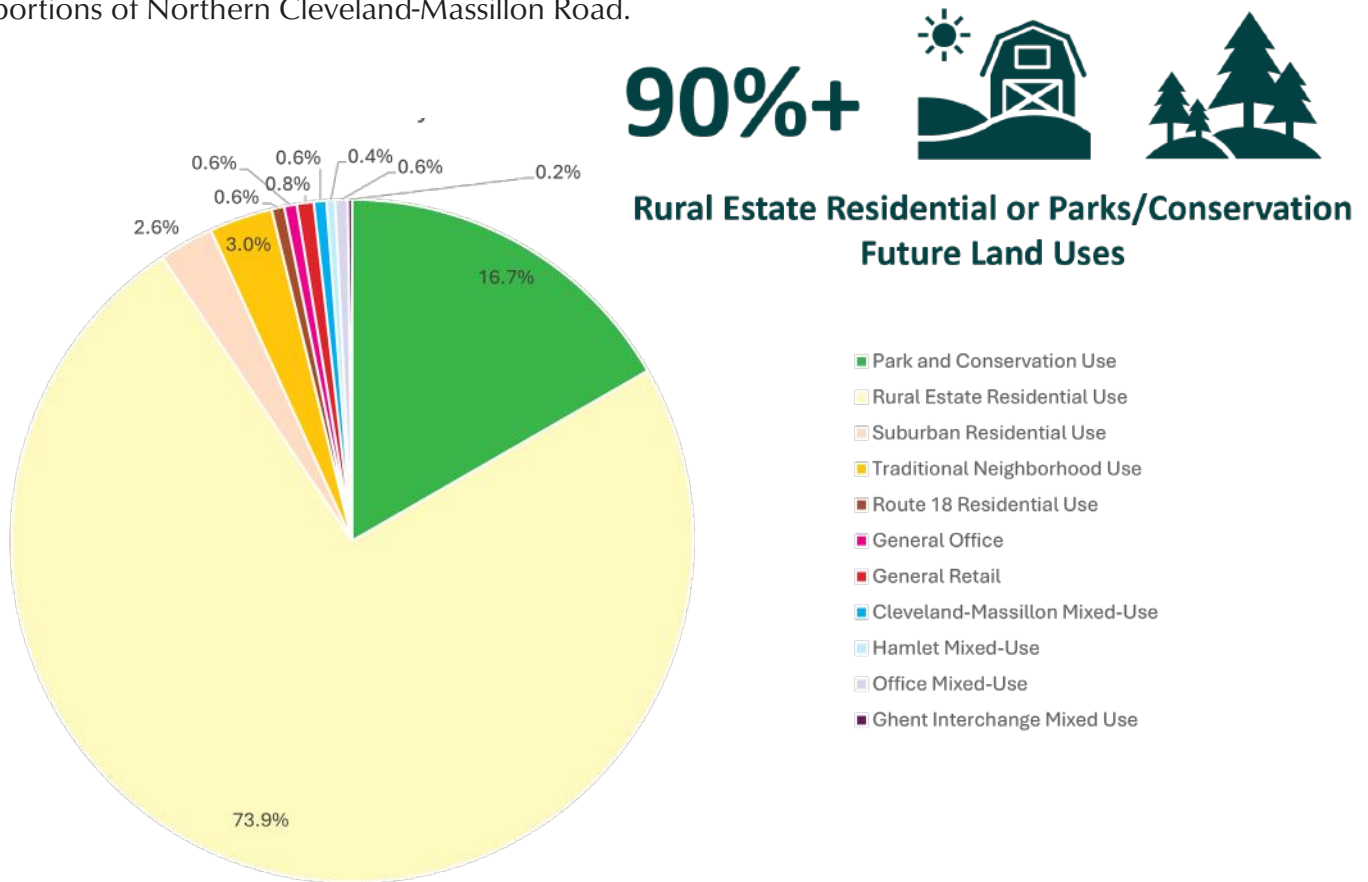





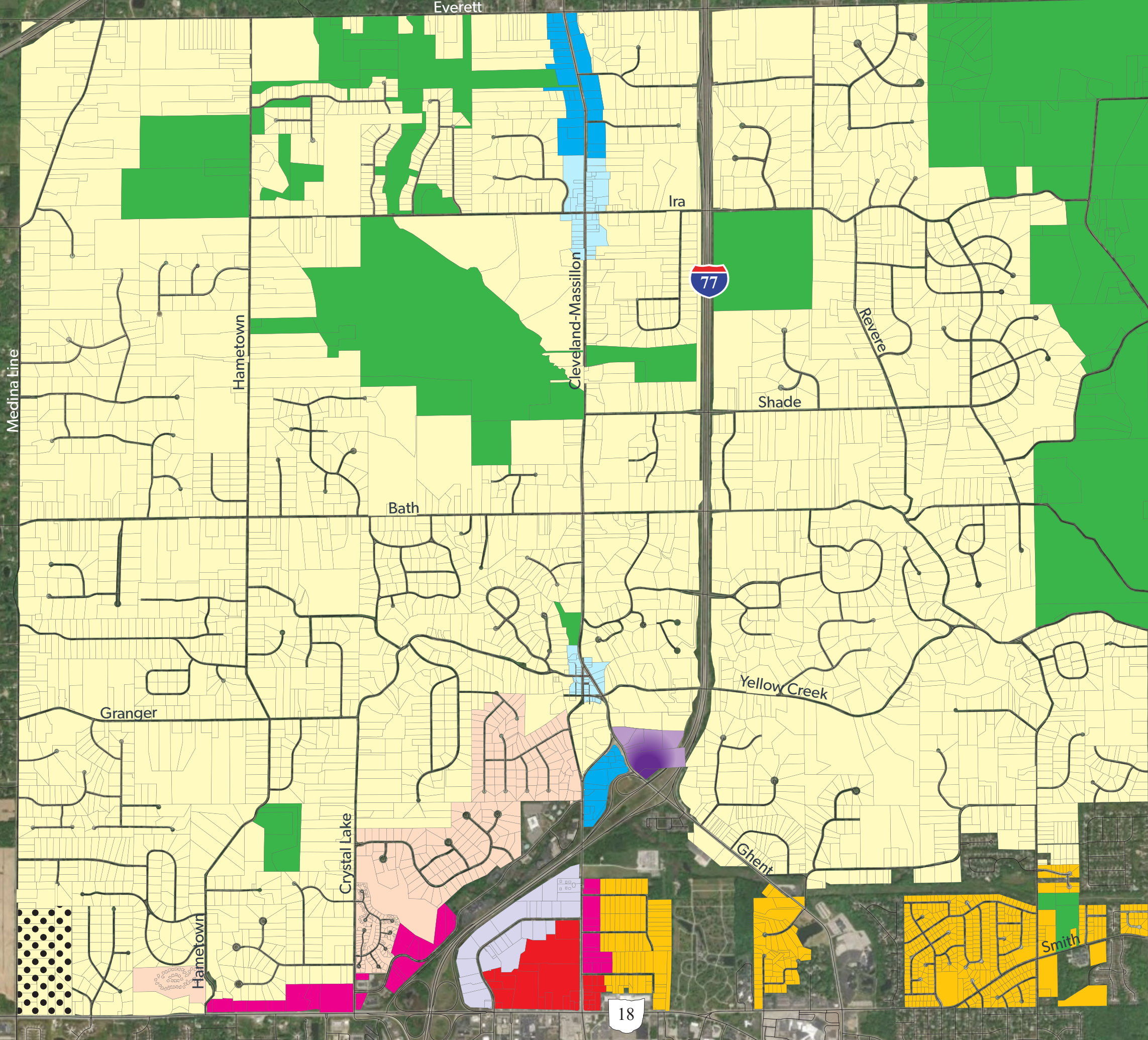
Figure 9: Future Land Use by Area

The 2025 Future Land Use Map is generally similar to the 2011 Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map as the vision and goals of the township generally remain the same. There were, however, four significant adjustments. Each adjustment is detailed below. Each of the first three modifications is part of the focus areas and has additional detail later in this chapter.







# Future Land Use Map

Bath Township






-  Park and Conservation Use
-  Rural Estate Residential Use
-  Suburban Residential Use
-  Traditional Neighborhood Use
-  Route 18 Residential Use
-  General Office
-  General Retail
-  Cleveland-Massillon Mixed-Use
-  Hamlet Mixed-Use
-  Springside Mixed-Use
-  Ghent Interchange Mixed-Use



## 2025 Bath Township Comprehensive Plan Update

District	Intent	Uses
 Park and Conservation Use	The intent of this district is to maintain park and conservation uses that reinforce the rural character of the Township	Uses may include parks, conservation areas, and large lot single family homes (1 unit/5 acres maximum)
 Rural Estate Residential Use	The intent of this district is to promote and maintain large lot residential and agricultural uses that reflect the rural character of the Township	Uses may include agricultural uses, single family detached uses on large lots (1 unit/2.5 acres maximum), and open space residential developments that protect large areas of natural resources
 Suburban Residential Use	The intent of this district is to maintain the limits of moderate density residential development focused around open spaces and waterways with development typically constructed on cul-de-sac roads	Uses may include single family residential homes or parks and recreational uses
 Traditional Neighborhood Use	The intent of this district is to maintain the limits of high density residential development bordering the Cities of Akron and Fairlawn	Uses may include single family residential homes (4 units/acre maximum) or parks and recreational uses
 Route 18 Residential Use	The intent of this district is to encourage the continuation of existing low-density of residential uses but, with appropriate protection standards and township review, allow for increased residential densities	Uses may include single family residential homes (1 unit/2.5 acres maximum), single family attached or detached homes (4 units/acre maximum with 50% of development developed as open space), parks and recreational uses, and public or institutional uses
 General Office Use	The intent of this district is to allow for non-retail oriented businesses that provide significant economic benefit to the Township	Uses may include professional offices, health and medical offices/clinics, research and development facilities, hotels, and financial institutions.

**Table 5: Future Land Use Intent and Uses**

District	Intent	Uses
 General Retail Use	<p>The intent is to maintain the existing limits of the district while providing a regional commercial destination with large-scale retail commercial uses</p>	<p>Uses may include retail commercial uses, office uses, and service uses that cater to both the local and regional market</p>
 Cleveland-Massillon Mixed Use	<p>The intent of this district is to promote a mix of uses at a small scale and to prevent the creation of large-scale uses and to limit the expansion of nonresidential uses into the surrounding residential neighborhoods</p>	<p>Uses may include attached housing units (townhomes or condos), live/work units, small scale retail/office, small scale flex space</p>
 Hamlet Mixed Use	<p>The intent of this district is to maintain and promote the historic nature of these hamlets as a mixture of small scaled commercial, office, and residential uses consistent with the existing development character, intensity, and form</p>	<p>Use may include small scaled residential, commercial, and office uses. These uses can be mixed into a single structure</p>
 Springside Mixed Use	<p>The intent of this district is to provide flexibility for future development along Springside Drive which encourages a mix of office, retail, and denser residential uses</p>	<p>Uses may include office, retail, hotel, and higher density residential uses (luxury condos or attached townhomes)</p>
 Ghent Interchange Mixed Use	<p>The intent of this district is to promote a moderately-scaled mix of uses adjacent to the I-77 interchange. As the district radiates away from the interchange, progressively lower intensity residential only uses are desired. The goal of this district is to limit the expansion of nonresidential uses into the surrounding residential neighborhoods</p>	<p>Uses may include attached or detached housing units (single family, townhomes, condos) or live/work units. Commercial, retail, or office uses may be included only as part of a mixed use development adjacent to the interchange.</p>

**Table 5: Future Land Use Intent and Uses**

1. The first adjustment is along the State Route 18 corridor between Harmony Hills and North Hametown Roads. This area was adjusted from the Route 18 Residential FLU in 2011 to Rural Estate FLU in 2025. In reviewing this area, there is limited potential for future redevelopment due to recent residential site improvements, deed restrictions, and physical impediments including floodplains, wetlands, a cemetery, and steep slopes. Due to the lack of development pressure, this area is best suited for Rural Estate use going forward.
2. The second adjustment is on Springside Drive. This area was adjusted from General Office use in 2011 to Springside Mixed-Use in 2025. The intent of the Springside Mixed-Use District is to provide flexibility for future development along Springside Drive which encourages a mix of office, retail, and denser residential uses. This is a new FLU district that was developed to provide additional alternatives to redevelopment within the aging office park given the recent post-pandemic increase in work from home (WFH) and hybrid employment. This FLU also seeks to accommodate the desire for additional step-in and step-down housing options within Bath Township.
3. The third adjustment is located at the northeastern corner of the I-77 and Ghent Road Interchange. This area was adjusted from Cleveland-Massillon Road Mixed Use in 2011 to Ghent Interchange Mixed Use in 2025. This is another new FLU designation in the 2025 plan. The intent of this district is to allow for the highest and best use of the district directly adjacent to the interchange by allowing for a moderately-scaled mix of commercial retail, office, and/or residential uses. As the district radiates away from the interchange only less intense scaled and residential uses will be allowed. The district will only allow for low-density, single-family residential uses at its northern edge. This is meant to protect the residential area to the north of the interchange from further unwanted commercial and/or dense residential development.
4. The fourth adjustment was to identify areas within the Township that are currently parks or preserves and designate them as such on the FLUM. These areas include the Bath Nature Preserve and the North Fork Preserve of Bath.



## VII. Focus Area Recommendations

As the overarching mission statement for the township's comprehensive planning process is to "Keep Bath Township Rural," a priority of this process was first to determine locations where development has occurred and where it is anticipated to spread in the future. By identifying these areas, the Plan can then develop strategies to control and restrict development to meet the desires of the Comprehensive Planning Committee and the general public.

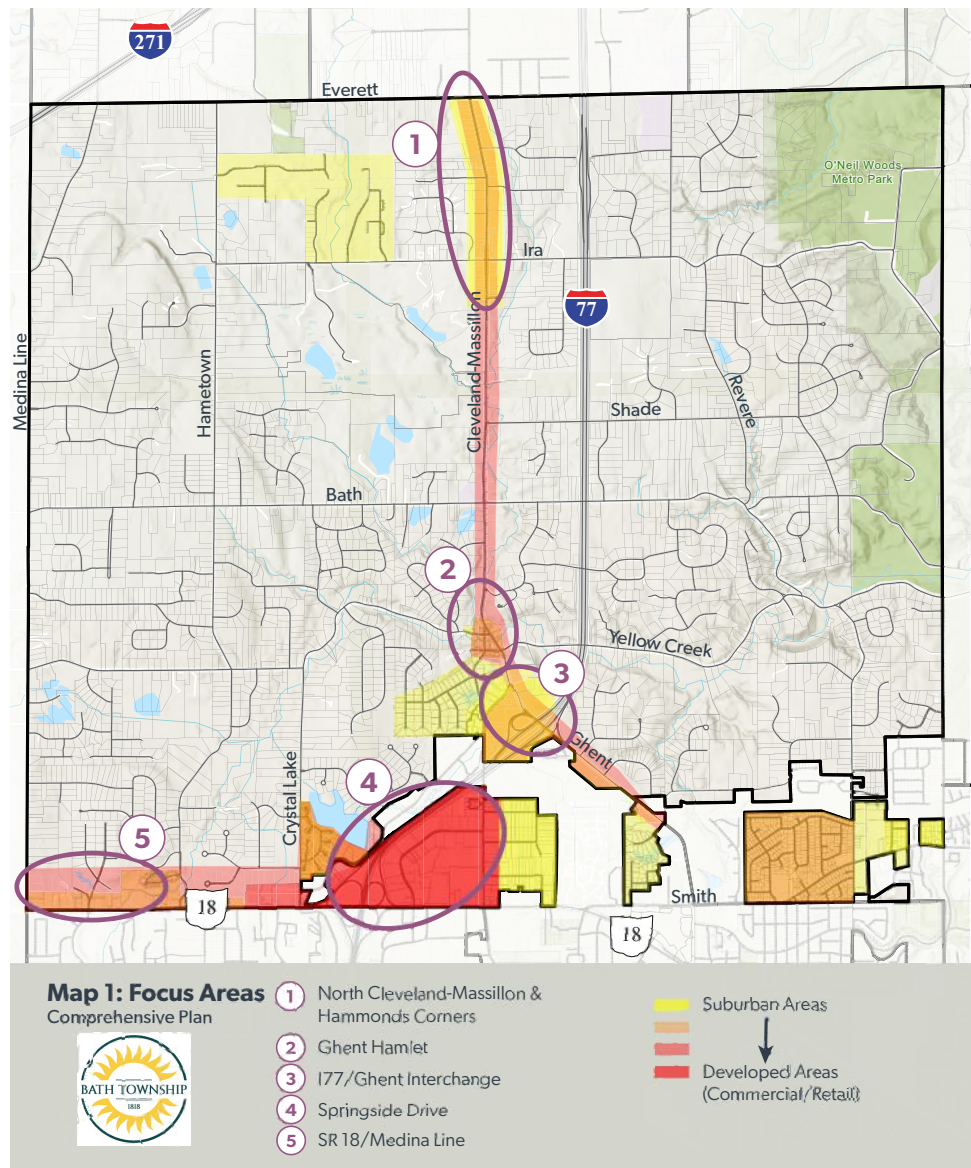
The Comprehensive Planning Committee completed a workshop to identify areas within the township they believed were vulnerable to future development. Mapping from this workshop was consolidated and analyzed by the consultant team to

identify focus areas for the comprehensive planning process. Five unique focus areas were identified all with distinct characteristics and different development characteristics.

The five focus areas are:

1. Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road/Hammond's Corners Hamlet
2. Ghent Hamlet
3. Ghent Interchange
4. Springside Drive
5. Medina Line/SR 18 Road

Detailed recommendations for each of these focus areas are detailed within the chapter along with implementation strategies in Chapter VIII.

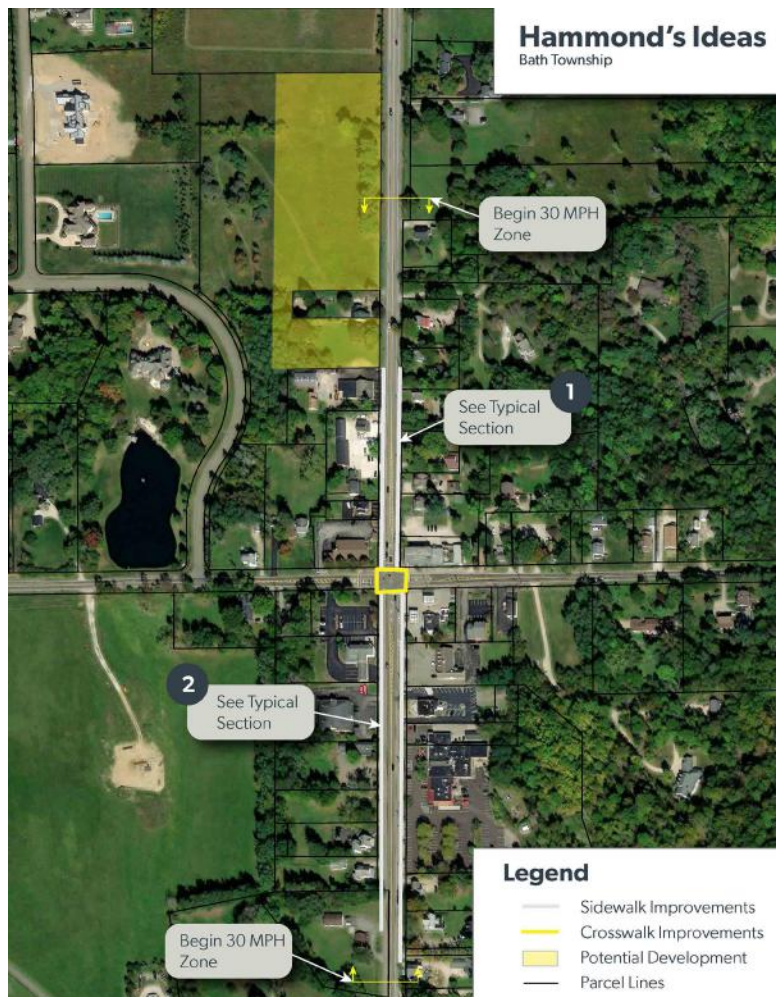


**1. Hammond's Corners/Northern Cleve-Mass Road Focus Area**

The hamlet is one of three unique and historic hamlets in the Township and the goal was to enhance the ability for people to identify the area as a unique place and encourage visitors to stay within the hamlet while shopping or dining. The hamlet has a vibrant mix of restaurants including Ken Stewart's Lodge, Tres Belle and Pint and Pie Works, as well as local retail stores including I of the Needle and the Summit Cigar Company. A major challenge with this hamlet is that many people drive through the area and don't recognize the location as a unique place. Existing speed limits on Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road are high (45 MPH), existing signage is small, and nothing ties the hamlet together. As such, improvement recommendations focused on walkability and placemaking improvements within the Hammond's Corners hamlet.

Improving the walkability of the hamlet has two benefits. The first is that physical sidewalk and crossing improvements encourage patrons of one establishment within the Hamlet to frequent another, increasing the hamlet's activity. The second is that physical pedestrian improvements will change the feel of the Northern Cleveland-Massillon corridor, alerting drivers that they have arrived in a different, distinct place.

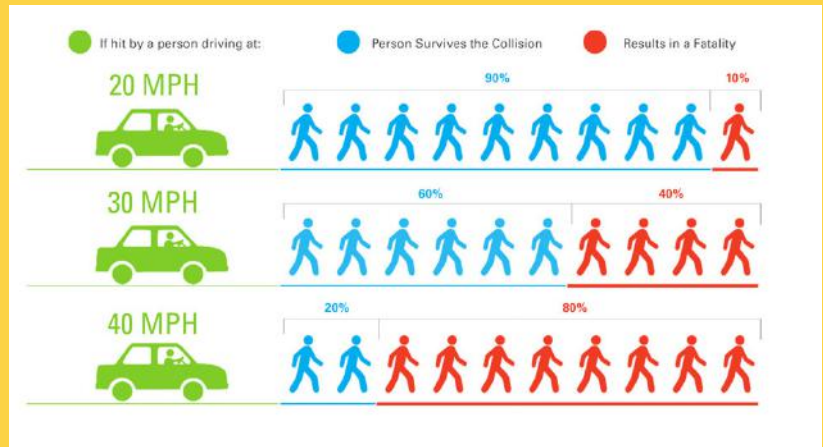
As illustrated in Figures 7 & 8: Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road Typical Sections adding sidewalks within the existing right-of-way footprint can easily be accommodated. The challenge is making the sidewalk facilities safe and inviting for users and cost effective for the township to construct. To accomplish this a series of improvements are recommended. First, the township should work with the Summit County Engineer to investigate lowering the speed limit within Hammond's Corners from 45 MPH to 35 MPH. Lowering speed limits will make walk improvements more inviting and improve safety. The Northern Cleveland-Massillon corridor has wide, paved shoulders that vary in width from six to ten feet. These shoulders could be slightly widened (where needed) and reutilized to accommodate buffered walk facilities. These facilities would provide raised curb medians between the vehicular traveled way and the new walk facilities, similar to the picture illustrated to the right which provides a barrier for bike lanes. These raised shoulder medians could



**Map 9: Hammond's Corners Recommendations**

## The Relationship between Vehicle Speed & Pedestrians

Nationally, speeding is a leading cause of preventable deaths, resulting in nearly one-third of all traffic fatalities each year, or close to 10,000 lives. Speeding not only increases the likelihood of crashes with people on foot, it increases the probability that those crashes will cause injuries that are far more serious. The figure to the right from San Francisco's Zero Vision Campaign illustrates the relationship between vehicle speed and pedestrian fatalities.



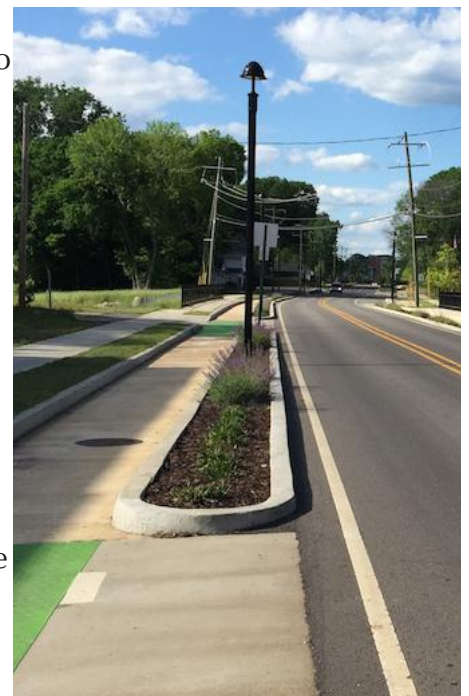
Common practice in traffic engineering calls for speed limits to be set based on how fast drivers tend to navigate on a given section of roadway; a self-fulfilling prophecy when roads are designed for higher speeds. Changing that practice by setting a vision for safer, slower streets allows transportation engineers to find the appropriate design solutions, regardless of prevailing speed. They can design and redesign streets to include features to encourage safer and slower driving. Redesigned streets can also provide people walking within sidewalks with frequent safe opportunities to cross streets and, where possible, greater separation from traffic with landscaped buffers, protected bike lanes, or parked cars. In some cases, this means changing local policy to allow for lower speed limits, especially in residential areas or near parks and schools.

Traditional enforcement of speed limits can be effective in convincing drivers that they will face a penalty for going over the legal speed limit. However, making streets safer requires more than just posting lower speeds or enforcing those speeds; streets and intersections must be designed for those lower speeds. (Smart Growth America, *Dangerous by Design* 2014)

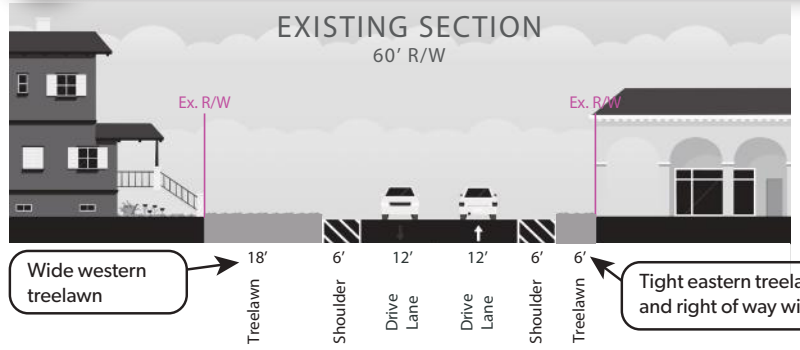
also provide an opportunity for placemaking. The medians could have decorative lighting and plantings further slowing traffic and contributing to the unique sense of place for the hamlet. In addition, the medians would allow for the existing open drainage system (i.e. open ditches) to remain in place. This would make these improvements much more cost effective while still providing safe, walkway facilities that contribute to a sense of place.

Crosswalk improvements are also recommended at the Northern Cleveland-Massillon and Ira Road intersection. Decorative crosswalks, curb ramps, and pedestrian signals are all recommended at this intersection.

Placemaking is also a key component to creating a vibrant hamlet. Entrance signage should be enhanced to ensure residents know they have arrived in a distinct location. Streetscaping elements mentioned earlier, including decorative lighting and plantings, are also recommended. Revisions to the zoning code should also be considered to establish branded signage and wayfinding for business signage within the hamlet.



**1 Cle/Mass Road - Hammond's North**



Remove shoulder and add raised treelawn island (see below), street trees, walk

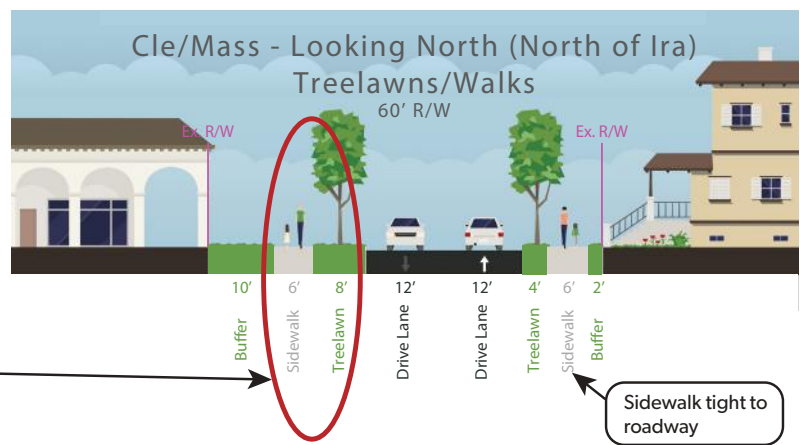
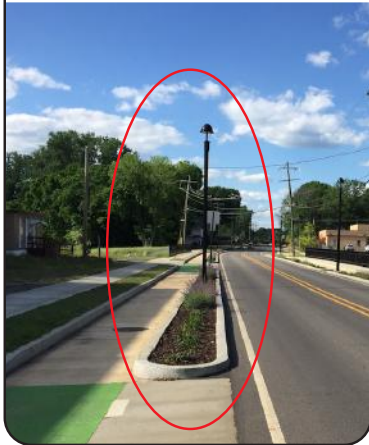
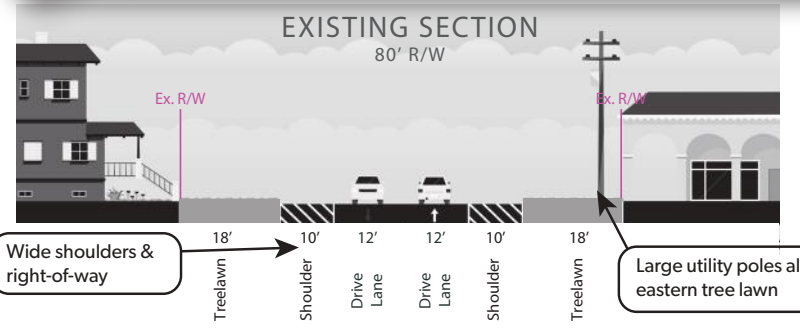


Figure 10: Cleveland-Massillion Road Typical Section (North of Ira)

**2 Cle/Mass Road - Hammond's South**



Remove shoulder and add raised treelawn island (see below), street trees, walk

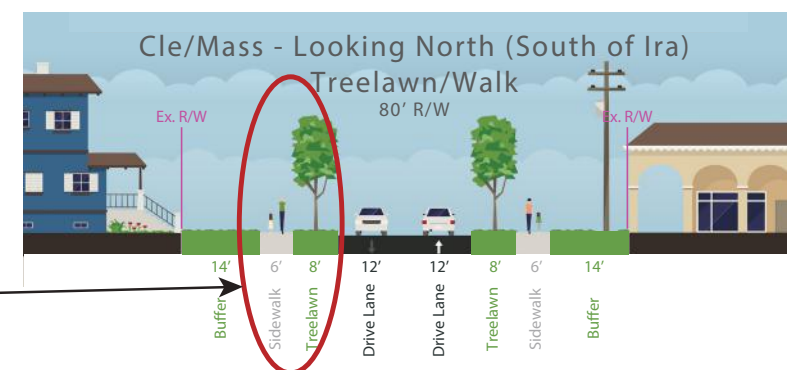
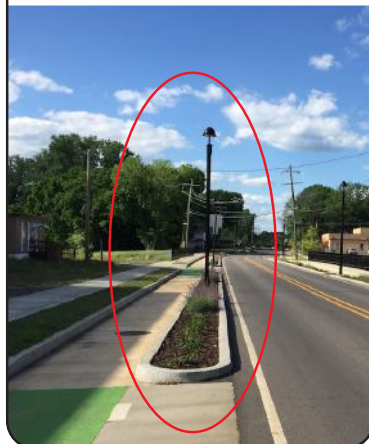


Figure 11: Cleveland-Massillion Road Typical Section (South of Ira)

## Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road

Future land uses along northern Cleveland-Massillon Road are recommended to remain as Cleveland-Massillon Road Mixed-Use as proposed in the 2011 plan. The intent of this area is to promote a mix of small-scale retail, office, flex space, and/or attached housing units and to prevent large-scale uses in the area. This corridor has a handful of greenfield properties that could be developed in the future if water and sewer were extended. The township has no desire to extend water and sewer along Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road at the present time. If development were to occur or if sentiment in the Township changes, economic development tools to leverage infrastructure improvements in the area are detailed within the Implementation Chapter of this Plan.



## 2. Ghent Hamlet Focus Area

The Ghent Hamlet is the larger of the two hamlets and acts as the cultural center of Bath Township. The hamlet has some unique assets including the Yellow Creek and has a variety of small restaurants and shops including Gasoline Alley, the Bake Shop in Ghent and Lanning’s Restaurant. Ghent is a well-defined area due to its geography, being at the bottom of the Yellow Creek valley but lacks cohesion, a central public gathering space, and is difficult to navigate on foot. Similar to Hammond’s Corners, the goal within the Ghent Hamlet is to enhance the ability for people to identify the area as a unique place and encourage visitors to stay within the hamlet while shopping or dining. In addition, the goal was also to create a civic gathering space to further establish Ghent as an activity center in the township.



### Walkability Improvements

Outside of a few crosswalks along Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road, the hamlet currently has no pedestrian facilities. To make this a destination where residents can park their vehicles once and safely experience all the hamlet has to offer, sidewalk improvements were recommended. Walk improvements were proposed along Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road linking the Heritage Corridors of Bath Wayside Exhibit in the north, through the hamlet to Yellow Creek Road. Sidewalks were also proposed along Granger, Wye, and Yellow Creek Roads. Each roadway corridor has wide existing right-of-way widths (60 to 80 feet) and can easily accommodate sidewalk facilities (with treelawns) without the need for private right-of-way acquisition. Improvements to pedestrian crossings at intersections within the hamlet were also recommended. These improvements include additional pedestrian signage, high visibility crosswalk pavement markings, and median refuge islands along Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road. Examples of these improvements are illustrated in Figure 12.



Figure 12: Example Pedestrian Crossing

### Traffic Calming

To further encourage pedestrian activity, a series of traffic calming improvements were recommended. Existing speed limits along Northern Cleveland-Massillon and Granger Roads are 40 MPH. Reducing speed limits to 30 MPH is recommended in concert with other walkability recommendations throughout this plan. The Township will need to work with the Summit County Engineer to reduce speed limits as they own both roadways. Decorative medians are recommended along Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road where turning movements are not needed. Medians

# Ghent Ideas

Bath Township



## Legend

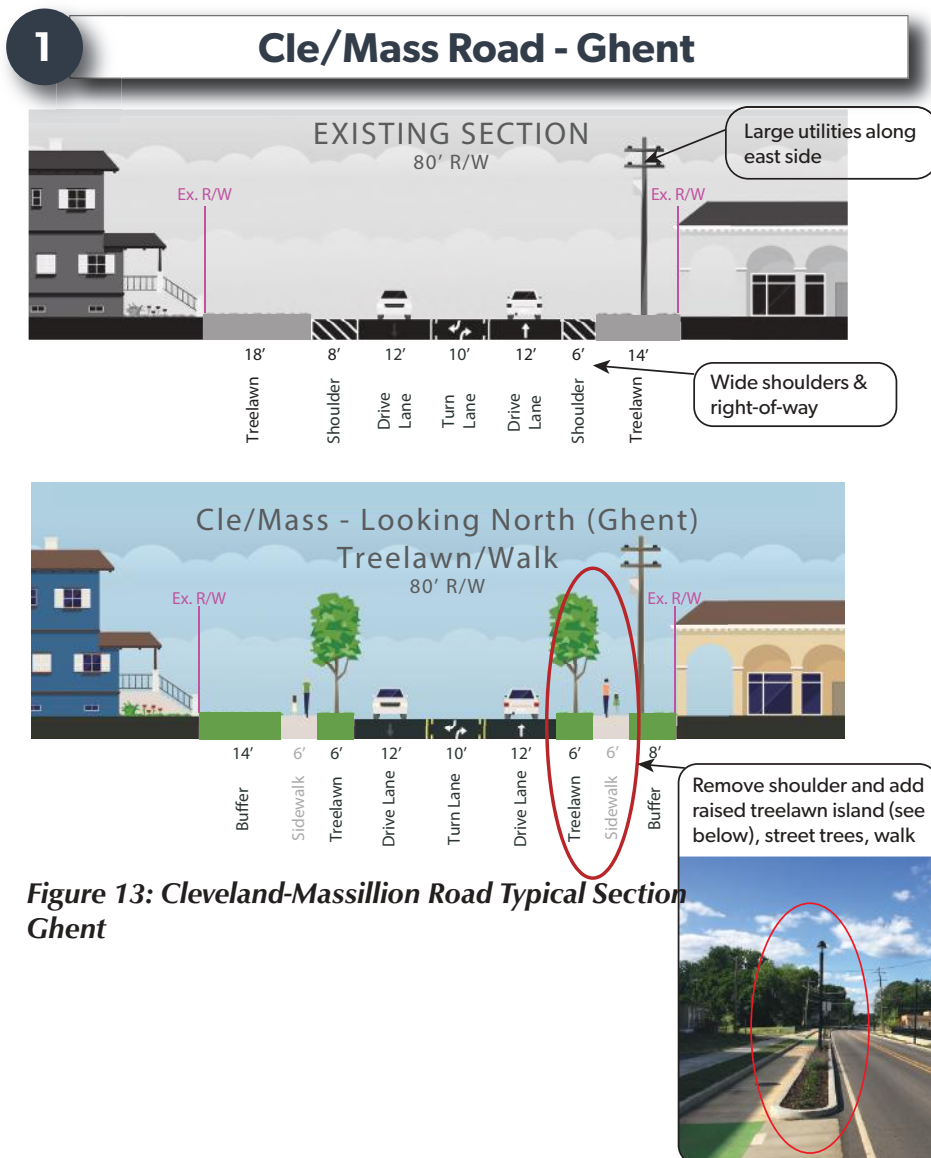
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Crosswalk Improvements
- Potential Public Space
- Parcel Lines
- FEMA Flood Zone

Map 10: Ghent Hamlet Recommendations

can be implemented on the Yellow Creek Bridge and at the northern edge of the hamlet north of Gasoline Alley. The northern median will require restricting driveway access for the northernmost drive at Gasoline Alley to right in, right out only. These medians will act as physical impediments that will slow traffic but also provide an opportunity for streetscaping improvements that can add to the hamlet’s sense of place.

**Placemaking**

In addition to walkability recommendations, placemaking improvements were also proposed. These recommendations include enhancing entrance signage to the hamlet along Cleveland-Massillion Road and adding street trees and decorative lighting where sidewalks are recommended. Similar to Hammond’s Corners, uniform design standards for signage and wayfinding are also proposed within the Ghent Hamlet. Access management (consolidating and defining driveways) standards should also be developed within the hamlet to improve traffic safety and traffic flow.



## Wye Road

Ironically, the hamlet is the center of the Township, but the hamlet itself doesn't have a center, a specific location, where people would typically gather. Throughout this planning process the public expressed a desire to develop a central gathering area within the Township. As the Hamlet was analyzed, centering the hamlet along the Wye Road corridor began to take shape. This corridor has far less traffic than Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road, crosses the Yellow Creek and is lined with small shops. Wye Road is also a Township-owned roadway and improvements would not need approval by another governmental entity, but the existing corridor has some challenges. "Cut through" traffic traveling along Wye Road from Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road makes pedestrian activity along this corridor challenging. Public parking is also limited. To address both of these challenges a series of recommendations were proposed. Creating a pocket park at the northern end of Wye Road is recommended to eliminate cut-through traffic and create an improved connection to the northern edge of the Hamlet. This would allow the township to reallocate space within the existing right-of-way to add public parking. These improvements are illustrated in Map 11: Wye Road Detail. If the intersection was closed, the northwestern turning radius at the Northern Cleveland-Massillon and Granger Road intersection would need to be widened to accommodate bus turning movements.



**Figure 14: Example of Mini Roundabout**



**Figure 15: City of Lima, Riverwalk**

To further signify the corridor as the center of the township and continue to calm traffic, mini roundabouts were recommended at the Granger and Wye and Yellow Creek and Wye intersections. Mini roundabouts are traffic-calming devices that lower speeds at minor intersection crossings and are an ideal treatment for uncontrolled intersections. Mini roundabouts may be installed using simple markings or raised islands, but are best applied in conjunction with plantings that add beauty to the street and the surrounding neighborhood. An example of a mini roundabout along Franklin Avenue in the City of Cleveland is illustrated above. These roundabouts are compact and can be designed to fit within the existing right-of-way along Wye Road. Not only do they calm traffic, they also provide a unique opportunity for placemaking and help define Wye Road as the center of the hamlet.

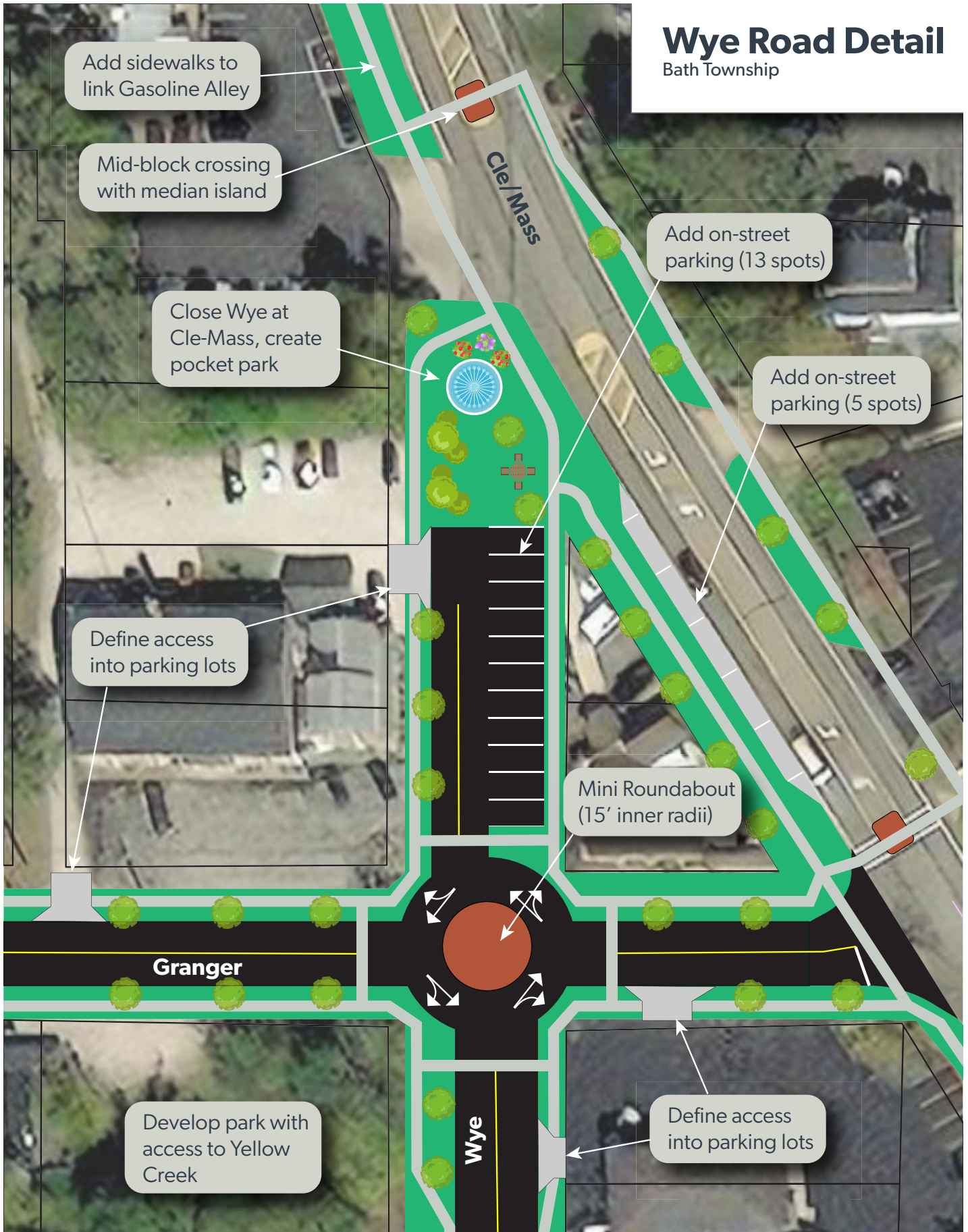
A new township park was recommended along the Yellow Creek at the corner of Wye and Granger Roads. This public space would allow residents to "touch the creek" and provide a central

gathering space for public events. The location is privately owned and would need to be purchased by the township. In addition, a “creekwalk” was proposed along the south side of Yellow Creek from Wye to Cleveland Massillon Roads that would link the new park and Wye Road to the rest of the hamlet. This improvement would help to highlight the hamlet’s biggest asset, the Yellow Creek. An example of a riverwalk from Lima, Ohio is illustrated on the previous page. These improvements would help to improve the Ghent Hamlet and make Wye Road the center of the Township.



# Wye Road Detail

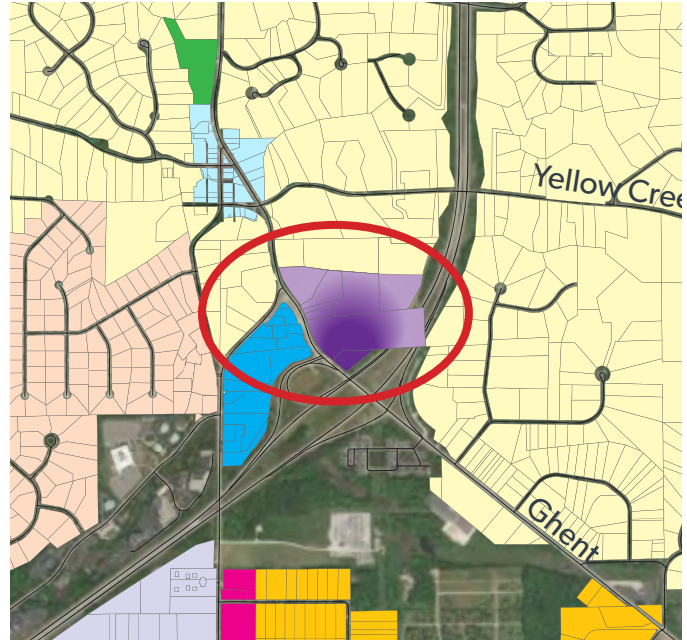
Bath Township



Map 11: Wye Road Detail

### 3. Ghent Interchange Focus Area

The northeastern corner of the I-77 and Ghent Road Interchange presents one of the best opportunities for development within the township. As the township wants to ensure the highest and best use of the property, it also wants to protect residents in the area and the Ghent Hamlet to the north from sprawling commercial development. The consultant team and the Comprehensive Plan Committee investigated multiple ideas to address these goals. Ultimately, what was determined as most appropriate was to develop a mixed-use overlay district that is specific to the needs of the Ghent Interchange area.



Similar to the Medina Line/SR 18 overlay district, the purpose of developing a mixed-use overlay is to provide flexibility in the development of this area while giving the township some authority to review development to ensure that it meets the goals and vision of this plan. The mixed-use overlay around the Ghent Interchange will allow for a mix of commercial retail, office, and/or residential uses directly adjacent to the interchange. As the mixed-use district continues northward along Ghent Road only residential uses will be allowed varying in intensity from townhome-style to single-family-detached homes as the mixed-use district terminates at its northern boundary. The goal is to allow for consistent uses and intensity at the northern edge of this mixed-use district so that adjacent residential uses are similar, thus effectively limiting the expansion of this mixed-use district northward. The district will mimic a “bullseye” as

#### Ghent Road Mixed-Use District Diagram

North



Ghent Road

South



I-77

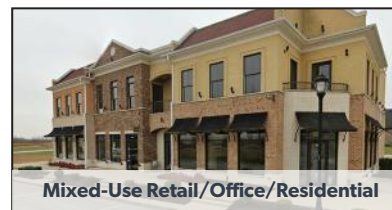
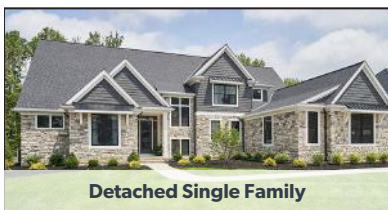
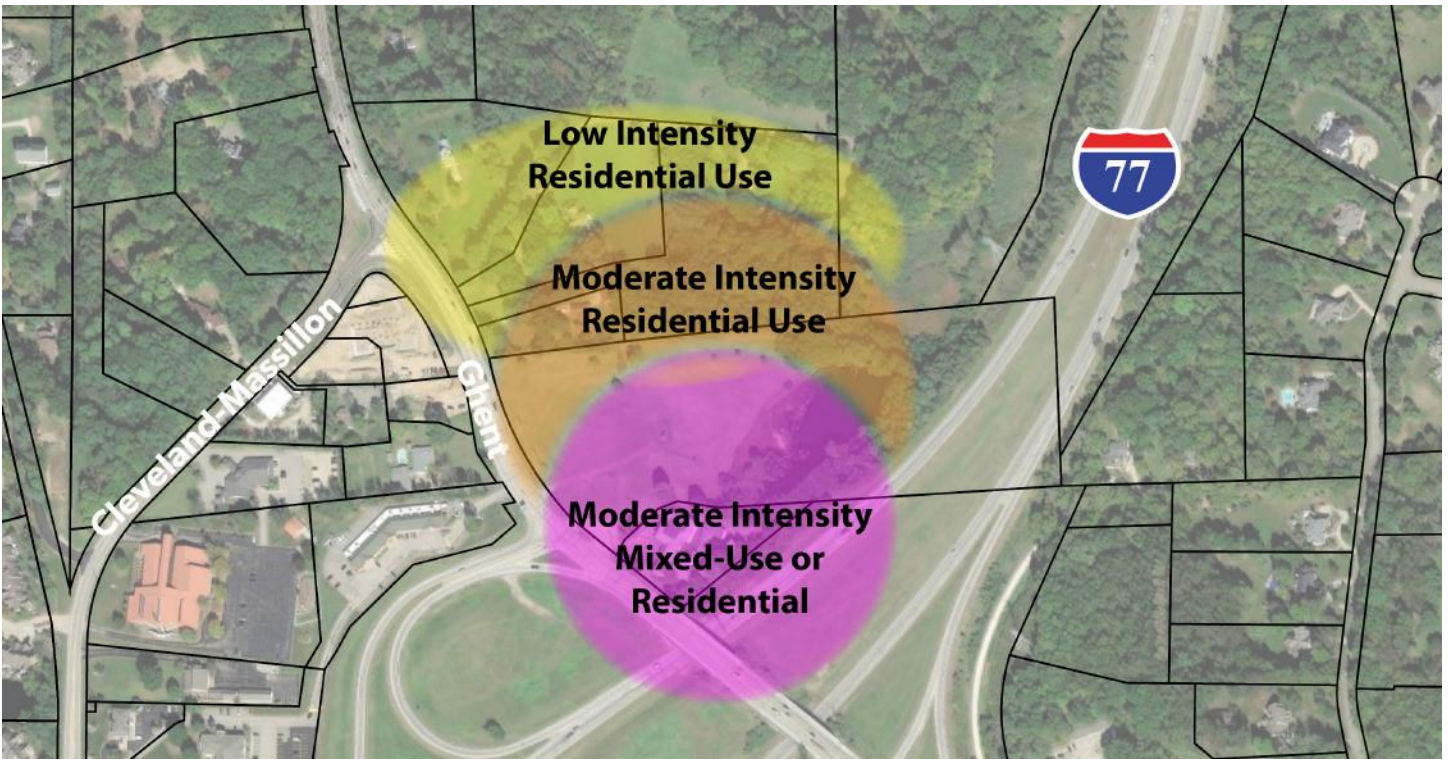


Figure 16: Ghent Road Uses and Intensities Diagram



**Map 12: Ghent Road Interchange Mixed-Use District**

illustrated in Map 12: Ghent Road Interchange Mixed-Use District highlights allowable uses and intensities radiating away from the interchange. The exact limits of development mixes and intensities will be determined by Bath Township as the overlay is developed. Figure 16: Ghent Road Interchange Uses and Intensities Diagram illustrates the types and intensities of uses considered.

Any development within this area should also seek to construct pedestrian connections (sidewalk or trail) to the Ghent Hamlet along Ghent and Northern Cleveland-Massillon Roads.

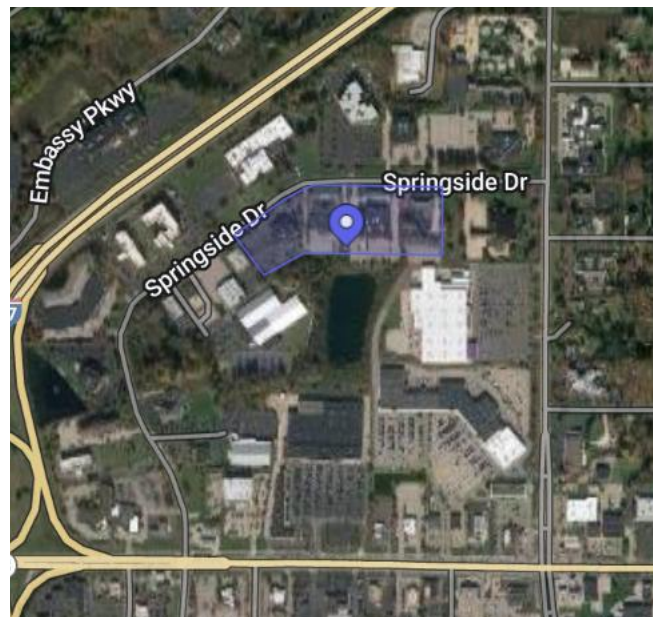
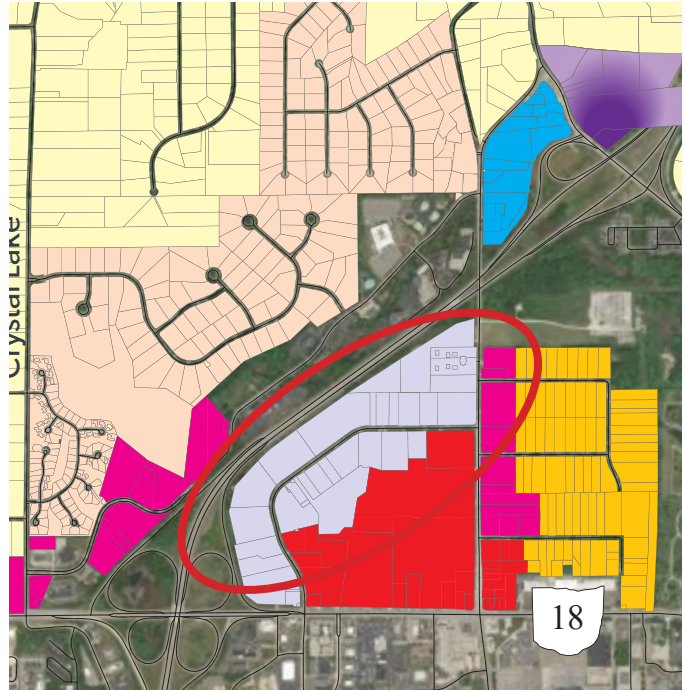
#### 4. Springside Drive Focus Area

Springside Drive is an older office park with convenient access to I-77 and to adjacent retail uses in the Montrose area. The office park has a variety of older, mid-rise office buildings and hotels. Since the COVID-19 Pandemic, suburban office parks have seen a jump in vacancies nationwide due to work from home and/or hybrid work trends. Springside Drive is no exception. The goal of this focus area was to determine the future highest and best use for parcels in this area, looking for case study examples of reuse that may be appropriate in Bath Township.

##### Placer.ai

To gain a better understanding of the existing office and hotel markets within the township, visitation analysis was conducted utilizing Placer.ai data (Location Intelligence & Foot Traffic Data Software – Placer.ai ). Placer.ai uses cell phone data from over 30 million users throughout the United States to monitor real-time travel and spending patterns of visitors. Placer.ai is used by some of the largest retail companies and real estate brokerages including Target, Amazon, and Cushman & Wakefield to determine retail market viability and to assist with site selection.

In terms of the Springside Drive area, the goal of the analysis was to verify the perception that the office park and hotels have seen a shift in visitation due to recent work from home trends. Three office buildings (301, 325, and 345 Springside Drive) with known active tenants and all four hotels were selected for the analysis. Monthly visitation from 2018 and 2019 were compared to monthly visitation levels in 2023. As illustrated in Figure 17: Springside Office Buildings Visitation Comparison 2018, 2019 vs. 2023 visitation levels to these office buildings were down 30% to 40% on average. Consequently, hotel visitation from 2018 and 2019 as compared to 2023 was down as well. The lone exception was Homewood Suites, which is the newest of the hotels in the area. Homewood saw similar visitation numbers on average pre and post-Pandemic. The remaining three hotels saw a dramatic drop in visitation numbers post-Pandemic. This analysis helped to verify perceptions and solidify the need for a plan for future land uses in this area.



Map 13: Springside Drive Placer.ai



Figure 17: Springside Office Buildings Visitation Comparison

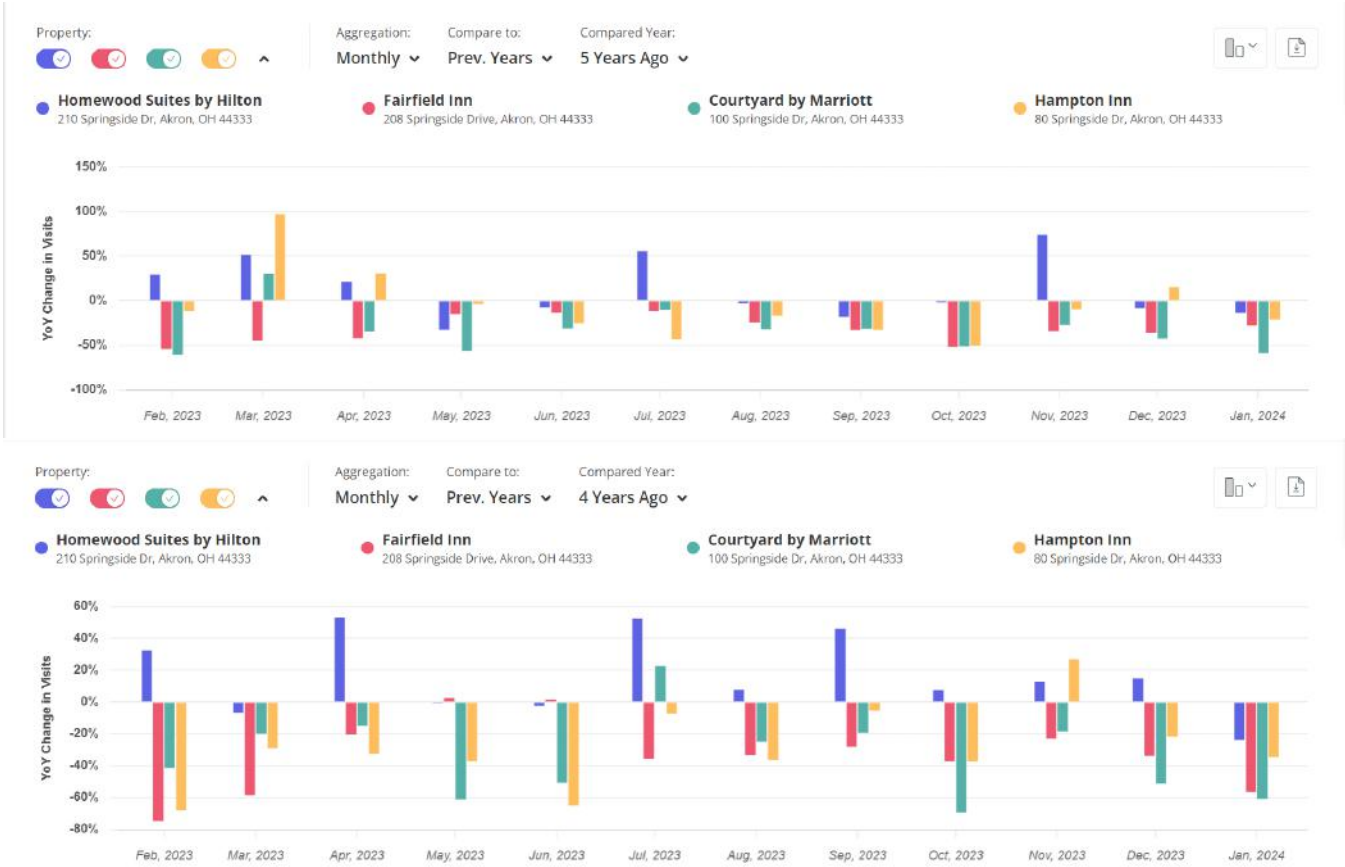


Figure 18: Springside Hotels Visitation Comparison

Springside Drive is an important economic center for the township providing high-quality employment opportunities. The area is part of a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) with the Cities of Akron and Fairlawn and provides both income and property taxes to the township. As such, it is important to understand that future land uses and/or zoning districts that are strictly residential in nature are not permitted within a JEDD district. Both of these factors played a role in future land use recommendations.

Future land use in this area was recommended to become Springside Mixed-Use. The intent of this district is to provide flexibility for future development along Springside Drive which encourages a mix of office, retail, and denser residential uses. The idea of suburban office park redevelopment is relatively new and a growing trend since the COVID-19 Pandemic. A case study example from Springdale, Ohio, called the Row On Merchant is presented below to illustrate the potential for similar mixed-use development along Springside. This land use would provide a new variety of housing options within the township, in an area where density is not a concern, while also bringing vibrancy to the area. This future land use is in line with feedback heard from the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the public that additional “step in” and “step down” housing options are needed within the township. These denser, more cost-effective living solutions provide opportunities for both younger and older adults. For younger adults it provides a cost-effective opportunity to live in the township and start a family. While for older adults it provides the opportunity to stay within the township when maintaining a large property is no longer an option. Redevelopment within this district would have to maintain a certain percentage of office and/or retail space.

### Case Study: Row on Merchant, Springdale, Ohio <https://rowonmerchant.com/>

The \$40 million project at 134 and 144 Merchant Street includes the conversion of 180,000 square feet of vacant office space into apartments and is the first project of this kind in the Cincinnati market. The project includes the conversion of each office building into 66 apartments and the construction of 97 rental townhomes in the parking lots surrounding the two office buildings. The apartments will have large floor plans, many with in-unit work-at-home or den spaces. Amenities in the apartments will include granite counters, stainless steel appliances, fitness facilities, a clubroom, and outdoor grilling and gathering areas. The buildings will include under-building parking spaces. There also are plans for a rooftop amenity area for residents to enjoy.



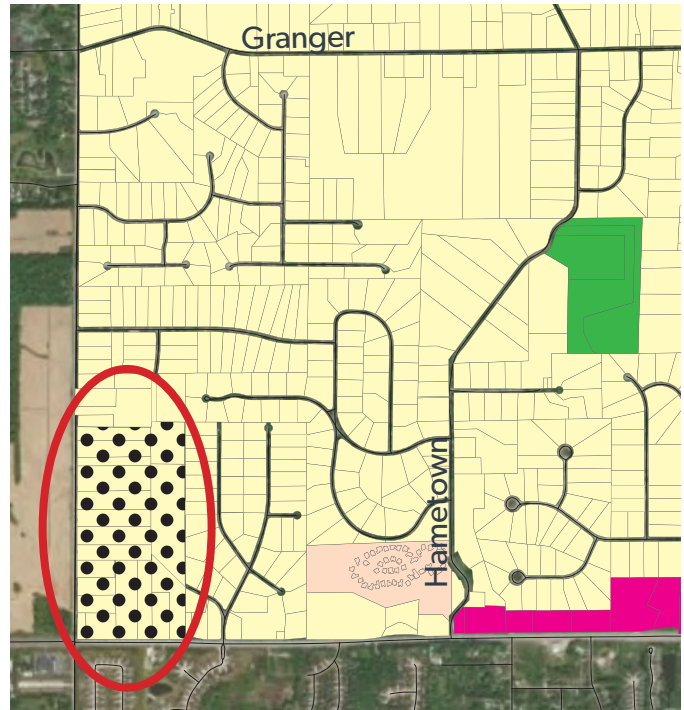
In addition to future land use recommendations, connectivity recommendations were also proposed to build off-sidewalk improvements planned along Springside and Cleveland Massillon Roads. Connectivity improvements look to link walking trails to retail establishments along SR 18, providing future residents with direct access to goods and services. The recommendations also call for a central park to provide some amenities for future residents. Unlocking connections to the adjacent retail areas is paramount to provide quality of life amenities for future residents in this area.



**Map 14: Springside Drive Connectivity Improvements**

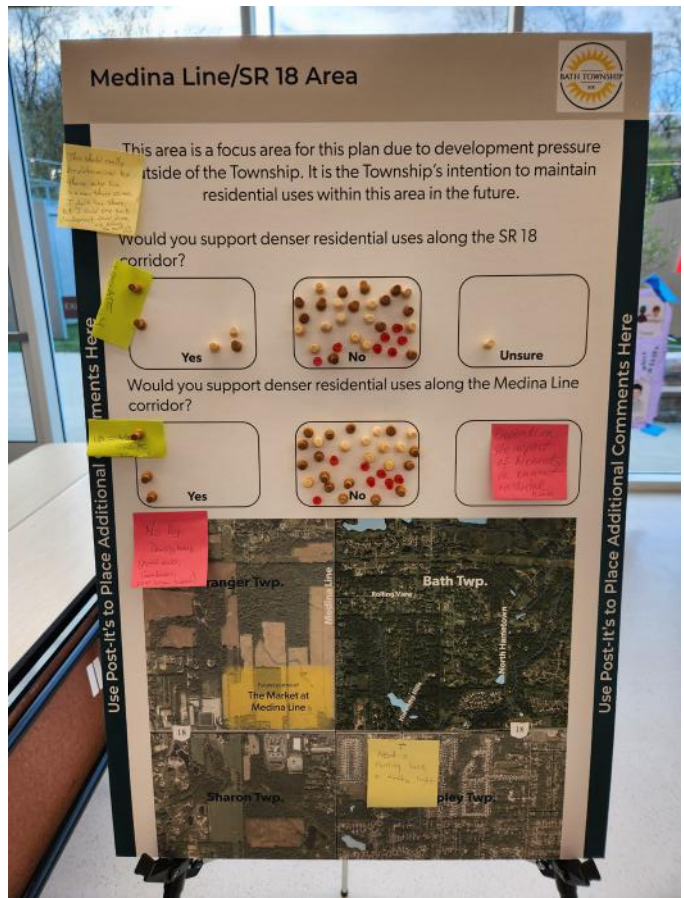
5. Medina Line/SR 18 Focus Area

The Medina Line and SR 18 area has been a focus area of the township since the 2011 plan. The vision of future land uses in this area has been to maintain the existing rural residential uses and not allow for the expansion of nonresidential uses. In the years since the 2011 plan, expansive residential and commercial development has arrived at the township’s doorstep. Figure 19: SR18 & Medina Line Road 2011 vs. 2024 illustrates the drastic development impacts within adjacent townships. During this planning process, it was clearly established that the township continues to envision this as a residential area with no expansion of any nonresidential uses west of Hametown Road. There was also clearly a vision to encourage the continuation of existing low-density residential uses but, with appropriate protection standards and township review, allow for increased residential densities. This goal can best be achieved through a residential overlay district.



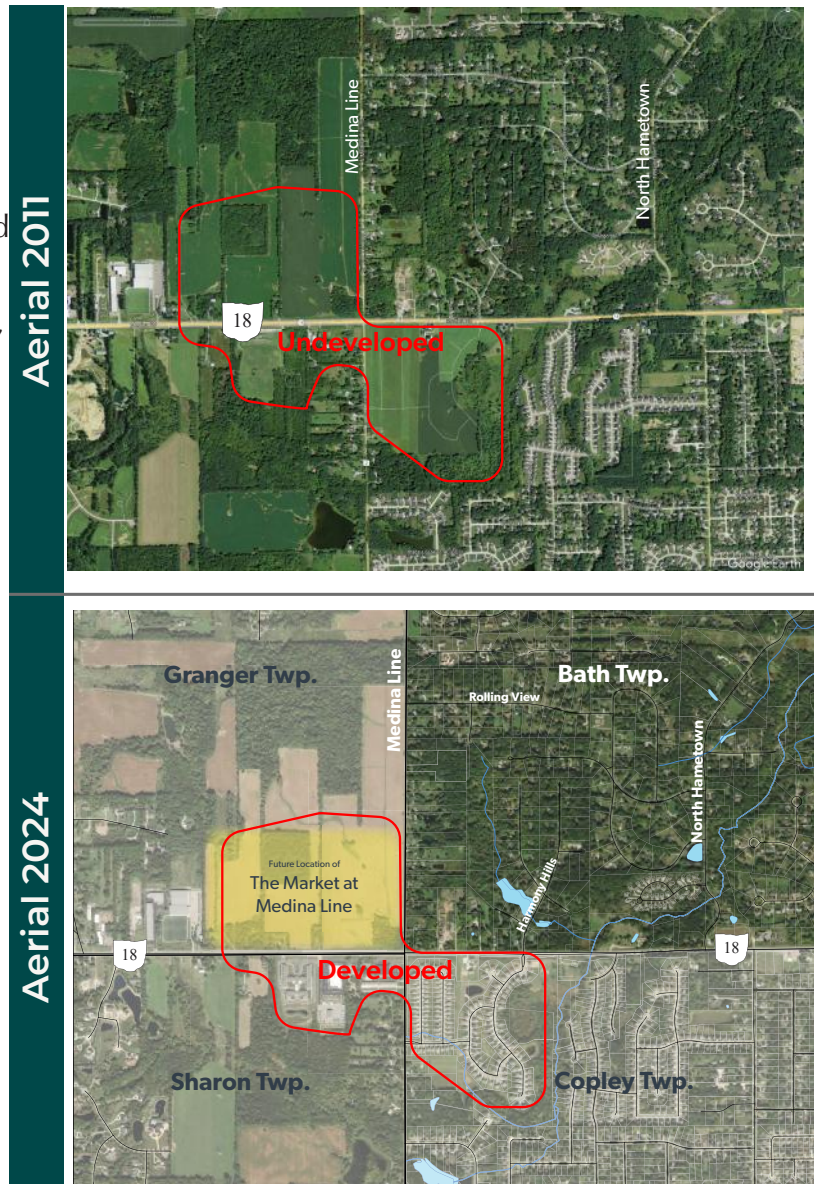
The residential overlay district will allow for detached or attached single-family residential uses with the enhanced protection standards and township review desired for increased development densities in this area. Under the residential overlay district, the detached or attached residential uses could develop with a maximum density of four units per acre and a minimum of 50% open space that needs to encompass all natural resources identified in this plan. The purpose of utilizing a residential overlay district is to provide flexibility in the development of this area while giving the township some authority to review development to ensure that it meets the goals and vision of this plan. The township should develop the residential overlay district to address the following issues, at a minimum:

- Open space standards (e.g., what uses and activities the township will count as open



space and what activities and uses, such as stormwater management facilities, that the township will not count as open space);

- The minimum standards for natural and environmental resource protection including what resources must be protected and how they shall be protected;
- Access management standards for vehicles, with a preference for avoiding access from SR 18 through the development of access along Medina Line Road. Where access from SR 18 is necessary, the township should mandate the consolidation of access (e.g., driveways) so that multiple uses are accessed from a single driveway or curb cut, minimizing traffic conflicts and congestion with any new development;
- Housing type or housing mix standards (e.g., the minimum percentage of single-family detached or the minimum percentage of attached housing units) which may vary based on the amount of open space (e.g., more open space required for the development of attached housing units);
- Buffering requirements to protect the views of the main corridors and views from adjacent development; and
- Architectural standards for the development of all uses.



**Figure 19: Medina Line/SR 18 2011 vs. 2024 Development Comparison**

## VIII. IMPLEMENTATION

It is important to understand that the Comprehensive Plan is only a starting point in the identification of various recommendations, improvements and initiatives that will each undergo their own respective project development processes.

While each project is unique, most, if not all will require additional study and refinement. Most importantly, as feasible projects are confirmed and advanced, the public will be re-engaged in the iterative process of determining a final course of action. For capital improvements, this means input on proposed details such as project limits, accessibility, and design features. For a zoning amendment, this would include an opportunity to share feedback on proposed regulations relative to permitted/conditional uses, district boundaries, and density.

As the township moves forward in implementing the vision, projects will be developed based on current priorities and financial considerations. Ultimately, the Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guiding document that the Administration and Trustees can reference and leverage as they continue to maintain and enhance Bath Township as one of the premier communities in Summit County.



### Prioritize Investments

The Administration and the Trustees should meet after the adoption of the Plan to review the implementation matrix and reprioritize near-term and longer-term projects based on current financial considerations, funding opportunities, market demand, and partner interest, if necessary.



### Leverage

The Township should create a committee to implement the plan which meets quarterly to discuss Plan Implementation and capitalize on the latest opportunities to advance strategic initiatives and leverage public-private investment. This committee should include administration, zoning commission, trustee, and public members.



### Monitor & Recalibrate

The Trustees should conduct biannual reviews of progress made towards implementing the Plan. The following questions should frame this discussion:

- Did we achieve the goals we set out to accomplish?
- What were the challenges?
- Should improvements be made and how?

Based on the biannual reviews, reprioritization of projects and adjustments to implementation strategies may be necessary.

## Hamlet Specific Implementation

Both hamlets have a series of capital and policy recommendations that will require a detailed strategy to begin implementing. It should be noted that the Comprehensive Plan is visionary in nature. While the township should strive to achieve all of these recommendations over the course of this plan (10 to 15 years) the reality is that some will not be implemented. Allocating funding for these improvements will be a major challenge and require multiple outside sources. The township should not look to solely fund all of these recommendations. A combination of grant funding, private/public partnerships, stakeholder partnerships, economic development tools, and township funding will be necessary. While the Implementation Matrix detailed later in this chapter will help the township prioritize which recommendations to pursue first, this discussion will provide the township with a strategy to fund plan priorities. A suggested Strategic Action Plan is also provided at the end of this chapter that provides the township with initial implementation priorities based on discussions that have come from this planning process.

## Grant Funding

The township should strategically pursue grant funding to implement capital improvements. Rather than provide an exhaustive listing of all grant sources, this plan seeks to detail some of the most applicable funding sources to pursue.

### Sidewalks, Streetscaping, and Traffic Calming

**ODNR Recreational Trails Funding** - This is an annual funding source offered by ODNR that requires a 20% local match. These funds are ideal for smaller (shorter) off-road trail projects that link to community assets. These funds can be used for trail upgrades but have a maximum funding award of \$150k. These funds would be ideal for the proposed creekwalk along the Yellow Creek.

**ODOT Systematic and Abbreviated Pedestrian Safety Funding** - These funding sources through ODOT provide up to \$2M and \$500k respectively to address known pedestrian safety issues with proven pedestrian safety improvements. Each source requires a 10% local match. There has to be a documented pedestrian safety issue in the area and a high demand for pedestrian traffic. Abbreviated funds are meant for “quick fix” pedestrian improvements that require no private right-of-way and can be constructed within two years of award. Both funding sources should be considered to leverage improvements along Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road specifically for improvements to the pedestrian crossing and medians (abbreviated funding).

**State of Ohio Capital Budget Bill** - The State of Ohio’s biennial Capital Budget, enacted in each even-numbered year, provides appropriations for the repair, reconstruction, and construction of capital assets of state agencies, colleges, universities and school districts. Communities pursue State Capital Budget Bill funds for walkways and parks and recreation improvements. If the township pursues this funding for hamlet improvements, the focus should be on upgrading sidewalk and streetscaping improvements that are difficult to fund with other funding sources.

**ODOT Pedestrian & Bicycle Special Solicitation** - The Ohio Department of Transportation is hosting a special solicitation for projects that make walking and biking a safe, convenient, and accessible transportation option for all Ohioans. A variety of pedestrian and bicycle-related projects are eligible for this special solicitation, including:

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- Plans and Studies - the development of pedestrian and/or bicycle-related plans or studies at the state, regional, local, or corridor level.
- Data Collection - the collection of data related to walking and biking.
- Education and Promotion - activities that educate on bicycle and walking matters and those that promote walking, biking, and transit as a transportation option.
- Short-Term Infrastructure Projects - engineering, design, and/or construction of pedestrian and bicycle projects that can begin construction by June 30, 2026.
- Traditional Infrastructure Projects - engineering, design, and/or construction of standalone pedestrian and bicycle projects of statewide significance

These funds are limited and will be available until they are allocated. The township should seek to apply for sidewalk or traffic calming improvements within the Ghent Hamlet.

**AMATS Formula Funding** - There are a handful of formula funding programs that are offered through AMATS (Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Carbon Reduction) that seek to allocate funding in future years within the region for bike and pedestrian improvements. AMATS accepts project applications on a biannual (every two years) basis for these funding sources. Funding requests for these sources typically far exceed the amount of money available in future years. Even once a project is programmed to one of these sources, it will be multiple years until construction funding is available. These are still viable funding sources for the township to consider and pursue, particularly on projects that require time to allocate local match funding or are reliant on another phase to be constructed.

### Greenspace Acquisition

**ODNR NatureWorks Grant** – The NatureWorks grant program provides up to 75% reimbursement assistance for local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas. Grant dollars are distributed by county and local jurisdictions within each county competing for funding. Annual funding within Summit County ranges from \$50k to \$75k annually. This funding source is ideal to supplement property acquisition costs for the Township Park in Ghent.

**OPWC Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program** - The Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program is dedicated to environmental conservation through the acquisition of green space as well as the protection and enhancement of river and stream corridors. This competitive grant program assists local communities as well as environmental and watershed-related nonprofit organizations with funding for the preservation of open spaces, sensitive ecological areas, and riparian corridors.

**ODNR Land & Water Conservation Funding** - This is a biannual (every two years) funding source offered through ODNR that requires a 50% local match. While this grant can fund a variety of park improvements, it can also fund recreational trails and support facilities, including trail bridges, trailheads and restrooms. These funds can be also used for land acquisition and have a maximum funding award of \$500k.

## Partnerships

The Township should seek to partner with governmental entities including AMATS, and the County Engineer, advocacy groups, and private businesses to share in the cost and maintenance of proposed infrastructure improvements. Other tools that should be explored within the Ghent Hamlet to assist with infrastructure improvements and/or maintaining streetscaping and placemaking improvements are a Special Improvement District (SID) and a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC).

### Special Improvement District (SID)

A SID is an economic development tool that allows private property owners in a self-defined area to establish a program for services or improvements aimed at the economic enhancement of the area. The area can be any size, as long as it is contiguous.

The SID enables a community, neighborhood, or business district to tax itself for specific improvements and services. Property owners can pay for the program with assessments on all properties in the given area.

SIDs are governed by private, nonprofit corporations created by private property owners. The board that runs the corporation is made up of the property owners as well.

**Benefits** - Since their inception, many studies have been conducted on SIDs, by both nonprofit and academic organizations. These studies show that SIDs increase tourism, increase the quality of life for residents, reduce crime, and raise property values within their designated areas.

SIDs create sustainable funding streams for the community and allow property owners to dictate how funding is spent on a yearly basis. SIDs improve cleanliness and safety and allow organizations to be nimble and put resources to work where they are needed most. With no additional financial burden to local governments, SIDs can capture the energy of motivated property owners wanting to improve their community and can provide at-large benefits to everyone involved in the community.

**How to Create a SID** - To create a SID, private property owners must make a petition to their Township Trustees who will in turn, create the SID.

To pass in Ohio, the petition must include signatures from owners that represent at least 60% of the front footage along all public streets of the given district, OR owners representing 75% of the land area. After meeting this criterion, the petition must be approved by the Township Trustees.

At that point, all eligible property owners will be assessed and provided improvement services. The only exemptions from SID assessments are government-owned properties and churches. These properties can, however, contribute voluntarily.

**Services** - The property owners that make up the board of trustees are in complete control of decisions made about the SID. They guide the implementation of a plan for public services and improvements that benefit the SID, which is typically submitted with the petition to create the SID. The plan may describe how the SID will hire employees and professional services, contract for insurance, and purchase or lease office space and office equipment.

The improvements and public services described in the plan may range from lighting, signage, and parking lots, to capital improvements, landscaping, and snow removal. Other potential services include communication with local police, graffiti removal, homeless outreach case workers, litter removal, safety vigilance, special duty police, sidewalk sweeping, and visitor ambassadors.

### **Community Improvement Corporations (CIC)**

Community Improvement Corporations (CICs) are non-profit organizations designed to assist in the revitalization, economic development, and overall improvement of local communities. These corporations are typically formed to manage projects such as the redevelopment of blighted areas, supporting business development, improving infrastructure, or addressing housing needs. CICs can work alongside local governments, businesses, and residents to create tailored solutions for community issues, focusing on long-term sustainability. The State of Ohio provides legal frameworks under the Ohio Revised Code, which allows municipalities, counties, or townships to establish and manage CICs, facilitating public-private partnerships that drive growth and improvement within a region.

Establishing a Community Improvement Corporation involves several steps. First, a group of interested stakeholders, including local government officials, business leaders, and residents, must come together to form a planning committee. This group will typically draft articles of incorporation and bylaws, specifying the corporation's mission, goals, governance structure, and the type of community development work it will focus on. Following this, the CIC must be registered with the Ohio Secretary of State. Importantly, the CIC's board of directors must be composed of a mix of community representatives, ensuring that the organization remains accountable and responsive to local needs. Once established, CICs may receive funding from various sources, including grants, donations, and loans, and they can also leverage tax incentives and state programs aimed at supporting community development.

The benefits of Community Improvement Corporations are significant for both communities and local governments. CICs allow for the efficient pooling of resources to address issues that affect a community's growth and prosperity. By facilitating redevelopment and providing a framework for managing local development projects, CICs can attract private investment, improve property values, and create jobs. They also enable local leaders to take proactive steps in shaping the future of their communities, rather than relying solely on state or federal programs. For residents, CICs can offer improved public services and better quality of life through enhancements to infrastructure and public spaces. For example, in Bath Township a CIC could offer matching façade grants to businesses in the Ghent Hamlet and Hammond's Corners. It could also provide low interest or forgivable loans to promote start-up or expanding businesses within the township.

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

Within both of the hamlets, the township has a unique opportunity to leverage potential future development to improve hamlet infrastructure. The creation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District could help fund sidewalk, streetscape, and/or traffic calming improvements as proposed. A successful TIF District ensures that the District encompasses properties where by future development, property values will increase. That increase in property value can be used to fund the aforementioned infrastructure improvements. Below is a short summary of key elements of a TIF District.

### Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (“TIF”) is an economic development tool that enables local governments, including municipalities, townships and counties to finance public infrastructure improvements and, in select circumstances, privately owned economic development projects and residential projects.

### Size and Boundary

An Incentive District may span multiple parcels and comprise an area no larger than 300 contiguous acres.

### Characteristics of Economic Distress

O.R.C. 5709.40(A)(5) requires that Incentive District TIFs demonstrate one or more of the following seven characteristics of economic distress:

- More than half of the residents’ incomes in the district are less than 80% of the median income of the residents in the political subdivision where the TIF district is located ;
- The average unemployment rate over the last year for the district is equal to 150% of the average rate of unemployment for Ohio over the same year;
- More than a quarter of the population living in the district has an income below the federal poverty line;
- The district is blighted;
- The district is located in a substantially distressed area;
- A certified engineer certifies that the public infrastructure in the district is inadequate to meet the potential development needs of the district; or
- The district consists of entirely unimproved land.

### How it Works?

TIF captures the increase in property value of real property. As shown below, an existing assessed value is established prior to the TIF’s enactment. This sets the taxable value of the property for the life of the TIF. In addition, extensive economic analysis is completed to establish projected future property values based on proposed public improvements within the district. These projections are the basis for the economic development plan that must be completed to justify a TIF. As improvements are made to the public infrastructure in the district and/or development occurs, property values should increase. That projected increase in property



value is used to fund the aforementioned public improvements throughout the district.

TIF is not a tax increase! The additional assessed values of the properties within the TIF district are paid by the property owner as payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs).

### **Taxes and TIFs**

Local legislative authorities may exempt up to 75% of the value of improvements to real property from taxation for up to ten years without local school board approval.

In general, any government desiring to exempt more than 75% of the value of the improvements from real property taxation or seeking a TIF term greater than 10 years must receive prior approval from the local board of education and statutorily required additional government entities. With those approvals, a political jurisdiction may exempt up to 100% of the improvements for up to 30 years. The jurisdiction that authorizes the tax incentive must specify the rate (100% maximum) and the length (30-year maximum term) of the property tax exemption.

### **What Qualifies as a Public Improvement?**

Any of the following improvements are eligible for TIF funding.

- Traditional Public Infrastructure Projects: roads, bridges, sidewalk, trail, streetscaping, water & sewer improvements
- Redevelopment Projects: land acquisition & environmental remediation
- New Development: gas, electric & communication facilities

Above all, the improvement must generally benefit the TIF district.

While a TIF District can be a useful tool, the township will have to complete an economic development plan to ensure the anticipated revenue from the TIF District is meaningful. Successful TIF implementation relies heavily on timing and creating the district ahead of property value increases. Depending on the length and percentage of property value needed for the TIF District, the township will need to partner with the Revere Local School District or the Copley Local School District depending on the location of the TIF.

### **Joint Economic Development District (JEDD)**

A JEDD is a special-purpose territorial district created by contract between municipal corporations and townships for the purpose of encouraging economic development, creating jobs, and improving the economic welfare of citizens. Typically, such objectives are accomplished by levying an income tax in the district. The tax revenue is shared by the parties to the JEDD and is used to provide additional services, new facilities or enhanced infrastructure in the JEDD, depending on the terms of the contract.

A JEDD agreement enables townships, cities, and villages to cooperatively address concerns associated with economic development, diminishing local revenues, growth, and annexation pressures. A JEDD provides a community-driven approach to solving economic development issues by allowing local governments to enter into legal agreements that have the potential to increase revenues and create jobs.

As mentioned previously within this plan, if a scenario arises in the future where utility expansion along Cleveland-Massillion Road is imminent, the creation of a JEDD should be considered. The development of a JEDD could provide funding for infrastructure improvements and would remove the threat of annexation. A summary of JEDD benefits is detailed on the following page. It should be noted that the Township has no interest in having water or sewer service extended along Cleveland-Massillion Road at this time.

### **Levy to Conserve Rural Properties**

As maintaining the rural character of the Township is paramount, the Township could consider enacting a property tax levy to raise funds to conserve properties at risk of development within the Township. Per Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 5705.19 the Township has the power to propose a levy for the purpose of furthering conservation. The levy would have to be voted on and passed by the general public but is a tool that would enact the Township's vision.

## Implementation Matrix

The implementation matrix detailed on the following pages is meant to aid the township in prioritizing objectives from this Comprehensive Plan. The matrix is designed to be a living document that the Trustees and staff use to re-evaluate objectives on a biannual basis. The matrix includes information on preliminary costs, potential funding sources, an estimated length of time needed to complete project, and details on next steps. The length of time needed to complete each project begins when the project is undertaken by the Township. Some projects may not be undertaken immediately after the Plan's adoption. Priority rankings are based on a scale of 1 through 5, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being the lowest.

1

Highest Priority  
Objectives



5

Lowest Priority  
Objectives



## Implementation Matrix for Focus Area Recommendations

Recommendation	Priority	Cost/Effort	Funding Source	Length of Project	Next Steps
<b><i>Hammond's Corners/Northern Cle/Mass Road</i></b>					
Install sidewalk with raised shoulder medians (west side of Cle/Mass)	---	\$\$\$	AMATS TA, CMAQ, CR Funding, ODOT Bicycle & Ped Solicitation, State Capital Budget	1 to 2 years	Develop preliminary plans, pursue grant funding
Install sidewalk with raised shoulder medians (east side of Cle/Mass)".	---	\$\$\$	AMATS TA, CMAQ, CR Funding, ODOT Bicycle & Ped Solicitation, State Capital Budget	1 to 2 years	Develop preliminary plans, pursue grant funding
Construct streetscaping improvements (Decorative street lighting, plantings, signage)	---	\$	AMATS TA Funding, SID, Township Funds	1 to 2 years	Develop with walk improvements
Improved entrance signage to Hammond's Corners	---	\$	Township Funds	6 to 12 months	Determine signage scale/style
Reduce speed limits along Cle/Mass Road	---	Effort	N/A	6 months	Work with Summit County Engineer to reduce limits
Develop uniform signage and facade standards for the hamlet	---	Effort	N/A	6 months	Work with Zoning Commission to develop

*Abbreviation Key:*

\$ - Low Cost

\$\$\$ - High Cost

AMATS TA - Transportation Alternatives Funds

AMATS CMAQ - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Funds

AMATS CR - Carbon Reduction Funds

SID - Special Improvement District

## Implementation Matrix for Focus Area Recommendations

Objective	Priority	Cost/Effort	Funding Source	Length of Project	Next Steps
<b><i>Ghent Hamlet</i></b>					
Install sidewalks along west side of Cle/Mass Road	--	\$\$\$	AMATS TA, CMAQ, CR Funding, ODOT Bicycle & Ped Solicitation, State Capital Budget, ODOT Safety	1 to 2 years	Develop preliminary plans, pursue grant funding
Install sidewalks along east side of Cle/Mass Road	--	\$\$\$	AMATS TA, CMAQ, CR Funding, ODOT Bicycle & Ped Solicitation, State Capital Budget, ODOT Safety	1 to 2 years	Develop preliminary plans, pursue grant funding
Install traffic calming (medians) and streetscaping improvements along Cle/Mass Road	--	\$	AMATS TA Funding, State Capital Budget, ODOT Safety	1 to 2 years	Work with AMATS to consider “pop up” event to temporarily test traffic calming improvements
Install sidewalks along Wye Road	--	\$\$\$	AMATS TA, CMAQ, CR Funding, State Capital Budget	1 to 2 years	Develop preliminary plans, pursue grant funding
Close Wye Road at Cle/Mass Road, create a pocket park, and develop on street parking	--	\$	ODNR Natureworks	1 year	Work with AMATS to install temporary pocket park to test traffic patterns and new parking
Install traffic calming (mini roundabouts) devices and streetscaping along Wye Road	--	\$	AMATS TA Funding, State Capital Budget, ODOT Safety	1 year	Work with AMATS to create “pop up” event to temporarily test mini roundabouts

## Implementation Matrix for Focus Area Recommendations

Objective	Priority	Cost/Effort	Funding Source	Length of Project	Next Steps
Install sidewalks along Granger Road	--	\$\$	AMATS TA, CMAQ, CR Funding, State Capital Budget	6 to 12 months	Develop preliminary plans, pursue grant funding
Install sidewalks along Yellow Creek Road	--	\$\$	AMATS TA, CMAQ, CR Funding, State Capital Budget	6 to 12 months	Develop preliminary plans, pursue grant funding
Reduce speed limits along Cle/Mass and Granger Road.	--	Effort	N/A	6 months	Work with Summit County Engineer to reduce limits
Develop entrance signage along Cle/Mass and Granger Road	--	\$	Township Funds	6 to 12 months	Determine signage scale/style
Develop creekwalk along Yellow Creek	--	\$\$\$	ODNR Recreational Trails	2 to 4 years	Acquire easements as needed
Develop a community park within in the Ghent Hamlet	--	Effort/\$\$	ODNR Natureworks, OPWC Clean Ohio Greenspace, ODNR Land & Water	2 to 4 years	Approach property owner to determine interest, pursue grant funding to acquire
Create access management, signage, and facade standards for the Hamlet	--	Effort	N/A	6 months	Work with Zoning Commission to develop

## Implementation Matrix for Focus Area Recommendations

Objective	Priority	Cost/Effort	Funding Source	Length of Project	Next Steps
<b><i>Ghent Interchange</i></b>					
Develop Ghent Interchange Mixed-Use overlay	---	Effort	N/A	12 to 18 months	Work with Zoning Commission to develop
<b><i>Springside Drive</i></b>					
Develop Office Mixed-Use overlay	---	Effort	N/A	12 to 18 months	Work with Zoning Commission to develop
Install walking trails to link to Montrose	---	\$\$\$\$	ODNR Rec Trails, ODNR Clean Ohio Trails	2 to 4 years	Acquire needed easements and then pursue grant funding
Develop community park	---	\$\$	ODNR Natureworks, OPWC Clean Ohio Greenspace, ODNR Land & Water	2 to 4 years	If residential development occurs, begin discussions to develop park
<b><i>Medina Line/SR 18</i></b>					
Develop Residential overlay district	---	Effort	N/A	12 to 18 months	Work with Zoning Commission to develop