

## A. History

In March of 1997, Union County launched the update of their Comprehensive Plan: *Our Vision! Our Future!*. The Comprehensive Plan is a tool that establishes an important framework for making decisions concerning Union County's future and the future of individual communities. Union County citizens expressed the desire to address important issues related to agriculture, community facilities and services, economic development, housing, land use, natural resources, parks and recreation, transportation and utilities. These issues are addressed as elements in the following chapters of this document.

The most successful county planning efforts are those that are inclusive in every aspect. Union County made a commitment to engage anyone that had an interest in the County's future. This commitment began with the Long Range Planning Committee that reflected the diverse interests of Union County: citizens, business leaders, township officials and elected and appointed leaders of the County. The Committee was a consensus body organized to guide the planning process and gather ideas presented in public forums.

This planning effort brought Union County together, provided opportunities to debate important issues and resulted in a consensus on the future of the County. Its implementation is the next bold step.

## B. Organization of the Document

Following this Introduction, there is an Executive Summary that provides an overview of the planning process, describes the Plan's goals and highlights key recommendations. In addition are chapters that summarize key planning issues facing the County and an update of information on existing conditions and trends.

Following these introductory chapters are nine additional chapters that represent each element of the Comprehensive Plan. Each is organized consistent with the following outline:

- Overview
- Goal
- Objectives and Strategies

Following the Element chapters, is the Implementation Element that summarizes actions and strategies that must be accomplished to achieve the goals, objectives and strategies identified by Union County citizens. The Implementation Element is followed by the Appendix that includes the following supporting information: Glossary, Bibliography and Index.



## A. Overview

The Comprehensive Plan is important because it serves as the County's official policy document for the County Commissioners, Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission, County Engineer's Office and local townships, municipalities and villages when addressing growth and development issues. There are three key components of any comprehensive planning process: gathering and analysis of existing conditions data; development of goals, objectives and strategies; and preparation of the plan.

When conceiving the process for updating the Comprehensive Plan, the County made a strong commitment to conduct a completely open and inclusive planning process. Throughout the update process, key opportunities for involvement were provided for everyone who lived or worked in Union County.

- 1. Community Forum 1: Idea Gathering** – In June, 1997, several hundred ideas were generated by citizens and organized according to elements of the Comprehensive Plan. These meetings were held in Marysville, Milford Center and Richwood.
- 2. Community Forum 2: Goal Setting** – In October, 1997, citizens worked with ideas generated at Community Forum 1 to prepare draft goals and initial strategies for the plan. These meetings were held in Jerome, Marysville, Milford Center and Richwood.
- 3. Open House: Growth Scenarios and Draft Plan** – In February, 1998, citizens gathered to review the progress on the planning process. The Open House presented preliminary recommendations for each planning area, including detailed strategies and implementation. These meetings were held in Jerome, Marysville, Milford Center, Plain City and Richwood.
- 4. Adoption Process** – The adoption process involved an official recommendation from the Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission, acceptance of the Plan by local jurisdictions and formal adoption by the County Commissioners.

In addition to these meeting opportunities, the Long Range Planning Committee met monthly. All committee meetings were posted and open to the community. Many citizens took advantage of these opportunities and were welcomed to participate.

The Comprehensive Plan is not intended to dictate to local communities what land use decisions are to be made. Instead, it is intended to be a flexible document to guide important land use and capital improvement decisions affecting Union County and its communities.

## B. Vision and Goals

Well-planned and -managed development, sufficient utility services, preserved farmland and open space and a strong economic base are the combined vision of the Comprehensive Plan. For each element of the Comprehensive Plan, the following goals have been developed by the Planning Committee based on public input and adopted by the County Commissioners. These goals establish the policy framework for the future of Union County.

1. **Agriculture** – The agriculture goal is *to sustain and promote a stable agricultural economy with an emphasis on farmland preservation.*
2. **Community Facilities and Services** – The community facilities and services goal is *to improve community facilities and services with an emphasis on education and safety services.*
3. **Economic Development** – The economic development goal is *a planned, diversified and expanded countywide economic base (tax base) and community central business district revitalization that provides for a variety of agricultural, commercial and industrial business opportunities and employment.*
4. **Housing** – The housing goal is *to establish a balance of housing types and styles planned for different income levels, ages and physical abilities while maintaining property and quality of life values.*
5. **Land Use** – The land use goal is *to establish a coordinated and consistent land use system based on intergovernmental cooperation, planned controlled growth and innovative land use controls that facilitate and strengthen rural character, small towns and Union County's quality of life.*
6. **Natural Resources** – The natural resources goal is *the protection and preservation of natural resources through environmentally sensitive development and resource conservation.*
7. **Parks and Recreation** – The parks and recreation goal is *park and open space planning and development that builds on existing facilities; supports cultural arts, recreational facilities and activities; and appeals to a variety of interests and ages.*
8. **Transportation** – The transportation goal is *to enhance the transportation system with proper planning that emphasizes road maintenance and improvements, and considers safety, access management, financing and alternative transportation options.*
9. **Utilities** – The utilities goal is *a utility infrastructure system developed to meet the needs of planned community growth that provides for environmentally safe sanitary sewer and water improvements and for proper stormwater management.*

### C. Major Recommendations

This Plan includes 9 goals, 35 objectives and 120 strategies which are outlined in the following chapters. The essence of the Plan is to manage the County's growth while preserving farmland and open space, diversifying the economic base and ensuring sufficient utility services. When considering all the strategies together, the following themes emerge:

1. Encouraging well-planned growth in key growth centers and corridors where utility services are or will be available and where other supporting infrastructure is in place or can be feasibly improved.

2. Encouraging the preservation of prime agricultural soils and rural character through updated zoning districts, enhanced subdivision regulations and well-managed growth, thereby discouraging very low density single-family development in areas without utilities.
3. Protecting the environmental quality of Big Darby Creek and minimizing developmental impacts in the watershed, while encouraging ecologically-related tourism development along the creek corridor.
4. Focusing central water and sewer service in key areas that can be logically serviced and which support the Plan's land use recommendations. Such service extensions should occur within capacity limits and should facilitate light industrial development and address public health concerns.
5. Enhancing the transportation system and encouraging improvements that logically facilitate traffic movement in concert with land use recommendations.
6. Diversifying the County's economic base by enhancing tourism, continuing retention and expansion efforts, reinvigorating downtowns and strengthening agribusiness.
7. Facilitating the provision of parks and recreational facilities through coordinated countywide planning, enhanced subdivision requirements and the creation of additional park districts.

### D. Implementation

Each goal has a related set of objectives and strategies to support implementation. The text for each element describes the objective and strategies including responsible parties and timeframes for implementation. Outlined below are the timeframes used for each strategy.

Short Term: 1998-2003

Mid Term: 2004-2010

Long Term: 2011-2018

Ongoing: 1998-2018



A. Overview

Planning issues were identified as part of the data gathering and analysis phase of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Planning issues include those currently facing the County and those perceived to have future impacts on the County. The identification of planning issues is an important part of the comprehensive planning process because such issues identify concerns that should be addressed by the Plan. Issues were categorized according to subject and are presented in summary form without commentary. Anonymity was important to ensuring a frank and open discussion during the interviews.

B. Community Facilities and Services

Community facilities and services should keep pace with the County's population growth.

1. Community Services

The County should coordinate the availability and administration of public services. There is a lack of emergency planning and service coordination for new development. Support exists for a countywide or multiple township fire service. Hazardous materials response services and planning efforts must be maintained for the US 33 Corridor.

Education of township trustees on the fundamentals of providing service to development may help their understanding of the issues of service delivery. An increasing population will heighten the demand for health services, particularly in the New California area. Lorain County was cited as a positive example for providing public services at the county level. A countywide interlibrary loan program should be considered. The Harold Lewis Center and meals on wheels programs were noted as especially positive community services in the County.

2. Community Facilities

There is increasing demand for a meeting facility centrally located in the County. This facility would provide space for a variety of events.

3. Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation areas throughout the County are limited. A countywide park system is needed. A community pool was recommended for Richwood.

4. Historic Preservation

The historical features of the County should be preserved. Preservation efforts should be strengthened. A number of historical features exist in the County, such as the brick streets of Richwood and the Old Armory. The recent loss of the Carnegie Library in Marysville was cited as an example of poor preservation efforts. Charleston, South Carolina was cited as a city with strong preservation efforts.

C. Economic Development

Generally, people want to see the industrial base expanded. The perception is that Honda is the main industry in the County. Historically, many people forget that Scotts was one of the earliest and largest sources of employment. While Scotts provided initial economic development to the County, many of its executives commute and live in Columbus. Some people felt that Scotts is the company bringing people to the County. Scotts' financial investment in a new warehouse illustrates its commitment to stay in the County. It is perceived that marketing efforts should be initiated and strengthened for the County and cities such as Marysville.

1. Industrial Development

Satellite industries continue to locate in Union County as a result of Honda of America. Increasing the industrial base, particularly clean industry, would create revenues to support community facilities and services. Richwood should be targeted for industry.

2. Commercial Development

There is a desire for more retail shopping (e.g. shoe stores) in Marysville. People are forced to go to Dublin for most of their retail needs.

D. Growth Management

Currently, the County is thought to be characterized by a haphazard development pattern. Intense development is negatively impacting the southeastern portion of the County. Development is increasing land prices. It is believed that if growth is dealt with effectively in the US 33 Corridor then that will serve as a growth model for the rest of the County. Efforts should first focus on the Corridor because of the increasing pace of development and then continued to other areas outside the Corridor. Future development should occur through coordinated planning. Growth along the US 33 Corridor should occur concurrently with infrastructure.

Some people believe that residential growth should be slowed down and there was support that development should be concurrent with the availability of infrastructure. However, a key issue is knowing when the rights of the property owner should concede to the needs of the community. Delaware County was cited more than once as a county serving as a bad example of sprawl land uncontrolled and uncoordinated growth. Interviewees felt that the Commissioners should take the lead in coordinating growth efforts and building relationships among townships. Leadership should support decisions focusing on growth management.

E. Land Use

Land use issues focused on collaborative decisionmaking. In addition, it was perceived that decisionmakers are not effectively addressing zoning issues in the townships. A County level planning and zoning person may be an option that helps townships effectively address planning and zoning issues. People knowledgeable of land use issues should fill decisionmaking positions on local zoning boards.

1. Population

Population growth in the County was a concern as it relates to uncontrolled growth. Infrastructure and public facilities and services must be in place as development increases.

2. Development Opportunities

An area that is projected to undergo substantial growth is the US 42 Corridor between New California and Plain City.

3. Countywide Zoning

Some people felt that countywide zoning should be implemented. There is no local central authority to deal with planning and zoning issues specific to the County. It was noted that even though Union County is a member of the Logan-Champaign-Union County Regional Planning Commission, some people believe that Union County has unique problems that should be addressed locally.

4. Township Zoning

Some believed that townships are not adequately dealing with zoning issues and are approving development without regard to proper planning. The zoning provisions of each township should be consistent. Agricultural zoning should be encouraged within various zoning districts of the townships and municipalities. Erosion and sediment control provisions should be incorporated into the review process. Some people felt that Jerome Township is one township attempting to adequately deal with township zoning issues. Flag lots were cited as a very poor example of a residential lot configuration.

F. Transportation

Interviewees felt that the existing transportation network was adequate, however, future traffic impacts should be anticipated with growth. One idea included a US 42 bypass around Plain City. Transportation should be addressed on a holistic basis in conjunction with growth and not incrementally. The County's current effort to manage access should have positive implications on traffic safety. Delaware County was cited as a bad example of uncontrolled access points.

G. Natural Resources

The County contains a variety of natural features that are impacted by development. The Darby Creeks are an important natural resource in the County. Development should be sensitive to this natural feature. Attention should be paid to the impact of development near the headwaters and tributaries of the Darby Creeks and sediment loads must be reduced in those areas. Maintaining wooded buffers is an important way of preserving the creeks. Operation Future was cited as a positive example of a program educating farmers about runoff problems and impacts on water quality.

H. Utilities

Citizens felt that the availability of existing utilities was adequate. However, residential growth impacts will affect water supply and sewage disposal. Long distance phone calls within the County are a concern. The existing countywide phone system divides the County. Ideally, toll-free phone calls within the County should be pursued, which would also allow for affordable internet access.

I. Implementation Issues

A final question asked to the interviewees was to identify constraints affecting comprehensive plan implementation. The following is a summary:

1. Getting community support for the Plan.
2. Communication of the Plan's intent.
3. Ensure the Plan's credibility.
4. Creating ownership in the Plan.
5. Plan should be realistic.
6. Lack of financial resources.
7. Development pressure.
8. Property rights perception.



### A. Metropolitan Statistical Area

The Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is located directly southeast of Union County and included the County until December, 1992, when metropolitan area definitions were revised by the US Bureau of the Census. The MSA is comprised of Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison and Pickaway counties. Following a notable population increase of 11 percent between 1980 and 1990, the MSA population has been projected by ODOD to increase by 22 percent (297,250) from 1,345,450 in 1990 to 1,642,700 in 2015. Delaware, Franklin and Madison counties, adjacent to Union County, comprised 79 percent (1,065,434) of the MSA population in 1990 and are projected to contribute 81 percent (1,322,400) to the MSA by 2015.

### B. Population Trends

Union County was ranked third of Ohio's 88 counties in population change rate between 1990 and 1995, based on the 1990 Census and 1995 Census estimates. This ranking was derived from a 14.3 percent (4,559) increase, which itself exceeds the 8.2 percent population increase experienced by the County between 1980 and 1990. The state experienced a 2.8 percent increase between 1990 (10,847,115) and 1995 (11,150,506), significantly lower than the increase experienced by Union County. The eight-county regional population was estimated to have increased 6.0 percent (76,493), a figure slightly lower than the MSA estimated population increase of 6.8 percent (92,062). Delaware County received the highest ranked population change rate, with an increase of 18.0 percent (12,027). Additional counties ranked in the highest 10 percent included Fairfield County, ranked fourth with an increase of 13.6 percent (14,084) and Madison count, ranked ninth with an increase of 10.3 percent (3,810).

## 3. Regional Employment

The eight-county region had 622,246 employees 16 years of age and older in 1994, as reported by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (this figure does not include most government workers). Employees in Union County accounted for three percent (16,027) of the regional total. Leading industries in the region, comprising 72 percent of total employment were:

- A. Services accounting for 34 percent (210,872 employees).
- B. Retail trade accounting for 23 percent (145,890 employees).
- C. Manufacturing accounting for 15 percent (93,705 employees).

The figures corresponding to the services and retail trade industries were comparable to the state figures of 32 percent (1,384,551) and 22 percent (952,095) respectively. Twenty-four percent (1,048,371) of employees in Ohio were in the manufacturing industry, a figure significantly higher than the regional figure. Employees in Union County accounted for two percent (3,368) of the services industry, one percent (1,796) of the retail trade industry and 10 percent (9,240) of the manufacturing industry in the eight-county region.

Employees in the eight-county region accounted for 14 percent of employees statewide. The finance, insurance and real estate industry constituted 23 percent (62,229) of the state total and the agricultural services, forestry and fishing industry contributed approximately 17 percent (3,731) of total state employees in the industry.

The 1990 Census reported 35,656 public administration (including government) employees in the eight-county region, accounting for six percent of the regional employees 16 years of age and older. This figure represents 19 percent of the state's 184,954 public administration employees and is reflective of the inclusion of the City of Columbus.

#### 4. Regional Agriculture Trends

Analysis of agriculture data obtained from the 1992 US Census of Agriculture reveals the following characteristics unique to the eight-county region:

- A. Eight percent (5,810) of Ohio farms were located in the region.
- B. Eleven percent (1,634,834 acres) of Ohio's farm land was located in the region.
- C. Eleven percent (\$443.7 million) of total agriculture sales in Ohio were in the region. The regional average per farm of \$77,435 was 40 percent or \$22,082 greater than the state figure of \$55,353.
- D. The average farm size of the eight-county region (282 acres) exceeded the state average of 201 acres by 40 percent (81 acres).
- E. Farmland covered 71 percent of the region, a figure significantly higher than the state coverage of 54 percent.

Union County contributed 14 percent of the region's farms (803) and land in farms (222,957 acres), as well as 18 percent of the regional agriculture sales (\$77.8 million).

### C. Agriculture

This section provides updated information pertaining to agriculture characteristics of Union County. Data has been derived from the 1982 and 1992 Census' of Agriculture.

#### 1. Findings

Agriculture remains an important contributor to the Union County economy, despite the fact that the amount of farmland continues to decrease in proportion to the State of Ohio. It is important to note that the size of farms in the County increased by 13 percent between 1982 and 1992. The number of full-time farmers in the County decrease by 23 percent, a proportion greater than the state figure of 13 percent. County agricultural sales rose 10 percent over the 10-year period, generating \$77.8 million in 1992.

#### 2. Prime Agricultural Soils

Over 90 percent of Union County soils are rated as prime agricultural soils, according to the 1992 Comprehensive Plan. This analysis is based upon data from the Ohio Capability Analysis Program (OCAP) of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Prime

agricultural soils can be further defined based upon more specific criteria. The OCAP program provides that assessment, as follows:

Table 4.1 Prime Agricultural Soils, Union County

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Prime soils	31,628	11%
Prime where drained	220,762	79%
Prime if not flooded	5,761	2%
Prime where drained and not flooded	2,459	1%
Non-prime soils	18,456	7%
Total	279,066	100%

Source: OCAP, ODNR

### 3. Economic Characteristics

In 1992, Union County was ranked 17th, or in the top 20 percent, of Ohio's 88 counties in percentage of total land in farms, reporting a figure of 79.8 percent or 222,957 acres. The County ranked seventh in average sales per farm (\$75,439). Ohio reported a farmland cover of 54.3 percent or 14,247,969 acres and an average sales per farm of \$55,353, both figures significantly lower than those reported by the County. Union County experienced a loss of eight percent or 18,548 acres of farmland between 1982 and 1992, paralleling the state figure of eight percent of 1,156,085 acres.

#### A. Farm Trends

While the number of farms/operators and farm acreage decreased in Union County between 1982 and 1992, the average size of farms and average sales per farm increased. The number of farms in the County decreased from 985 in 1982 and 1992, a loss of 182 farms (18 percent). The state experienced a similar trend, with a loss of 16,223 farms (19 percent). The average size of Union County farms increased 13 percent (from 245 acres to 278 acres) over the 10-year period. Although the average size of farms in Ohio increase 14 percent (from 177 acres to 21 acres), the average size of farms in the County was greater in 1992.

Union County and the state both experienced decreasing trends in the number of full-time farmers (no days of work off the farm) between 1982 and 1992. The number of full-time farm operators in the County dropped 23 percent (from 391 to 303). State figures revealed a decrease of 13 percent (from 30,127 to 26, 226).

#### B. Agricultural Sales

Union County agricultural products generated \$77.8 million in sales in 1992, an increase of 10 percent or \$7.2 million from 1982. Average total sales per farm increased 35 percent, from \$71,702 in 1982 to \$96,912 in 1992. It was reported that:

1. Livestock, poultry and their products accounted for 55 percent or \$42.5 million of total sales in 1992, a figure higher than the 49 percent or \$39.2 reported in 1982.

2. Average total sales per farm increased 35 percent, from \$71,702 in 1982 to \$96,912 in 1992.

The increase in total sales of agricultural products in Union County was lower than the state figure of 16 percent (from \$3.4 million to \$3.9 million). Similarly, the County's increase in average sales per farm was lower than the state figure of 42 percent (from \$38,966 to \$55,353). Please refer to tables at end of chapter.

## D. Housing

This section addresses the following topics: housing affordability, residential development activity and housing improvement strategy.

### 1. Findings

Between 1990 and 1996, 2,497 residential units were constructed in Union County. Annual residential activity in Union County continues to increase steadily, reflecting the County's standing as the third fastest growing county in Ohio. The largest percentage of unit type constructed since 1990 is single-family buildings (95 percent), with a total cost estimate of \$205.6 million. Housing cost relative to household income suggest less affordable owner-occupied housing and more affordable renter-occupied housing in the County than throughout the state. A Community Housing Improvement Strategy (CHIS) was completed in 1994 and notes that there is a shortage of affordable rental housing units.

### 2. Housing Affordability

Housing costs as a percentage of household income provide some indication of the affordability of housing. With a commonly accepted affordable housing standard of 25 percent or less of annual income, households with costs greater than 25 percent have been characterized as those with housing affordability problems. The County affordability characteristics closely paralleled those reported by the state in 1990, although median cost percentages suggested owner-occupied units as slightly more affordable at the state level and renter-occupied units slightly more affordable at the County level. Further analysis of owner- and renter-occupied housing unit data obtained from the 1990 Census revealed the following:

- A. Housing costs of owner-occupied units in the County were generally more affordable than costs of renter-occupied units. Nearly 80 percent (4,437) of Union County owner-occupied housing units had costs of less than 25 percent of the 1989 household income, a figure slightly higher than the 77 percent (47,534) reported by the state. Fifty-one percent (1,267) of the renter-occupied units in the County did not have costs exceeding 25 percent, slightly higher than the Ohio figure of 47 percent (604,841).
- B. Housing costs of renter-occupied units in Union County were generally higher relative to household income than costs of owner-occupied units. Only nine percent (522) of the owner-occupied units in Union County had housing costs of 35 percent or greater, a figure comparable to the state figure of nine percent (215,260). One-quarter (611) of the County's renter-occupied units had costs of at least 35 percent, a slightly lower figure than the state figure of 30 percent (387,063).

- C. Union County reported a higher median owner cost as a percentage of household income than the state, with figures of 17.2 percent and 16.4 percent respectively. The County's median renter cost of 23.6 percent was slightly lower than the state figure of 25.3 percent.

### 3. Residential Development Activity

Data provided by the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) revealed the construction of 2,110 residential structures (2,497 residential units) in Union County between 1990 and 1996. The number increased steadily over the seven-year period, from 154 in 1990 to 434 in 1996. Ninety-five percent (2,012) of the structures were single-family buildings and three percent (69) were buildings containing at least five units. A total cost estimate of \$244.1 million was reported for the time period, with 92 percent (\$205.6 million) associated with single-family structures and five- or more unit structures accounting for seven percent (\$15.8 million). Two- to four-unit structures accounted for less than two percent of constructed buildings and costs.

### 4. Housing Improvement

A Community Housing Improvement Strategy (CHIS) was prepared for Union County in 1994 by Burns, Bertsch, Harris, and Carr, Inc. of Columbus. The CHIS serves to guide federal, state and local housing assistance fund investments through programs such as the Home Investment Partnership Program and Community Development Block Grants, through which many Community Housing Improvement grants are obtained.

The CHIS is a three-year strategy required prior to receiving funds under the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990. The document must be approved by the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Local Government Services. Local residents form the Housing Advisory Committee, a group representing the public in the development of the CHIS. The following narrative provides a summary of the Union County CHIS.

#### A. Union County Housing Market/Needs Analysis

Several factors influencing the demand for and supply of housing were identified, including the following:

1. Population.
2. Households.
3. Income.
4. Cost of housing.
5. Utility costs.
6. Property taxes.
7. Presence of lead-based paint hazard.

Homeless and special needs populations were examined as well, with an emphasis on the needs of homeless, elderly, physically and mentally disabled populations and persons with HIV and AIDS. Supportive services such as disaster relief, emergency and other repairs, rent and deposit assistance, utility assistance and housing loan

assistance became available to residents of Union County in September, 1993. Other factors influencing the housing market include:

1. Adequacy of supportive infrastructure.
2. Water and sewer availability.
3. Drainage sewers.
4. Paved roads.
5. Employment.
6. Education.
7. Local regulations.
8. Public perceptions of housing.

The CHIS presents several conclusions drawn upon the County's housing market/needs analysis and results of community surveys. With a growing demand for housing generating from within and outside of the County, there is a shortage of affordable housing, particularly in regard, to rental units. This growing demand is partially responsible for an increase in property values, resulting in greater difficulties for low- and moderate-income households to obtain affordable housing. Township regulations, such as a five-acre minimum lot for mobile homes, have also affected affordability. Public perception has similarly played a role in the barriers of housing affordability, availability, accessibility and adequacy experienced by County residents, particularly for renters and low- and moderate-income households.

B. Affordable

The CHIS identifies many housing strategies or activities directed towards the needs of very low-, low- and moderate-income households, homeless persons and special needs populations. Housing activities have been prioritized for the purpose of targeting resources to households with the greatest needs. The following presents a summary of the strategies and priorities.

1. Union County Housing

Priorities of the County housing strategies include housing rehabilitation, homebuyer and rental assistance, support facilities and services, public/private cooperation, new construction and infrastructure, acquisition and demolition, and housing code regulation.

2. Homeless and Special Needs Strategies

Homeless and homeless prevention strategies have been identified as follows:

- A. Support facilities and services
- B. Rental assistance.
- C. Homebuyer assistance.
- D. Housing code regulation.

Strategies directed towards special needs population include:

- A. Rehabilitation.
- B. Support facilities and services.
- C. Rental assistance.
- D. New construction and infrastructure.
- E. Housing code regulation.

3. Lead-Based Paint Abatement Strategy

Activities associated with the abatement of lead-based paint include identifying and addressing the hazards of lead-based paint, diagnosing and testing for elevated blood lead levels and preventing hazards.

4. Three Year Action Plan

The Action Plan, with an implementation period of 1995 to 1997, presents specific guidelines pertaining to target populations/areas, funds budgeted and their sources, activity timing and outcome and administrative bodies associated with the housing strategies. The administrative structure is comprised of representatives of the private and public sectors and is responsible for the CHIS implementation process.

## E. Land Use

This section addresses the following topics: existing land use, development constraints and opportunities, recreation and open space, and natural environment.

### 1. Findings

A number of findings have been noted for the land use element. These include existing planning, population trends and forecasts, existing land use ratios for the planning subareas and the natural environment.

A. Existing Planning

Planning efforts have been and are being completed that will impact Union County. Annexation policies in the City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan (1993) and proposed Dublin Community Plan (1997) support annexation into Union County. The proposed Dublin Community Plan recommends the development of an 830-acre metropolitan park in the southeastern corner of the County. The Logan County Comprehensive Plan Update (1996) recommends industrial development in the southeastern corner of that county.

B. Population

Union County's 1990 population was 31,969 and the estimated population is 36,528. Population forecasts show that by 2020 the County's population may increase by a range of 8,219 persons to 38,119 persons, nearly double the County's current population. All of the planning subareas are projected to increase in population by 2020. This will increase the demand for residential land use, supporting commercial development, parkland and public facilities and services.

### C. Existing Land Use

Agricultural/vacant land use encompasses the largest land use category in the County and within each of the planning areas. Along the US 33 Corridor, agricultural/vacant land accounts for about 97 percent of the land use. Within each of the other planning areas, agricultural/vacant land use encompasses an average of 52 percent and residential land use encompasses an average of 29 percent. Marysville contains the largest percentage of parks and public/quasi-public land (five percent and 12 percent respectively) versus an average of 0.2 percent and six percent in the other planning subareas. Of the four planning subareas, industrial land encompasses an average of two percent in Marysville, Plain City and Richwood.

### D. Natural Environment

The County contains a variety of natural resources. The Big and Little Darby Creeks are classified as a federal and state scenic river. Such a designation amplifies the significance of the Creeks' high water quality and diversity of plant and animal species. Floodplains extend through Marysville, Milford Center and Plain City. Protection mechanisms for these natural corridors will need to be explored.

## 2. Existing Planning

Local governments surrounding Union County are engaged in planning. This section reviews the planning efforts of the seven adjacent counties (Champaign, Delaware, Franklin, Hardin, Logan, Madison and Marion) and two adjacent municipalities (City of Dublin and City of Columbus).

### A. Proposed Dublin Community Plan (1997)

The City of Dublin is on the verge of adopting its Community Plan. The plan identifies a preferred growth scenario for the community through 2020 and analyzes impacts of land use, transportation, fiscal, sanitary sewer and water. The Plan focuses on an area in the southeastern part of Union County generally bounded by McKittrick Road, US 33 and the eastern County border. The Plan recommends annexation of the area from the eastern County boundary to Hyland Croy Road and notes that development will require expensive sewer and water extensions.

An important recommendation is the proposal for a metropolitan park of 830 acres in the area bordered by Mitchell-DeWitt Road, McKittrick Road and the Union County boundary. Goals include preserving the rural character of outlying areas and natural features, developing residential areas adjacent to the park and using the park as a northwestern growth boundary for Dublin.

Prior to the current planning effort, the City of Dublin adopted its Community Plan in 1988. Policies included higher density residential and office development to be complemented by increased pedestrian activity, emphasis on parkland and open space with green belt linkages, aggressive annexation and a coordinated system of transportation planning between street improvements and transportation alternatives. A majority of the area west of Avery Road is recommended for single-family use with a density of two dwelling units per acre.

B. Logan County Comprehensive Plan Update (1996)

The recommended land use and thoroughfare plans for Logan County provide a general framework for directing future development. Identified development areas are based on the availability of transportation and utility infrastructure. In particular is a large industrial development area proposed adjacent to Union County which includes East Liberty, Middlesburg and the Honda/Transportation Research Center. The plan suggest that this area is likely to attract additional industry which will then increase the demand for housing and commercial businesses. With the exception of the West Mansfield area, the majority of the area adjacent to Union County is proposed for agriculture. Proposed road improvements on the thoroughfare plan are identified for SR 287, SR 559 and CR 44 and CR 153.

C. Madison County Comprehensive Plan (1994)

The Madison County Comprehensive Plan was initiated to develop a growth management strategy for the county based on the idea that the Plan is a guide for determining the location and timing for public improvements. The proposed land use plan recommends agricultural preservation areas along the County's northern border. Environmental policies include maintaining a 120-foot buffer area along the Darby Creeks, establishing a Darby Creek overlay district to guide development in environmentally sensitive areas and developing erosion and sedimentation control measures. Conservation areas and corridors extend to the Union County line along the Darby Creeks.

D. City of Columbus (1993)

The Columbus Plan identifies several goals addressing the vitality of neighborhoods, growth, transportation, recreation, natural resources, historic preservation and aesthetics. Goal statements stipulate the support for directing growth to areas with adequate infrastructure. Furthermore, the Plan identifies two general annexation policies which will affect Columbus' future growth, infill and fringe area annexation. The Plan proposes that the City round out its corporate boundaries and discourage expansion into environmentally sensitive areas.

This Plan impacts Union County through the recommended Northwest Expansion District, which extends along the southern side of Dublin and north along US 33. The Plan suggests that such a district will eventually be programmed for capital improvements. According to the land use element, Columbus is to maintain its existing policy of supporting annexations in high growth corridors.

E. Delaware County Master Plan (1993)

The Delaware County Master Plan was developed to guide land development through the year 2010. Two portions of the Plan, the North Planning Area and the South Planning Area, are relevant to Union County due to their location adjacent to the western Delaware county line. Goals for these planning areas include identifying and preserving natural, historic and cultural resources, preserving rural character, encouraging balanced land use patterns and managing development to be compatible with exiting infrastructure.

The Plan generally recommends rural agricultural land use along the Union County border and recognizes that there will be increasing single-family development in Delaware's southwestern corner near urbanizing areas of Dublin. Implementation tools recommended include agricultural districts and current use valuation, cluster zoning, conservation easement, overlay zoning and capital improvements programming.

F. Urbana / Champaign County Comprehensive Plan Update (1993)

The Champaign County Comprehensive Plan Update is a joint planning process and addresses several issues. For example, one of the farmland preservation findings noted that existing land use regulations facilitated dispersed development and the corresponding goal was to improve existing land use regulations to preserve the existing rural character. The land use plan recommends agricultural and rural residential land uses along the county's eastern border with Union County. Two important elements of the Plan include the recommendation of growth boundaries for Champaign County's six villages and Urbana, based on the number of project dwelling units.

G. Hardin County Comprehensive Plan (1979)

The Hardin County Plan identifies a variety of land use goals and objectives such as to strive for land use diversity to meet urban and rural needs. The preparation of land use plans for the county and its local governments is the suggested means to fulfill that goal. The Plan also encourages the preservation of agricultural and natural resources in the county through the establishment of orderly growth policies. According to the Plan, agricultural land is recommended adjacent to Union County. It also suggests that the majority of development will occur on the perimeter of existing cities.

H. Marion County Land Use Plan (1970)

The Marion County Land Use Plan recommends areas adjacent to Union County for agriculture land use and the towns of Prospect and Waldo are expected to have residential growth to the east and west, respectively.

I. Logan-Union-Champaign County Regional Plan (1970)

Evolving from studies addressing transportation, housing, natural resources and other components, the Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Plan was developed to guide development in the tri-county region. Important components of the Plan are land use, community facilities and major roads.

The concentric ring development concept was adopted by the regional planning commission and is based on the idea that growth will take place on the existing urban periphery and that population density will remain highest in the urban core areas. Concentric ring development is proposed by the Plan for the focus areas of Bellefontaine, Marysville and Urbana. The Plan suggests that agricultural land use will continue to dominate the tri-county region. The Plan recommends physical improvements and redevelopment for the focus areas.

Highway-oriented commercial land uses are recommended at interchange points along US 33 and US 68. Industrial land uses are proposed for US 33 southeast and northwest of Marysville and south of Urbana along US 68. Greenways are recommend for the floodplain areas along rivers and creeks and larger greenbelt areas are recommended to surround the focus areas. Implementation mechanisms identified by the Plan include formulating master plans at the local level, the adoption of zoning and subdivision regulations consistent with such an effort and the use of capital improvements programming.

### 3. Development Regulations

The following information is based on a cursory review and initial discussions regarding land use controls in Union County. The following table provides an overview of which local governments have adopted land use controls. Building construction (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) is regulated under building regulations administered by Union County.

Table 4.2 Land Use Controls

<u>Community</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Subdivision Regulations</u>
Allen Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Claibourne Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Darby Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Dover Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Jackson Township	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Jerome Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Leesburg Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Liberty Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Magnetic Township	Yes	No
Marysville	Yes	Yes
Milford Center	Yes	Yes
Millcreek Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Paris Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Plain City	Yes	Yes
Richwood	Yes	No
Taylor Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Union County	N/A	Yes
Union Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Unionville Center	No	No
Washington Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
York Township	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Under County Subdivision Regulations

### 4. Existing Land Use

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

### A. Marysville

The City of Marysville encompasses approximately 6,240 acres or 9.75 square miles. About 41 percent (2,587 acres) of the City is agricultural/vacant land. Much of those areas are to the northeast and southeast of the downtown and near the Union County Airport.

Residential land use encompasses 33 percent (2,022 acres) of the City, of which 27 percent is single-family. A majority of the single-family land uses are located southwest, west and north of US 33 between Mill Creek and SR 31. Mobile homes are concentrated in three areas, two of which are located near the downtown and one at the southeast corner of the City. Collectively, these areas encompass 133 acres.

Commercial and office land uses are concentrated in the central business district. Strip retail and auto-oriented commercial land uses are located along W. 5th Street to the west of downtown, Delaware Avenue west of US 33 and Main Street between Mill Creek and US 33. Industrial areas cover approximately 200 acres (three percent) generally located in the southeast corner of the City. About 766 acres (12 percent) of public/quasi-public land uses are located throughout the City. The Ohio Reformatory for Women, Marysville Middle School and Marysville High School encompass a large percentage of this category. City park areas containing 289 acres (five percent) are concentrated in areas along Mill Creek and west of downtown.

### B. Milford Center

The smallest of the planning areas, Milford Center, encompasses about 385 acres or 0.6 square miles. A majority of the Village, approximately 247 acres (64 percent), is agricultural/vacant land. Much of the residential land use (29.5 percent or 113.5 acres) is south of State Street. Single-family residential also exists along approaches into the Village. A mobile home park is located along the Village's southern edge near Second Street. Generally, a majority of the commercial development is located along US 36 between Mill and State Streets and in the area of First and Second Streets. The largest public/quasi-public use, Fairbanks Elementary School is located at the eastern edge of the Village. Milford Center's park (12 acres) is located where US 36 crosses the Big Darby Creek.

### C. Plain City

Plain City covers approximately 1,122 acres or 1.7 square miles. Approximately 687 acres (61 percent) of the Village is agricultural/vacant land. Single-family residential land uses encompass about 275 acres (25 percent) and multi-family encompasses about 19 acres of the Village (one and one half percent). A majority of the public/quasi-public land uses, about 60 acres (five and one-half percent) are located northwest of the US 42 and SR 161 intersection. Pastime Park and Plain City Elementary School are located in that area. Industrial land uses cover about 33 acres (three percent) and are generally located near the downtown area south of Main Street and west of Chillicothe Street.

D. Richwood

The Village of Richwood covers about 785 acres or 1.2 square miles. About 389 acres (50 percent) of the Village are agricultural/vacant land. Single-family residential covers about 242 acres (31 percent) and mobile homes cover about 12 acres (two percent). The Richwood Fairgrounds and school facilities account for the 70 acres (nine percent) of public/quasi-public land. Commercial land uses are concentrated around the intersection of Ottawa and Franklin Streets and total 35 acres (four percent). Encompassing about 28 acres (three percent), Richwood Lake serves as the Village's primary park. An industrial land use (nine acres) is located along the Village's western edge.

F. US 33 Corridor

Of the 434 square miles (277,760 acres) that encompass Union County, approximately 242 square miles (155,000 acres) encompass the southern half of the County within the area of the US 33 Corridor. While much of the Corridor is characterized by large scale farming operations, the area is changing as industrial development continues to expand. Honda of America is located near the western edge of the County. Agricultural/vacant land encompasses about 149,540 acres (97 percent) of the Corridor. Single-family residential land uses are becoming concentrated along township and county roads and encompass 2,870 acres (two percent). A mobile home park is located at Springdale Road and US 36. Four golf courses (Darby Creek Golf Course, Flagstone Golf Course, Rolling Meadows Golf Course and Blues Creek Golf Course) account for the 650 acres of public/quasi-public land uses in the Corridor. In addition, township halls account for a small amount of public/quasi-public land uses in this planning area.

G. Summary

Please refer to the accompanying table for a tabulation of land use acreage within each of the planning areas.

Table 4.3 Comparative Existing Land Use (1997)

Land Use	Marysville Acres(%)	Milford Center Acres(%)	Plain City Acres(%)	Richwood Acres(%)	US 33 Corridor <sup>1</sup> Acres(%)
Agricultural/Vacant	2,587(41.0)	247(64.0)	687(61.0)	389(50.0)	149,540(97.0)
Single-family	1,657(27.0)	111.5(29.0)	275(25.0)	242(31.0)	2,870(2.0)
Multi-Family	232(4.0)	0(0.0)	19(1.5)	14(2.0)	0(0.0)
Mobile Home	133(2.0)	2(0.5)	4(0.3)	0(2.0)	0(0.0)
Commercial/Office	370(6.0)	11(3.0)	42(3.7)	35(4.0)	186(0.0)
Industrial	206(3.0)	0(0.0)	33(3.0)	9(1.0)	1,744(1.0)
Parks	289(5.0)	1.5(0.5)	50 <sup>3</sup> (4.6)	28(3.0)	0(0.0)
Public/Quasi-Public	766(12.0)	12(3.0)	12(1.0)	70(9.0)	650(0.0)
Totals	6,240 <sup>2</sup> (100.0)	385 <sup>2</sup> (100.0)	1,122 <sup>2</sup> (100.0)	785 <sup>2</sup> (100.0)	155,000 <sup>4</sup> (100.0)

Notes: <sup>1</sup> This set of land use ratios does not include the ratios of incorporated areas.

<sup>2</sup> Estimate includes transportation and natural corridors.

<sup>3</sup> Estimate, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> This total includes the total land area of incorporation areas within the US 33 Corridor.

## F. Population

### 1. Population Trends

Union County's population has increased by 40 percent since 1960. While the largest percentage increase occurred between 1970 and 1980 (24 percent), the smallest occurred between 1960 and 1970 (four percent). Please refer to Table 4.4 for an overview of population trends in the County.

#### A. Marysville

Since 1960, the City's population has increased by 4,704 persons (95 percent), which has been a major factor in the County's overall population growth. The largest increase occurred between 1980 and 1990 (30 percent). The City's 1995 population was estimated at 14,000.

#### B. Milford Center

Of the three subareas, Milford Center is the only Village with a decrease in population. Overall, since 1960 this Village has had a decrease. The largest percentage drop occurred between 1980 and 1990 (-15 percent). The Village's 1995 population was estimated at 631.

#### C. Plain City

Located in Madison and Union Counties, Plain City has had an overall population increase since 1960 of six percent. Between 1970 and 1980 there was a seven percent decrease (-152 persons). Since 1980, the Village has increased by eight percent (176 persons) to an estimated 2,302 in 1995. The Village's 1998 population is estimated at nearing 3,000 (state estimated 2,750).

#### D. Richwood

While the Village of Richwood has had a two percent increase in population since 1960, this change includes a five percent decrease from 1970 to 1980. Since 1980, the Village has increase by five persons. The Village's 1995 population was estimated at 2,195.

Table 4.4 Union County Population Trends (1960-1995)

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>1960-90</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Union County	22,853	23,786	29,536	31,969	36,528	9,116	40%
Marysville	4,952	5,711	7,414	9,656	14,000	4,704	95%
Milford Center	794	753	764	651	631	-143	-18%
Plain City	2,146	2,254	2,102	2,278	2,302	132	6%
Richwood	2,132	2,072	2,181	2,186	2,195	54	2%

Note: <sup>1</sup>1995 figures are estimates by Ohio Department of Development.  
Source: US Census 1960-1990.

2. Population Forecasts

Population forecasts are an attempt to depict the future growth of a community based on existing trends. A variety of methodologies are used to illustrate such future growth based on statistics and others based on judgement. Unpredictable factors, such as long-term economic conditions, cause forecasts to vary considerably. Four different methodologies were used to depict different population forecasts for Union County and the planning areas. The following is a summary of population forecasts for Union County.

A. 1980-1995 Rate Forecast

This rate is based upon the difference in population between the beginning and end of the last decade, as noted below. This uses a weaker historical basis for forecasting population. Applying the applicable rate for each area results in the following forecast:

Table 4.5 1980-1990 Rate Forecast

	<u>Rate</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Total Change</u>	<u>Total Percent</u>
Union County	23%	36,528	39,414	45,887	53,424	17,017	47%
Marysville	30%	14,000	16,114	21,348	28,282	14,282	98%
Milford Center	-15%	631	584	501	430	-201	-32%
Plain City	8%	2,302	2,399	2,604	2,828	526	23%
Richwood	0.2%	2,195	2,197	2,202	2,206	11	0.005%

B. 1960-1995 Rate Forecast

The 1960-1990 rate is the cumulative decade average that recognizes a 30-year trend. This incorporates a stronger historical trend than other forecasts. Applying this 35-year growth rate results in the following forecast:

Table 4.6 1960-1995 Rate Forecast

	<u>Rate</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Total Change</u>	<u>Total Percent</u>
Union County	59.8%	36,528	39,649	45,890	52,131	15,603	43%
Marysville	95%	14,000	16,217	20,650	25,083	11,083	126%
Milford Center	-18%	631	612	574	536	-95	-15%
Plain City	6%	2,302	2,325	2,373	2,421	119	5%
Richwood	3%	2,195	2,204	2,222	2,240	45	2%

C. 1990-1995 Development Activity Rate Forecast

The recent five-year development cycle of residential permits (1990-1995) provides the basis for this forecast. While this recognizes recent development trends, its timeframe is short and places too much emphasis on short term trends. Applying the rate results in the following forecast:

Table 4.7 1990-1995 Development Activity Rate Forecast

	<u>Rate</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Total Change</u>	<u>Total Percent</u>
Union County	2.9%	36,528	42,141	56,086	74,647	38,119	104%
Marysville	18%	14,000	15,306	18,296	21,869	7,869	56%
Milford Center	2.9%	631	728	969	1,289	658	104%
Plain City	3.3%	2,302	2,708	3,746	5,183	2,881	125%
Richwood	3.4%	2,195	2,594	3,624	5,063	2,868	130%

D. Proportional Forecast

Using State of Ohio prepared county-level forecasts through 2015, proportion percentages for each of the planning areas have been determined. Applying that ratio to the state’s forecasts for Union County results in the following forecast:

Table 4.8 Proportional Forecast

	<u>Rate</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Total Change</u>	<u>Total Percent</u>
Union County	7%	36,528	39,085	41,820	44,747	8,219	23%
Marysville	38%	14,000	14,852	15,892	17,004	3,004	21%
Milford Center	2%	631	643	656	815	184	29%
Plain City	6%	2,302	2,440	2,586	2,753	451	20%
Richwood	6%	2,195	2,326	2,446	2,593	398	18%

Source: Ohio Department of Development, 1996.

E. Births, Deaths, Immigration and Outmigration Forecast

This forecast is limited to projecting the County’s population and not the planning areas due to a lack of data available at the local level. Using rates for births, deaths and migration, these rates were applied to Union County’s 1995 population and calculated through 2020.

Table 4.9 Union County Births, Deaths, Immigration and Outmigration Forecast

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1995	36,528	n/a	n/a
2000	40,479	3,951	11%
2010	48,824	8,345	21%
2020	57,799	8,975	18%

Source: US Census 1990.

F. Build-Out Forecast

As stated earlier, a population forecast will be prepared for each growth scenario and the final recommended land use plan. The Planning Team will prepare those as the scenarios are developed with the Long Range Planning Committee.

G. Aggregated Forecasts

Aggregating the above forecasts by planning area results in the potential low and high population figures for future decades. The following tables and accompanying charts present these forecasts for each planning area.

1. Union County

The preceding forecasts result in an increase in the County’s population by 2020 ranging from 44,747 (low) to 74,647 (high). The forecasted increase in population may be as low as 8,219 persons and as high as 38,119 persons, a difference of 29,900.

Table 4.10 Union County Aggregated Forecasts (2000-2020)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Difference</u>
1995	36,528	n/a	n/a
2000	39,085	42,141	3,056
2010	41,820	56,086	14,266
2020	44,747	74,647	29,900

2. Marysville

The forecasts indicate an increase in the City’s population by 2020 ranging from 17,004 (low) to 28,282 (high). The forecasted increase in Marysville’s population may be as low as 3,004 persons or as high as 14,282.

Table 4.11 Marysville Aggregated Forecasts (2000-2020)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Difference</u>
1995	14,000	n/a	n/a
2000	14,852	16,217	1,365
2010	15,892	21,348	5,456
2020	17,004	28,282	11,278

3. Milford Center

The forecasts indicate a potential increase or decrease in the Village’s population by 2020 ranging from 430 (low) to 1,289 (high). The forecasted decrease for Milford Center may be as low as -201 persons or it may increase by 658 persons.

Table 4.12 Milford Center Aggregated Forecasts (2000-2020)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Difference</u>
1995	631	n/a	n/a
2000	584	728	144
2010	501	969	468
2020	430	1,289	859

4. Plain City

The forecasts indicate a potential increase in the Village’s population by 2020 ranging from 2,419 (low) to 6,033 (high). These results show that Plain City’s population may increase by a low of 117 persons or increase by 3,731 persons.

Table 4.13 Plain City Aggregated Forecasts (2000-2020)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Difference</u>
1995	2,302	n/a	n/a
2000	2,325	3,152	827
2010	2,372	4,361	1,989
2020	2,419	6,033	3,614

## 3. Richwood

The potential increase in the Village's population by 2020 may range from 2,199 (low) to 5,960 (high). These results show that Richwood's population may increase by a low of 13 persons or a high of 3,774 persons.

Table 4.14 Richwood Aggregated Forecasts (2000-2020)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Difference</u>
1990	2,186	n/a	n/a
2000	2,190	3,054	864
2010	2,195	4,266	2,071
2020	2,199	5,960	3,761

## H. Impacts

As illustrated above, population forecasts can be projected in a variety of ways. Using the low and high aggregated forecasts, the population impacts can be assessed in many ways. One method is to estimate the future residential land use demand. A second method is to assess the demand for parkland. In order to estimate the impact, the following information is necessary:

1. Union County's person per household (pph) average size is 2.73 persons (1990 Census). The countywide pph average is used for the planning areas. The forecasted population increases would result in the construction of new single- and multi-family dwellings (calculation: forecasted population/pph to determine new dwellings). *See Table 4.15.*
2. Using an average residential density (1.0 units/acre for the County, 3.5 units/acre for Marysville and 4.0 units/acre for Milford Center, Plain City and Richwood) the range of new dwellings would result in increased acreage for new residential land use (calculation: [new dwellings/density] \* 1.15 to determine gross acreage). *See Table 4.15.*
3. A standard for national parkland criteria is 10 acres per 1,000 residents. That standard can be applied to the forecasted population for the planning areas (calculation: forecasted population / 1,000 x 10 to determine potential parkland acreage). *See Table 4.16.* This is only a general attempt to look at land use demands. Potential land use demands based on the population projections include:

Table 4.15 Potential Demand for Residential Land Use by 2020

	Dwelling Units		Residential Acreage	
	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
Union County	3,011	13,963	3,463	16,057
Marysville	1,100	5,232	361	1,719
Milford Center <sup>1</sup>	-73	241	-20	70
Plain City	43	1,367	12	393
Richwood	5	1,382	1	346

Note: <sup>1</sup>As a result of decreasing population forecasts for this community, the negative number indicates the potential vacancy of dwelling units and/or acreage.

Table 4.16 Potential Demand for Parkland by 2020

	Parkland Acreage	
	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
Union County	82 acres	381 acres
Marysville	30 acres	143 acres
Milford Center	0 acres	7 acres
Plain City	1 acres	37 acres
Richwood	0 acres	37 acres

These assessments do not take into account detailed estimates of retail services and impacts on public services, especially water and sewer. Those assessments will be made to assist the Steering Committee in evaluating growth scenarios and the land use plan.

## G. Development Constraints and Opportunities

The presence of different factors, such as corridors, key development areas, activity areas and physical barriers affect the County’s growth. Such factors may result in opportunities and constraints for development in Union County.

### 1. Corridors

Primary corridors include existing and proposed transportation routes into the County. US 33 is a primary traffic corridor. This heavily traveled route moves people and commerce between Central Ohio and the rest of the state by connecting I-75 and I-270 around Columbus. Other primary corridors crossing the County include SR 31, SR 347, SR 4, US 42 and US 36. US 42 is a primary corridor for truck traffic.

### 2. Land Use Clusters and Key Development Areas

Key development areas are sites where factors such as development activity create an environment favorable to development. Development continues to occur along the US 33 Corridor, particularly in the southeast corner of the County. Industrial development continues to occur on the southeast edge of Marysville near the Scotts facility, the western edge of the County near the Honda of America facility and along Industrial Parkway. Residential development is increasing on the fringe of Marysville and Dublin. Large scale residential development may occur in the New California area along US 42 into Plain City.

3. Activity Area

Activity areas may be classified as either regional or local based on the attraction level of people to the area. The Union County Fairgrounds serve as a regional activity area and the Plain City and Richwood Fairgrounds serve as local activity areas. In addition, a regional activity center in the form of a metropolitan park is proposed in the southeast corner of the County.

4. Barriers

Barriers may be natural or built and have the ability to interrupt a city's expansion. Barriers are often considered as assets because they may serve as greenbelts and link parks and other natural areas in the County. In Union County, barriers include the Darby Creeks, Mill Creek, Blues Creek, Bokes Creek, Rush Creek and Fulton Creek. In addition, the County has several historic covered bridges which may be impacted by increasing traffic from development. These bridges include the Reed Bridge, Little Darby Bridge, Treacle Creek Bridge, Spain Creek Bridge and Upper Darby Bridge.

H. Recreation and Open Space

Recreation and open space planning in the County and planning areas is very limited. Generally, current efforts are focusing on six areas including Allen Township, Dublin, Marysville, Milford Center, Plain City and Richwood.

1. Allen Township

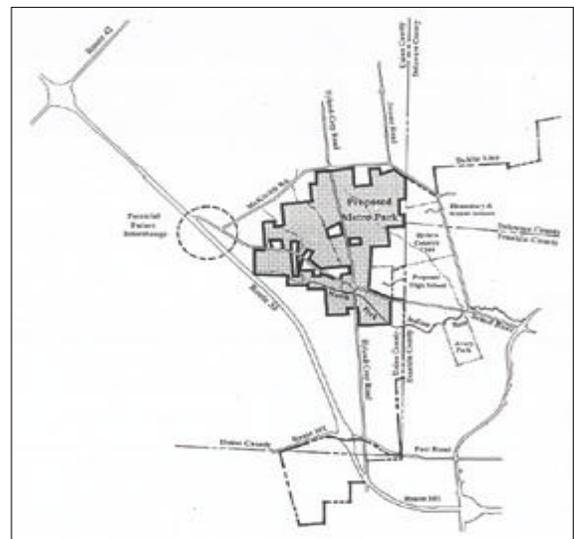
A State of Ohio Nature Works grant has been received for Allen Township Park. The grant money in the amount of \$20,500 is to fund site development, play equipment and a picnic area.

2. City of Dublin

The proposed Dublin Community Plan (1997) recommends an 830-acre metropolitan park in the southeast corner of Union County. The park is to take advantage of natural features such as North Fork Indian Run, existing tree cover and topography.

3. City of Marysville

Currently, the municipality is attempting to establish a framework upon which to make decisions for the location of future parkland relative to proposed residential developments. The effort is still in the policy formulation stages.



*The Dublin Community Plan recommends this general location in Jerome Township for a new metropolitan park.*

### 4. Village of Milford Center

Contained in the Village's subdivision regulations is a parks and recreation facilities plan. This plan identifies open space and passive recreation along the Big Darby Creek floodplain between Reed and State Streets. Public and semi-public areas are proposed where the creek enters and exits the Village along western and eastern limits. A long range recreation plan is proposed and stipulates standards for recreation facilities and notes that such facilities are limited to the school playground.

### 5. Village of Plain City

The Village recently added 27 acres to its parkland system.

### 6. Village of Richwood

Park and recreation efforts in the Village are focusing on Richwood Lake. The Village has received \$30,000 in grant money from the Ohio Nature Works grant to be used for new furniture and athletic courts.

## I. Natural Environment

### 1. Darby Creeks

Flowing through the southern portion of the County, the Big and Little Darby Creeks are one of ten state-designated scenic rivers in Ohio. State scenic river status was received in 1984 and the federal equivalent program, National Scenic River Status, was received in 1994. The Darby Creek watershed encompasses approximately 580 square miles and consists of 245 miles of tributaries. The Creek passes through seven counties, 14 townships and six incorporated communities. It is unique because it is home to a variety of warm freshwater habitats and is one of 13 National Scenic Rivers that is state managed and generally flows through private lands.

The Darby Creeks contain an abundance of wildlife within the 85 river miles that have received the state scenic river designation. Approximately 86 species of fish reside in the system and 39 species of mollusk. Ecologically significant features total 107 according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. There are a number of species classified as either endangered (14), threatened or potentially threatened (28) by the state and federal government. The County has enacted setback and buffer requirements for areas within floodplains of the County's flood areas. The Darby Creek Scenic River Advisory Council and Darby Creek Partnership play an important role in managing the scenic river.

### 2. Natural Constraints and Opportunities

The existence and location of natural resources in Union County create natural opportunities and constraints that may impact development.

#### A. Natural Constraints

Poorly drained soils and floodplains act as constraints on development. It appears that a majority of the general soil associations are characterized by poor drainage.

Marysville, Milford Center and Plain City are located along floodplain areas. Generally, the County is located over a limestone bedrock aquifer and buried valley aquifer.

B. Natural Opportunities

The County has a number of important creeks and tributaries. These provide open space and natural corridors and serve as places for recreation and natural habitats. The Darby Creeks are an important asset to the County and surrounding region, and serve as a basis for creating natural amenities in areas that are becoming more urbanized, such as Marysville and Plain City.



A. Overview

Agriculture is a very important component of Union County’s economy, land use and history – and its preservation is critical to the County’s quality of life. Farmland and prime agricultural soils are a threatened resource in Union County, partly due to metropolitan growth as well as changes in the way farming is conducted. The Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on two key objectives: preserving farmland as a natural, nonrenewable resource and supporting the family farm as an important component of the County’s economic base.

B. Goal

The agriculture goal is *to sustain and promote a stable agricultural economy with an emphasis on farmland preservation.*

C. Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 – Preserve Farmland

Union County should continue to strive to preserve its rich farmland and agricultural heritage. Farmland and prime agricultural soils are a nonrenewable resource. Strategies should include strengthening state legislation provisions that provide the County and townships with additional tools. Specifically, these tools should include creating a non-profit land trust, promoting CAUV and agricultural districts, strengthening township zoning provisions and County subdivision regulations and encouraging appropriate land use patterns and clustered development.

*Strategies*

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

The County should appoint a study committee of residents and farmers to consider establishing a countywide PDR program. This committee should work with the County Prosecutor, the State Office of Farmland Preservation and the American Farmland Trust to draft program criteria and administration, study and recommend funding options and prepare a recommendation to County Commissioners. Once adopted, the program should begin implementation. Districts should be located outside of city/village growth areas.

*Implementation: County Commissioners and PDR Study Committee*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

- B. Consider support of state legislative changes to permit township adoption of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, then encouraging local programs.

The County should consider supporting state legislative changes that would allow townships to adopt local Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs. Individual townships should appoint a study committee of residents and farmers to consider establishing a local TDR program. This committee should work with the County Prosecutor, the State Office of Farmland Preservation and the American Farmland Trust to draft program criteria and administration, study and recommend funding options and prepare a recommendation to legislative authorities. Once

adopted, the program should begin implementation. Districts should be located outside of city/village growth areas.

*Implementation: Local Governments with Adopted Zoning Codes and TDR Study Committee*

*Timeframe: Long Term*

- C. Support state legislative changes that regulate large-scale livestock and poultry operations. Concern has been raised by the public that large-scale farm operations, especially livestock and poultry operations, would have a negative impact on the County's environment. Legislative proposals have been submitted to increase state permitting requirements. The County should submit testimony in support of these proposals. Local officials should be cognizant of large-scale farm operations when considering residential rezoning proposals.

*Implementation: County Commissioners and County Board of Health*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

- D. Consider creation of a non-profit land trust.  
The County should appoint a study committee of residents and farmers to consider establishing a countywide land trust. This committee should work with the American Farmland Trust and OSU Extension to draft program criteria and administration, study and recommend funding options and prepare a recommendation to County Commissioners. The land trust should function to purchase or receive as a donation outstanding agricultural land and/or natural resources or conservation easements. The appointed committee should be provided administrative funds for a two-year commitment and should initiate the trust.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, OSU Extension and Land Trust Study Committee*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

- E. Encourage participation in the CAUV program and Agricultural Districts.  
The County should continue to promote the CAUV Program and Agricultural Districts through OSU Extension, Union County Soil and Water Conservation District and the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Districts should be located outside of city/village growth areas.

*Implementation: County Commissioners and NRCS*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- F. Encourage adoption of agricultural protection zoning.  
Agricultural protection zoning districts help to insulate working farms from intrusive nonfarm development, such as residential subdivisions. These districts discourage nonfarm development in agricultural areas and support farm operations by reducing the number of potential land use and operational conflicts. Districts should be located outside of city/village growth areas.

Township zoning resolutions should be amended to protect farmland. The following options should be considered:

1. The minimum lot size for a single-family residence should be restricted. An appropriate standard would be 10 acres, 20 acres or 40 acres as the minimum size of a lot for a single-family residence.
2. Additional single-family lots could be permitted in the district under special circumstances. These would be controlled as a conditional use. The number of splits would be limited, however, by the size of the parcel. For instance, one split could be permitted per 10 acres. Or the splits could be tied to the recommended gross density per the Comprehensive Plan.
3. All lot splits would be required to be clustered on a single private driveway with joint access.

Townships should consider adopting an agricultural protection zoning district if support exists in the community. Applying the district to land through the rezoning process should occur either in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan or at the initiation of individual property owners. The County should prepare a model district as part of a larger update to township zoning, which could serve as a starting point. Communities that have adopted similar zoning districts include Washington Township in Butler County and Preble County. *See Land Use, Objective 1, Strategy C and Natural Resources, Objective 3, Strategy A.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee and Townships with Adopted Zoning Resolutions*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

G. Strengthen subdivision regulations.

County and municipal subdivision regulations should be amended to include more stringent standards as a means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan (Richwood should adopt subdivision regulations). The following regulations should be considered:

1. Environmental assessment requirements that require subdividers to inventory and assess environmental features, including poorly drained soils, prime agricultural soils, topography and slope, woodlands, wetlands and species habitat.
2. Provisions that restrict the number of permitted lot splits from a tax parcel. These provisions could link the quantity to a date or could limit the number on an annual basis.
3. Joint access should be required in conjunction with stronger access management standards.
4. Soil erosion and sediment control regulations should be adopted in conjunction with the Soil and Water Conservation District as administrators.

Once the amended regulations are drafted, educational sessions should be initiated for major users and clients. *See Land Use, Objective 1, Strategy C.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, County Engineer's Office and Municipalities*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

- H. Encourage open-space subdivisions and clustering of new development.

Regulations should be updated to strongly promote open-space subdivisions and further limit the number of permitted lot splits. These regulations should encourage residential densities compatible with this strategy and discourage lower densities by limiting the number of homesites for undeveloped acreage. *See Land Use, Objective 1, Strategy E.*

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

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

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

Future population and development expansion should be directed in and around existing population centers of communities principally located in Union County and where water and sanitary sewer services are to be provided. Development should be discouraged outside these areas using the following actions:

1. Update-township zoning resolutions in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan relative to land use patterns and residential density.
2. Establish formal utility service area boundaries, discouraging annexation that is outside those boundaries and encouraging annexation within those boundaries.

*See Land Use, Objective 1, Strategy C and Utilities, Objective 2, Strategy F.*

*Implementation: Cities, Villages and Townships with Adopted Zoning Codes*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

## Objective 2 - Support the Family Farm

Supporting the family farm in Union County involves providing assistance to ensure such businesses remain viable. Strategies include promoting CAUV and agricultural districts, promoting estate planning, providing technical assistance in farm management and financial operations, supporting activities for farm youth and facilitating local ownership of farmland.

### *Strategies*

- A. Encourage participation in the CAUV program and agricultural districts.

*See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy E.*

- B. Promote estate planning by farm landowners.

The County should work with the American Farmland Trust to promote estate planning to agricultural landowners. OSU Extension and the Farm Bureau should develop an annual workshop to promote estate planning and provide technical assistance.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, OSU Extension and Farm Bureau*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- C. Expand technical assistance on farm management and finances.  
OSU Extension and Farm Bureau should initiate programs offering technical assistance to existing agribusiness to ensure long-term viability in Union County.  
*Implementation: OSU Extension and Farm Bureau*  
*Timeframe: Ongoing*
- D. Continue to support local fairs, 4-H and Future Farmers of America.  
The County should continue to support all farming activities and associations which educate and encourage Union County's youth – especially as it relates to agriculture, farming and animal husbandry. The OSU Extension and Farm Bureau should take the lead in supporting these efforts.  
*Implementation: County Commissioners, OSU Extension and Farm Bureau*  
*Timeframe: Ongoing*
- E. Encourage locally-owned farmland.  
The County Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) should consider establishing a clearinghouse for the transfer of farmland between local farm operators. The OSU Extension and Farm Bureau could assist in establishing and promoting the clearinghouse.  
*Implementation: Community Improvement Corporation, OSU Extension and Farm Bureau*  
*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*



## A. Overview

Community facilities and services provide for a range of public needs, in the areas of fire, emergency medical services, local telephone service, public safety, education and public health. This element addresses the provision of such facilities and services and addresses several key issues.

## B. Goal

The community facilities and services goal is *to improve community facilities and services with an emphasis on education and safety services.*

## C. Objectives and Strategies

### Objective 1 - Determine the Best Means of Providing Fire and EMS Services

Fire and EMS services are crucial to protecting the public health, safety and general welfare. The County Commissioners have initiated a study to consider options for managing these services in the unincorporated areas.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Appoint study committee and recommend a strategy.

The County appointed a study committee in 1997 to consider various options for managing Fire and EMS services. The recommendations should be brought to the public for general discussion. If the recommendations have public support, are feasible and funding is available, the County should proceed with implementation.

*Implementation: County Commissioners and Study Committee*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Mid Term*

### Objective 2 - Establish Unified Local Telephone Service

Unified local telephone service has been identified as a priority within Union County. The County should continue participation in regional solutions and take local action.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Appoint a study committee and recommend a strategy.

The County should appoint a study committee to consider various options for establishing unified local telephone service. The committee should work with local telephone providers to identify options to unify local service. The committee should also coordinate with the Central Ohio Regional Forum, which has been studying toll-free extended area service. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) should be brought into the discussion as well.

*Implementation: County Commissioners*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

### Objective 3 - Ensure Communities Continue to be Safe as Growth Occurs

A host of local law enforcement activities should continue to ensure that public safety remains a priority, especially as the County grows. Among the various activities are block watch programs, DARE, youth activities, volunteer efforts and coordinated dispatching.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Encourage local participation and support of block watch programs.

The County should encourage expanding community policing by encouraging additional outreach programs, particularly among the County's youth. Neighborhood block watch programs should be expanded where requested by individual neighborhoods.

*Implementation: All Local Law Enforcement Agencies*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- B. Support and expand prevention programs for youth.

The County should continue to support DARE and other youth prevention programs.

*Implementation: All Social Service Agencies, Local Law Enforcement Agencies and School Districts*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- C. Support and encourage youth activity programs that provide an alternative to anti-social behavior.

Youth activity programs should continue to be offered, through DARE and other avenues, to provide youth with alternatives to anti-social behavior. Teen services including recreational activities, education support and counseling should be further developed and expanded to meet the needs of the County's youth, particularly during after school hours and the summer months. Public-private ventures and student involvement should be encouraged.

*Implementation: All Social Service Agencies and Local Law Enforcement Agencies*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- D. Support volunteer efforts to support local law enforcement.

Where feasible, local law enforcement efforts should be augmented by volunteers. This is an issue that should be decided by local law enforcement officials.

*Implementation: All Local Law Enforcement Agencies*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- E. Coordinate dispatching.

Where feasible, dispatching should be coordinated.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Sheriff's Department and All Local Law Enforcement Agencies*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

### Objective 4 - Ensure Local Schools Meet the Needs of a Growing Population

Public school districts have partnered with the County and local units of government in providing services to residents. Communities and school districts should continue to improve coordination and communication relative to planning, zoning and economic development policies. Labor force development programs should continue as well.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Improve coordination and communication between communities and local school districts in planning, zoning and economic development issues.

The County and local communities must continually communicate with local school districts regarding development trends, planning issues and zoning proposals. Likewise economic development policy must be coordinated with districts, particularly when district approval is required for key incentives.

*Implementation: Local Government Officials and School Districts*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

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

County resources to strengthen the existing work force should be made more available to local residents. The starting point is better communication about what is available. Success stories motivate people to use these services. Programs should be carefully crafted to address technical aspects associated with future labor market needs. Successful entrepreneurs and small business owners should be encouraged to participate and share their experiences with others. *See Economic Development, Objective 1, Strategy B.*

*Implementation: Office of Economic Development and Vocational Education Facilities*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

### Objective 5 - Support Community Health and Mental Health Services

Community health and mental health services should be supported through the provision of local services to countywide residents, development of a secure funding base, promotion of health-enhancing behaviors and ensuring development protects the public.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Promote local health and social service resources to countywide residents.

The County medical community should provide residents, workers and visitors with fine health and social services. Care should be constantly improved to ensure the community receives the highest services possible. Recruiting the best physicians, nurses and staff is an important component, as is ensuring all County facilities are fully equipped.

*Implementation: County Health Board, Medical Facilities and Health Care Providers*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- B. Develop a secure funding base for local public health services.

The County should continue to target available resources that support local public health services. This includes tax levies, state and federal grants, local matching funds and staff assistance. Where possible, alternatives should be investigated, such as partnering with the private sector.

*Implementation: County Health Board and All Local Jurisdictions*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- C. Promote health-enhancing behaviors to countywide residents.

The County Health Department should continue to promote wellness and health-enhancing behaviors among county residents. An education campaign using the media, literature, speakers bureau and displays for public events (e.g. county fair, malls, etc.) should be implemented.

*Implementation: County Health Board*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- D. Ensure development permits protect the public health.

A comprehensive review of the County and local development regulations should be undertaken to identify any shortfalls that affect public health. Ongoing review and approval of permits should be driven by ensuring the public health, safety and welfare is protected.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, County Health Board and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

### Objective 6 - Establish a Community Center(s)

The public has indicated an interest in establishing a multiple purpose community center(s). The County should study this desire to determine if a need exists and whether the County can effectively respond.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Appoint a study committee and recommend a strategy.

The County should appoint a study committee to consider the various options for establishing a multiple purpose community center(s). The committee should be comprised of representatives from various County and local agencies, and civic organizations. If a positive recommendation is provided by the study committee, a plan to develop, fund and operate a community center(s) should be developed. Once approved and funding secured, the plan should be implemented.

*Implementation: County Commissioners and Study Committee*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Long Term*

## A. Overview

The focus of economic development policies is to diversify the County's local economic base, to strengthen downtowns and businesses that support agriculture. Union County has been very successful to date in building a strong local economy and additional strategies are recommended to further diversify these accomplishments. The Land Use Element should be used to geographically orient the application of economic strategies, especially relative to future industrial and commercial sites.

## B. Goal

The economic development goal is *a planned, diversified and expanded countywide economic base (tax base) and community central business district revitalization that provides for a variety of agricultural, commercial and industrial business opportunities and employment.*

## C. Objectives and Strategies

### Objective 1 - Diversify and Expand the County's Economic Base

The County should continue its efforts to diversify and expand the economic base, including efforts within the unincorporated area as well as individual communities, such as Marysville and Richwood. The Land Use Element should be linked to the Economic Development Element to provide a geographic focus to the following strategies. Tourism is an economic sector that has great promise for Union County, particularly given efforts to designate Middleburg-Plain Road as a scenic byway and constructing a bikepath along Big Darby Creek.

#### *Strategies*

##### A. Continue retention and expansion activities.

The Office of Economic Development and Community Improvement Corporation should continue retention and expansion activities. Efforts should focus on the County's strongest economic sectors and those businesses that can be expected to provide Union County with significant economic contributions over the long term.

*Implementation: Office of Economic Development and Community Improvement Corporation*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

##### B. Continue to encourage work force development.

Work force development is the leading economic development priority in communities across the country. The County should continue to work with existing job training, employment services and educational resource groups to define how County residents can receive better preparation for future jobs. These services must stress preparation for higher quality jobs in existing and new industries, as well as training in entrepreneurship and self employment. The County should work with Columbus State Community College, OSU branch campus at Marion and local technical/vocational schools to design appropriate course work and training that would strengthen the local work force. Such course work should be responsive to

local major employers' needs. *See Community Facilities and Services, objective 4, Strategy B.*

*Implementation: Office of Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- C. Encourage industrial and commercial development in appropriate locations that can be serviced by utilities and transportation.

The Land Use Plans recommended in this Comprehensive Plan should be implemented, particularly as they relate to land use patterns, utilities and transportation. The following actions should be considered:

1. Reviewing informal development proposals and local zoning decisions should occur in light of the Plan's land use, utility and transportation recommendations.
2. Approving tax incentives should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's land use, utility and transportation recommendations.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- D. Continue to market Union County development sites.

The Office of Economic Development should continue to market development sites. The land use recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan should be integrated into the site inventory at the parcel level. This information should be maintained in a digital data base with related digital graphics. This would serve as an informational base to link with the County Engineer's growing GIS system. The marketing program should continue to be supported by the right mix of direct mail, public relations special events and electronic marketing techniques.

*Implementation: Office of Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- E. Provide technical assistance to community leaders and businesses.

Most businesses need help in using development services provided by local government. The County should provide technical assistance to local firms seeking County government services related to zoning, traffic, business permits and other matters. The County Engineer's Office is proposing a one-stop center to assist in this regard. This assistance would speed up the process of working with local businesses and would reduce their frustration with government bureaucracy.

These policies should provide for added service that would not be available to businesses locating elsewhere. Improved parking services should be one of those benefits, as well as support from the County in marketing downtown businesses. A Business Improvement District (BID) should be established using special assessments to fund improvements producing common benefits to downtown businesses.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, County Engineer's Office and City of Marysville*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

F. Continue to encourage and support tourism.

The Office of Economic Development should work with tourism entities to prepare a strategy of performance targets and a marketing plan for enhancing tourism. The focus should be the Big and Little Darby Creeks where a number of separate activities are underway. The following actions should be considered:

1. Support designation of Middleburg-Plain City Road (CR 57) between SR 245 and SR 161 as a scenic byway designation. This area contains four covered bridges and one historic bridge.
2. Support construction of the proposed Hilliard-Urbana rails-to-trails project through Union County along abandoned rail right-of-way that parallels Big Darby Creek. The bike trail should be linked to Marysville via the DP&L powerline right-of-way.
3. Develop a pre-1900 working farm - as a regional public park - along a nature interpretive center along the Big Darby Creek. The farm would be similar to Slate Run Historical Farm operated by the Columbus Metropolitan Parks District.
4. Support the proposed national wildlife preserve assuming the interests of the agricultural community are properly addressed.
5. Enhance tourism-related businesses in Plain City, Unionville Center and Milford Center. Appropriate businesses include specialty retail (e.g. antiques, crafts, outfitters), restaurants and lodging (e.g. bed and breakfast inn).
6. Support the preservation and restoration of historic sites, including homesteads, cemeteries, country schools and farm buildings and covered and historic bridges.

A task force should be appointed to coordinate these efforts and a formal development plan prepared. Continued funding support by the County Commissioners should be encouraged, as well as other local and state funds for tourism and economic development projects.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

G. Investigate ways to improve funding to support Strategies A through F.

The County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce and Office of Economic Development should investigate various options for funding economic development activities under this objective. A detailed needs assessment should be completed, funding alternatives identified and fundraising undertaken to implement priority strategies.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce, Office of Economic Development and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

## Objective 2 - Encourage Revitalization of City and Village Downtowns

The downtowns of Marysville, Richwood, Milford Center and Plain City, among others, are important centers of civic and economic activity. The County should continue to encourage and support local revitalization efforts to ensure downtowns remain strong centers of retail activity and employment opportunities, as well as another component in attracting tourism dollars to the County's economy.

### *Strategies*

- A. Support participation in the Ohio CDBG Small Cities commercial revitalization program. The County should continue to provide technical assistance to cities and villages eligible to participate in Ohio CDBG Small Cities commercial revitalization program. The focus should be Marysville, Milford Center, Plain City and Richwood.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Office of Economic Development and Marysville, Milford Center, Plain City and Richwood*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

- B. Encourage concentrated commercial development in appropriate locations. Future commercial (retail) development should be encouraged to concentrate in appropriate locations with water and sanitary sewer service and adequate road access. Scattered retail development should be discouraged.

*Implementation: Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- C. Encourage weekend farmers markets and other special events in downtowns. A program should be developed to promote and support farm markets in communities throughout the County, using the Marysville experience as a starting point. These markets should be linked to both tourism and local demand for fresh fruits and vegetables. Restrictive zoning regulations pertaining to farm markets should be identified and removed. The OSU Extension and Farm Bureau should help coordinate and implement this effort.

*Implementation: OSU Extension, Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

## Objective 3 - Support Agribusiness

Agriculture is an important component of the County's economic base and is a historic way of life in Union County. This is particularly true of smaller scale, family-owned and -operated farms and businesses that support agriculture. Strategies should be undertaken which support and promote such enterprises.

## *Strategies*

- A. Continue to promote businesses that support agriculture.

Businesses that support agriculture should continue to be encouraged and promoted to the same extent as other commercial and industrial businesses to help maintain the County's diverse economy. Such businesses include implement dealers, grain mills, seed dealers, etc. An agribusiness council should be established to work with the Office of Economic Development to identify efforts and actions necessary to encourage and promote agribusiness.

*Implementation: Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce and Farm Bureau*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- B. Focus retention and attraction efforts on businesses that support agriculture.

Existing businesses that support agriculture should continue to be contacted on a regular basis to understand the unique issues faced by these businesses. Retention and expansion efforts should continue to focus assistance with site selection, utility services, permitting, financial and tax incentives, and other issues. It is essential that the County continue the marketing communications component of this program that actively encourages existing agriculturally-related businesses to expand and make appropriate use of County services to facilitate expansion. The retention and expansion program should identify how Union County, the Ohio Department of Development and other groups could help businesses that support agriculture with growth needs.

*Implementation: Office of Economic Development and Farm Bureau*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

- C. Continue to support local fairs and market agricultural products.

The County should continue to support all farming activities and associations which encourage and promote agriculture. The OSU Extension should continue its marketing efforts of agricultural products through local fairs and other activities. Local fairs offer an excellent opportunity to market agricultural products to interested parties and the general public.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce, OSU Extension and Farm Bureau*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*



## A. Overview

Housing is one of the ingredients in providing County residents with an outstanding quality of life. However, with the growth trends impacting the County and land values, it is more difficult for residents to find affordable housing options. A full range of housing types and styles are to be encouraged in Union County to ensure a balanced community.

## B. Goal

The housing goal is *to establish a balance of housing types and styles planned for different income levels, ages and physical abilities while maintaining property and quality of life values.*

## C. Objectives and Strategies

### Objective 1 - Encourage Housing for All Income Levels

The County has established a goal of encouraging a balance of housing types and styles, ensuring housing opportunities for all income levels. Relevant strategies include targeting state and local resources to facilitate the development of affordable housing, considering establishing a metropolitan housing authority, encouraging single-family homes in existing communities and maintaining property values.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Target state and local resources to facilitate affordable housing (new and rehabilitated).

The County should continue to target available resources that facilitate affordable housing. This includes state and federal grants, local matching funds, staff assistance, regulatory relief and capital improvements. Where possible alternatives should be investigated, such as tax incentives or partnering with lending institutions. A joint Comprehensive Housing Improvement Strategy (CHIS) should be prepared by the County and local jurisdictions to facilitate funding opportunities.

The County should identify and study various incentives (financial, regulatory, etc.) that would encourage the construction of new housing specifically for that portion of the local low- and moderate-income housing market that is unserved. A countywide housing market study (including all cities and villages) that identifies all types of housing available (as well as housing demand) should be prepared to establish a baseline. The study should then be maintained and updated as a means of monitoring the market and success of current and future incentive programs. Incentives should ensure that County residents are provided a full spectrum of housing options. Such options should be geographically dispersed throughout the County and not concentrated in a few municipalities.

*Implementation: County Commissioners*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

- B. Investigate the creation of a metropolitan housing authority.

The County should consider establishing a metropolitan housing authority under the provisions of the Ohio Revised Code as a means of providing affordable housing, elderly housing and housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. The County should study experiences of Ohio counties of similar size and makeup.

*Implementation: County Commissioners*

*Timeframe: Long Term*

- C. Encourage single-family homes in existing communities.

In supporting future residential development, the County and local communities should emphasize in-fill new construction on existing, zoned and serviced sites - as opposed to expansion of existing communities. If a community lacks appropriate in-fill sites, then it should support residential expansion within existing utility service areas and in conjunction with the necessary infrastructure.

In the US 33 Corridor around US 42, however, the County will support new residential development within a defined growth and utility area as reflected on the South Planning Area land use map. This area is intended to provide for a more organized growth pattern that addresses environmental, transportation and service related issues in Union County, in a well-planned and sensitive manner that preserves countywide farmland and open space.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- D. Maintain property values.

The County should identify sources of financial and other assistance that can be used by property owners faced with code enforcement issues. Such sources could include state and federal loans and grants, CDBG-funded lend-a-tool programs, and low-cost financing arranged by the County through local financial institutions. Providing this assistance will improve the County's ability to maintain property values by successfully enforcing zoning, health and building violations. Also, the County Health Board, municipalities and villages should consider – either together or individually – adopting a property maintenance code as another tool.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Health Board and Local Government Official*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

## Objective 2 - Support Senior and Assisted Living Housing Opportunities

Where feasible the County should support the development of senior and assisted living housing opportunities, as one means of ensuring residents can live their entire lives in Union County. State and local resources should be targeted to facilitate this objective.

## *Strategies*

- A. Target state and local resources to facilitate senior and assisted living housing (new and rehabilitated).

Senior citizens and those in need of daily assistance often are faced with the issue of finding suitable affordable housing. The County should encourage appropriate housing options through all available state and federal programs.

Transportation support services can be vitally important. The Union County Department of Human Services is currently investigating transportation options, including moving toward a Coordinated Agency System with the goal of transitioning to a New Entity for transportation coordination and services. This effort should be supported.

Private and nonprofit proposals for empty nester, independent living, assisted living, etc. should be supported by the County, particularly where such proposals are supported by the Land Use Element and are well-integrated into adjacent neighborhoods. *See Transportation, Objective 2, Strategy 1.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*



## A. Overview

The Land Use Element is the heart of the Comprehensive Plan and provides a framework for considering all other aspects of this document. The Land Use Element seeks to direct growth to appropriate locations - where water, sanitary sewer, roads and community facilities are or will be available - and where neighborhoods can develop. The balance of the County's rural character, defined by prime agricultural soils and historic farms and homesteads, should be protected as an important piece of the County's history and quality of life. Detailed land use recommendations are provided for the five key subareas - Marysville, Milford Center, Plain City, Richwood and US 33 Corridor/South Planning Area.

## B. Goal

The land use goal is *to establish a coordinated and consistent land use system based on intergovernmental cooperation, planned controlled growth and innovative land use controls that facilitate and strengthen rural character, small towns and Union County's quality of life.*

## C. Objectives and Strategies

### Objective 1 - Encourage Well-Managed Growth

The primary focus of the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage well-managed growth, which is vitally important to the County's long term health and viability. But this growth must be directed to appropriate locations that can be serviced by water, sanitary sewer, roads and community facilities. Concurrently the rural landscape and productive farmland (a nonrenewable resource) of Union County must be protected from very-low-density residential development. The strategies under this objective focus on coordination among units of local government, preparing detailed development plans, updating development regulations, defining utility service subareas and encouraging clustered development.

#### *Strategies*

##### A. Coordinate County and local growth management activities.

The County should continue to pursue stronger working relationships with and between units of local government relative to land use, water and sanitary sewer services, and transportation. It is in the County's best interest to create strong, ongoing partnerships and to avoid unnecessary conflicts and disagreements.

Concurrently, local governments must be willing to work in a trusting and open way with the County and with each other. A host of land use, zoning, subdivision, utility service and related issues can be addressed in this way. Strategies in this Plan will be dependent on a partnership to ensure success. The Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission (LUCRPC) should assist in ensuring coordination. Local zoning provisions for planned unit developments should be integrated into the County's subdivision process.

At the same time, an annual forum should be held to discuss County land use, planning and development issues. This would be a public event, held on an annual basis and at which progress on the Comprehensive Plan could be discussed. Such a forum could be based upon a similar effort in Wayne County.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, All Local Government Officials and Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

B. Prepare joint development plans for critical areas.

There are several critical areas of Union County for which a detailed development plan should be prepared – as an adjunct planning activity that would implement the Comprehensive Plan.

Development plans would base recommendations at the tax parcel level – as opposed to the Comprehensive Plan which is more general. Development plans would identify land use preferences and density at the tax parcel level, necessary infrastructure that supports preferred land uses, and identify necessary community facilities (e.g., parks, schools). Development plans would also consider urban form, local agricultural preservation activities, open space protection and zoning code updates. These plans should be prepared jointly by the County and local jurisdictions.

A Development Plan should be in place and ready for implementation. Development approvals - in the form of rezonings, site plans, subdivision plats and health permits should be in conformance with the Development Plan unless the deviation is a conscious choice by local officials and is reasonable.

A Development Plan should be prepared for the planning areas of Marysville and Richwood, as well as each of the following planning subareas:

1. US 33 and US 42 interchange.
2. Jerome Township east of US 33 and south of Brock Road.
3. Jerome Township west of US 33 and south of US 42.
4. Industrial Parkway Corridor between Scottslawn Road and Taylor Road.
5. US 33 Corridor between Logan County and Bear Swamp Road.
6. US 42 Corridor northeast of US 33 to Delaware County.
7. Big Darby Creek/Middleburg-Plain City Road Historic Corridor, including Milford Center and Plain City.

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

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, All Local Government Officials and Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

C. Encourage up-to-date local development regulations.

County and local development regulations – as represented in zoning codes, subdivision regulations, historic district standards and other regulations – should be strengthened to better reflect the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the public’s desire for improved aesthetics in the community. The following actions are recommended:

1. Strengthen environmental review and approval of development projects by amending subdivision regulations with stronger conservation standards and related submittal requirements that fully document conditions and provide remedies to lessen resulting impacts. Richwood should adopt subdivision regulations.
2. Provide township officials with state-of-the-art zoning tools by preparing a model township zoning resolution that implements portions of the Comprehensive Plan and enhances coordination with the County subdivision and capital improvement processes.
3. Encourage the preservation of prime agricultural soils and farmland by amending subdivision regulations with soil standards that discourage development on prime agricultural soils and by adopting agriculture-exclusive zoning at the township level and outside city/village growth areas. *See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategies F and G and Natural Resources, Objective 3, Strategy A.*
4. Strengthen County health standards to require a minimum two acres for on-site residential wastewater systems, to encourage nontraditional solutions for clustered residential development (at recommended gross densities) through alternative wastewater systems (e.g. constructed wetlands, evapotranspiration, spray irrigation and common leach fields) which do not negatively harm the natural environment, and to strengthen coordination between health permits, zoning permits, building permits and subdivision approvals. Strengthen regulation of septic outflow (leachate). *See Utilities, Objective 2, Strategy E.*
5. Adopt formal erosion and sedimentation controls at the County level. This would strengthen the County’s ability to minimize environmental impacts resulting from development – especially as those impacts relate to water quality. The Soil and Water Conservation District should hire an urban technician to administer these new controls.
6. Improve development approval coordination between the County and local units of government by creating formal coordination by amending the County Subdivision Regulations and local zoning resolutions/ordinances. Provide for joint review and comment on development applications and standardize development regulations wherever feasible. *See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy I.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, County Engineer’s Office, County Health Board, Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission, Soil and Water Conservation District and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

- D. Establish formal water and sanitary sewer subareas.

Individual utility service providers should consider formally adopting utility service subareas - which define and establish clear geographic areas in which utility service can be provided during the planning period. The utility service subareas, along with the Comprehensive Plan, would serve as a strong policy framework for preparing annual capital improvement plans and could be a basis for establishing clear annexation policies. *See Utilities, Objective 1, Strategy B and Objective 2, Strategy F.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

- E. Discourage mini-farms and encourage clustered development.

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

1. County Subdivision Regulations and township zoning resolutions should be amended to require that lots completely front onto a public or private road and must strictly meet a three-to-one lot-to-width ratio.
2. The County should further explore whether a lot size ceiling can be required on individual homesites and that those sites must be clustered together – through township zoning resolutions – to further protect prime agricultural soils and productive farmland.
3. The County should encourage the use of density bonuses in township zoning resolutions as an incentive to using clustered subdivision design. County Health Board regulations should be amended to permit shared leach fields in platted reserves with smaller lot sizes as another incentive.

*See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy H.*

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

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

## Objective 2 - Conserve Union County's Historical Places

The County has significant historical places and resources, and these should be carefully preserved and protected as growth continues. A formal Historic Resources Commission should be considered to assist the County Historical Society. Design guidelines that protect rural character should be established and implemented through the subdivision process and local zoning decisions.

### *Strategies*

- A. Continue to encourage preservation of historic sites and districts.

The County should create a formal Historic Resources Commission charged with preserving and enhancing the character of the County's historic resources and with the necessary support and tools to achieve their stated mission. The Commission should integrate its efforts with the County Historical Society. To further enhance their

efforts, the County, City, villages and townships should promote historic preservation and adaptive reuse of buildings by providing economic incentives for restoration of historic and aesthetically significant buildings via tax abatement, low interest loans, fines, grants, etc. As successful restorations take place the County should give recognition to those involved.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Historical Society and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- B. Educate the public regarding the value of historic resources.

Awareness of the County's historic resources should be expanded, along with understanding the role played by individuals and communities in historic preservation. Education is extremely important in creating awareness among individuals and in educating future generations. If a Historic Resources Commission is established (Strategy A) then that body could oversee implementation of this strategy.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- C. Conserve rural character through design guidelines.

Design issues are addressed – either overtly or covertly – through the various township zoning codes and County subdivision regulations. The process leading to the Comprehensive Plan identified a high priority among the public for the conservation of rural character. The County should develop a set of design guidelines which would provide direction relative to site planning, architectural character and treatment, landscaping, buffering and screening, signage, on-site lighting and other related design concerns. The guidelines would assist the development community with the preparation of proposals requiring site plan approval prior to issuance of a building permit. The guidelines should apply to all development types.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

## D. Standards

This section of the Land Use Element establishes a series of standards that help define and elaborate the land use recommendations and which should be incorporated into local development regulations.

### 1. Residential Density

Defining residential development by categories of density is important to understanding the land use recommendations of this element and to establish clear development expectations for individual communities.

To determine the yield of dwellings based on gross density, multiply the recommended gross density by the size of a parcel. A gross density of 3.25 results in a yield of 325 lots in a 100-acre parcel. To determine the net density for the same parcel, the land set aside for rights-of-way must be subtracted. If 10 percent is set aside for rights-of-way, then the resulting net density would equal 3.61 lots per acre. This would be equivalent to a 12,066 square foot lot.

The following densities are recommended:

Table 9.1 Recommended Residential Densities by Planning Area

<u>Planning Area</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Maximum Gross Density Per Acre (dwelling units)</u>
Marysville	single-family	3.25
	multi-family	10
	mobile homes	6
Milford Center	single-family	4
	multi-family	6
	mobile homes	6
Plain City	single-family	2.5
	multi-family	10
	mobile homes	6
Richwood	single-family	2
	multi-family	6
	mobile homes	6
South/US 33	agriculture/rural residential	.20
	agriculture/semi-rural residential	.40
	low density residential	.80
	medium density residential	1.75
	village center	6.0

**Gross Density** is defined as the maximum number of lots permitted on a parcel. Gross Density bears no relationship to the minimum lot size permitted on a parcel. Example:

Gross Density = 0.2 dwelling unit/acre  
 Lot = 100 acres  
 Yield = 20 lots  
 Average Lot Size = unknown - depends upon design

**Net Density** is defined as the maximum number of lots permitted on a parcel, having deleted right-of-way. Net Density typically more closely reflects the minimum lot size permitted on a parcel. Example:

Net Density = 0.2 dwelling unit/acre  
 Lot = 90 acres (100 acres minus 10% for right-of-way)  
 Yield = 18 lots  
 Average Lot Size = 5 acres

## 2. Rural Development Standards

The following rural development standards are recommended:

- A. Townships that are predominantly agricultural should remain so and development should be discouraged. Where development is desired and supportable based on the Land Use Element, such development should be clustered either on adjoining lots or within the same development – with open space permanently preserved.  
Utility service (water and sanitary sewer) should not be provided in these areas unless provided for in County utility plans. Agricultural-exclusive zoning should be offered to property owners wishing to preserve their rural way of life and farm operations from conflicts with residences.
- B. Buildings along public roads should be set back at least 100 feet to 200 feet. If a homesite has woods, the home should be located adjacent to those woods to blend into the landscape and not on the center of the lot.
- C. Commercial uses should be located at intersections of major arterials, with access management standards in place to minimize the number of curb cuts and to require cross-access easements.
- D. Tree lines, wood lots, stream corridors, etc. should be preserved if a site is developed and permanently set aside as open space. Development should avoid these areas.

## 3. Commercial Development Standards

The following commercial development standards are recommended:

- A. Commercial development should be designed to be integrated on larger parcels, which provides for more efficient usage of land, shared access points and more efficient utility systems. Pedestrian/bicycle connections should be encouraged.
- B. Where feasible pedestrian and bike connections between commercial areas and nearby neighborhoods should be supported. Secure bike racks should be provided at major shopping centers and major retailers.
- C. Parking should be shared where possible to reduce excessively large pavement areas. Landscaping along parking lot perimeters should be required to lessen visual impact of these lots. Interior landscaping should be required to break up paved surfaces and provide shade, direct traffic and otherwise provide for a safer environment.
- D. The amount of on-site lighting should be limited as much as possible. Exterior on-site lighting sources should be shielded to reduce glare. Light spillage off of a property should not occur. Zoning codes should be amended to provide lighting standards.
- E. Architectural design should be compatible with the immediate physical environment and be harmonious with adjacent and nearby structures. Signage should be compatible with architecture of the principal structure. Countywide design guidelines should be adopted.
- F. Screening and buffering should be required between non-residential and residential uses to minimize impacts. Additional setbacks could be required to further separate industrial and commercial uses from residential. Screening should also be provided along public roads.

- G. Access management standards should be adopted, including required traffic impact studies. Site access should be controlled by minimizing curb cuts onto the public road network. Entrances and exits should be clearly marked.
- H. Planned unit development districts and other planned zoning districts should be used to properly manage commercial development and ensure local communities completely understand the design and impact of a development proposal.

#### 4. Industrial Development Standards

The following industrial development standards are recommended:

- A. Industrial uses should be encouraged to locate adjacent to existing industrial uses.
- B. Access management standards should be adopted, including required traffic impact studies. Site access should be controlled which minimizes curb cuts onto the public road network. Entrances and exits should be clearly marked. Turn lanes should be required where appropriate.
- C. Parking lots and service areas should not be the principal visual elements of an industrial site and design emphasis should be placed on the building and landscaping. Service areas should be located away from public rights-of-way and residences or heavily screened by evergreen landscaping and mounding. Off-street parking lots should be screened from the road.
- D. Outdoor storage, work areas and equipment should not be permitted or should be heavily screened.
- E. Building facades should be broken up through varying setbacks, use of glass, soldier courses, etc. to avoid monotonous building facades. Buildings should be architecturally consistent in a development and exterior colors should be complimentary. Signage should be compatible with architecture of the principal structure. Countywide design guidelines should be adopted.
- F. Screening and buffering should be required between non-residential and residential uses to minimize impacts. Additional setbacks could be required to further separate industrial and commercial uses from residential. Screening should also be provided along public roads.
- G. Planned unit development districts and other planned zoning districts should be used to properly manage industrial development and ensure local communities completely understand the design and impact of a development proposal.

#### E. Land Use Recommendations

A Land Use Plan has been prepared for each of the five major planning areas in Union County. The Plan for each planning area is general in nature and should be further refined to the tax parcel level by each of the planning areas. This document summarizes each plan and the principles that define each individual plan. Tables that estimate recommended acreage have been rounded.

It is important to note that several townships are not explicitly addressed by the following planning areas, principally because there is a low expectation of development during the planning period. These townships are Claibourne, Jackson, Leesburg, Liberty, Taylor, Washington and York. The plan recommends that these unincorporated areas should develop

under the Agriculture and Rural Residential designation with a gross density of 0.4 dwelling units per acre or an average gross density of one dwelling unit for each five acres. The 0.4 du/ac standard is not intended to promote five-acre lots. To calculate the total amount of designated development, multiply the parcel size by 0.2; 100-acre parcel would gross 20 dwelling units.

## 1. Marysville

### A. Principles

- 1. Residential Uses and Neighborhoods** - Residential development will continue on the City's northeast, north, west and south sides. Single-family homes will continue to be built at an average gross density of 3.25 dwelling units per acre. Future neighborhoods will integrate and be consistent with the density, road and open space pattern created by existing neighborhoods and will be well-integrated throughout the City. Parks will serve as neighborhood focal points.
- 2. Multi-Family** - Multi-family development, including rental- and owner-occupied units, will continue in existing locations around the City, and will provide a transition between single-family residential and non-residential land uses. Future multi-family development will be well-integrated into the surrounding neighborhood, and will continue to develop at an average gross density of 10 dwelling units per acre – not to exceed 12 dwelling units per acre.
- 3. Commercial** - Highway- and regional-oriented commercial uses will continue at key intersections along the US 33 Corridor. Future development will focus on infill parcels and not a general expansion of existing, commercially-zoned property. Access will be shared.
- 4. Downtown** - The downtown will continue to be revitalized as an exciting mixed-use area with retail businesses, personal services, offices, government and cultural arts. Housing will continue to play a role and pedestrian access will be a priority. Institutional uses will continue to anchor the downtown as well.
- 5. Corporate Office** - New corporate office campuses will be encouraged at two key intersections along US 33 at SR 31, SR 4 and Northwest Parkway. These locations, with good access and visibility and in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, are ideal for signature office development. A low- to moderate-density approach will be taken, with residential-looking structures combined with significant landscaping. Pedestrian access should be provided to nearby neighborhoods.
- 6. Light Industrial and Office** - Light industrial and office uses will be encouraged south of Industrial Parkway to the general vicinity of Weaver Road and will also focus on the Union County Airport, keeping in mind Airport expansion needs. Such uses will be non-polluting and include light assembly, research and development, flex-office and office uses. Additional internal circulation is recommended through several new arterials linking Columbus Avenue and Chestnut Street, Columbus Avenue and Watkins Road, and Industrial Parkway and SR 736.
- 7. Industrial** - Industrial uses will continue in the Industrial Parkway Corridor, focusing first in the area of existing industrial complexes, then expanding to the southeast. East of Scottslawn Road, industrial expansion should occur south and west of Industrial Parkway. Appropriate uses include light to moderate manufacturing, assembly, warehousing and distribution, flex-office and office. Traffic- and truck-

intensive uses will be located in close proximity to US 33 interchanges and will have controlled access.

8. **Open Space** - An open space system will continue along Mill Creek and expand into other stream corridors. The system will be comprised of public parkland, private open space, land with conservation easements, floodplain and agriculture. Where feasible the City will extend its bike/pedestrian path further along Mill Creek and will provide a linkage to a proposed path running between Marysville and Milford Center along the DP&L right-of-way.

B. Summary

The Land Use Plan for Marysville attempts to balance land use patterns in a way that focuses industrial and commercial development on the City’s east side and continues residential development on the City’s north, south and west sides. Commercial uses are generally concentrated at key intersections along US 33 and in the downtown. Industrial uses are directed at the Industrial Parkway / US 33 Corridor. Public uses are focused in existing locations and additional open space is recommended along Mill Creek and other streams. A network of pedestrian and bicycle paths are recommended along stream corridors and sanitary sewer right-of-way. The Land Use Plan could accommodate a maximum residential population of 77,000 persons and 28,000 dwelling units - if developed at maximum density.

Table 9.2 Marysville Proposed Land Use

<u>Proposed Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single-family Residential	7,700	47.0
Multi-Family Residential	230	1.4
Mobile Home	130	0.8
Corporate Office	300	1.8
Special Use Area	70	0.4
Commercial and Office	500	3.0
Light Industrial and Office	1,800	11.0
Industrial	2,600	16.0
Public/Quasi-Public	1,600	9.8
Open Space/Floodplain	440	3.0
Parks	1,000	6.0
Total	16,300 <sup>1</sup>	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Includes transportation and natural corridors.

2. Milford Center

A. Principles

1. **Residential Development and Neighborhoods** - Residential development will continue to be concentrated in the Village center and extending along Middleburg Plain City Road. Additional residential development is expected along Reed and Orchard streets. Residential densities are expected not to exceed 4.0 dwelling units per acre. Future neighborhoods should build upon the density, road and open

space pattern created by existing neighborhoods and should be well-integrated throughout the Village. Parks should serve as neighborhood focal points.

2. **Multi-Family and Mobile Homes** - Multi-family and mobile home development is expected to continue in present locations, but is not expected to expand or to be constructed in new locations. Future residential development should be single-family.
3. **Commercial** - Commercial development should continue to meet local needs for goods and services, and be located in the downtown, in a cluster south of the abandoned railroad right-of-way and in a cluster on SR 4. Future commercial should focus on meeting visitor needs as the bikeway and other eco-tourism opportunities become apparent. This may include restaurants, specialty boutiques such as antique stores, and bed and breakfast inns.
4. **Light Industrial** - Light industrial development should continue to focus on the southside of abandoned rail right-of-way, in two separate clusters that will provide Milford Center with space for future growth. Along the proposed bikeway, screening and additional building and parking setbacks will be necessary to ensure this facility is not negatively impacted by nearby industrial activities.
5. **Open Space** - An open space system is recommended along the Big Darby Creek floodplain. The system should be comprised of public parkland, private open space, land with conservation easements, floodplain and agriculture. A bike/pedestrian path is recommended along the abandoned railroad right-of-way that parallels the Big Darby.

B. Summary

The Land Use Plan for Milford Center seeks to modestly expand the Village to accommodate additional growth while ensuring protection of the Big Darby Creek Corridor. Single-family residential land uses are recommended to continue in the central part of the Village, with expansion for future development north of the Big Darby. Commercial uses are recommended to continue downtown and in small pockets on the south and north sides. Industrial uses are recommended to continue to focus on the south side of the Village, with land provided for expansion. The school site on the Village's east side is expected to expand in the future. A bike/pedestrian path is recommended along the abandoned railroad right-of-way. The Land Use Plan could accommodate a maximum residential population of about 3,700 persons with about 1,400 dwelling units - if developed at maximum density.

Table 9.3 Milford Center Proposed Land Use

<u>Proposed Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single-Family Residential	169	39.0
Multi-Family Residential	0.0	0.0
Mobile Home	2	0.0
Commercial	17	4.0
Light Industrial	30	7.0
Public/Quasi-Public	53	13.0
Open Space/Floodplain	147	35.0
Parks	7	2.0
Total	425 <sup>1</sup>	100.0

<sup>1</sup>Includes transportation and natural corridors.

### 3. Plain City

#### A. Principles

1. **Residential Development and Neighborhoods** - Residential development will continue in the downtown and on the Village's south, northwest and southeast sides. Single-family homes will continue to be built at an average gross density of 2.5 dwelling units per acre. Future neighborhoods will integrate and be consistent with the density, road and open space pattern created by existing neighborhoods and should be well-integrated throughout the City. Parks will serve as neighborhood focal points.
2. **Multi-Family and Mobile Homes** - Mobile home development will continue in present locations, but is not expected to expand or to be constructed in new locations. Future residential development will be single-family with some appropriate multi-family.
3. **Commercial** - Commercial development will continue to meet local needs for goods and services, and be located in the downtown and in clusters on Jefferson Avenue and SR 161. Future commercial development will focus on meeting visitor needs as the proposed Big Darby bikeway and other eco-tourism opportunities become apparent. This will include restaurants, specialty boutiques such as antique shops, and bed and breakfast inns.
4. **Light Industrial and Mixed Commercial** - Light industrial development will be directed to the Village's east side, outside of the Big Darby floodplain. A special commercial/industrial area that would encourage mixed-use development will occur along the proposed US 42 bypass northwest of the Village center. These uses will be located outside the Big Darby floodplain and will incorporate significant stormwater management practices.
5. **Open Space** - An open space system will be created in the Big Darby Creek floodplain. The system will be comprised of agriculture, undeveloped floodplain, private open space, public parkland and land with conservation easements. A bike/pedestrian path is recommended along the abandoned railroad right-of-way that parallels the Big Darby.
6. **Roads** - A US 42 bypass is proposed along the village's northwest side.

B. Summary

The Land Use Plan for Plain City is intended to support additional physical expansion of the Village and facilitating a balanced land use pattern. The two principal commercial areas – downtown and Jefferson Avenue – are expected to continue their role as business centers. Industrial development is recommended east of the Village and north along a new US 42 bypass. Residential development should continue on the City’s southside and an open space system should be preserved along Big Darby Creek. A bike/pedestrian path is recommended along the abandoned railroad right-of-way that parallels the Big Darby. The Land Use Plan could accommodate a maximum residential population of about 6,800 persons with about 2,500 dwelling units – if developed at maximum density.

Table 9.4 Plain City Proposed Land Use

<u>Proposed Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single-Family Residential	900	61.0
Multi-Family Residential	20	1.2
Mobile Home	5	0.0
Commercial	120	8.2
Light Industrial	300	20.0
Public/Quasi-Public	100	7.0
Parks	20	1.4
Total	1,465 <sup>1</sup>	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Includes transportation and natural corridors.

4. Richwood

A. Principles

1. **Residential Development and Neighborhoods** - Residential development will continue on each side of the Village. Single-family homes will continue to be built at an average gross density of 2.0 dwelling units per acre. Future neighborhoods will integrate and be consistent with the density, road and open space pattern created by existing neighborhoods and should be well-integrated throughout the City. Parks will serve as neighborhood focal points. Subdivision regulations will be adopted.
2. **Multi-Family** - Multi-family development will continue in present locations, but is not expected to expand or to be constructed in new locations. Future residential development will be single-family.
3. **Commercial** - Commercial development will continue to meet local needs for goods and services, and be located in the downtown and in a cluster on Blagrove Street. Future commercial will focus on meeting local needs.
4. **Light Industrial** - Light industrial development will be focused in the Village’s industrial park on Richwood’s southside along SR 37 and Tawa Road, and in a second proposed park at SR 47 on the east side. Where necessary additional screening, and building and parking setbacks will be required to protect nearby neighborhoods.
5. **Open Space** - The Village’s central park and fairgrounds will continue as major public places, but additional parkland will be acquired through land dedications as part of residential developments. Significant woodlands will be the focus of these park sites.
6. **Roads** - A connector road linking SR 47 and SR 37 is proposed.

B. Summary

The Land Use Plan for Richwood is intended to provide for physical expansion of the Village based on the current land use pattern. Residential neighborhoods are expected to expand in all directions, providing for integrated residential settings. Commercial development is expected to continue in the downtown and in a cluster along Blagrove Street. Industrial development will be focused in the Village’s industrial park on Richwood’s southside along SR 37 and Tawa Road, and in a second proposed park at SR 47 on the east side. The Village’s recreational facilities will continue to serve the community. The Land Use Plan could accommodate a maximum residential population of 3,200 persons and 1,160 dwelling units - if developed at maximum density.

Table 9.5 Richwood Proposed Land Use

<u>Proposed Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single-Family Residential	550	62.0
Multi-Family Residential	15	1.7
Mobile Home	0	0.0
Commercial	40	4.5
Light Industrial	115	13.0
Public/Quasi-Public	95	11.0
Parks	70	8.0
Total	885 <sup>1</sup>	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Includes transportation and natural corridors.

5. South Planning Area / US 33 Corridor

The South Planning Area includes Allen, Darby, Dover, Jerome, Mill Creek, Paris and Union townships, and portions of Leeburg, Liberty and Taylor townships.

A. Principles

1. **Development Pressure** - The South Planning Area is the focus of most of the development pressure within Union County. It contains the US 33 Corridor and Jerome Township. Public utilities have been extended along Industrial Parkway and are expected to be provided into portions of Jerome Township. As a result future development of a low-density suburban level in clustered subdivisions will occur in those areas with utilities and will be managed to protect the area’s unique quality of life and semi-rural character.
2. **Development Pattern** - Low density development will occur along Industrial Parkway and US 33, and at key interchanges. Scottslawn Road, US 42 and SR 161 interchanges will serve as anchors and utilities will be focused to these areas. Commercial and office development will be clustered at the US 42 interchange in conjunction with utilities. The density of commercial development should not exceed 10,000 square feet per acre.

- 3. Residential Development** - The density of future residential development will be based upon utility availability. Where utilities are to be provided, single-family development will occur at an average gross density of 1.75 dwelling units per acre which is necessary to support developer-funded improvements. This development should occur in clusters, with a net density that exceeds the gross density.

Where utilities are not to be provided, single-family development will occur at an average gross density of 0.8 dwelling units per acre. Five acre and larger lots will be discouraged because of the intent to provide water utility services to this area and to prevent additional loss of usable farmland.
- 4. Agriculture, Semi-Rural and Rural Residential** - Portions of the planning area will remain principally agricultural in nature - especially northeast and southwest of the US 33 Corridor where utilities will not be provided. Design guidelines will encourage a development pattern that minimizes impacts and intrusions, such as clustering homes under community-approved guidelines and designating agricultural-exclusive areas. The residential gross density of these areas will be 0.2 dwelling units per acre in the Darby watershed and 0.4 dwelling units per acre outside the Darby watershed. Clustered subdivision design is preferred.
- 5. Village Centers** - A mixed-use village center will be encouraged in the villages of Allen Center, Jerome, New California, New Dover and Watkins. The intent is to support these existing historic centers and encourage reinvestment to ensure their long term viability. These centers will include a mix of small-scale retail, professional services, public uses, offices and residences.
- 6. Light Industrial and Offices** - Light industry, research and development, and office uses will be clustered in the industrial area north of SR 161, which is the principal area for light-industrial and office development in the South Planning Area. This area is most appropriate because it is in close proximity to the Northwest Columbus growth area, has utility service, highway accessibility, good visibility, and is zoned for such uses by Jerome Township.

Property located in the Industrial Parkway Corridor north of New California – which has been discussed for light industrial development and which is appropriate for such uses in the long term – is recommended here to remain agriculture and rural residential uses in the short term.

Both of these areas will only develop in conjunction with utilities. These areas will be master planned and well coordinated, and not developed in a piecemeal (lot by lot) way. Access will be shared. Design standards will be incorporated into the township zoning resolution which will improve the aesthetic quality of this development type.
- 7. Open Space** - Future development will be sensitive to the Big Darby watershed, which drains over one-half of the Corridor. New standards will be adopted that incorporate significant stormwater management practices.

Open space corridors will be preserved along all streams and creeks. The system will be comprised of agriculture, undeveloped floodplain, private open space, public parkland and land with conservation easements. The metro park proposal in Jerome Township should occur if property owners are supportive and willingly sell their land to the park district. If it does not occur, the park district should consider other sites in Union County. Eminent domain is not supported as a technique for acquiring parkland.

- 8. **Bikeway System** - A safe bikepath/bikeway system will be developed along US 42 Corridor, Mill Creek, Watkins-California Road, Middleburg-Plain City Road and DP&L right-of-way between Milford Center and Marysville.
- 9. **Roads** - Road improvements will be made which enhance local circulation and traffic flow, and which can be at least partially funded and maybe wholly funded through developer contributions.
- 10. **Water and Sewers** - The County should amend the sanitary sewer district boundaries in the Industrial Parkway service area to recognize available capacity.

B. Summary

The Land Use Plan for the South Planning Area / US 33 Corridor attempts to focus a majority of future growth where it can be supported by public utilities, within the US 33 and Industrial Parkway Corridor and with concentrations at key interchanges. The Plan acknowledges that development pressure will continue and identifies the US 33 Corridor as the focus of such growth for Union County. Light industrial development, warehousing and distribution, and office will primarily locate in this Corridor as well, with a second concentration expected to continue around the Honda complex northwest of Marysville. Extra measures will be necessary to mitigate potential impacts from development locating in the Darby watershed. Medium density residential development will be focused on the US 33 and US 42 interchange. The Land Use Plan could accommodate a maximum residential population of 34,562 in the areas designated as low density and medium density residential - if developed at maximum density.

Table 9.6 South Planning Area / US 33 Corridor Proposed Land Use

<u>Proposed Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Agriculture/Rural Residential	73,000	44.0
Agriculture/Semi-Rural Residential	45,000	27.0
Low Density Residential	2,700	1.6
Medium Density Residential	6,000	3.5
Village Center	400	0.2
Corporate Office	0	0.0
Commercial and Office	700	0.4
Light Industrial and Office	1,500	0.9
Industrial	6,000	3.6
Parks	2,200	1.3
Other Planning Areas	30,000	18.0
Total	167,500 <sup>1</sup>	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Includes transportation and natural corridors and excludes planning areas for Marysville, Milford Center and Plain City.

## A. Overview

Natural resources have been an important part of Union County and initially attracted inhabitants to live, hunt, fish and farm. Prime agricultural soils continue to be important to the County's economic well-being and the Darby Creek stream system is a local, state and national resource unmatched in the Midwest. Likewise, the County and municipalities should strengthen regulations to better manage development's impact on the natural environment.

## B. Goal

The natural resources goal is *the protection and preservation of natural resources through environmentally sensitive development and resource conservation.*

## C. Objectives and Strategies

### Objective 1 - Properly Manage Natural Resources

Irreplaceable natural resources should be properly managed and the impacts resulting from Union County's growth should be minimized. Strategies include encouraging best management practices in the development process, strengthening the management of stormwater and regulation of erosion and sedimentation, and strengthening floodplain regulations.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Encourage best management practices (BMPs) through development processes and technical assistance.

A series of best management practices should be integrated into County and local development regulations. BMPs can serve as either regulations or guidelines – with the intent of minimizing development impacts on the environment, especially relative to wetlands, woodlands, stream corridors, ponds, prime agricultural soils and aquifer recharge areas. This is especially important in the Darby watershed, but has also been requested for other parts of the County by the public through this planning process.

The following actions are recommended:

1. Require site plans approvals and rezonings. Site plans should indicate the location of proposed improvements and incorporate an inventory of existing conditions, with mitigating factors shown. Approval of site plans would be an administrative action.
2. Require appropriate preservation and protection measures for sensitive environmental features. This would occur through a site planning approval or as part of a rezoning (absent a site planning requirement) or platting action. Objective 2 provides additional guidance and recommended standards.
3. Stormwater management actions as identified in Objective 1, Strategy B should be pursued through BMP requirements. The amount of impervious surface should be minimized and permeable pavement considered where feasible.
4. Erosion and sedimentation control actions as identified in Objective 1, Strategy C should be pursued through BMP requirements.

5. Tree protection measures should also be required. *See Natural Resources, Objective 2, Strategy D.*
6. Vegetative buffers along streams and creeks should be protected, maintained and enhanced. *See Natural Resources, Objective 2, Strategy C.*

Work sessions should be held with local government officials to disseminate recommended practices. A summary of these practices should be made available for public distribution.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), OSU Extension and Townships*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- B. Strengthen stormwater management regulations.

Enhanced stormwater management regulations should be adopted at the County and municipal levels. If such regulations are in place, they should be evaluated to ensure they are up-to-date. The NRCS should provide recommendations to the County and municipalities.

Stormwater runoff should be detained on building sites using open, natural drainage systems such as vegetative swales, wetlands (natural and built) and detention or retention ponds, and in conformance with County regulations. Ponds should be designed to maximize habitat value. Systems should be designed to maximize the removal of pollutants and aesthetics considerations should be promoted.

The adoption of up-to-date regulations is important to ensuring the County is adequately protecting the environment – including the Darby Creek system – from the adverse impacts of development.

Regulations should be amended to require marsh and other filter systems for stormwater retention/detention ponds in the Darby watershed, and existing facilities should be retrofitted. Examples include multiple-celled wet ponds with extended detention and in-channel gabion-weir wall systems.

Stream and creek (riparian) buffers should be created to filter stormwater and protect habitat. Property owners should consider participation in the USDA Conservation and Wetland Reserve Programs. *See Natural Resources, Objective 2, Strategy C.*

The County and municipalities should work with communities and counties upstream and downstream to better coordinate stormwater management at the watershed level - which is a very appropriate way to address stormwater. For instance, six counties and 28 townships are located in the Darby watershed.

The state offers models of these regulations for use by local jurisdictions (e.g., "ODNR Rainwater and Land Development Guide").

*See Natural Resources, Objective 2, Strategy A.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Municipalities, Natural Resource Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation District*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

C. Strengthen soil erosion and sedimentation regulations.

The County and municipalities should adopt or strengthen existing erosion and sedimentation regulations. The Soil and Water Conservation District can administer such regulations for the unincorporated area and can provide technical assistance to municipalities through an urban technician.

The impact of construction activity, including grading, should be managed to ensure erosion does not adversely affect stream systems, adjacent properties and stormwater sewers. *See Natural Resources, Objective Strategy A.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Municipalities and Soil and Water Conservation District*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

D. Strengthen floodplain regulations.

The preservation of open space, especially along streams and creeks, was a strong concern of the general public during the planning process. The Long Range Planning committee likewise recognized the value of preserving open space as a means to preserve the County's rural character, protect environmental resources and reduce flooding. The following actions are recommended:

1. To implement this strategy, the County and municipalities should adopt up-to-date floodplain regulations and should prohibit all development, excavation, grading and placement of fill within the 100-year floodplain. This requirement has already been adopted by other counties in Ohio, including Madison County. The variance process should include clear guidelines that provide flexibility for extraordinary situations. An educational component should be included with this new standard.
2. The County and municipalities should request a formal restudy by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to update NFIP mapping. This is especially important along the Big Darby and Mill creeks.
3. Townships should adopt floodplain overlay zoning to ensure coordination between local zoning approvals and the County's NFIP permitting program. Overlay zoning districts would better manage development proposals that affect a 100-year floodplain and would provide property owners and developers forewarning regarding floodplain regulatory issues.
4. Vegetative buffers should be required along all floodways to protect water quality and maintain species habitats. Where such buffers already exist, they should be continued and where nonexistent, they should be planted with assistance from the NRCS.
5. Building permits should not be issued until an NFIP permit has been issued by the appropriate local authority.

*See Natural Resources, Objective 2, Strategy A.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Municipalities, NFIP Administrators and Townships*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

Objective 2 - Protect Irreplaceable Resources

Natural resources that are irreplaceable should be protected where possible to ensure their long term viability and ecological health. The Darby Creek stream system is the most obvious example in Union County. It has been designated a state and national resource. In addition, efforts should be taken to protect all other stream systems in the County, including protecting and enhancing buffers, and encouraging protection of wetlands, prairie remnants and forests.

*Strategies*

- A. Encourage protection of the Darby Creek stream system.

The Darby Creek stream system is a recognized state and national scenic river and its protection has been a theme of the public participation leading to the drafting of this Plan. The Darby system is also a priority for conservation by local conservation organizations (e.g. Operation Future, Darby Creek Association, Metropolitan Parks District of Columbus and Franklin County, OSU Extension, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy among other organizations).

The following actions are recommended:

1. Implement the Land Use Plans contained in this document to the extent that they do not negatively impact the Darby system. Local zoning resolutions should be amended to conform with the recommended land use pattern and residential densities contained in the Comprehensive Plan Update.
2. Strengthen County and municipal erosion and sedimentation regulations. *See Natural Resources, Objective 1, Strategy C.* Erosion controls on all construction projects - public and private - should be aggressively administered in the Darby watershed by the appropriate state and local agencies.
3. Strengthen County and municipal stormwater regulations to reduce flooding and its impact on the environment. *See Natural Resources, Objective 1, Strategy B.*
4. Preserve the 100-year floodplain by prohibiting all development, excavating, grading and filling. *See Natural Resources, Objective 1, Strategy D.*
5. Undertake stream restoration projects where necessary and establish and/or maintain vegetative buffers where nonexistent. Participation by property owners in the USDA Conservation and Wetland Reserve Programs should be promoted. Protection measures should be targeted to highly erodible soils.
6. Discourage particularly disruptive land use activities, such as large livestock operations, excavation in the 100-year floodplain, landfills, large scale construction, industrial and commercial activity, golf courses that drain into the stream system, and the use of lawn chemicals (e.g. fertilizers and herbicides).
7. Establish a signage system along state and county roads demarcating the Darby watershed boundary – as part of a larger public education campaign. A logo should be proposed which can be used on all public materials, including a signage system.

The above actions should be coordinated through the Long Range Planning Committee or a task force of County and local agencies and individuals with jurisdiction in the watershed. The County Commissioners should appoint the task force working with other major stakeholders, such as the City of Marysville, each township and village in the watershed, etc.

Also, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Metropolitan Park District of Columbus and Franklin County and The Nature Conservancy have announced a protection plan for the Darby watershed that has identified a 50,000-acre planning area within which a (USFW) National Prairie Restoration/Wildlife Refuge may be located. A portion of the planning area is located in Union and Darby townships in Union County. The size of the refuge has not been determined. A component of the protection plan also focuses on riparian corridor protection along the Big and Little Darby Creeks.

The Comprehensive Plan Update supports protection of the Darby Corridor. The Plan also recognizes that local input in the discussion, planning and potential development of the proposed USFW refuge is very important,.

Provided local issues are adequately addressed (e.g., potential impact on local tax revenues and compatibility with agricultural land uses) and provided a voluntary land acquisition approach is used, the wildlife refuge represents a significant opportunity for the community and region to preserve the natural and rural character of southwest Union County.

Representative County officials should meet with other groups in the Darby watershed to assure coordination, etc.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, Soil and Water Conservation District, County Engineer's Office and Municipalities*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

- B. Expand stream protection measures to all other systems.

The stream protection measures of Objective 1, Strategy A that directly relate to managing development impacts on the environment (e.g., actions 1, 2, 3 and 5 under Strategy A) should be considered for implementation on all other stream systems in Union County on a case-by-case basis. Similar to Objective 1, Strategy A, a task force could be established for a given stream system which would serve as the coordinating body.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Soil and Water Conservation District, Municipalities and Township Trustees*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

- C. Maintain and enhance buffers along all streams and creeks.

The County and municipalities should encourage wooded and vegetative buffers along all creeks, streams and tributaries. Property owners, developers and farmers should be educated on the importance of preserving, enhancing and maintaining vegetative buffers along streams and creeks and should receive technical assistance from the NRCS. Buffers filter stormwater runoff (removing, chemicals, sediment and other pollutants), provide wildlife habitat and reinforce the County’s historic landscape. The following buffer standards are recommended:

Table 10.1 Recommended Minimum Vegetative Buffers

<u>Riparian Corridor</u>	<u>Minimum Buffer</u>	<u>Vegetative Types</u>
Scenic river	120 feet	Wooded
Other rivers, major creeks/streams	50 feet	Wooded and grassed
Other tributaries	25 feet	Grassed

Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources and NRCS

Buffers associated with a platted subdivision should be set aside in a reserve on the plat. County and local floodplain regulations and subdivision regulations should be amended to reflect these standards.

*See Natural Resources, Objective 1 Strategies A and B.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer’s Office, NRCS and Municipalities*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

- D. Encourage protection of wetlands, prairie remnants and forests.

Unique natural assets – such as wetlands, prairie remnants and virgin forests – should be protected through a host of actions. The following is a partial list:

1. Amending the County and municipal zoning and subdivision regulations to provide design guidelines and incentives that encourage the use of clustering and open-space subdivisions – which in turn permanently preserve open space features.
2. Discouraging building sites and construction activity from impacting natural assets through a set of design guidelines and landscape standards in local zoning codes. Considerations should include the following:
  - A. Trees to be preserved on a building site should not be located closer than 50 feet from a construction area and the soil within the drip zone should not be compacted by equipment, building materials or grading.
  - B. Trees identified for preservation should be protected during construction by placement of fencing at the drip zone and signage that warns construction workers not to place material or operate equipment within the drip zone.
  - C. Individual trees and tree lines that are to be preserved in a residential subdivision should be placed in a reserve or no-build zone on a plat.

Maintenance should be required of a “forced” homeowners association for the subdivision. *See Natural Resources, Objective 1, Strategy A.*

3. Protecting natural assets through enrollment in the USDA Conservation Reserve Program.
- 4 . Working with the ODNR whenever a potential prairie remnant is discovered. Prairie remnants could be protected through a donation of land or conservation easement to the state or a local, nonprofit land trust. Concurrently if a site is not to be farmed or developed and its characteristics are suitable for a prairie habitat, the property owner is encourage to permit the site to return to a prairie habitat.

*Implementation: County Engineer’s Office, OSU Extension, NRCS and Townships*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

### Objective 3 – Conserve Productive Resources

Productive natural resources are important to the County’s economy. Their conservation for future use should continue to be an ongoing strategy at the County and local levels. However, in cases where water resources may be adversely impacted by excavation, such activity should be either discouraged or prohibited.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Encourage conservation of prime agricultural soils.

Prime agricultural soils are nonrenewable and once removed from a site or built upon, are forever taken out of production. The County, townships and municipalities should undertake efforts to discourage development of prime agricultural soils (as defined by the USDA) outside of city/village growth areas, including adopting overlay zoning protections and/or provisions in subdivision regulations. *See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy F and Land Use, Objective 1, Strategies B and C.*

*Implementation: Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- B. Encourage conservation of mineral resources.

Valuable mineral resources should be conserved for future production. These resources may include sand, gravel, limestone, natural gas and oil. Local zoning resolutions should provide for a district that conserves mineral resources for future extraction and discourages noncompatible development. Such a district should also require adequate transportation access during extraction and should provide for the reclamation of land impacted by excavation and mining, in conjunction with state requirements. In addition, natural resource mapping from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources should be used as a general guide in evaluating specific parcels when considering excavation proposals. Excavation should not be supported in a 100-year floodplain or near the Big Darby Creek or one of its tributaries.

*Implementation: Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Long Tem*

### Objective 4 - Preserve Open Space

Open space should be preserved wherever feasible, because once developed it is difficult to return such land to a natural state. Development should be accommodated where most appropriate and where unique open space features exist on a development site, every effort should be taken to ensure protection.

#### *Strategies*

- A. Encourage best management practices (BMPS) through development processes and technical assistance.

*See Natural Resources, Objective 1, Strategy A.*

- B. Discourage development in the 100-year floodplain.

*See Natural Resources, Objective 1, Strategy C.*

A. Overview

Parks and recreation are important service areas that enhance a community's quality of life. Union County communities provide some degree of parks, particularly in Marysville and several townships, but the expectation exists that additional demands will be made as the County grows. This element seeks to provide the groundwork by comprehensively planning for parks, encouraging the creation of park districts, supporting metropolitan efforts and other activities.

B. Goal

The parks and recreation goal is *park and open space planning and development that builds on existing facilities; supports cultural arts, recreational facilities and activities; and appeals to a variety of interests and ages.*

C. Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 – Preserve and Expand Parks

A comprehensive approach should be taken to meet park and recreational needs in Union County. This should be a public process and it should provide the groundwork for local communities (e.g., municipalities, villages and townships) to decide how best to meet these needs. This groundwork should also support the creation of park districts as the principal mechanism for providing park and recreational services.

*Strategies*

A. Prepare a detailed countywide master plan.

A countywide parks and recreation master plan can serve as a guide to ensure recreational facilities and services are established to meet the diverse needs of the population, ranging from nature trails and exercise paths to ball fields and courts. The County should coordinate a broad-based effort that involves all local jurisdictions (including school districts) and which addresses a full range of issues, including cultural arts and facilities, historic resources and other similar community assets.

Likewise efforts to obtain parkland along Big Darby Creek should be integrated into this planning effort to ensure local interests are taken into consideration. Involving citizens in the process and maximizing public-private and intergovernmental relationships should be encouraged. Addressing the implementation through park districts is another important issue – districts must be in place to hold and maintain public parkland. *See Parks and Recreation, Objective 1, Strategy B.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Parks Districts, Cities, Villages and Townships*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

B. Establish a joint park district(s).

In conjunction with Strategy A and as a means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan Update, efforts should be taken to establish additional joint park districts in Union County. Joint districts could be created by and between the County, municipalities, villages, townships and school districts. The County currently has one active park district (City of Marysville, Union County and Paris Township), which is an example of local cooperation. Through the master plan process (Objective 1, Strategy A) the interests of other local jurisdictions to create additional park districts can be considered. *See Parks and Recreation, Objective 1, Strategy A.*

There is merit in considering additional joint or regional park districts within the County, principally regulating from operational cost savings and a more stable revenue through a larger funding base. Townships facing growth pressure will also be continually hit with requests for public park facilities. Requiring mandatory land dedication in subdivisions may necessitate local park districts to manage such public properties. Districts should also be in place to obtain and expend fees provided in lieu of a parkland dedication, as well as a park fee levied on building permits. *See Parks and Recreation, Objective 1, Strategy A.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Parks Districts, Cities, Villages and Townships*  
*Timeframe: Mid Term*

C. Expand park resources through acquisitions and stable funding.

Individual communities and the County should make a concerted and ongoing effort to identify and acquire parkland that will most effectively serve local users. Where park districts are nonexistent, local officials should work towards expanding existing and adding new parkland where it will benefit the public. This effort should be undertaken in conjunction with a countywide master plan (Objective 1, Strategy A).

The following national guidelines should be considered by local park districts and communities in providing parks and recreation facilities to serve local residents. Factors to consider in creating parks include cost of operation and maintenance.

Table 11.1 National Parks and Recreation Association Guidelines

Park Type	Acreage Per 1,000	Minimum Park Size	Minimum Service Radius
Mini-Park/Tot Lot	0.25 ac – 0.50 ac	0.5 ac – 2.0 ac	1/4 mi – 1/2 mi
Neighborhood Park	1.0 ac – 2.0 ac	4 ac – 8 ac	1/2 mi – 1 mi
Community/Township Park	1.0 ac – 2.0 ac	8 ac – 25 ac	1 mi – 3 mi

Note: Mini-Parks, Tot Lots and Neighborhood Parks are typically provided in platted subdivisions.  
 About 10 acres of parkland should be provided per 1,000 persons or 0.027 acres per dwelling unit.

Sources: ACP, National Park and Recreation Association and "Time-Save Standards for Housing and Residential Development," 1995

Further consideration should be given to anticipated growth in Union County and serving to meet the needs of the future population. Stable sources of funding should be identified within each parks district. Examples include special levies, fees, general appropriations, state grants and other intergovernmental funds. Maintenance by homeowner associations should also be considered.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Parks Districts, Cities, Villages and Townships*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

- D. Support development of a regional park in southeastern Union County.

The Metropolitan Parks District of Columbus and Franklin County has proposed the creation of a regional park in Jerome Township south of McKittrick Road. The development of this proposed park would provide open space and recreational facilities to a population currently underserved. It would also provide a regional buffer between less developed portions of Union County and the suburban portions of Franklin County. The Commissioners and Jerome Township Trustees have adopted resolutions in support of the project.

The Metropolitan Parks District should proceed with acquisition only in conjunction with willing sellers and should not use eminent domain powers. The Township should consider zoning property outside the proposed park boundaries for a low density, single-family (one-half unit per acre) and agricultural land use pattern. Access issues should be sufficiently addressed to ensure the local road network is improved by the Parks District as necessary to accommodate park-generated traffic.

If the proposed metropolitan park does not occur in Jerome Township, the County should encourage the Parks District to consider an alternative site near Big Darby Creek in Union County.

*Implementation: Metropolitan Parks District*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- E. Provide parkland in conjunction with residential development.

In park districts, subdivision regulations and zoning codes (e.g., planned unit development and planned zoning districts) should be amended to require the dedication of parkland in residential subdivisions or the payment of a fee in lieu of such land dedication. This is a common requirement in Ohio.

The set aside would be treated as a reserve on the final plat. The parcel(s) should be conveyed to an existing park district or appropriate government entity with the first phase of the subdivision and the land incorporated into a public park district. A conservation easement should also be placed on the reserve to protect it in perpetuity from future development. *See Parks and Recreation, Objective 1, Strategy B.*

In terms of determining the appropriate amount of green space to be set aside, the regulations could require a minimum of 10 acres per 1,000 persons (source: National Parks and Recreation Association). Using the 1990 household size of 2.73 persons, the requirement would be .027 acres per dwelling unit. For a 100 lot subdivision, the set aside would be 2.7 acres.

Design standards could be included which define the acceptable characteristics of the parcel proposed to be set aside. These standards should include the following:

1. The parcel should have minimum road frontage that ensures adequate public access, visual presence and a strong connection with the neighborhood.
2. The parcel should be centrally located within the subdivision or adjacent to appropriate natural features (e.g. streams, ravines).
3. A majority of the proposed park should be appropriate for recreational facilities given slope, vegetation, floodplain and other features.
4. The set aside should not include area required for stormwater retention/detention. Those facilities could be located adjacent to or integrated with the open space set aside, but should not be included in the calculation of the land dedication.

The regulations could also permit the payment of a fee in lieu of a land dedication, provided that both parties (subdivider, County and/or park district) are in agreement. Criteria should be included under which the payment may be considered by the County, such as availability of existing parkland to serve the proposed subdivision, lack of a suitable site for a park within the development, etc.

If the criteria can be met, then the County should require a payment equal to the acreage that otherwise would be dedicated. The payment should be based upon a private appraisal hired by the County. Payment of a fee in lieu of dedication should be submitted with the final plat of the subdivision's first phase.

If a park district is nonexistent, then a nonprofit land trust or "forced" homeowners association should receive the set aside.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission, Municipalities, Villages, Townships and Park Districts*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

- F. Develop a countywide bike path system.

A countywide bike path system should be planned, designed and developed to provide for public recreation and as an alternative for on-road cyclists. The system would enhance safety between motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists through the use of designated walkways and bike paths. Such a system could also provide an alternative for commuters.

The system could be comprised of the following links:

1. Abandoned rail right-of-way along Big Darby Creek.
2. Utility easements between Milford Center and Marysville.
3. Parkland or easements along Mill Creek.
4. US 42 Corridor.

The Commissioners should appoint a task force to study and recommend a detailed plan of action. Funding for development, operation and maintenance must be secured as well.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Municipalities, Villages, Townships and Park Districts*

*Timeframe: Mid Term and Ongoing*

### Objective 2 - Expand Programming

As the County continues to grow, recreational programming should be focused on the populations that will most benefit: youth, elderly and handicapped. Until resources are sufficient within individual districts to address broader needs, the above populations should continue to be the priority.

#### *Strategies*

A. Encourage the expansion of recreational programming

Recreational programming should be expanded by local providers to ensure a broad range of recreational opportunities for all age groups and interests. Both summer and winter activities should be expanded. Special attention to youth, elderly and handicapped needs should be addressed. This strategy should be partially addressed through Objective 1, Strategy A (master plan) and will become a more important issue as the County and individual communities grow in population. Also, the Union County Family YMCA should be encouraged to construct an indoor swimming pool, which would meet an ever increasing need for such a facility.

*Implementation: Local Recreational Providers*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*



A. Overview

Population is noticeably increasing along with the number of vehicles and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This has put pressure on the existing street and road network. Commuter traffic to and from the Columbus Metropolitan Area now dominates the AM and PM traffic volumes on many intersections.

The County is served by an 821 mile network of federal, state, County, and township roads. Marysville City and village streets (Plain City, Richwood, Milford Center, Magnetic Springs, Unionville Center) plus incorporated parts of the City of Dublin feed into the County system. The County is also served by a light duty County airport which includes a single 4,220-foot long runway. There are no route-type bus systems operating in the County.

B. Goal

The transportation goal is *to enhance the transportation system with proper planning that emphasizes road maintenance and improvements, and considers safety, access management, financing and alternative transportation options.*

C. Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 - Maintain and Improve Road Network

*Strategies*

A. Balance expenditures for streets/roadways.

Governmental jurisdictions are responsible for following three categories of improvements:

1. Routine maintenance of existing streets/roadways.
2. Safety/travel improvements to existing pavements.
3. Construction of new streets/roadways links.

Competition is intense for the financial and political resources in the transportation field. Governmental jurisdictions should strive to carefully allocate resources in an equitable manner to best meet the existing needs as well as judiciously provide for streets/roadways network expansions as necessary. Budgets should be managed both for short and long-term needs.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

B. Control access.

Access Management Policy Plans should be adopted by all local jurisdictions to maintain traffic capacity and reduce conflicts. An example of this is Industrial Parkway in Jerome Township. The purpose of the Plan is to preserve and restore the capacity and safety of roads while providing proper access to adjacent existing and future land uses in the County.

This policy should include driveway spacing requirements, traffic impact study policies and access permit processes. Driveway spacing is complex and important as it will depend on several factors: roadway functional classification, speed limits, size of development, left turn restrictions, lot frontage, and corner lot or interior lot. Provide road widths only as necessary for the classification.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrator*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- C. Re-evaluate Marysville southern bypass proposal.

A bypass is displayed on exhibits from the City Thoroughfare Plan (pending enactment). The bypass would connect US 33 on the southeast side to SR 4 on the southwest side. The proposal should be scrutinized in terms of function and utility for the City and southern unincorporated areas around Marysville. Specifically, is current planning taking it too far from population centers to serve the public and provide a much needed east-west link for the City? If so, should an alignment closer to Marysville be investigated?

*Implementation: Marysville City Engineer and City Council*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

- D. Plan for East/West connector.

City and County planners should continue to look for ways to improve traffic flow through Marysville. This would benefit both City and County residents. An east/west connector could take the form of improvements to 6th Street or a revamped southern bypass. Improvements to east/west traffic-flow north of Marysville should also be studied.

*Implementation: Marysville City Engineer and City Council*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

- E. Reserve right-of-way from new developments.

City, County and Village engineers should work with developers to dedicate right-of-way for future road widenings and improvements. The County and City should require dedication of right-of-way on lot splits.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- F. Assist commuting.

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

Options for consideration include:

1. Commuter bus connections from Columbus, such as bus service to the Honda plant.
2. The feasibility of a multi-modal facility for rail and bus service should also be investigated.

- 3. Preliminary studies should be conducted into establishing commuter or light rail passenger service to Columbus.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, City Administration and Marysville City Council*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

- G. Require traffic impact studies.

Traffic impact studies should be required for every significant development, as well as those that carry traffic distribution to arterials and collectors as designated on the adopted county or principal thoroughfare maps.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

## Objective 2 - Public Transportation

### *Strategies*

- A. Investigate public bus service.

Bus service (COTA) should be investigated from Columbus to Marysville, Plain City and other communities and major industries in the County. A study should be recommended to determine routes where public bus service would be feasible. Both inter-county and intra-county plans should be examined. Also, the various agencies currently operating van and para-transit services in the City, County and villages should be coordinated to better meet the overall transportation needs of the general population. *See Housing, Objective 2, Strategy A.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Marysville City and Village Council and Village Administrative*

*Timeframe: Short Term for Inter-County and Long Term for Intra-County*

- B. Expand bike routes/sidewalk plans.

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

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

## Objective 3 - Improve Safety of the Transportation System

### *Strategies*

- A. Improve safety.

Inadequate and/or unsafe intersections, railroad crossings, roads, culverts and bridges should be improved, concentrating on those with significant accident histories.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- B. Control access.

*See Transportation Objective 1, Strategy B.*

#### Objective 4 - Particular Community Strategies

The following strategies are recommended for each community.

##### *Strategies*

- A. Marysville

1. Require of developers traffic impact studies for affected areas.
2. Improve inadequate and/or unsafe intersections, roads, culverts and bridges. Acquire additional rights-of-way as necessary.
3. Expand developer participation through impact fees and/or service fees.
4. Study safety aspects of existing high speed ramps at SR 31 N and SR 4 N.
5. Encourage transit commuting.
6. Finalize and adopt Thoroughfare Plan
7. Develop sidewalk plan in unsidewalked areas.
8. Develop and connect bike paths.
9. Develop plan to cross US 33 near SR 31 N with north-south bike/pedestrian bridge.

*Implementation: Marysville City Engineer, Mayor, Council and Service Director*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

- B. US 33 Planning Area and Jerome Township

1. Consider off-site road improvements by developers during development process.
2. Base traffic planning on projected growth traffic rate.
3. Manage and control access along roads.
4. Improve safety at railroad crossing through remedial measures. Encourage ODOT funding of lights and gates at critical crossings.
5. Coordinate with Dublin and Concord Township in Delaware County on transportation problems.
6. Consider bike paths along roads.
7. Plan for the future expansion of US 42/US 33 interchange and for a possible future interchange at Mitchell-Dewitt Road/US 33.
8. Require developer construction of planned on-site road improvements.
9. Finalize and adopt Thoroughfare Plan.
10. Plan for road relocations shown on the thoroughfare plan.
11. Prepare Access Management Plan for Industrial Parkway and other roads as required.

12. The following roads should be widened to improve safety and traffic carrying capacity: Darby-Pottersburg Road C,D; McKittrick Road; Mitchell-Dewitt Road C,D; State Road; Brock Road; County Home Road; Raymond Road; Paver-Branes Road A-D; Lunda Road A; Osborne Road A-C; Blaney Road; Bellepoint Road A, B; and Columbus Avenue D-H.
13. Safety/intersection improvements should be undertaken at the following intersection: Jerome Road/Brock Road; Hyland-Croy Road/McKittrick Road; Northwest Parkway/Holycross-Epps Road; Columbus Ave/Mitchell-Dewitt Road; Smart-Cole Road/US 42; Reed Road/Wheeler-Green Road; Northwest Parkway/Paver-Barnes Road; and Jerome Road/US 42.
14. Guardrail should be installed and replaced on various roads throughout the County.
15. Plan for long-term widening at Industrial Parkway.  
*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office and Township Trustees*  
*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

C. Richwood

1. Emphasize long term street improvement program.
2. Improve SR 47, east-west through the village and also to SR 4.
3. Maximize state grant and loan programs.
4. Expand road maintenance and improvement.
5. Investigate SR 37 to SR 47 connector.
6. Improve SR 37 to SR 4.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Village Administrator and ODOT*  
*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

D. Plain City

1. Construction of US 42 bypass.
2. Manage and control access along US 42.
3. Corridor study along US 42.
4. Investigate bike path along old railroad.
5. Emphasize long term street improvement program with SR 161, US 42, S. Chillicothe and West Avenues being priorities.
6. Expand road maintenance and improvement.
7. Maximize state grant and loan programs.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and ODOT*  
*Timeframe: Mid Term to Long Term*

Objective 5 - Traffic Planning

*Strategies*

A. Traffic planning.

Population increases have caused a noticeable rise in the number of vehicles on the County and township road network as well as the state highway system. The southern half of the County is more acutely impacted, especially the US 33 Corridor. The City of Marysville lacks an east-west connector forcing traffic through the City.

County and township roads are under pressure from increased traffic and driveway cuts. Both conditions stress a roadway system originally designed for agricultural purposes. Moreover, the highest capacity roadway, US 33, is largely inaccessible through the heart of the developing portion of Union County. Long-term there may be a need for additional access to US 33 throughout Union County.

Both the City of Marysville and the County need to finalize and adopt a thoroughfare plan. Impact fees may be part of the discussion. The Union County Engineer should coordinate. Among the issues that should be addressed are the following.

1. Require traffic impact studies for every significant development expected to generate more than 50 peak hour trip ends (50 home subdivision multiplied by 10 trip ends per day multiplied by 10% peak hour) and carry traffic distribution to the designated major collectors (state system) from the adopted County thoroughfare maps.
2. Require left-turn lanes at frequent intervals in accordance with side street traffic volumes.
3. Establish a program of access management with specific spacing requirements in accordance with the hierarchy of road classifications.
4. Consider service roads in commercial areas.
5. Require use of common access driveways.
6. Minimize number of street intersections along Industrial Parkway and enforce access management.
7. Develop network of collector streets near Industrial Parkway.
8. Investigate construction of a new interchange at Mitchell-Dewitt Road and US 33.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

Objective 6 - Adequately Fund Transportation

The modus operandi for economic expansion across the state has been significantly sustained by outside funding sources over the years. Developer and local and state officials have become accustomed to this pattern wherein infrastructure deficiencies categorized as "growing pains" are addressed by government. Local governments can no longer expect this level of outside support nor can they afford to pay for improvements themselves.

Traditional sources of outside money have all but disappeared in recent years. Development interests still want to follow the old model leaving local governments in the middle.

The political subdivisions of the County have all received project subsidies from state and federal government in the form of ODOT roadway and bridge projects, Ohio EPA utility grants and loans, ODNR environmental programs, etc. Most of these initiatives have now been greatly curtailed in the State of Ohio. Many of the objectives of this chapter hinge on adequate funding. The governmental units should develop a ten-year capital improvements plan for transportation.

The local governmental units should be clear about their lack of money, but advance innovative financing concepts such as:

1. Ohio Department of Development tax abatement and grant assistance programs.
2. Ohio Department of Taxation programs.
3. Tax increment financing (TIF).
4. Design/build.
5. Issue II financing.
6. Credit enhancement.
7. EDA grants and loans.
8. Transportation improvement districts (TID).
9. Ohio DOT District 6 discretionary funds.
10. Impact fees.

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

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

1. Permissive license fees.
2. General fund dollars.
3. General income tax revenues.
4. General sales tax.
5. Gas tax license fee funds passed through from the state.

## *Strategies*

- A. Expand road maintenance and improvement.

Develop road maintenance and improvement programs to effectively and efficiently provide for the safe and dependable flow of traffic. Develop a hierarchy of needs to guide the expenditure of roadway dollars, especially in light of reduced ODOT funding levels.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators*  
*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

- B. Investigate establishing transportation improvement districts

Within the statutes of the state and working with ODOT, a district may be advantageous for the County to target economic growth and the finances to pay for it. TIDs currently exist in Butler and Licking Counties.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer*  
*Timeframe: Short Term*

- C. Expand developer contributions.

Local communities should require developers to participate in on- and off-site subdivision and development-related public improvements, as necessitated and justified by their developments. Determine developer contribution on a pro rata basis and applied equally to all projects.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer, Councils and Village Administrators*  
*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- D. Encourage cooperative ventures.

Encourage cooperative ventures by packaging "PARTNERING" projects with public and private sector associations. The responsibilities and risks would be shared along with financial responsibilities. An example is the cooperative effort on the Industrial Parkway with the City, County, Ohio Department of Development and the Scotts Company joining forces.

- E. Maximize state grants and loan programs.

Although current state funding options are quite limited, this situation will not last indefinitely. The County and its political subdivisions should position themselves by having previously designed projects ready to go if and when state policies change toward a more aggressive building/construction tone.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Administrator and Finance Director and Village Administrators*  
*Timeframe: Ongoing*

Objective 7 – Reconciling Differences

*Strategies*

A. Reconcile differences.

All communities, villages and townships share the same courthouse, but, have somewhat different socio-economic settings. Whereas the Richwood area may be interested in supporting its fertile agricultural tradition, the infrastructure issues in the County area just north of Dublin are challenging in totally different ways. Marysville, as the seat of County government, is flanked by both lifestyles yet has a unique small town atmosphere of its own it seeks to nurture.

In these circumstances, governmental resources may have a tendency to migrate to the areas most needed. Some may view a perceived disproportionate concentration of effort in one geographical area as more of a measure of preparedness and a will to administer sound planning policies. In the infrastructure area, effort is closely aligned with monetary investment. A “have” versus “have not” schism may detract from the overall cohesiveness of the County.

Distinct planning areas with tailored goals and strategies should be developed in terms of infrastructure requirements. The effectiveness of the infrastructure policies should be reviewed every two to three years. This may start with township zoning but be a common thread of countywide planning throughout the townships, villages, and the City. For example, individual home systems may be discouraged in areas of Jerome Township but permitted near Richwood with essentially the same lot attributes. Also, traffic impact studies may be academic in northern Union County. Different development standards are used now on a case by case basis but this should be a stated County planning policy.

*Implementation: All Local Governments*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

Objective 8 - Amend Existing Thoroughfare Plan

*Strategies*

A. Protect the Thoroughfare Plan.

The existing Thoroughfare Plan should be protected with enforcement of traffic planning principles, including Access Management Guidelines especially along Industrial Parkway.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer’s Office and Marysville City Engineer*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

B. Amend the Plan to acknowledge US 42 / Plain City bypass.

The existing Thoroughfare Plan should be amended to include the US 42 Plain City bypass.

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer’s Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Councils*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

- C. Implement the Plan in concert with adjacent jurisdictions.

The existing Thoroughfare Plan should be implemented in concert with the Dublin Comprehensive Plan, November, 1997, in the southeast corner of Jerome Township. An example of this planning document's impact on Union County is the recommendation for an interchange on US 33 at Mitchell-Dewitt Road.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

## A. Overview

The noticeable increase in population has been the propelling force for new residential and commercial developments. Most water and sewer needs in these new developed areas are being met by expanding and extending existing systems, although scattered homes in rural areas rely on individual wells and sewage systems.

Public water, sanitary sewer systems and storm sewer facilities are provided by Marysville, Plain City, Milford Center and Richwood, plus parts of unincorporated Union County. As a regional sewer facilitator, Marysville provides sewer service to Jerome Township. Private wells provide water in other communities and rural areas in the County. The County operates and maintains 10 wastewater treatment package plants throughout the County. In rural areas and other communities in the County, septic tanks and subsurface leaching systems dispose of domestic sewage.

## B. Goal

The utility's goal is *a utility infrastructure system developed to meet the needs of planned community growth that provides for environmentally safe sanitary sewer and water improvements and for proper stormwater management.*

## C. Objectives and Strategies

### Objective 1 – Ensure Adequate Public Water Supply

#### *Strategies*

- A. Adopt and implement well head protection legislation at the local level for municipal services.

Private on-site wells provide water in several communities and rural areas in the County. The County and/or local jurisdiction should adopt and implement legislation to provide wellhead protection. Wellhead protection programs are currently being reviewed by Ohio EPA for the City of Marysville and the Village of Richwood.

*Implementation: Marysville, Milford Center and Richwood*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- B. Prepare and maintain water, utility master plans to either improve and/or maintain existing systems.

By preparing and maintaining water utility master plans and capital improvement plans, financial and technical “blueprints” can be developed to systematically implement water improvements on a timely basis. An example of this planning is the loop water line around Marysville. *See Land Use, Objective 1, Strategy D.*

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- C. Protect potential future water resources.

The projected growth scenario will require more potable water. The municipalities, villages and County should chart a course to stay well ahead of both the growth curve and stricter drinking water standards. By developing and protecting new water supply sources, domestic/industrial water delivery demands, fire protection requirements and compliance with all applicable drinking water standards could be ensured. Mill Creek, a primary raw water source for the majority of the residents of Union County, should also be protected.

*Implementation: All Legislative Authorities and Appropriate Engineers*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

- D. Continue to support a County water system.

The County has a growing water distribution system and should continue to purchase water from Marysville and support legislatively and financially increases in capacity. There is potential competition from the DELCO system in Delaware County and from Columbus. This competition may be difficult to preempt in sparsely populated areas. The DELCO system primarily offers domestic-type service (little fire supply capability). Meanwhile, the Columbus system could be a catalyst for annexation encroachment into the County. The County should do everything it can to maintain sole authority in the rural water supply business and finance extensions with the bonding authority of the County. Fire-fighting capacity should be maintained where feasible.

Concerning both water and sewer, the County should continue with its strategy of extending growth areas, as it did along Industrial Parkway by agreement with the City.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and County Commissioners*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

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

### *Strategies*

- A. Comply with NPDES permit limits for treated wastewater quality at the wastewater treatment plants must be a top priority.

Having made substantial investments in wastewater collection and treatment systems, it is important to maintain and expand these systems as needed to meet existing customers and as required for future demands.

*Implementation: County Environmental Engineer, Legislative Authorities, and Wastewater Departments of Marysville, Plain City and Richwood*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

- B. Strengthen health code requirements regarding on-site treatment and disposal.  
Develop and enforce regulations that protect water and other natural resources in the area.
- Implementation: County Health Department*  
*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*
- C. Discourage discharging of on-site systems in Darby Creek watershed.  
The Big Darby Creek is currently a State and National Scenic River. It is an exceptional warm water habitat and state resource water of extremely high quality. The Big Darby also has a diverse biological community with many rare and/or endangered species. As a result, it has strict anti-degradation rules impacting stream water quality. For these reasons, additional loading into the Big Darby Creek basin may be counterproductive. On site systems permitted in the Big Darby watershed should be non-discharging type systems.
- Implementation: County Health Department*  
*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*
- D. Discourage development or expansion of central sewer system in Mill Creek watershed unless it is pumped away from Mill Creek.  
Discourage developments with on-site systems in the Mill Creek watershed, a primary drinking water supply for many residents of Union County.
- Implementation: County Health Department*  
*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*
- E. Ensure individual wastewater outlets are adequate and will not negatively impact water quality.  
The County and City should continue to comply with NPDES limits and be in OEPA compliance. The County should require outlet approval, be coordinated by or with Health Department, and include outlet approval as part of sewage permit. Discharging type individual systems should be discouraged in all areas of the County without adequate outlets.
- Implementation: County Commissioners, County Environmental Engineer, Health Department and SWCD*  
*Timeframe: Ongoing*
- F. Discourage the proliferation of scattered homes without sanitary sewers.  
Current state subdivision statues and local zoning regulations encourage random development and promote sprawl, which is commonly known as strip development. Often, minor subdivisions or lot splits detract from future sanitary sewer planning by creating pockets of homeowners resistant to sanitary sewers. Large lots are expensive to serve per front foot. They are not desirable from the perspective of traffic, land use and utility planning and construction. To counteract this pattern, the County should investigate and consider the following:
1. Encourage changes in state law regarding impact fees and subdivision definition.

2. Develop sanitary sewer equivalency fees.
3. Investigate an escrow account-type system.
4. Identify areas of the County (limited) that would require payment of a fee if individual systems were proposed. Fees would be used on watershed level utility master planning and be based on front foot.
5. Amend zoning resolutions.
6. Require outlets to be approved by an engineer or a local agency.
7. Require future utility easements.
8. Utilize minimum standards for development such as OCAP, Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) or a similar system for site specific evaluation. These systems exhibit site-specific physical characteristics such as soils, slope, groundcover, water, etc. There would be no assurance of approval.
9. Establish maximum size for individual home system.
10. Require an ongoing home system maintenance guarantee.
11. Promote agricultural districts to promote farmland preservation and restrict the spread of scattered individual systems.
12. Encourage cluster development and require set aside for parks or open space. Increase the setback requirements. Use passive treatment techniques such as wetlands.
13. To counteract this pattern, the County should establish a Task Force to address the above issues.

*See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy I and Land Use, Objective 1, Strategy D.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, County Health Department and Township Trustees*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

### Objective 3 - Improve Stormwater Management

#### *Strategies*

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

A storm water master plan should be prepared to determine necessary storm sewer improvements to correct existing problems and accommodate proposed land development. A storm water management policy should be developed and implemented into the subdivision regulations before any significant development proceeds. The plan should consider detention facilities to control peak storm water run-off from new developments.

Enforcement of the plan and policy is critical since much of the proposed land use areas may drain through existing storm water systems.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office, City Engineer, Village Administrators and SWCD*

*Timeframe: Mid Term to Long Term*

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## Objective 4 - Particular Community Strategies

### *Strategies*

#### A. Marysville

1. Develop new raw water supply sources and enhance Mill Creek watershed protection.
2. Support (partnership) maintenance of tiles and open ditches and creeks.
3. Expand municipal wastewater plant and system.
4. Expand municipal water treatment plant and distribution system.
5. Review and expand developer contributions where appropriate.
6. Enforce utility service agreements and master plans.
7. Assess short- and long-term cost impact of providing services to new areas.

*Implementation: Marysville City Council and City Administration*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

#### B. Milford Center

1. Improve village water and wastewater facilities.
2. Protect water sources.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and Village Administrator*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

#### C. Plain City

1. Implement stormwater improvements for Sweeney Run and major storm trunks.
2. Protect water sources.
3. Develop stormwater plan.
4. Expand water treatment plant to handle existing and future growth.
5. Replace/install critical waterlines.
6. Investigate regional water/sewer possibilities (City, County, Plain City, Milford Center and Unionville Center).
7. Continue to identify and correct I/I and wastewater collection system.
8. Identify and eliminate remaining combined sewers.
9. Replace/install critical sanitary sewers.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and Village Administrator*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

## D. Raymond and Peoria

1. Develop community wastewater system.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

## E. Richwood

1. Improve village water and wastewater facilities.
2. Manage use of farm tiles as stormwater outlets particularly on the east side of village.
3. Protect water sources.
4. Continue inflow/infiltration (I/I) identification and correction of wastewater distribution and collection systems.
5. Provide new water storage tank.
6. Adopt subdivision regulations.
7. Install/replace critical waterline and connect loops.
8. Consider drainage improvements between village and Ottawa Ditch.
9. Improve Fulton Creek.
10. Improve/replace critical sanitary sewers.

*Implementation: County Engineer's Office and Village Administrator*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

## F. US 33 Planning Area and Jerome Township

1. Provide water and sewer to all of Jerome and other townships as feasible.
2. Require developers to extend water and sewer to the extent feasible.
3. Identify current environmental problems and propose attainable solutions.
4. Encourage cooperation between local governments in providing utilities.
5. Negotiate additional water and sewer capacity from the City of Marysville.
6. Control growth by managing water and sewer services to Industrial Parkway service area.
7. Provide sewers to Raymond and Peoria, if feasible.

*Implementation: County Commissioners and County Engineer's Office*

*Timeframe: Short Term to Mid Term*

## Objective 5 - Adequately Funded Utilities

The modus operandi for economic expansion across the state has been significantly sustained by outside funding sources over the years. Developers and local and state officials have become accustomed to this pattern wherein infrastructure deficiencies categorized as "growing pains" are

addressed by government. Local governments can no longer expect this level of outside support nor can they afford to pay for the cost of the improvements themselves.

Traditional sources of outside money continue to dry-up. Development interests still want to follow the old model leaving local governments in the middle.

The political subdivisions of the County have all received project subsidizes from the state and federal government in the form of OEPA utility grants and loans, ODNR environmental programs, etc. Most of these initiatives have now been greatly curtailed in the State of Ohio.

The local governmental units should be clear about their lack of money, but advance innovative financial concepts such as:

1. WPCLF loan fund.
2. OWDA financing for brown field sites.
3. ODOD tax abatement and grant assistance programs.
4. Ohio Department of Taxation programs.
5. Tax increment financing (TIF).
6. Design/build where permissible.
7. Issue II financing.
8. Credit enhancement.
9. EDA grants and loans.
10. Private issue finance.
11. Rural economic and community development services.
12. Impact fees.

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

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

1. General fund dollars.
2. General income tax revenues.
3. General sales tax.
4. Water and sewer rates.
5. County ditch petition.
6. Connection charges.
7. Assessments.

*Strategies*

## A. Expand revenue stream.

Continue to pursue alternative revenue sources and other types of financing districts to fund new growth, where appropriate. Save local resources for system reinforcement projects.

*Implementation: County Commissioners and City and Village Legislative Authorities*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

## B. Expand developer contributions.

Municipalities and the County should continue to require developers to expand their contributions in utility improvements as necessitated by development. Such contributions should be determined on a pro rata basis and applied equally to all projects. When appropriate, utility lines should be oversized to accommodate future development above and beyond the subject development. System expansion policy should be implemented and enforced to ensure that private sector development interests contribute a fair share to the growth picture.

*Implementation: County Commissioners and City and Village Legislative Authorities*

*Timeframe: Short Term*

## C. Encourage cooperative ventures.

Cooperative ventures should be encouraged by making use of private-public partnerships for new developments. Utility grants and environmental loans can be packaged as “PARTNERING” projects with public and private sector associations with responsibilities and risks being shared.

*Implementation: Various Governmental Financial Administrators*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

## D. Maximize state grant and loan programs.

The rehabilitation and expansion of utility infrastructure projects can be funded through various grant and loan programs. Various loan programs associated with these loan sources range from 0% to low interest rates with retirement periods ranging from 20 years to 40 years.

*Implementation: County Engineer’s Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators*

*Timeframe: Ongoing*

## Objective 6 - Reconciling Differences

All communities, villages and townships share the same courthouse, but have somewhat different socio-economic settings. Whereas the Richwood area may be interested in supporting its fertile agricultural tradition, the infrastructure issues in the County area just north of Dublin are challenging in totally different ways. Marysville, as the seat of County government, is flanked by both lifestyles yet has a unique small town atmosphere it seeks to nurture.

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In these circumstances, governmental resources may have a tendency to migrate to the areas most needed. Some may view a perceived disproportional concentration of effort in one geographical area as more of a measure of preparedness and a will to administer sound planning policies. In the infrastructure area, effort is closely aligned with monetary investment. A “have” versus “have not” schism may detract from the overall cohesiveness of the County.

Distinct planning areas with tailored goals and strategies should be developed in terms of infrastructure requirements. The effectiveness of the infrastructure policies should be reviewed every two years to three years. This may start with township zoning but be a common thread of countywide planning throughout the townships, villages and the City. For example, individual home systems may be discouraged in areas of Jerome Township but permitted near Richwood with essentially the same lot attributes. Different development standards are used now on a case-by-case basis but this should be a stated County planning policy.

The county should consider reforming a group such as a Joint Economic Development Task Force to meet on a quarterly basis to facilitate communications at all levels in the County. Or this could be coordinated through the CIC.

*Implementation: All Local Governments*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*



## A. Overview

The Comprehensive Plan is meant to be a working document that results in concrete changes to the way Union County and local government manages itself and protects the community's outstanding quality of life. In a sense, the Plan presents a blueprint for action that provides direction and assists decisionmakers over the next 20 years. The intent is to fulfill the goals, objectives and strategies that embody the civic contract that is a result of this effort.

Implementation should be led by the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC). The LRPC has served as the community's planning entity beginning with the previous Comprehensive Plan and provides an excellent forum for discussing issues of countywide significance. Implementation will also involve a host of county and local departments, boards and commissions, other local public entities, non-profits, businesses and citizens.

## B. How to Use the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be used on a daily basis as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment, capital improvements, economic incentives and other matters affecting the County's environment – built and natural. The following is a summary.

### 1. Annual Work Programs and Budgets

Individual County, city and village departments and administrators should prepare annual work programs and budgets cognizant of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Several strategies can be implemented in this way. Council review of these proposals should likewise occur cognizant of the Plan's strategies.

### 2. Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning and subdivision plats, should be a central means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. In fact, zoning codes and subdivision regulations should be updated in response to regulatory strategies presented in the Plan.

In particular, the densities recommended for each planning area are intended as general guidelines for use by local elected and appointed officials, property owners and developers. The guidelines are intended to be flexible, but also to provide a degree of consistency countywide. Individual communities will make their own decisions regarding appropriate densities as a part of local zoning approvals.

### 3. Capital Improvement Plans

Annual, five-year and 10-year capital improvement plans (CIP) should be prepared consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's infrastructure recommendations (water, sewer and roads). New improvements that are not reflected in the Plan - and which could dramatically impact the Plan's land use recommendations - should necessitate at least a minor update to the Plan.

### 4. Economic Incentives

County and local economic incentives should be reviewed in light of recommendations in the Economic Development, Land Use, Transportation and Utilities Elements. These incentives should be integrated with other Plan strategies and policies to ensure consistency, particularly with the Plan's land use recommendations.

### 5. Private Development Decisions

Property owners and developers should consider the strategies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan in their own land planning and investment decisions. Public decisionmakers will be, using the Comprehensive Plan as a guide in their development-related deliberations, such as deciding zoning and subdivision proposals and infrastructure requests (water, sewer and roads). Property owners and developers should be consistent with the Plan's recommendations.

### 6. Annual Land Use Conference

The CIC should hold an annual conference for the public that will focus on countywide land use, planning and development issues. A status report on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan should be part of the agenda. This could be a day-long conference with sessions focusing on specific issues facing the community, as well as "nuts and bolts" informational sessions on the zoning and subdivision process, open-space subdivisions, farmland preservation and conservation easements, among other topics.

### 7. Future Interpretation

The County Commissioners should call upon the CIC's Long Range Planning Committee to provide an interpretation of major items that are unclear or are not fully addressed in the Plan. In formulating an interpretation, the Committee may call upon outside experts and other groups for advice. Minor items that require interpretation should be handled by local jurisdictions as they follow the Plan.

## C. Updating the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is meant to be a flexible, living document that is constantly used and when necessary updated to reflect changing conditions and local priorities. The following actions are recommended:

1. The Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis. This could occur as part of an annual meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee. The event could occur as part of a larger community-wide event, such as the land use conference recommended in section B.
2. Every five years the County Commissioners should initiate a major review and update to this Plan. The Long Range Planning Committee should be directed to oversee the update. The County may require outside professional assistance.

D. Summary of Strategies

The following table summarizes the strategies that are incorporated into each element of the Comprehensive Plan. The table provides a reference for each strategy (by element), the parties responsible for implementation and the recommended timeframe as follows:

Short Term: 1998-2003

Mid Term: 2004-2010

Long Term: 2011-2018

Ongoing: 1998-2018

Table 14.1 Summary of Strategies

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Implementation</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
Agriculture		
1A	County Commissioners and PDR Study Committee	Mid Term
1B	Local Governments with Adopted Zoning Codes and TDR Study Committee	Long Term
1C	County Commissioners and County Board of Health	Short Term and Ongoing
1D	County Commissioners, OSU Extension and Land Trust Study Committee	Mid Term
1E	County Commissioners and NRCS	Ongoing
1F	County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee and Townships with Adopted Zoning Resolutions	Mid Term
1G	County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, County Engineer's Office and Municipalities	Short Term and Ongoing
1H	County Commissioners Long Range Planning Committee, County Engineer's Office, Health Board and Townships with Adopted Zoning Resolutions	Short Term and Ongoing
1I	Cities, Villages and Townships with Adopted Zoning Codes	Ongoing
2A	<i>See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy E</i>	
2B	County Commissioners, OSU Extension and Farm Bureau	Ongoing
2C	OSU Extension and Farm Bureau	Ongoing
2D	County Commissioners, OSU Extension and Farm Bureau	Ongoing
2E	Community Improvement Corporation, OSU Extension and Farm Bureau	Mid Term and Ongoing
Community Facilities and Services		
1A	County Commissioners and Study Committee	Short Term and Mid Term
2A	County Commissioners	Short Term
3A	All Local Law Enforcement Agencies	Ongoing
3B	All Local Law Enforcement Agencies and School Districts	Ongoing
3C	All Local Law Enforcement Agencies	Ongoing
3D	All Local Law Enforcement Agencies	Ongoing

3E	County Commissioners, County Sheriff's Department and All Local Law Enforcement Agencies	Mid Term
4A	Local Government Officials and School Districts	Short Term and Ongoing
4B	Office of Economic Development and Vocational Education Facilities	Short Term and Ongoing
5A	County Health Board, Medical Facilities and Health Care Providers	Ongoing
5B	County Health Board	Ongoing
5C	County Health Board	Ongoing
5D	Local Government Officials	Mid Term and Ongoing
6A	County Commissioners and Study Committee	Mid Term and Long Term

## Economic Development

1A	Office of Economic Development and Community Improvement Corporation	Ongoing
1B	Office of Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing
1C	County Engineer's Office, Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce and Local Government Officials	Ongoing
1D	Office of Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing
1E	County Commissioners, Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, County Engineer's Office and City of Marysville	Mid Term and Ongoing
1F	County Commissioners, Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau and Local Government Officials	Mid Term and Ongoing
1G	County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce and Office of Economic Development and Local Government Officials	Mid Term and Ongoing
2A	County Commissioners and Office of Economic Development	Mid Term and Ongoing
2B	Local Government Officials	Ongoing
2C	OSU Extension, Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau and Local Government Officials	Mid Term and Ongoing
3A	Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce and Farm Bureau	Ongoing
3B	Office of Economic Development and Farm Bureau	Short Term and Ongoing
3C	County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce, OSU Extension and Farm Bureau	Ongoing

## Housing

1A	County Commissioners	Mid Term and Ongoing
1B	County Commissioners	Long Term
1C	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office and Local Government Officials	Ongoing

1D	County Commissioners, County Health Board and Local Government Officials	Ongoing
2A	County Commissioners	Mid Term and Ongoing
 Land Use		
1A	County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, All Local Government Officials and Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission	Ongoing
1B	County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, All Local Government Officials and Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission	Short Term to Mid Term
1C	County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, County Engineer's Office, County Health Board, Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission and Local Government Officials	Short Term and Ongoing
1D	County Commissioners and Local Government Officials	Mid Term
1E	<i>See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy H</i>	
2A	County Commissioners, County Historical Society and Local Government Officials	Ongoing
2B	County Commissioners, County Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau and Local Government Officials	Ongoing
2C	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office and Local Government Officials	Short Term and Ongoing
 Natural Resources		
1A	County Engineer's Office, NRCS, SWCD, OSU Extension and Townships	Ongoing
1B	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Municipalities, NRCS and SWCD	Short Term
1C	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Municipalities and SWCD	Short Term
1D	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Municipalities, NFIP Administrators and Townships	Short Term
2A	County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee Soil and Water Conservation District, County Engineer's Office and Municipalities	Short Term and Ongoing
2B	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Soil and Water Conservation District, Municipalities and Township Trustees	Mid Term
2C	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, NRCS and Municipalities	Mid Term and Ongoing
2D	County Engineer's Office, OSU Extension, NRCS and Townships	Mid Term and Ongoing
3A	Local Government Officials	Ongoing
3B	Local Government Officials	Long Term
4A	<i>See Natural Resources, Objective 1, Strategy A</i>	
4B	<i>See Natural Resources, Objective 1, Strategy C</i>	

## Parks and Recreation

1A	County Commissioners, Parks District, Cities, Villages and Townships	Short Term
1B	County Commissioners, Parks District, Cities, Villages and Townships	Mid Term
1C	County Commissioners, Parks District, Cities, Villages and Townships	Mid Term and Ongoing
1D	Metropolitan Park District	Ongoing
1E	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission, Municipalities, Villages, Townships and Park Districts	Short Term
1F	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Municipalities, Villages, Townships and Park Districts	Mid Term and Ongoing
2A	Local Recreational Providers	Ongoing

## Transportation

1A	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators	Ongoing
1B	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrator	Ongoing
1C	County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer	Mid Term
1D	City Council and Marysville City Engineer	Mid Term
1E	County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer	Ongoing
1F	County Commissioners, Marysville City Council and City Administration	Mid Term
1G	County Engineer's Office, Village Administrators and Marysville City Engineer	Ongoing
2A	County Commissioners, Marysville City and Village Council and Village Administrators	Short Term – Inter-County Long Term – Intra-County
2B	County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer	Short Term to Mid Term
3A	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators	Ongoing
3B	<i>See Transportation, Objective 1, Strategy B</i>	
4A	Marysville City Engineer, Mayor, City Council and Service Director	Short Term to Mid Term
4B	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office and Township Trustees	Short Term to Mid Term
4C	County Engineer's Office, Village Administrator and ODOT	Short Term to Mid Term
4D	ODOT and County Engineer's Office	Mid Term to Long Term
5A	County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer	Short Term to Mid Term
6A	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators	Short Term to Mid Term
6B	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Planning Departments	Short Term
6C	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer, City Council and Village Administrators	Ongoing

6D	Legislative Authorities	Ongoing
6E	Marysville City Administrator, Finance Director, County Engineer's Office and Village Administrators	Ongoing
7A	All Local Governments	Short Term and Ongoing
8A	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer	Short Term to Mid Term
8B	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Councils	Short Term
8C	County Engineer's Office and Marysville City Engineer	Short Term
 Utilities		
1A	Marysville, Milford Center, Plain City and Richwood	Ongoing
1B	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators	Ongoing
1C	All Legislative Authorities and Appropriate Engineers	Ongoing
1D	County Commissioners and County Engineer's Office	Ongoing
2A	County Environmental Engineer, Legislative Authorities and Wastewater Departments of Marysville, Plain City and Richwood	Short Term to Mid Term
2B	County Health Department	Short Term to Mid Term
2C	County Health Department	Short Term and Ongoing
2D	County Health Department	Short Term and Ongoing
2E	County Commissioners, County Environmental Engineer, Health Department and SWCD	Ongoing
2F	County Commissioners, County Engineer's Office, Township Trustees and County Health Department	Ongoing
3A	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer, Village Administrators and SWCD	Ongoing
4A	Marysville City Council and City Administrator	Short Term to Mid Term
4B	County Engineer's Office and Village Administrator	Short Term to Mid Term
4C	County Engineer's Office and Village Administrator	Short Term to Mid Term
4D	County Engineer's Office	Short Term
4E	County Engineer's Office and Village Administrator	Short Term to Mid Term
4F	County Commissioners and County Engineer's Office	Short Term to Mid Term
5A	County Commissioners and City/Village Legislative Authorities	Ongoing
5B	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators	Short Term
5C	Various Governmental Finance Administrators	Ongoing
5D	County Engineer's Office, Marysville City Engineer and Village Administrators	Ongoing
6	All Local Governments	Short Term and Ongoing



## A. Overview

The Appendix is comprised of a glossary of planning terms, a bibliography of sources consulted in preparing the Comprehensive Plan Update and a subject index.

## B. Glossary

Comprehensive plans are technical documents that establish public policies and programs to help a community manage its future. But reading such technical language can be distracting and negatively affect a plan's success because of poor communication. That is why this glossary is provided – to aid the reader in understanding the jargon and concepts presented in the Union County Comprehensive Plan.

**Agribusiness** – A private enterprise strongly linked to agriculture, such as grain mills, implement sales, butchering, nurseries, orchards, farm markets and landscape contractors.

**Agricultural Protection Zoning** – This is a zoning classification that seeks to protect agricultural operations by discouraging the development of residential subdivisions and other incompatible uses. Such districts could only be adopted in a community with a zoning code. This would be an optional tool that would require public and property owner support.

**Aquifer** – An underground bed or stratum of earth, gravel or porous stone that contains water.

**Build-Out** – Build-out is the point at which a community's total land area is completely developed.

**City** – A city is an incorporated community under the Ohio Revised Code with a population of at least 5,000 persons.

**Commercial Development** – Commercial development is defined as typical commercially-related uses, such as retail, auto-oriented businesses, personal services and professional offices.

**Conservation Easement** – An easement precluding future or additional development of the land.

**Density, Gross** – Gross density is a measurement of the maximum number of lots permitted on a parcel. Gross density bears no relationship to the minimum lot size permitted on a parcel.

**Density, Net** – Net density is a measurement of the maximum number of lots permitted on a parcel, having deleted right-of-way. Net density typically more closely reflects the minimum lot size permitted on a parcel.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** – Floor Area Ratio measures gross floor area of nonresidential structures proportionally to the size of the parcel on which the structure is located. If a one-acre site has a FAR of 0.25 then a building with a gross floor area of 10,890 square feet would meet this standard ( $43,560 \times 0.25 = 10,890$ ). FAR is a means of measuring the intensity of nonresidential development.

**Goal** – Is a broad policy statement that indicates preferences for specific subject areas or planning values.

**Land Use** – The way in which land is used or occupied by people.

**Leap-Frog Development** – The development of new areas that are removed from existing developed areas and therefore not adjacent. Such development is costly to serve with public utilities and extends urbanized areas farther away from the denser core of a community.

**Light Industrial Development** – Light industrial development is defined as comprising uses that are non polluting and low impact, such as research and development, high tech manufacturing, light assembly, and warehouse and distribution.

**Natural Resources** – Elements of the physical environment such as forests, meadows, wetlands, minerals, water, air, plants and animals in their natural habitat.

**Objective** – Is a refinement of a goal and indicates a policy direction and action to implement the related goal.

**Open Space** – Areas not built upon, such as woodlands, wetlands, fields, meadows, stream corridors, fence rows, species habitats, lawns and landscape. The term “open space” is interchangeable with the term “greenspace”.

**Rural** – A sparsely developed area where the land is predominantly undeveloped or primarily used for agricultural purposes.

**Rural Character** – Rural character is defined as the physical attributes that define a historic rural landscape, including woodlands, riparian corridors, farm fields, fence rows, barns and other outbuildings, historic homesteads, etc.

**Sprawl** – An uncontrolled or unmanaged form of urban/suburban growth that uses land inefficiently and which results in traffic congestion, land use conflicts, excessive infrastructure costs and environmental impacts.

**Strategy** – A strategy details the steps necessary to initiate and complete an objective.

**Village** – A village is an incorporated or unincorporated community under the Ohio Revised Code with a population of less than 5,000 persons.

**Wetlands** – Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surfacewater or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support and that under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.

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## Union County Comprehensive Plan Update

January 25, 1999

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