





PLAN

Seneca County ◊ County Park District ◊ Tiffin ◊ Fostoria

FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

June 2020







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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2018, the Seneca County Commissioners and Seneca Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) in cooperation with the cities of Tiffin and Fostoria and the Seneca County Park District (SCPD) began the process of developing this planning document. Through this joint planning effort, the participating entities have successfully planned today for the needs of tomorrow. This Plan was made possible thanks to the time and effort of the dedicated members of the Steering Committee as well as the numerous residents, business owners and other stakeholders who provided input during the planning process. Many thanks also to the numerous individuals who contributed photographs to help illustrate the plan.

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CHAPTER 1:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, Seneca County encompasses approximately 553 square miles with roughly 55,000 residents. The county boasts a robust agricultural industry with over 1,150 farms and in the past has ranked first for wheat, second for soybeans, and fourth for corn production out of Ohio's 88 counties. Seneca County also offers residents and visitors over 1,200 acres of public parkland, one of the state's few designated Scenic Rivers, and a wide variety of recreational options.

Yet, the area also has a diverse economy, with a variety of businesses and industries, one of the area's largest healthcare providers (the Mercy Healthcare System), and two universities (Tiffin University and Heidelberg University). Moreover, with more than 2,000 new jobs and $500 million in new investment announced since 2014, Seneca County has placed in the top ten percent of more than 530 similar sized areas in the US for economic development every year in that same period.

At the same time, local leaders representing Seneca County, the Seneca County Park District, the city of Tiffin and the city of Fostoria recognize that long-term planning is essential to ensure that all businesses flourish and residents enjoy prosperity and a high quality of life.

The Seneca County Multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan sets forth a framework for the next generation. This Executive Summary provides a short overview of the Plan's vision, goals and objectives.

Overarching Vision

Our ability to achieve the best future possible for our next generation is for us all to agree on what that future looks like. By formulating a shared, overarching vision, we agree to leverage our individual resources in ways that move us in the same direction, toward the achievement of our Overarching Vision. That doesn't mean we're all doing the same thing, but that all entities are thinking more holistically about the challenges and opportunities ahead, agree on what's important to preserve and conserve, and what our long-term outcomes should be.

The **Overarching Vision** for the future of Seneca County is to be....

....A thriving, resilient and forward-thinking community;

....A leader in leveraging our assets (people, places, resources) within a balanced, sustainable framework in a manner that honors our past, strengthens our existing assets, and anticipates, plans for, and embraces the future;

....An attractive, distinctive, memorable and desirable place to call home, visit, and do business in; and

....Engaged in good stewardship of both our built and natural environment.

In addition to the **Overarching Vision**, each jurisdiction has its own Vision tailored to its specific perspective.

Tailored Vision Statements

Vision for Seneca County

To be an inclusive community that celebrates & brings to life both its rural & urban cultural heritage: fostering active lifestyles by improving access to existing natural resources for all county residents; & supporting a robust & innovative local economy that both integrates with & helps lead the regional economy.

Vision for the Seneca County Park District

To be a recognized leader & desired partner in providing life-enhancing & lifelong, nature-based outdoor experiences for all; & to build a legacy of good environmental stewardship for future generations.

Vision for Tiffin

To be a regional hub for business & industry as well as a vibrant & active place for residents, employees & visitors: providing a range of housing to meet the needs of all households; continuing to celebrate & preserve our historic & cultural resources & recognize them as economic development drivers; working cooperatively with local institutions to foster learning & advancement; & supporting the active lifestyles of residents.

Vision for Fostoria

To be a place where all residents feel safe & secure; a hub for job training & skills development; & a place where families & businesses feel good about investing. Having galvanized local leaders & engaged residents, Fostoria will continue to embrace its heritage while actively preparing for its future.

Integrated Goals

The four jurisdictional partners agree that the following six integrated goals and objectives apply to all of the jurisdictions, either directly or indirectly, and provide a structure around which the individual strategies are framed.

1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy

Ensure we are prepared to & successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national & global economy, with an emphasis on jobs & tax revenue.

2. Attractive, Desirable, and Livable Places (Built Environment)

Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living & socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

3. Quality Community Facilities and Services

Create & foster a strong sense of community by ensuring social needs are met with equitable programs & access to a wide range of community & public facilities and services.

4. Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human & economic wellbeing, provide recreation & educational opportunities for locals & tourists, & significantly enhance the character of our community.

5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility, and Public Utilities

Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure & utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current & future residents & businesses.

6. Strong Community Character and Image

Enhance & strengthen our community character & brand to establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study & visit; instill community pride; & attract new residents, businesses & visitors.

These goals and objectives will be accomplished by effective and responsible collaboration, authentic engagement to increase participation, and accountable implementation.

Why a Unified Plan?

This collaborative planning effort resulted in a unified plan for Seneca County, the city of Tiffin, the city of Fostoria, and the Seneca County Park District. The partners in this planning effort understand the importance of collaboration and the benefits of having a joint framework with rich context for establishing sound public policy and community development strategies that address pressing and future community issues. This collaborative effort enabled all entities to work together to deal with issues that transcend each and to allow the entities to explore the role each shares in achieving the overarching vision. In addition, we know that initiatives identified through this cooperative approach and endorsed by this multi-jurisdictional plan are more likely to qualify for federal and state grants that often seek to fund projects that meet multiple objectives and/or cross municipal boundaries.

CHAPTER 2:
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION

This Multi-Jurisdictional Plan for Seneca County, Tiffin, Fostoria, and the Seneca County Park District is a guide for long-term decisions based on a shared vision and values. It is a blueprint for collaboration among the four partners who came together and commissioned it. And it is this partnership that makes this Plan unique among comprehensive planning processes. It is a testament to the spirit of cooperation that exists in Seneca County today.

This Plan reflects both shared goals and objectives as well as the unique strategies developed for each of the jurisdictional partners. It is a long-range vision document that establishes the foundation upon which decision makers can rely as they make policy and budget decisions about future land use, economic development, public amenities such as parks and open space preservation, capital improvements related to transportation and utilities and regulations such as zoning. The goals, objectives and strategies have been formulated with insights gained from extensive community input from thousands of people. Their concerns, aspirations and ideas have help shaped the recommendations throughout this Plan. It is meant to be flexible to accommodate change over time.

The Plan is divided into five sections:

Chapter 1 provides a short overview of the main points of the Plan.

Chapter 2 describes the planning process, highlights the public involvement efforts and summarizes previous planning efforts.

Chapter 3 highlights existing assets, describes existing conditions and trends, and summarizes issues and opportunities that need to be addressed in the coming years.

Chapter 4 includes an overall vision for the county, as well as specific vision statements for each partner, and a set of shared – integrated - long-term goals and objectives.

Chapter 5 is comprised of four separate subchapters that describe the individualized objectives and specific strategies for each partner.



The Plan Process

This multi-jurisdictional planning effort evolved from a traditional update to the 2001 Seneca County Comprehensive Plan, to a joint project with four partners: Seneca County, the cities of Tiffin and Fostoria, and the Seneca County Park District. The partners agreed to collaboratively produce one document that could guide future development for all of them. They recognized that much of the same information was pertinent to all parties and that their decisions, in large part, were interwoven and affected a larger audience than any of the individual group's constituents alone.

The planning process, spearheaded by the Seneca Regional Planning Commission, was initiated in the spring of 2018. A 17-person Steering Committee was immediately formed, with each of the partners represented on the committee.

The first phase of the project included interviews with over 50 stakeholders from around the county, representing a diverse range of viewpoints, data collection and analysis. It also included site visits and an initial assessment of the existing conditions in the county and its context. This assessment involved the compilation and synthesis of information gathered through the stakeholder interviews, a review of adopted plans, and an analysis of relevant data provided by the Regional Planning Commission and other county departments and agencies. A countywide online survey, described in more detail below, provided public comments and insights related to existing conditions, issues and aspirations. The Steering Committee reviewed the assessment during meetings throughout the autumn of 2018.

Phase II began in January 2019 with a series of three public meetings, described in more detail below, held back-to-back in Tiffin, Fostoria and Green Springs. The Steering Committee presented initial findings and received feedback on goals and pressing issues. The set of integrated goals and objectives were refined during this phase, and policy ideas were developed from feedback received at the public meetings, Steering Committee meetings, and from the public survey.

Phase III involved finalizing the objectives and developing specific strategies for each of the partners: Seneca County (villages and townships), the Seneca County Park District, Tiffin and Fostoria. A second set of public meetings was held in November 2019. The draft of the final plan was distributed in early 2020.



Public Engagement

Public involvement and input from as many people as possible was an essential component of this planning effort to ensure the final plans addressed the varying needs throughout the county.

Online Survey

The Steering Committee conducted an online survey inviting residents, business owners and other interested people to share their opinions and concerns with the Steering Committee. The survey was posted on the Seneca Regional Planning Commission (SPRC) website. Print copies were also made accessible at the SRPC's office in downtown Tiffin. The survey was conducted from mid-August 2018 to late January 2019. A total of 1,146 people completed at least some part of the survey.

The survey was divided into six sections: Seneca County in general, city of Tiffin, city of Fostoria, Seneca County Park District's facilities, participant demographics, and an opportunity to leave email address for plan updates. Because of the length of the survey and the various components, respondents were able to complete only the parts of the survey that were relevant to them.

The survey results provided valuable information for the Steering Committee regarding the issues and goals of citizens, business owners and local employees. The survey was openly available to anyone interested in participating. Survey responses were obtained from all parts of the county; however, some of the villages and townships were more heavily represented than others. It is important to note that the results helped inform the Steering Committee's discussion and decisions, but are not considered with statistical certainty as a valid representation of community-wide opinions.

In March 2019, the consultants prepared a separate report with a summary of findings and a complete listing of the survey results, including the write-in responses categorized by topic, for the Steering Committee's use.

Public Forums

In January 2019, the Steering Committee and CT Consultants held three community forums to share the work of the committee to date and get feedback from the community. The first meeting was held on January 14 in Tiffin, the second was on January 15 in Fostoria and the third meeting was on January 16 in Green Springs. All meetings were open to the public but the three locations were chosen in order to reach people from all parts of the county. Each meeting was formatted the same, starting with a brief presentation reviewing the planning process, the county's existing conditions, issues and strengths and the plan's "first cut" visions and goals. Afterwards, attendees were divided into groups and traveled to presentation boards.

Each board addressed a different goal of the plan including: prosperous and resilient economy, attractive, desirable and livable places, quality community facilities and services, environmental stewardship, enhanced mobility, accessibility and public utilities, strong community character and image. Steering Committee members led the groups in discussion at each board asking participants to comment on ideas of how to accomplish each goal. Participants wrote their thoughts on sticky notes and placed them on the boards. Groups rotated stations every ten minutes, visiting each board over the course of about an hour.











A second set of public meetings was held in Tiffin on November 20, 2019 and Fostoria on November 21, 2019. The primary purpose of the meetings was to allow community members to comment on the goals developed for each of the jurisdictional partners in the Comprehensive Planning Process: Seneca County, the cities of Fostoria and Tiffin, and the Seneca County Park District. A brief presentation described the process and data that had produced the goals. After the presentation, attendees "voted" for their top priorities as illustrated on poster boards.

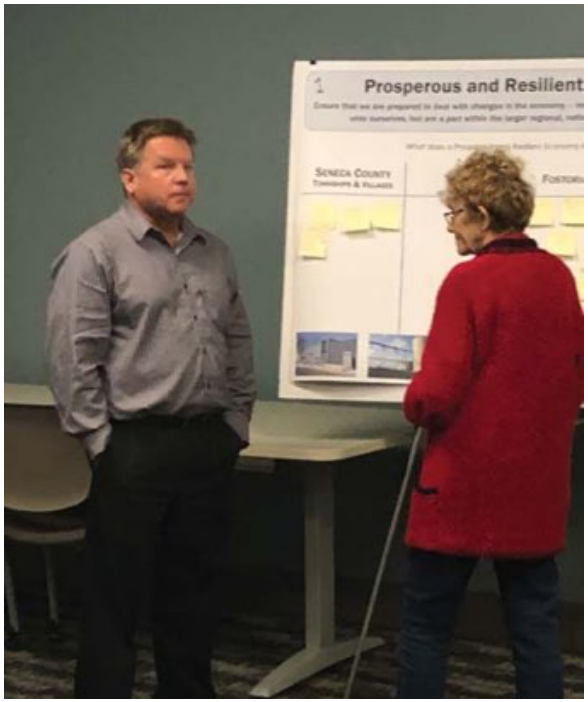
Four sets of poster boards/goals corresponding to the four jurisdictional partners were set up around the room and community members were allowed to circulate freely between the four stations at their own pace. Steering committee members and consultants were on hand to answer questions about specific goals, objectives and strategies.

Community members were invited to write down their thoughts on Post-it Notes and provided the opportunity to submit their concerns via email to the Seneca Regional Planning Commission. This gave people who were not able to attend the meeting the opportunity to provide feedback. Several dozen comments and emails were received and reviewed. The Steering Committee members reviewed all the comments and emails and made refinements to the Plan goals and objectives as a result.








1 Prosperous and Resilient
Seneca County


1 Prosperous and Resilient Economy




3 Quality Community Facilities and Services


3 Quality Community Facilities and Services
TOLEDO

Planning Documents Referenced in the Seneca County Multi-Jurisdictional Plan

Prior to and during the creation of this Multi-jurisdictional plan, a number of other planning efforts were conducted by some of the partners. The goals and findings of these plans were reviewed and relevant initiatives incorporated into this plan.

County-Oriented Plans

2001 Seneca County Comprehensive Plan Update

The overarching vision for Seneca County expressed in the 2001 Plan was to "accommodate growth while retaining the character and inherent attractiveness so important to the citizens of the county". The plan also emphasized three themes: Quality of Life, Balanced Growth, and Efficient Services. The following goal statements from the plan reflect these three themes:

1. Maintain and enhance the standard of living for all citizens of Seneca County.
2. Encourage growth that focuses on existing urban areas and respects the intrinsic values of the land.
3. Ensure timely and orderly development within the county by making strategic public investments in infrastructure and services.

2011 Seneca County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The goals of the Seneca County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy plan include:

1. Retain existing businesses and help them expand.
2. Attract new, diversified business activity to Seneca County.
3. Facilitate workforce employability and training.
4. Provide infrastructure to support business locations, relocations, and expansions through Seneca County.
5. Market and brand Seneca County and its communities, internally and externally.
6. Provide and atmosphere in which entrepreneurs can flourish
7. Enhance Seneca County's quality of life foe business leaders, employers, and residents.
8. Organize for maximum effectiveness in achieving successful economic development.

2016 Strategic Plan for the Seneca County Park District

The Seneca County Park District (SCPD), created in 1996, received a dedicated funding source when the first county park levy passed in 2016. The Park District's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee, includes the following short-term and long-term goals to guide the wise allocation of resources:

1. Assure long term sustainability by building awareness and making use of a variety of marketing strategies.
2. Create an organizational infrastructure that will maintain and/or grow all aspects of the SCPD.
3. Build more coalitions/collaborations/partnerships with organizations that parallel our mission.

2016 Seneca County, city of Tiffin, and city of Fostoria Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing

This Plan identified impediments to fair housing choices in the county, as well as Tiffin and Fostoria. It includes the following recommendations:

1. Seek more affordable housing opportunities.
2. Address the needs for accessibility and reasonable accommodation of tenants' needs, related to housing, public buildings and open spaces.
3. Increase acceptance of Section 8 vouchers.
4. Continue to provide fair housing education and training.
5. Consider establishing a homeless shelter.
6. Address predatory lending issues.
7. Continue to coordinate efforts with local housing agencies.

2017 Seneca County Transportation Improvement Plan

The Seneca County Transportation Improvement Plan Update includes four priority projects:

1. Fair Lane Extension Project in Tiffin to address economic development needs.
2. Tiffin-Fostoria Connector Project, a 3-phase project to improve access between the two cities.
3. Fostoria Loop Project, a 7-phase project to provide a transportation loop around the City.
4. Seneca County Active Transportation Plan.

The Seneca County Active Transportation Plan was completed in December, 2018, and includes a number of recommendations for the development of trails and bikeways in Seneca County.

2017 Seneca County Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan

This Plan inventoried public transportation providers throughout the county. The Plan includes the following strategies to address gaps and needs:

1. Regionalized Coordination: coordinate services in the most efficient and cost effective way.
2. Improve Customer Service: offer transportation services on weekends, holidays and evenings.
3. Improve Efficiencies and Minimize Duplication: improve efficiencies through shared training and resources; minimize redundant trips outside county by multiple providers.
4. Marketing: educate Seneca County residents on all available mobility options.
5. Communication and Coordination: keep public updated on information regarding Medicaid transportation rules.
6. Capital Needs: explore upgrades to public transportation software, develop bus shelters for deviated fixed routes, and provide vehicles, when needed, to Seneca County Board of Development Disabilities (Opportunity Center), SCAT, and other providers.

2018 Community Branding Plan and Strategy

The Plan established a brand identity to create a distinctive and differentiated position – reflected through a singular brand expression – adapted and applied to the family of organizations that represent the Tiffin-Seneca Community. Specific strategies include the following:

1. Elevate Tiffin-Seneca as a destination, home, and place of economic opportunity.
2. Appeal to enterprise companies, entrepreneurs, and existing businesses for sustainment or expansion.
3. Create a brand that can be applied to TSEP, the Chamber, Seneca County and the city of Tiffin.
4. Support community goals: economic development, residential attractions, tourism and businesses/youth retention.

2018 Seneca County Active Transportation Plan

This Plan grew out of the need to provide a safer and healthier environment for residents of Seneca County and those who choose to visit and take advantage of its active transportation routes. Recommendations focused on the needs of each jurisdiction:

1. For the county, recommendations focus on improving or creating the network of trails that connect rural communities.
2. Recommendations for Fostoria focus on extending existing trails, increasing signage, and adding shared lane markings on a number of streets.
3. Recommendations for Tiffin include adding trails or other connections to provide access to major destinations such as nature preserves and city parks, Downtown and the universities; extending existing bike trails; and providing shared lane markings along a number of local streets.

City of Tiffin Plans

2010 Strategic Downtown Planning Initiative Phase II

Tiffin's 2010 downtown plan was the second phase of a two-phased planning effort, structured according to the principles and four-point system of the Main Street program. Phase II explored detailed design and development initiatives and implementation strategies based on the recommendations from the Phase I initiative. It includes the following eight guiding principles:

1. Create "place" and destination with brand identity.
2. Market downtown's history and vitality.
3. Celebrate the riverfront.
4. Encourage pedestrian-oriented connections and connect downtown "anchors".
5. Promote context sensitive infill development.
6. Provide selective on-street parking and promote shared parking at the rear of buildings.
7. Develop appropriate regulatory environment, review process and enforcement.
8. Promote effective general maintenance.

2016 Downtown Tiffin Strategic Growth and Development Plan

The 2016 Downtown Growth and Development Plan builds on the 2010 Downtown Plan, by identifying near-term catalytic opportunities and long-term projects. The 2016 Plan includes the following elements:

1. Analysis of current market conditions and trends.
2. Redevelopment goals and initiatives including placemaking, town/gown development, and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and housing.
3. Strategies related to infill development, rehabilitation of existing properties, improved transportation, bicycling and parking facilities, street conversion, and related zoning recommendations.
4. Targeted neighborhoods are Fort Ball, Little Italy, the Riverfront, and Downtown.

2018 Downtown Tiffin Parking Study & Garage Analysis

This Plan includes the following components:

1. Four possible sites for a future parking garage;
2. Recommendations to increase the efficiency and utilization of existing parking facilities through improved signage, lighting, valet service and parking management strategies; and
3. Recommendations to reduce vehicular traffic in downtown by promoting alternative modes, such as biking, public transit, and shuttle service between downtown, the universities and other key destinations.

2019 Tiffin Area Housing Opportunities Analysis

This Plan documented a number of current conditions that confirm Tiffin is one of the most underserved housing markets in Northwest Ohio, and that the shortage prevents prospective homeowners and renters from moving into the area. The Plan also notes the following:

1. In the next three years, a market exists for 330 to 450 new housing units in the Tiffin area (city and surrounding townships).
2. Identifies eight development sites to showcase the variety of housing options suitable for Tiffin, including downtown adaptive reuse, rental housing and urban infill housing sites; infill maintenance-free housing development; for-sale housing development; and multi-family housing sites.

2019 Tiffin Farmers' Market Plan

This Plan identified a number of recommendations to improve operations, increase the number of months the market is open, and develop programming to increase local awareness and appreciation of local food.

CHAPTER 3:
SENECA COUNTY TODAY

CHAPTER 3: SENECA COUNTY TODAY

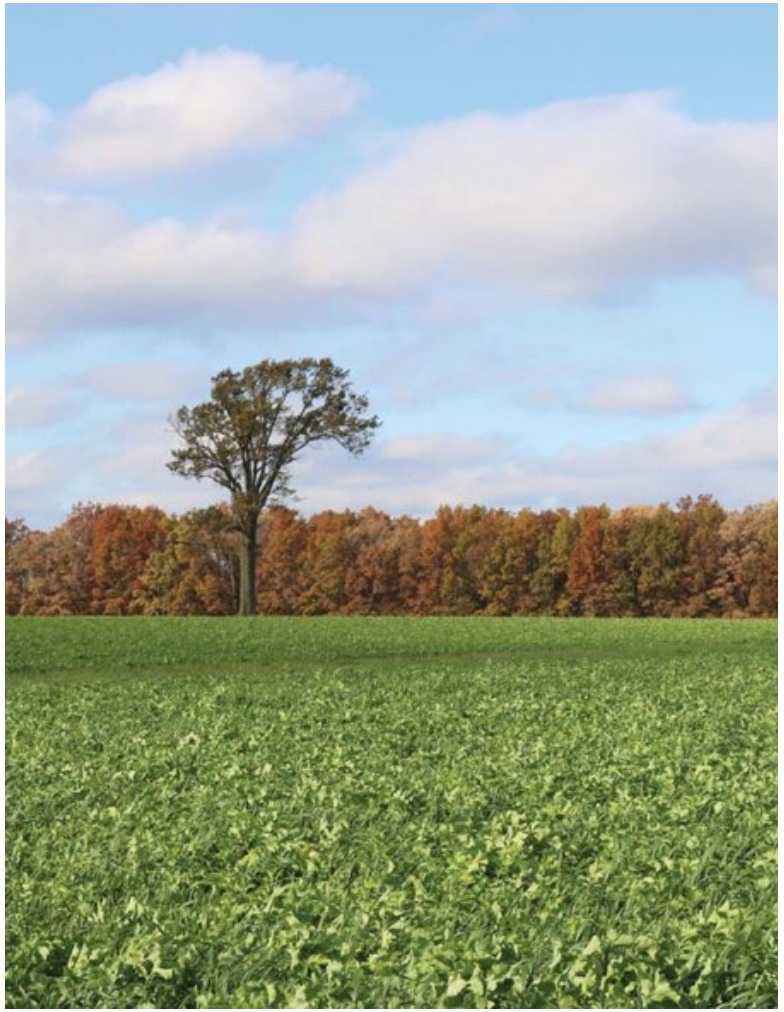
Planning for the future of Seneca County begins with having a good understanding of current conditions and trends, existing assets, and important issues that provide the framework for developing goals and strategies. This chapter provides highlights of topics discussed during the planning process and additional analysis of key elements that provide context for the rest of this plan. This chapter reviews population and housing characteristics; land use, roadways, and other infrastructure issues; the natural conditions of the land and how they influence uses of the land; and a variety of other economic and physical characteristics.

Overview

Today, Seneca County encompasses approximately 553 square miles with 55,000 residents. The county boasts a robust agricultural industry with over 1,150 farms and in the past has ranked first for wheat, second for soybeans, and fourth for corn production out of Ohio's 88 counties. Seneca County also offers residents and visitors over 1,200 acres of public parkland, one of the state's few designated Scenic Rivers, and a wide variety of recreational options.

While land-wise Seneca County is largely a rural, agricultural county, there are a number of diverse assets in the two cities of Tiffin (the county seat) and Fostoria, as well as six villages and a number of small, unincorporated communities. The Tiffin-Fostoria-Seneca County micropolitan area has seen a surge of economic growth in the past few years, with more than 2,000 new jobs and $500 million in new investment since 2014. Seneca County has been recognized nationally for placing in the top 100 of the 531 micropolitan areas in the USA for economic development for eight years in a row and six times in the top ten percent. Residents are served by two area hospitals, and have access to two universities, a regional educational service center, industrial training centers, and a number of local quality public and private schools.

At the same time, there are a number of issues to be addressed in this Plan, such as continued economic growth to ensure wider benefits and combat un- and underemployment, ongoing population decline in many areas of the county, especially in regards to young adults who go away for college and never return, and concerns related to stagnant housing development.



Regional Location

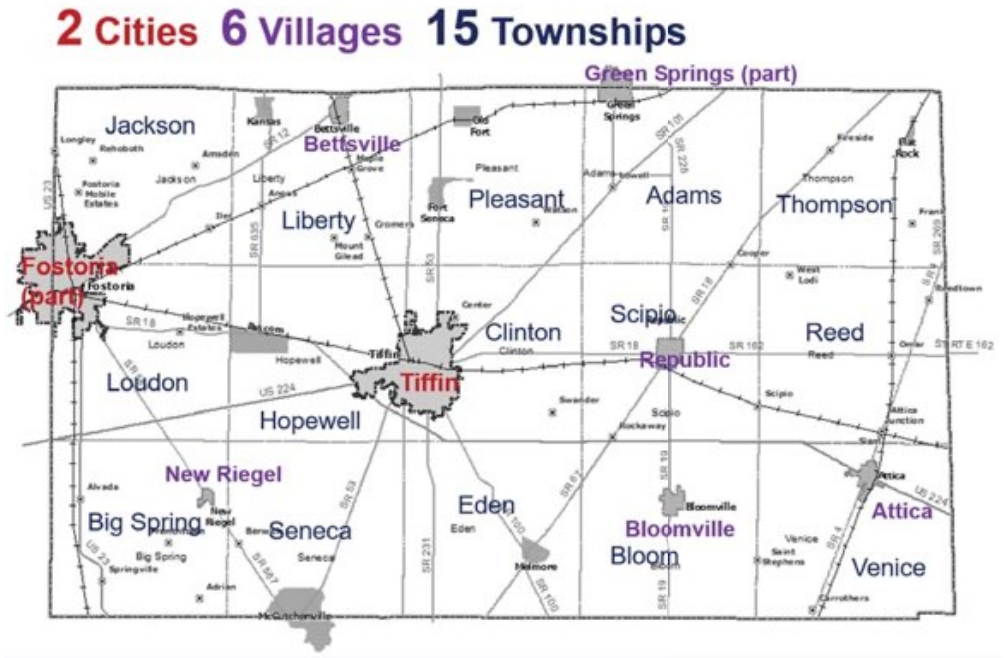
Seneca County is located in northwest Ohio, approximately 40 miles southeast of Toledo, 80 miles west of the Cleveland, and about 80 miles north of Columbus. Seneca County is classified as a micropolitan area (an urban cluster of at least 10,000 people but fewer than 50,000 people) and is not considered part of a larger metropolitan area. This means that Seneca County does not have a "high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work)" with any larger metropolitan area, the closest of which is the Toledo Metropolitan Area.

Seneca County contains two cities (though only a portion of Fostoria is in Seneca County), six villages, and fifteen townships, with the eastern portion of the county much more rural and less densely populated than the central and western portions of the county. Running through Seneca County and Tiffin is the Sandusky River, a state scenic river.



History

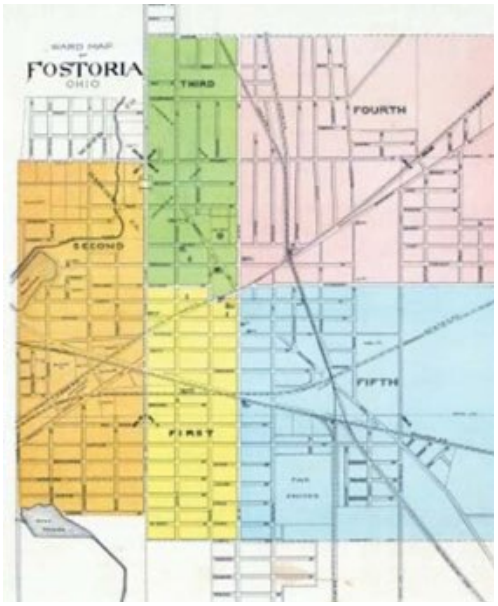
Seneca County's first inhabitants were the Seneca Indians who settled along the Sandusky River in what is today Tiffin. Wyandots also populated the county. Both tribes were farmers and hunters. Land grants were awarded from Connecticut in the Firelands west of Tiffin but European Americans did not begin to settle in the area until the early 1800s. During the War of 1812, Fort Ball was established in Tiffin along the Sandusky River. In 1817, the Pan Yan Inn, a stagecoach stop near the fort brought the economic stimulus, and that year, Tiffin became the first incorporated community. In 1820, the Ohio government authorized the creation of Seneca County, named after the Seneca Indian tribe. Tiffin was named the county seat in 1824.



By the 1830s, migration by settlers from New York and New England was fueled by the completion of the Erie Canal, which connected the markets by the Great Lakes to the Hudson River and New York City. Attica Village and Bettsville Village were incorporated in 1833 and 1838 respectively. In 1841, the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad connected Tiffin with Sandusky, Ohio. As Tiffin developed, Heidelberg College was founded in 1850 as the third coeducational college in the nation. By 1860, the county was well established as a primarily agricultural county and population growth slowed. By 1883, New Riegel became the last village to be incorporated in the county. However, with an abundance of railroads and the discovery of oil and natural gas in 1888, both Fostoria and Tiffin became major regional employment centers.

Not surprising, Seneca County is rich in cultural resources and history, with a number of historic buildings that remain intact, and traditional downtown main streets in Fostoria and Tiffin, as well as Attica, Bloomville and Republic villages. Indeed, according to the Ohio Historical Society, Seneca County has a number of sites listed on the National Register, including 38 in Tiffin, two in Fostoria, one in Attica Village, one in New Riegel Village, and three in or near Flat Rock and Kansas. In addition, there are a number of archaeological sites.









Population Characteristics

At the heart of our community are the people who choose to live here. Understanding the trends in population, households and housing growth, as well as other characteristics of the population, helps identify the need for future housing, businesses, schools, parks and other public amenities. This section explores the demographic and housing trends in Seneca County and in some cases compares differing trends within the county. Some of the data was obtained from the U.S. Decennial Census, which is a complete count of the population conducted

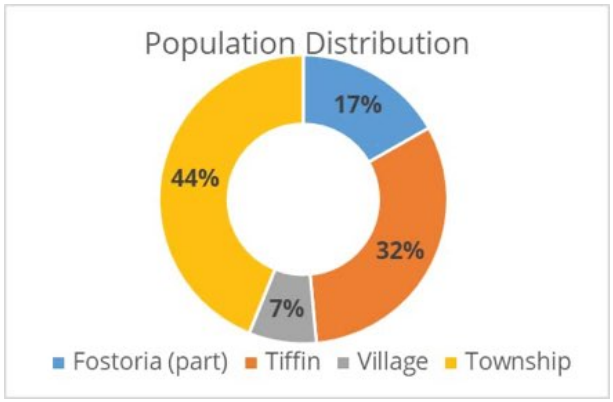


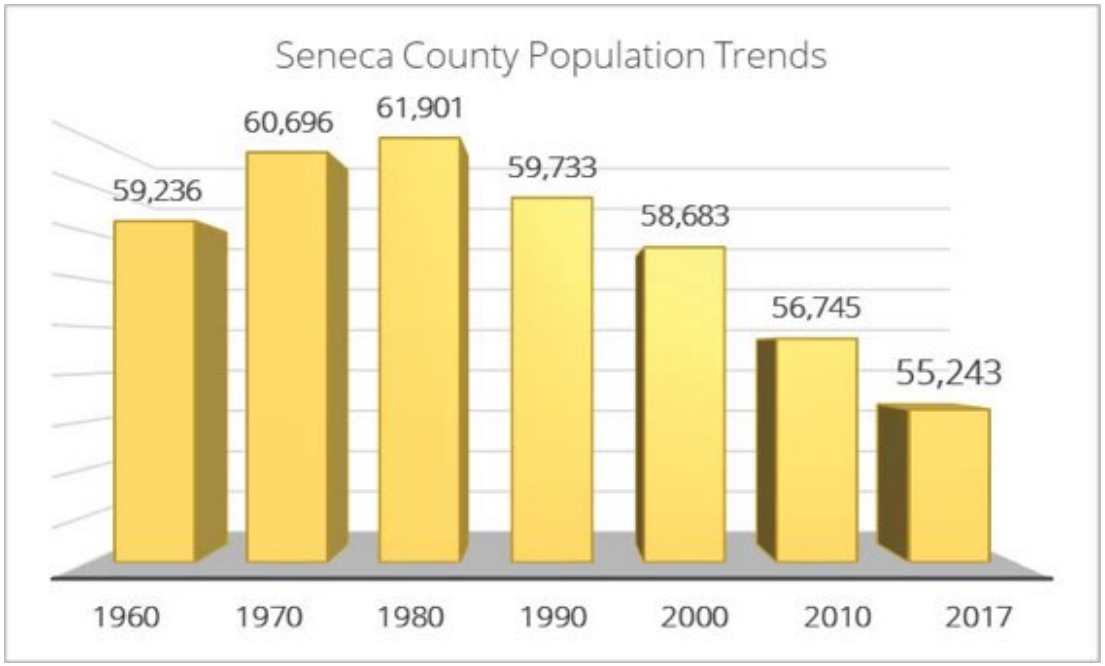


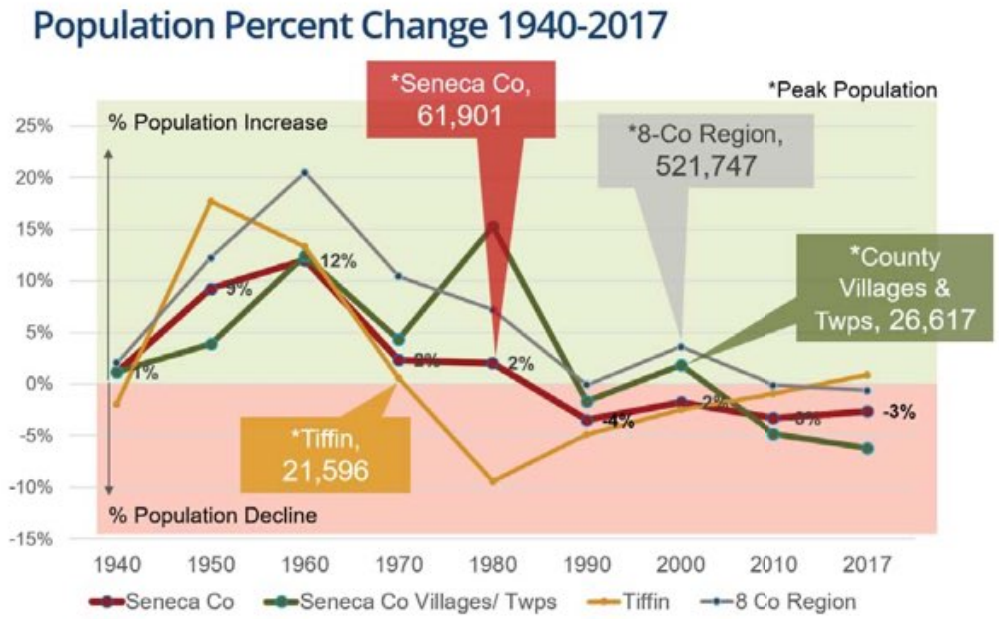
once every 10 years. Supporting data was also used from the American Community Survey (ACS), which is extrapolated data from a survey of a sampling of the population every year.

The county's population, like many other rural counties in Ohio, has been declining for a few decades. The 2017 county population estimate is 55,243; an 11% decline from peak population of 61,901 in 1980, and a 2.7% decline since 2010. This is slightly less than the 3.3% average decline in the five adjacent counties to the north, east and south. In comparison, Hancock County increased by 1.5% and Wood County by 4.2%, both of which are located to the west along the I-75 corridor.

Nearly half of county residents (49%) live in an "urban" area, either Tiffin or Fostoria, while 44% live in one of the 15 townships, and only 7% live in one of the six villages. Clinton Township, adjacent to Tiffin, is the most populous township with over 4,000 residents. In contrast, Bloom, Reed and Venice Townships (with 800 or fewer residents) in the southeast comprise the least populated areas of the county.





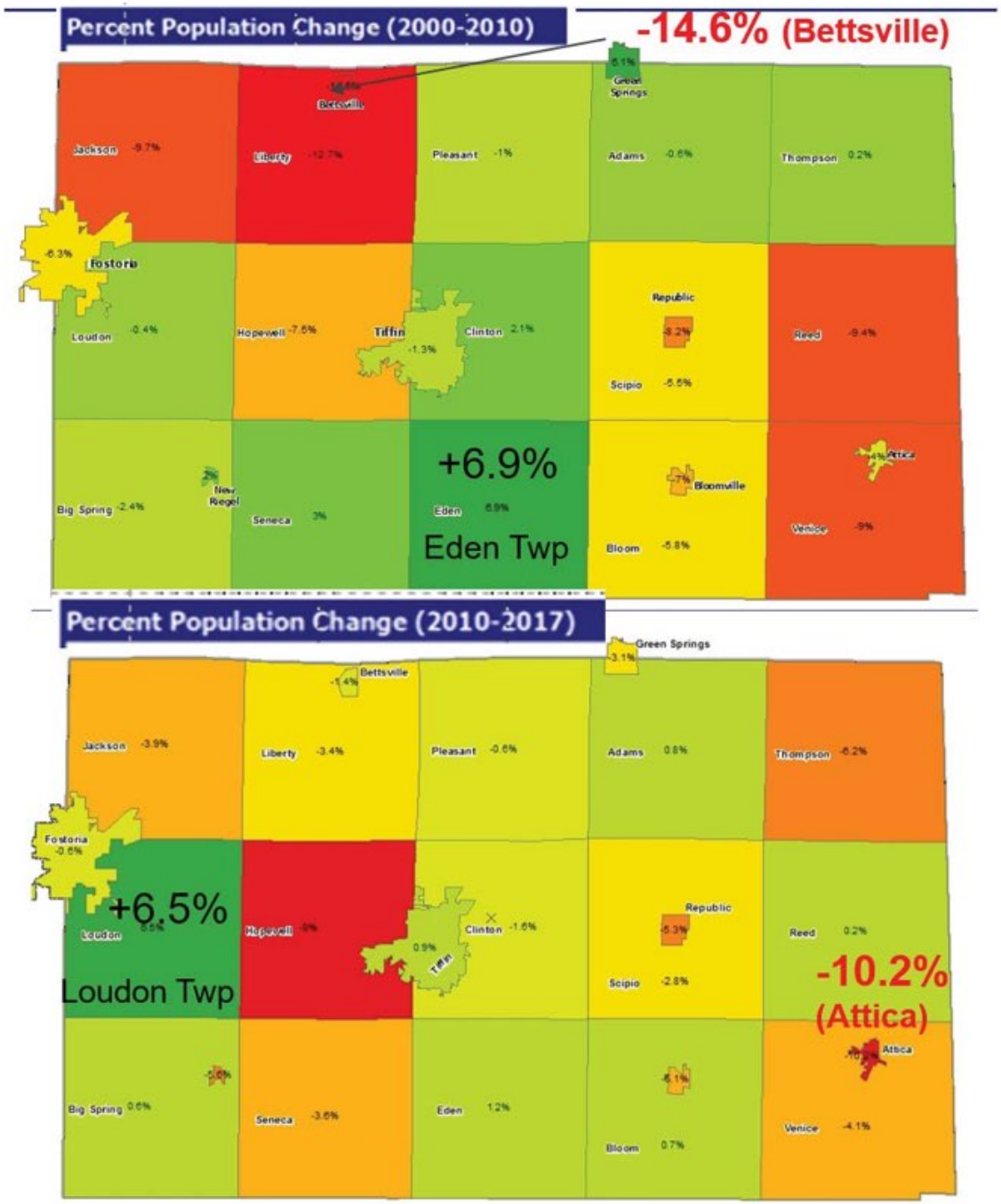


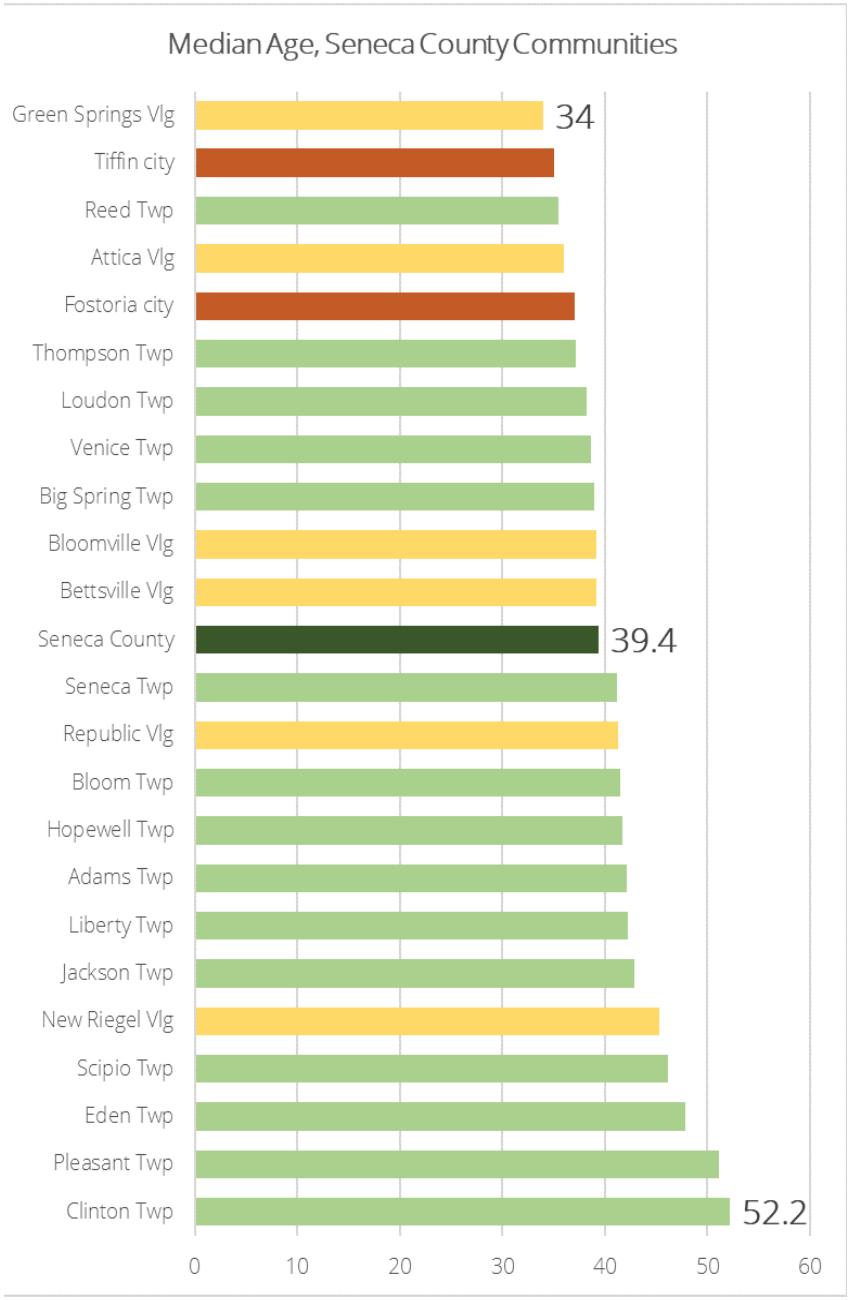
When looking more closely at population change throughout the county, there have been significant differences since 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, when the overall population of the county declined by 3.3%, the village of Bettsville in the northwest area of the county lost 14.6% of its population, while Eden Township in the south central area grew by 7%. Between 2010 and 2017, when it is estimated the county's population declined by 2.6%, there was slightly less disparity; the village of Attica lost 10% of its population, while Loudon Township adjacent to Fostoria grew by 6.5%. The city of Tiffin and five townships also experienced population growth.

57% of survey respondents are concerned about population loss in the cities and villages.

According to state law, villages are incorporated areas with fewer than 5,000 residents. Villages in Seneca County range in size from 269 residents (New Riegel) to 1,018 residents (Attica). With such a small population base, it is difficult for village governments to maintain public amenities such as parks and sidewalks.

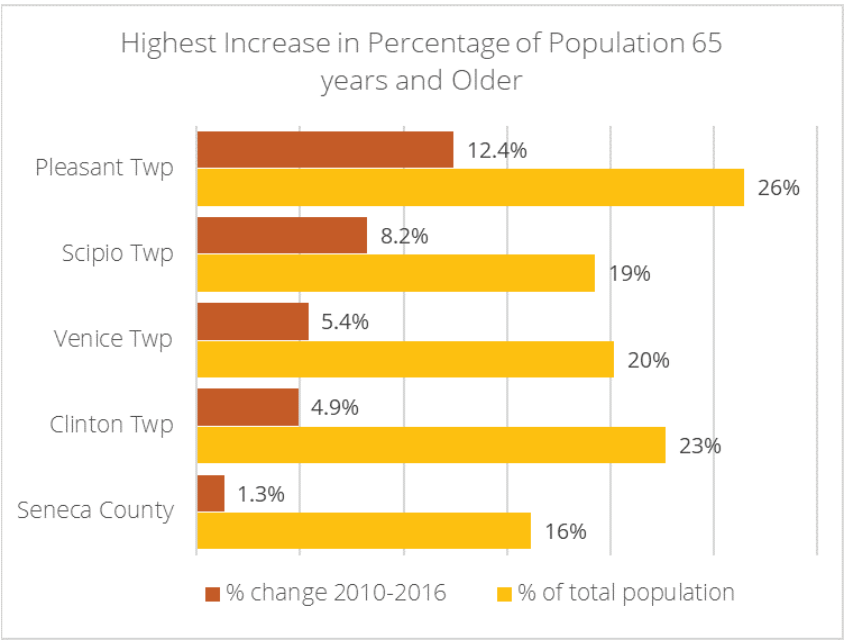
Seneca County's population, like much of the U.S., is getting older. Between 2000 and 2016, the median age of residents in Seneca County increased from 36.3 to 39.5 years, which is similar to Ohio's 39.2. Yet, when looking at the differences in the median age of residents in the cities, villages and township, there is an 18-year spread: the median age in Green Springs is 34, while in Clinton Township it is 52.2.





The age of a community's population is a key factor in understanding the housing and social programming needs of residents.

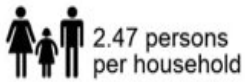
While the percentage of the population in the county that is 65 years and older increased only slightly between 2010 and 2016 (from 15% to 16%), four townships experienced significant increases (5% or more), with Pleasant Township experiencing the largest increase (12%) and having the highest percentage of older adults (26%) 65 years and older. Nationally, the percentage of the population that is 65 years and older is expected to continue to increase as people live longer and birth rates remain stagnant. Increases in the number and percentage of seniors, especially if they age in place, will lead to an increased need for support services.



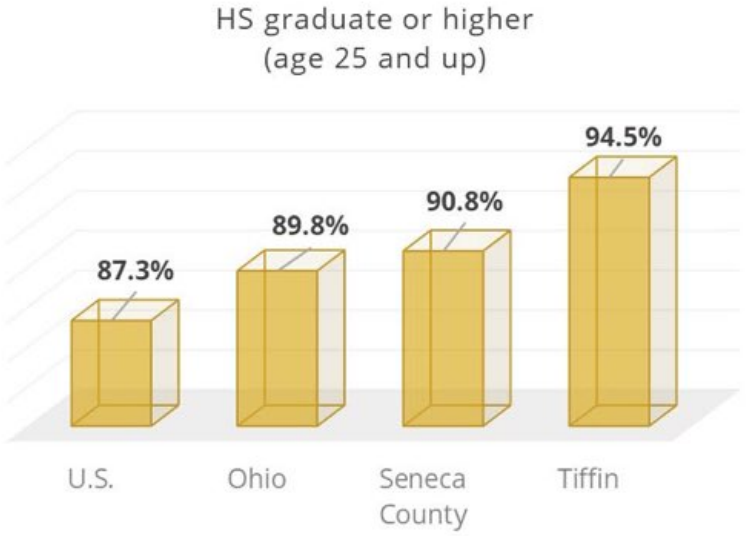
The city of Tiffin, because of the number of Heidelberg and Tiffin University students who live in the city, has the second youngest median age (35.1) and the highest proportion of Millennials (23.5%), compared to 18.5% for the county. In contrast, the village of Green Springs has the highest proportion of children and youth residents, with more than 36% of residents under age 20. Thompson Township, Big Spring Township and Fostoria have the 2nd, 3rd and 4th highest percentages of residents under age 20 (33.5%, 32.9% and 30.4% respectively) compared to the county average of 26.1%.

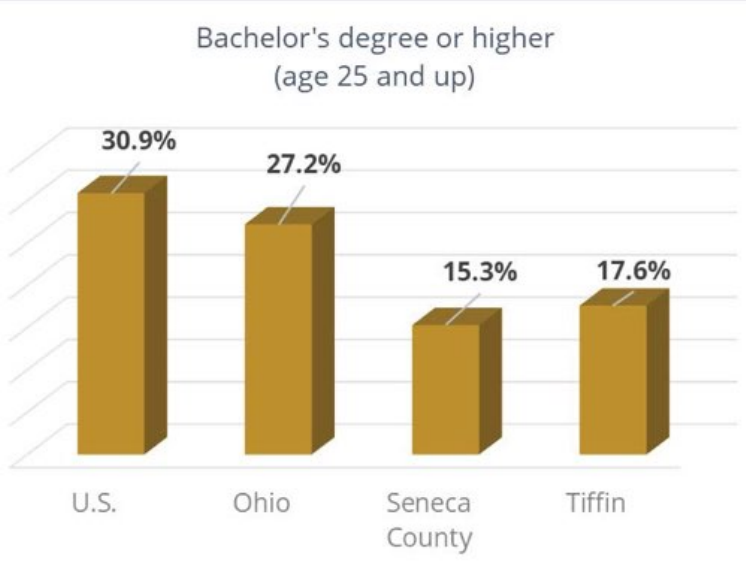
Another important consideration when evaluating the housing and neighborhood climate are trends in the number and types of households, which are closely tied to overall population and age. The U.S. Census defines a household as any person or group of people living together in a residence regardless of relationship. A family is a type of household where two or more people (one of whom is the householder) are related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing in the same housing unit. A household may consist of a person living alone or of multiple related and/or unrelated individuals living together. Household characteristics can provide a more complete picture of community.

Household size continues to get smaller. In 2016, there were an estimated 21,349 households in the county, and an average household size of 2.47 people, which is slightly smaller than in 2010, when the average household size was 2.49. This is a result of a decrease in the number of families with children (1,671 fewer than in 2000), and an increase in the number of people living alone (from 26% to 27%). In addition, approximately 40% of all households have someone who is 65 years or older. Tiffin and Fostoria have lower percentages of family households (59% and 60% respectively), and higher percentages of persons living along (34% and 31%). Changing household size and makeup have implications for the types of housing needed in the county.



As the population characteristics in the county have changed, so too have the educational levels of the residents over the age of 25. Of particular importance are the differences between the county, the state and the nation's levels of high school graduates and college educated. The percentage of the county's population with a high school diploma



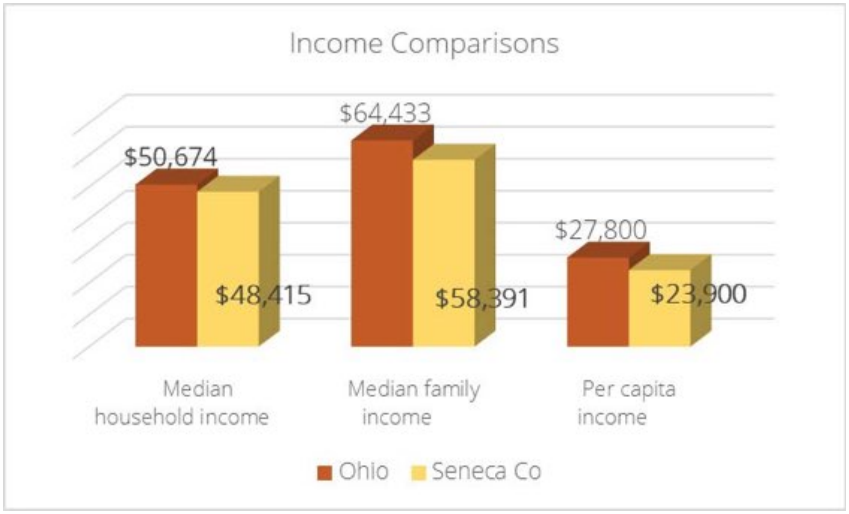


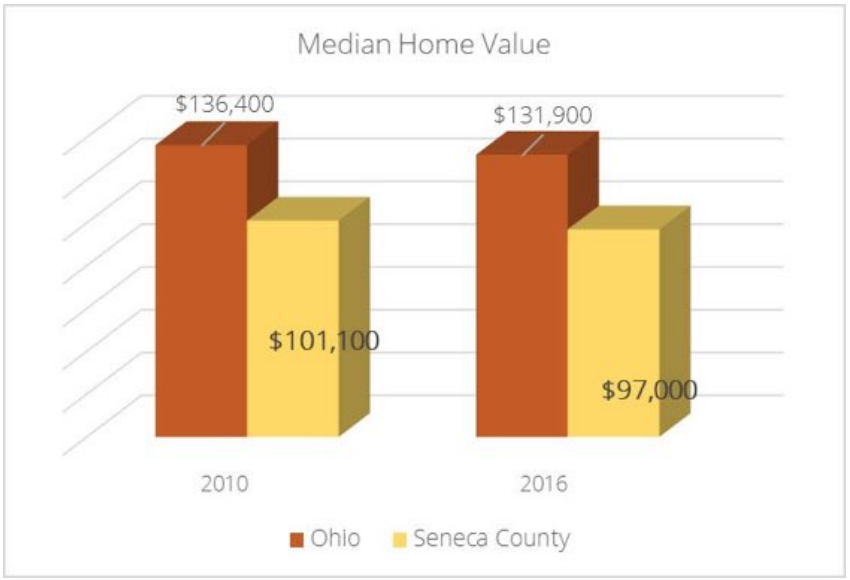
is higher than both the state's and the nation's, and has increased by 3.3 percentage points since 2010. This indicates that the local schools are performing well. In contrast, both Tiffin's and Seneca county's percentage of population with at least a Bachelor's degree are considerably less than the state's and the nation's. In addition, the County's percentage has actually decreased from 16.1% in 2010 to 15.3% in 2016. This is consistent with concerns that once local high school graduates go away for college they do not return, and it is difficult to attract and retain professionals to the county.

Household Income and Home Values

According to various economic indicators, Seneca County continues to lag behind Ohio. Between 2010 and 2016, the county's median household income and per capita income grew at higher rates than the state (14% and 11.5% respectively compared to the state's growth rates of 7% and 10.7%), yet the county's incomes continue to be lower than the state. At the same time, there is considerable variation throughout the county, with typically lower incomes in the cities and villages (ranging between 61% and 116% of the county) and higher incomes in the townships (ranging from 93% to 147% of the county).

The median value of homes in the county is $97,000, roughly 26% lower than for the state, and 4% lower than 2010. Yet, similar to incomes, there is a wide range of house values throughout the county, with typically lower values in the cities and villages (ranging between $58,000 and $89,300) and higher values in the townships (ranging between $79,800 to $154,800).





Housing Trends and Characteristics

As noted in the population trends, the county's population peaked in 1980, yet from a housing growth standpoint, the number of housing units continues to increase, though at a very slow rate. Approximately 247 residential building permits were issued in the county between 2011 and 2018. At the same time, the total number of housing units is estimated to have increased by only 50 units (0.2%) to 24,172, reflecting the number of housing units that have been demolished in the aftermath of the 2008 housing crisis.

When looking at Seneca County's housing growth in comparison with the surrounding counties, Hancock County, with 1,192 new units and Wood County, with 693 new units, had the highest percentage increases, 3.6% and 1.3% respectively since 2010. Ohio's growth rate during this same period was 1.4%.

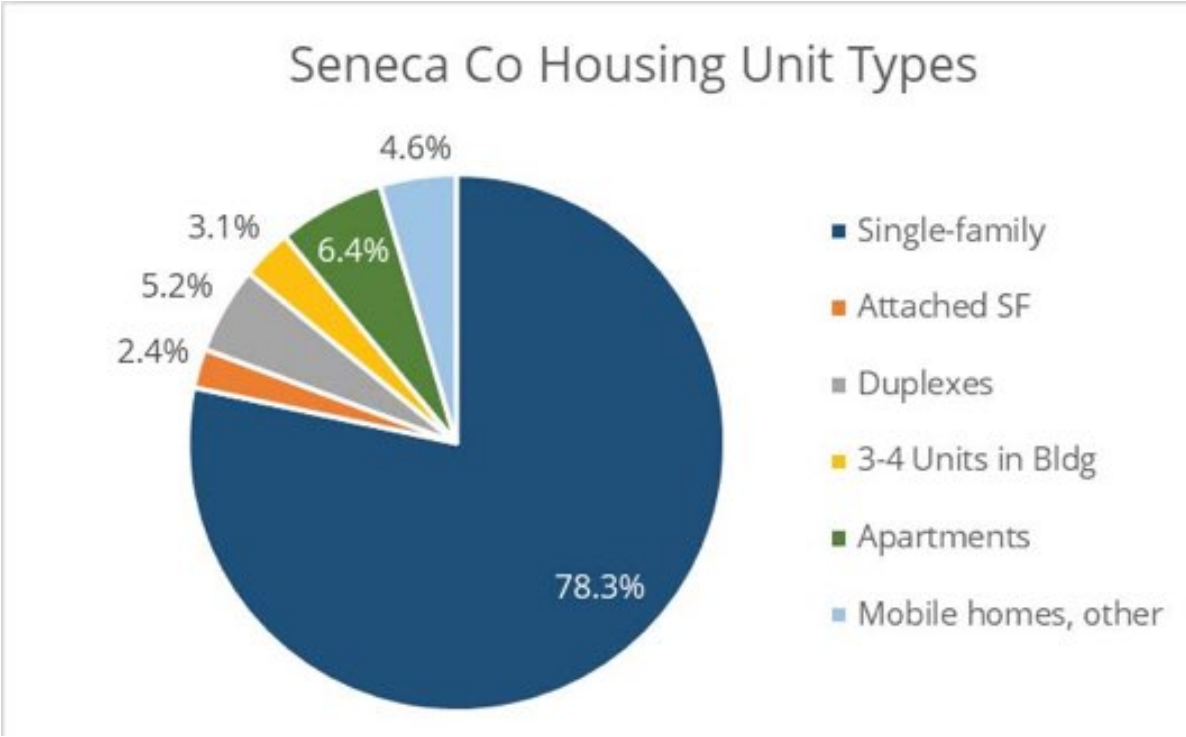
As might be expected in a rural community, Seneca County's housing stock is comprised primarily of single-family detached homes (78%), with roughly 10% multifamily (3-4 units in a building and apartments), 5% mobile homes, and very few attached units (2%). However, there is considerable variation in housing diversity in Tiffin and Fostoria (which together have nearly half of all housing in the county), compared to the villages and townships.

+247 Units

Residential building permits issued 2011-208

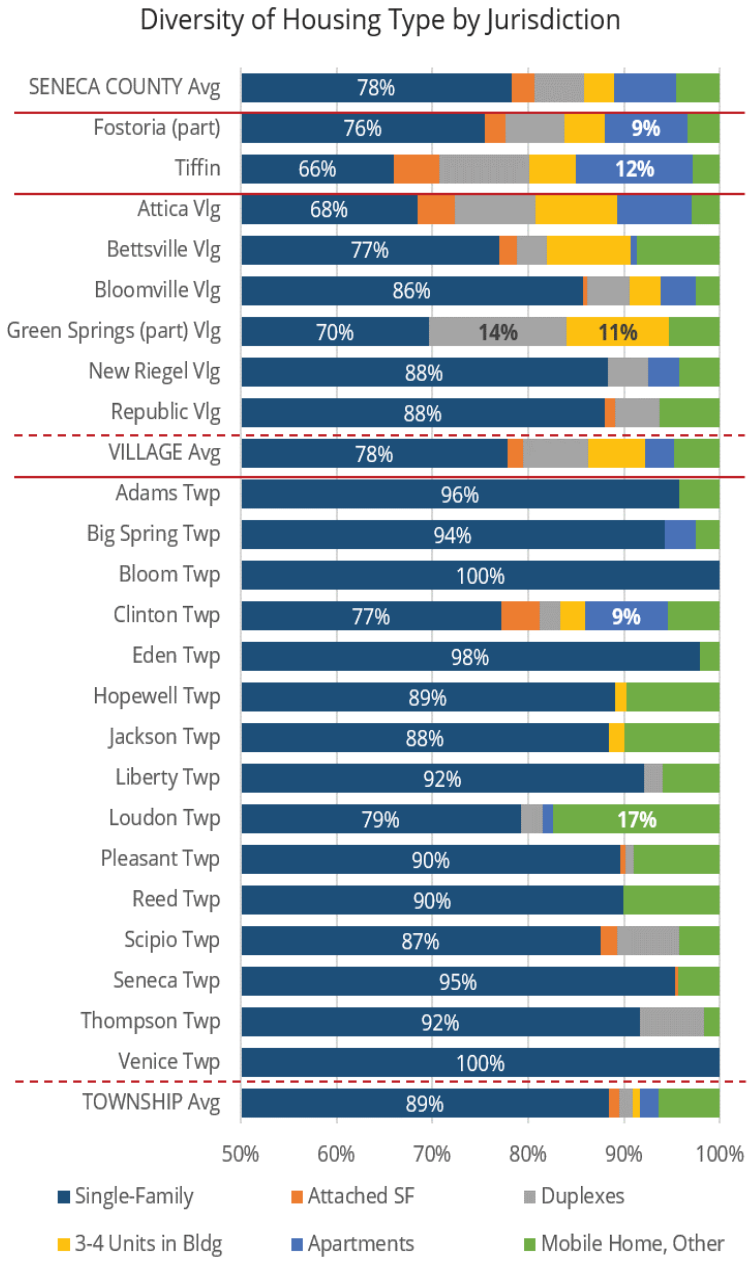
58% of survey respondents are concerned about lack of housing for young families in the county.

- 2019 Seneca County Community Survey

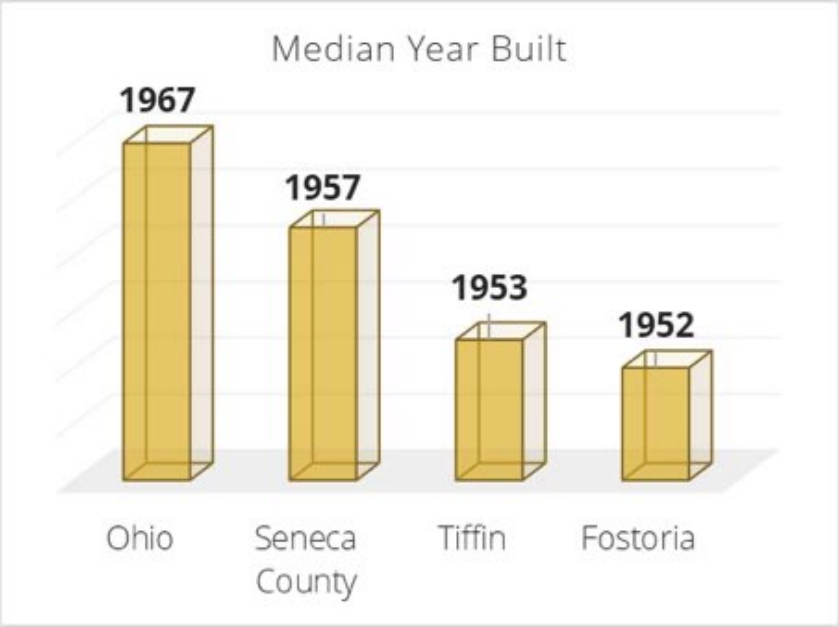


Both cities and half of the villages (Attica, Bettsville and Green Springs) have lower percentages of single-family detached housing units than the county average. In contrast, single-family homes comprise 89% of units in the townships, though Clinton Township (adjacent to Tiffin) and Loudon Township (adjacent to Fostoria) are closer to the county average. Tiffin has the highest percentage of apartment units (12%), and 94% of the apartments are found in just three locations: Tiffin (926), Fostoria (363), and Clinton Township (167).

Across the county, 72% of the occupied housing units are owner-occupied, which is slightly lower compared to 74% in 2010. Not surprisingly, the areas with the lowest rates of owner-occupancy are in the urbanized areas where there is a greater variety of housing types.



Despite continued housing construction each decade, the majority of housing units in the county are over 60 years old. Older homes, depending on the quality of construction, often require periodic major investments in replacing roofs, heating and cooling systems, even when regular maintenance is conducted. In addition, older homes often require substantial remodeling to meet contemporary buyers' needs, such as modern kitchens, updated bathrooms, and larger closets.



"The lack of modern housing is a quality of life and economic issue that negatively impacts the growth of the labor pool and spending power at local businesses."

- 2019 Housing Opportunities Analysis, Tiffin

The 2019 Housing Opportunities Analysis prepared for Tiffin, notes that the Tiffin area has a housing shortage. The report surveyed 18 apartment properties totaling 811 units within Tiffin's primary market area. These properties overall have a 99.8% occupancy level, with waiting lists reported at 15 of the 18 properties, clearly indicating the local apartment market is constrained as demand is exceeding supply. The analysis reported that overall occupancy rates are extremely high among all ages and types of rental housing in the Tiffin primary housing market area.

There is a growing need for more housing options throughout Seneca County. As more people live longer, there is increased interest in low-maintenance housing including apartments, and as more people live alone and younger generations have smaller families, there is a growing need for more variety in smaller housing units. Indeed, during the planning process, area realtors noted that people moving to the area for new employment often have difficulty finding suitable housing and end up moving to a neighboring county.

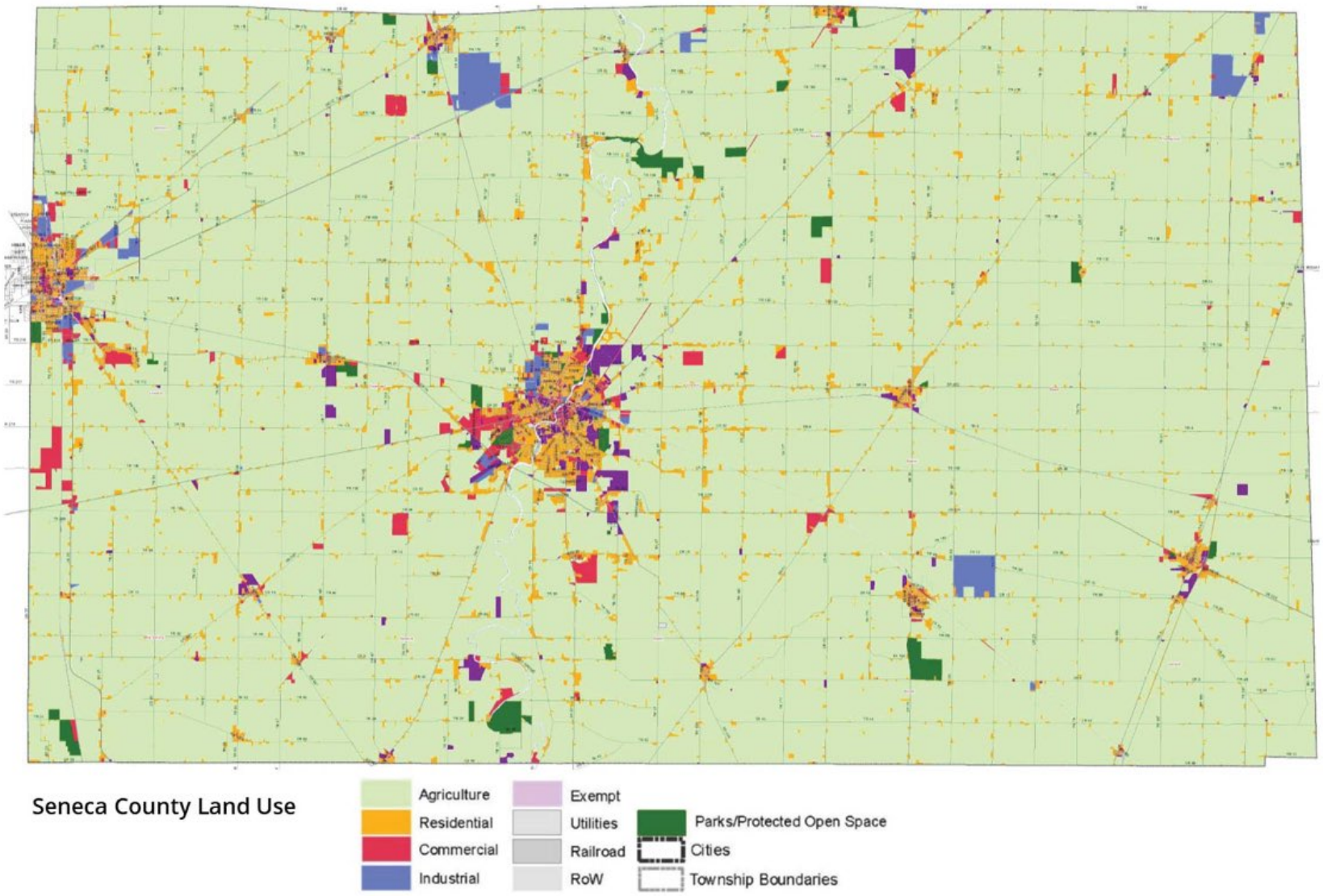
Top five housing needs in Tiffin:

- More affordable housing
- Home, roof, window repair programs/grants
- Incentives to attract builders & residents to Tiffin
- New, improved apartments, townhomes & condominiums
- New single-family homes

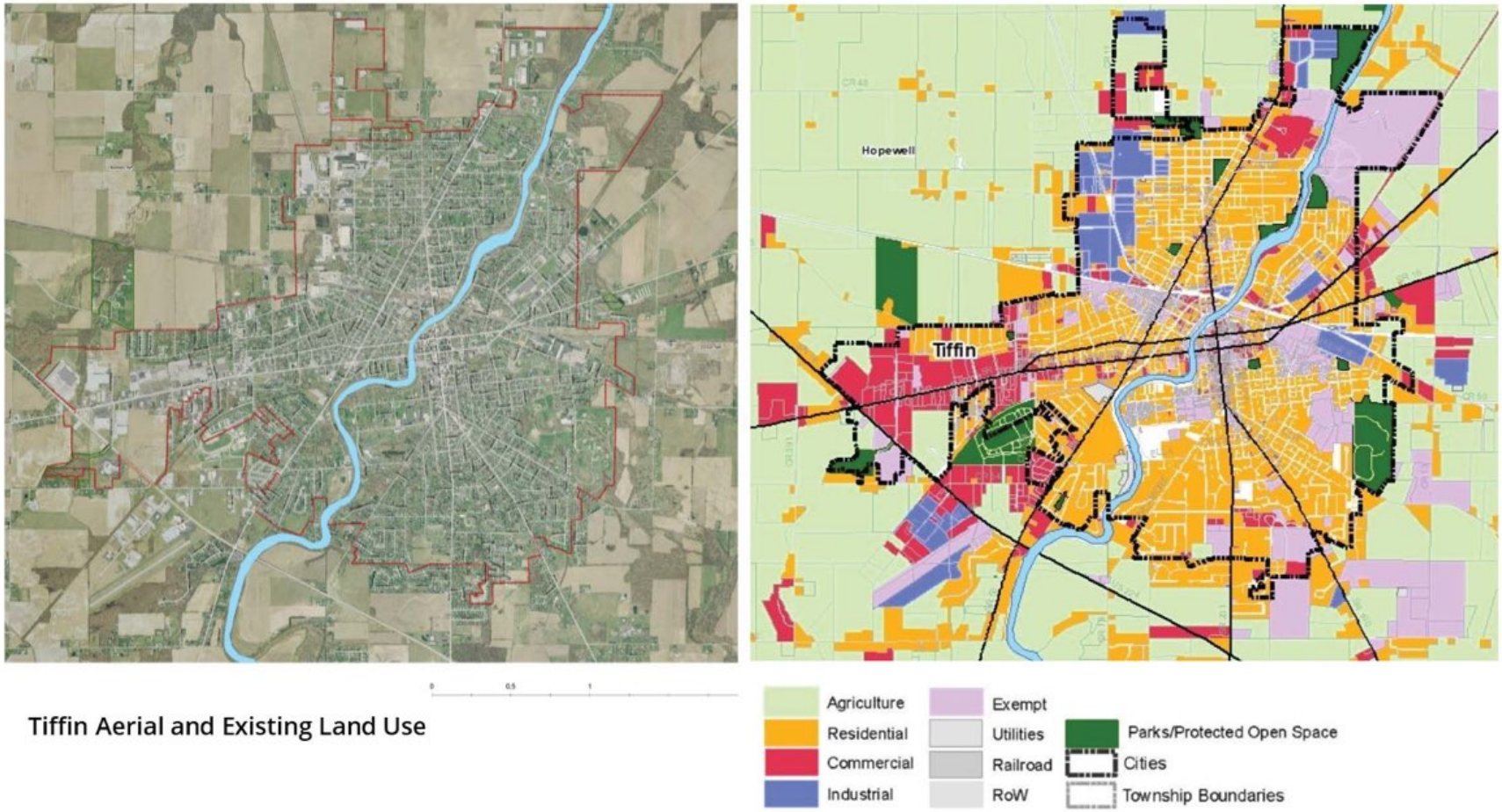
- 2019 Seneca County Community Survey

Land Use

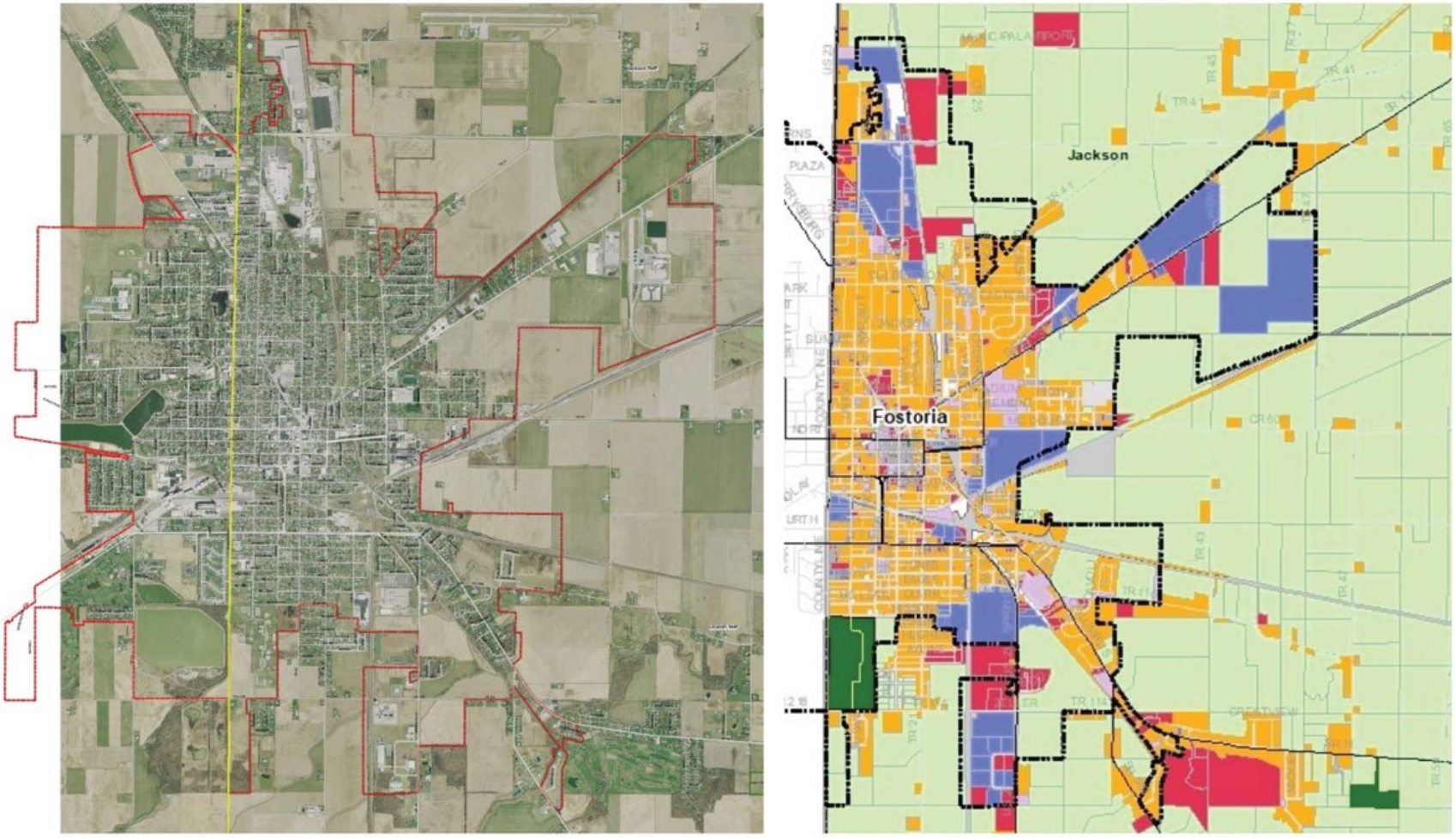
From its earliest days of settlement in the 1800s, Seneca County has historically been a farming community. Agriculture and large expanses of open spaces dominate much of the landscape. Indeed, over 90% of the county's total land area is listed as agricultural use by the Seneca County Auditor's office, and the U.S. Census Bureau considers 92% of the county rural. In contrast, approximately 5% of the county is devoted to residential uses while only 2% is used for commercial and industrial uses, and the remainder is devoted to utilities and public/exempt uses such as government, parks and schools.



In comparison, Tiffin, Fostoria and the smaller villages are dominated by residential uses. The land use maps for the county and each city highlight the distinctions.



Tiffin Aerial and Existing Land Use



Fostoria Aerial and Existing Land Use

Tax Base

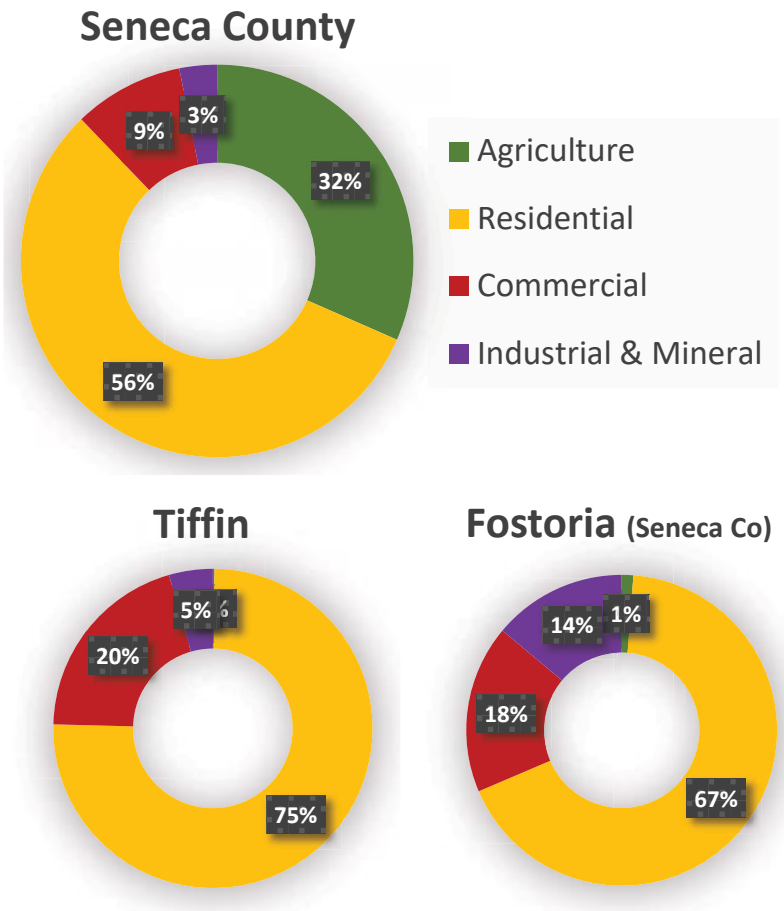
Seneca County's total tax base, by dollar value, is approximately 56% residential, 32% agricultural land, 9% commercial and 3% industrial & mineral. By comparison, Tiffin and Fostoria (Seneca Co portion only) have much higher commercial and industrial tax bases, 20% and 5% respectively for Tiffin and 18% and 14% respectively for Fostoria.

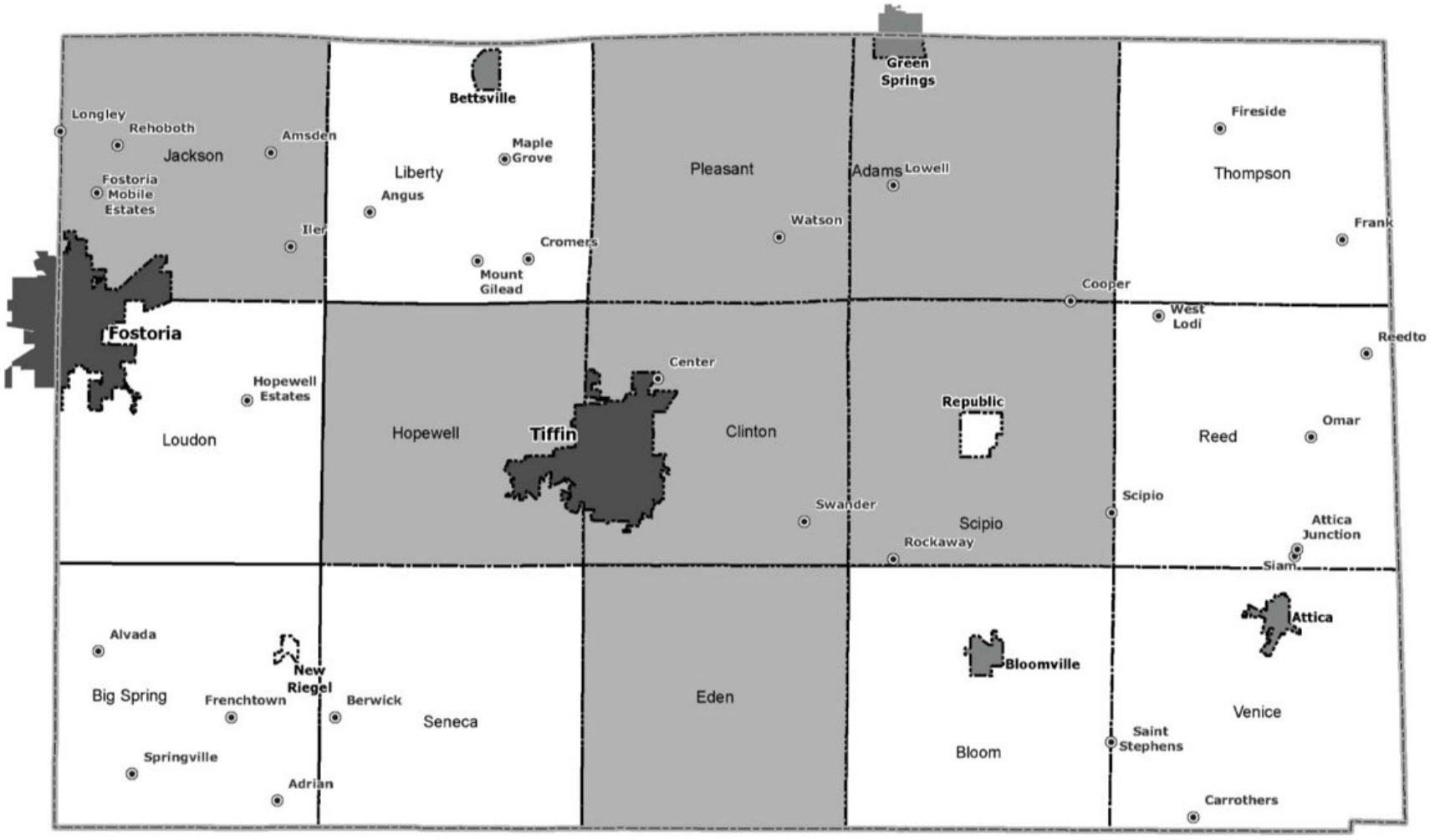
Zoning

Typically, local zoning regulations (code provisions and zoning district map) are the primary tools used to guide/regulate future development. Zoning regulations dictate how much and what type of development can occur, and the zoning map indicates the areas of the community where each of the districts is applied. These regulations in turn affect the location, kind, and amount of potential growth and development. Zoning provides numerous benefits and can be a powerful tool to improve the aesthetics of a community, protect the environment, and enhance the overall quality of life.

In Seneca County, Tiffin and Fostoria have adopted and regularly administer their zoning regulations. In addition, three villages (Attica, Bloomville and Green Springs) and seven townships (Adams Twp, Clinton Twp, Eden Twp, Hopewell Twp, Jackson Twp, Pleasant Twp and Scipio Twp) have adopted zoning regulations. The zoning regulations vary from having only a few districts (such as Attica Village which has only four districts) to numerous districts (such as Clinton Township which has over 20 districts).

Real Property Valuation by Use Category, 2017





Jurisdictions with Local Zoning

Zoned City

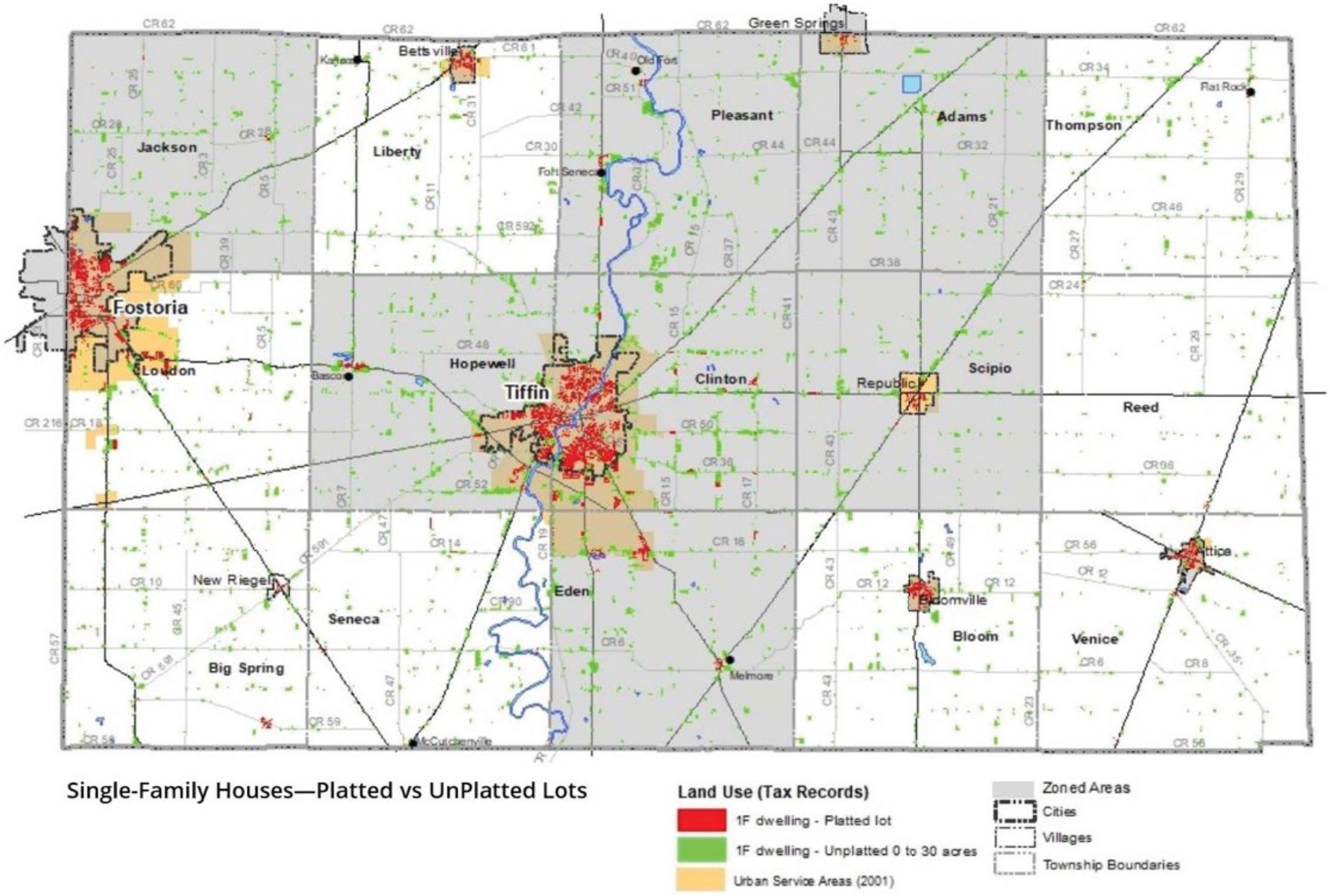
Zoned Village

ZONED TOWNSHIP

NOT ZONED

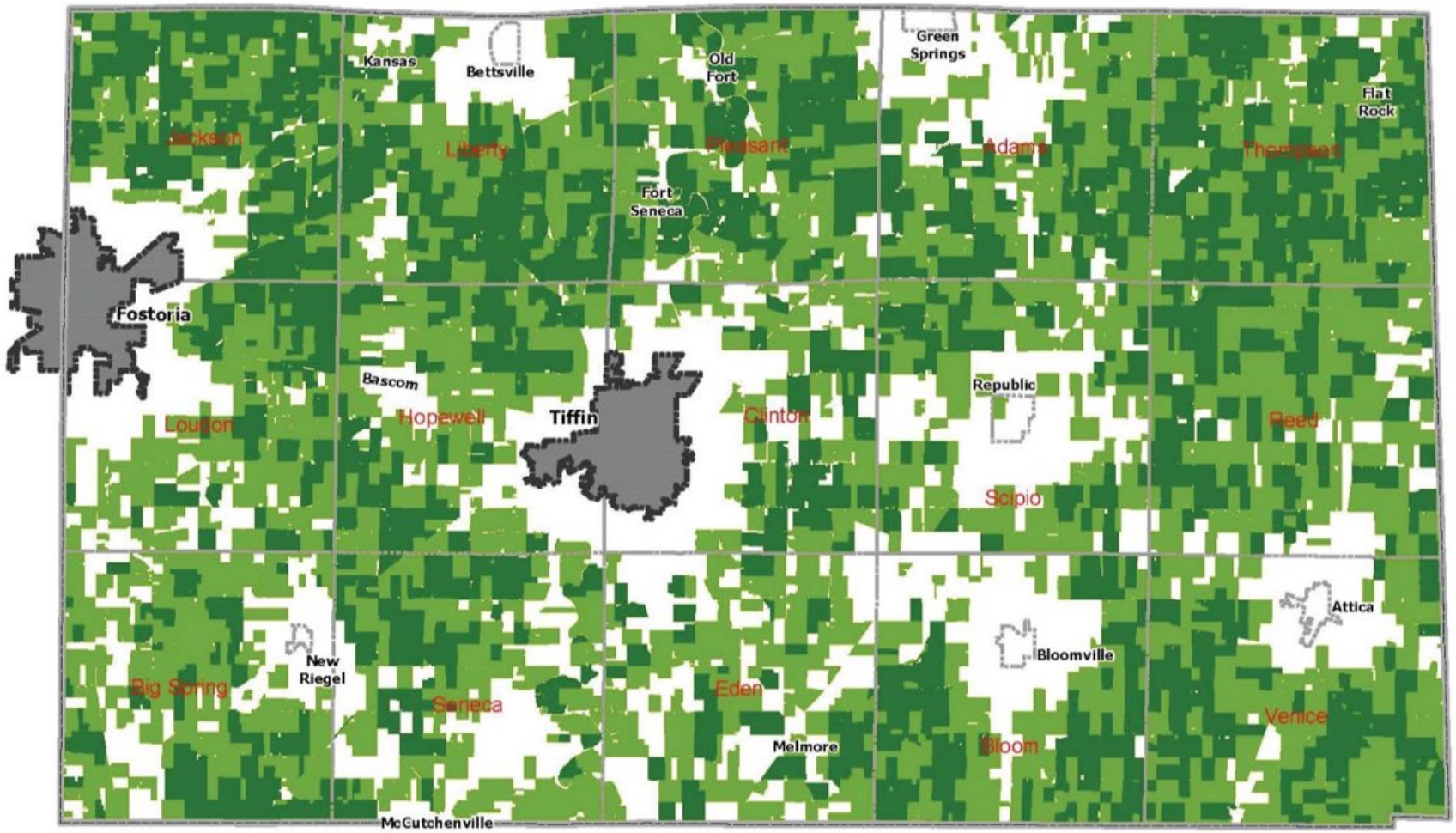
Residential Development

Residential growth has historically been developed on smaller platted lots concentrated in Tiffin, Fostoria, incorporated villages and within the Urban Service Areas in townships adjacent to Tiffin and Fostoria. Residential development in townships outside the Urban Service Areas has generally occurred on unplatted lots considered "frontage development" along the county and township roads and must rely on on-site septic systems and well water, which require larger lots.



Farmland

Seneca County is one of Ohio's leading farm counties. According to the US Census of Agriculture (compiled every five years), there were 1,156 farms on 266,896 acres devoted to farmland in Seneca County in 2017. Seneca County is an agriculturally rich community because of the type of soils present, which are predominately classified as prime farmland suitable for cultivation.



Prime Farmland

Land Evaluation & Site Assessment (LESA)

Areas preferred for Farmland Preservation - 2010

Land Use Classifications 2010 (LESA)

- Ag I: Top 30%
- Ag II: Middle 40%

The amount of land being farmed has been decreasing since 1997, when nearly 298,000 acres were in production (except for a spike in acres in 2012). The number of farms in the county had been decreasing by an average of 14 annually between 1997 and 2012, but then increased by 4% between 2012 and 2017. The average size of a farm in 2017 was 231 acres, while the median was 80 acres. Both the average and median size of farms has decreased since 2012, from 261 acres and 111 acres respectively. Net cash farm income of operators has also declined since 2012, from an average of $47,063 per farm to $33,101 per farm in 2017.

Over 311,700 acres in Seneca County participate in the Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV) program. This program provides a substantial reduction in the valuation of land that is exclusively dedicated to agricultural production, which results in lower property taxes. These properties have a total market value of $1,506 million, which is reduced by the program to a CAUV value of $665 million.

In Ohio, like the national trend, the average age of producers increased from 54.6 years in 2012 to 55.8 in 2017 because of the declining number of beginning and young farmers. This makes it difficult for older farmers to plan for retirement, especially those with no heirs to take over the farm, and it increases the pressure to sell to developers, large corporate farms, investment firms, and oil and gas companies.

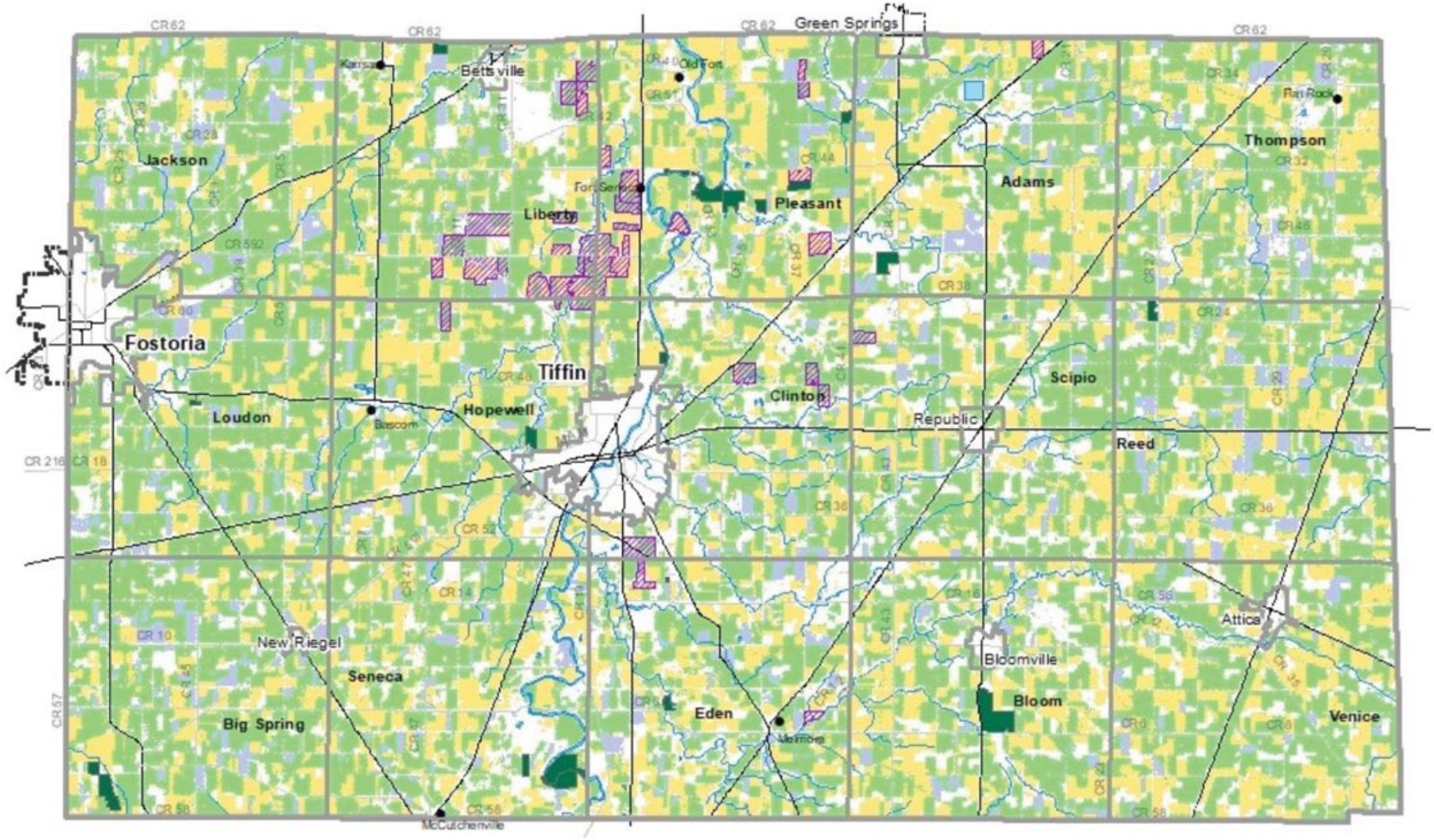
In recent years, agritourism has gained popularity as a way to extend the season, increase diversification and boost farming income for operators. According to recent USDA census data, spending at Ohio farms for agritourism and recreation has increased approximately 64% since 2007. Agritourism consists of farmers and agriculture-based enterprises opening attractions to the general public in an effort to educate, entertain, and increase revenues. Activities like pumpkin patches, corn mazes, hay rides, and winery and wine-tasting tours all fall under agritourism.

Although agricultural heritage is an important component of Seneca County's culture and economy, there is little agricultural-based tourism in Seneca County.

Historic family farms are an important link to Seneca County's agricultural history. Since 2002, 38 farms in Seneca County have been certified as Century Farms as part of the Ohio Historic Family Farms program. This program recognizes farms that have been owned by the same family for at least 100 consecutive years, and is intended to help farmers preserve their historic documents and encourage them to pass their historic farms on to future generations.

According to the Black Swamp Conservancy, just over 4,600 acres had been protected in Seneca County as of 2018 (Black Swamp Conservancy 2019 Annual Report). Most landowners who work with the Black Swamp Conservancy protect their land with a perpetual land conservation agreement known as a conservation easement. The landowner agrees to restrict the use of the land in order to protect its conservation value. In the case of an agricultural land conservation agreement, most non-agricultural activities are prohibited to protect the productivity of the soils and the land's water resources. A land conservation agreement on woodlands, wetlands, meadows or streamside land prohibits residential and commercial development and usually limits construction to structures necessary for a nature preserve.

Ohio Family Farm ReGeneration Act establishes a tax credit for owners of agricultural assets, which grants an income and franchise tax credit to any person who sells or rents agricultural assets to a beginning farmer. Creating incentives for landowners to sell or rent to beginning farmers will create more opportunity for the next generation, and reward retiring farmers who keep their land in agricultural production.

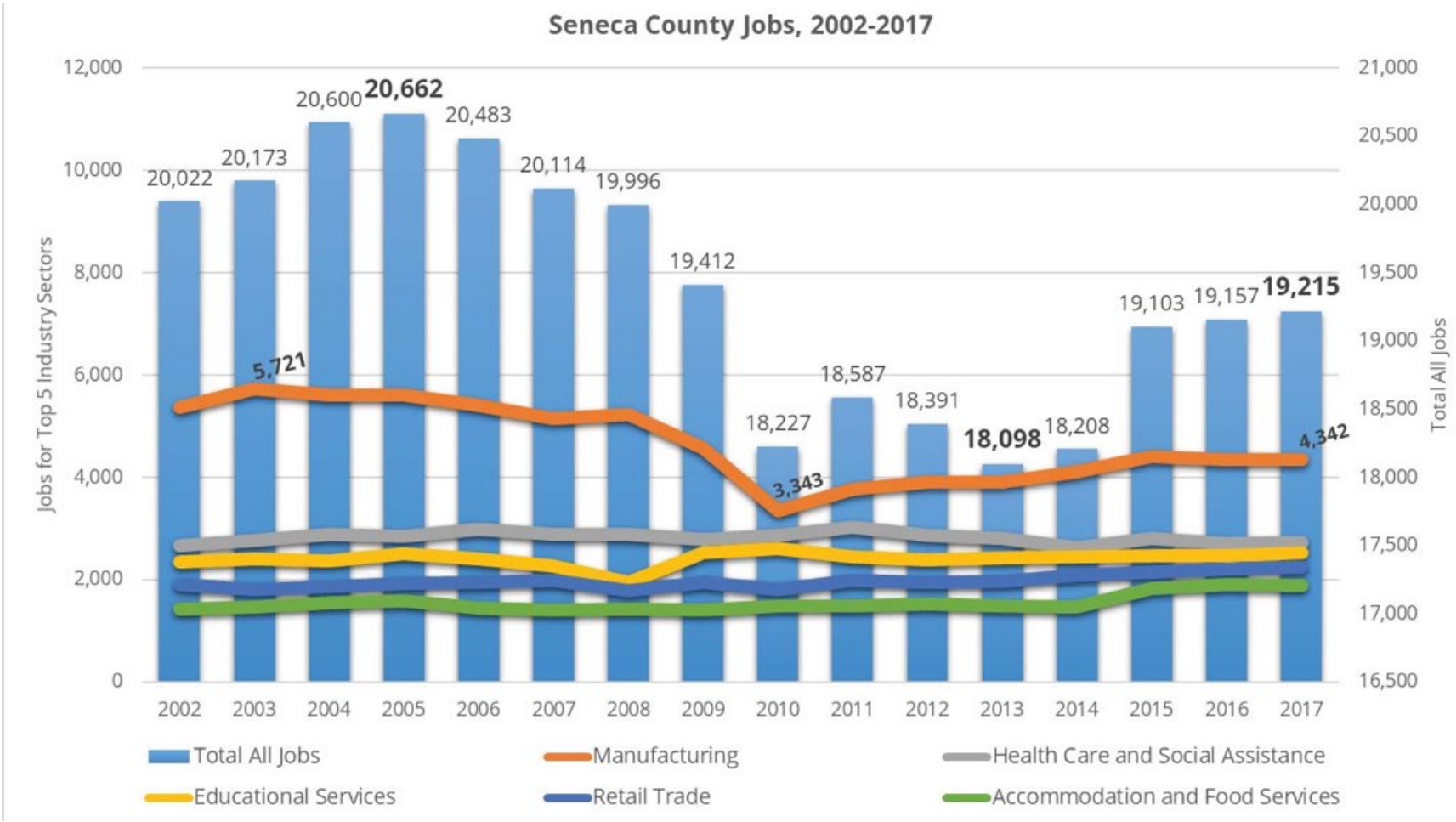


Cropland, Agricultural Easement Areas and Protected Open Space Areas

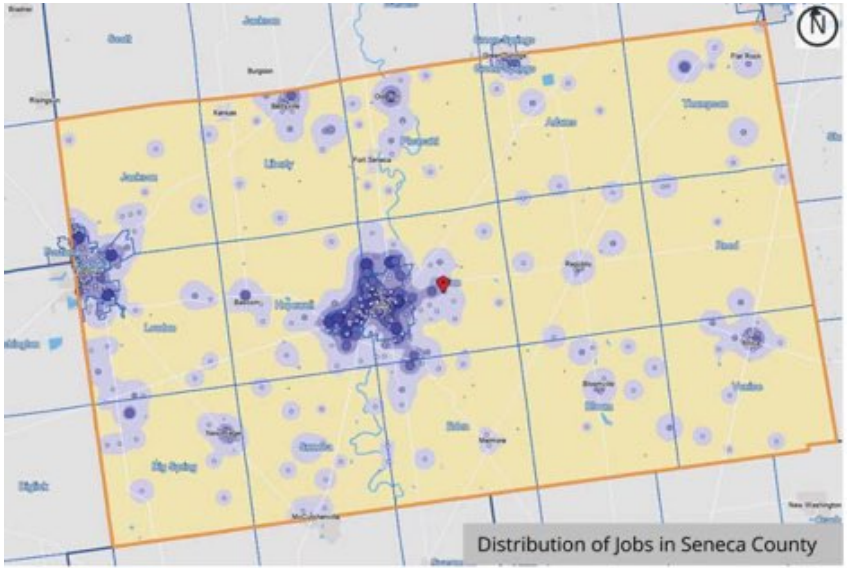
Economic Diversity and Employment

In addition to Seneca County's rich history as a farming community, manufacturing has played a key role in both Tiffin's and Fostoria's growth. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the county's natural gas deposits led to a booming glass-making industry. Numerous manufacturing operations were established, and most businesses produced items or provided services for farmers living in the surrounding countryside.

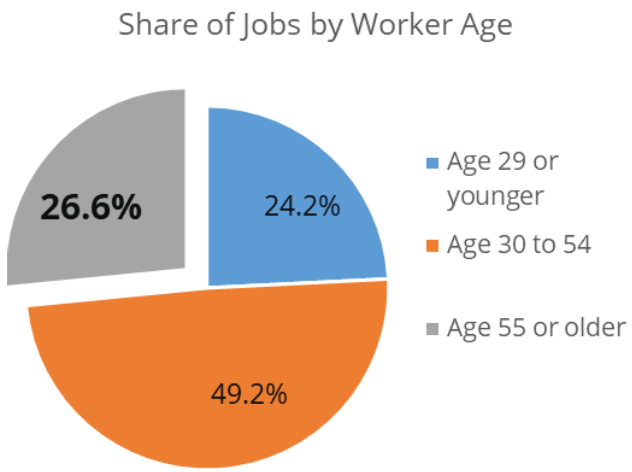
There were approximately 19,215 jobs in the county in 2017. At 23% of all jobs, the manufacturing sector continues to provide the highest percentage of jobs in the county, though both the number and share of total jobs has declined from 5,721 jobs (28% of total jobs) in 2003. Since the 2008 recession, there has been significant economic growth, and the number of jobs in the county is beginning to approach pre-recession levels. The top five industry sectors in the county (Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance, Educational Services, Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services), provide 72% of all of the jobs in the county, and have contributed to the recent growth in jobs.



Tiffin businesses provide the majority of jobs in the county (55%) including 62% of manufacturing jobs, 73% of educational service jobs and 68% of accommodation & food services jobs, while 16% of all jobs are located in Fostoria, and 29% are in the villages and townships.



The workforce is getting older and there is a high percentage of employees nearing retirement age. Over 25% of jobs in the county are held by employees age 55 and older, which is a significant increase compared to 2002, when persons in this age group held less than 15% of jobs.



While overall, wages are about 35% below the U.S. average, the cost of living for Seneca County residents (at 76.1) is much lower than the U.S. average (100) as well.

Over 15,500 residents (60% of those employed) commute to jobs outside the county, and 10,400 (46%) of the jobs in the county are held by residents. This creates a situation where many Seneca County residents are dependent on the success of surrounding counties for their economic well-being. This high level of out-commuting lowers the daytime population in the county thereby lowering the demand for daytime retail and restaurants.

Quality education and non-traditional postgraduate training opportunities are key to creating an educated workforce with relevant skills that attract employers. Seneca County has a number of institutions that provide education and training, including Heidelberg University, Tiffin University, Sentinel Career Center, the Fostoria Learning Center, and nearby Terra State Community College.



Retail Sales

There are an estimated 330 retail trade and food & drink establishments in Seneca County, with annual sales of approximately $419 million. Yet, residents spend a portion of their disposable income outside the county, referred to as sales "leakage". Retail sales "leakage" compares the potential total value of sales within the county (based on population and income) to actual sales volume. An estimated 37% of potential sales in Seneca "leak" out to other communities, resulting in an estimated $247 million in retail sales that potentially could have been made in the county (ESRI 2018 data).

Purchases most often made outside of Seneca County included 83% of sales at Clothing Stores, 77% of sales at Miscellaneous Retailers (such as florists, gift stores, and office supply) and 70% of sales at Furniture Stores.

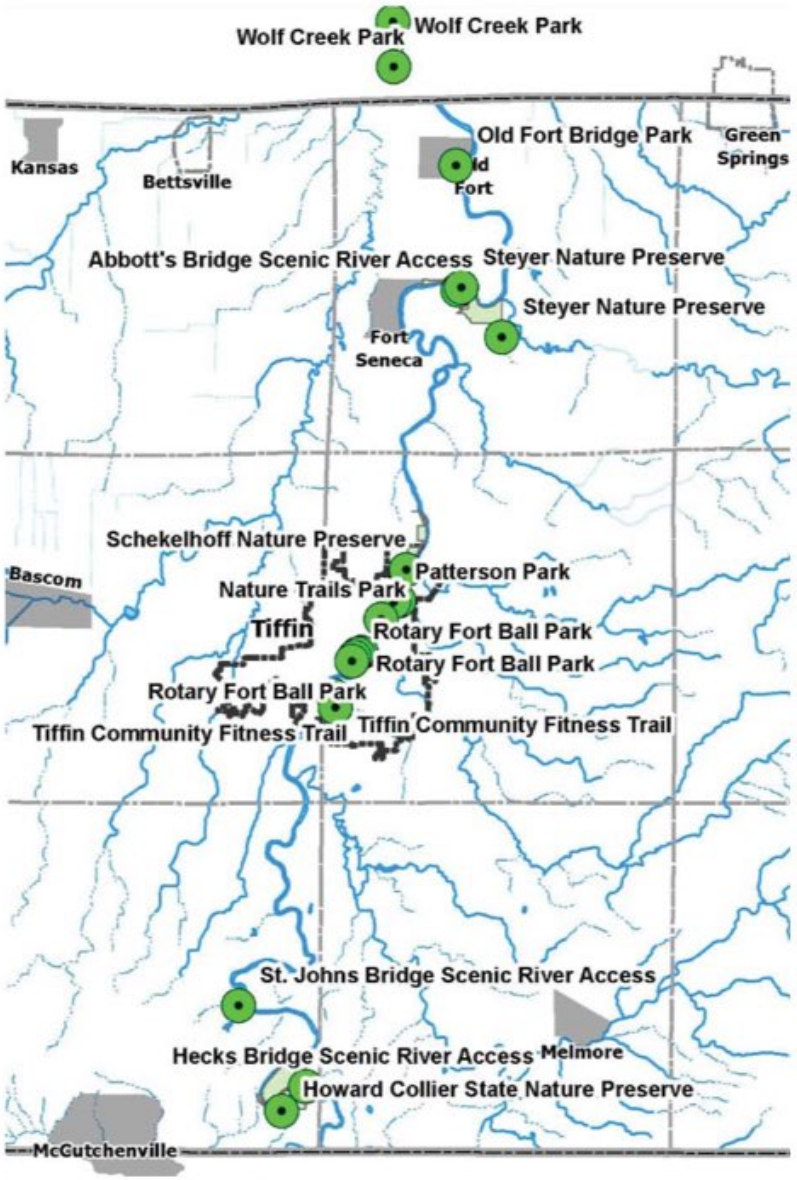


Seneca County has a generally dispersed, low-density population. Tiffin with just under 18,000 residents and Fostoria with about 13,000 residents, lack the critical mass needed to attract certain retailers, as well as merchandise that is easily purchased online. In contrast, there are three retail sectors that actually have sales that exceed local demand, meaning customers are drawn from outside the trade area: lawn and garden supply retailers; beer, wine and liquor establishments; and gasoline stations.

Broadband

Reliable and affordable high-speed broadband internet e-Connectivity has become a necessity for everyone, including residences, businesses, farms, and governments in Seneca County. Every business sector (manufacturing, offices, retailers) needs such assess to be successful in today's global economy because of the growing reliance on data collection, data analysis, and the speedy and accurate transfer of such information. Even for children, access is essential as schools become more technologically savvy and rely more on online learning. Many residents are using cloud-based services to store data on everything from home finance to family photos and recipes, so that now, even home life is increasingly dependent on internet access.

Despite the need, internet access is spotty throughout Seneca County. Smaller villages and rural areas are notoriously difficult for traditional providers to reach with hard lines, but the introduction of mobile hot spots has solved many problems that even 10 years ago were thought to be insurmountable. Nevertheless, large segments of rural Seneca County do not have access to high-speed broadband, as noted on a map prepared by INNOVATEOhio, a program created in 2019 to develop strategies for improving access in Ohio (https://innovateohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/innovate/priorities/resources/broadband/overview).



NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Watersheds

Nearly all of Seneca County (94%) is in the Sandusky River watershed, and the Sandusky River plays an important role in Seneca County's history and development. For example, four forts along the river's banks including Fort Stephenson were instrumental in the Americans' decisive victory in the War of 1812.

The Sandusky River is one of Ohio's longest rivers (130 miles) within the Lake Erie watershed, draining more than 1,825 square miles. It is the least densely populated watershed in Ohio, where agriculture is 83% of the land use. A 65-mile stretch of the Sandusky River between Upper Sandusky and Fremont is designated a State Scenic River.

The Sandusky River has several public access sites and provides fishing along most of its length, highlighted by the annual migration of walleye and white bass from Sandusky Bay to Ballville Dam.

Floodplains and Riparian Corridors

There are a number of floodplains and riparian corridors in the county. Floodplains are the areas adjacent to rivers and streams that are subject to periodic or regular flooding. Riparian corridors include the stream banks and associated areas adjacent to the waterway, including the floodplain. When vegetated, riparian areas function as stream buffer zones, protecting the waterway by absorbing and removing pollutants from runoff and slowing down the flow of storm water into the river thereby helping to reduce downstream flooding and allowing groundwater recharge. If a floodplain or riparian area is farmed or mowed to the water's edge, water quality degradation may occur.

Wetlands and Hydric Soils

Wetlands are defined as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands are important for floodwater storage, filtration

and purification of water, and ground water recharge. The presence of wetlands often coincides with the occurrence of hydric soils. The vast majority of Seneca County's soils do not drain well naturally, though most rural areas are tiled to allow for successful farming.

Woodland Resources

Woodlands and trees, their canopy cover, and associated plant and animal communities contribute many environmental benefits: they stabilize soil by controlling wind and water erosion, reduce flooding by slowing and storing stormwater runoff, improve water quality by filtering and absorbing pollutants, reduce fluctuations in temperature extremes, provide wildlife habitat, and provide a source of organic matter.

They also provide a number of benefits related to public health and safety, aesthetics, and livability: for example, they reduce noise levels, cleanse pollutants from the air, produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. Trees in urban areas have also been shown to mitigate ozone pollution. Urban forests also provide significant economic benefits through increased real estate values, improved settings for business activities, and reduced energy costs for heating and cooling. The aesthetic value of trees in urban settings is reflected in civic pride, a healthy community image, and economic vitality.

Water Quality Monitoring

The Ohio EPA uses biological criteria primarily to assess the effects of aquatic pollution sources such as industrial and wastewater treatment facilities that hold National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. This data is used to assess the overall health of waterways and identify potential problems. Adverse impacts to aquatic habitat (and thus water quality) stem from point sources (discreet discharge points such as municipal sewage treatment systems or industrial waste outputs) and non-point sources (dispersed sources such as road runoff during rainfall events). Once potential problem areas are identified, resource managers can then begin to assess subwatersheds for sources of degradation and possible solutions.

Non Point Source Impacts to Water Quality

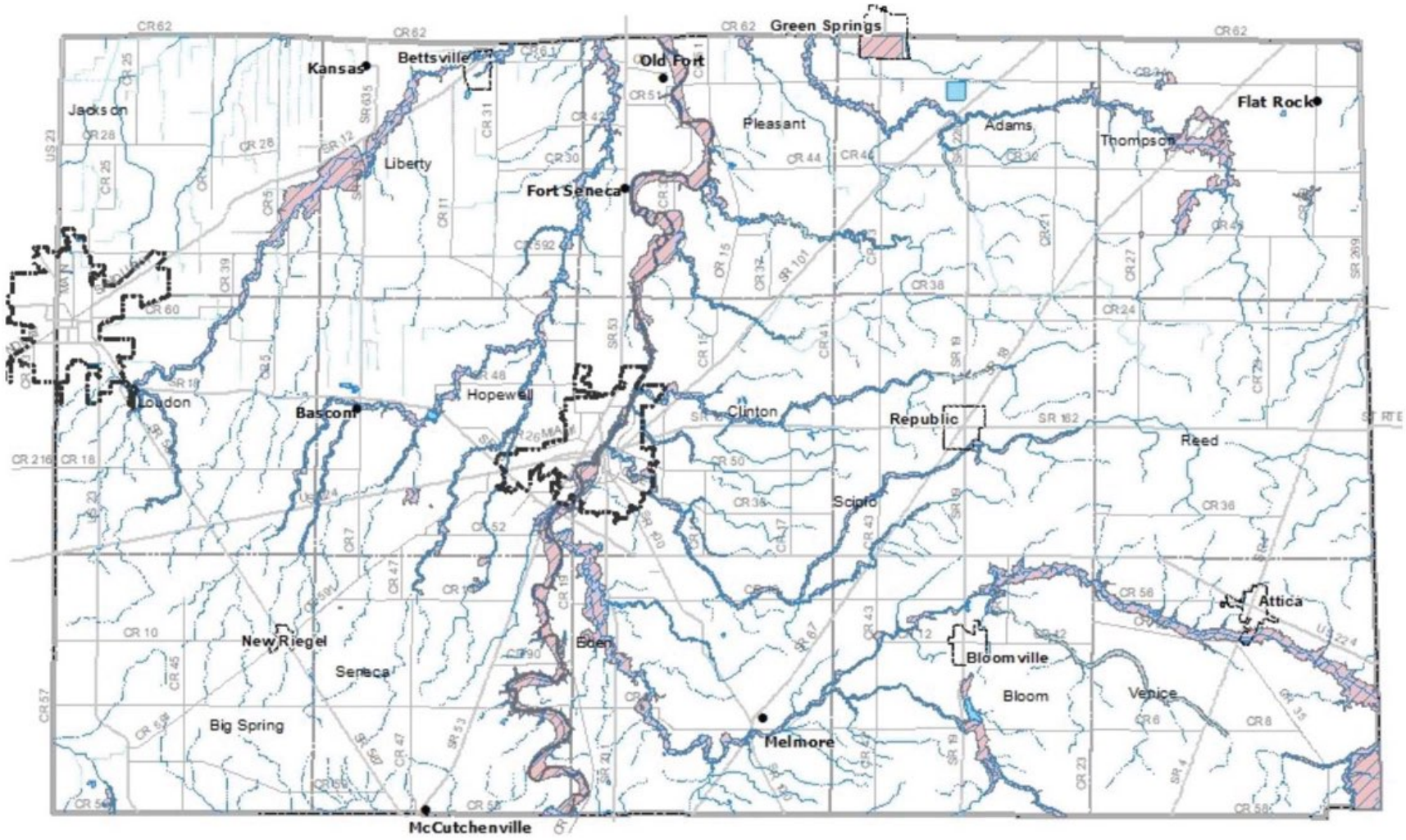
Water quality can be adversely affected by non-point (dispersed) sources (NPS), such as failing septic systems or stormwater runoff from agricultural settings. As storm water flows across surfaces, it carries soil, pathogens and other pollutants from streets, pesticides and fertilizers, and eroded sediment. Unlike point sources of pollution, NPS pollution are difficult to identify, manage, and quantify. There are no pipe or outflow sources to monitor, and it can be difficult to locate sources and the pathways these pollutants travel into downstream receiving waters.

Nearly every stream in Seneca County provides agricultural drainage. Streams that existed prior to when agricultural drainage programs began have been highly modified, and ditches have been dug to drain wetlands and provide outlets for tile drainage. Both ditches and natural streams carry water, nutrients, and energy downstream.

Home Sewage Treatment Systems

Most houses in the townships do not have access to public sewers and must rely on on-site septic systems (referred to as home sewage treatment systems (HSTS)). The average life expectancy of a HSTS is approximately 20 years, though some perform longer and newer systems may fail as well. The Seneca County Health Department has an inventory of about 9,000 failing HSTS and has identified eight hot spots. Failing home sewage treatment systems (HSTS) can have a negative impact on the water quality in the Sandusky River because nutrients from failing systems contribute to algae growth and disease-causing organisms.

Ohio EPA's 2014 report of water quality in the lower Sandusky River and Bay Tributaries Watershed indicated that some of the streams in Seneca County fail to meet water quality goals. The primary sources of pollution that need to be addressed include: waste water collection and treatment systems, cropland drainage and home septic systems.



Floodplain and Riparian Corridors

Parks and Open Space

There are a wide variety of both public and private parks and recreation facilities in Seneca County and a number of different entities responsible for preserving important areas of natural open spaces. Based on land ownership from the County Auditor's website, there are 2,918 acres of land devoted to these facilities.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is the county's largest owner of land in this category, with nearly 900 acres (31% of the 2,918 acres of protected open space) in its two state nature preserves (529 acres combined, based on land owned by ODNR) and six other sites (370 acres collectively).

The second largest landowner is the Seneca County Park District (SCPD). The District owns or has a management partnership on 10 sites that, together, cover more than 800 acres, or 28% of the protected open space in the county.

Four hundred seventeen (417) acres are dedicated to city and village parks (14% of the county's land mass). Nearly 600 acres are privately owned parcels used for recreational purposes, including two golf courses (370 acres, 13%) and other privately owned recreational sites (235 acres, 8%).

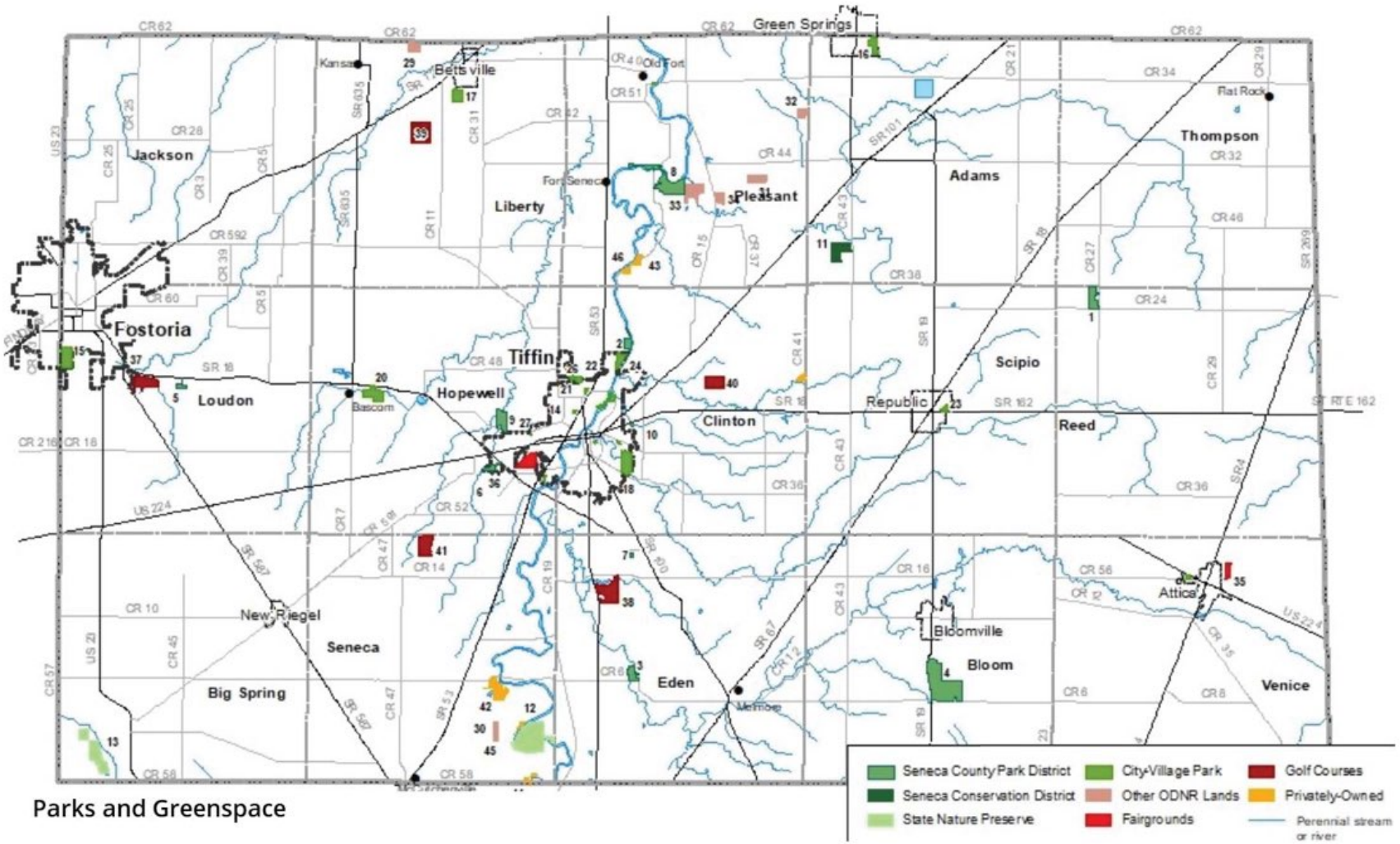
Based on the responses to the online survey, the primary reasons residents gave for visiting any park in the county was walking/running/hiking (76%), followed by special events sponsored by the park (22%), dog walking (20%), and photography (17%).

When asked specifically about desired investments in city parks and recreation in Tiffin, Tiffin residents identified trails (walking, running and cycling); followed by boating (35%), creating a river promenade (34%) and increasing nature-oriented activities (33%) as the three most important.









Parks and Greenspace

ID	PARK	ID	PARK	ID	PARK	ID	PARK	ID	PARK	ID	PARK
1	Bowen Nature Preserve	9	Tiffin University Nature Preserve	17	H.P. Eells Park	25	Tiffin Baseball Field	33	ODNR 5	41	Seneca Hills Golf Course
2	Clinton Nature Preserve	10	Zimmerman Nature Preserve	18	Hedges-Boyer Park	26	Tiffin Skate Park	34	ODNR 6	42	Camp Fire USA
3	Forrest Nature Preserve	11	Miller Conservation Farm	19	Josiah Hedges Park	27	Beechwood Park	35	Attica Fair	43	Izaak Walton & Camp Hertzer
4	Garlo Heritage Nature Preserve	12	Howard Collier State Nature Pres.	20	Meadowbrook Park	28	Riverview Park	36	Seneca County Fairgrounds	44	NW OH Christian Youth Camp
5	Geary YMCA Fruth Outdoor Center	13	Springville Marsh State Nature Pres.	21	Nature Trails Park	29	ODNR 1	37	Loudon Meadows Golf Course	45	Sandusky River Coon Hunters
6	Mercy Community Nature Preserve	14	Apple-Jack Park	22	Oakley Park	30	ODNR 2	38	Mohawk Country Club	46	Tiffin Rangers
7	Opportunity Park	15	Foundation Park	23	Republic Park	31	ODNR 3	39	Forclosed Golf Course	47	Clinton Lake Campground
8	Steyer Nature Preserve	16	Green Springs Community Park	24	Schekelhoff Nature Pres.	32	ODNR 4	40	Clinton Heights Golf Course		

Seneca County Park District

The Seneca County Commissioners established the Seneca County Park District in 1996, and that same year, the members of the first Park Board were appointed. The following year, the Park District acquired its first property, the 256-acre Garlo Heritage Nature Preserve, through a gift from Alma and Dolly Garlo. Over the years, five other nature preserves have been acquired and developed, as well as four additional properties in cooperation with community partners for a total of ten county parks. The Park District has developed and annually conducts more than 180 nature programs for all ages, with attendance exceeding 4,000.

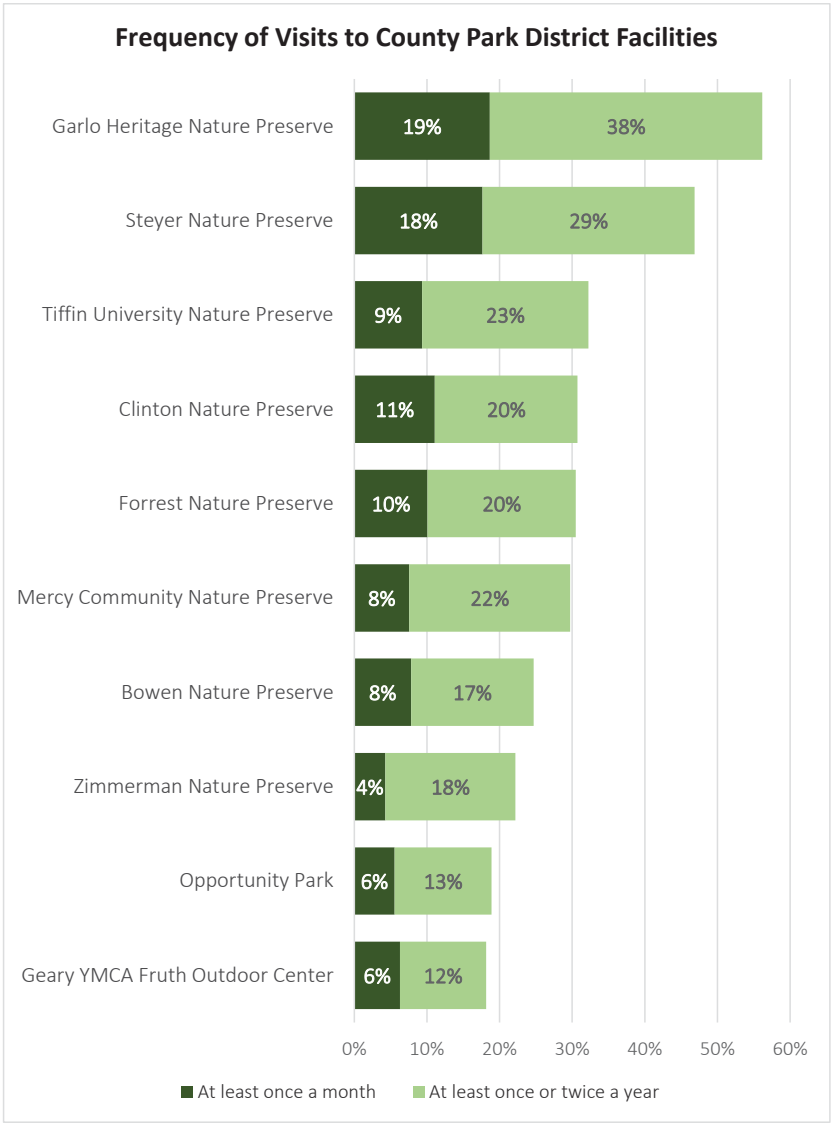
In 2016, the voters passed a 0.5-mill, 10-year levy as the first dedicated funding source to support the Seneca County Park District. The measure will generate around $575,000 per year to be used to hire full-time employees, fund maintenance, capital improvements, equipment, vehicles, and supplies, and to provide funding for competitive grants for Seneca County townships, villages, and cities.

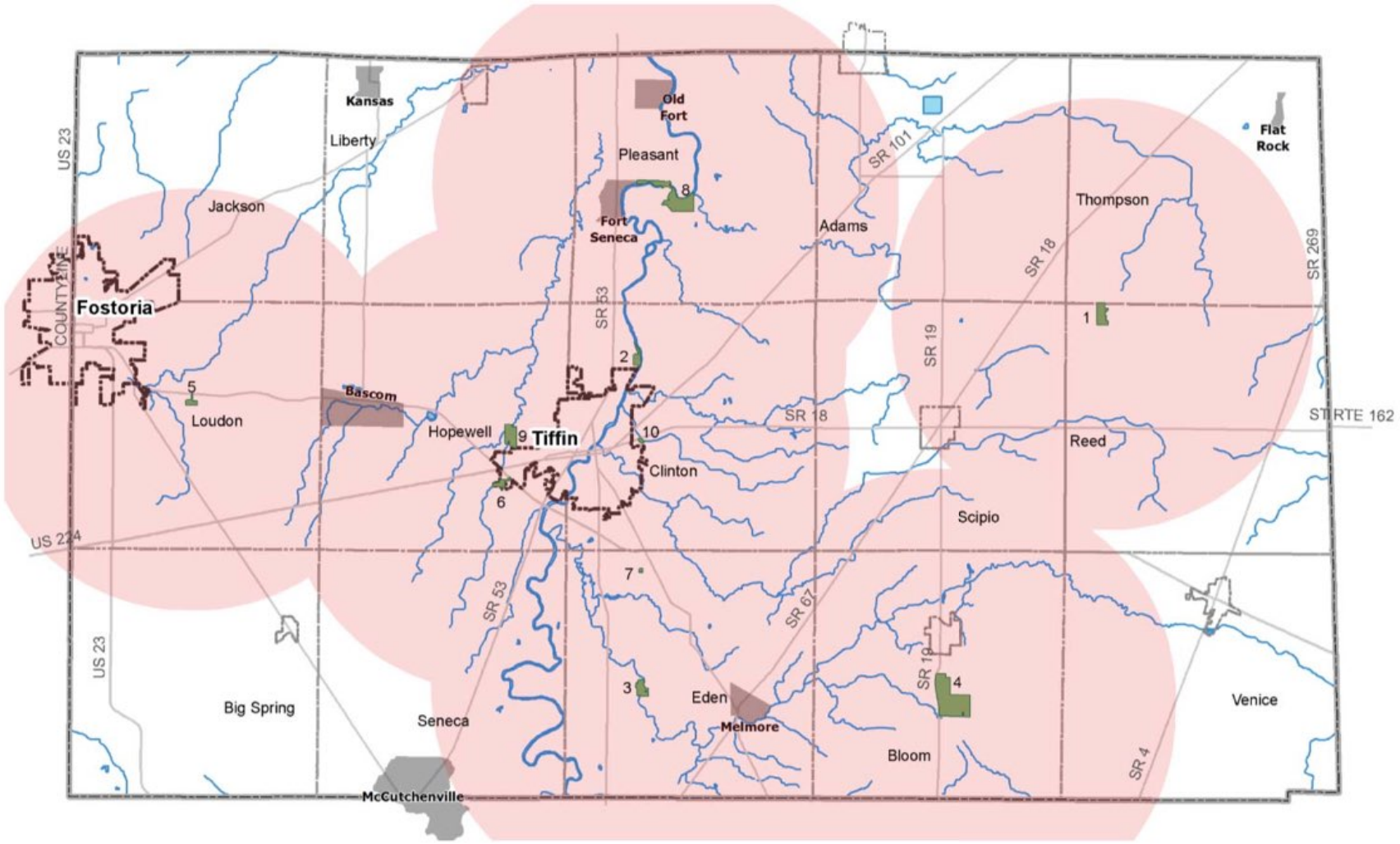
During its strategic planning process in 2017, the Park District identified three primary goals for the future: increase awareness of the park district, develop more key partnerships, and assure the long-term survival of the park district by attracting more youth.

Certain park sites are part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The CRP removes environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plants species that will improve environmental health and quality. Restrictions are placed on the use of the property for a 10- to 15-year period in order to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

Based on the responses to the online survey questions about the Seneca County Park District facilities, Seneca County residents value these facilities. When asked about the condition of each of the District's facilities, all were rated "Good" or better by at least 90% of respondents.

As indicated in the chart below, Garlo Heritage Nature Preserve was visited the most frequently by respondents (56% at least once in the last year), followed by Steyer Nature Preserve (47% at least once in the last year).





Seneca County Park District Facilities
Highlighting 5-Mile Service Area

1	Bowen Nature Preserve	6	Mercy Community Nature Preserve
2	Clinton Nature Preserve	7	Opportunity Park
3	Forrest Nature Preserve	8	Steyer Nature Preserve
4	Garlo Heritage Nature Preserve	9	Tiffin University Nature Preserve
5	Geary YMCA Fruth Outdoor Center	10	Zimmerman Nature Preserve

Seneca County Park District
5 mi. Park District Buffer

Existing Cultural and Historic Resources

Seneca County is rich in cultural resources and history. Historic resources embody the physical elements in the landscape that reflect human actions in relation to past events, sites or structures. These historic resources symbolize an important era in Seneca County's history and serve to educate viewers while providing an appreciation of the past. Such resources include houses, stores, mills, churches, bridges, waterworks, and landscapes such as farms and farm fields. Archaeological resources embody physical evidence or remains of known human life, activities or cultures.

There are over 2,100 historic, cultural and archaeological sites in Seneca County listed in the Ohio Historic Inventory (OHI) data base maintained by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. While these sites are located throughout the county, the largest concentration is in Tiffin.

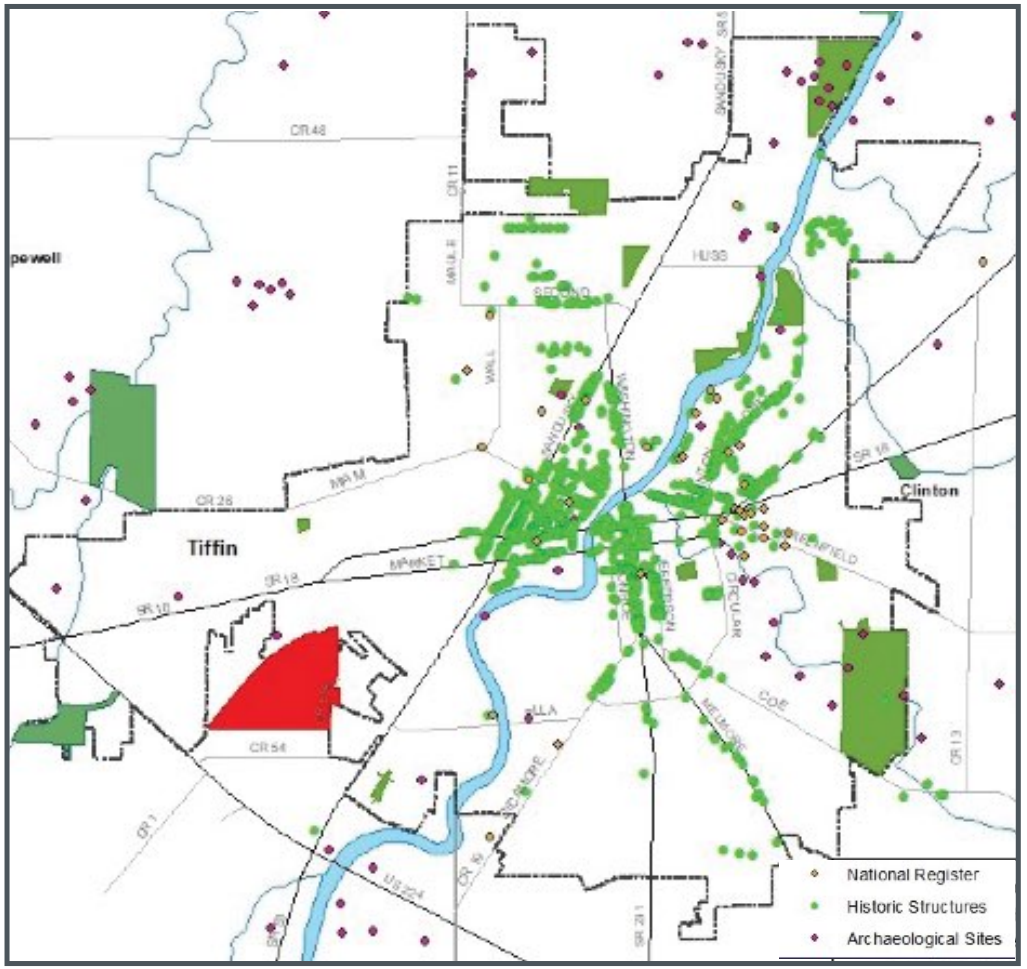
Historic structures make up nearly 58% (1,216) of the OHI listings, the majority of which are historic homes (857). There are 750 archaeological sites, including 598 containing prehistoric artifacts. There are five National Register Historic Districts: four in Tiffin (Downtown Tiffin Historic District, Fort Ball-Railroad Historic District, North Sandusky Street Historic District, and Northeast Tiffin Historic District) and one in Fostoria (Fostoria Downtown Historic District). In addition, there are 39 properties on the National Register, 31 of which are in Tiffin.

The concentration of these sites, as shown on the Historic Sites map, can provide the basis for establishing a scenic byway.



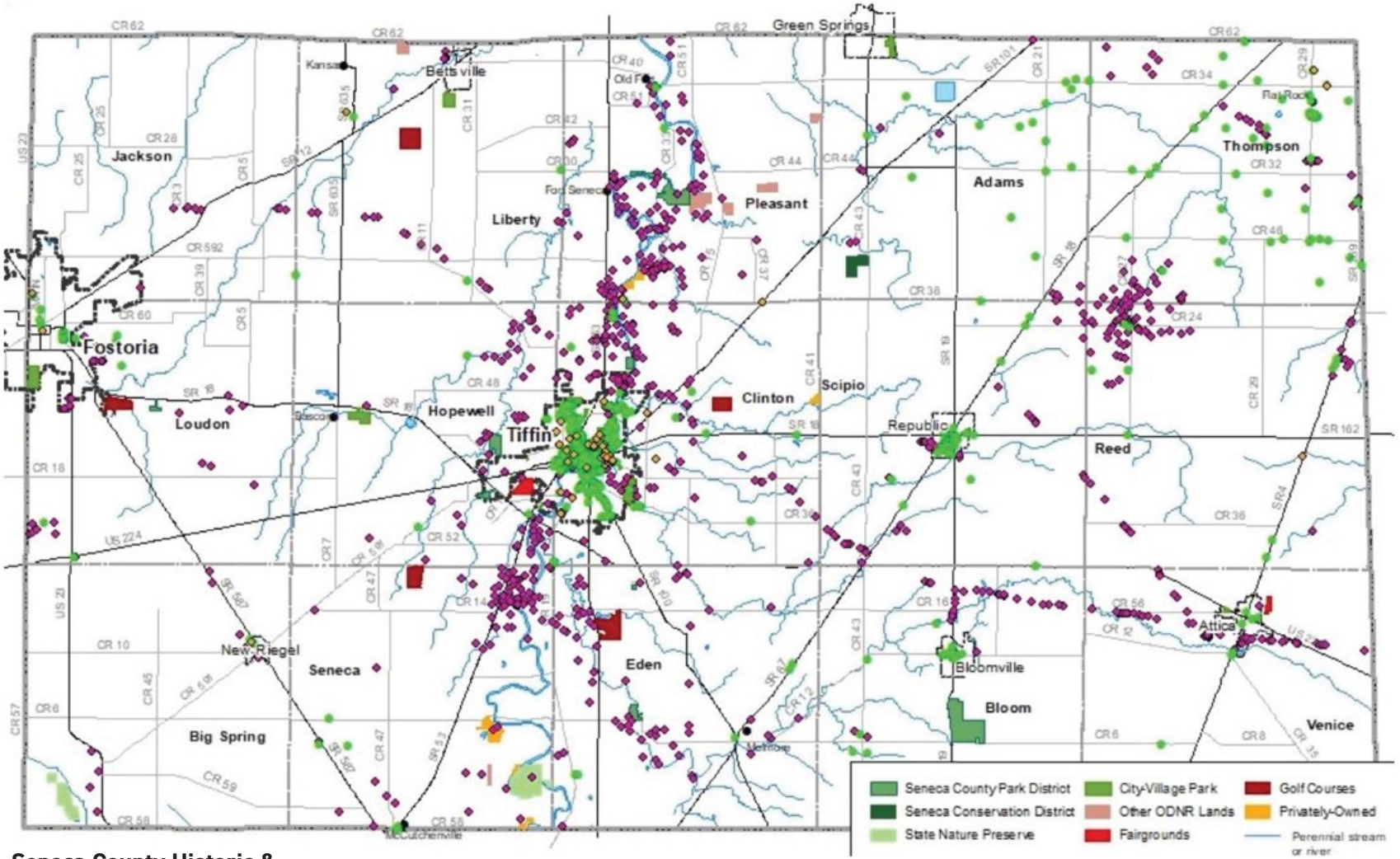






Tiffin Historic & Archaeological Sites

Total Historic: 975 (705 Historic Houses)
Total Archaeological: 386



Seneca County Historic & Archaeological Sites

Total Historic: 1,216 (857 Historic Houses)
Total Archaeological: 750

TRANSPORTATION

Roadway Network

Transportation is an essential service that contributes to the county's ability to keep its citizens safe, provide a great quality of life, and facilitate economic growth and prosperity. In conjunction with the establishment of the Seneca Transportation Improvement District, the Seneca County Transportation Commission maintains the Seneca County Transportation Improvement Plan.

The road system in the county is composed of approximately 222 miles of state highways, 373 miles of county roads, 634 miles of township roads, plus over 130 miles of municipal roads. The state highways include US Route 224, which moves traffic east and west; US Route 23 and OH Route 53, which carry traffic north and south across the county while US 224; and OH Routes 18, SR 101, and SR 4, which serve primarily as arterial and collector routes that carry traffic through the county.

A number of transportation issues were raised during the planning process (e.g. from both the online survey and the public forums) including:

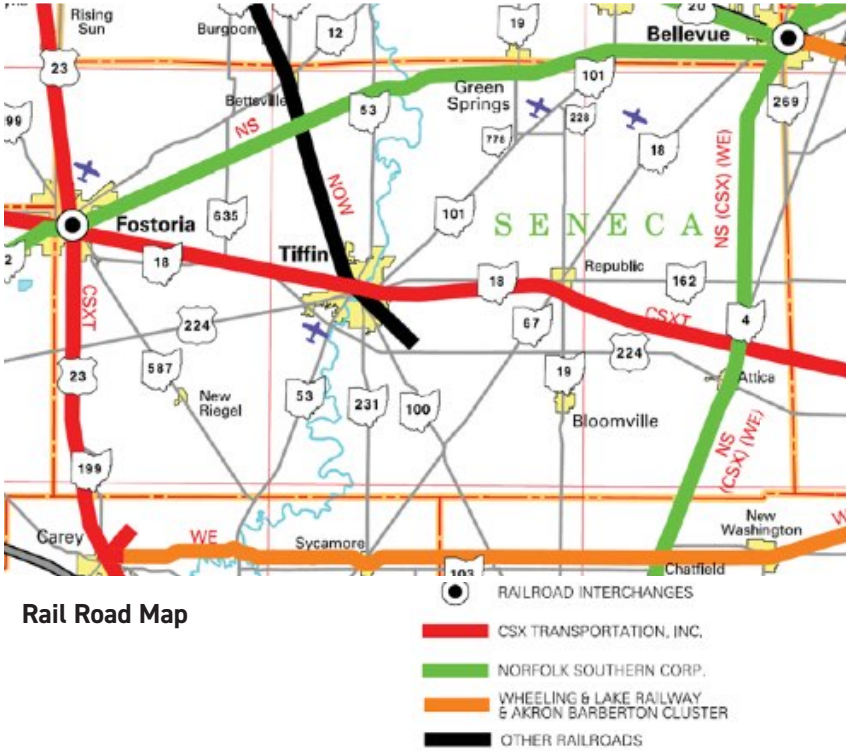
- Roads need resurfacing and improvements;
- Need for connections/highway access for industry within county and region, especially appropriate routes through Tiffin and Fostoria;
- Need connecting roads, I-75 link;
- Need to improve safety for children/students to walk;
- Need to provide access for trucks to US224; and
- Improve safety at rail crossings.

Rail Lines

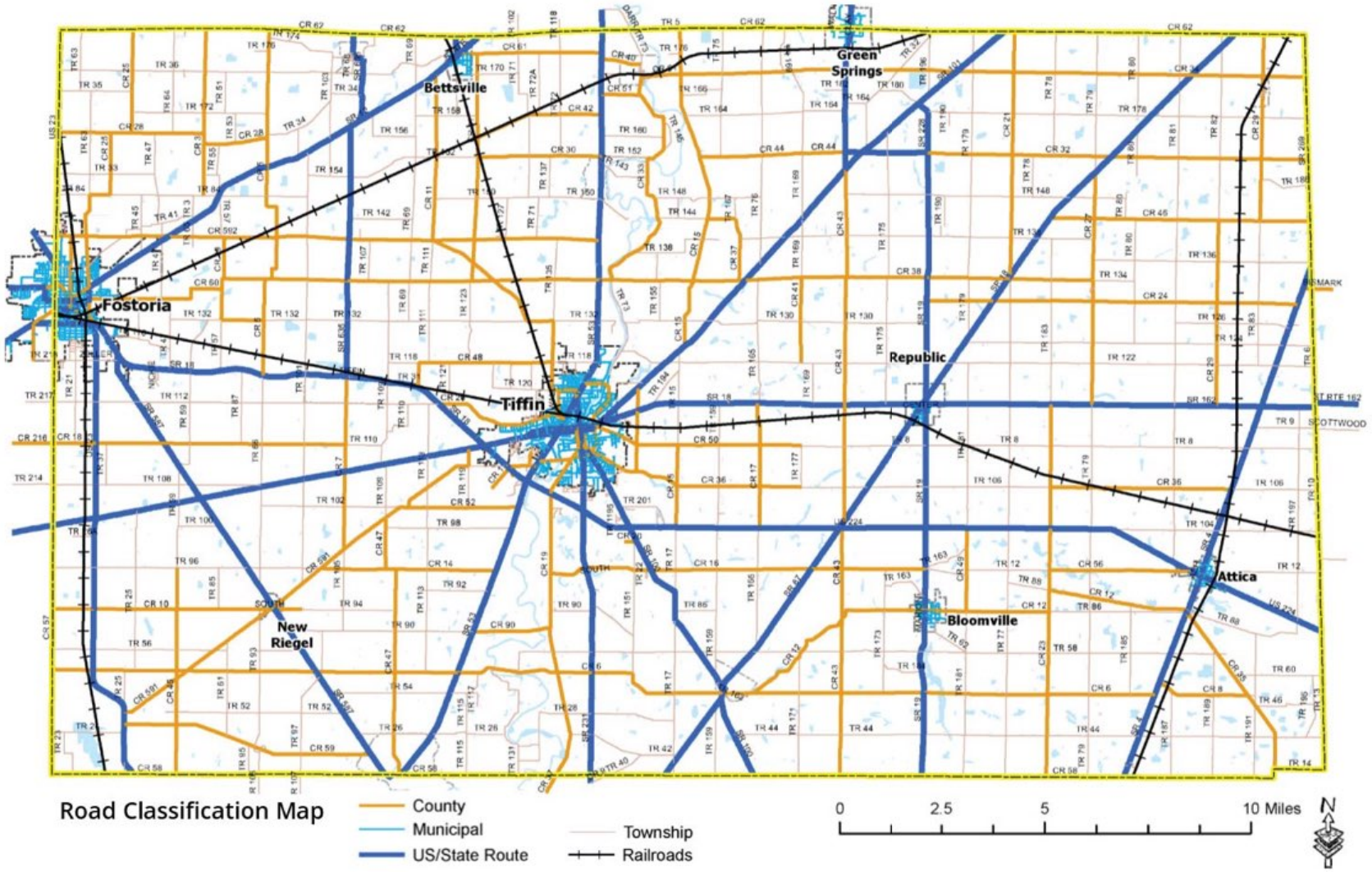
There is considerable use of rail to transport goods to and through Seneca County. Two lines pass through Tiffin and three lines pass through Fostoria. Each of the rail lines also passes through numerous villages. The most heavily used line is the CSX line passing through Tiffin, Bascom, and Fostoria, which serves 70 trains per day. A second CSX line running north-south through Fostoria serves 25 trains per day. The Norfolk Southern Railroad running east-west through Fostoria to Bellevue also serves 25 trains per day. In the eastern region of the county, the Norfolk Southern Railroad running north-south through Attica serves over 50 trains per day.

All of the rail lines serving the region have many crossing points in Seneca County. The greatest concern with railroad crossings is at the locations where they cross major thoroughfares with high traffic volumes in and around Fostoria and Tiffin.

In 2019, the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) directed CSX Transportation (CSX) to consolidate rail crossings in the city of Tiffin. CSX will upgrade the grade crossings at five crossings in the city of Tiffin to four quadrant light and gate systems at Perry St., Market St., Nelson St., Clinton St., and Wall St. CSX will close the grade crossings in Tiffin at Monroe St. and Homes St.



Rail Road Map


Bettsville
Green Springs
Fostoria
Tiffin
Republic
New Riegel
Bloomville
Attica
Road Classification Map
County
Municipal
US/State Route
Township
Railroads
0
2.5
5
10 Miles
N

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CHAPTER 4:
SENECA COUNTY TOMORROW

CHAPTER 4: SENECA COUNTY TOMORROW

In order to achieve the best future possible for our next generation we need to agree on what that future looks like. By formulating a shared, overarching vision, we agree to leverage our individual resources in ways that move us in the same direction, toward the achievement of our Vision. That doesn't mean we're all doing the same thing, but that all entities are thinking more holistically about the challenges and opportunities ahead, agree on what's important to preserve and conserve, and what our long-term outcomes should be.

Overarching Vision

- A thriving, resilient and forward-thinking community;
- A leader in leveraging our assets (people, places, resources) within a balanced, sustainable framework in a manner that honors our past, strengthens our existing assets, and anticipates, plans for, and embraces the future;
- An attractive, distinctive, memorable and desirable place to call home, visit, and do business in; and
- Engaged in good stewardship of both our built and natural environment.

In addition to the **Overarching Vision**, each jurisdiction has its own vision tailored to its specific perspective.

Vision for Seneca County

To be an inclusive community that celebrates & brings to life both its rural and urban cultural heritage: fostering active lifestyles by improving access to existing natural resources for all county residents; & supporting a robust & innovative local economy that both integrates with & helps lead the regional economy.

Vision for the Seneca County Park District

To be a recognized leader & desired partner in providing life-enhancing and lifelong, nature-based outdoor experiences for all; & to build a legacy of good environmental stewardship for future generations.

Vision for Tiffin

To be a regional hub for business & industry, & a vibrant & active place for residents, employees & visitors: providing a range of housing to meet the needs of all households; continuing to celebrate & preserve our historic & cultural resources & recognizing them as economic drivers; working cooperatively with local institutions to foster learning & advancement; & supporting active lifestyles of residents.

Vision for Fostoria

To be a place where all residents feel safe and secure; a hub for job training and skills development; and a place where families & businesses feel good about investing. Having galvanized local leaders & engaged residents, Fostoria will continue to embrace its heritage while actively preparing for its future.






Integrated Goals

This multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan can be summed up in six integrated goals and their associated objectives. "Integrated" goals are defined as those that apply to all of the four jurisdictional partners, either directly or indirectly. The thoughts expressed in this chapter are broad in nature and represent common objectives that generally apply.

For ease of language, Seneca County and the phrase "the County" are often used to collectively represent the four jurisdictional partners in this section. When used in the descriptions of the Goals and Objectives, readers of this section can infer meaning for all of the participating jurisdictions: Seneca County, the cities of Fostoria and Tiffin, and the Seneca County Park District. In Chapter 5, specific strategies for each entity are outlined separately as follows:

5.1 Seneca County

5.2 Seneca County Park District

5.3 City of Tiffin

5.4 City of Fostoria

The **Integrated Goals** provide a structure for developing the more detailed objectives and associated action steps.

1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy

Ensure we are prepared to & successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national & global economy, with an emphasis on jobs & tax revenue.

2. Attractive, Desirable, and Livable Places (Built Environment)

Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living & socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

3. Quality Community Facilities and Services

Create & foster a strong sense of community by ensuring social needs are met with equitable programs & access to a wide range of community & public facilities & services.

4. Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human & economic well-being, provide recreation & educational opportunities for locals & tourists, & significantly enhance the character of our community.

5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility, and Public Utilities

Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure & utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current & future residents & businesses.

6. Strong Community Character and Image

Enhance & strengthen our community character & brand to establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study & visit; instill community pride; & attract new residents, businesses & visitors.

In thinking about the our **Integrated Goals** for the future, more detailed objectives were formulated to help frame the development, investment, and conservation polices and provide direction for the individual action plans to be developed by the County, Tiffin, Fostoria, and the Seneca County Park District. These objectives, summarized in this chapter, are broad policy statements that stand the test of time to provide guidance over the next 20 years.

Goal 1: Prosperous and Resilient Economy

Ensure we are prepared to and successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national and global economy, with an emphasis on jobs and tax revenue.

A prosperous economy is one where everyone benefits; and a resilient economy has the capacity to return to employment growth after any economic downturn. Seneca County wants to create a platform for growth to ensure we are prepared to and successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national and global economy. Our economic well-being relies on jobs offering good incomes. In comparison to the rest of Ohio, the average Seneca County resident's income is seven percent lower, but the county's current economic trajectory is positive. During the past few years, our area has seen a surge of growth, gaining national recognition for economic development among similar-sized communities. To continue this progress, we need to adopt the most up-to-date development strategies and have a firm understanding of the existing economy and its resources. Ups and downs in the local economy are inevitable, but deliberate community planning regarding the economy can help us weather instability and capitalize on growth.

Objective 1.1 Strategic Planning

Create/update and successfully implement economic development strategic plans and ongoing planning processes for Seneca County (rural Seneca County, Tiffin and Fostoria) that strengthen and grow the economy, providing fiscal sustainability for the county and local jurisdictions.

A strong economy helps to pay for a better quality of life in Seneca County. Working together, economic development plans can help create and retain desirable jobs, providing a good standard of living.

Summary of Objectives
1.1 Engage in Strategic Planning for Economic Development - Create/update and successfully implement economic development strategic plans and ongoing planning processes for Seneca County (rural Seneca County, Tiffin and Fostoria) that strengthen and grow the economy, providing fiscal sustainability for the county and local jurisdictions.
1.2 Promote Workforce Development - Attract, retain and develop a diverse, educated, skilled workforce to meet the needs of current and future companies and industries.
1.3 Ensure Suitable Locations for Economic Development - Facilitate and promote economic development in the best, most appropriate locations and create/enhance locations as needed (taking into account available utilities, transportation network and zoning/land use) to encourage a clearly understood, cooperative and strategic development-friendly environment.
1.4 Retain, Expand & Attract Businesses - Strengthen the existing and attract new businesses, industries and clusters that encourage economic growth, investment, job creation and retention, and increased tax revenue to support public services.
1.5 Support & Expand Agribusiness - Support and expand the county's agriculture/food industry cluster, including productive agriculture as well as business services, retail and wholesale trade establishments dedicated to agriculture.
1.6 Support & Promote Entrepreneurship - Support and strategically promote and facilitate entrepreneurship.
1.7 Revitalize Downtowns - Promote downtown revitalization and strengthen the downtowns in Tiffin, Fostoria, and the villages in rural Seneca County.

Increased personal income and wealth not only provides a higher and more attractive quality of life, but correspondingly increases the tax base so the County and local jurisdictions can provide the level of services

residents expect. Economic development is guided by carefully crafted public policies that allow a community to determine its future direction and guide appropriate types of development according to its own values. In today's 21st century economy, Seneca County can focus on creating a skilled and educated workforce, investing in an infrastructure for innovation, and fostering an innovative business climate.

Objective 1.2 Workforce Development

Attract, retain and develop a diverse, educated, skilled workforce to meet the needs of current and future companies and industries.



The availability of a reliable, skilled workforce is one of the most important factors for businesses planning to expand or relocate. Today, the shift to a knowledge economy has brought widespread concern that young people are entering the workforce without the skills employers value most, such as communication, critical thinking, leadership, and teamwork skills. Seneca County needs a quality workforce to stay competitive, to keep existing businesses strong, to keep young people in the community, and to raise residents' standard of living. Workforce development strategies include developing approaches to enhance the skills of workers so that all residents can become contributing members of the local economy. These strategies involve partnerships with educational institutions, employers, unions and state and local workforce development agencies and organizations.

Workforce development can include adjusting the local education system to produce graduates who have the necessary skills, and providing skill development for displaced workers and on-the-job training. When employers have access to a good workforce, they can become more competitive, increase productivity and retain workers, and are more likely to prosper. Seneca County is committed to ensuring residents have the skills that local employers need to ensure businesses have a competitive advantage in the 21st century global marketplace.



Objective 1.3 Suitable Locations

Facilitate and promote economic development in the best, most appropriate locations and create/enhance locations as needed (taking into account available utilities, transportation network and zoning/land use) to encourage a clearly understood, cooperative and strategic development-friendly environment.

Employment centers (businesses and industries) need to be strategically located to take advantage of the existing highway network, have access to the necessary utilities such as water, sewer, gas, electricity, broadband, and be appropriately buffered from nearby residential neighborhoods. Most important is the need for suitably zoned land that allows for construction and expansion, and in certain cases, is necessary in order to obtain funding.

In the broadest sense, infrastructure is the support system needed for producing, selling and delivering goods and services. In order to improve the local business climate and overall quality of life in Seneca County, it is essential that our infrastructure is well-maintained, and improved and expanded when necessary. This requires ongoing long-term capital improvement planning for all infrastructure in the county:

- Transportation infrastructure enables the movement of goods and people.
- Communications infrastructure, including broadband, is key to communicating globally and providing telecommuting opportunities.
- Public utility infrastructure includes the provision of water and sanitary sewer service, which are critical for business operations.
- Social infrastructure is the people-oriented aspect of communities, such as quality of life services for residents, including health, education, government services, etc.
- Infrastructure can also include available facilities such as speculative buildings, infill opportunities, industrial and business parks, available sites with transportation, communications and utility infrastructure in place; and brownfield conversions.

Objective 1.4 Retention, Expansion & Attraction

Strengthen the existing and attract new businesses, industries and clusters that encourage economic growth, investment, job creation and retention, and increased tax revenue to support public services.

Seneca County, given its location within the state, is a locally-focused economy, and should take advantage of its location near major cities such as Toledo, Detroit, Cleveland, and Columbus. Policies and programs that foster the retention and expansion of existing businesses, entrepreneurial development, and business attraction will help all of Seneca County. Current efforts to engage and listen to the local business community to identify and solve problems should continue and expand. The County should continue to use available and appropriate economic development incentives to foster new development, providing both relocating and new firms with "one-stop shopping" economic development services to encourage them to grow in Seneca County.

Real estate developers actively focus on areas where demand and buying power are high enough to create a return on investment.



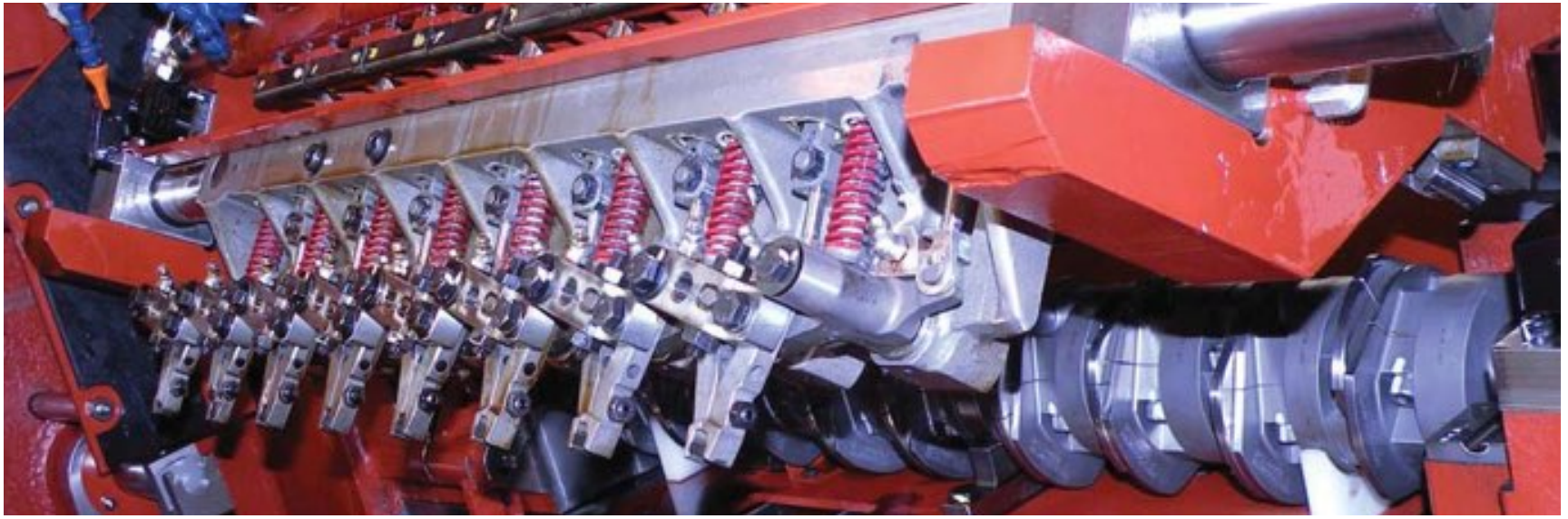


Seneca County should engage in business retention and expansion strategies to help existing local businesses keep their doors open. The County should also invest in business attraction and retention strategies that encourage or promote business growth in areas that wouldn't otherwise be considered viable options for investment, ensuring that retail has a chance to be successful, and that neighborhoods have affordable goods and services for residents.

Seneca County should carefully consider the market when developing retention and attraction strategies to sustain a healthy and diverse local business community across all neighborhoods. The County needs to have a solid understanding of both the similarities and differences between market sectors and the factors that influence their location decisions. For example, industrial development tends to be more regional in focus while commercial and office developments are often more locally oriented. The rapid changes in the retail industry have dramatically impacted local businesses and both retailers and service establishments must become more personalized in their approach. We need to stay up to date on criteria used by site selectors for each of these segments.







Objective 1.5 Agribusiness

Support and expand the county's agriculture/food industry cluster, including productive agriculture as well as business services, retail and wholesale trade establishments dedicated to agriculture.

We are one of Ohio's leading farm counties. With over 90% of the county in farmland, agribusiness is clearly a key economic driver. Retaining and expanding existing agricultural businesses is an effective economic development strategy. Investment in agribusiness contributes to the local economy in many of the same ways as investments in other local businesses. One area of opportunity to explore is expanding our agriculture/food industry cluster to embrace and encourage businesses that are related to agriculture. With a rich agricultural heritage and the growing demand for local foods, culinary tourism and outdoor recreation, agricultural-based tourism can also be a significant contributor to maintaining the economic viability of agriculture in Seneca County.





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Objective 1.6 Entrepreneurship

Support and strategically promote and facilitate entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is an important driver of our local economy. Local start-ups are often the ones that stimulate the local economy the most, and today's knowledge-based economy encourages the development of new, local businesses. Entrepreneurs, whether involved in high-tech or middle-tech businesses, help drive change through innovation, new product development and improved quality of life. To support these individuals and businesses, Seneca County needs to attract a skilled workforce, and ensure the availability of high-speed internet access, provide allowances for home-based businesses, and ensure the availability of office spaces that can accommodate intense computer-based activity with adequate backup power sources.

Objective 1.7 Downtowns

Promote downtown revitalization and strengthen the downtowns in Tiffin, Fostoria, and the villages in rural Seneca County.

Many rural communities are engaged in revitalization efforts to renew downtown areas and restore them to their former prominence as a center of community activity. Nationally, the most successful strategy or framework for revitalization efforts is the National Main Street Center's Main Street Four Point Approach to downtown revitalization. This approach capitalizes on historic downtowns' atmosphere and unique personality, focusing on re-centering the downtown as the cultural and civic heart of the community. It advocates for preserving the downtown built environment while ensuring it meets the needs of current businesses and residents. Tiffin has used this strategy quite effectively; other communities in Seneca County could benefit as well.

Downtowns are often home to many small businesses, including boutique and specialty stores, local restaurants, etc. Many locate there due to lower rents than in newly built strip centers. Others, especially





retailers, benefit from being in a compact, walkable environment. Historic downtowns are increasingly popular for their authentic sense of place, offering visitors an experience unlike anything they can find in more modern commercial areas.

Nationally, small businesses (like those in the county's downtowns) employ over 50% of the workforce, and have generated over 65% of new jobs since 1995. There are almost 28 million small businesses in the U.S., of which over 22 million are self-employed with no additional payroll or employees, and their growth is on the rise (www.forbes.com). Plus, local businesses tend to buy locally, pumping more of the profits from their economic activity back into the community than chain store counterparts, sparking economic development. Downtown investment and focus in Seneca County should continue.









Goal 2: Attractive, Desirable & Livable Places (Our Built Environment)

Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living and socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

An attractive, desirable and livable built environment may take many forms. But the common denominator is the relationship between the built environment and how it affects the lives of residents. As we develop attractive, desirable, and livable places, we must address all elements of the built environment and how people experience and use it.

We acknowledge that a relationship exists between the built form and the way it impacts the quality of life for our residents. Quality places and neighborhoods foster a sense of community that both welcomes newcomers and entices them and long-time residents to stay. We will ensure that our decisions impacting the built environment coexist in ways that advance a resilient economy, a healthy community, and harmony with the natural environment.

Seneca County will be enhanced through preservation of neighborhood character and celebration of the cultural and historic resources. We want to attract new residents with a variety of housing opportunities in vibrant neighborhoods, our historic villages, and thriving downtowns, making sure any new development does not interfere with our rural and scenic appeal or our natural resources. We need abundant housing choices for people at all economic levels, stages of life, and walks of life to live, create, and thrive.

Summary of Objectives

2.1 Increase Housing Options - Encourage and facilitate responsible/ quality housing development in suitable locations in order to increase the housing supply to meet diverse housing needs of different ages, households, incomes and desired amenities.

2.2 Maintain Desirable Neighborhoods - Maintain safe, walkable and desirable neighborhoods.

2.3 Celebrate our Valued Culture & Places - Strengthen and celebrate the unique heritage and identities of places (including our downtowns and distinctive neighborhoods) and culture through historic preservation, quality urban design and architecture, and support for the arts.

2.4 Foster Property Maintenance - Promote well-maintained buildings and properties.

2.5 Sustainable Land Use - Maintain a balance of rural and city/ village and natural environments.



Objective 2.1 Housing Options

Encourage responsible/quality housing development in suitable locations in order to increase and diversify the housing supply to meet the housing needs of different ages, households, incomes, and desired amenities.

Seneca County has a shortage of residential options that appeal to a diversity of households. Desired household types range from young, single adults; young, married couples; families with small children; families with older children; empty-nesters; and older, retired singles and couples. We should undertake a careful analysis of local markets to determine the type of housing needed, as well as locations for new construction verses rehabilitation. Both current residents and newcomers looking for housing in Seneca County have expressed a desire to see a greater variety of options: to buy and to rent, in urban and rural settings, as well as budget-friendly and luxury units.



Objective 2.2 Desirable Neighborhoods

Maintain safe, walkable and desirable neighborhoods.

Our residents want to live in safe, walkable and desirable neighborhoods. Those who live (or want to live) in urbanized areas want the option of walking or bicycling to destinations rather than depending solely on cars. Providing a complete sidewalk network and safe neighborhoods not only improves social equity, but also contributes to a healthier lifestyle and more regular interaction of residents, leading to a stronger sense of community. Well-designed communities are not just a collection of individual houses, rather they are planned places that give equal attention to public areas that are conducive to walking, jogging, and casual socializing.









Objective 2.3 Valued Culture & Places

Strengthen and celebrate the unique heritage and identities of places (including our downtowns and distinctive neighborhoods) and culture through historic preservation, quality urban design and architecture, and support for the arts.

Seneca County has a long and rich history that is reflected in the built environment. Historic and cultural resources are essential to protect because they provide community identity, foster local pride in the community, and attract other people to come to the community. The added benefit is that by protecting historic areas, Seneca County ensures that old buildings are reused in areas that are already served by public infrastructure and safety services.

Seneca County's downtowns each contain a mix of significant public buildings, locally owned restaurants, stores, professional offices and upper floor residences. The combination of shops, businesses, and religious and civic uses is enhanced with special events. The Main Street Four Point Approach promotes a comprehensive revitalization effort that focuses on re-creating a distinctive sense of place and an authentic experience for downtown patrons. Downtowns can and should be places where residents meet friends and neighbors to enjoy community activities, amenities and atmosphere.



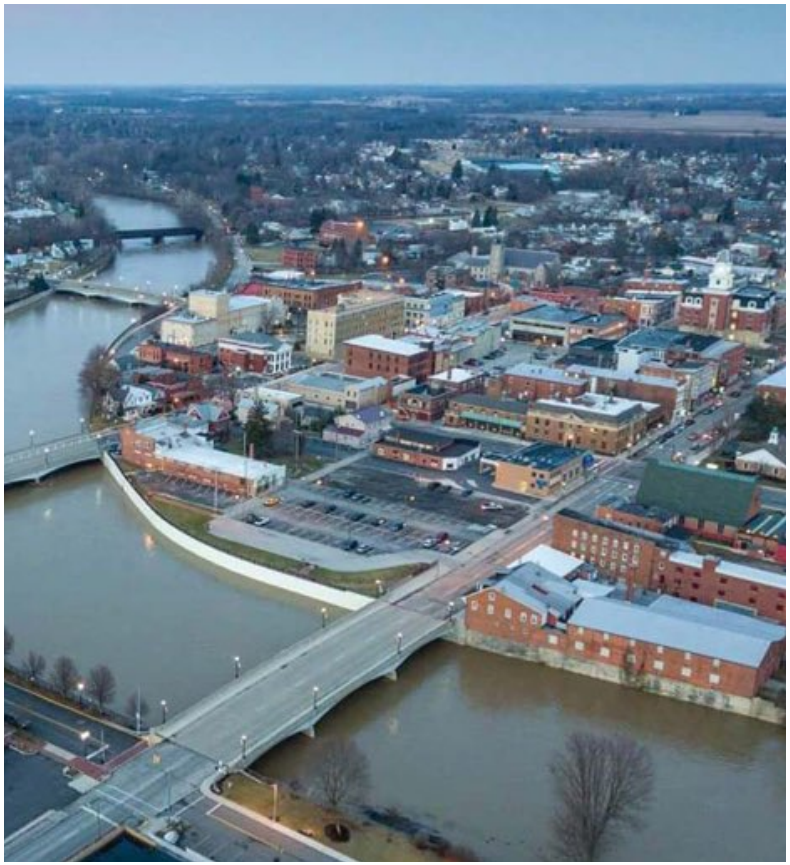
Objective 2.4 Property Maintenance

Promote well-maintained buildings and properties.

Residential neighborhoods, downtowns and other shopping and entertainment areas in Seneca County benefit when buildings and landscaping are kept in good repair. Proper maintenance of both the built environment and the greenspace surrounding it is a critical element of desirable and safe neighborhoods. When lacking, neighborhoods can feel unsafe, which leads to a dangerous decline toward disinvestment, decreased property values, and blight. In addition to looking better and feeling safer, well-maintained







properties are a significant indicator of community pride, something that resonates with residents. To maintain community pride, property values, and a feeling of safety and security, Seneca County will invest in policies and processes to ensure that all property owners maintain our built environment.

Objective 2.5 Land Use

Maintain a balance of rural and city/ village and natural environments.

Farms and farmland are an integral part of the fabric of Seneca County. These landscapes are valuable not only for agricultural production, but also for an abundance of wildlife, natural vegetation, woodlands, and historic and natural landmarks. Scenic vistas provide a natural escape from population, pollution, and noise. Even agricultural lands not in production contribute to the character of the county, adding to its rural charm, beauty, and serenity. This pastoral setting is dotted with six villages and two larger cities that have historically served as commercial and civic hubs for rural residents. Both villages and cities have character-defining elements, and each contributes to the county's identity. It is essential that Seneca County's municipal and township governments carefully craft appropriate and tailored land use policies that direct development to areas that are most easily served by existing infrastructure to maintain the historic balance between rural and urban.



Goal 3: Quality Community Facilities & Services

Create and foster a strong sense of community by ensuring social needs are met with equitable programs and access to a wide range of community and public facilities and services.

Seneca County is home to two world-class universities, twenty-six public schools and five private schools. Quality parks and recreational opportunities are readily available. Art, music and theater productions are produced and held at various locations throughout the year. Health and social services support the physical and emotional well-being of community members. The public libraries, as well as those associated with our various educational institutions, offer residents ready access to learning opportunities. Our amenities "package" is vast, and gives us a high quality of life and the ability to raise well-rounded, healthy and knowledgeable citizens.

Seneca County strives to create an inclusive, diverse community, where everyone has the opportunity to fulfill their potential. As a community, we have prioritized access to healthy, affordable food, quality education, and living wage jobs. We aim to promote active living through thoughtful, resident-led planning that results in pedestrian-oriented development for all ages and abilities, harmonized with an integrated transportation system.



Summary of Objectives

3.1	Foster Inclusive Community - Foster inclusive communities that embrace the strengths, perspectives and needs of an increasingly diverse population.
3.2	Promote Education & Lifelong Learning - Maintain and promote robust educational systems to improve our overall educational attainment and encourage a lifelong learning attitude.
3.3	Foster Active Living - Promote active living/active lifestyles through local parks, recreation facilities, trails, and programming to provide opportunities for residents to experience nature, and to increase their awareness and appreciation of the natural environment.
3.4	Promote Health & Wellness - Provide equitable and accessible community/public facilities and supportive services that build strong communities and foster our physical, mental and behavioral health and well-being, such as: health care, libraries, public safety, and emergency response systems, and improve our overall standard of living.
3.5	Increase Food Security/Access - Support food security and year-round access to healthy food, especially for children.



Objective 3.1 Inclusive Community

Foster inclusive communities that embrace the strengths, perspectives and needs of an increasingly diverse population.

One of the things we value most about our community is the "small-town feel," where "everyone knows each other." This provides a more intimate sense of community that enables us to appreciate each other and our differences. We want to be an inclusive and diverse community that thrives by offering safe and affordable housing as well as food security to people of all income levels, ages, and backgrounds. We want to create a more sustainable and empowering community for both present and future citizens.

Objective 3.2 Education

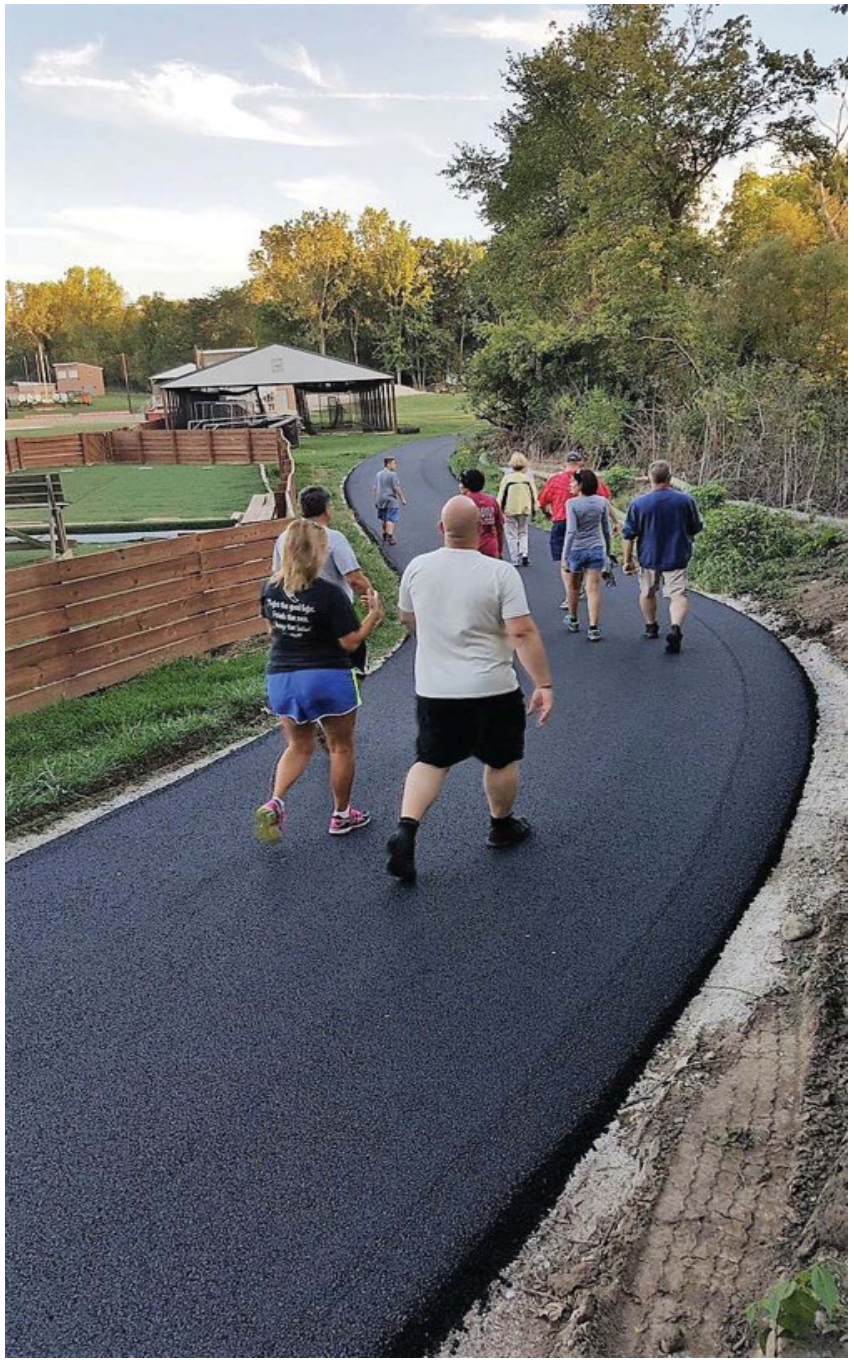
Maintain and promote robust educational systems to improve our overall educational attainment and encourage a lifelong learning attitude.

Despite the deep educational resources available in Seneca County, we have a lower percentage of college-educated residents than the state (15% compared to 27%). Both universities desire to partner with local schools and community organizations to create a culture of lifelong learning in Seneca County. We want to explore these options and create new programs that make learning fun for residents of all ages.

Objective 3.3 Active Living

Promote active living/active lifestyles through local parks, recreation facilities, trails, and programming to provide opportunities for residents to experience nature, and to increase their awareness and appreciation of the natural environment.

Proximity and access to parks leads to regular physical activity, which increases longevity and well-being, helps children and adults maintain a healthy weight, and can reduce risks of obesity and related health consequences. Parks and playgrounds provide a variety of opportunities for physical activity, which makes it easier to lead a more active lifestyle.



Objective 3.4 Health & Wellness

Provide equitable and accessible community/public facilities with supportive services, such as: health care, libraries, public safety, and emergency response systems, that build strong communities, foster our physical, mental and behavioral health and well-being, and improve our overall standard of living.

Community facilities are integral parts of the neighborhoods they serve. This careful integration of uses helps create distinctive and supportive neighborhoods. Seneca County wants to encourage the location of large community wide facilities where adequate infrastructure, such as roads, sewers, and water service, exists to serve the intended uses. County residents would also benefit from connections such as bike paths that provide access to these facilities.

Our goal is to ensure that all residents lead healthy and successful lives. One way to help achieve this goal is to ensure those who need support and assistance can obtain it. Seneca County can work with the numerous public and private agencies that provide an array of supportive services to help, including assistance to help obtain and maintain safe housing, counseling, and other support services to improve quality of life.

SENECA COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT
Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Objective 3.5 Food Security

Support food security and year-round access to healthy food, especially for children.

Children who live in households that are food insecure are likely to be sick more often. Food insecurity is a condition in which households lack access to adequate food because of limited money, transportation or other resources. Lack of adequate healthy food can impair a child's ability to concentrate and perform well in school and is linked to higher levels of behavioral and emotional problems from preschool through adolescence. Food insecurity can affect children in any community, not only traditionally underserved ones. For many families, seemingly small changes in income, expenses, or access to federal or state assistance programs may instantly reduce the ability to purchase healthy food and result in increased vulnerability to food insecurity and missed or meager meals. Moreover, the effects of food insecurity to families and children extend well beyond the immediate hunger pains from lack of food; long-term health and economic consequences include higher health care expenditures, lower educational achievement, lost productivity and lower earnings in adulthood, and increased risk of poverty later in life.



Goal 4: Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human and economic well-being, provide recreation and educational opportunities for residents and tourists, and significantly enhance the character of our community.

The changing status of our natural environment is a global concern. Locally, there are numerous steps that communities can take to be stewards of our natural resources and promote environmental sustainability. Improving the environment is not just adopting more "green" practices; helping community members realize the opportunities and benefits the natural environment provides will lead them to take steps to become environmental advocates. Seneca County is rich with natural resources to appreciate and protect. Preservation and restoration of green infrastructure is essential to maintaining natural ecological processes that improve and protect air and water resources, habitat and species diversity.

Objective 4.1 Resource Protection

Conserve and protect the ecosystems (rivers and streams, floodplains, woodlands, wetlands, steep hillsides, and sensitive habitats, etc.) in order to:

- *maximize their natural functions for the benefit of the community, such as for storm water management, wind breaks, and energy conservation;*
- *reduce flooding and erosion;*
- *maximize their visual and aesthetic value;*
- *reduce development costs; and*
- *maximize their environmental benefits such as provide critical habitat and biodiversity.*

Summary of Objectives

4.1	Practice Natural Resource Preservation/Conservation - Conserve and protect our ecosystems (rivers and streams, floodplains, woodlands, wetlands, steep hillsides, and sensitive habitats, etc.) in order to maximize their natural functions, environmental benefits, and visual and aesthetic value; and to reduce development costs.
4.2	Preserve & Properly Manage Accessible Greenspace - Preserve and properly manage green space for current and future generations, to ensure its environmental quality, health and resiliency and to provide critical habitat and support for diverse wildlife.
4.3	Ensure Clean Air & Water through Best Management Practices - Promote low-impact development, green infrastructure and other best practices that ensure clean air and clean water and reduce pollution (air, water, nonpoint source pollution, etc.) and its deleterious effects.
4.4	Protect River Life - Protect and promote the Sandusky River, its tributaries and other waterways as key natural resources.
4.5	Promote Green Energy - Promote renewable and alternative energy systems.
4.6	Promote Solid Waste Management - Promote solid waste reduction, reuse and recycling.



Growth that significantly diminishes environmental quality, community character, and ecological systems is shortsighted and is a poor legacy to leave the next generation. If we develop the landscape without an awareness of the environment, fewer natural areas will be left to provide public health and safety functions. Such practices in the past have made those remaining areas with high ecological integrity even more critical. These resources are an important part of the quality of life in Seneca County. It is critical to maintain a thorough inventory and understanding of these resources. Preserving the ecological health and function of our natural areas will avoid the costs of environmental degradation and translate ultimately into economic viability.

Natural areas that can be protected based on public health and safety values include flood plains, wetlands, changeable ground surfaces, areas with high water tables, and areas subject to landslides. Other zones that can be protected include wetlands and wetlands transition areas, steep slopes, high ground water pollution potential areas, and aquifer recharge areas. In addition, developed canopy cover and permeable surfaces reduce the incidence and severity of floods, reduce soil erosion, and improve surface and groundwater quality.

Objective 4.2 Accessible Greenspace

Preserve and properly manage green space for current and future generations, to ensure its environmental quality, health and resiliency and support for diverse wildlife.

Green spaces are a critical component of the county's ecological health, environmental quality, aesthetics, and livability. In addition to larger natural areas, smaller urban green spaces and the urban forest are maintained for aesthetics and because they are a part of where we live and work. We come into contact with these spaces as we drive along a city street, as we walk through parks, and enjoy views of the open landscapes around our homes and where we work. Green open spaces help stabilize soil by controlling wind and water erosion, reduce noise levels, cleanse pollutants from the air, produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide, provide wildlife habitat, and improve water quality by filtering soil and pollutants. They also provide significant economic benefits through increased real estate values, improved settings for business activities, and, in the case of the urban forest, reduced energy costs for heating and cooling. The aesthetic value of green spaces in urban settings is reflected in civic pride, a healthy community image, and economic vitality.

Objective 4.3 Clean Air & Water Best Management Practices

Promote low-impact development, green infrastructure and other best practices that ensure clean air and clean water and reduce pollution (air, water, nonpoint source pollution, etc.) and its deleterious effects.

Green spaces can help reduce the dust and dirt that fills the atmosphere, which contain toxins that are bad for health and deplete the ozone layer.



The waterways of Seneca County provide numerous valuable functions, including drinking water, habitat, recreation, and transportation. Water quality is reflective of the surrounding landscape and efforts to preserve, protect, and improve the integrity of our rivers and streams should address the long-term management of the larger watershed. Water quality designations indicate how sensitive certain waters are to alteration and contaminants. These designations help resource managers monitor how well water quality goals are being met. While improvements in treating point sources of pollution, such as municipal and industrial wastes, have led to major improvements in water quality, increases in development and more intensive agriculture have created nonpoint source (NPS) pollution from pesticides and fertilizers, eroded sediment from developing areas and increased water runoff from impervious surfaces.

Limiting impervious surface area serves to reduce storm water runoff volume. The greater the area of impervious surfaces, the more runoff will occur, carrying water downstream. Low-impact development, green infrastructure and other best practices encourage on-site absorption (run-on). Runoff is defined as the direction of storm water flow from pervious cover to impervious cover (for example, sloping lawn to paved road); whereas, run-on can be defined as the flow of storm water from impervious cover to pervious cover. If sites are graded to produce run-on, water is much more likely to infiltrate the soil and reduce storm water runoff. Some examples of run-on include: rooftop discharge that travels through downspouts and across grassed yards, road drainage that is directed into swales rather than curbs and gutters, and runoff from small parking lots, sidewalks and bike paths that drains into grassed areas, forests or fields.



In addition, limiting the amount of impervious surfaces in groundwater recharge areas is an effective way to preserve groundwater supplies, especially during times of drought. Groundwater recharge is the replenishment of groundwater sources by seepage of precipitation, surface water, and runoff. The maintenance of mature vegetation (preferably large, native tree species) on recharge areas also preserves and protects groundwater quality and quantity. Although precipitation is usually abundant, recharge is moderate.

Objective 4.4 River Life

Protect and promote the Sandusky River, its tributaries and other waterways as key natural resources.

The Sandusky River is one of Ohio's longest rivers within the Lake Erie watershed, and it is the predominate watershed in Seneca County. It is also the least densely populated watershed in Ohio where agriculture is 83% of the land use. The portion of the river that runs through Seneca County is designated a State Scenic River.

Adjacent to the river is the riparian corridor, a system that includes land, soils, plants, wetlands, water bodies, land cover, and people. These all affect the water flowing down through the watershed to the streams and ultimately the Sandusky River, influencing flooding, erosion, water

quality, water temperature, and habitat. When vegetated, the land filters water pollutants (toxic chemicals, nutrients, and sediment) from runoff, prevents stream warming, and provides food, cover, and habitat for wildlife.

If a riparian area is developed to the water's edge, water quality degradation may occur at that site. Flooding, erosion, sedimentation of surface waters, increased storm water runoff, loss of wetlands and riparian areas, increased pollution, and wildlife habitat losses are some of the problems that could occur if the Sandusky River, its tributaries and their associated riparian areas are not protected.

Protection of the Sandusky River and its tributaries is also instrumental in adding aesthetic and economic well-being to the community. A healthy and accessible river provides recreational and health benefits, cultural enhancement, increased property values, and an improved quality of life.

Efforts are underway to designate the Sandusky River as a state and national water trail. With such a designation, the county could benefit from increased recreational opportunities, blue green trail connections, and economic development. The Water Trail designation raises awareness, appreciation, and stewardship for water quality and for our natural resources. It connects people to our natural resources and ever improving greenspaces; systems of natural corridors; regional, state, and national trail systems; scenic views; and critical natural areas. It is a strategy that will enhance the quality of life for residents in the region and contribute to continued water quality and ecological improvement of this river and its entire watershed.



Objective 4.5 Green Energy

Promote energy efficiencies and renewable energy systems.

Energy conservation can be achieved through improved energy efficiency and integration of renewable energy technologies. Both are smart investments that create significant financial returns. In addition, **small-scale** renewable energy systems, such as wind, solar and geothermal, that service an individual site can be developed in ways that are beneficial for both the property owner and compatible with the immediate surrounding neighborhood.

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing in Ohio allows property owners to borrow money through government loans or bonds to pay for energy improvements to their properties via a special assessment on the property tax bill over a period of up to 30 years. Participating local governments must pass legislation to establish an "Energy Special Improvement District" or ESID. Most PACE projects either increase energy efficiency or generate energy through renewable technologies such as small-scale wind, geothermal, and solar.

There has been a significant amount of debate among Seneca County residents in regard to **large-scale** alternative energy projects. These types of projects, also known as utility-scale projects, are typically facilities that are connected to the nation's transmission system. The county is not opposed to **large-scale** alternative energy but reserves the

right to review each project on its individual merits or lack thereof. The county should carefully consider its options and weigh the benefits and consequences of any actions at its disposal.

Objective 4.6 Solid Waste Management

Promote solid waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

The purpose of solid waste management is to ensure solid waste is managed in such a way that protects both public health and the environment. There are always opportunities for residents, industries, businesses, institutions, and public facilities to reduce solid waste generation, recycling and saving money rather than sending it to landfills. Waste can be categorized based on material, such as plastic, paper, glass, metal, and organic waste. Categorization may also be based on hazard potential, including radioactive, flammable, infectious, toxic, or non-toxic. Categories may also pertain to the origin of waste, such as industrial, domestic, commercial, institutional or construction and demolition.



Goal 5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility & Public Utilities

Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure and utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current and future residents and businesses.

Communities are increasingly developing multi-modal and active transportation plans. In more rural environments like Seneca County these initiatives are critical as transportation options beyond personal vehicles tend to be more limited than in more populated areas. Alternative transportation methods especially help the elderly and younger citizens who may not be able to drive. Safe and efficient transportation also includes the proper design of the roadway system and quality of roads themselves. All transportation routes should be as open and universally accessible whenever possible.

Beyond transportation issues, a well-developed and modern community should be ready for enhanced technology, ensuring easy access to high speed telecommunications for all citizens. Less developed areas can sometimes struggle with this, but with technology developing at such a fast rate, staying apprised of these changes is critical in continuing to be a relevant and viable community.

Finally, well-maintained infrastructure also consists of public utilities like sewer and water. These services are essential for the residential, commercial and industrial sectors. Communities with inadequate services will experience a lack of growth as access to sewer and water often dictate development. Not only should there be sufficient services, utilities should also be well-maintained and up-to-date to keep problems for citizens and business owners at bay.

Summary of Objectives

5.1 Ensure Regular Roadway Maintenance - Maintain and improve existing roads to address health and safety issues.

5.2 Provide a Connected Roadway Network - Provide a well-connected and well-designed roadway system with improved access to major thoroughfares within and out of the county.

5.3 Provide Alternative Transportation Options - Create a multi-modal transportation network that promotes active transportation and alternative responsive transportation opportunities.

5.4 Increase Use of Existing Air & Rail Networks - Maximize use of the existing airports and rail lines for economic development, and ensure safety, local accessibility, and livability for area residents.

5.5 Embrace Smart Community Technologies - Embrace "smart community" technologies including easy access to high speed telecommunications infrastructure throughout the county to increase economic competitiveness, support and enhance environmental and social sustainability, and to be prepared for continued advancements in technology (e.g. 5G networks and autonomous vehicles).

5.6 Provide Water/Waste Water Infrastructure - Provide water and sanitary sewer service commensurate with the current and future needs of industrial, commercial, and residential sectors.



Objective 5.1 Roadway Maintenance

Maintain and improve existing roads to address health and safety issues.

Modern society revolves around motorized transportation. From large utility vehicles that move freight and other heavy goods, to personal vehicles that make it easy to travel throughout the county, well-maintained surface transportation routes are critical to maintaining and improving quality of life in the county. Properly maintained roads are critical for emergency vehicles to reach residents in need of assistance. As a community, we should identify health and safety issues, devise a corrective plan, then put together an implementation strategy to address those issues.

Objective 5.2 Roadway Network

Provide a well-connected and well-designed roadway system with improved access to major thoroughfares within and county.

A well-designed and well-maintained roadway system is imperative for the economic health and growth of Seneca County. The ability to move goods to, from and within Seneca County is a critical element of any economic development strategy. We should, therefore, continue to upgrade and improve paved surfaces throughout the county.





Objective 5.3 Alternative Transportation

Create a multi-modal transportation network that promotes active transportation and alternative responsive transportation opportunities.

In order to be the kind of progressive, forward-looking community we want to be, we must create a transportation system that provides safe, convenient, and efficient movement of vehicular, pedestrian and other non-motorized traffic. This kind of connectivity has significant influence on the appearance, character, and economic viability of the area and it directly impacts everyday quality of life. The recently completed Active Transportation Plan sets broad guidelines to assist public officials, developers, and other interested parties in making decisions relating to traffic flow; reserving rights-of-way for future roadway improvements; selecting pavement widths; identifying public and private funding for infrastructure; identifying appropriate locations for community centers and facilities (for example, schools); and other transportation issues.

Objective 5.4 Air & Rail Networks

Maximize use of the existing airports and rail networks for economic development, and ensure safety, local accessibility, and livability for area residents.

Transportation connectivity is a necessity for growth and even basic existence. People and goods must be able to move into, within and out of the county. While there are no four-lane divided limited access highways in Seneca County, a fact lamented by many, the community is blessed to have multiple state routes, rail lines, and airports to support commerce. These existing assets should be supported and promoted to all businesses in the county, and partnerships encouraged among both similar and dissimilar enterprises when efficiency, cost, or safety can be achieved. Success in maximizing air and rail networks has the ability to directly impact the cost of living, available amenities within the community, and overall quality of life for residents, all of which are important for the continued future success of the county.

Objective 5.5 Smart Communities

Embrace "smart community" technologies including easy access to high speed telecommunications infrastructure throughout the county to increase economic competitiveness, support and enhance environmental and social sustainability, and to be prepared for continued advancements in technology (e.g. 5G networks and autonomous vehicles).

High speed internet service is either unavailable or unreliable for much of Seneca County. Access needs to be expanded to include all households, institutions, and businesses. Electronic and/or virtual connectivity is a big factor in retaining exiting and attracting new residents and businesses to the county. Organizations like Connect







Ohio have been working to assist communities, particularly rural areas, in improving access. Understanding that rural broadband is often not economically profitable for providers, Seneca County should communicate with providers to explore collective broadband service programs and seek funding through programs such as the Connect America Fund, USDA Grants and Loans, and the American Broadband Buildout Act. The County should also work with ODOT who controls the right-of-ways to eliminate barriers for providers. Zoning should be revised with language which encourages dark fiber in the preparation of new housing developments. A comprehensive technology assessment, improvement plan, and prioritization effort could be a first step in providing access for residents that are underserved in this respect. Innovative funding mechanisms should be identified, partnerships built to implement the plan, and local zoning regulations reviewed and updated to ensure they adequately accommodate broadband improvements.

Objective 5.6 Water/Waste Water Infrastructure

Provide water and sanitary sewer service commensurate with the current and future needs of industrial, commercial, and residential sectors.

We should consider water and wastewater service needs as we plan future urban expansions while continuing to provide high-quality service to our existing customers. Fostoria has retained a water treatment plant and ownership of city water lines; Tiffin outsources that to AquaOhio. Many rural areas get their water from wells. Regardless of its source or ownership of the lines, we must provide clean, safe drinking water to all of our residents. Likewise, we should continue to improve waste water lines and treatment facilities to reduce pollution and other potential hazards. Additionally, the County Sewer District should strongly consider expanding sanitary lines to unsewered areas where there exist high percentages of failing home sanitary treatment systems (HSTS).

Sufficient and effective public systems that provide drinking water and sanitary sewer services in developed areas are fundamental human needs, and key factors in retaining and attracting residents, businesses, and industry.





Goal 6: Strong Community Character & Image

Enhance and strengthen our community character and brand to: establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit; to instill community pride; and attract new residents, businesses and visitors.

What makes people come to Seneca County? What makes them stay? A strong community character and image is essential to drawing young people and growing a population base, while also seeing that retirees and families remain in the community. People choose to live in a place for a variety of reasons. Often times family connections play a large role. But even when there is no personal family connection, people need a reason to lay down roots. A warm spirit of belonging and a welcoming atmosphere are among the biggest factors graduates of local universities cite as reasons they stay. Not coincidentally, these same values influence people to "come back home," or to never leave in the first place. A community must make people aware of their strengths and what they have to offer. Every place has strengths and unique assets, but they often go unsung.

From our historic neighborhoods to the Sandusky River, our business and industrial community to our educational institutions, Seneca County should be on the map as a destination to live and visit. Now more than ever, people from far and wide are looking to experience a unique sense of place with vibrant local community rich in natural and cultural landscapes. Promoting resources and showing pride and support for the area's people and places must be integrated into the fabric of everyday life in Seneca County.

Summary of Objectives

6.1 Celebrate Seneca County - Identify, document, and celebrate the various reasons why the county and local communities are a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business.

6.2 Engage in Branding & Promotion – Proactively, positively, creatively, and effectively communicate and market the community brand and brand reasons locally, regionally, statewide, nationally and globally, and effectively implement the branding efforts through signage, online media platforms, and other creative ways.

6.3 Promote Tourism Development - Proactively support, encourage and market Seneca County as a destination to attract new businesses, tourists and visitors, both as an economic development strategy and as a way to attract new residents.



Objective 6.1 Celebrate Seneca County

Identify, document, and celebrate the various reasons why the county and local communities are a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business.



Pride is a community asset. Residents value their history, agricultural heritage, neighborhood charm, and scenic and natural vistas. Local identity provides residents with a sense of place and belonging in Seneca County. The County should celebrate its assets and understand that, with local pride, comes resilience in the face of any economic and social challenges.

There are multiple festivals and events held throughout the county throughout the year, including street festivals, parish festivals, and other activities sponsored by civic organizations. Events like the Heritage Festival and the Seneca County Fair have been drawing people together to celebrate what's best about Seneca County for decades. More recently, Farm to Table efforts have brought people together to celebrate not only our local food producers, but also the relationships that are deepened by "breaking bread" over the same table together. Downtown



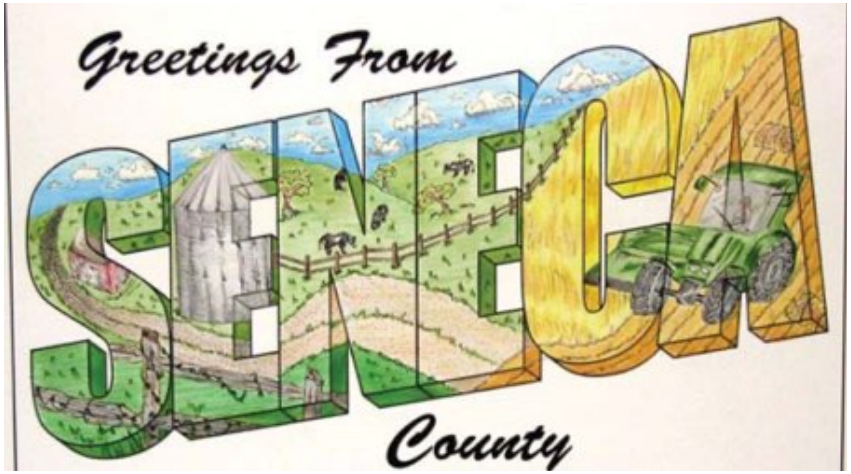
events in both Fostoria and Tiffin routinely bring people into the historic business districts to have a good time while remembering their roots. It is this intimacy and familiarity that residents value.

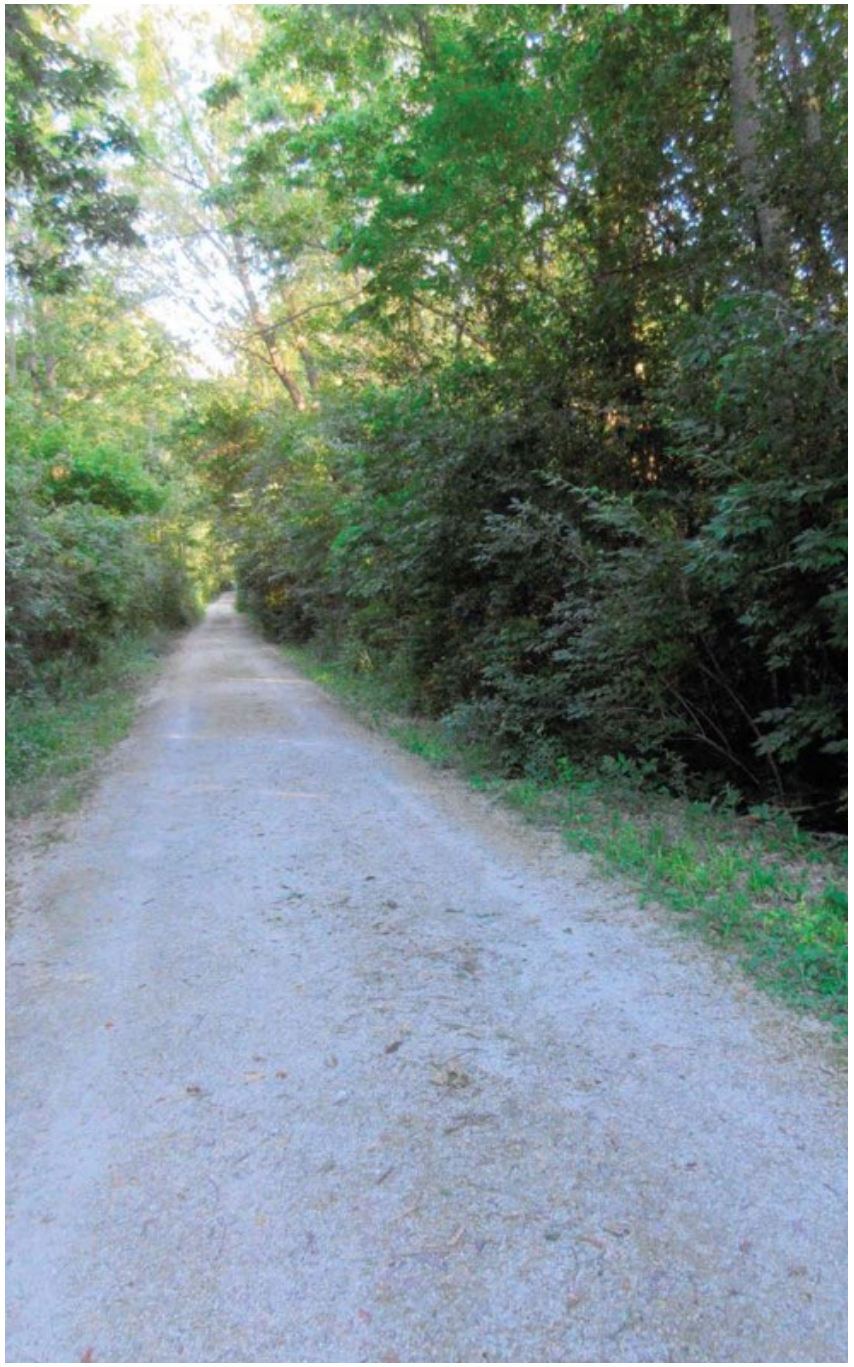
Objective 6.2 Branding & Promotion

Proactively, positively, creatively, and effectively communicate and market the community brand and brand reasons locally, regionally, statewide, nationally and globally and effectively implement the branding efforts through signage, online media platforms, and other creative ways.

In the effort to sell or promote almost any product or service, company "branding" has become a critical way of creating a memorable impression on consumers. Simply put, branding combines the elements of communication (brand narrative) and design (brand logo and design guidelines) that enable a company to distinguish itself from its competitors in the marketplace.

Communities, too, are working to promote and sell their assets, advantages, and uniqueness to current and future residents, visitors, workers, and businesses. The message they consistently communicate, how they present themselves graphically, and the experiences they





promote (and deliver) all create their brand. Creating and managing an effective community brand has become an important consideration for successful, forward-thinking, and progressive communities.

In 2018, the Seneca County Commissioners, city of Tiffin, Seneca Regional Chamber, Seneca Regional Planning Commission, and Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership (formerly SIEDC) went through a branding process. The process deliberately engaged the community, identified themes and produced graphic standards that all stakeholders could use at their discretion. The cohesive message visitors get when they see the economic development and planning organizations, chamber of commerce, and government offices all using integrated graphics is powerful. The resulting logo encompasses all that makes this place special: first and foremost the connection everyone feels to each other and to the community represented by a bridge and a single line (A Life Connected); the historic and new built environment; rural life, agriculture, and growth; water and dynamic movement; and the Seneca County Justice Center as a symbol of cooperation.

The result is a connected look and feel, and a singular brand that is repeated throughout the county. The message is clear: "If you come to any one of us, you can work with all of us." (credit: branch launch video). The participants in this effort agree that this kind of collaborative project requires significant effort, but pays large dividends.

In 2015, the city of Fostoria and the Fostoria Economic Development Corporation launched their new brand. At the same time, they also launched new websites designed to promote their communities. Likewise, the Seneca County Park District, Seneca County Chamber, and city of Tiffin launched new websites within the past few years.

Moving forward, additional efforts should be made to further develop, promote, connect, enhance and implement the community brands in an intentional, thoughtful, strategic, and collaborative way.

Objective 6.3 Tourism Development

Proactively support, encourage and market Seneca County as a destination for tourists and visitors, to elevate the county's reputation, both as an economic development strategy and as a way to attract new residents and businesses.

There are numerous historic sites, natural resources, parks and other local destination sites that are promoted by the county and already attract tourists and visitors. The Seneca County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is managed by the Seneca Regional Chamber of Commerce and branded as "Destination Seneca County," and the CVB has a website (www.destinationsenecacounty.org) and social media presence on Facebook.

Yet, now, more than ever, this is the age of "experiences", and it is important to continue to promote, support and expand the tourism industry in the county and to work with State, regional and other local tourism officials to develop partnerships and participate in State and regional tourism initiatives.

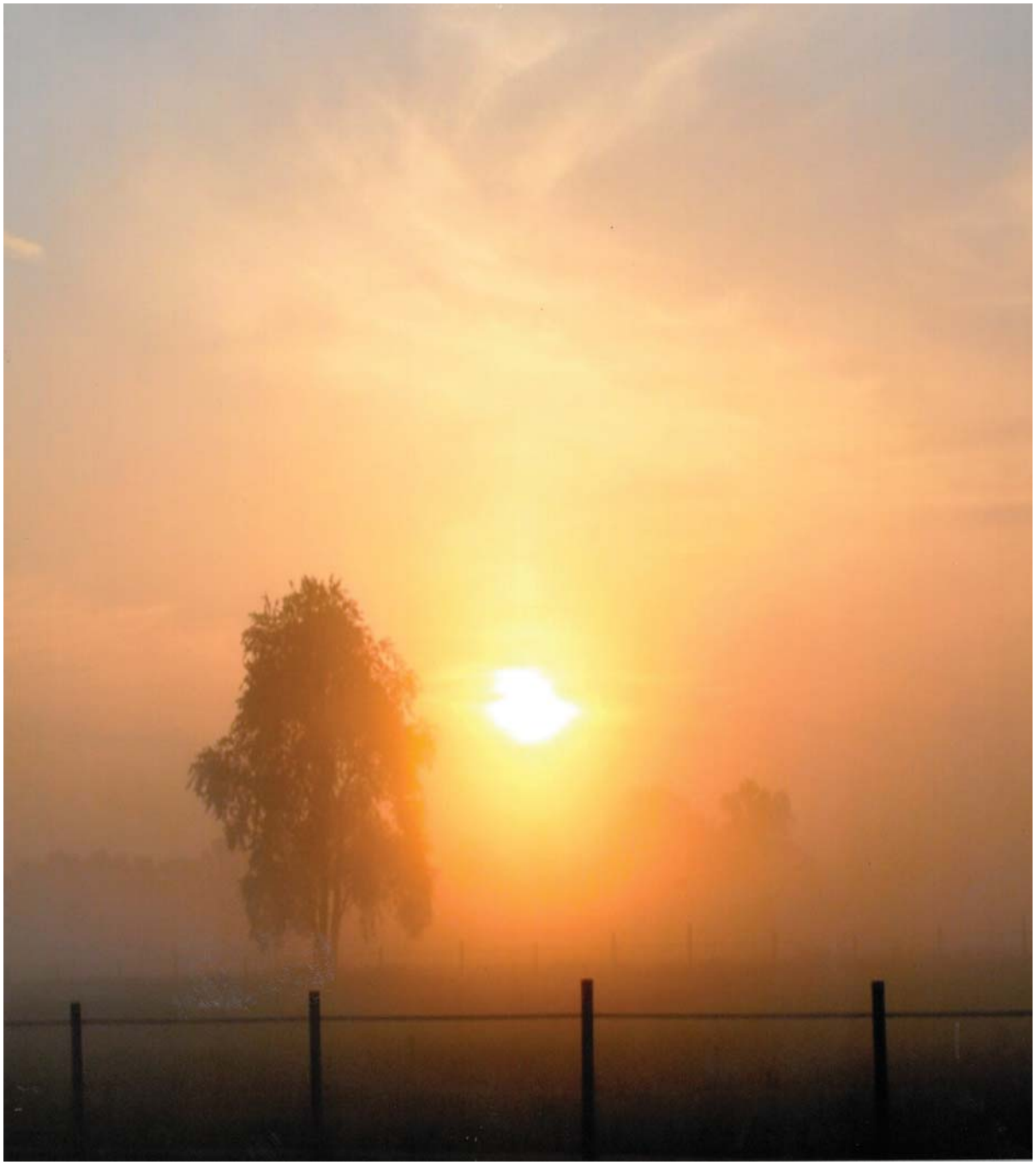


To promote tourism, and protect and enhance the county's intrinsic qualities, Seneca County could designate qualifying roadways as Scenic Byways through Ohio's Scenic Byway Program. The county has the cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, natural, and scenic resources needed to meet the criteria.

Statewide tourism maps and promotional materials identify scenic byways and highlight the communities along the corridors. This recognition can be a source of pride for the community and can spur tourism and associated economic development opportunities.

Other types of recognitions such as the Sandusky River's designation as a State Scenic River in 1970, enable the county and local businesses to capitalize on the scenic qualities of the river.

In order to most effectively build on the successes of the past and chart a bold new course for the future of tourism in Seneca County, a collaborative, inclusive, and professional strategic plan should be developed for tourism, to be implemented by the CVB in partnership with the many stakeholders involved locally, regionally, and on a statewide level.



CHAPTER 5.1: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR SENECA COUNTY

June 2020

SENECA
COUNTY

CHAPTER 5.1: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR SENECA COUNTY

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) outlines six integrated goals and related objectives that all partners participating in the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan agreed are either directly or indirectly important to each one's vision for the future. This chapter is customized to address the goals, objectives and related strategies that are directly applicable to Seneca County as a whole, with emphasis on villages and townships. The primary entities responsible for carrying out the strategies include the Seneca County Commissioners, Seneca Regional Planning Commission (SRPC), Seneca County Convention and Visitors Bureau/Chamber, Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership (TSEP) and village and township officials. This chapter includes maps and photographs to help illustrate the strategies, as well as a matrix that indicates the priorities and anticipated time frame for beginning the various strategies. Many of the plan's recommendations will require additional study and the development of more detailed action steps that go beyond the scope of this project. The vision directly applicable to Seneca County is:

Vision for Seneca County

To be an inclusive community that celebrates & brings to life both its rural & urban cultural heritage: fostering active lifestyles by improving access to existing natural resources for all county residents; & supporting a robust & innovative local economy that both integrates with & helps lead the regional economy.

This chapter focuses on the relevant strategies for the County to achieve the goals and objectives described in detail in Chapter 4. The numbering of Goals and Objectives is consistent with the numbering scheme in Chapter 4; therefore, wherever the Objectives are not numbered sequentially, it indicates that the missing objective is not applicable to Seneca County, village or township governments.



SENECA COUNTY GOALS

- Ensure we are prepared to and successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national and global economy, with an emphasis on jobs and tax revenue.

1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy

- Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living and socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

2. Attractive, Desirable, & Livable Places (Built Environment)

- Create/foster a strong sense of community & ensure social needs are met with equitable programs & access to a wide range of community and public facilities and services.

3. Quality Community Facilities and Services

- Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human and economic well-being, provide recreation and educational opportunities for locals and tourists, and significantly enhance the character of our community.

4. Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

- Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure and utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current and future residents and businesses.

5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility, & Public Utilities

- Enhance and strengthen our community character and brand to: establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit; to instill community pride; and attract new residents, businesses and visitors.

6. Strong Community Character and Image

SENECA COUNTY PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS

This chapter presents a number of strategies to advance Seneca County. Many of the strategies are place-based, and the places where the specific strategies are to be applied are presented in the Priority Improvements map on page 5.1:5. A similar map, Priority Conservation Areas, is found on page 5.1:19 and conceptually highlights areas in the county where conservation of natural resources is a priority.

Both maps are conceptual illustrations of the strategies highlighted in this chapter; the areas are not intended to be described with precise boundaries.

The Priority Improvements map illustrates where the County intends use its resources to guide future physical investment and change, as defined below and explained in more detail in this chapter

Preserve Prime Farmland

Preserve existing agricultural areas, identify ways to enhance and encourage local agriculture capacity and viability, including expanding value-added related accessory businesses and services.

Focused Growth in Fostoria and Tiffin

Continue to promote housing and business/industrial development in Fostoria and Tiffin, in line with existing and planned zoning, community facilities and infrastructure, and as further supported in Chapter 5.3 Tiffin, and Chapter 5.4 Fostoria.

Community Investments in Villages and Places

Retain the value and viability of smaller communities. Invest in villages and smaller unincorporated places in order to encourage development that maintains the existing pattern and character of the community, and to foster improvements to and investments in public and private buildings.

Downtowns Village Enhancements

Promote investments in smaller, typically historic downtowns through investments in commercial and mixed use developments that restore and repurpose existing buildings. Support local businesses, and entrepreneurial enterprises to strengthen the local economy.

River Enhancements

Continue to partner with Ohio EPA and other federal, state, and local partners on improving water quality in the Sandusky River and increased appreciation for the natural, cultural and economic benefits provided by a healthy river. Continue to promote greater recreational use of the river and obtain designation as a water trail.

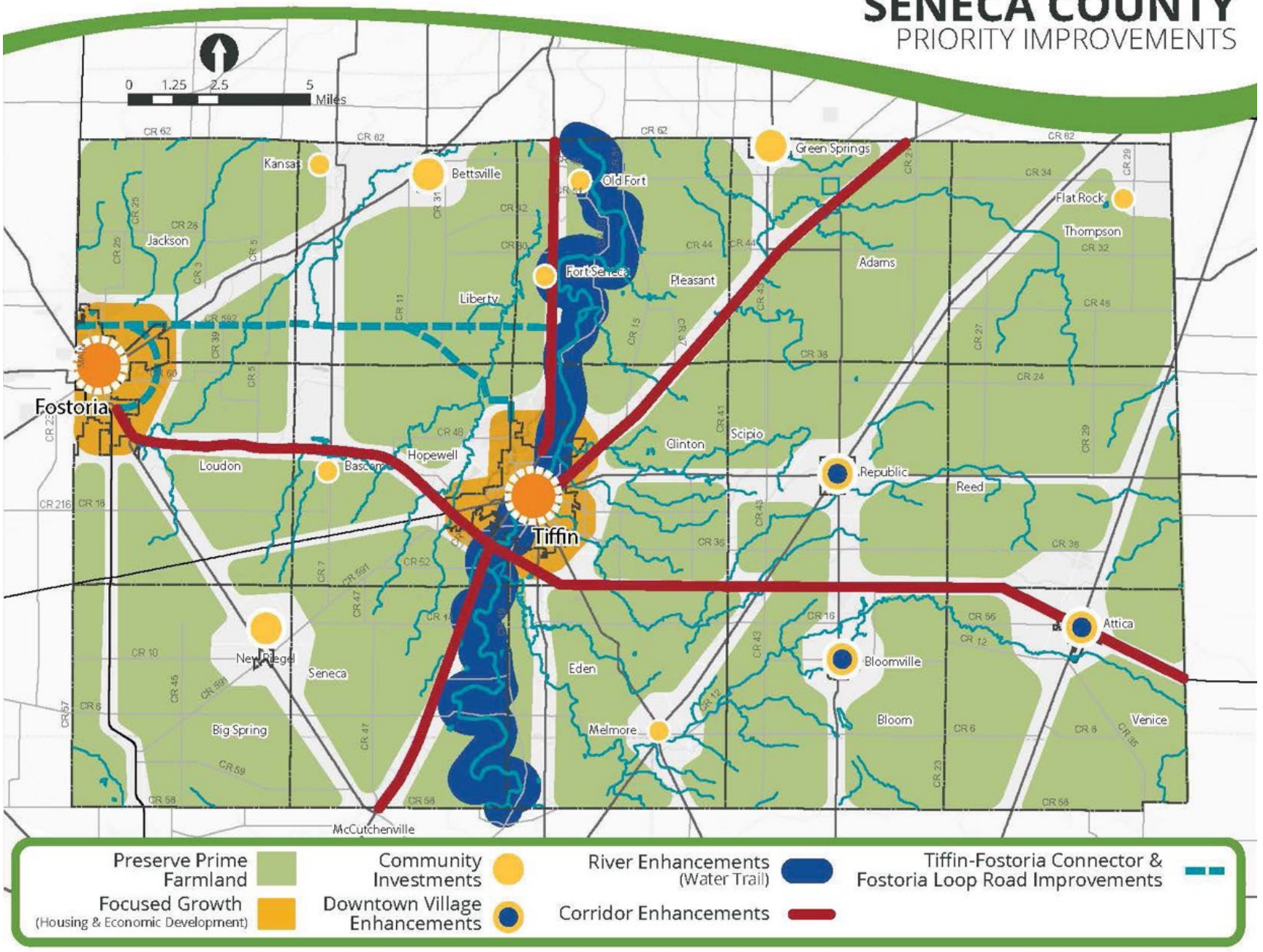
Corridor Enhancements

Strengthen the appearance of private development, public improvements and safety for all users along primary corridors to facilitate economic development and promote a positive impression of the county.

Tiffin-Fostoria Connector and Fostoria Loop Road Improvements

Support the continued implementation of the Tiffin-Fostoria Connector and Fostoria Loop Road improvements in order to enhance and promote continued economic development.




SENECA COUNTY
PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS
0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles
Kansas
Bettsville
Old Fort
Green Springs
Flat Rock
Thompson
Jackson
Fort Seneca
Pleasant
Adams
Liberty
Fostoria
Loudon
Bascom
Hopewell
Clinton
Scipio
Republic
Reed
Tiffin
Attica
Bloomville
New Riegel
Seneca
Eden
Melmore
Bloom
Venice
Big Spring
McCutchenville
Preserve Prime Farmland
Focused Growth (Housing & Economic Development)
Community Investments
Downtown Village Enhancements
River Enhancements (Water Trail)
Corridor Enhancements
Tiffin-Fostoria Connector & Fostoria Loop Road Improvements

GOAL 1. PROSPEROUS & RESILIENT ECONOMY

Objective 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

1.1.1 Plans - Update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), first formulated in 2011, and continue to coordinate goals and objectives with the County's Comprehensive Plan. Identify the entities and organizations best capable of implementing the plan's action items.

1.1.2 Organizations - Ensure that entities and organizations assigned to oversee implementation of the plans have sufficient resources to do their work.

1.1.3 Ongoing Dialogue - Maintain and strengthen the dialogue and collaboration among elected officials and department heads with respect to development.



Objective 1.2: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 Workforce Plans - Continue to work with partners on current efforts to prepare workforce development strategic plans. Two new "plans" are currently being developed – one is through the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative and another is through the 4CG initiative (4CG represents the 4 County Group 4 Collaborative Growth), which includes the economic development and workforce development organizations in Huron, Ottawa, Sandusky and Seneca Counties. These entities began working together in 2013 to collectively address the region's workforce challenges.

1.2.2 County Collaboration - Continue to collaborate with other counties in ways that enhance and strengthen Seneca County's workforce.

1.2.3 Partnerships - Continue to facilitate engagement, collaboration, and partnerships between business, industry, education, and workforce and economic development. Link businesses with educators; focus on areas of specialization at Heidelberg and Tiffin Universities. Work toward seamless delivery of education. Refine and evaluate workforce development initiatives to ensure that they are responsive to real needs of business and labor; provide a feedback mechanism to evaluate effectiveness.

1.2.4 Marketing - Effectively market jobs, career opportunities, and employers to the local community and regionally.

1.2.5 Training and Assistance - Develop and/or strengthen educational and training programs, initiatives, and assets that increase the employability of the local workforce. This includes working to remove obstacles that make it difficult to keep and maintain a job, such as lack of transportation and childcare. Encourage increased transportation options and childcare program for the local labor force.

1.2.6 Professional Development - Continue to maintain and strengthen the research, benchmarking, networking, and professional development opportunities for professionals and organizations engaged in workforce development.

1.2.7 Attract Workers to Seneca County - Develop, strengthen, and maintain assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that attract and retain youth, retain residents and encourage in-migration of new residents.

1.2.8 Resources - Strategically allocate resources to maintain, strengthen and improve workforce development efforts. Increase resources as recommended in the current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

1.2.9 Remove Obstacles - Design and implement programs and needed support services such as transportation and childcare to remove obstacles for people who work in rural parts of the county (outside Tiffin and Fostoria), as identified in the current CEDS and other initiatives such as the Bus Transit Plan.

Objective 1.3 SUITABLE LOCATIONS

1.3.1 Sites and Buildings - Continue to identify suitable locations for future commercial and industrial development in rural parts of Seneca County, including suitable locations that may require zoning changes. Through planning, engagement, and expertise, identify and guide the development of the best existing and potential sites and facilities for industrial and commercial development. Identify and develop on an ongoing basis a sufficient inventory of potential and available commercial and industrial land, buildings and space to accommodate the current and future needs of existing and potential new business. This inventory should include information on available utilities and other key assets.



1.3.2 Capital Improvement Planning - Identify and plan for capital improvements needed to promote suitable economic development in rural Seneca County to ensure adequate infrastructure capacity to existing and new developments.

1.3.3 Infrastructure - Create and maintain an updated database inventory and condition assessment of existing infrastructure and utilities (including broadband access) and associated GIS maps in rural Seneca County. Make the information available, in real time, to Seneca County Commissioners, municipalities, TSEP and SRPC as well as current and potential businesses. Align the county's and municipalities' capital improvement plans and TSEP's strategic plans to ensure adequate infrastructure capacity to existing and new development. Coordinate with the County Engineer and municipal engineering. Pursue grants and other incentives to defray costs. Consider Public/Private Partnership (P3) arrangements where feasible. See also Goal 5. Mobility, Accessibility and Public Utilities for additional discussion on transportation and utility strategies.

1.3.4 Development Agreements - Ensure mutually acceptable annexation and development agreements are in place between municipalities and townships in order to promote and foster economic development. Review existing agreements and update as needed.

1.3.5 Redevelopment - Facilitate the revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas and obsolete sites and facilities in rural Seneca County through redevelopment, rehabilitation, and other available means.

1.3.6 Zoning - Review the existing township and village zoning regulations where applicable. Work with townships and villages to update as needed to reflect desires of each local community with respect to development. Proactively rezone locations for new business development in suitable locations identified in 1.3.1.

1.3.7 Market Priority Properties - Create a countywide map of priority development-ready properties that are available for development and market the sites and/or buildings. Maintain and make the information available online.

Objective 1.4 RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION

1.4.1 Business Retention & Expansion Programs - Continue to maintain, improve and strengthen comprehensive and effective formal business retention and expansion programs, including that of the Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership.

1.4.2 Incentives & Resources - Develop policies and related programs for incentives, assistance programs, and other resources for existing and new businesses. Assist businesses in adopting contemporary business practices, such as maximizing online resources such as websites and social media for marketing. Continue to promote incentive programs available through the State. An example of a potential (but difficult to implement) program is a Workforce Guarantee program, which provides technical and financial assistance directly to employers to train their workers to ensure they stay on the cutting edge of their industry.

1.4.3 Industry Groups - Continue to partner with existing, and expand as needed, industry councils or groups that provide peer-to-peer networking and that support the specific industry by identifying and addressing issues and concerns faced by that industry, especially those that prohibit growth, expansion and/or retention.

1.4.4 Targeted Industries - Develop and maintain a targeted industry sector retention, expansion, and attraction strategy.

1.4.5 Retail Strategy - Develop a countywide retail retention, expansion, and attraction strategy for rural villages, which complements and supports existing retail (e.g., "buy local" program, downtown business enhancement), and increases quality of life.

1.4.6 Marketing - Continue to effectively market the county's positive attributes, assets and competitive advantages regionally, statewide,

nationally and globally. Develop a strategy and market available industrial and commercial properties in rural Seneca County. Highlight the available incentives for each, including federal Opportunity and Foreign Trade Zone status, state Priority Investment Area designation, and local Enterprise Zone and Community Reinvestment Area availability. See also marketing strategies included in Goal 6.

1.4.7 Regulation - Create a strategic and business-friendly regulatory environment. Review existing regulations, procedures, and customer experience to improve the regulatory environment, make it more business-friendly, and eliminate any unnecessary obstacles.

1.4.8 Technology - Continue to work with local businesses, both start-up and existing, so they are better equipped to stay current on the ways technology can be used to enhance business practices.

Objective 1.5 AGRIBUSINESS

1.5.1 Agribusiness Strategic Plan - Develop an agriculture and food industry cluster strategic plan that identifies ways to enhance and encourage local agricultural capacity and viability, including expanding value-added related accessory businesses and services. Assign a group or organization to oversee its implementation, and make it a priority in public policy.

1.5.2 Local Food - Identify, maintain, strengthen and develop assets, programs, and initiatives that encourage and promote locally grown food. For example, work with local communities and producers to expand existing or create new farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs that allow consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from the producer.



1.5.3 Partnerships - Continue to maintain and strengthen relationships, collaboration, and partnerships with local, regional, state, and national partners engaged in the agriculture and food industry cluster.

1.5.4 Adaptation - Continue to identify, develop and implement assets, programs, resources, and initiatives to help farmers of all sizes improve resilience and effectively adapt to changes in the environment, including climate change and water quality concerns, as well as ways to take advantage of new technology including utilizing smart-technology that assists in tracking and monitoring ag practices.

1.5.5 Diversification - Work with farmers to diversify ag production including new crop opportunities such as hemp production, and to expand into ag-related income generating activities, such as agritourism activities.

1.5.6 Recruitment - Assist in recruiting young and beginning farmers and their families; work with the Farm Bureau, OSU Extension and other entities.

Objective 1.6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1.6.1 Entrepreneurship Plan - Develop an entrepreneurship strategic plan to foster entrepreneurs in rural Seneca County, as well as identify and/or develop a group or organization to oversee its implementation.

1.6.2 Entrepreneurship Facilities - Explore, evaluate and develop appropriate and successful entrepreneurship facilities in village centers, as recommended in the current CEDS, together with onsite support services, consulting, education, and financial support to new, developing, and experienced entrepreneurs and businesses.







1.6.3 Resources - Identify, effectively leverage and develop more resources for entrepreneurs, start-up, and tech-based businesses that choose to locate in rural Seneca County. This includes resources available through the partnership with the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership and the Entrepreneurial Communities initiative.

1.6.4 Capital - Identify and develop more seed, early-, and late-stage capital for entrepreneurs and newer businesses in Seneca County (e.g., local investment groups, angel capital, seed and venture capital, government programs).

1.6.5 Entrepreneurship Marketplace - Facilitate the identification and vetting of existing and new potential entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurs and then connect entrepreneurs with those opportunities and capital (i.e., entrepreneurship marketplace.)

1.6.6 Culture - Develop, maintain, and strengthen assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that foster and strengthen a local culture of entrepreneurship. Encourage participation by community members in entrepreneurial conferences and events like Rural Rise that address the specific challenges and opportunities of rural entrepreneurship.

1.6.7 Collaboration - Continue to strengthen collaboration with local, regional and state institutions of education, intellectual property-creating and innovative local companies, entrepreneurs and technology-based companies in order to help create new companies, attract companies, and/or help existing companies grow and increase their competitiveness. Adopt successful programs like the Midland CEO program that encourage and develop partnerships between industry and rural Seneca County high schools to develop entrepreneurs and new businesses. The Midland CEO program is a great example of what successful collaboration can do and should continue to be pursued.

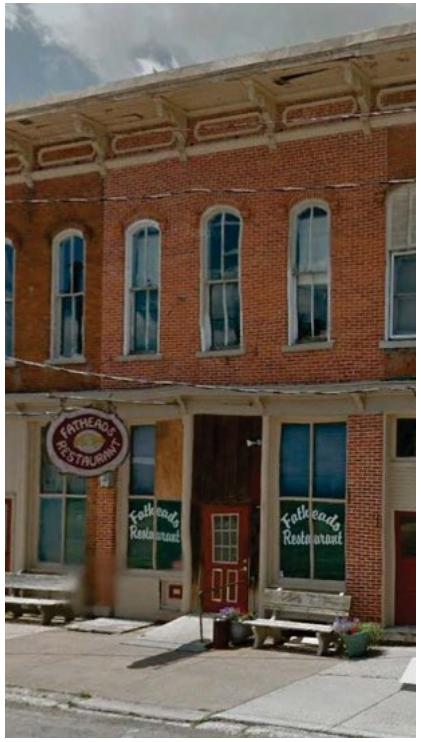
Objective 1.7 VILLAGE DOWNTOWNS

1.7.1 Plans - Develop and update strategic and development plans for village downtowns.

1.7.2 Systematic Approach - Adopt and implement a comprehensive, holistic, incremental, and proven approach to downtown revitalization, such as Main Street, that addresses the appearance, promotion, business enhancement, and organizational resources of the downtown.

1.7.3 Downtown Resources - Continue to maintain and strengthen the resources available to organizations working on downtown revitalization throughout rural Seneca County.

1.7.4 Downtown Incentives - Develop and implement appropriate incentive programs to foster downtown revitalization.







GOAL 2. ATTRACTIVE, DESIRABLE & LIVABLE PLACES (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

Objective 2.1 HOUSING OPTIONS

2.1.1 Residential Research - Conduct housing research and studies, identifying housing conditions and developing strategies to preserve existing housing resources and develop new ones.

2.1.2 Housing Development - Develop and maintain programs that facilitate the development of a sufficient quantity and desired variety of housing types, designs, and price to meet the diverse needs of existing and potential rural Seneca County residents in the most appropriate places.

2.1.3 Housing Resources - Continue to utilize existing programs and develop new programs and resources to help maintain and improve the housing stock and assist low-moderate income households attain their desired housing, including home ownership.

2.1.4 Building Reuse - Support the innovative reuse of vacant or under-utilized buildings for housing alternatives.

2.1.5 Creative and Context-Sensitive Design - Continue to encourage sensitivity to environmental considerations and natural conditions in the development of new housing and rehabilitation of existing housing. Develop regulations that allow for/encourage creative design in the development of residential areas and structures.

2.1.6 Fair Housing - Continue to educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities.

2.1.7 Downtown Upper-Floor - In villages with appropriate two- and three-story commercial buildings, encourage building owners to consider creating upper-floor residential units when renovating downtown commercial structures.









Objective 2.2 DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

2.2.1 Sidewalks & Lighting - Identify, improve existing, and develop more sidewalks, street lighting, and other assets to create more walkable neighborhoods in compact areas of villages, where the concentration of homes warrants such improvements.

2.2.2 Public Safety - Continue to maintain, strengthen, and develop programs, initiatives, and organizations that contribute to public safety and the safety of neighborhoods.

2.2.3 Neighborhood Appearance - Develop village branding, initiatives, programs, and organizations that enhance the appearance of neighborhoods in rural Seneca County (e.g., American in Bloom).

Objective 2.3 VALUED CULTURE & PLACES

2.3.1 Downtowns - Revitalize and activate village downtowns and other places into lively gathering places, with flexible multi-use spaces and event programming. Maintain and improve the overall appearance of downtowns.

2.3.2 Gathering Places - Maintain and increase village community meeting places, including outdoor gathering spaces to provide residents comfortable places to socialize and encourage visitors to linger.

2.3.3 Historic Preservation Organizational Structure - Create a county-wide organizational structure to spearhead a collaborative effort to strategically plan for and develop goals and strategies to preserve important historic assets. This organizational structure is intended to bring together all of the existing historical societies and similar entities in order to mobilize around coordinated activities.

2.3.4 Historic Preservation Resources - Create an inventory of notable historic structures and places with unique historic worth. Utilize existing databases such as the Ohio Historic Inventory database (with more than 2,100 historic, cultural and archaeological sites in the county) and the





Ohio Historic Family Farms program database (with 38 certified century farms in Seneca County). Develop resources to encourage their long-term preservation and economic well-being, informing property owners of various programs available for historic buildings, structures and places.

Objective 2.4 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

2.4.1 Building Code & Permits - Enforce a system of standard building codes and permits to ensure the structural safety and functional integrity of all buildings. Consider establishing a County Building Department to be responsible for issuing building permits. Adequately support the education of the existing process for standard building codes and permits.

2.4.2 Workshops - Create a strategy for educating residents and property owners about the various aspects of property maintenance. Identify the key topics to address and the delivery system for conduct educational workshops to provide opportunities for homeowners to learn techniques for long-term maintenance.

2.4.3 Property Maintenance Code - Continue to enforce property maintenance codes in rural Seneca County where they exist. Encourage the creation of local property maintenance code in rural Seneca County in locations where needed but do not currently exist.

2.4.4 Property Clearinghouse - Create a clearinghouse for vacant lots and blighted structures countywide. Work with the Seneca County Land Bank on maintaining once established.

2.4.5 Blight Abatement - Continue to enforce countywide blight abatement guidelines, in partnership with the Seneca County Land Bank, and work with the Seneca County Land Bank on the demolition of vacant houses and other vacant structures.





Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

2.5.1 Compact/Infill Development - Continue to promote new compact development on infill lots and adjacent to existing built up areas in order to reduce the need to expand development into important natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas, minimize the encroachment of residential development and expansion of water and sewer utilities into adjacent rural areas. Implement zoning that encourages development of vacant and underutilized properties, and brownfield sites.

2.5.2 Zoning Administration - Update village and township zoning regulations and continue to enforce local zoning where it currently exists. Train local boards and commissions on administration of local regulations. Review existing regulations to assess success relative to protecting agricultural lands, critical environmental areas, and valuable natural areas and promoting suitable/sustainable development.

2.5.3 Village Promotion - Promote balanced development in the villages, ensuring the preservation of amenities and quality of life that make rural living desirable, while also allowing for appropriate commercial and industrial development that complements each area as identified by each community.

2.5.4 Farmland Preservation - Continue to conserve existing agricultural land and limit development in agricultural areas. Develop zoning and subdivision regulations that reduce incentives to develop scattered frontage lots along rural roads.

2.5.5 Open Space Preservation - Develop zoning regulations that encourage the preservation of open space and limit development on and near critical natural areas. See also Goal 4 for Natural Resource Preservation and Conservation strategies.

2.5.6 County Subdivision Regulations - Review and update the County Subdivision Regulations as needed to ensure that the subdivision regulations advance and are in sync with local township zoning regulations.



GOAL 3. QUALITY COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Objective 3.1 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

3.1.1 Special Interest Groups - Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs, initiatives, and assets focused on addressing and serving the interests and needs of particular groups that reflect particular segments of our diverse population (e.g., young professionals, international students, religious groups, 4H, etc.)

3.1.2 Connection & Interaction - Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs and initiatives and assets that encourage interaction and foster connection between representatives of different groups and/or diverse individuals (e.g., organizations that pair young and old residents and initiatives to encourage more volunteer efforts from all students to help elderly residents).

3.1.3 Events - Create, strengthen and support events that support, foster, and celebrate diversity, inclusivity, and the uniqueness of individuals in the community.

3.1.4 Education & Training - Continue to support programs and initiatives that educate, train, communicate about, and promote diversity and inclusivity.

Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

3.2.1 Graduation Rates - Continue to support local schools in their efforts to increase the quality and capacity of public and private PreK-12 educational facilities, celebrate teaching excellence and increase the percentage of high school students graduating with college credit and/or an industry credential.

3.2.2 Skilled Trades - Advocate for increased technical and vocational study programs.

3.2.3 Libraries - Continue to support community-wide programs via the public libraries.

3.2.4 Improved Access - Continue to provide as well as improve greater access to programs to assist children from low-to-moderate income households.

3.2.5 Higher Education - Strengthen and support physical, economic and social connections to Tiffin University, Heidelberg University, and nearby Terra State Community College.

Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING

3.3.1 Village Parks - Develop strategies and programs to enable village governments to maintain and improve village parks and recreation facilities, recognizing their importance in attracting and retaining residents. Evaluate current park amenities to determine need for improvements.

3.3.2 Trails - Develop a network of trails throughout the county. See the recently completed Active Transportation Plan for detailed recommendations for locations.

3.3.3 Local History - Where applicable, assist villages in developing and telling their local "story" through interpretive signage, public art, or other media in public spaces. Conduct scavenger hunts and other events to encourage residents and visitors to have fun, be active, and learn about their community.



3.3.4 Cooperative Programs - Build strong intra-park coordination between villages and the County Park District to provide diverse programs and offer a broad range of facilities and experiences to rural Seneca County residents.

Objective 3.4 HEALTH & WELLNESS

3.4.1 Health Care - Increase countywide health and healthcare specialists/services, including mental health.

3.4.2 Assisted Living - Develop a strategy for improving/achieving adequate assisted living housing and home care.

3.4.3 Safe Communities - Continue to promote safe communities and increase safety in rural Seneca County utilizing neighborhood block watch, protective services, emergency services, etc.

3.4.4 Existing EMS - Continue to provide the existing EMS and ambulance service. Support our current EMS structure and explore ways to become more effective.

3.4.5 Countywide EMS - Investigate and work towards providing a full-time countywide paid EMS and ambulance service.

3.4.6 Gathering Places - Continue to support community gathering places in rural Seneca County to foster social interaction and reduce social isolation.

3.4.7 Police & Fire - Continue to maintain local police and fire departments in rural Seneca County, assist with acquiring updated equipment, and when necessary, explore potential for new stations.

3.4.8 Cooperative Services - Continue to streamline overlaps of services. Explore cooperative agreements with ambulance districts, sheriff's office, fire departments.

3.4.9 Technology - Continue to support the use of technology and increase use of shared services, for example, coordinate radio systems throughout the County.

3.4.10 Behavioral and Mental Health - Continue to support efforts by the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties, local emergency responders, healthcare workers, and hospitals to develop effective systems to respond to people experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis (suicide or overdose), provide effective education, and establish suitable facilities.

3.4.11 Access - Work on increasing residents' access, both financial and transportation, to health and wellness facilities.





Objective 3.5 FOOD SECURITY & ACCESS

3.5.1 Farm Markets - Continue to promote and increase farm to table and farmer's market type endeavors.

3.5.2 Local Food - Encourage institutions, including schools, hospitals, jails, etc. to use local food and to improve the nutritional quality of food served.

3.5.3 Food Access - Increase access to fresh food and promote the consumption of high quality food.



GOAL 4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – VALUED NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION

4.1.1 Priority Conservation Areas - Identify and agree on areas of the county where critical natural resources exist (such as floodplain and riparian areas) and have the highest priority for conservation efforts. See map on the next page for a map of environmental conditions that either are constraints to development or are environmentally sensitive and therefore worthy of conservation and even preservation/acquisition.

4.1.2 Cleanups - Continue to engage in river cleanups and invasive species removal campaigns.

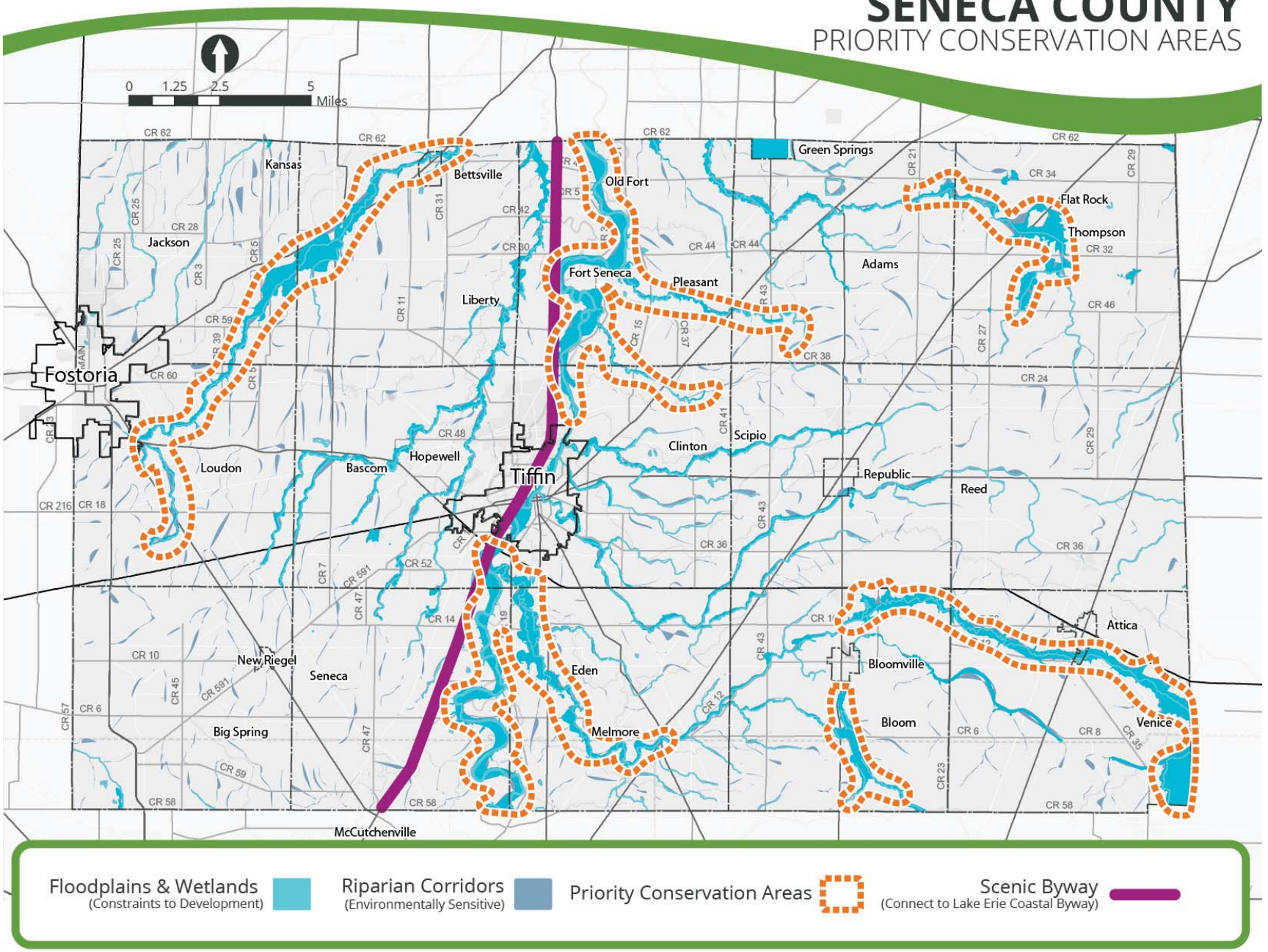
4.1.3 Site Design - Encourage site design that protects the natural terrain and groundwater, preserves or restores significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporates native vegetation into landscape plans.

4.1.4 Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) - Within rural areas that are not serviced by sanitary sewage disposal facilities, continue to evaluate proposed lots for both primary and back-up on-lot sewage disposal systems. Develop a plan to assist homeowners with failing septic systems to either get connected to sanitary sewer lines or to replace their existing system.

4.1.5 Open Space Subdivision Design - Incorporate conservation development into local zoning codes for the villages and townships in the county that have adopted zoning. Consider providing incentives for making conservation development the preferred method of residential development, giving riparian corridors, woodlands, and wetlands priority as the required opens space set aside.

4.1.6 Acquisition - Prioritize riparian corridors, woodlands, wetlands for acquisition using programs such as Clean Ohio, linking greenways to provide corridors of open space, rather that isolated pockets.

SENECA COUNTY
PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS



4.1.7 Easements - Work with appropriate private land trusts and other organizations engaged in acquiring environmentally sensitive lands and/or protective easements.

4.1.8 Tree Preservation/Restoration - Continue and increase efforts to plant and protect trees to maintain current and increase future canopy coverage.

4.1.9 Mining - Continue to balance the interest of companies or individuals wanting to extract minerals from the land with those of the surface owner and adjoining property owners so as to assure maximum benefits to all county residents.

4.1.10 Mitigation - Continue to mitigate erosion and habitat loss. Increase efforts in select areas.



Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE

4.2.1 Ecotourism - Utilize natural resources for tourism.

4.2.2 Hunting - Increase hunting opportunities as well as signage and safety of public hunting.

4.2.3 Trees - Increase participation with local shade tree commissions where they exist and encourage the creation of local shade tree commissions in communities where they don't currently exist.

4.2.4 Parks - Work with the County Park District and local villages to ensure a suitable amount of and access to community parks and park facilities.

4.2.5 Water Trails - Continue to collaborate on designating the Sandusky River as a State Water Trail, creating a water trail partnership, securing



assistance from ODNR Division of Watercraft, and inventorying existing access and hazard points as well as natural, cultural, and historic features and points of interest.

Objective 4.3 CLEAN AIR & WATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

4.3.1 Low-Impact Development - Develop appropriate materials to educate and promote low-impact development practices and other best practices that help to preserve and enhance our sensitive natural areas and important natural resources.

4.3.2 Stormwater Management - Adopt effective stormwater management regulations. Encourage the use of modern technology to reduce storm water runoff and pollutants, both urban and rural, from entering into bodies of water and promote groundwater recharge. Establish mandatory setbacks from riparian wetlands and floodplains and watercourses, in both local zoning regulations as well as the Seneca County Subdivision Regulations.

4.3.3 Wellhead Protection - Work with the Health Department to develop a Wellhead Protection Plan and Overlay Zone to protect public water supplies.

4.3.4 Prioritization - Map areas of the county that meet the criteria of a "Priority Nutrient Reduction Area".

4.3.5 Environmental Programs - Continue to encourage and promote public programs that incentivize or share in the cost of implementing environmental best management practices. Examples of existing programs include Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GRLI) and Section 319(h) grants.

4.5.6 Failing Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) - Continue to eliminate failing HSTS. Identify priority areas with failing septic systems based on ecological impact and develop a strategic plan to address these hot spots. Elements of the plan could include: establishing a field testing policy for on-lot sewage system permitting; undertaking an educational campaign to reduce the incidence of malfunctioning on-lot sewers; and establishing a mandatory pump-out schedule for septic systems by licensed haulers at least once every 3 years. Continue to require a back-up on-lot sewage disposal system for all uses relying upon such systems and establish standards and criteria that consider the cumulative impacts of on-site septic systems upon surface and groundwater quality.

Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE

4.4.1 Watershed - Continue to collaborate with Ohio EPA and other federal, state and local partners on planning for the watershed.

4.4.2 Combined Sewer Separation (CSOs) - Identify and reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to Sandusky River. Work with property owners and local communities to prioritize the locations where CSOs exist.

4.4.3 NPS-IS - Work with Sandusky River watershed organizations to develop and implement a Non-Point Source Pollution Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS) to reduce sediment and pollutant movement into the Sandusky River. Prepare an Urban Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Strategy specifically for use within urbanized areas. An up-to-date



strategy/plan is an eligibility requirement for some funding sources designed to help reduce and/or eliminate pollutants in the River and watershed, such as Section 319(h) funds.

4.4.4 Water Quality Attainment - Continue to work towards full Ohio EPA water quality attainment status.

Objective 4.5 GREEN ENERGY

4.5.1 Proper Placement - Encourage townships and villages to adopt appropriate zoning regulations to permit and properly locate small-scale renewable energy systems.

4.5.2 Solar - Encourage electric companies to give easy access to solar. Including residential, solar generation and discontinue demand-metering charge.

4.5.3 Evaluation - Carefully evaluate all proposed energy projects to determine their potential benefits and consequences.



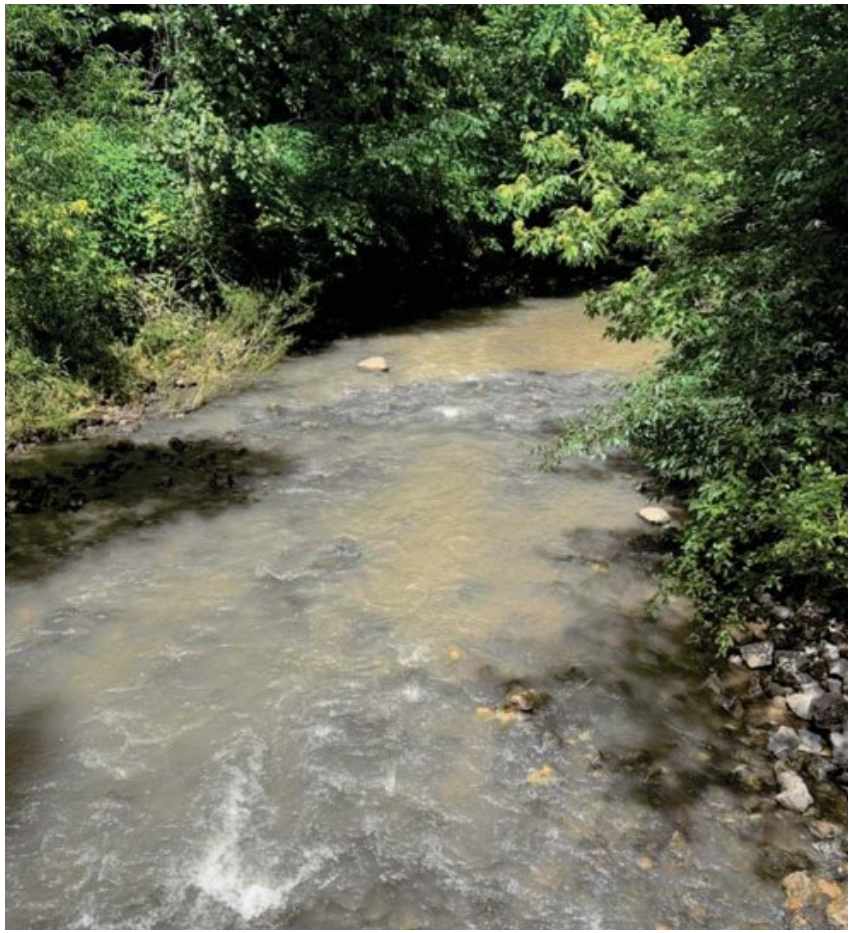
Objective 4.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.6.1 Landfills - Continue to ensure adequate landfill space and properly control and regulate.

4.6.2 Recycling - Continue to explore and encourage recycling with an emphasis on waste reduction, reuse and reduce.

4.6.3 Solid Waste - Continue to provide effective and efficient solid waste services and removal.

4.6.4 Source Reduction - Adopt standards that eliminate the initial production of wastes and pollutants at the source.



GOAL 5. ENHANCE MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY & PUBLIC UTILITIES

Objective 5.1 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

5.1.1 Repairs - Repair bridges, overpasses, roads, and sidewalks. Keep roads and utilities in good repair. Procure more funds for roads and bridges.

5.1.2 Farm Equipment - Identify and adopt preferred roadway design standards known to better accommodate farm equipment on township roads. For example, studies show that wider lane and shoulder width make it easier for drivers of passenger vehicles to maneuver around slow-moving farm equipment.

5.1.3 Thoroughfares - Work with villages leaders to create attractive thoroughfares through the center of the villages.

5.1.4 Signage - Improve signage and create a wayfinding system. Incorporate local branding into the wayfinding system.



Objective 5.2 ROADWAY NETWORK

5.2.1 Transportation System - Improve and maintain transportation system in order to address present and future traffic challenges.

5.2.2 Tiffin-Fostoria Industrial Connector – Continue to prioritize and research funding options for this $7 million project designed to create a meaningful connection between Tiffin's and Fostoria's industrial sectors.

5.2.3 Access Management - Develop access management techniques to limit points of ingress/egress, and maintain the level of service on principle and minor arterials. Adopt county level access management regulations.

5.2.4 Transportation Networks - Continue to support public transportation networks (Seneca Crawford Area Transportation, Seneca County Commission on Aging, Seneca County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Seneca County Veterans Services, Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services, and Flat Rock Homes, Inc.). Support other multi-modal transportation alternatives (biking, walking paths, etc.) to link population centers, areas with employment opportunities, and other destinations that are economically feasible.

5.2.5 Collaboration - Continue to collaborate with federal, state and local planning agencies and transportation departments to enhance transportation networks in the region. Participate in regional transportation summits and planning workshops to ensure county needs are included and prioritized on regional plans.

5.2.6 Congestion - Implement congestion management techniques at key county highway intersections through redesign, additional traffic lanes, and improved signalization.

5.2.7 Walkability - Encourage the use of safe and "walkable" streetscape design and signage standards, especially within villages and rural communities intersected by state routes.

Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

5.3.1 Walkability - Develop infrastructure that encourages people to commute to work and school on bike or on foot.

5.3.2 Bike Lanes - Create more bike lanes and "sharrows" along specific roadways, utilizing the recommendations from the recently completed Seneca County Active Transportation Plan.

5.3.3 Public Transit - Enhance public transit and mobility, and identify and procure sources of funding.

Objective 5.4 AIR & RAIL NETWORKS

5.4.1 Promote Air & Rail - Promote alternate means of transportation such as aviation and rail.

5.4.2 Highways - Reconnect rail to major highways.

5.4.3 Airport - Continue to use/promote the airport as an economic opportunity.

Objective 5.5 SMART COMMUNITIES

5.5.1 Broadband – Provide high-speed internet access to all rural areas. Work with organizations like "Connect Ohio" to improve access to areas lacking acceptable Download/Upload speeds. See the Broadband Internet Availability Map on the next page for areas of the county that currently do not have adequate internet access.

5.5.2 Telecommunications - Promote the proper placement and provision of telecommunication services.

5.5.3 Electric Charging Stations - Encourage the installation of electric car charging facilities at strategic locations throughout the county.

Objective 5.6 WATER & WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

5.6.1 Distribution & Collection - Establish acceptable water distribution/rates and wastewater collection systems in rural Seneca County.

5.6.2 Extend Utilities - Strategically extend water and sewer utilities, in conjunction with planning and zoning controls, to ensure projected growth occurs in an orderly manner, i.e., growth occurring outward from existing villages and population centers.

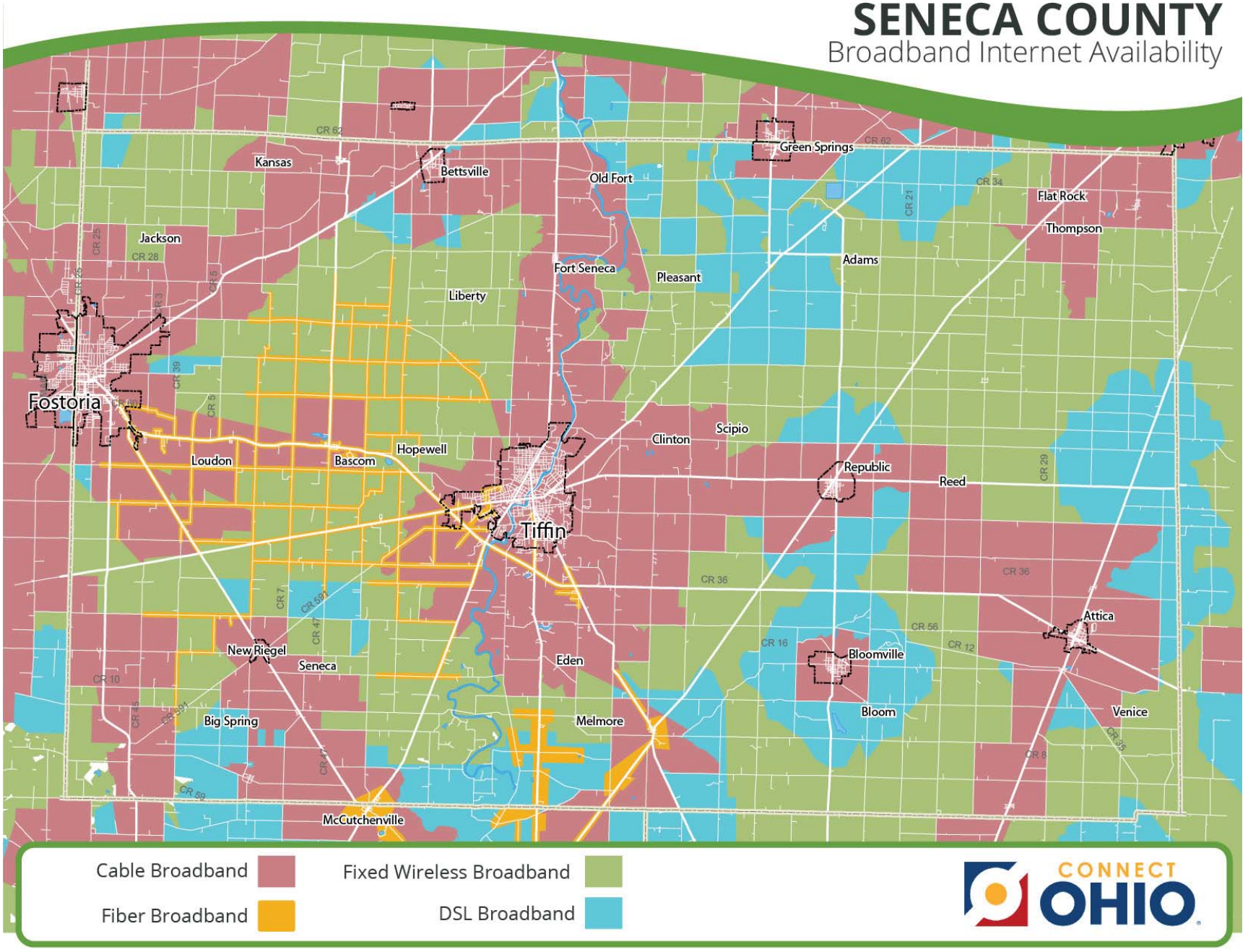
5.6.3 Special Extensions - Pursue the feasibility of providing water of adequate quality and capacity to special areas with documented health and human safety issues.

5.6.4 Home Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) - Establish standards and criteria for consideration of cumulative impacts of on-site septic systems on surface and groundwater quality.

5.6.5 Growth Management - Develop strategies for future infrastructure in strategic/targeted locations.



SENECA COUNTY
Broadband Internet Availability



GOAL 6. STRONG COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE

Objective 6.1 CELEBRATE SENECA COUNTY

6.1.1 Inventory - Continue to identify and develop an inventory of the reasons why the County and local communities are a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business (brand reasons).

6.1.2 Documentation - Document, process and package content of the brand reasons in text, pictures, sound recording, and video. Create a central information bureau.

6.1.3 Celebration - Celebrate the brand reasons using a variety of means, including events, awards, and public relations.

6.1.4 Volunteerism - Develop volunteerism.





Objective 6.2 BRANDING & PROMOTION

6.2.1 Media Relations - Market and communicate the community brand through media relations. Encourage area businesses to participate in the distribution of marketing materials.

6.2.2 Multi-Media Materials - Develop a wide range of marketing materials, utilizing as many different platforms and methods as possible in order to reach the widest audience. Market and communicate the community brand through: social media, print publications, digital publications, websites, video, audio and podcasting.

6.2.3 Advertising - Market and communicate the community brand through advertising.

6.2.4 Marketing Campaigns - Work with Destination Seneca County to develop a coordinated and comprehensive marketing campaign.

6.2.5 Branding - Continue to develop and implement the Seneca County branding effort to enhance the reputation and experience of the county and its rural areas as a great place to live, work, and operate a business.

6.2.6 Signage - Work with village and township officials to develop a comprehensive community signage package that includes the four types of wayfinding signs: identification, directional, informational, and regulatory. Utilize state and federal guidelines when designing the system, ensuring eligibility for state and federal funding sources.

6.2.7 Public Art - Incorporate public art along trail networks to tell the story of the region.

6.2.8 Scenic Byway Designation - Create a scenic byway plan and designate qualifying routes, e.g. SR 53, as scenic byways. The Scenic Byway designation helps stimulate the tourism economy because the program recognizes, promotes and enhances scenic byways in Ohio. Designation also helps cultivate a community's image and brand, which are vital aspects of tourism promotion, and preserves historic and community character and a sense of pride. Designating SR 53 as a scenic byway in Seneca County includes the potential to connect to the existing Lake Erie Coastal Byway to the north and the existing Lincoln Highway Byway to the south.

Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

6.4.1 Strategic Planning - Develop a strategic plan for tourism development for Seneca County.

6.4.2 Organizational Resources - Ensure the organizations tasked with tourism development have the resources they need to successfully implement the strategic plan.

6.3.3 Coordination - Continue to expand and coordinate visitor and tourism activities with promotion of Heritage, Agricultural, and Ecotourism.

6.3.4 Zoning - Update local zoning ordinances to ensure they adequately address and promote appropriate lodging development, including hotels, short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts, in order to enhance the region's ability to attract overnight visitors.



Seneca County's Implementation Priority Timeframe

This plan identifies a number of strategies that the Seneca County and its partners can take to move toward the County's vision for the future. Yet, we recognize that we cannot do everything at once. To this end, the matrix below identifies ongoing programs and initiatives that are important to maintain and allocates a preferred timeframe for expanding or enhancing existing programs and starting new initiatives, programs and projects.

Note: "A", "B", "C" and "D" represents priority; A is the highest priority, D the lowest. New programs/projects and enhancements to existing programs/projects are shown in the implementation timeframe based on start date. Any new program/project that will be ongoing once started is indicated with as "/O." Implementation timeframe is when the program/project is to begin. Existing programs/projects that will continue are prioritized.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
Goal 1 Prosperous and Resilient Economy				
Objective 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING				
1.1.1 Plans – Update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); coordinate goals & objectives with County Comprehensive Plan; identify entities/organizations best capable of implementing action items.			B	
1.1.2 Organizations - Ensure that entities and organizations assigned to oversee implementation of the plans have sufficient resources to do their work.		B		
1.1.3 Ongoing Dialogue – Maintain and strengthen dialogue and collaboration among elected officials and department heads with respect to development.	A			
Objective 1.2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT				
1.2.1 Workforce Plans – Continue to work with partners to prepare workforce development strategic plans (plans currently being developed through the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative and the 4CG initiative).	A			
1.2.2 County Collaboration – Continue to collaborate with other counties in ways that enhance and strengthen Seneca County's workforce.		B		
1.2.3 Partnerships – Continue to facilitate engagement, collaboration, and partnerships between business, industry, education, and workforce and economic development.	A			
1.2.4 Marketing - Effectively market jobs, career opportunities, and employers to the local community and regionally.	B			
1.2.5 Training and Assistance - Develop and/or strengthen educational and training programs, initiatives, and assets that increase the employability of the local workforce.		C		
1.2.6 Professional Development – Continue to maintain and strengthen research, benchmarking, networking, and professional development opportunities for professionals and organizations engaged in workforce development.	C			
1.2.7 Attract Workers to Seneca County - Develop, strengthen, and maintain assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that attract and retain youth, retain residents and encourage in-migration of new residents.	C			

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe		Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.2.8	Resources – Strategically allocate resources to maintain, strengthen and improve workforce development efforts, as recommended in the current CEDS.	O		B	
1.2.9	Remove Obstacles – Design and implement programs and needed support services such as transportation and childcare to remove obstacles for people who work in rural parts of the county (outside Tiffin and Fostoria).		B		
Objective 1.3 SUITABLE LOCATIONS					
1.3.1	Sites and Buildings - Continue to identify suitable locations for future commercial and industrial development in rural parts of Seneca County, including suitable locations that may require zoning changes.	A			
1.3.2	Capital Improvement Planning - Identify and plan for capital improvements needed to promote suitable economic development in rural Seneca County.		C/O		
1.3.3	Infrastructure – Create and maintain an updated database inventory and condition assessment of existing infrastructure and utilities (including broadband access) and associated GIS maps in rural Seneca County, and make the information available online.		B/O		
1.3.4	Development Agreements – Ensure mutually acceptable annexation and development agreements are in place between municipalities and townships. Review existing agreements and update as needed.		A		
1.3.5	Redevelopment - Facilitate the revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas and obsolete sites and facilities in rural Seneca County through redevelopment, rehabilitation, and other available means.		D		
1.3.6	Zoning – Review existing zoning regulations in villages and townships that have adopted zoning; update as needed; proactively rezone appropriate locations for new business development in suitable locations identified in 1.3.1.		C		
1.3.7	Market Priority Sites – Create a countywide map of priority development-ready properties that are available for development, make available online and market the properties.		C		
Objective 1.4 Business RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION					
1.4.1	Business Retention & Expansion Programs – Continue to maintain, improve and strengthen comprehensive and effective formal business retention and expansion programs.	A			
1.4.2	Incentives & Resources - Develop policies and related programs for incentives, assistance programs, and other resources for existing and new businesses; assist businesses in adopting contemporary business practices (e.g. websites and social media for marketing); continue to promote incentive programs available through the State.			A	
1.4.3	Industry Groups – Continue to collaborate with existing, and expand as needed, industry councils or groups that provide peer-to-peer networking and that identify and address issues and concerns faced by that industry.	D			
1.4.4	Targeted Industries - Develop & maintain a targeted industry sector retention, expansion, and attraction strategy.		C		

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/O" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.4.5 Retail Strategy – Develop a countywide retail retention, expansion, and attraction strategy for retail in villages.		B		
1.4.6 Marketing – Continue to effectively market the county's positive attributes, assets and competitive advantages regionally, statewide, nationally and globally. Develop a strategy and market available industrial and commercial properties in rural Seneca County. Highlight available incentives. See also marketing strategies included in Goal 6.	A	A		
1.4.7 Regulation - Create a strategic and business-friendly regulatory environment. Review existing regulations to determine if there are ways to improve the procedures and eliminate unnecessary obstacles.		C		
1.4.8 Technology – Continue to work with local businesses, both start-up and existing, so they are better equipped to stay current on the ways technology can be used to enhance business practices.	C			
Objective 1.5 AGRIBUSINESS				
1.5.1 Agribusiness Strategic Plan - Develop an agriculture and food industry cluster strategic plan and assign a group or organization to oversee its implementation.		A		
1.5.2 Local Food - Identify, maintain, strengthen and develop assets, programs, and initiatives that encourage and promote local food.		B		
1.5.3 Partnerships – Continue to maintain and strengthen relationships, collaboration, and partnerships with local, regional, state, and national partners engaged in the agriculture and food industry cluster.	A			
1.5.4 Adaptation – Continue to identify, develop and implement assets, programs, resources, and initiatives to help farmers of all sizes improve resiliency, adapt to changes in the environment, and take advantage of new technology.	A		A	
1.5.5 Diversification - Work with farmers to diversify ag production including new crop opportunities such as hemp production, and to expand into ag-related income generating activities, such as agritourism activities.			B	
1.5.6 Recruitment – Assist in recruiting young and beginning farmers and their families; work with the Farm Bureau, OSU Extension and other entities.		A		
Objective 1.6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP				
1.6.1 Entrepreneurship Plan - Develop an entrepreneurship strategic plan to foster entrepreneurs in rural Seneca County; identify and/or develop a group or organization to oversee its implementation.		B		
1.6.2 Entrepreneurship Facilities - Explore, evaluate and develop appropriate and successful entrepreneurship facilities in village centers; provide financial and onsite support services.			B	
1.6.3 Resources - Identify, effectively leverage and develop more resources for entrepreneurs, start-up, and tech-based businesses that choose to locate in rural Seneca County.		B		

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe		Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.6.4	Capital - Identify and develop more seed, early-, and late-stage capital for entrepreneurs and newer businesses in Seneca County.		C		
1.6.5	Entrepreneurship Marketplace - Facilitate the identification and vetting of existing and new potential entrepreneurial opportunities and connect entrepreneurs with those opportunities and capital.			A/O	
1.6.6	Culture - Develop, maintain, and strengthen assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that foster and strengthen a local culture of entrepreneurship.		C		
1.6.7	Collaboration – Continue to strengthen collaboration with local, regional and state education institutions, intellectual property-creating and innovative local companies, entrepreneurs and technology-based companies.	B			
Objective 1.7 VILLAGE DOWNTOWNS					
1.7.1	Plans – Develop and update strategic and development plans for village downtowns.		B		
1.7.2	Systematic Approach - Adopt and implement a comprehensive approach to address the appearance, promotion, business enhancement, and organizational resources of village downtowns.		B		
1.7.3	Downtown Resources – Continue to maintain and strengthen the resources available to organizations working on downtown revitalization throughout rural Seneca County.	B			
1.7.4	Downtown Incentives - Develop and implement appropriate incentive programs to foster downtown revitalization.			C	
Goal 2. Attractive, Desirable & Livable Places (Built Environment)					
Objective 2.1 HOUSING OPTIONS					
2.1.1	Residential Research - Conduct housing research and studies, identifying housing conditions and developing strategies to preserve existing housing resources and develop new ones.		C/O		
2.1.2	Housing Development – Develop and maintain programs that facilitate the development of a sufficient quantity and desired variety of housing types, designs, and price in the most appropriate places.		C/O		
2.1.3	Housing Resources – Continue to utilize existing programs and develop new programs/ resources to help maintain/improve the housing stock; assist low-moderate income households attain desired housing, including home ownership.	B	B		
2.1.4	Building Reuse - Support the innovative reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings for housing alternatives.			C	
2.1.5	Creative and Context-Sensitive Design – Continue to encourage sensitivity to environmental conditions in development of new housing and rehabilitation of existing housing. Develop regulations that allow for/encourage creative design in residential development.	B	D		
2.1.6	Fair Housing – Continue to educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities.	B			

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/O" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
2.1.7 Downtown Upper-Floor Housing – In villages with appropriate two- and three-story commercial buildings, encourage building owners to consider creating upper-floor residential units when renovating downtown commercial structures.			C	
Objective 2.2 DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS				
2.2.1 Sidewalks & Lighting – Identify, improve existing, and develop more sidewalks, street lighting, and other assets to create more walkable neighborhoods in villages where the concentration of homes warrants such improvements.		C		
2.2.2 Public Safety – Continue to maintain, strengthen, and develop programs, initiatives, and organizations that contribute to public safety and the safety of neighborhoods.	B			
2.2.3 Neighborhood Appearance – Develop village branding, initiatives, programs, and organizations that enhance the appearance of neighborhoods in rural Seneca County (e.g., American in Bloom).			B	
Objective 2.3 VALUED CULTURE AND PLACES				
2.3.1 Downtowns - Revitalize and activate village downtowns and other places into lively gathering places, with flexible multi-use spaces and event programming. Maintain and improve the overall appearance of downtowns.			B	
2.3.2 Gathering Places – Maintain and increase village community meeting places, including outdoor gathering spaces to encourage visitors to linger and socialize.		B		
2.3.3 Historic Preservation Organizational Structure – Create a county-wide organizational structure to spearhead a collaborative effort to strategically plan for and develop goals and strategies to preserve important historic assets.		B		
2.3.4 Historic Preservation Resources - Create an inventory of notable historic structures and areas with unique historical worth; develop resources to encourage long-term preservation.			C	
Objective 2.4 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE				
2.4.1 Building Code & Permits - Enforce a system of standard building codes and permits to ensure the structural safety and functional integrity of all buildings; consider establishing a County Building Department; adequately support the education of the existing process for building codes and permits.		C		
2.4.2 Workshops – Create a strategy for educating residents and property owners about property maintenance; identify key topics to address and the delivery system for conducting educational workshops about long-term maintenance.		C/O		
2.4.3 Property Maintenance Code – Continue to enforce property maintenance codes in rural Seneca County where they exist; encourage creation of local property maintenance code in locations where needed but do not currently exist.	O		C/O	
2.4.4 Property Clearinghouse - Create a clearinghouse for vacant lots and blighted structures countywide. Work with the Seneca County Land Bank on maintaining once established			B/O	

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
2.4.5 Blight Abatement – Continue to enforce countywide blight abatement guidelines, and collaborate with the Seneca County Land Bank on demolition of vacant houses and other vacant structures.	C			
Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE				
2.5.1 Compact/Infill Development – Continue to promote new compact development on infill lots and adjacent to existing built up areas; implement zoning that encourages development of vacant/ underutilized properties, and brownfield sites.	A	A/O		
2.5.2 Zoning Administration - Update village and township zoning regulations and continue to enforce local zoning where it currently exists; train local boards/commissions on administration of local regulations. Review existing regulations for effectiveness in protecting agricultural lands, critical environmental areas, and valuable natural areas and promoting sustainable development.	A	A/O		
2.5.3 Village Promotion - Promote balanced development in villages that preserves amenities and quality of life while also allowing for appropriate commercial and industrial development.			C	
2.5.4 Farmland Preservation – Continue to conserve existing agricultural land and limit development in agricultural areas. Develop zoning regulations and/or subdivision regulations that reduce incentives to develop scattered frontage lots along rural roads.	A	A/O		
2.5.5 Open Space Preservation – Develop zoning regulations that encourage preservation of open space and limit development on/near critical natural areas. See also Goal 4 for Natural Resource Preservation and Conservation strategies.		A/O		
2.5.6 County Subdivision Regulations – Review and update the County Subdivision Regulations as needed to ensure that the subdivision regulations advance and are coordinated with local township zoning regulations.			C	
Goal 3. Quality Community Facilities & Services				
Objective 3.1 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES				
3.1.1 Special Interest Groups - Create, strengthen, and support organizations and programs that address/serve the interests and needs of particular segments of our diverse population.		B/O		
3.1.2 Connection & Interaction - Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs, initiatives and assets that encourage interaction and foster connection between diverse groups/ individuals.			C/O	
3.1.3 Events - Create, strengthen and support events that support, foster, and celebrate diversity, inclusivity, and the uniqueness of individuals in the community.		C/O		
3.1.4 Education & Training – Continue to support programs and initiatives that educate, train, communicate about, and promote diversity and inclusivity.	C			
Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING				
3.2.1 Graduation rates - Continue to support local schools in their efforts to increase the quality and capacity of public and private PreK-12 educational facilities.	A			

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/O" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe		Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
3.2.2	Skilled Trades – Advocate for increased technical and vocational study programs.		B		
3.2.3	Libraries - Continue to support community-wide programs via the public library.	C			
3.2.4	Improved Access – Continue to provide as well as improve greater access to programs to assist children from low- to moderate-income households.	B		B	
3.2.5	Higher Education – Strengthen and support physical, economic and social connections to Tiffin University, Heidelberg University and Terra State Community College.	B	B		
Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING					
3.3.1	Village Parks – Develop strategies and programs to enable village governments to maintain and improve village parks and recreation facilities; evaluate current park amenities to determine need for improvements.			B	
3.3.2	Trails – Develop a network of trails throughout the county. See the recently completed Active Transportation Plan for detailed recommendations for locations.		B		
3.3.3	Local History – Where applicable, assist villages in developing and telling their local "story" through interpretive signage, public art, or other media in public spaces.			C	
3.3.4	Cooperative Programs – Build strong intra-park coordination between villages and the County Park District to provide diverse programs and offer a broad range of facilities and experiences to rural Seneca County residents.			C	
Objective 3.4 HEALTH & WELLNESS					
3.4.1	Health Care - Increase countywide health and healthcare specialists/services, including mental health.			B	
3.4.2	Assisted Living – Develop a strategy for improving/achieving adequate assisted living housing and home care.			C	
3.4.3	Safe Communities – Continue to promote safe communities and increase safety in rural Seneca County utilizing neighborhood block watch, protective services, emergency services, etc.	A	D		
3.4.4	Existing EMS – Continue to provide the existing EMS and ambulance service. Support our current EMS structure and explore ways to become more effective.	B			
3.4.5	Countywide EMS – Investigate and work towards providing a full-time countywide paid EMS/ ambulance service.				A
3.4.6	Gathering Places – Continue to support community gathering places in rural Seneca County to foster social interaction and reduce social isolation.	B			
3.4.7	Police & Fire – Continue to maintain local police and fire departments in rural Seneca County; assist with acquiring updated equipment, and when necessary, explore potential for new stations.	B		A	
3.4.8	Cooperative Services – Continue to streamline overlaps of services. Explore cooperative agreements with ambulance districts, sheriff's office, and fire departments.	C	A		

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
3.4.9 Technology – Continue to support the use of technology and increase use of shared services, for example, coordinate radio systems throughout the County.	C		C	
3.4.10 Behavioral and Mental Health – Continue to support efforts by the MHRSB, local emergency responders, healthcare workers, and hospitals to develop effective systems to respond to people experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis (suicide or overdose), provide effective education, and establish suitable facilities..	B	A		
3.4.11 Access – Work on increasing residents' financial and transportation access to health and wellness facilities.		B		
Objective 3.5 FOOD SECURITY & ACCESS				
3.5.1 Farm Markets – Continue to promote and increase farm-to-table and farmer's market type endeavors.	B	B		
3.5.2 Local Food - Encourage institutions, including schools, hospitals, jails, etc. to use local food and to improve the nutritional quality of food served.		D		
3.5.3 Food Access – Increase access to fresh food and promote the consumption of high-quality food.		A		
Goal 4. Environmental Stewardship –Valued Natural Resources				
Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION				
4.1.1 Priority Conservation Areas - Identify areas of the county where critical natural resources exist (such as floodplain and riparian areas) and have the highest priority for conservation efforts.			A	
4.1.2 Cleanups – Continue to engage in river cleanups and invasive species removal campaigns.	B			
4.1.3 Site Design - Encourage site design that protects the natural terrain and groundwater, preserves significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporates native vegetation into landscape plans.		A		
4.1.4 Home Sewage Treatment System - In areas not serviced by sanitary sewers, continue to evaluate proposed lots for on-lot sewage disposal systems. Develop a plan to assist homeowners with failing septic systems to connect to sanitary sewer lines or replace their existing system.	A			
4.1.5 Open Space Subdivision Design - Incorporate conservation development zoning regulations for villages and townships that have adopted zoning. Consider providing incentives to encourage conservation development that preserves riparian corridors, woodlands, and wetlands as protected open space.		A		
4.1.6 Acquisition - Prioritize riparian corridors, woodlands, wetlands for acquisition using programs such as Clean Ohio, in order to create linked greenways to provide corridors of open space instead of isolated pockets of open space.				D
4.1.7 Easements - Work with appropriate private land trusts and other organizations engaged in acquiring environmentally sensitive lands and/or protective easements.			B	
4.1.8 Tree Preservation/Restoration – Continue & increase efforts to plant and protect trees to maintain current and increase future canopy coverage.	B	B		

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/0" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
4.1.9 Mining – Continue to balance the interest of companies or individuals wanting to extract minerals from the land with those of the surface owner and adjoining property owners so as to assure maximum benefits to all county residents.	A			
4.1.10 Mitigatation – Continue to mitigate erosion and habitat loss. Increase efforts in select areas.	D	C		
Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE				
4.2.1 Ecotourism - Utilize natural resources for tourism.		C		
4.2.2 Hunting - Increase hunting opportunities as well as signage and safety of public hunting.		C		
4.2.3 Trees - Increase participation with local shade tree commissions where they exist and encourage the creation of local shade tree commissions in communities where they don't currently exist.		C		
4.2.4 Parks – Work with the County Park District and local villages to ensure a suitable amount of and access to park facilities.			C	
4.2.5 Water Trails: Continue to collaborate on designating the Sandusky River as a State Water Trail, creating a water trail partnership, securing assistance from ODNR, and inventorying existing access and hazard points as well as natural, cultural, historic features and other points of interest.		C		
Objective 4.3 CLEAN AIR & WATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES				
4.3.1 Low-Impact Development - Develop material to educate and promote low-impact development practices and other best practices that help to preserve and enhance sensitive natural areas and important natural resources.			C	
4.3.2 Stormwater Management - Adopt stormwater management regulations; establish mandatory riparian setbacks in both local zoning regulations and the Seneca County Subdivision Regulations.		A		
4.3.3 Wellhead Protection – Work with the Health Department to develop a Wellhead Protection Plan and Overlay Zone to protect public water supplies.		A		
4.3.4 Prioritization - Map areas of the county that meet the criteria of a "Priority Nutrient Reduction Area.			B	
4.3.5 Environmental Programs - Continue to encourage and promote public programs that incentivize or share in the cost of implementing environmental best management practices.	B			
4.5.6 Failing Home Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) – Continue to eliminate failing HSTS; develop educational programs and requirements for ensuring existing systems are properly maintained; develop a long-term solution to address failing septic systems countywide.	A			
Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE				
4.4.1 Watershed - Continue to collaborate with Ohio EPA and other federal, state and local partners on planning for the watershed.	B			

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
4.4.2 Combined Sewer Separation (CSOs) – Identify and reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to Sandusky River. Work with property owners and local communities to prioritize the locations where CSOs exist.		A		
4.4.3 NPS-IS - Work with Sandusky River watershed organizations to develop and implement a Non-Point Source Pollution Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS) and Section 319 funding to implement priority projects.		B		
4.4.4 Water Quality Attainment – Continue to work towards full Ohio EPA water quality attainment status.	A			
Objective 4.5 GREEN ENERGY				
4.5.1 Proper Placement - Encourage townships and villages to adopt appropriate zoning regulations to permit and properly locate small-scale renewable energy systems.		C		
4.5.2 Solar - Encourage electric companies to give easy access to solar. Including residential, solar generation and discontinue demand-metering charge			D	
4.5.3 Evaluation - Carefully evaluate all proposed energy system projects to determine their potential benefits and consequences.	A			
Objective 4.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT				
4.6.1 Landfills - Continue to ensure adequate landfill space and properly control and regulate.	C			
4.6.2 Recycling – Continue to explore and encourage recycling with an emphasis on waste reduction, reuse and reduce.	C			
4.6.3 Solid Waste – Continue to provide effective and efficient solid waste services and removal.	B			
4.6.4 Source Reduction - Adopt standards that eliminate the initial production of wastes and pollutants at the source.				D
GOAL 5. Mobility, Accessibility & Public Utilities				
Objective 5.1 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE				
5.1.1 Repairs - Repair bridges, overpasses, roads, and sidewalks. Keep roads and utilities in good repair. Procure more funds for roads and bridges.	B			
5.1.2 Farm Equipment - Accommodate farm equipment on township roads.		B		
5.1.3 Thoroughfares – Work with villages to create attractive thoroughfares through the center of the villages.			C	
5.1.4 Signage - Improve signage and create a wayfinding system.			C	
Objective 5.2 ROADWAY NETWORK				
5.2.1 Transportation System - Improve and maintain transportation system in order to address present and future traffic challenges.		A		

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/0" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
5.2.2 Tiffin-Fostoria Industrial Connector – Continue to prioritize and research funding options for this project designed to connect Tiffin's and Fostoria's industrial sectors.				A
5.2.3 Access Management – Develop access management techniques to limit points of ingress/egress, and maintain the level of service on principle and minor arterials. Adopt county level access management regulations.			B	
5.2.4 Transportation Networks – Continue to support public transportation networks and other multi-modal transportation alternatives to link population centers with employment opportunities and other destinations.	B			
5.2.5 Collaboration - Collaborate with federal, state, and local planning agencies to enhance transportation networks in the region.	C			
5.2.6 Congestion - Implement congestion management techniques at key county highway intersections through redesign, additional traffic lanes, and improved signalization.			B	
5.2.7 Walkability - Encourage the use of safe and "walkable" streetscape design and signage standards, especially within villages and rural communities intersected by state routes.			D	
Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION				
5.3.1 Walkability - Develop infrastructure that encourages people to commute to work and school on bike or on foot.		C		
5.3.2 Bike Lanes - Create more bike lanes and "sharrows" along specific roadways, utilizing the recommendations from the recently completed Seneca County Active Transportation Plan.		C		
5.3.3 Public Transit - Enhance public transit and mobility, and identify and procure funding.		C		
Objective 5.4 AIR & RAIL NETWORKS				
5.4.1 Promote Air & Rail - Promote alternate means of transportation such as aviation and rail.		D		
5.4.2 Highways - Reconnect rail to major highways.			C	
5.4.3 Airport – Continue to use/promote the airport as an economic opportunity.	C			
Objective 5.5 SMART COMMUNITIES				
5.5.1 Broadband - Provide high-speed internet access to all rural areas. Work with organizations like "Connect Ohio" to improve access to rural areas lacking internet access with acceptable download/upload speeds.		A		
5.5.2 Telecommunications - Promote the proper placement and provision of telecommunication services.	C			
5.5.3 Electric Charging Stations - Encourage installation of electric car charging facilities at strategic locations.		C		
Objective 5.6 WATER & WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE				

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe		Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
5.6.1	Distribution & Collection - Establish acceptable water distribution/rates and wastewater collection systems in rural Seneca County.			B	
5.6.2	Extend Utilities – Strategically extend water and sewer utilities, in conjunction with planning and zoning controls, to ensure projected growth occurs in an orderly manner.			B	
5.6.3	Special Extensions - Pursue the feasibility of providing water of adequate quality and capacity to special areas with documented health and human safety issues.		C		
5.6.4	Home Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) - Establish standards and criteria for consideration of cumulative impacts of on-site septic systems upon surface and groundwater quality.		A		
5.6.5	Growth Management – Develop strategies for future infrastructure in strategic/targeted locations.			C	
Goal 6. Strong Community Character & Image					
Objective 6.1 CELEBRATE SENECA COUNTY.					
6.1.1	Inventory – Continue to identify and develop an inventory of the reasons why the County and local communities are a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business (brand reasons).	A	A		
6.1.2	Documentation – Document, process and package content of the brand reasons in text, pictures, sound recording, and video. Create a central information bureau.		A/O		
6.1.3	Celebration – Celebrate the brand reasons using a variety of means, including events, awards, and public relations.			A/O	
6.1.4	Volunteerism - Develop volunteerism.			B	
Objective 6.2 BRANDING & PROMOTION					
6.2.1	Media Relations – Market and communicate the community brand through media relations. Encourage area businesses to participate in the distribution of marketing materials.		B/O		
6.2.2	Multi-Media Materials – Develop marketing materials, utilizing as many different platforms and methods as possible.		B/O		
6.2.3	Advertising – Market and communicate the community brand through advertising.		B/O		
6.2.4	Marketing Campaigns – Work with Destination Seneca County to develop a coordinated and comprehensive marketing campaign.			B/O	
6.2.5	Branding – Continue to develop and implement the Seneca County branding effort to enhance the reputation and experience of the county and its rural areas as a great place to live, work, and operate a business.	B			
6.2.6	Signage – Develop a comprehensive community signage package that includes the four types of wayfinding signs: identification, directional, informational, and regulatory. Design the system in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines, ensuring that it can be funded through state and federal sources.		C		

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/O" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
6.2.7 Public Art - Incorporate public art along trail networks to tell the story of the region.			D	
6.2.8 Scenic Byway Designation – Create a scenic byway plan and designate qualifying routes, such as SR 53 as scenic byways.			B	
Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT				
6.3.1 Strategic Planning – Develop a strategic plan for tourism development for Seneca County.		A		
6.3.2 Organizational Resources – Ensure the organizations tasked with tourism development have the resources they need to successfully implement the strategic plan.		B		
6.3.3 Coordination – Continue to expand and coordinate visitor and tourism activities with promotion of Heritage, Agricultural, and Ecotourism.	C			
6.3.4 Zoning – Update local zoning ordinances to ensure they adequately address and promote appropriate lodging development, including hotels, short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts in order to enhance the region's ability to attract overnight visitors.		C		

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

CHAPTER 5.2: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR THE SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

June 2020

SENECA PARKS

CHAPTER 5.2: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR THE SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) outlines six integrated goals and related objectives that all partners participating in the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan agreed are either directly or indirectly important to each one's vision for the future. This chapter is customized to address the goals, objectives and related strategies that are directly applicable to the Seneca County Park District, who is the primary entity responsible for carrying out the recommendations. This chapter includes maps and illustrations, as applicable, to explain the strategies. Most strategies for the Park District are ongoing. Many of the plan's recommendations will require additional study and the development of more detailed action steps that go beyond the scope of this project. The vision directly applicable to Seneca County Park District is:

Vision for the Seneca County Park District

To be a recognized leader and desired partner in providing life-enhancing and lifelong, nature-based outdoor experiences for all; and to build a legacy of good environmental stewardship for future generations.

This chapter focuses on the relevant strategies for the Park District to achieve the goals and objectives described in detail in Chapter 4. The numbering of Goals and Objectives is consistent with the numbering scheme in Chapter 4; therefore, wherever the Objectives are not numbered sequentially, it indicates that the missing objective is not applicable to the Park District.



SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT GOALS

- Ensure we are prepared to and successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national and global economy, with an emphasis on jobs and tax revenue.

1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy

- Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living and socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

2. Attractive, Desirable, & Livable Places (Built Environment)

- Create/foster a strong sense of community & ensure social needs are met with equitable programs & access to a wide range of community and public facilities and services.

3. Quality Community Facilities and Services

- Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human and economic well-being, provide recreation and educational opportunities for locals and tourists, and significantly enhance the character of our community.

4. Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

- Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure and utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current and future residents and businesses.

5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility, & Public Utilities

- Enhance and strengthen our community character and brand to: establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit; to instill community pride; and attract new residents, businesses and visitors.

6. Strong Community Character and Image

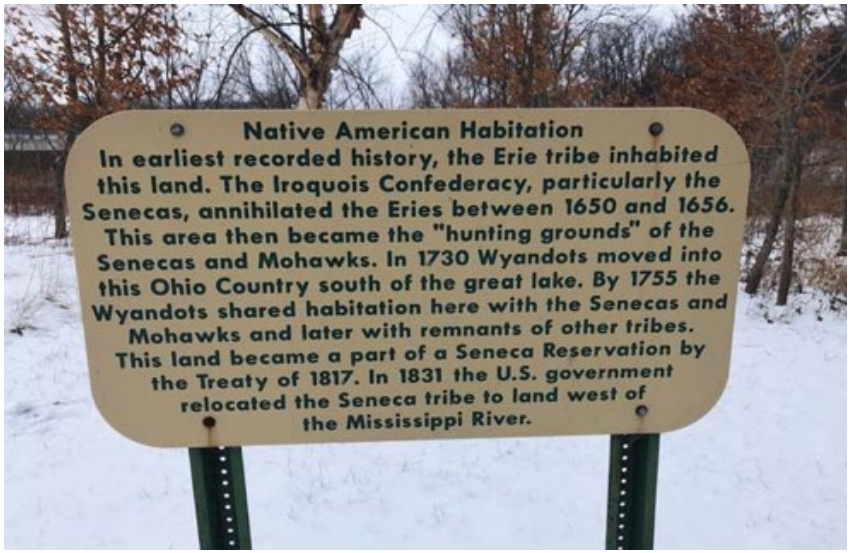
GOAL 2. ATTRACTIVE, DESIRABLE & LIVABLE PLACES (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

Objective 2.3 Celebrate our UNIQUE PLACES

2.3.1 Rural Identity – Preserve riparian corridors, floodplains, and other ecologically sensitive areas as important parts of Seneca County's rural identity.

2.3.2 Partnerships – Consider additional programming, and possible partnerships with organizations like the local OSU Extension Office/4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters, and other similar organizations to educate Seneca County youth about the land's rich history, its current state, and future potential.

2.3.3 Historic Properties – Celebrate local history by preserving the places that are central to the local identity, both in the built and natural environments. Inventory historically significant places, within and outside the Parks, and work with other organizations to maintain them.





Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE.

2.5.1 Prevent Insensitive Sprawl – Work with area officials and planning professionals to minimize the intrusion of sporadic residential development into rural areas. In areas where sensitive ecological areas are adjacent to existing communities, work with village and city officials to find mutually beneficial solutions to growth.

2.5.2 Locations – Evaluate current Park locations for service coverage across the county.

GOAL 3. QUALITY COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Objective 3.1 Foster INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

3.1.1 Accessibility – To the extent possible, make Park facilities accessible to people with physical and cognitive disabilities. Where it is not physically possible, consider video or other alternative methods for people whose challenges prevent them from experiencing the Parks first-hand.





3.1.2 Affordability – Economic constraints also can be a barrier that keeps people from enjoying the parks. Consider opportunities to partner with other organizations to provide transportation for those who have no way to reach the Parks, or bring programs into more urbanized areas so that more people can easily access the Parks.

Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

3.2.1 Programming – As funds and capacity permit, expand both existing and new programs for the general public throughout the Park District. Maintain and develop a variety of cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents, students and visitors.

3.2.2 Partnerships – Seek out opportunities to partner with local schools and universities on ecological program offerings. Partner with local health institutions and organizations to support personal fitness initiatives.

3.2.3 Meeting space – Maintain and expand community meeting spaces in appropriate Park facilities for use both as educational classes or workshops and social gatherings and events.

3.2.4 Partnerships – Build strong inter-agency partnerships with villages, cities, townships, universities, K-12 schools, homeschoolers, and other community organizations to provide diverse programs and facilities that collectively meet the needs of all Park visitors.

3.2.5 Headquarters/Nature Center – Identify and establish location for a Nature Center and park headquarters.







Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING

3.3.1 Marketing – Continue and expand marketing efforts so that residents know where Parks are located and programming opportunities are available.

3.3.2 Maps – Whether digital or hard copy, make maps of each Park available on-site so visitors can fully enjoy the resource.

3.3.3 Maintenance – As funds permit, continue to make improvements to existing trails to make them more user-friendly and improve the experience for visitors.

3.3.4 Expand Trail Networks – As natural resource capacity permits, plan and strategically place new environmentally responsible trails for public enjoyment.

3.3.5 Variety – Consider a wide variety of trail types to reach an expanding circle of Park users (ex: single track trails, blue/water trails, motorized/ATV trails).

3.3.6 Amenities – Develop quality amenities for guest comfort, accessibility, and satisfaction. Refer to the Concept Development Plans for the following Park District Nature Preserves: Bowen, Garlo, Steyer and Zimmerman.

3.3.7 Facilities – Expand Park amenities. Consider overnight facilities such as cabins, yurts, or camp sites.

Objective 3.4 Promote HEALTH AND WELLNESS

3.4.1 Connecting Bike Paths – To the extent possible, support trail initiatives to connect existing recreational resources with residential and commercial areas.

3.4.2 Partnerships – Pursue partnerships with local healthcare organizations and professionals to offer nature-based options to help residents improve overall health and well-being. These kinds of partnerships have been endorsed by national organizations such as the American Lung Association, American Heart Association and American Diabetes Association. Work with local chapters to help lend legitimacy and publicity as these partnerships are launched within Seneca County.

GOAL 4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – VALUED NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION

4.1.1 Cleanups – Engage in river cleanups and invasive species removal campaigns.

4.1.2 Site Design – Ensure designs for all Park improvements and site designs developed for future Parks protect the natural terrain and groundwater, preserve or restore significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporate native vegetation into landscape plans.



4.1.3 Runoff Reduction – Encourage the use of modern technology to reduce storm water runoff and pollutants, both urban and rural, from entering into bodies of water.

4.1.4 Acquisition – Work with other agencies to assist with prioritizing riparian corridors, woodlands, wetlands for acquisition using programs such as OPWC Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation, linking greenways to provide corridors of open space, rather that isolated pockets.

4.1.5 Easements - Work with appropriate private land trusts and private property owners to protect environmentally sensitive areas either through direct acquisition or protective easements.

4.1.6 Tree Preservation/Restoration - Make concerted efforts to plant and protect trees to maintain current and increase canopy coverage.

Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE

4.2.1 Park District Nature Preserves – Consider future nature preserves to protect endangered and threatened species, and to protect the rural "feel" that is key to Seneca County's identity. Be prepared to act (or respond) if, and when, opportunities for acquisition present themselves.

4.2.2 Ecotourism - Utilize appropriate natural resources for tourism. Work with other agencies to leverage the Sandusky River as a tourist attraction. Promote links between the river and bicycle/pedestrian facilities in adjacent parks, townships, cities, and villages.

4.2.3 Hunting - Increase signage and safety for public hunting. Consider opportunities for new hunting sites.

Objective 4.3 Promote BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

4.3.1 Planning - Continue to collaborate with Ohio EPA and other federal, state and local partners on planning for the watershed.

4.3.2 Permeable Surfaces – Advocate for incorporating best practices and up-to-date technology to promote permeable surface use to reduce polluted run-off and help reduce or eliminate flooding.



4.3.3 Light & Sound Pollution – Work with local partners such as the cities and villages, townships, universities, and civic and social organizations to educate the public about the negative effects of light and sound pollution, including ways to reduce these now and in the future.

Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE

4.4.1 Habitats – Work collaboratively with other organizations to help identify and document existing conditions of wildlife habitats and places of ecological significance in the riparian corridors associated with the Sandusky River. Prioritize areas that are most in need of protection or restoration, then identify funding sources and create a work plan to protect the resource(s).

4.4.2 Erosion – Work collaboratively with other organizations to help identify vulnerable/erosion-prone areas to minimize erosion.

4.4.3 Upstream maintenance – Work together with neighboring counties to the south to ensure the continued health of the River.



4.4.4 Sandusky River Cleanups – Work collaboratively with other organizations to help engage in regular clean-ups and removal of invasive species.

Objective 4.5 Ensure CLEAN AIR & WATER

4.5.1 Green Infrastructure – Be an example for the County in embracing sustainable building practices in every possible situation when planning County Park improvements and in designing future County Parks.

4.5.2 Stream Restoration – Work collaboratively with other organizations to promote natural streams, riparian corridors, and adjacent floodplains to function naturally and retain water longer to reduce flooding impacts. Encourage the elimination of obstructions such as pipes, gates, filters, or other blockages from existing streams, whenever feasible, to allow riparian corridors and adjacent floodplains to function naturally.

4.5.3 Bioswales – Include bioretention areas in all places possible, at both existing facilities and in design for new facilities, and as an educational demonstration.

4.5.4 Stormwater Harvesting – Consider the possibility of including green roofs and rainwater collection systems on buildings planned for future construction.

Objective 4.6 Promote GREEN DEVELOPMENT

4.6.1 Alternative Energy – Encourage development of environmentally friendly alternative energy resources for use at park facilities as well as locations in the county. Alternative energy sources should be reviewed and developed to avoid the risk of detrimentally affecting wildlife and scenic views.

4.6.2 Sustainable and Inclusive Growth – Work with other agencies to include green stormwater infrastructure in new development.

4.6.3 LEED (Leader in Energy and Environmental Design) – Work with other agencies to encourage the use of LEED standards for facility rehabilitation and development.

Objective 4.7 Promote SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.7.1 Trash & Recycling – Assess the need for canisters at each facility and deploy (and maintain) receptacles accordingly.



GOAL 5. ENHANCED MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY & PUBLIC UTILITIES

Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

5.3.1 Active Transportation – Continue to be involved in the development of an active transportation plan and support trails that are established throughout the county, especially those located near County Park locations or that create connections to or between County Park locations. Cooperative efforts for long-term management of these trails are anticipated.

Objective 5.5 SMART TECHNOLOGY

5.5.1 Smart Technology – Continue to work toward development and keeping up with current technological advancements for interfacing with park visitors. Consider educational components and highlight special features in each park.



GOAL 6. STRONG COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE

Objective 6.1 CELEBRATE SENECA COUNTY

6.1.1 Local Historic Resources – Work collaboratively with other agencies that encourage protection and rehabilitation of areas with unique historic worth.

Objective 6.2 Engage in BRANDING AND PROMOTION

6.2.1 Marketing – Increase community exposure by using a broad range of assets, such as social media, website, print, radio, television, and in-person appearances at local events.

6.2.2 Signage – Develop better wayfinding and location signage. Establish a brand identity to graphically unify all signage.

Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

6.3.1 Water Trails - Work collaboratively with other agencies to designate the Sandusky River as a State Water Trail, creating a water trail partnership, securing assistance from ODNR Division of Watercraft, and inventorying existing access and hazard points as well as natural, cultural, and historical features and points of interest. Negotiate dock space and plan for access and amenities at those sites.

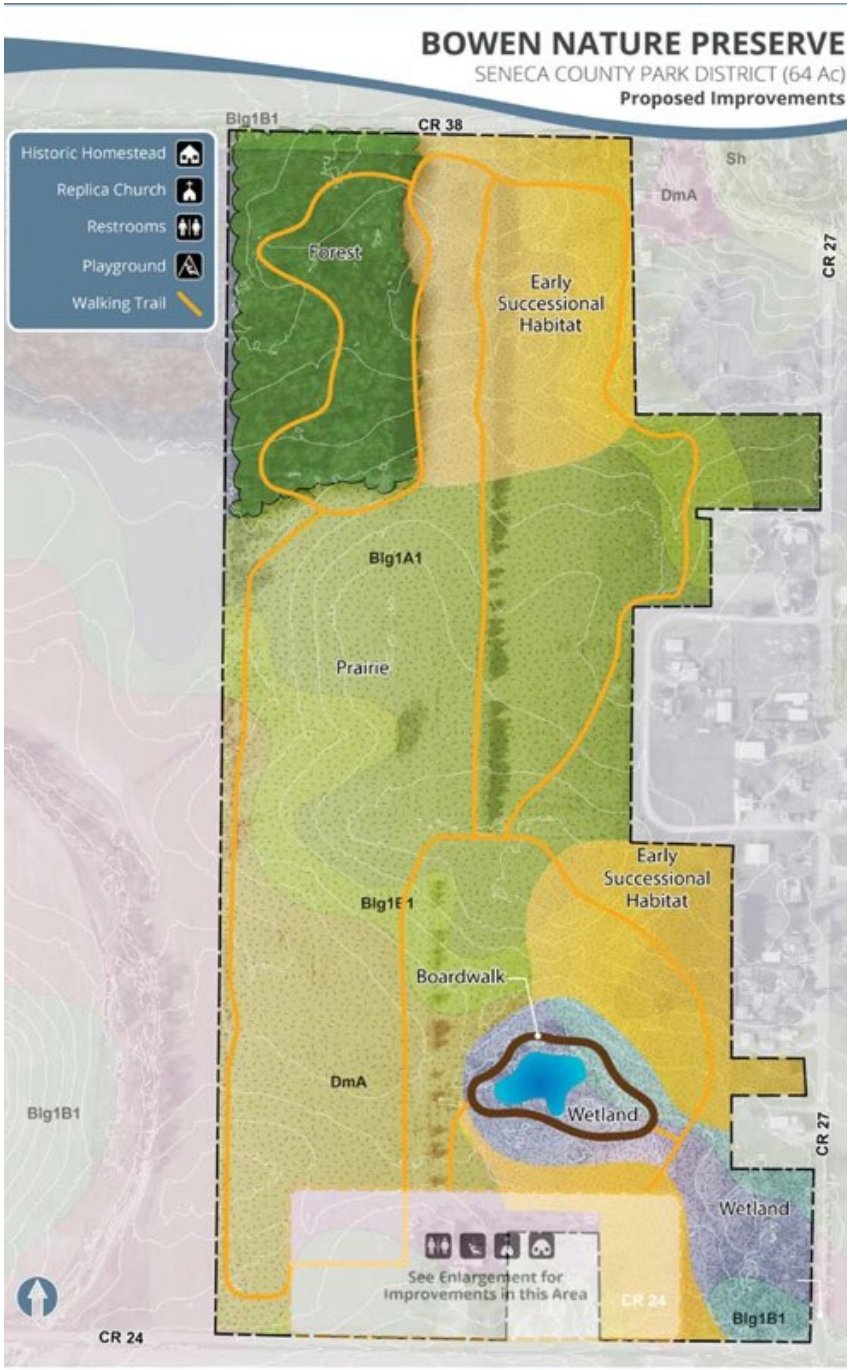
6.3.2 Cross-Promotion - Coordinate with agencies and organizations to cross promote events, facilities, and services.

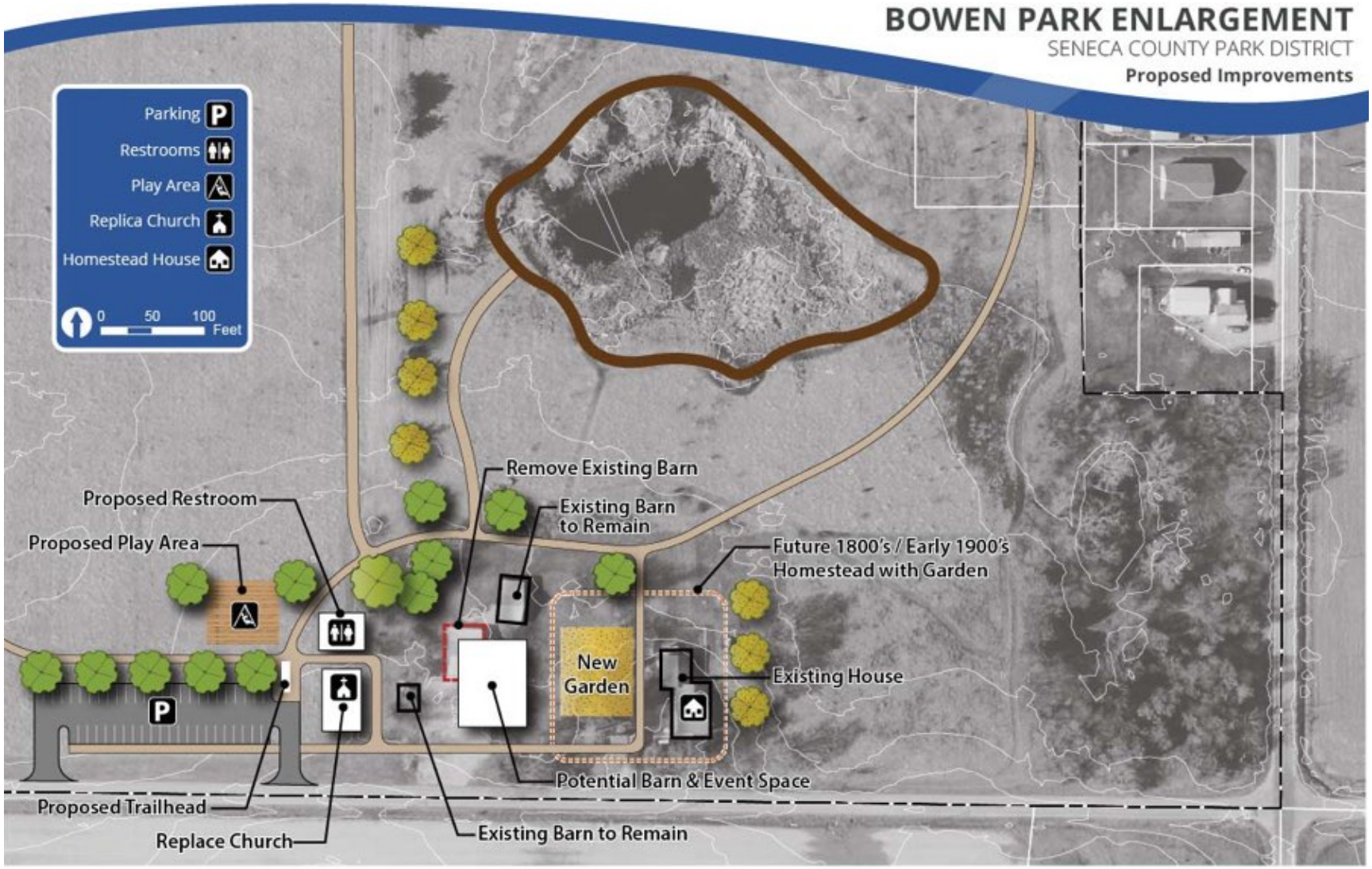
Conceptual Plans for Select Parks

Concept Plans for the following Park District Nature Preserves: Bowen, Garlo, Steyer and Zimmerman illustrate how various improvements can be made to improve amenities for guest comfort (e.g. restrooms), accessibility and recreation.





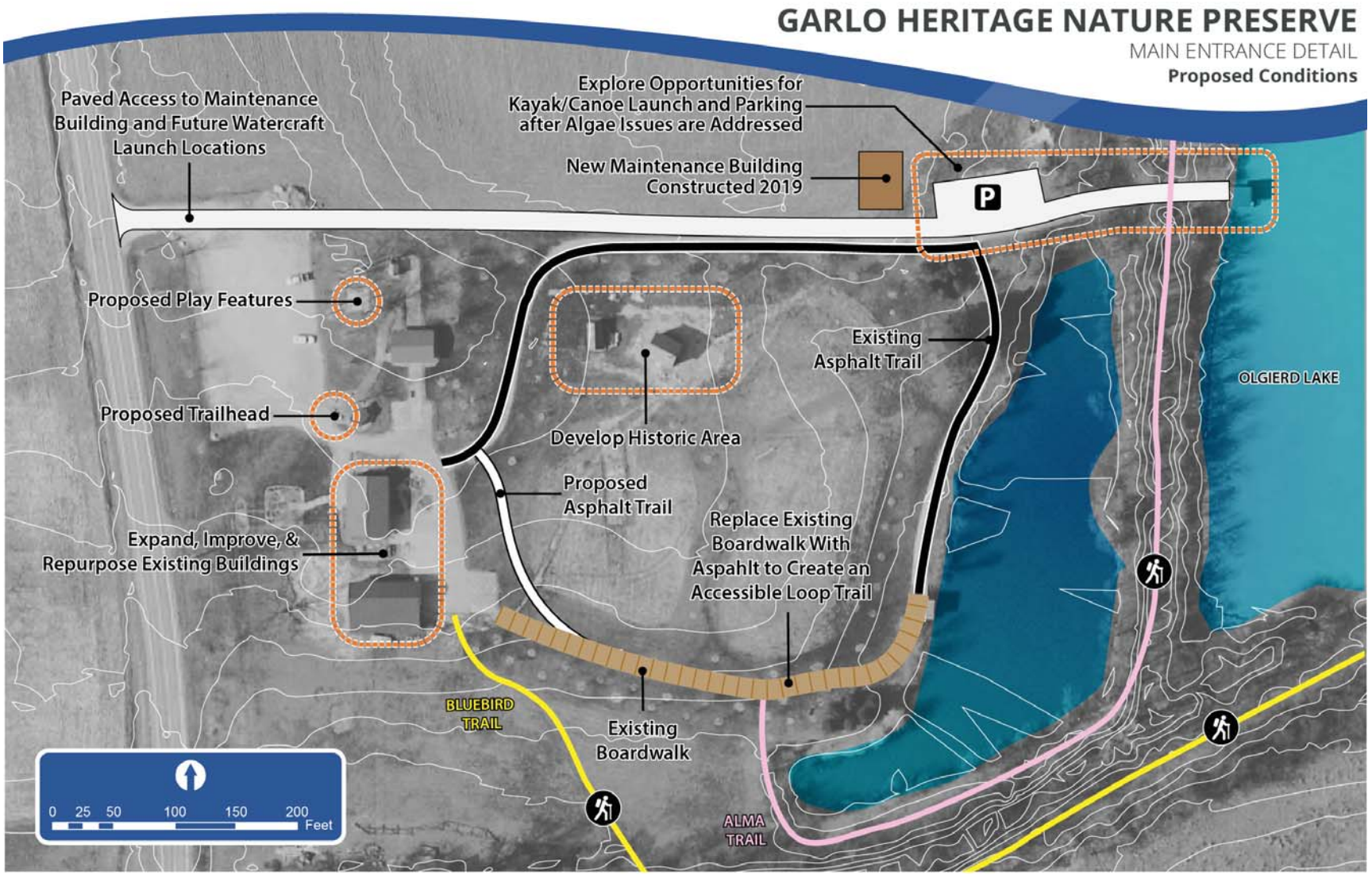

BOWEN NATURE PRESERVE
SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT (64 Ac)
Proposed Improvements
Historic Homestead
Replica Church
Restrooms
Playground
Walking Trail
Blg1B1
CR 38
Sh
DmA
CR 27
Forest
Early Successional Habitat
Blg1A1
Prairie
Early Successional Habitat
Blg1E1
Boardwalk
DmA
Wetland
Blg1B1
CR 27
Wetland
See Enlargement for Improvements in this Area
CR 24
Blg1B1
CR 24

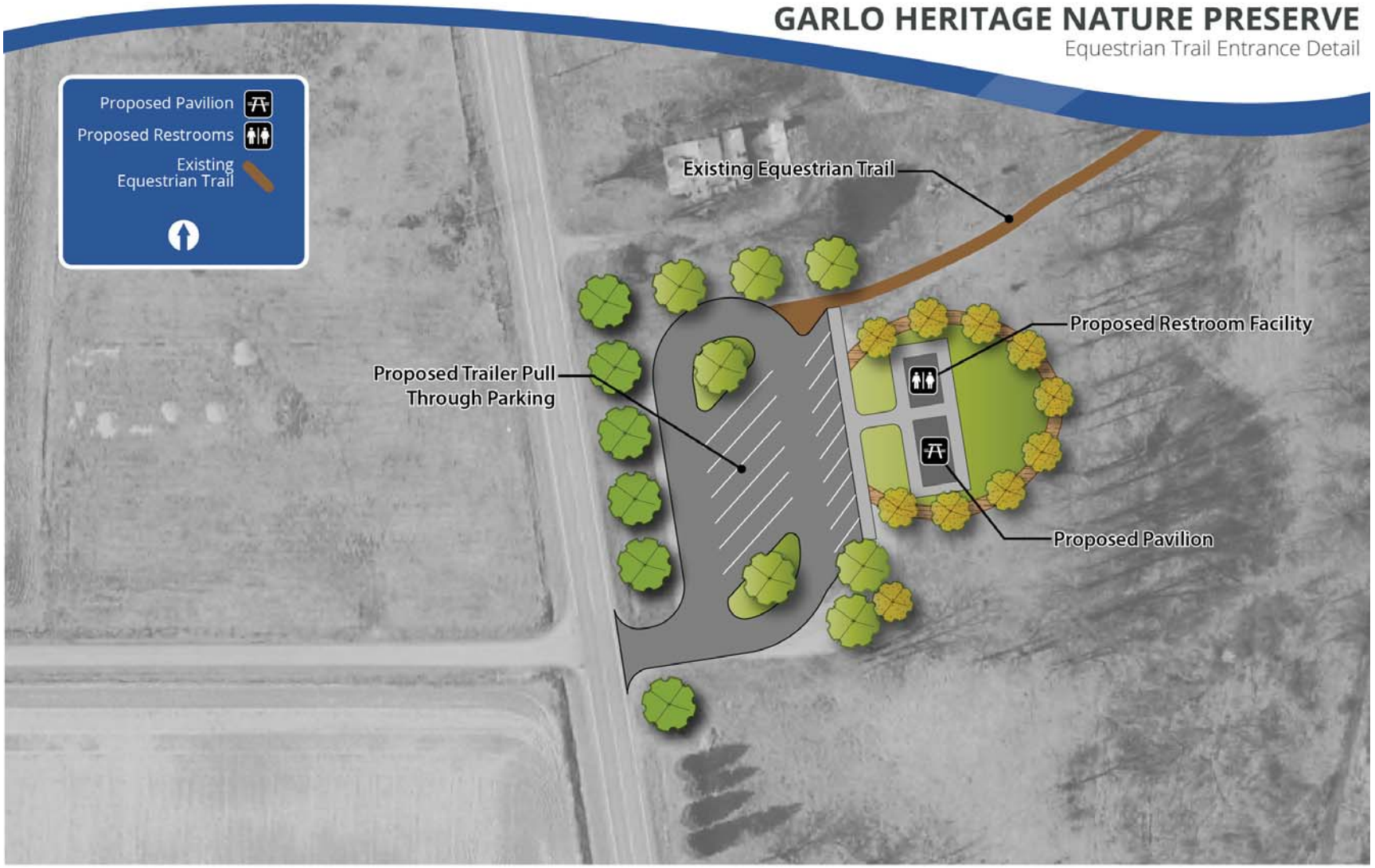

BOWEN PARK ENLARGEMENT
SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT
Proposed Improvements
Parking
Restrooms
Play Area
Replica Church
Homestead House
0 50 100 Feet
Remove Existing Barn
Proposed Restroom
Existing Barn to Remain
Proposed Play Area
Future 1800's / Early 1900's Homestead with Garden
New Garden
Existing House
Potential Barn & Event Space
Proposed Trailhead
Replace Church
Existing Barn to Remain





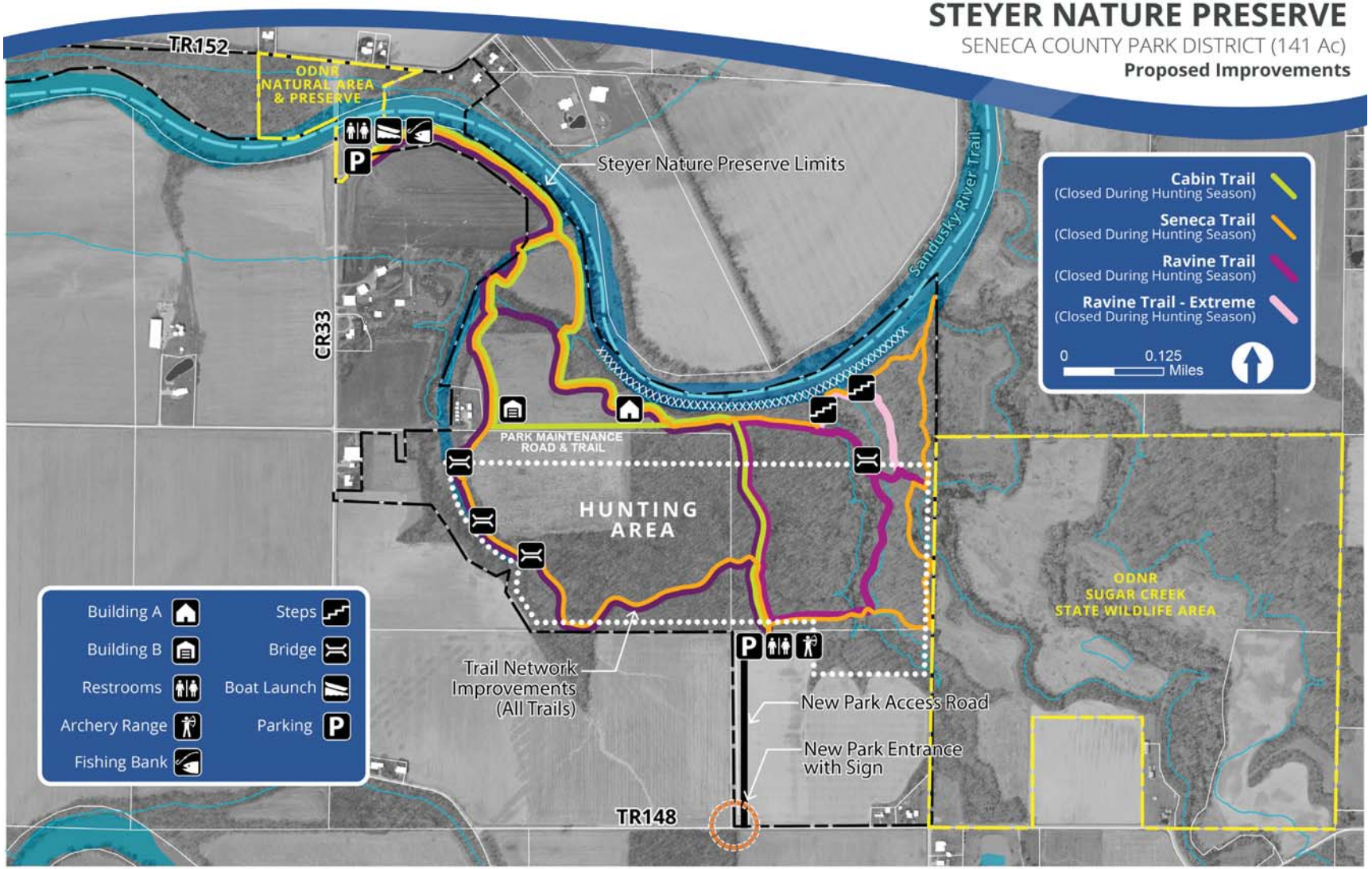

GARLO HERITAGE NATURE PRESERVE
SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT (292 Ac)
Proposed Conditions
Wetland / Marsh
Horse Trail (4.27 mi)
Alex Trail (0.2 mi)
Alma Trail (0.16 mi)
Bluebird Trail (0.58 mi)
Dolly Trail (0.3 mi)
Maria Trail (1.2 mi)
Paved Trail
Parking
0
0.1
0.2
Miles
TR58
Existing Forest
ODNR SILVER CREEK WILDLIFE AREA
ADVANCED HORSE TRAIL
Wetland / Marsh
See Equestrian Enlargement for Improvements in this Area
DOLLY TRAIL
OLGIERD LAKE
ALEX TRAIL
See Main Entry Enlargement for Improvements in this Area
ALMA TRAIL
Wetland / Marsh
ADVANCED HORSE TRAIL
MARIA TRAIL
BLUEBIRD TRAIL
Existing Forest
CR6

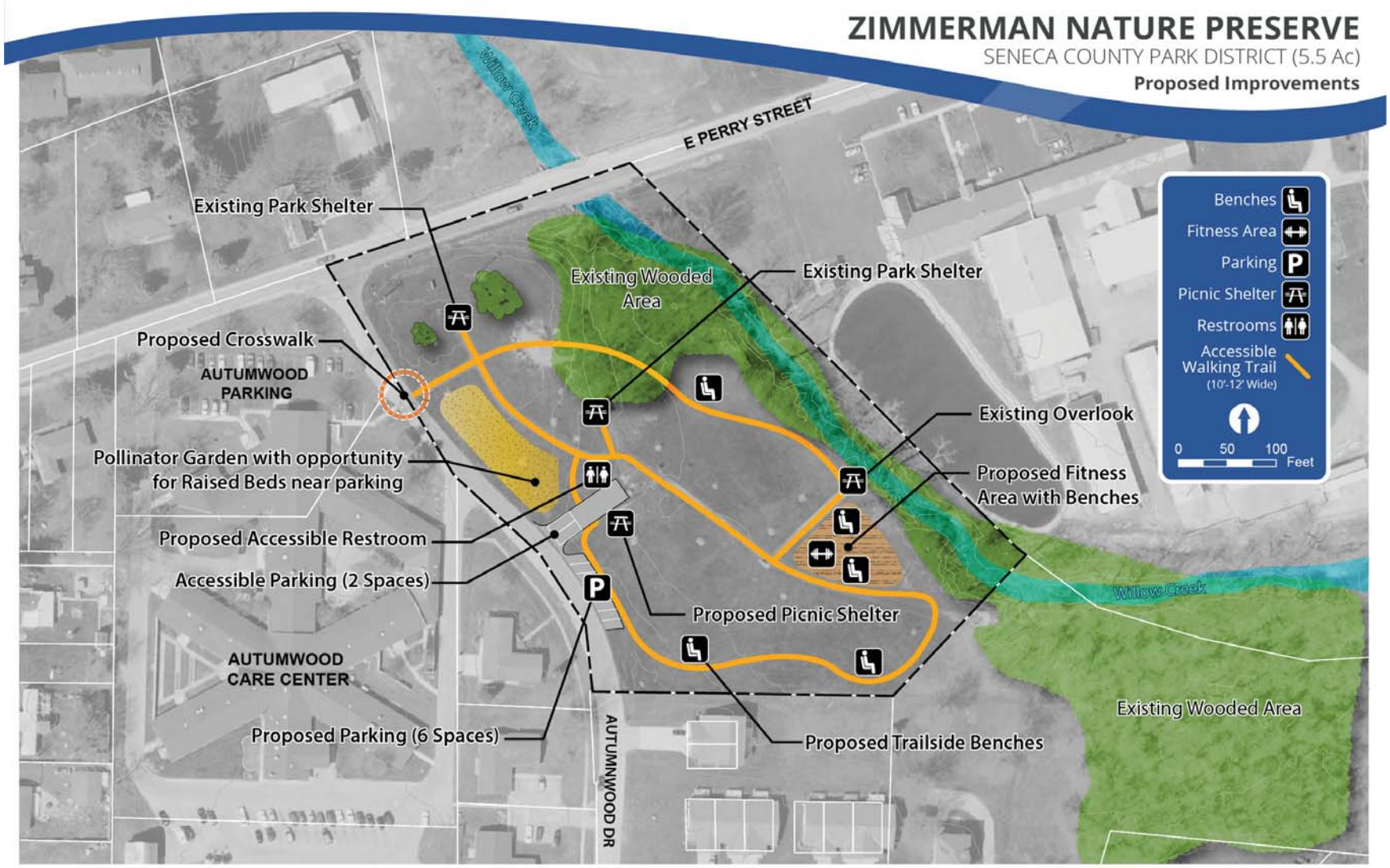

GARLO HERITAGE NATURE PRESERVE
MAIN ENTRANCE DETAIL
Proposed Conditions
Paved Access to Maintenance Building and Future Watercraft Launch Locations
Explore Opportunities for Kayak/Canoe Launch and Parking after Algae Issues are Addressed
New Maintenance Building Constructed 2019
P
Proposed Play Features
Proposed Trailhead
Develop Historic Area
Existing Asphalt Trail
OLGIERD LAKE
Proposed Asphalt Trail
Expand, Improve, & Repurpose Existing Buildings
Replace Existing Boardwalk With Aspahlt to Create an Accessible Loop Trail
BLUEBIRD TRAIL
Existing Boardwalk
ALMA TRAIL
0 25 50 100 150 200 Feet


GARLO HERITAGE NATURE PRESERVE
Equestrian Trail Entrance Detail
Proposed Pavilion
Proposed Restrooms
Existing Equestrian Trail
Existing Equestrian Trail
Proposed Restroom Facility
Proposed Trailer Pull Through Parking
Proposed Pavilion


Got Trail?
We've Got Traurmed!




STEYER NATURE PRESERVE
SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT (141 Ac)
Proposed Improvements
TR152
ODNR NATURAL AREA & PRESERVE
Steyer Nature Preserve Limits
Sandusky River Trail
CR33
Cabin Trail
(Closed During Hunting Season)
Seneca Trail
(Closed During Hunting Season)
Ravine Trail
(Closed During Hunting Season)
Ravine Trail - Extreme
(Closed During Hunting Season)
0
0.125
Miles
PARK MAINTENANCE ROAD & TRAIL
HUNTING AREA
ODNR SUGAR CREEK STATE WILDLIFE AREA
Building A
Building B
Restrooms
Archery Range
Fishing Bank
Steps
Bridge
Boat Launch
Parking
Trail Network Improvements (All Trails)
New Park Access Road
New Park Entrance with Sign
TR148


ZIMMERMAN NATURE PRESERVE
SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT (5.5 Ac)
Proposed Improvements
E PERRY STREET
Willow Creek
Existing Park Shelter
Existing Wooded Area
Existing Park Shelter
Proposed Crosswalk
AUTUMWOOD PARKING
Existing Overlook
Pollinator Garden with opportunity for Raised Beds near parking
Proposed Fitness Area with Benches
Proposed Accessible Restroom
Accessible Parking (2 Spaces)
Willow Creek
Proposed Picnic Shelter
AUTUMWOOD CARE CENTER
Existing Wooded Area
Proposed Parking (6 Spaces)
Proposed Trailside Benches
AUTUMNWOOD DR
Benches
Fitness Area
Parking
Picnic Shelter
Restrooms
Accessible Walking Trail
(10'-12' Wide)
0
50
100
Feet

CHAPTER 5.3: ACHIEVING TOMORROW...
FOR THE CITY OF TIFFIN

June 2020

TIFFIN
OHIO

CHAPTER 5.3: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR THE CITY OF TIFFIN

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) outlines six integrated goals and related objectives that all partners participating in the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan agreed are either directly or indirectly important to each one's vision for the future. This chapter is customized to address the goals, objectives and related strategies that are directly applicable to the city of Tiffin. The primary entities responsible for carrying out the strategies include the City and Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership. This chapter includes maps and photographs to help illustrate the strategies, as well as a matrix that indicates the priorities and anticipated time frame for beginning the various strategies. Many of the plan's recommendations will require additional study and the development of more detailed action steps that go beyond the scope of this project. The vision directly applicable to the city of Tiffin is:

Vision for Tiffin

To be a regional hub for business & industry, & a vibrant & active place for residents, employees & visitors: providing a range of housing to meet the needs of all households; continuing to celebrate & preserve our historic & cultural resources & recognize them as economic development drivers; working cooperatively with local institutions to foster learning & advancement; & supporting active lifestyles of residents.



This chapter focuses on the relevant strategies for the City to achieve the goals and objectives described in detail in Chapter 4. The numbering of Goals and Objectives is consistent with the numbering scheme in Chapter 4; therefore, wherever the Objectives are not numbered sequentially, it indicates that the missing objective is not applicable to the Tiffin.

CITY OF TIFFIN GOALS

- Ensure we are prepared to and successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national and global economy, with an emphasis on jobs and tax revenue.

1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy

- Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living and socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

2. Attractive, Desirable, & Livable Places (Built Environment)

- Create/foster a strong sense of community & ensure social needs are met with equitable programs & access to a wide range of community and public facilities and services.

3. Quality Community Facilities and Services

- Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human and economic well-being, provide recreation and educational opportunities for locals and tourists, and significantly enhance the character of our community.

4. Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

- Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure and utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current and future residents and businesses.

5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility, & Public Utilities

- Enhance and strengthen our community character and brand to: establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit; to instill community pride; and attract new residents, businesses and visitors.

6. Strong Community Character and Image

GOAL 1. PROSPEROUS & RESILIENT ECONOMY

Objective 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Tiffin-Seneca County Economic Partnership (TSEP) - Continue to engage in annual strategic planning for downtown and citywide economic and community development, including member surveys, one-on-one visits with stakeholders, and other community engagement methods as part of that process.

Economic Development Strategy – Update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Continue to engage in conversations contributing to the development of the CEDS. Make sure priority developments, including infrastructure needed to support economic development, are accurately listed in the needs analysis.



Organizations – Identify, develop and/or strengthen committees and/or organizations to oversee implementation of those plans.

Ongoing Dialogue – Continue to maintain and strengthen the dialogue and collaboration among elected officials with respect to development.

Objective 1.2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 Workforce Plans – Continue to work with partners on current efforts to prepare workforce development strategic plans. Two new "plans" are currently being developed – one is through the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative and another is through the 4CG initiative (4CG represents the 4 County Group 4 Collaborative Growth), which includes the economic development and workforce development organizations in Huron, Ottawa, Sandusky and Seneca Counties. These entities began working together in 2013 to collectively address the region's workforce challenges.

1.2.2 Collaboration – Continue to collaborate with other counties in ways that enhance and strengthen the Tiffin workforce.

1.2.3 Partnerships – Continue to strengthen and facilitate engagement, collaboration, and partnership between business, industry, education, and workforce and economic development.

1.2.4 Marketing – Improve efforts to effectively market jobs, career opportunities, and employers to the local community and regionally.

1.2.5 Training and Assistance – Continue to promote state and federal educational and workforce training programs, and develop and strengthen local administration of such programs and initiatives that increase the employability of the local workforce (workforce growth/ development was ranked as a high priority in the Comprehensive Plan survey and TSEP's annual membership survey, workforce growth/

development having been ranked the top priority overall for three years in a row, 2017-2019). Revise/update educational and workforce training programs, based on the recommendations of the current CEDS or other workforce development strategic documents.

1.2.6 Professional Development – Strengthen research, benchmarking, networking, and professional development opportunities for professionals and organizations engaged in workforce development. Include as a focus in the updated CEDS.

1.2.7 Attract Workers to Tiffin – Continue to develop, strengthen and maintain assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that attract and retain youth, retain residents and encourage in-migration of new residents.

1.2.8 Resources – Strategically allocate resources to maintain, strengthen and improve workforce development efforts. Increase resources as recommended in the current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

1.2.9 Remove Obstacles – Design and implement programs and needed support services such as transportation and childcare to remove obstacles for people who want to work in the city, as identified in the current CEDS and other initiatives such as the Bus Transit Plan.

Objective 1.3 SUITABLE LOCATIONS

1.3.1 Sites and Buildings – Continue to identify locations for future commercial and industrial development, including suitable locations that may require zoning changes. Continue to maintain a clearinghouse for vacant lots and blighted structures. Develop and maintain a sufficient inventory of potential and available commercial and industrial parcels and buildings to accommodate the current and future needs of existing and potential new businesses. Develop spec buildings as opportunities arise. Expand and add business parks where needed. Strategically



guide development of the best existing and potential sites and facilities for industrial and commercial development, taking existing or expandable infrastructure and compatible land uses into consideration.

1.3.2 Mixed-Use Infill – Continue to pursue/foster redevelopment opportunities in the historic central core of the city, look for redevelopment options that support appropriate scale mixed-use opportunities, particularly around the university campuses.



1.3.3 Riverfront Promenade Development - Encourage/facilitate the creation of a mixed-use development on the north side of Market Street along the Riverfront Promenade, as identified in the 2016 Downtown Tiffin Strategic Growth and Development Plan (referred to in this chapter as the 2016 Growth and Development Plan).

1.3.4 Capital Improvement Planning – Identify and plan for capital improvements needed to promote economic development to ensure adequate infrastructure capacity to support existing and new developments.

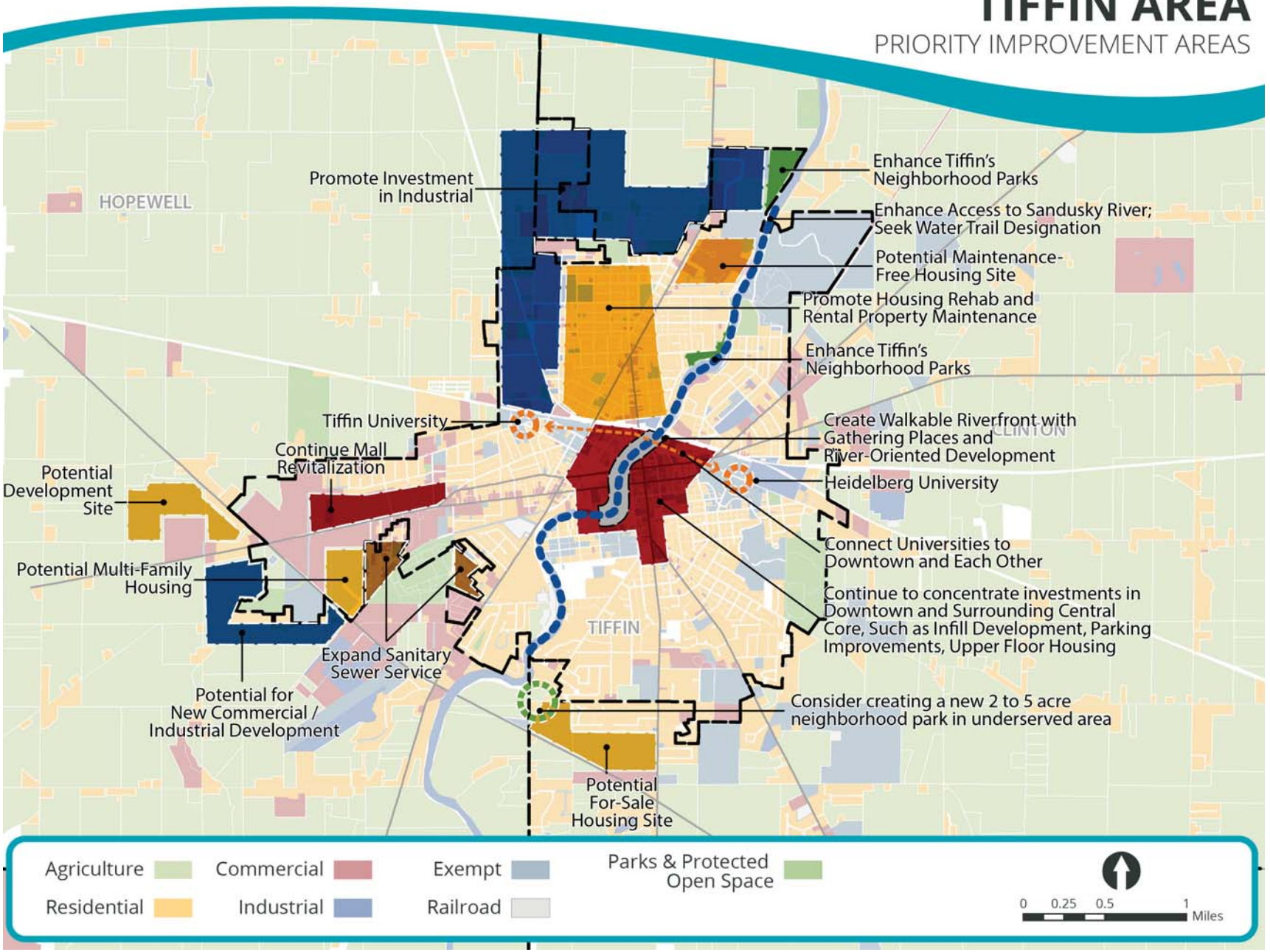
1.3.5 Infrastructure Improvements – Create and maintain an updated database inventory and condition assessment of existing infrastructure and utilities (including broadband access) and associated GIS maps. Make the information available in real time to the City and TSEP as well as current and potential businesses. Align the City's capital improvement plans and TSEP's strategic plans to ensure adequate infrastructure capacity to support existing and new development. Pursue grants and other incentives to defray costs. Consider Public/Private Partnership (P3) arrangements where feasible. See also Goal 5. Mobility, Accessibility and Public Utilities for additional discussion on transportation and utility strategies.

1.3.6 Redevelopment – Facilitate the revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas and obsolete sites and facilities through redevelopment, rehabilitation, and other available means. Prioritize re-use of existing brownfield or grayfield sites above greenfield sites.



TIFFIN AREA

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREAS



1.3.7 Interstate Access – Improve truck roadway connections between Tiffin/Seneca County and I-75 and I-80/90. See also Goal 5. Mobility, Accessibility and Public Utilities for additional discussion on transportation strategies.

1.3.8 Development Agreements – Review, and update as needed, existing annexation agreements between the City and surrounding townships in order to promote and foster economic development.

1.3.9 Zoning – Review and evaluate the Tiffin zoning code, revise as needed based on updated economic development strategies and potential annexation opportunities. Proactively rezone appropriate locations for new business/industrial development.

1.3.10 University Campus Zoning – Consider creating a new district to facilitate development on Tiffin University and Heidelberg University campuses.



Objective 1.4 RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION

1.4.1 Programs – Continue to maintain, improve and strengthen TSEP's formal business retention and expansion programs.

1.4.2 Incentives and Resources – Continue to maintain incentives, assistance programs, and other resources available (and modify and/or increase as needed). Promote the selective and coordinated use of public financing, tax incentives, and economic development programs to attract new businesses and retain existing and expanding businesses. Continue to promote incentive programs available through the state.

An example of a potential (but difficult to implement) program is a Workforce Guarantee program, which focuses on providing technical and financial assistance directly to employers to train their workers to ensure that their workers stay on the cutting edge of their industry.

1.4.3 Industry Groups – Continue to partner with existing industry groups such as the Chamber and the Industrial Management Council. Evaluate the need for new/expanded industry councils or groups that provide peer to peer networking and that work on identifying and addressing issues and concerns faced by that industry, especially issues related to growth, expansion and/or retention.

1.4.4 Targeted Industries – Update the strategy and criteria used to identify targeted industry sectors that match the areas' strengths, goals and assets. Update implementation strategies related to their support and attraction. Currently targeted industries include: Food & Agribusiness, Automotive, Industrial Machinery & Equipment, Education. See Objective 1.3 for additional information on suitable locations.

1.4.5 Retail Strategy – Create a strategy to strengthen retail businesses in Tiffin. Identify existing and desired retail clusters, develop an inventory and related map, and identify any needed infrastructure (including parking) to ensure each cluster's success. Conduct a market analysis to determine sales leakage, daytime and nighttime populations, available and underutilized space (and its condition or ability to be

immediately occupied). Work with the Chamber to establish localized retail committees (by geographic area) or teams of "champions" among local retailers who would be available to meet with people looking to relocate or open a retail store in Tiffin, as well as assist existing retailers. Promote retail attractions, retention, and expansion in ways that increase quality of life, decrease retail leakage, and increase sales tax revenue. Encourage retailers to create engaging window displays along commercial corridors (especially in downtown). Develop a "buy local" campaign to encourage residents to patronize local retail stores and local restaurants.

1.4.6 Marketing – Continue to effectively market the city's positive attributes, assets, and competitive advantages locally regionally, state-wide, nationally, and globally. Increase visibility to selective outside economic interests through targeted marketing.

1.4.7 Regulations – Create a business-friendly environment through appropriate regulations, assistance, etc., decreasing government regulations if necessary. Evaluate the zoning approval process (such as local site plan review conducted by the City Engineer), the building permitting process (administered through Richland County Building Inspection), and any other regulations to determine if there are ways to improve the process.

1.4.8 Technology – Continue to work with local businesses, both start-up and existing, so they are better equipped to stay current on the ways technology can be used to enhance business practices.

Objective 1.5 AGRIBUSINESS

1.5.1 Strategic Plan – Develop an agriculture and food industry cluster strategic plan that identifies ways to enhance and encourage local agricultural capacity and viability, including expanding value-added related accessory businesses and services. Assign a group or organization to oversee its implementation, and make it a priority in public policy.



1.5.2 Local Food – Continue to strengthen and develop assets, programs, and initiatives that encourage and promote local food. Identify locally owned restaurants, other entities such as the school districts that purchase food, and businesses that are engaged in the food industry. Quantify current demand for local food and encourage commitments from institutions (hospitals, schools, government agencies) and other large-scale public and private entities to buy locally. Convene discussions with them and local food growers to develop programs dedicated to developing local assets, encouraging "buying local," and strengthening the local food industry.

1.5.3 Farmers Market – Continue to implement the recommendations in the 2019 Tiffin Farmers' Market Plan to improve the Farmers' Market. Recommendations include: creating a stand-alone non-profit organization to oversee the Market; moving the Market to a more strategic and spacious location; hiring a part-time manager; expanding the calendar, including music and/or arts programming to increase appeal; and other ideas. See the 2019 Tiffin Farmers' Market Plan for additional details.

Objective 1.6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1.6.1 Entrepreneurship Plan – Develop an entrepreneurship strategic plan, as well as identify and/or develop the group(s) or organization(s) to oversee its implementation.

1.6.2 Entrepreneurship Facilities – Explore, evaluate, and successfully develop appropriate entrepreneurship facilities like incubators, accelerators, makerspaces, and pop-up stores, together with onsite support services, consulting, education, and financial support to new, developing, and experienced entrepreneurs and businesses.

1.6.3 Resources – Support the establishment and growth of entrepreneurial ventures by implementing a system of support services and educational opportunities specifically targeted to new and emerging entrepreneurs. Identify and effectively leverage and develop more resources for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and tech-based businesses. This includes resources available through the partnership with the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership and the Entrepreneurial Communities initiative.





1.6.4 Capital – Identify and develop more seed, early- and late-stage capital for entrepreneurs and newer businesses in the city (e.g. angel capital, seed and venture capital, government programs).

1.6.5 Entrepreneurship Marketplace – Facilitate the identification and vetting of existing and new potential entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurs and the connection of those opportunities and entrepreneurs with capital.

1.6.6 Culture – Continue to develop, maintain, and strengthen assets, programs, initiatives and organizations that foster and strengthen a local culture or ecosystem of entrepreneurship.

1.6.7 Collaboration – Continue to strengthen collaboration with local, regional and state educational institutions and intellectual property-creating and innovative local companies in order to help create new companies, attract companies, and/or help existing companies grow and increase their competitiveness.

Objective 1.7 DOWNTOWN TIFFIN

1.7.1 Plans – Continue to implement, and update as needed, the City's 2016 Growth and Development Plan, and other related strategic plans for Downtown Tiffin.

1.7.2 Private Investment Demonstration Projects - Encourage/facilitate the priority redevelopment projects identified in the 2016 Growth and Development Plan. (See Plan for additional details.)

» Tiffin Flats

» University Commons

» East Tower

1.7.3 Resources – Continue to maintain and strengthen the resources available to organizations and individuals working toward Tiffin's Downtown revitalization.







1.7.4 Incentive Programs: Continue to assist developers in successfully utilizing federal and state incentives, such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Historic Tax Credits (HTC), and New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) as well as local incentives such as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE), Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA), job tax credits, etc. Create new local programs to further incentivize reinvestment within the historic urban core for both commercial and residential re-development.

1.7.5 Zoning - Update the zoning code (as recommended in the Downtown Plan) to require new construction be developed in a manner that respects the traditional downtown main street character. The Plan notes that the existing zoning ordinance allows developers to erect buildings that are compatible to the existing traditional building style, but it does not require it. Recommendations for code updates include:

- Adopt context sensitive building development standards: create build-to lines to maintain street frontage; remove minimum lot area per dwelling unit in the downtown area; require quality building materials that are consistent with existing buildings; allow new modern uses; make vehicle-related uses conditional in C-3;
- Recognize the importance of the "frontage" on the river: establish specific setback requirements from the river and treat this area as a "front yard" rather than as a "rear yard"; consider converting to a form-based code or creating a form-based overlay for Downtown.
- Update the parking standards: require parking lots to be located to the side of the building and not in front of a building and limit the amount of frontage that can be devoted to parking; create maximum parking standards; require the provision of bicycle parking in addition to vehicular parking standards; consider electric charging stations in select municipal locations. Update the sign regulations: Investigate creating specific size, height and design standards for signage in the downtown area.
- Update the sign regulations: Investigate creating specific size, height and design standards for signage in the downtown area.

1.7.6 Public Open Space - Assist in developing public open space/ gathering spots in strategic locations to provide places for pedestrians to linger, rest, and socialize. Pursue grant funding. For example, according to the Downtown Growth and Strategic Redevelopment Plan, the distance along South Washington Street between Market Street and Five Points is 2,000 feet long and has the highest concentration of commercial uses in Downtown Tiffin. Successful business strips are typically no longer than 1,000 feet, therefore a gathering place is warranted along this stretch of South Washington Street. Consider a quality green space on the north side of the American Civil War Museum of Ohio.

1.7.7 Downtown Core Land Uses - Promote the creation of a downtown hub, (as recommended in the Downtown Plan): such as a bookstore or business incubator; activate first floors along Washington, Market, Perry and other strong commercial corridors with commercial uses; recruit more restaurants and nighttime businesses to promote downtown as "The Place" in Seneca County for food and beverage choices; encourage



upper floor residential through continued education of property owners regarding the use of historic tax credits. Encourage the use of awnings of quality design and materials per the Architectural Design Guidelines. See also 1.4.5 for additional retail strategies.

1.7.8 Public Private Partnerships (P3s) - Continue to look for local opportunities to create P3s (public-private partnerships) to construct both public and private projects.

1.7.9 Parking - Develop strategies to ensure sufficient parking and improve the perception of parking availability in Downtown Tiffin, as recommended in the Downtown Tiffin Parking Study and Garage Analysis. The study includes data and parking recommendations to help retain, expand and attract more businesses Downtown. The Plan discusses the pros and cons of constructing a parking deck. See Study for additional details.



GOAL 2. ATTRACTIVE, DESIRABLE & LIVABLE PLACES (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

Objective 2.1 HOUSING OPTIONS

2.1.1 Housing Development – Continue to promote, maintain, support, and facilitate the development of a sufficient quantity and desired variety of housing types, design, and price points, including rental and ownership opportunities for young professionals, first-time home buyers, families, students, retirees, and empty nesters. The recently completed Housing Opportunities Analysis concludes that between 330 and 450 new housing units are needed in the Tiffin area (Tiffin and surrounding townships), and underscores the importance of increasing the supply and variety of housing in order for the city to continue its successful economic development growth.

The analysis identifies the following as examples of potential housing sites:

- Site of former golf course off SR 53, 43 acres;
- Farmland w/frontage off Coe Street, 82 acres;
- Deer Ridge Phase II, off US 224 at Twp Rd 1197, 13 acres;
- Several parcels north of US 224 near CR 19, approx. 158 acres total;
- Downtown Urban Infill housing, 200 block of West Market Street, 2.6 acre site;
- Downtown Adaptive reuse for rental housing: Laird Arcade, former Gibson Hotel, multiple smaller buildings scattered throughout downtown;
- Multi-family housing sites, north of US 224, between US 224 and SR 18 (W. Market Street), near the shopping area, across from Mercy Hospital, approximately 58 acres total; and

» Farmland northwest of US 224 and west of W. Market Street/SR 18, multiple parcels, approximately 143 acres.

2.1.2 Housing Resources – Continue to participate in programs that help maintain and improve the housing stock and assist low-moderate income householders attain their desired housing, including home ownership. Continue to utilize the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Community Housing Improvement and Preservation Program (CHIP) to help maintain the housing stock and assist low-moderate income households become homeowners. Identify additional, and develop new programs and resources to help maintain and improve the housing stock.

2.1.3 Building Reuse – Develop regulations that support the innovative reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings for housing alternatives. Consider allowing as a conditional use the adaptive reuse of churches and other nonresidential buildings as multi-family in single-family neighborhoods, with specific criteria to ensure that the residential neighborhood is not impacted.



2.1.4 Creative and Context-Sensitive Design – Develop regulations that allow for/encourage creative design in the development of residential areas and structures. Encourage sensitivity to environmental considerations and natural conditions in the development of new housing and rehabilitation of existing housing.

2.1.5 Fair Housing – Continue to educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities.

2.1.6 Downtown Housing – Continue to encourage the creation of housing options that appeal to different lifestyles, ages, and income levels in order to support the downtown (and larger community). As recommended in the 2016 Growth and Development Plan, continue to encourage the rehabilitation of upper floors in downtown buildings as apartments. In addition, encourage the construction of one- and two-story infill townhomes (attached units) south of Madison Street to provide a transition to the single-family residential neighborhoods to the south. Provide new and modern infill housing along the north and south sides of Perry Street. These parcels represent unique opportunities for modern apartments or condominiums in the core of Downtown with access to Rock Creek and East Green.

2.1.7 Historic Homes Preservation – Encourage the preservation of older homes, especially houses that contribute to the character of the neighborhood. Create funding opportunities for rehabilitation of existing homes. Work with first-time home buyers (or even first-time commercial redevelopers) to find incentives to underwrite the costs of rehabilitating older structures.

2.1.8 Incentive Programs - Continue to educate local property owners and developers about federal and state incentives, such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Historic Tax Credits (HTC), and New Market Tax Credits (NMTC), Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA), job tax credits, etc. Create new programs to further incentivize residential development and investment in the city's neighborhoods .

Objective 2.2 DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

2.2.1 Sidewalks and Lighting – Conduct periodic "walking audits" to identify areas where sidewalk improvements are needed. Improve existing, and construct more sidewalks, street lighting, and other assets to create more walkable neighborhoods.

2.2.2 Alleys – Maintain, strengthen and develop programs, initiatives and organizations that enhance and improve the appearance, wayfinding, safety, and experience of walking through of alleys. Consider additional places where alley enhancements can be made similar to the improvements made to the alley located across from the Ritz Theatre between City Parking Lot #3 and South Washington Street, adjacent to 33 and 45 South Washington Street.

2.2.3 Public Safety – Maintain, strengthen and develop programs, initiatives and organizations that contribute to public safety and the safety of neighborhoods.



2.2.4 Neighborhood Appearance – Maintain, strengthen and develop neighborhood initiatives, programs and organizations that enhance the appearance of neighborhoods. Consider neighborhood-level branding initiatives.



2.2.5 Historic Neighborhoods - Consider creating new, local programs to further incentivize reinvestment within the city's historic neighborhoods. The 2016 Downtown Growth and Development Plan recommends focusing on transitional neighborhoods between downtown Tiffin and the campuses at Tiffin and Heidelberg Universities, such as the Fort Ball neighborhood, areas along Frost Parkway, Little Italy, and the Riverfront. Developments that focus on housing, urban livability, and pedestrian amenities are paramount. Promote residential and mixed-use infill development on vacant sites and redevelopment of obsolete sites. Create pedestrian amenities to link these neighborhoods and downtown. For additional details, see the 2016 Downtown Growth and Development Plan.

2.2.6 Fort Ball Neighborhood – Address flooding issues, rental conversions and demolition of structures for parking in the Fort Ball Neighborhood. The 2016 Downtown Growth and Development Plan notes that habitual flooding issues have negatively impacted the historic charm and prestige of the historic residential area, enabling speculators to acquire properties for rental student housing. The need for student parking near Tiffin University further contributes to the decline of the historic character of the neighborhood as neglected homes have been demolished for surface parking. As a neighborhood in transition, encourage Tiffin University to support this renewed interest in the neighborhood and work with new property owners and developers to revitalize the historic area. Encourage single-family home ownership along with hospitality uses such as the event center (train depot) and Bed and Breakfast lodging. For additional details, see the Plan.



Objective 2.3 VALUED CULTURE & PLACES

2.3.1 Downtown Tiffin – Maintain and improve the overall appearance of downtown through a variety of efforts: Continue and expand the Façade Enhancement Grant program; install decorative lighting and expand other streetscape improvements to all areas in downtown; celebrate and enhance the bridges that serve as gateways into downtown; enhance the riverfront; foster new commercial development, including hotels, that will strengthen the economy of downtown and the city overall.

2.3.2 Civic Core – Continue to concentrate public facilities such as the new Justice Center, and the numerous county agencies downtown. Celebrate this as a natural campus or destination for governmental functions, as recommended in the 2016 Downtown Growth and Development Plan. Implement the recommendations of the County Facilities Master Plan (currently underway). Other nearby public assets include the Tiffin-Seneca County Public Library and East Green. See the Plan for additional details.

2.3.3 Historic Preservation – Encourage development and protection of other areas of the city that have unique historic value, informing property owners of various programs available to help preserve historic properties. Create an inventory of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts and encourage their long-term preservation and celebration.

2.3.4 Gathering Places – Maintain and increase community meeting places, including outdoor gathering spaces to encourage visitors to linger and socialize.

Objective 2.4 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

2.4.1 Property Maintenance Code - Maintain and strengthen property code enforcement, including minimum maintenance standards.

2.4.2 Home Repair Resources - Conduct educational workshops to provide opportunities for homeowners to learn techniques for long-term maintenance. Consider providing an associated tool-lending library. The nonprofit Home Repair Resource Center in Cleveland Heights, OH is a good example of an organization that provides a number of services including helping homeowners with contractors, and other hands-on learning opportunities.



2.4.3 Rental Property Registry - Maintain up-to-date records on rental housing in Tiffin. Given the number of college students who choose to live off-campus, there are a number of single-family homes that have been converted from owner-occupancy to absentee ownership and rental occupancy. Regulating the condition and operation of rental housing is important to ensuring neighborhoods retain their attractiveness. Consider requiring owners of residential rental property to register their rental properties with the city.

2.4.4 Vacant Property Clearinghouse/Registration – Inventory, evaluate and map all vacant buildings in the city. Maintain an updated database of the inventory/assessment. Determine if any concentrations or other patterns are evident. Partner with the Seneca County Land Bank to create and maintain the inventory. Keep track of and monitor vacant properties citywide by establishing a vacant property registration. Work with a local contractor or developer to realistically determine which properties can be saved. Buildings that remain vacant or unoccupied for an extended period often become an attractive nuisance to children, a nesting place for rodents, an increased fire hazard and dumping place for garbage. Detroit conducted a massive inventory using volunteers and a standardized evaluation tool. The volunteer work directly informed and helped guide improvements to the City's demolition programs. Work with the County Land Bank or other similar organizations to (at a minimum) properly mothball solid properties until they can be sold, or (better) improve the buildings and offer them to buyers, either at subsidized or market rates, depending on renovation costs vis-à-vis property values in the surrounding neighborhood.

2.4.5 Demolition - Demolish vacant buildings that do not have historic value or do not make positive contributions to the neighborhood. Work with the Seneca County Land Bank on demolition. Work with Habitat for Humanity's ReStore to collect architectural materials and provide them at reasonable cost to property owners who are restoring buildings.

2.4.6 PACE – Educate residential and commercial property owners on the benefits of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs to make building improvements and improve energy efficiency.

Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

2.5.1 Compact Development – Promote new compact development on infill lots and adjacent to existing built up areas in order to reduce the need to expand development into important natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas, minimize the encroachment of residential development and expansion of water and sewer utilities into adjacent rural areas.

2.5.2 Zoning Review - Review the zoning districts and overlay districts, as well as the related uses and development standards, and the application of the districts on the zoning map to be sure the districts effectively promote and achieve the types of neighborhoods and commercial districts desired by the city. Evaluate regulations to assess their success relative to revitalizing urban areas and make changes accordingly. Update zoning regulations to encourage development of vacant or underutilized properties and brownfield sites and to ensure protection of historic districts and properties and revitalization of commercial areas, in particular the historic central business district.



2.5.3 Subdivision Regulations – Develop and/or update subdivision regulations as needed to ensure that new residential subdivisions meet contemporary standards.

GOAL 3. QUALITY COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Objective 3.1 Foster INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

3.1.1 Special Interest Groups – Continue to support organizations, groups, programs, initiatives and assets focused on addressing and serving the interests and needs of particular groups that reflect particular segments of the city's diverse population (e.g. young professionals, international students, religious groups, 4H, etc.) Support young professionals' groups as part of labor recruitment efforts and to bolster excitement in the community.

3.1.2 Connection and Interaction – Continue to support organizations, groups, programs, initiatives and assets that encourage interaction and foster connection between representatives of different groups and/or diverse individuals, such as organizations that pair old and young residents to support more volunteer efforts from all students to help elderly residents.

3.1.3 Events – Continue to accommodate and support events that support, foster and celebrate diversity, inclusivity and uniqueness of individuals in the community (e.g. CultureFest, International Dinner).

3.1.4 Education and Training – Continue to support programs and initiatives that educate about, and promote diversity and inclusivity on all levels (income, gender, race, culture, etc.).

3.1.5 ADA Transition Plan – Identify physical and psychological barriers throughout the community and create a work plan to address identified deficiencies per guidelines established by the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.





Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

3.2.1 Graduation Rates – Continue to support local schools in their efforts to increase the quality and capacity of public and private K-12 educational facilities, celebrate teaching excellence and increase the percentage of high school students graduating with college credit and/or an industry credential.

3.2.2 Skilled Trades – Continue to support increased variety and availability of technical and vocational study programs.

3.2.3 Library – Continue to support community-wide educational programs via the Tiffin-Seneca Public Library. Encourage the public library to work with school libraries as well as those at Heidelberg and Tiffin Universities to share resources, conduct community programs, and develop relationships with and programs for all residents.

3.2.4 Improved Access – Continue to assist in expanding access to programs to assist children from low to moderate income households.

3.2.5 Higher Education – Continue to support physical, economic and social connections to Tiffin University, Heidelberg University and Terra State Community College.



3.2.6 Theater – Continue to support the Ritz Theater, as well as K-12 school programs and theaters at Heidelberg (Gundlach) and Tiffin University (Osceola) to engage residents in learning about the theater and participating in their productions. Similarly, partner with respective Fine Art programs to advance education about other forms of art.

Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING

3.3.1 Walkability - Regularly conduct walkability audits for all public spaces to assess accessibility challenges, then prioritize and undertake projects as resources permit. See also 2.2.1.

3.3.2 Comfort – Continue to provide and maintain public restroom facilities in areas where events are regularly hosted.

3.3.3 City Parks – Improve city parks, recognizing their importance in attracting and retaining residents. Evaluate current park amenities and locations for service coverage across the city.

3.3.4 City Trails – Continue to maintain and improve the existing network of trails in the city. See the recently completed Active Transportation Plan for detailed recommendations on improving the city's trails.

3.3.5 Local History – Where applicable, tell Tiffin's story through interpretive signage, public arts, or other media in public spaces. Example: tell the story of Fort Ball through interpretive public art at various locations in the neighborhood. Conduct fun scavenger hunts to encourage residents and visitors to have fun, be active, and learn about their community.

3.3.6 Cooperative Programs – Build strong intra-park coordination between the City, the County Park District and others to provide diverse programs and offer a broad range of facilities and experiences to city residents.





Objective 3.4 HEALTH & WELLNESS

3.4.1 Behavioral and Mental Health – Continue to support and collaborate with local health care providers to campaign for education, awareness and support of mental health and behavioral health concerns.

3.4.2 Hospital and Medical Coordination – Continue to support coordinated efforts with hospitals, other medical professionals to increase the number of programs and facilities to address mental and behavioral health issues including recovery programs in the ongoing struggle with drug addiction.

3.4.3 Access – Work on increasing residents' financial and transportation access to health and wellness facilities, such as the Tiffin Y, Allen Eiry Senior Center and other fitness facilities.

3.4.4 Safe Communities – Continue to strengthen partnerships between Tiffin Police Department and local schools and neighborhoods using programs such as "Lunch with a Cop" or Neighborhood Watch organizations.

3.4.5 Emergency Services – Continue to maintain police and fire departments with updated equipment. Foster an environment that helps maintain emergency/safety services.

Objective 3.5 FOOD SECURITY & ACCESS

3.5.1 Farmers' Market - Develop a Community Garden to support educational efforts including Seed to Table programs, as recommended in the City's Farmers' Market Plan. Use these and other similar programs to educate families on how to supplement their grocery budgets with home-grown options.

3.5.2 Urban Gardening - Encourage urban gardening. From a regulatory perspective, ensure supportive zoning and other regulations. From an educational perspective, work with local schools and both Universities as well as local chapters of the FFA, 4H, Boy and Girl Scouts and other service organizations that focus (in whole or part) on learning agricultural and horticultural skills to educate residents on proper techniques and practices for growing, canning and/or storing home grown food options.







GOAL 4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – VALUED NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION

4.1.1 Priority Conservation Areas - Identify and agree on areas of the city where critical environmental resources (such as floodplain and riparian areas) exist and have the highest priority for conservation efforts. See Tiffin Priority Conservation Map on the next page for a map of environmental conditions that either are constraints to development or are environmentally sensitive and therefore worthy of conservation and even preservation/acquisition.

4.1.2 Planned Unit Development Design – Review and evaluate the existing Planned Unit Development regulations (Chapter 1173); update the regulations to include criteria for ensuring the required open space adequately preserves key natural areas such as riparian corridors, woodlands, and wetlands, in the order of priority determined by the City. Ensure that the approval process and density allowances make this an attractive form of development.

4.1.3 Tree Preservation/Restoration – Continue to plant and protect trees to first maintain and then increase canopy coverage. Consider adopting a tree preservation/conservation ordinance that would require large wooded areas to be preserved to the extent practicable, especially for new residential development. Work with groups such as the Shade Tree Commission to educate residents and commercial property owners to select the best species for individual sites and educate property owners on proper tree care and maintenance.

Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE

4.2.1 City Parks – Regularly audit each city park to ensure it is properly maintained and look for ways to improve aesthetics and/or accessibility. Engage neighborhood residents in conversation to identify needs, discuss safety concerns, and overall vision for each park.

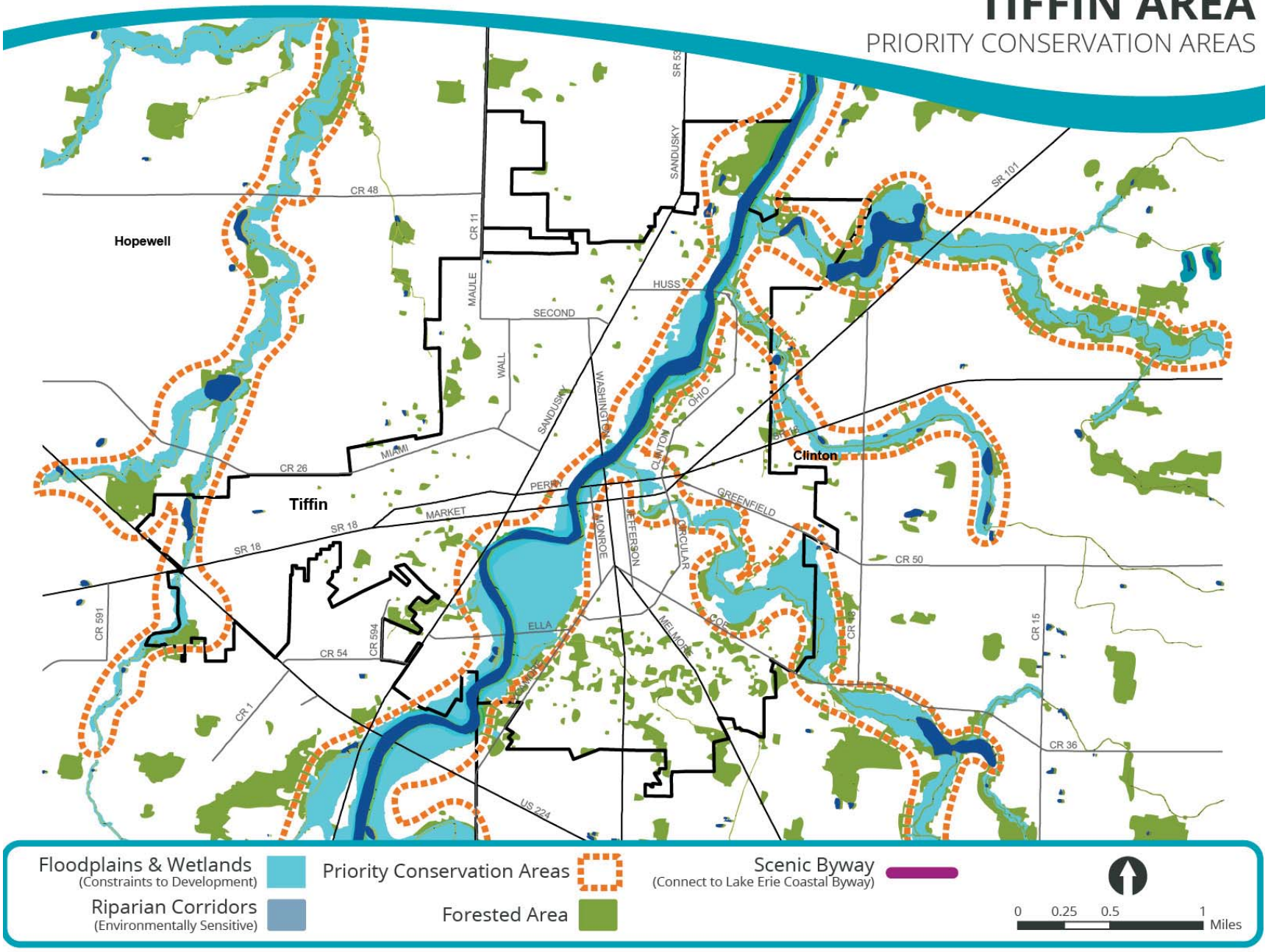
4.2.2 River Access – Provide access points to the Sandusky River at various points throughout the city to allow residents and visitors to engage with and enjoy the river for fishing, canoeing/kayaking (where depths permit), and other recreational pursuits. Create scenic overlooks to allow visitors to engage with the River in a more passive way.

4.2.3 State Water Trail – Continue to work with stakeholders throughout the county to designate the Sandusky River as a state Water Trail. Develop access points and supportive services and businesses within the city limits.



TIFFIN AREA

PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS



Objective 4.3 CLEAN AIR & WATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

4.3.1 Low-Impact Development (LID) – Promote low impact development, green infrastructure and other best practices that help preserve and enhance our sensitive natural areas and important natural resources.

4.3.2 Stormwater Management – Continue to support and advance effective stormwater management techniques that promote groundwater recharge, establish riparian buffers, and employ best management practices. Reestablish vegetative buffers in downtown near the Sandusky River to help filter runoff from streets and parking areas.

4.3.3 Regulations – Continue to require developers and contractors to include proactive stormwater management techniques in their site plans. Regularly inspect building sites to ensure sediment reduction techniques are being implemented, see also Objective 4.1. Establish mandatory setbacks from watercourses and wetlands in order to protect their beneficial functions in managing storm water, and require green "islands" in parking areas as a green alternative to help manage storm water.

4.3.4 Site Design – Continue to encourage site design that protects natural terrain and groundwater, preserves or restores significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporates native vegetation into landscape plans. Examine regulations to ensure developers are providing adequate drainage and storm water management facilities that accommodate all potential storm water runoff and reduce the potential for flooding, particularly in flood prone areas such as the areas around Ella Street, behind the Tiffin Mall, the north end near the River (Humane Society), etc.

4.3.5 Education – Educate the general public on the benefits of green infrastructure. Hold classes for home-owners to educate them on how



green stormwater management practices can be included in everyday life. Work with local schools incorporate these lessons into regular biology and other life science class curriculum. Educate residents and contractors about the City's newly created Stormwater Management Program, including Pre- and Post-Construction permitting requirements.

Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE

4.1.1 Sandusky River – Continue to support regular River clean-ups and invasive species removal campaigns, as undertaken by the Shade Tree Commission.

4.4.2 Combined Sewer Separation – The City began separating combined sanitary and storm sewers in 2002, and is continually working to meet Ohio EPA mandates governing overflows into the Sandusky River. Continue on this path to implement the Long-Term Control Plan as renegotiated with Ohio EPA, reducing the amount and quality of discharges into the River.

4.4.3 NPS-IS Plan – Work with the County and Sandusky River watershed organizations to develop and implement a Non-Point Source Pollution Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS) to reduce sediment and pollutant movement into the Sandusky River. Prepare an Urban Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Strategy specifically for use within the city. Include a map of Priority Nutrient Reduction Areas. An up-to-date

strategy/plan is an eligibility requirement for some funding sources designed to help reduce and/or eliminate pollutants in the River and watershed, such as Section 319 funds.

4.4.4 Water Quality Attainment – Continue to work towards full Ohio EPA water quality attainment status.

4.4.5 Home Sewage Treatment Systems – Work with all residential property owners who are not served by the City's sanitary sewer system, such as those along Crayon Street, to abandon their septic systems and tie into city lines. Look for grants and other funding opportunities to help reduce costs.

Objective 4.5 GREEN ENERGY

4.5.1 Alternative Energy – Encourage renewable and alternative energy production. Educate residents, property and business owners about different options, such as solar or geothermal. Ensure the proper placement and provision of energy infrastructure component throughout the city. Review the Tiffin Zoning Code to ensure it allows for placement of alternative energy infrastructure in both residential and commercial/industrial areas. Consider adding allowances for renewable energy facilities such as solar fields on otherwise unusable land, such as brownfields, and ensuring that energy systems geared for on-site use can be easily erected on top of structures like rooftops (example: Owens



Corning Headquarters surface parking lots treatment, Toledo, OH). Work with local electric companies to more easily integrate alternative energy sources into the energy grid.

4.5.2 LEED (Leader in Energy and Environmental Design) – Encourage structures, whether new or those being rehabilitated, to incorporate the necessary features to become LEED certified. Investigate having city staff become LEED accredited professionals.

Objective 4.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.6.1 Recycling – Continue to promote recycling with an emphasis on reuse and waste reduction. Work with Ottawa-Sandusky-Seneca Joint Solid Waste District to publicize and promote the two recycling drop-off points in Clinton Township, which are the ones most convenient to Tiffin residents.

4.6.2 Waste Removal – Continue to provide effective, efficient and affordable solid waste reduction services and removal.

4.6.3 Regulations – Adopt standards that eliminate the initial production of wastes and pollution at the source.

GOAL 5. ENHANCED MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY & PUBLIC

Objective 5.1 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

5.1.1 Systematic Maintenance – Keep the city's transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair by maintaining and upgrading the existing network, through asset management planning and innovative maintenance strategies that take into account lifecycle costs, management strategies, long-term operational and financial considerations. Procure more funds for maintenance and repair.

5.1.2 Downtown Street Improvements - Implement the recommendations in the 2016 Downtown Growth and Development Plan for several specific streets. See Plan for more details.

- **Court Street -** Improve Court Street with wide sidewalks, street trees, and decorative street lighting.
- **Gateways -** Establish gateways at the following locations: Perry Street at Rock Creek, Market Street at Bridge, and South Washington Street at Bridge.
- **Street Conversions –** The idea of converting Downtown Tiffin's one-way streets to two-way streets was first raised in the 2010 Strategic Plan. Consider converting Monroe and Jefferson Streets to two-way traffic. Provide parallel on-street parking along both sides of these streets where the width of the road is sufficient.



» **South Washington Street –** Continue existing streetscape enhancements from the core of the downtown further south along Washington Street to the Five Points intersection. Improvements should include bumpouts to minimize pedestrian crossing distances at intersections, decorative street lights, specialty pavements, street trees and furniture. Where surface parking lots exit along the corridor, provide a 4-foot high screen consisting of masonry wall, decorative fence, evergreen hedge or combination thereof.

» **Five Points Improvements –** Enhance the intersection in the spirit of a European piazza; replace existing signal posts and wires with decorative signal mast arms; provide decorative light fixtures to match the downtown lighting standard; repair and replace pedestrian pavements and provide specialty paving and patterns to match the streetscape standards; provide planters at key locations to screen surface parking areas at various concerns, provide street streets in these planter locations; enhance the historic façade of St. Joseph Catholic Church with accent lighting.

» **Bridge Enhancements -** Improve the pedestrian zones along the Perry Street and Market Street bridges. See Plan for more details. This may include widening the pedestrian walk zones, specialty planters, and lighting. These bridge improvements will enhance the pedestrian connections from west of the River including Tiffin University. In addition, these improvements along with East Riverfront improvements will help establish walking loops along the Riverfront of varying distances. Consider adding LED uplighting with various color options to accent the bridges after dark.



5.1.3 Bridges – Continue to regularly evaluate and prioritize bridge repairs, and replace when needed, as on Ella Street.

Objective 5.2. ROADWAY NETWORK

5.2.1 Fair Lane Extension – Continue to prioritize and research funding options for this $8 million, multi-phase road and signalization project designed to improve access to a planned 60-acre commercial site.

5.2.2 Tiffin-Fostoria Industrial Connector – Continue to prioritize and research funding options for this $7 million project designed to create a meaningful connection between Tiffin's and Fostoria's industrial sectors.

5.2.3 Access Management – Develop access management policies and regulations to limit points of ingress/egress, and maintain the level of service on commercial corridors.

5.2.4 Transportation Networks – Continue to support public transportation networks (Seneca Crawford Area Transportation, Seneca County Commission on Aging, Seneca County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Seneca County Veterans Services, Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services, and Flat Rock Homes, Inc.) and other multi-modal transportation alternatives (biking, walking paths, etc.) to link population centers, areas with employment opportunities, and other destinations that are economically feasible.

5.2.5 Collaboration – Continue to collaborate with federal, state, and local planning agencies and transportation departments to enhance transportation networks in the region. Participate in regional transportation summits and planning workshops to ensure local needs are included and prioritized on regional plans.

Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

5.3.1 Improve Amenities for Pedestrians and Bikers - The 2016 Growth and Development Plan offers recommendations to support pedestrian and other non-motorized circulation amenities in the downtown:



Public realm improvements - Provide benches, designated bicycle parking areas, pedestrian resting areas, improved lighting, landscaping, murals and other amenities to make pedestrians and cyclists want to linger in the downtown.

Pedestrian Crossings - Use mid-block crossings and bumpouts at intersections to improve pedestrian crossings; erect a pedestrian bridge to connect Perry and Miami Streets and increase connectivity of downtown to Tiffin University and the Fort Ball neighborhood.

Bike amenities – Create a bike share program to increase downtown accessibility, reduce automotive traffic, and increase healthy lifestyles. Make convenient, safe, attractive links for students to access downtown. Provide public bicycle parking in lots and on sidewalks and require new developments to provide bike parking. Include sharrows and consider bike lanes during road reconstruction and restriping plans.

5.3.2 Rock Creek Trail – Complete the remaining portions of the Rock Creek Trail to provide connectivity from Hedges Boyer Park to the Sandusky River. Remove invasive plant species throughout the corridor with grant funding and/or volunteer labor. For additional information on this and all the city's trails, see the recently completed Active Transportation Plan.

5.3.3 Sharrows – Development infrastructure that encourages people to commute to work and/or school on bike or foot. Create more bike lanes and sharrows throughout the city to promote a more active lifestyle for residents, reduce congestion and wear on road surfaces, and make the community more attractive to people from outside the community who are looking to relocate.

Objective 5.4 AIR & RAIL NETWORK

5.4.1 Connections – Make connections between Tiffin's many state and federal highway routes and its rail and air resources. Use these connections to improve both leisure travel and commercial shipping/ economic development.

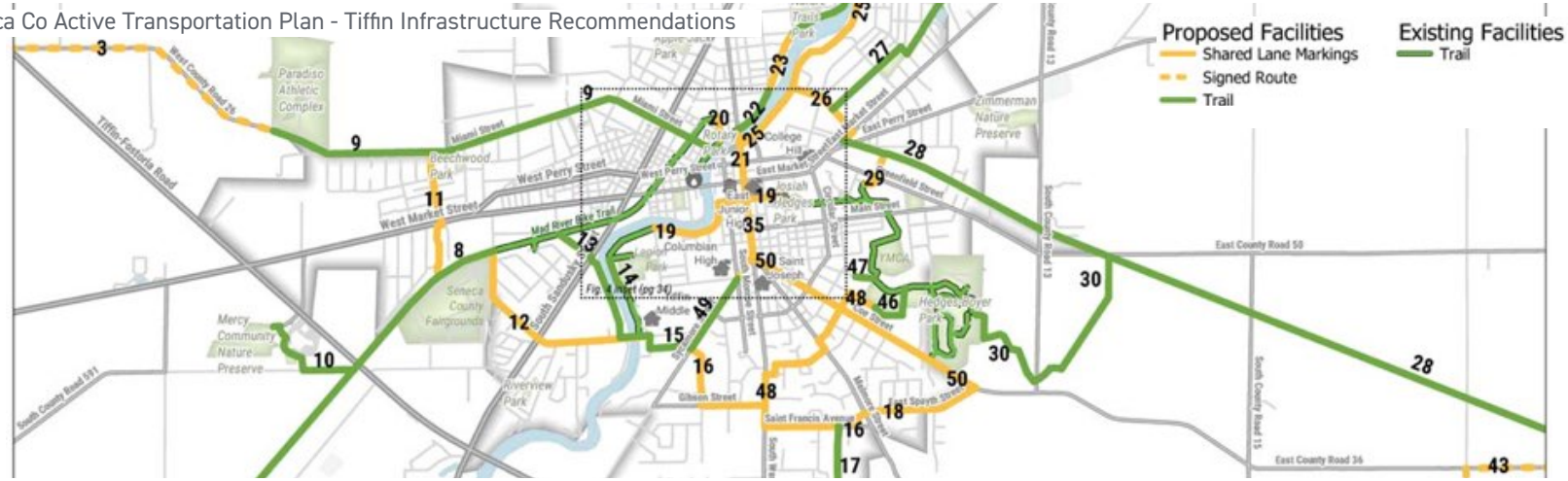
Objective 5.5 SMART COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGIES

5.5.1 Broadband – Support the improvement of reliable and affordable high-speed internet so that it is easily accessible for all residents.

5.5.2 WiFi – Develop wireless internet connections and hot spots for Downtown and other gathering places throughout the community.

5.5.3 Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations – Encourage the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at strategic locations throughout the community. Pursue grant funding to help offset costs.

Seneca Co Active Transportation Plan - Tiffin Infrastructure Recommendations



Objective 5.6. WATER & WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

5.6.1 Sanitary Sewer – Continue to maintain reasonable wastewater collection rates. Pursue grant funding to help offset costs for improvements to the city's sanitary and stormwater collection and treatment systems.

5.6.2 Future Development - Plan and develop water and wastewater infrastructure based on projected future need for targeted locations.

5.6.3 Wastewater Facility Plan – Continue to regularly update the City's wastewater facility plan. At present, it is a "best practice" recommendation to also produce and maintain an Asset Management Plan, mirroring what is required for water treatment plants. While not yet an official requirement to qualify for financial assistance through DEFA (Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance), industry "insiders" see indications pointing toward an AMP requirement in addition to the current facility plan in the future.

5.6.4 Wastewater Treatment Facility – As the City's wastewater treatment plant is nearing the end of its functional life cycle, next steps should include assessing the current rate structure to determine if additional increases are needed, projecting future needs based on growth patterns and future economic development plans, investigating and applying for funding opportunities, and designing a new plant that will meet the future needs of the city.



GOAL 6. STRONG COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE

Objective 6.1. CELEBRATE Tiffin

6.1.1 Celebrate Tiffin – Continue to identify and develop an inventory of reasons why Tiffin is a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business. Emphasize the city's history and heritage. Promote recreational, educational, and investment opportunities.

6.1.2 Volunteers – Develop a volunteer recruitment and community engagement strategy that not only recruits people to help with the various activities in town, but also promotes the wide variety of fun recreational and entertainment options available.

Objective 6.2. Engage in BRANDING AND PROMOTION

6.2.1 Brand Development – Continue to develop and implement the community brand developed in the 2018 branding process - in terms of graphic design and guidelines, narrative and messaging, and connection between the brands.

6.2.2 Marketing and Promotion – Advertise Tiffin activities and attractions to townships, villages and cities in Seneca County, throughout the northwest Ohio region, the state, country and globally. Increase exposure to all assets, using a broad range of media including: social media, print, radio, television, local newsletters as well as various partners' websites.

6.2.3 Demolition – Remove blighting influences within the city.

6.2.4 Signage – Develop and install clear entry, wayfinding, and other signage throughout the city, using the accepted brand standards, to establish community identity, enhance the resident, visitor, student, and worker experience in the city, and point the way to destinations within the city limits as well as attractions throughout Seneca County.

Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

6.3.1 Strategic Plan – Develop and implement (and continually update) a strategic plan for tourism development in Tiffin.

6.3.2 Resources - Ensure the organization(s) tasked with implementing the tourism strategic plan have the resources necessary to properly carry out recommendations.

6.3.3 Public Art – Commission pieces of public art and install them at various locations throughout the community. Strongly consider using local artists, not only to build community pride, but also to celebrate the talent residing in the city. Particularly in the downtown, prepare a strategy to unify art installations and at-related programming.

6.3.4 Theater – Work with the Ritz, Gundlach, and Osceola Theaters to publicize shows within the city and throughout the region.

6.3.5 Restaurants – Continue to work with local restaurateurs to publicize local food events (such as Taste of Downtown Tiffin) and destination dining experiences (such as The Empire at 138, Ironwood Steakhouse and The Pioneer Mill).

6.3.6 Festivals – Continue to support events and festivals to celebrate important events and the arts; provide opportunities for community gatherings and engagement, and to highlight the city's history, cultural assets, and people.

6.3.7 Zoning – Update the Tiffin Zoning Code to ensure it supports the development of popular destination businesses like Bed and Breakfasts and other short-term rentals, entertainment venues, and recreational areas.





CITY OF TIFFIN IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

This plan identifies a number of strategies that the city of Tiffin and its partners can take to move toward the City's vision for the future. Yet, we recognize that we cannot do everything at once. To this end, the matrix below identifies ongoing programs and initiatives that are important to maintain and allocates a preferred timeframe for expanding or enhancing existing programs and starting new initiatives, programs and projects.

Note: "A", "B", "C" and "D" represents priority: A is the highest priority; D the lowest. Existing programs/projects that will continue are noted in the "Ongoing" column and prioritized. New programs/projects and enhancements to existing programs/projects are shown in the implementation timeframe based on start date. Any new program/project that will be ongoing once started is indicated as "/O" within the anticipated start date column.

TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
GOAL 1. PROSPEROUS AND RESILIENT ECONOMY				
Objective 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING				
1.1.1 Tiffin-Seneca County Economic Partnership (TSEP) - Continue to engage in annual strategic planning for Downtown and Citywide economic and community development.	A			
1.1.2 Economic Development Strategy – Update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).			C	
1.1.3 Organizations – Identify, develop and/or strengthen committees and/or organizations to oversee implementation of those plans.		B		
1.1.4 Ongoing Dialogue – Maintain and strengthen dialogue and collaboration among elected officials with respect to development.	A			
Objective 1.2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT				
1.2.1 Workforce Plans – Continue to work with partners on current efforts to prepare workforce development strategic plans.	A			
1.2.2 Collaboration – Continue to collaborate with other counties in ways that enhance and strengthen Tiffin's workforce.	B			
1.2.3 Partnerships – Continue to strengthen/facilitate engagement, collaboration, and partnerships between business, industry, education, and workforce and economic development.	A			
1.2.4 Marketing – Continue and improve efforts to effectively market jobs, career opportunities, and employers to the local community and regionally.	B	B/O		
1.2.5 Training and Assistance –Continue to promote state and federal educational/workforce training programs to increase the employability of local workforce. Revise/update educational/ workforce training programs based on recommendations of updated CEDS.	C		C	
1.2.6 Professional Development – Strengthen research, benchmarking, networking, and professional development opportunities for professionals and organizations engaged in workforce development.		C/O		
1.2.7 Attract Workers to Tiffin – Continue to develop, strengthen and maintain assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that attract and retain youth, retain residents and encourage in-migration of new residents.	C			






Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
1.2.8 Resources – Strategically allocate resources to maintain, strengthen and improve workforce development efforts. Increase resources as recommended in an updated CEDS.	B	B		
1.2.9 Remove Obstacles – Design and implement programs and needed support services such as transportation and childcare to remove obstacles for people who want to work in the City.			B	
Objective 1.3 SUITABLE LOCATIONS				
1.3.1 Sites and Buildings – Continue to identify locations for future commercial and industrial development, including suitable locations that may require zoning changes; maintain inventory of vacant lots and blighted structures, and potential/available commercial and industrial parcels and buildings to accommodate the current and future needs.	A			
1.3.2 Mixed-Use Infill – Continue to pursue/foster redevelopment opportunities in the historic central core of the City.	B			
1.3.3 Riverfront Promenade Development - Encourage/facilitate the creation of mixed-use development on north side of Market Street along the Riverfront Promenade.		B		
1.3.4 Capital Improvement Planning – Identify and plan for capital improvements needed to promote economic development.		C		
1.3.5 Infrastructure Improvements – Create/maintain an updated database inventory and condition assessment of existing infrastructure and utilities (including broadband access) and associated GIS maps.			B	
1.3.6 Redevelopment – Facilitate the revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas through redevelopment/rehabilitation of obsolete sites and facilities.			D	
1.3.7 Interstate Access – Improve truck roadway connections between Tiffin/Seneca County and I-75 and I-80/90. See also 5.2.2 for additional transportation strategies.				B
1.3.8 Development Agreements – Review, and update as needed, existing annexation agreements between the City and surrounding townships to foster economic development.		A		
1.3.9 Zoning – Review the Tiffin zoning code, revise as needed to foster economic development and potential annexation opportunities. Proactively rezone appropriate locations for new business/ industrial development.		B		
1.3.10 University Campus Zoning – Consider creating a new district to facilitate development on Tiffin University and Heidelberg University campuses.		B		
Objective 1.4 RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION				
1.4.1 Programs – Continue to maintain, improve and strengthen TSEP's formal business retention and expansion programs.	A	A		
1.4.2 Incentives and Resources – Continue to maintain incentives, assistance programs, and other resources available (and modify and/or increase as needed).	A	A		
1.4.3 Industry Groups – Continue to partner with existing industry groups such as the Chamber and the Industrial Management Council. Evaluate need for new/expanded industry councils or groups.	D		B	

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/0" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
1.4.4 Targeted Industries – Update the strategy and criteria used to identify targeted industry sectors that match the areas' strengths, goals and assets. Update implementation strategies related to their support and attraction. See 1.3 for additional information on suitable locations.			C	
1.4.5 Retail Strategy – Create a strategy to strengthen retail businesses in Tiffin: identify retail clusters; develop an inventory and related map; identify any needed infrastructure; conduct a market analysis; and assist local businesses.		B		
1.4.6 Marketing – Continue to effectively market City's positive attributes, assets, and competitive advantages locally regionally, state-wide, nationally, and globally.	A			
1.4.7 Regulations – Evaluate and streamline the zoning approval process and building permitting process to be more business-friendly.			B	
1.4.8 Technology – Continue to work with local businesses, both start-up and existing, so they are better equipped to use technology to enhance business practices.	C			
Objective 1.5 AGRIBUSINESS				
1.5.1 Agribusiness Strategic Plan – Develop an agriculture and food industry cluster strategic plan and assign a group or organization to oversee its implementation.		C		
1.5.2 Local Food – Continue to strengthen/develop programs, etc to promote local food. Identify local entities that are engaged in the food industry and identify ways to strengthen the local food industry.	B		B	
1.5.3 Farmers Market – Continue to implement the recommendations in the Farmers' Market Plan to improve the Farmers' Market.	A			
Objective 1.6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP				
1.6.1 Entrepreneurship Plan – Develop an entrepreneurship strategic plan, and identify and/or develop the group(s) or organization(s) to oversee its implementation.		B		
1.6.2 Entrepreneurship Facilities – Explore, evaluate, and successfully develop appropriate entrepreneurship facilities like incubators, accelerators, makerspaces, and pop-up stores, together with onsite support services.			B	
1.6.3 Resources – Create a system of support services and educational opportunities specifically targeted to new and emerging entrepreneurs.		B		
1.6.4 Capital – Identify and develop more seed, early and late stage capital for entrepreneurs and newer businesses in the city.		C		
1.6.5 Entrepreneurship Marketplace – Facilitate the identification and vetting of existing and new potential entrepreneurial opportunities and connect opportunities and entrepreneurs with capital.		A		
1.6.6 Culture – Continue to develop, maintain, and strengthen assets, programs, initiatives and organizations that foster and strengthen a local culture or ecosystem of entrepreneurship.	C			
1.6.7 Collaboration – Continue to strengthen collaboration with education institutions and innovative local companies to create/attract new companies and help existing companies grow.	B			



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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
Objective 1.7 DOWNTOWN TIFFIN				
1.7.1 Plans – Continue to implement and update as needed the City's Downtown Growth and Redevelopment Plan, and other related strategic plans for Downtown Tiffin.	A			
1.7.2 Private Investment Demonstration Projects - Encourage/facilitate the following priority redevelopment projects identified in the Downtown Growth and Redevelopment Plan: Tiffin Flats		B		
University Commons and East Tower				C
1.7.3 Resources – Continue to maintain and strengthen the resources available to organizations and individuals working toward Tiffin's Downtown revitalization.	A			
1.7.4 Incentive Programs: Continue to assist developers in successfully utilizing federal, state, and local incentives; create new local programs as needed.	B			
1.7.5 Zoning - Update the zoning code (as recommended in the Downtown Plan) to require new construction be developed in a manner that respects the traditional downtown main street character, includes context sensitive form-based development standards; and updated parking standards and sign regulations.		B		
1.7.6 Public Open Space - Assist in developing public open space/gathering spots in strategic locations to provide places for pedestrians to linger, rest, and socialize.				C
1.7.7 Downtown Core Land Uses - Promote the creation of a downtown hub, with strong commercial corridors, more restaurants and night time businesses, and upper floor residential.			C	
1.7.8 Public Private Partnerships (P3s) - Continue to look for local opportunities to create P3s (public-private partnerships) to construct both public and private projects.	B			
1.7.9 Parking - Develop a strategy to improve parking in Downtown Tiffin, as recommended in the Downtown Tiffin Parking Study and Garage Analysis.				D
GOAL 2. ATTRACTIVE, DESIRABLE & LIVABLE PLACES (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)				
Objective 2.1 HOUSING OPTIONS				
2.1.1 Housing Development – Continue to promote, maintain, support, and facilitate the development of a sufficient quantity and desired variety of housing, as recommended in the 2019 Housing Opportunities Analysis.	A			
2.1.2 Housing Resources – Continue to participate in programs that help maintain and improve the housing stock and assist low-moderate income householders attain desired housing; Develop new programs and resources to help maintain and improve the housing stock.	B	B		
2.1.3 Building Reuse – Develop regulations that support the innovative reuse of vacant or under-utilized buildings for housing alternatives.			C	
2.1.4 Creative and Context-Sensitive Design – Develop regulations that allow for/encourage creative design in the development of residential areas and structures.			D	

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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
2.1.5 Fair Housing – Continue to educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities.	B			
2.1.6 Downtown Housing – Continue to encourage the creation of Downtown housing options that appeal to different lifestyles, ages, and income levels, including rehabilitation of upper floors in downtown buildings as apartments, and construction of new, modern infill housing.	A			
2.1.7 Historic Homes Preservation – Create funding opportunities to encourage the preservation of older homes, especially houses that contribute to the character of the neighborhood.			B	
2.1.8 Incentive Programs: Continue to educate local property owners and developers about federal, state and local incentives; create new programs to further incentivize residential development and investment in the City's neighborhoods.	B	B		
Objective 2.2 DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS				
2.2.1 Sidewalks and Lighting – Conduct periodic "walking audits" to identify areas where sidewalk improvements are needed. Improve existing, and construct more sidewalks, street lighting, and other assets to create more walkable neighborhoods.	C			
2.2.2 Alleys – Maintain, strengthen and develop programs, initiatives and organizations that enhance and improve the appearance, experience of walking through, wayfinding, and safety of alleys.	B			
2.2.3 Public Safety – Maintain, strengthen and develop programs, initiatives and organizations that contribute to public safety and the safety of neighborhoods.	B			
2.2.4 Neighborhood Appearance – Maintain, strengthen and develop neighborhood initiatives, programs and organizations that enhance the appearance of neighborhoods.	B			
2.2.5 Historic Neighborhoods - Consider creating new, local programs to further incentivize reinvestment within the City's historic neighborhoods; promote residential and mixed-use infill development on vacant sites and redevelopment of obsolete sites; create pedestrian amenities to link neighborhoods and Downtown.			B	
2.2.6 Fort Ball Neighborhood – Encourage revitalization of this neighborhood: address flooding issues, rental conversions and demolition of structures for parking, encourage single-family home ownership along with hospitality uses.			B	
Objective 2.3 Celebrate our VALUED CULTURE and PLACES				
2.3.1 Downtown Tiffin – Maintain and improve the overall appearance of Downtown; celebrate and enhance the bridges that serve as gateways into Downtown; enhance the riverfront; and foster new commercial development.	A			
2.3.2 Civic Core – Continue to concentrate public facilities such as the new Justice Center, and the numerous county agencies downtown.	B			
2.3.3 Historic Preservation – Encourage development and protection of areas of the city that have unique historic value; create inventory of historic properties; encourage their long-term preservation.	B			
2.3.4 Gathering Places – Maintain and increase community meeting places, including outdoor gathering spaces to encourage visitors to linger and socialize.	A			






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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
Objective 2.4 Foster PROPERTY MAINTENANCE and Investment				
2.4.1 Property Maintenance Code - Maintain and strengthen property code enforcement, including minimum maintenance standards.	C			
2.4.2 Home Repair Resources - Conduct educational workshops about techniques for long-term maintenance. Consider providing an associated tool-lending library.			D	
2.4.3 Rental Property Registry - Maintain up-to-date records on rental housing in Tiffin. Consider requiring owners of residential rental property to register their rental properties with the City.		C		
2.4.4 Vacant Property Clearinghouse/Registration – Inventory, evaluate and map all vacant buildings in the City; maintain an updated database of the inventory/assessment.		B		
2.4.5 Demolition - Demolish vacant buildings that do not have historic value or do not make positive contributions to the neighborhood.		C		
2.4.6 PACE – Educate residential and commercial property owners on the benefits of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs to improve energy efficiency.		D		
Objective 2.5 Sustainable LAND USE				
2.5.1 Compact Development – Promote new compact development on infill lots and adjacent to existing built up areas where water and sewer utilities already exist.			C	
2.5.2 Zoning Review – Review/update zoning regulations to encourage revitalization of downtown, protection of historic districts and new development on vacant, underutilized and brownfield sites.		B		
2.5.3 Subdivision Regulations – Develop and/or update subdivision regulations as needed to ensure that new residential subdivisions meet contemporary standards.			C	
GOAL 3. QUALITY COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES				
Objective 3.1 Foster INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES.				
3.1.1 Special Interest Groups – Continue to support organizations and programs that address/serve the interests and needs of particular segments of the City's diverse population.	B			
3.1.2 Connection and Interaction – Continue to support or organizations and programs that encourage interaction and foster connection diverse groups/individuals.	C			
3.1.3 Events – Continue to accommodate and support events that support, foster and celebrate diversity, inclusivity and uniqueness of individuals in Tiffin.	B			
3.1.4 Education and Training – Continue to support programs and initiatives that educate about, and promote diversity and inclusivity on all levels (income, gender, race, culture, etc.).	B			
3.1.5 ADA Transition Plan – Identify and correct any physical and psychological barriers throughout the community per guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act.		C		

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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
Objective 3.2 Promote EDUCATION and Life Long Learning				
3.2.1 Graduation rates – Continue to support local schools in their efforts to increase the quality and capacity of public and private K-12 educational facilities.	A			
3.2.2 Skilled trades – Continue to support increased variety and availability of technical and vocational study programs.	B			
3.2.3 Library – Continue to support community-wide educational programs via the Tiffin-Seneca Public Library.	D			
3.2.4 Improved access – Continue to assist in expanding access to programs geared toward children from low- to moderate-income households.	B			
3.2.5 Higher education – Continue to support physical, economic and social connections to Tiffin University and Heidelberg University.	B			
3.2.6 Theater – Continue to support the Ritz Theater, PreK-12 school programs and theaters at Heidelberg (Gundlach) and Tiffin University (Osceola) to foster community participation and education.	C			
Objective 3.3 Promote ACTIVE LIVING Lifestyles				
3.3.1 Walkability - Regularly conduct walkability audits of public spaces to assess accessibility challenges; prioritize and undertake projects as resources permit.			D	
3.3.2 Comfort – Continue to provide and maintain public restroom facilities in areas where events are regularly hosted.	C			
3.3.3 City Parks – Improve city parks, recognizing their importance in attracting and retaining residents. Evaluate current park amenities and locations for service coverage across the City.			C	
3.3.4 City Trails – Continue to maintain and improve the existing network of trails in the City, as recommended in the 2019 Active Transportation Plan.	A			
3.3.5 Local History – Where applicable, tell Tiffin's story through interpretive signage, public arts, other media in public spaces, and hosting events.		B		
3.3.6 Cooperative Programs – Build strong intra-park coordination between City and County Parks to increase program diversity and range of facilities available to City residents.		B		
Objective 3.4 Promote HEALTH AND WELLNESS				
3.4.1 Behavioral & Mental Health – Continue to support/collaborate with local health care providers to campaign for education, awareness and support of mental health and behavioral health concerns.	B			
3.4.2 Hospital & Medical Coordination – Continue to coordinate efforts with hospitals, and other medical professionals to increase the number of programs and facilities to address mental and behavioral health issues, including recovery programs for the ongoing struggle with drug addiction.	C			
3.4.3 Access – Work on increasing residents' financial and transportation access to health and wellness facilities, such as the Tiffin Y, Allen Eiry Senior Center and other fitness facilities.		B		






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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
3.4.4 Safe Communities – Continue to strengthen partnerships between Tiffin Police Department and local schools and neighborhoods.		D		
3.4.5 Emergency Services – Continue to maintain police and fire departments with updated equipment. Foster an environment that helps maintain emergency/safety services.	B			
Objective 3.5 Increase FOOD SECURITY and ACCESS				
3.5.1 Farmers' Market - Support educational efforts including Seed to Table programs to educate families on how to supplement their grocery budgets with homegrown options.	A			
3.5.2 Urban Gardening - Encourage urban gardening; update zoning regulations as needed.				C
GOAL 4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP -VALUED NATURAL RESOURCES				
Objective 4.1 Practice NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION / CONSERVATION				
4.1.1 Priority Conservation Areas - Identify and agree on areas of the city where critical environmental resources (such as floodplain and riparian areas) exist and have the highest priority for conservation efforts.			A	
4.1.2 Planned Unit Development Design – Review and update the existing Planned Unit Development regulations (Chapter 1173); to encourage this form of development and ensure key natural areas such as riparian corridors, woodlands, and wetlands are conserved.			B	
4.1.3 Tree Preservation/Restoration – Continue to plant and protect trees to maintain current and increase canopy coverage; consider adopting a tree preservation/conservation ordinance; educate property owners on proper tree care and maintenance.	C		B	
Objective 4.2 Preserve and properly manage ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE				
4.2.1 City Parks – Regularly audit maintenance of each City Park; improve aesthetics and/or accessibility; engage residents to identify needs and overall vision for each Park.		B		
4.2.2 River Access – Provide access points to the Sandusky River and create scenic overlooks.			B	
4.2.3 State Water Trail – Continue to work with County stakeholders to designate the Sandusky River as a state Water Trail. Develop supportive services and businesses within the City limits.	C			
Objective 4.3 Ensure CLEAN AIR & WATER Utilizing BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES				
4.3.1 Low-Impact Development (LID) – Develop materials to educate and promote Low Impact Development, green infrastructure and other best practices to protect important natural resources.			D	
4.3.2 Stormwater Management – Continue to support and advance effective stormwater management techniques; re-establish vegetative buffers in Downtown near the River to help filter runoff from streets and parking areas.	C			
4.3.3 Regulations – Continue to require developers and contractors to include appropriate stormwater management techniques in their site plans. Establish mandatory setbacks from watercourses and wetlands.	C			

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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
4.3.4 Site Design – Continue to encourage site design that protects natural terrain and groundwater, preserves or restores significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporates native vegetation into landscape plans.	C			
4.3.5 Education – Educate the public on the benefits of green infrastructure, and about the City's newly created Stormwater Management Program, including Pre- and Post-Construction permitting requirements.	D			
Objective 4.4 Protect RIVER LIFE along the Sandusky River				
4.4.1 Sandusky River – Continue to support regular River clean-ups and invasive species removal campaigns, undertaken by the Shade Tree Commission.	B			
4.4.2 Combined Sewer Separation – Continue to implement the Long-Term Control Plan as re-negotiated with Ohio EPA, reducing the amount and quality of discharges into the River.	A			
4.4.3 NPS-IS Plan – Work with the County and Sandusky River watershed organizations to develop and implement a Non-Point Source Pollution Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS) and pursue Section 319 funding to implement priority projects.		B		
4.4.4 Water Quality Attainment – Continue to work towards full Ohio EPA water quality attainment status.	A			
4.4.5 Home Sewage Treatment Systems – Work with all residential property owners not served by the City's sanitary sewer system to abandon their septic systems and tie into City lines. Look for grants and other funding opportunities to help reduce costs.				C
Objective 4.5 Promote GREEN ENERGY				
4.5.1 Alternative Energy – Encourage renewable and alternative energy production; review the Tiffin Zoning Code to ensure it allows for placement of alternative energy infrastructure in both residential and commercial/industrial areas; educate residents, property and business owners about different options, such as solar or geothermal; work with local electric companies to more easily integrate alternative energy sources into the energy grid.			C	
4.5.2 LEED (Leader in Energy and Environmental Design) – Encourage proper design of structures to enable them to become LEED certified. Investigate having city staff become LEED accredited professionals.			D	
Objective 4.6 Promote SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT				
4.6.1 Recycling – Continue to promote recycling; work with Ottawa Sandusky Seneca Joint Solid Waste District to publicize and promote recycling drop-off points nearest to the City.	C	C		
4.6.2 Waste Removal – Continue to provide effective, efficient and affordable solid waste reduction services and removal.	B			
4.6.3 Regulations – Adopt standards that eliminate the initial production of wastes and pollution at the source.		C		






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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
GOAL 5. ENHANCED MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY & PUBLIC				
Objective 5.1 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE				
5.1.1 Systematic maintenance - Continually maintain and upgrade the existing roadway network, through asset management planning and innovative maintenance strategies based on lifecycle costs, management strategies, long-term operational and financial considerations. Procure more funds for maintenance and repair.				
5.1.2 Improve Downtown streets, as noted below:				
- Court Street: Improve Court Street with wide sidewalks, street trees, and decorative street lighting.			B	
- Gateways: Establish gateways at Perry Street at Rock Creek, Market Street at Bridge, and South Washington Street at Bridge.			C	
- Street Conversions: Convert Downtown Tiffin's one-way streets to two-way streets and provide parallel parking along both sides of the street where the width of the road is sufficient.				C
- South Washington Street: Continue existing streetscape enhancements from the core of the Downtown further south along Washington Street to the Five Points intersection.			B	
- Five Points Improvements: Enhance the intersection in the spirit of a European piazza; provide planters at key locations to screen surface parking areas, enhance the historic façade of St. Joseph Catholic Church with accent lighting.			B	
- Bridge Enhancements: Improve the pedestrian zones along the Perry Street and Market Street bridges; consider adding LED up lighting with various color options to accent the bridges after dark.				C
5.1.3 Bridges – Continue to regularly evaluate and prioritize bridge repairs, and replace when needed as on Ella Street.	B			
Objective 5.2. ROADWAY NETWORK				
5.2.1 Fair Lane Extension – Continue to prioritize and identify funding options for constructing the multi-phase road and signalization project.			D	
5.2.2 Tiffin-Fostoria Industrial Connector – Continue to prioritize and identify funding options to create a meaningful connection between Tiffin's and Fostoria's industrial sectors.				A
5.2.3 Access Management – Develop access management policies and regulations to limit points of ingress/egress, and maintain the level of service on commercial corridors.	A			
5.2.4 Transportation Networks – Continue to support public transportation networks and other multi-modal transportation alternatives to link population centers with employment opportunities, and other destinations.	B			
5.2.5 Collaboration – Continue to collaborate with federal, state, and local planning agencies and transportation departments to enhance transportation networks in the region.	D			

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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
Objective 5.3. Provide ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION Options				
5.3.1 Improve Amenities for Pedestrians and Bikers, as noted below:				
- Public realm improvements - Provide benches, designated bicycle parking areas, pedestrian resting areas, improved lighting, landscaping, murals and other amenities for pedestrians and cyclists.	B			
- Pedestrian Crossings - Use mid-block crossings and bumpouts at intersections to improve pedestrian crossings; increase connectivity of downtown to Tiffin University and the Fort Ball neighborhood.	B			
- Bike amenities – Create a bike share program to increase Downtown accessibility; provide public bicycle parking in lots and on sidewalks and require new developments to provide bike parking; include sharrows and consider bike lanes during road reconstruction and re-striping plans.			C	
5.3.2 Rock Creek Trail – complete the remaining portions of the Rock Creek Trail to provide connectivity from Hedges Boyer Park to the Sandusky River.			C	
5.3.3 Sharrows – Create more bike lanes and sharrows throughout the City to promote a more active lifestyle for residents.			B	
Objective 5.4 Increase Use of Existing HUBS				
5.4.1 Connections – Make connections between Tiffin's many state and federal highway routes and its rail and air resources.				C
Objective 5.5 Embrace SMART COMMUNITY Technologies				
5.5.1 Broadband – Support the improvement of reliable and affordable high-speed internet so that it is easily accessible for all residents.				C
5.5.2 WiFi – Develop wireless internet connections and hot spots for Downtown and other gathering places throughout the community.			C	
5.5.3 EV Charging Stations – Encourage the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at strategic locations throughout the community. Pursue grant funding to help offset costs.			C	
Objective 5.6. WATER & WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE				
5.6.1 Sanitary Sewer – Continue to maintain reasonable wastewater collection rates. Pursue grant funding to help offset costs for improvements.	B			
5.6.2 Future Development - Plan and develop water and wastewater infrastructure based on projected future need for targeted locations.		B		
5.6.3 Wastewater Facility Plan – Continue to regularly update the City's wastewater facility plan; develop and maintain an Asset Management Plan.	B			
5.6.4 Wastewater Treatment Facility – Plan for the eventual upgrade/replacement of the wastewater treatment plant; assess current rate structure to determine if additional increases are needed to meet future needs of the City.		B		






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TIFFIN'S IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs
GOAL 6. STRONG COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE				
Objective 6.1. CELEBRATE Tiffin				
6.1.1 Celebrate Tiffin – Continually identify and publicize reasons why Tiffin is a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business (brand reasons).	A			
6.1.2 Volunteers – Develop a volunteer recruitment and community engagement strategy to assist with the various activities in town.		C		
Objective 6.2. BRANDING AND PROMOTION				
6.2.1 Brand Development – Continue to develop and implement the community brand developed in the 2018 branding process - in terms of graphic design and guidelines, narrative and messaging, and connection between the brands.				
6.2.2 Marketing – Advertise Tiffin activities and attractions to townships, villages and cities throughout the northwest Ohio region, using a broad range of media.	B			
6.2.3 Demolition – Remove blighting influences within the city.				C
6.2.4 Signage – Develop and install wayfinding signage throughout the city.		B		
Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT				
6.3.1 Strategic Plan – Develop and implement (and continually update) a strategic plan for tourism development in Tiffin.		A		
6.3.2 Resources – Ensure the organization(s) tasked with implementing the tourism strategic plan have the resources necessary to carry out recommendations.		B		
6.3.3 Public Art – Commission and install public art at various locations throughout the City. Prepare a strategy to unify art installations.			C	
6.3.4 Theater – Work with the Ritz, Gundlauch, and Osceola Theaters to publicize shows within the City and throughout the region.		C		
6.3.5 Restaurants – Continue to work with local restauranteurs to publicize local food events (like Taste of Downtown Tiffin) and destination dining experiences.	C			
6.3.6 Festivals – Continue to support events and festivals to highlight the City's history, cultural assets, and people.	C			
6.3.7 Zoning – Update the City zoning code to ensure it supports the development of destination businesses like Bed and Breakfasts, other short-term rentals, entertainment venues, and recreational areas.			C	

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/0" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

CHAPTER 5.4: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR THE CITY OF FOSTORIA

June 2020



CHAPTER 5.4: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR THE CITY OF FOSTORIA

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) outlines six integrated goals and related objectives that all partners participating in the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan agreed are either directly or indirectly important to each one's vision for the future. This chapter is customized to address the goals, objectives and related strategies that are directly applicable to the City of Fostoria. The primary entities responsible for carrying out the strategies include the City and Fostoria Economic Development Corporation. This chapter includes photographs to help illustrate the strategies, as well as a matrix that indicates the anticipated time frame for beginning the various strategies. Many of the plan's recommendations will require additional study and the development of more detailed action steps that go beyond the scope of this project. The vision directly applicable to the City of Fostoria is:

Vision for Fostoria

To be a place where all residents feel safe and secure; a hub for job training and skills development; and a place where families and businesses feel good about investing. Having galvanized local leaders and engaged residents, Fostoria will continue to embrace its heritage while actively preparing for its future.



This chapter focuses on the relevant strategies for the City to achieve the goals and objectives described in detail in Chapter 4. The numbering of Goals and Objectives is consistent with the numbering scheme in Chapter 4; therefore, wherever the Objectives are not numbered sequentially, it indicates that the missing objective is not applicable to Fostoria.

CITY OF FOSTORIA GOALS

- Ensure we are prepared to and successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national and global economy, with an emphasis on jobs and tax revenue.

1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy

- Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living and socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

2. Attractive, Desirable, & Livable Places (Built Environment)

- Create/foster a strong sense of community & ensure social needs are met with equitable programs & access to a wide range of community and public facilities and services.

3. Quality Community Facilities and Services

- Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human and economic well-being, provide recreation and educational opportunities for locals and tourists, and significantly enhance the character of our community.

4. Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

- Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure and utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current and future residents and businesses.

5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility, & Public Utilities

- Enhance and strengthen our community character and brand to: establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit; to instill community pride; and attract new residents, businesses and visitors.

6. Strong Community Character and Image

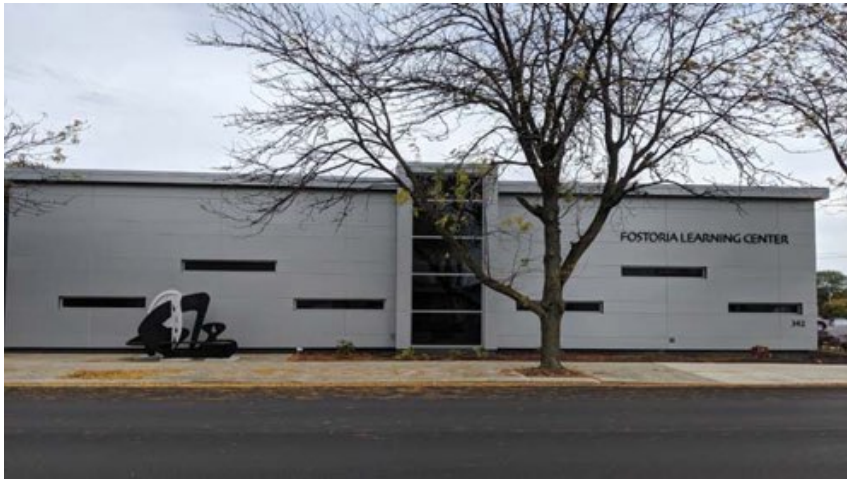
GOAL 1. PROSPEROUS & RESILIENT ECONOMY

Objective 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

1.1.1 FEDC - Develop and/or update three- to five-year economic development strategic plan(s) for Fostoria on a routine basis, and identify organizational partner(s) needed to implement the plan(s). Hancock and Wood Counties do not have Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), while Seneca County does. Work with Seneca County to accomplish the goals outlined therein, and work with Hancock and Wood Counties to undertake planning efforts to create those strategies.

1.1.2 Organizations - Ensure that organizations such as FEDC, Fostoria Learning Center (FLC), the City, and other economic development organizations tasked with implementation and oversight of the plan(s) have sufficient resources to do their work. As FLC comes under the leadership and management of FEDC, align programs and projects to more efficiently meet economic development needs in the community.

1.1.3 Ongoing Dialogue – Maintain and strengthen the dialogue and collaboration among elected officials with respect to development.



Objective 1.2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 Workforce Plans - Develop a workforce development strategic plan.

1.2.2 Collaboration – Collaborate with Hancock, Seneca and Wood Counties in ways that enhance and strengthen Fostoria's workforce.

1.2.3 Partnerships - Maintain and increase FLC's and FEDC's multiple non-profit, educational and private sector partnerships within the tri-county service area (Seneca, Hancock, Wood Counties) to strengthen, improve, and innovate workforce development.

1.2.4 Marketing - Effectively market jobs, career opportunities, and employers to the local community and regionally, using the resources and outlets available in Seneca, Hancock and Wood Counties.

1.2.5 Training and Assistance – Continue to promote FLC's and FEDC's existing curriculum, and expand the course catalogue based on needs identified both by local businesses and by the FEDC and FLC Boards, to help residents enhance and expand their skills, or be retrained so they better match the needs of local businesses.

1.2.6 Professional Development - Maintain and strengthen the research, benchmarking, networking, and professional development opportunities for professionals and organizations engaged in workforce development to ensure programs offered are effective.

1.2.7 Attract Workers to Fostoria - Develop, strengthen, and maintain assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that encourage youth/young adults to stay or return to the city after college, and encourage in-migration of new residents. Offer young professionals the opportunity to forgive portions or all of their student loans as an incentive to relocate to the City. Target students at Tiffin University and Heidelberg University. See also Goals 2, 3 and 5 for other strategies for enhancing housing, neighborhoods, community facilities and transportation systems, which are all necessary to attract new residents.



1.2.8 Apprenticeships and Shadowing Programs – Use FLC's partnerships with local businesses to create an apprenticeship and/or shadowing program. Expand programs like "Career Exploration" to allow people to better see the kinds of jobs available to learners on any given career or educational path.

1.2.9 Remove Obstacles - Design and implement programs, initiatives, and services to remove obstacles for people who want to work locally. Investigate programs like The GRIT Project that pair opioid recovery with workforce development training. Develop companion programs offering childcare and transportation to allow learners' primary focus to remain on obtaining new skills. Offer specialized classes concentrating on assisting those who are re-entering the workforce after a period away, such as stay-at-home moms, persons recovering from addictions, transient and homeless individuals, or people embarking on their "encore careers."



Objective 1.3 SUITABLE LOCATIONS

1.3.1 Sites & Buildings - Identify vacant sites and facilities that are available for development and also those suitable for redevelopment (adaptive re-use, rehabilitation, or demolition). Strategically expand and/or add business parks. Map these sites and make the pertinent details available via GIS maps in an electronic format that is available to potential developers 24/7. Rank and evaluate sites based on the necessary effort to make each one shovel ready. Work with commercial realtors to effectively market developable sites. Adopt a policy of directing new development to areas of existing commercial and industrial concentrations in order to maximize use of existing infrastructure.

1.3.2 Redevelopment – Promote and incentivize the redevelopment of declining, obsolete or severely underutilized commercial and industrial sites and facilities, including locations in Downtown Fostoria. Rank and prioritize these sites. See also Objective 1.7 for recommendations regarding Downtown redevelopment.

1.3.3 Brownfields – Specifically identify and remediate (or assist property owners in remediating) brownfield sites and encourage redevelopment of those sites, including those in historic Downtown Fostoria. Consider developing a policy to prioritize, accelerate, and incentivize Downtown brownfield redevelopment.

1.3.4 Infrastructure – Map existing infrastructure and utilities (including broadband access) using GIS and pair it with a database that can be updated regularly (by those with authorized access) and available in real time for all partners and stakeholders engaged in economic development (City, FEDC, FLC, property owners, realtors, businesses, etc.). Align the

City's capital improvement plans and FEDC's strategic plans to ensure adequate infrastructure capacity to existing and new development. Pursue grants and other incentives to defray costs. Consider P3 arrangements where feasible. See also Goal 5. Mobility, Accessibility and Public Utilities for additional discussion on transportation and utility strategies.

1.3.5 Development Agreements – Explore and implement mutually acceptable annexation and development agreements between the City and adjacent townships (in all three Counties) to increase the supply of developable land needed to support continued economic development.

1.3.6 Zoning – Continue to review and update the Zoning Code and Land Development Regulations, as needed, to reflect the desires and strategies of the partners with respect to development.

1.3.7 Broadband – Increase the access to and affordability of broadband access within the City.

Objective 1.4 RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION

1.4.1 Programs – Enhance and expand FEDC's existing Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) program.

1.4.2 Incentives & Resources – The City; Seneca, Hancock and Wood Counties; FEDC, and the Chamber offer a variety of programs and resources to support the local businesses community. Collect and distill this information, then work with each of the partners to cross-promote all funding and incentive programs, at minimum including links and information on each organization's website. As existing programs are expanded and new incentives are developed, aggressively market these new resources to the local business community and supporting businesses including realtors. Examples of new programs to develop could include:

» Develop and distribute a community calendar to the local business community. The calendar could include information on event(s) that may bring their targeted demographic into the community, and information on planned capital improvements, which would enable businesses to plan ahead for disruptions with shipping logistics or customer access.

» Regularly conduct community wide market analysis and then distribute relevant information to local businesses. Meet with business owners to review trends, discussing potential impact to that specific business, the wider industry and Fostoria overall.

» Create a mentoring program for business owners and executives.

1.4.3 Industry Groups – Identify or develop industry councils or peer-to-peer networking groups to address specific concerns faced by that industry, especially any issues that prohibit or slow growth, expansion and/or retention.

1.4.4 Marketing – Promote Fostoria's assets both internally and externally. Work on changing negative narratives and perceptions. Promote every positive thing happening in Fostoria, such as business openings and expansions, to multiple media outlets (including social media) and to local civic, social, and faith-based organizations. Sharing



news about success stories helps build confidence and encourages other local businesses to stay and expand.

1.4.5 Targeted Industries – Identify specific industry clusters that are fundamental to Fostoria's economic health, and prioritize positive marketing toward them. See Objective 1.3 for additional information on suitable locations.

1.4.6 Retail Strategy – Identify existing and desired retail clusters. Map those to illustrate potential infrastructure and/or parking needed to ensure each cluster's success. Conduct a market analysis to determine sales leakage, daytime and nighttime populations, available and underutilized space (and its condition or ability to be immediately occupied). Convene a team of "champions" among local retailers who would be available to meet with people looking to relocate or open a retail store in Fostoria.

1.4.7 Economic Stability – Through BR&E visits, identify businesses that are having difficulties and work with them on strategies to recover. For small business owners looking to retire, work with them well in advance to develop a succession plan and market the business to potential buyers.

1.4.8 Regulation – Evaluate the zoning approval process (such as site plan review) conducted by Fostoria and the building permitting process (administered through Wood County Building Inspection to determine if there are ways to streamline the process.

1.4.9 Technology – The evolution of technology is changing the way business is done. Work with local businesses, both start up and existing, to better use technology for efficiency and growth.

Objective 1.5 AGRIBUSINESS

1.5.1 Strategic Plan – Develop an agriculture and food industry cluster strategic plan, assign a group or organization to oversee its implementation, and make it a priority in public policy.

1.5.2 Local Food – Identify locally owned restaurants, other entities such as the school district that purchase food, and businesses that are engaged in the food industry. Quantify current demand for local food and encourage commitments from institutions (hospitals, schools, government agencies) and other large scale public and private entities to buy locally. Convene discussions with them and local food growers to develop programs dedicated to developing local assets, encouraging "buying local," and strengthening the local food industry.

1.5.3 Cluster Development – Enhance and encourage local agricultural capacity and viability, including expanding value added related accessory businesses and services

1.5.4 Agribusiness – Make supporting local food systems a public policy priority.

Objective 1.6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1.6.1 Entrepreneurship Plan – Focus on entrepreneurship as a key component of the City's Economic Development Strategy (see Objective 1.1). Identify and/or develop the group(s) or organization(s) to shepherd its implementation.

1.6.2 Entrepreneurship Facilities – FLC has a Small Business Training series; expand that program and develop companion programs and services such as business incubators, accelerators, makerspaces, and pop-up stores. The FLC facility is perfectly positioned and equipped to host classes; programming should be carefully scheduled to maximize the facility and its resources. Devote the resources necessary to create, market, and implement these classes.

1.6.3 Resources – Support the establishment and growth of entrepreneurial ventures by implementing a system of support services and educational opportunities for new and emerging entrepreneurs. Identify and effectively leverage and develop more resources for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and tech-based businesses.

1.6.4 Capital – Reach out to the local business community, local angel investors and other likely partners to create a pool of venture capital funds. Fostoria's Opportunity Zone is a significant draw for local investment, while its CRA districts, Enterprise Zone, and local Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) further incentivize development. Research and vet potential partners, then make connections and facilitate meetings between prospective investors, developers, and budding business people. Market these opportunities to potential developers, both inside Fostoria and out.

1.6.5 Entrepreneurship Marketplace – As FEDC, FLC, the Chamber and CVB are now all in one location, entrepreneurs are likely to regularly visit this one-stop-shop. Develop programs designed to raise their profile and encourage people to purchase their goods or services. Consider setting aside dedicated space to allow new entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas, products, or services to learners who visit the Center for classes. Consider creating a space for "pitch parties," where inventors can use the public forum to raise capital, in the spirit of the TV show Shark Tank, either from a one-time angel investors or through crowdfunding sights. Develop and promote classes geared toward helping local residents to build their own business. Expand and promote FLC's Small Business Training series.

1.6.6 Culture – Support a culture of entrepreneurship in Fostoria. Begin by working with youth programs such as Junior Achievement (JA) to allow school age children, from elementary through high school, to learn the benefits and responsibilities of owning and operating a business. Consider possible linkages between the FLC's Small Business Training program and a school based programs like DECA (formerly known as Distributive Education Clubs of America). Develop business plan contests; winners might be offered "free" rent by a willing local building owner or secure space in a local business incubator.

1.6.7 Collaboration – There are more than 100 2- and 4-year educational institutions within a 100-mile radius of Fostoria. Research program offerings, identify those with programs most closely aligned with FLC's programs and Fostoria's needs, and begin pursuing partnerships to expand on-line and in-person learning opportunities for the Fostoria business community using FLC's well-appointed classrooms.

Objective 1.7 Revitalize DOWNTOWN FOSTORIA

1.7.1 Plans – Update Fostoria's Downtown Plan. Be sure it includes recommendations for the physical, economic, and social environments as well as a work plan that prioritizes projects, assigns a responsible person or team to do the work, and identify the budget needed to carry out the proposed actions. Consider organizing stakeholders according to the Main Street Four Point Approach to Downtown Revitalization. This program is comprehensive in its scope and has a proven track record in downtowns across the country to help rebuild value and sense of community. If joining the Ohio Main Street Program network is a goal, reach out to Heritage Ohio to host a Downtown Assessment Resource Team (DART) visit to get stakeholders "fired up."

1.7.2 Downtown Resources – Catalogue and distribute a list of resources available to downtown property and business owners, including: local incentive programs and funding assistance programs; the Small Business Trainings offered by FLC and others that are developed; annotated excerpts of recently completed plans and studies with analyses of how the resulting data or information informs or impacts Downtown Fostoria. Become knowledgeable and distribute information on both the state and federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC) programs, as well as New Markets Tax Credits (NMTCs) and other tax credit programs that incentivize downtown investment. C-PACE, or Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy programs are gaining popularity with redevelopers. Consider offering packets containing a comprehensive list of resources to new business and property owners as they consider Downtown as an opportunity and/or as they purchase and move into their space.







1.7.3 Downtown Incentives - Develop and implement appropriate incentive programs to foster downtown revitalization. Educate local property owners and with developers to use federal and state incentives, such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs), Historic Tax Credits (HTCs), and New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs) as well as local incentives such as PACE, CRA, job tax credits, etc. Create new local programs to further incentivize reinvestment within the historic urban core for both commercial and residential re-development. Some options to incentivize downtown redevelopment could include: the City discounting or completely forgiving permit or other fees; the Seneca County Land Bank (or different organization that can acquire properties through receivership) acquiring vacant properties and properly mothballing them until a permanent owner can be found; groups such as FEDC, the CIC, or other stakeholder group creating a contest for entrepreneurs in which the prize is start-up capital, 'free' rent for a specified time period, or other incentive.

1.7.4 Protective Regulations – Adopt specific design standards and guidelines for Downtown Fostoria to protect the historic character of the area. National research has demonstrated that properties within protected districts increase in value over time, even during recessions. Clarify and expand the provisions of Chapter 1335 Preservation and Design Review Regulations in the Building Code, and consider moving this chapter to the Zoning Code to ensure that applicants can easily find and incorporate the design criteria into the construction project. Clearly designate the boundaries of downtown where the design standards and guidelines apply, and depict on the Zoning Map as an overlay district. Chapter 1335, adopted in 1995 and updated in 2010, states that design review is conducted in Historic Preservation Districts, "as shown on the Zoning Map" but there are no such districts shown on the map (last updated in 2007). Talk with property and business owners to gather their input, identify and document important features of existing buildings that are important to build upon and then craft language that fits. Consider making compliance with local design standards a

threshold requirement for participation in local funding programs. The overlay district would be specifically created for and only applicable to the Downtown, though protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods would have the added benefit of stabilizing the areas people go through to get to Downtown.

1.7.5 Building Codes – Work to educate local building code officials about the alternate building code section that allows exemptions for certain historic features. Work with property owners to find alternate solutions to common problems such as universal access; rear entrances can be improved and often more accessible parking accommodated behind buildings that on-street. For properties that have large parking areas located behind the buildings, rear entrance can be ideal, not only allowing all customers better line of sight and closer access to the entrance, but also potentially increasing traffic through a business if they allow customers to then pass through the front door to reach other businesses on the main street. This has successfully worked in other downtowns (example: art gallery).

1.7.6 Festivals and Events – While the needs of the physical and economic environments are many, Fostoria must also support a campaign to improve both Fostoria and regional residents' perception of the Downtown. Improving the streets and buildings and supporting the Downtown business culture is not enough, on its own, to change decades of dismissive attitudes toward the historic central business district. Fostoria must give people a "fun" reason to come Downtown. Promotions generally fall into two categories: special events (which are designed to bring people Downtown and change their negative perceptions, but not necessarily increase sales) and retail events (which are designed to make cash registers ring). Develop a calendar of events that is balanced between retail and special events and distribute it annually to Downtown businesses.





GOAL 2. ATTRACTIVE, DESIRABLE & LIVABLE PLACES (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

Objective 2.1 HOUSING OPTIONS

2.1.1 Housing Development – Conduct a housing study to evaluate existing housing conditions and to determine the quantity, styles, and price-points of housing needed in Fostoria. Review the results with neighborhood residents and community groups to create consensus, then approach City Council to formally adopt policies and create programs in line with the recommendations. Ensure recommendations for housing rehabilitation and demolition balance historic preservation and authentic sense of place with the reality of demolition by neglect. Promote, maintain, support, and facilitate the development of a sufficient quantity and desired variety of housing types, design, and price points for older and younger residents.

2.1.2 Housing Resources – Fostoria participates in the Ohio Department of Services Agency's Community Housing Improvement and Preservation Program (ODSA's CHIP program). Be sure information on this program as well as Fair Housing materials are regularly circulated to residents throughout the community, especially in areas where eligible households are concentrated. Consider developing a program like Cleveland Restoration Society's very successful Heritage Homes Program that offers both technical and financial assistance to owners of homes built prior to 1968 (houses are not required to be historic nor located in an historic district). This type of incentive program would be beneficial for many homeowners because 48% of the homes in Fostoria were built prior to 1940, more than 75% prior to 1960. Offer homeownership classes to teach basic maintenance to new homeowners as well as those who have owned for a longer time, but would like to learn more about home maintenance. Consider bringing the Ohio Historic Preservation Office's Building Doctor program to town; preservation experts





skilled in older techniques can meet with owners of historic homes to address special needs. Consider launching a community development corporation (CDC) or similar organization to champion housing needs, and become expert in assistance programs specifically designed to support housing renovation and construction.

2.1.3 Adaptive Reuse – If a building can no longer serve in the capacity for which it was originally built, encourage owners to rehabilitate it to provide housing. Good examples of this include school buildings, warehouses, and even churches. Review and update the Zoning Code to include provisions (such as appropriate density allowances) that will encourage this kind of redevelopment.

2.1.4 Creative Design - Allow for and encourage creative design in developing residential structures. Review and update the Zoning Code to ensure new homes are in scale with the surrounding neighborhood, and that new development will integrate in to the existing neighborhood fabric.

2.1.5 Context Sensitive Development - Encourage sensitivity to both the built and natural environments when developing new housing or rehabbing existing buildings. Though Fostoria is relatively flat, developers should pay attention to natural features to avoid causing (or worsening) improper drainage or flooding. Particularly in historic neighborhoods, consider adopting place-specific design standards and guidelines to ensure design, scale and set-back are compatible with adjacent and surrounding properties. This is critical to preserving sense of place, which is one of Fostoria's greatest assets.

2.1.6 Fair Housing - Educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities. Develop a program to regularly distribute information to vulnerable populations, and also make it readily available at public locations such as the library, senior center, food pantries, and any businesses that will allow it. While some funding programs may still require more traditional distribution methods, rethink those and include





more modern technology, such as social media, chat groups, and other on-line platforms to reach a greater percentage of local residents.

2.1.7 Downtown Upper-Floor - Encourage building owners to consider creating upper-floor housing when renovating downtown commercial structures. Educate building owners about tax credit programs that could assist with financing. Develop a list of local architects, structural engineers, and contractors who have successfully renovated other historic commercial properties to distribute to property owners.

2.1.8 Historic Neighborhoods – Use incentive programs to renovate older homes or build new structures where previous ones were demolished. Not only does this make it more affordable for everyone from single and/or first-time home buyers to large, even multi-generational families, but it preserves the authentic urban fabric that makes Fostoria what it is. It also uses existing infrastructure, which is more financially efficient and responsible. Consider creating new, local programs to further incentivize reinvestment within the historic urban core.

2.1.9 Incentive Programs - Educate local property owners and developers about federal and state incentives, such as LIHTCs, HRTCs, and NMTCs as well as local incentives such as CRA, job tax credits, etc. Create new programs to further incentivize reinvestment in the City's historic urban neighborhoods for both commercial and residential re-development.

Objective 2.2 DESIREABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

2.2.1 Sidewalks & Lighting – Conduct a windshield inventory and assessment of all sidewalks in the community. Use this inventory to prioritize sections based on age and/or condition, universal access compliance, and impact to the surrounding neighborhood. Similarly, conduct a lighting inventory and assessment. Use this inventory to prioritize lighting improvements based on the kind of neighborhood and their respective lighting needs (less harsh in residential areas, higher density and coverage in commercial areas). Include age and/or condition. In areas where additional lighting is needed, work with the City or local electric provider to determine if there is sufficient electric service to the area to support additional or upgraded lighting. Consider using LEDs to reduce energy costs.



2.2.2 Alleys – Maintain alley surfaces and regularly pick up debris to improve appearance of alleys throughout Fostoria. Historically, these paths allowed services vehicles such as trash collection, to happen away from the front of the houses, keeping those less attractive functions out of sight. Alleys can be a character defining feature in older, historic neighborhoods and should be preserved as part of the City's landscape.

2.2.3 Public Safety – Organize and/or expand Neighborhood Block Watch programs. This partnership between residents and City Police not only helps make neighborhoods more safe, but it also facilitates regular, positive communication between the two groups, which can be a helpful bridge during tense situations.

2.2.4 Neighborhood Appearance – Conduct regular neighborhood pride days. Organize volunteers to pick up trash and mow or otherwise remove overgrown vegetation from vacant lots. Consider organizing volunteer paint programs that assist older and physically challenged residents with exterior painting or other modest home maintenance. Have collection days to take old tires, paint cans and other household hazardous waste. Work with local media outlets to organize neighborhood garden contests or other activities aimed at promoting and celebrating neighborhood pride. Work with programs like America in Bloom that offer structure and guidance on how to locally organize efforts.

Objective 2.3 VALUED CULTURE AND PLACES

2.3.1 Promotion (Events & Meetings) – Increase the use of Downtown Fostoria as a lively gathering place, with flexible multi-use spaces, meeting spaces, and event programming.

2.3.2 Promotion (Culture & Entertainment) - Maintain and develop a variety of cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents, students and visitors. Work with institutions like Kaubisch Memorial Public Library, the Fostoria Area Historic Society and Museum, local bands and theater groups to promote interest in local history.




CITY OF FOSTORIA
IRON TRIANGLE
VISITOR CENTER AND VIEWING AREA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2.3.3 Design – Improve the overall appearance of Downtown Fostoria, both publicly and privately owned properties and spaces. See also 1.7 for specific strategies for Downtown.

2.3.4 Historic Preservation & Resources - Create an inventory of notable historic structures and encourage their long-term preservation and economic well-being. Consider development/protection regulations for areas with unique historic worth, informing property owners of various programs available for historic buildings. Consider placing individual buildings or even entire neighborhoods or districts on the National Register of Historic Places, then work with owners to take advantage of state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits as they renovate and improve properties.



2.3.5 Commercial Development - Encourage commercial development that will enhance, preserve, and strengthen downtown, including hotels.

2.3.6 Sunshine Point – Continue endeavors like the Fostoria Gardeners' initiative at Sunshine Point to beautify areas throughout Fostoria. Not only does this aesthetically improve the community, but it builds pride and unique sense of place.

2.3.7 Lodging - Encourage the development of more lodging facilities, including house-sharing alternatives such as Bed & Breakfast establishments, Airbnb, etc. Review and update the Zoning Code to appropriately regulate.

2.3.8 Farmers Market - Encourage a year-round, indoor farmers market.

Objective 2.4 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

2.4.1 Property Maintenance and Building Codes - Maintain and strengthen property code enforcement, including minimum maintenance standards. The City's vacant property registration legislation should be re-visited regularly and strengthened if problems with absentee landlords persist. Work with property owners and local contractors to be sure they are obtaining permits prior to renovation and/or new construction to ensure the structural safety and functional integrity of all buildings. See also Objective 1.7.5 for additional discussion.

2.4.2 Workshops - Conduct educational workshops to provide opportunities for homeowners to learn techniques for long-term maintenance. See also Objective 1.7.5 for additional suggestions.

2.4.3 Library – Create and manage a tool lending library.

2.4.4 Vacant Property Clearinghouse – Inventory and evaluate all vacant buildings in the City. Buildings that remain vacant or unoccupied for an extended period often become an attractive nuisance to children, a nesting place for rodents, an increased fire hazard and dumping place for garbage. Keep track of and monitor vacant properties city-wide by establishing a vacant property registration. Work with a local contractor or developer to realistically determine which properties can be saved. Detroit conducted a massive inventory using volunteers and a standardized evaluation tool. The volunteer work directly informed and helped guide improvements to the City's demolition programs. Work with the County Land Bank or other similar organization to (at minimum) properly mothball solid properties until they can be sold, or (better) improve the buildings and offer them to buyers, either at subsidized or market rates, depending on renovation costs vis-à-vis property values in the surrounding neighborhood. See Objective 1.3 for additional recommendations on available buildings and sites.

2.4.5 Blight Abatement/Demolition - Create and enforce citywide blight abatement guidelines (potentially partnering with the Seneca County Land Bank). Demolish vacant houses and other vacant structures when rehabilitation or re-use is not viable. Work with local demolition contractors to salvage architectural elements from buildings being demolished. Work with Habitat for Humanity's ReStore to collect architectural materials and provide them at reasonable cost to property owners who are restoring buildings.

2.4.6 PACE – Educate residential and commercial property owners on the benefits of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs to make building improvements and improve energy efficiency.



Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

2.5.1 Historic Districts – Identify historic neighborhoods and, where feasible, work to list them on the National Register of Historic Places. Install signage unique to that neighborhood to define the area and help instill sense of place. Work with property owners to utilize incentives such as state and federal historic rehab tax credits to improve their homes or commercial buildings.

2.5.2 Zoning Review - Review the zoning districts and related uses and development standards, and the application of the districts on the Zoning Map to be sure the districts are inclusive of the types of land uses the community wants to see in those areas. Example: zoning in Downtown Fostoria might be tweaked to promote live/work spaces. Evaluate regulations to assess their success relative to revitalizing urban areas and make changes accordingly. Update zoning regulations to encourage development of vacant or underutilized properties and brownfield sites.

GOAL 3. QUALITY COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Objective 3.1 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

3.1.1 Special Interest Groups - Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs, initiatives, and assets focused on addressing and serving the interests and needs of particular groups that reflect particular segments of our diverse population (e.g., young professionals, international students, religious groups, 4H, etc.).



3.1.2 Connection & Interaction - Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs and initiatives and assets that encourage interaction and foster connection between representatives of different groups and/or diverse individuals (e.g., organizations that pair young and old residents and initiatives to encourage more volunteer efforts from all students to help elderly residents).

3.1.3 Events - Create, strengthen and support events that support, foster, and celebrate diversity, inclusivity, and uniqueness of individuals in the community (e.g., Culturefest, International Dinner, Special Olympics).

3.1.4 Education & Training - Create, strengthen and support programs and initiatives that educate about, and promote diversity and inclusivity. Work with local employers, schools, and faith-based organizations to implement. Support Fair Housing outreach and education activities.

3.1.5 ADA Transition Plan – Identify physical and psychological barriers throughout the community, then create a work plan to address identified deficiencies per guidelines established by the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

3.2.1 Fostoria City Schools – Partner with the school district to increase the percentage of high school students graduating with college credit and/or an industry credential. Maintain, strengthen, increase, support, celebrate and reward teaching excellence, innovation, and capacity in the PreK-12 system.

3.2.2 Fostoria Learning Center - Maintain Fostoria Learning Center and increase the quality and capacity of public and private PreK-12 educational facilities. Partner with local public schools to increase technical and vocational study programs.

3.2.3 Kaubisch Memorial Public Library - Continue communitywide programs via the public library.

3.2.4 Head Start - Provide greater access to programs to assist children from low to moderate income households.

3.2.5 Higher Education - Develop programmatic connections to four year institutions such as Heidelberg and Tiffin Universities, and two year programs such as Terra Tech and Owens Technical Colleges.

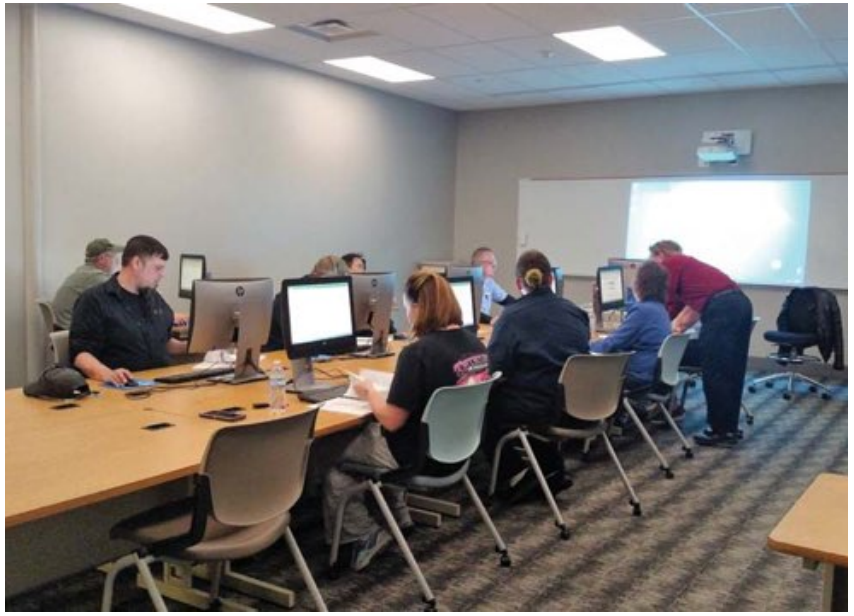
Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING

3.3.1 Walkability - Regularly conduct walkability audits for all public spaces to assess accessibility challenges, then prioritize and undertake projects as resources permit.

3.3.2 City Parks - Evaluate current park locations for service coverage across the city.

3.3.3 City Trails – Maintain existing and develop new trails and/or non-motorized connectors within the city limits. Please see the recently completely Active Transportation Plan for detailed recommendations on trail development.

3.3.4 Local History – Where applicable, tell Fostoria's story through interpretive signage, public arts, or other media in public spaces. Showcase Fostoria's rich railroad and glass history in public art, signage, educational scavenger hunts, etc.



3.3.5 Cooperative Programs – Build strong intra-park coordination between City and County Parks to provide diverse programs and offer a broad range of facilities and experiences to City residents.

Objective 3.4 HEALTH AND WELLNESS

3.4.1 Behavioral and Mental Health - Continue to support and collaborate with local health care providers to campaign for education, awareness and support of mental health and behavioral health concerns.

3.4.2 Hospital and Medical Coordination - Continue to support efforts with hospitals and other medical professionals to increase the number of programs and facilities to address mental and behavioral health issues including recovery programs for those struggling with drug addiction.

3.4.3 Safe Communities – Develop and strengthen partnerships between Fostoria Police Department and local schools and neighborhoods using programs such as "Lunch with a Cop" or Neighborhood Watch organizations.

3.4.4 Emergency Services – Maintain police and fire departments with updated equipment. Foster an environment that help maintain emergency/safety services. Streamline overlapping services.

3.4.5 Access – Explore options for public transportation to ensure all residents can access health and wellness facilities.

Objective 3.5 FOOD SECURITY & ACCESS

3.5.1 Urban Gardening - Encourage urban gardening. Work with groups like Fostoria Garden Club, Fostoria Learning Center, local 4-H and FFA clubs to create educational programs for the community. Create demonstration projects at strategic locations in residential neighborhoods, particularly in those areas of town that have poor access to grocery stores and fresh foods (i.e. food deserts).

3.5.2 Farmers Market – Fostoria's open air Farmers Market is located in Downtown Fostoria and runs from May to September. Work with local vendors to discuss expanding to a year-round market. Identify (and, if needed, refurbish) a location in Downtown Fostoria for colder months. Work with Fostoria Learning Center, the Fostoria Area Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations that support entrepreneurs to support new pop-up businesses in becoming regular vendors to build a local clientele.





GOAL 4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – VALUED NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION

4.1.1 Cleanups - Engage in Portage River, Lamberjack and Mosier Lake cleanups and invasive species removal campaigns at these bodies of water as well as at other local greenspaces and parks.

4.1.2 Stormwater Management - Update the City's stormwater management regulations to maintain/protect riparian buffers along the East Branch of the Portage River, and employ best management practices. Establish mandatory setbacks from watercourses and wetlands in order to protect their beneficial functions in managing storm water. Encourage sensitive site design of new development and rehabilitation of existing development sites to reduce storm water runoff and pollutants from entering into bodies of water such as Lamberjack and Mosier Lakes.

4.1.3 Planned Unit Development Design – Review and evaluate the existing Planned Unit Development regulations (Chapter 1129) to ensure it includes adequate criteria for ensuring the required open space adequately preserves key natural areas such as riparian corridors, woodlands, and wetlands, in the order of priority determined by the City. Ensure that the approval process and density allowances make this an attractive form of development.

4.1.4 Tree Preservation/Restoration - Plant and protect trees to first maintain and then increase canopy coverage. Consider adopting a tree preservation/conservation ordinance that would require large wooded areas to be preserved to the extent practicable, especially for new residential development.

Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE

4.2.1 City Parks – Maintain and improve all city parks, including Portage, Gray, City Park and others.

4.2.2 Parks - Strike a balance with available acreage for parks with access and private land ownership. Inventory and map existing greenspaces. Identify a balance of park acreage to private land acreage.

4.2.3 Fostoria Reservoir - Develop Fostoria Reservoir with facilities for non-motorized watercraft opportunities.

4.2.4 Collaboration– Groups such as the Shade Tree Commission, City Park Department, Fostoria Garden Club and others interested



in preserving and celebrating greenspace should communicate regularly regarding the care, conservation and expansion of Fostoria's greenspaces.

Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE

4.4.1 Water Trails - Talk with ODNR to investigate the possibility of creating a blue trail to connect the city with the main expanse of the Portage River.

4.4.2 NPS-IS – Work with OEPA and other communities in Hancock, Ottawa, Sandusky and Wood Counties to prepare and update a Non-Point Source-Implementation Strategy (NPS-IS) for the Portage River watershed. This is an important planning document to have when pursuing funding for stream improvements, such as Section 319 funds.

4.4.3 Combined Sanitary and Storm Sewer Overflow (CSO) – Work with OEPA to find funding to separate the combined sewer. Minimize (and eventually eliminate) harmful discharge in the East Brand of the Portage River.

Objective 4.5 GREEN ENERGY

4.5.1 Zoning – Review the Fostoria Zoning Code to ensure it allows for placement of alternative energy infrastructure in both residential and commercial/industrial areas. Consider adding allowances for large scale renewable energy facilities such as solar fields on otherwise unusable land, such as brownfields, and ensuring that energy systems geared for on-site use can be easily erected on top of structures like rooftops (example: Owens Corning Headquarters surface parking lots treatment, Toledo, OH).

4.5.2 Partnerships - Encourage Hancock-Wood Electric Coop and North Central Electric Coop to make residential and commercial usage of solar and other alternative power resources easier.

4.5.3 LEED (Leader in Energy and Environmental Design) – Encourage structures, whether new or those being rehabilitated, follow the standards necessary to become LEED certified. Investigate becoming LEED accredited professionals.

Objective 4.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.6.1 Landfill Improvements – Work with the Health Department and Ottawa-Sandusky-Seneca Solid Waste District to address maintenance of the existing landfills to ensure problems are addressed and monitored.

4.6.2 Recycling - Explore and encourage recycling with an emphasis on waste reduction, reuse and reduce. Work with local schools to encourage a new generation of Fostorians to recycle and re-use. – Work with Ottawa-Sandusky-Seneca Solid Waste District to maximize programs such as their Recycling Container Loan Program to reduce waste going into a landfill and increase awareness of the importance of recycling. OEPA's Litter Prevention Program has grants available for similar waste reduction/recycling expansion programs.



GOAL 5. ENHANCE MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY & PUBLIC UTILITIES

Objective 5.1 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

5.1.1 Repairs – Inventory and rate the need for improvements to all local bridges, overpasses, and roads. Investigate and pursue funding programs available to assist with these projects. Develop a roadway grading system to create a long-term maintenance plan for the street system.

5.1.2 Truck Routes - Evaluate and improve truck routes through Fostoria to ensure trucks can adequately maneuver through and avoid residential neighborhoods.

5.1.3 Local Roads - Enhance the appearance of roadways through the city, especially the main routes. The main roads through Fostoria serve as the city's "front door", and their appearance contributes to residents' and outsiders' perception of Fostoria. As such, investments in trees, other landscaping, etc., can make a big contribution toward improving local perceptions and community pride.

5.1.4 Signage - Improve signage and create a wayfinding system. Particularly with the number of federal and state highways that converge







and wind throughout Fostoria, an easy-to-interpret wayfinding system is paramount.

Objective 5.2 CONNECTED ROADWAY SYSTEM

5.2.1 Fostoria Loop Road – Continue to investigate funding sources so this massive, 7-phase loop around Fostoria can be built.

5.2.2 Transportation System - Improve and maintain transportation system in order to address present and future traffic challenges.

5.2.3 Access Management – Employ access management techniques to limit points of ingress/egress, and maintain the level of service on commercial corridors.

5.2.4 Transportation Networks - Support public transportation networks and other multi-modal transportation alternatives (biking, walking paths, etc.) to link population centers, areas with employment opportunities, and other destinations that are economically feasible.

5.2.5 Collaboration - Collaborate with federal, state, and local planning agencies and transportation departments to enhance transportation networks in the region. Participate in regional transportation summits and planning workshops to ensure local needs are included and prioritized on regional plans.

5.2.6 Congestion - Implement congestion management techniques at key intersections through redesign, additional traffic lanes, and improved signalization.

Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

5.3.1 Trails – Implement the trail recommendations in the recently completed Active Transportation Plan that are relevant to Fostoria.

5.3.2 Walkability - Develop infrastructure and educational campaigns that encourage people to commute to work and school on bike or on foot. Inventory and assess existing sidewalks, then rank repairs/ replacement and new construction according to need and potential for use. Encourage the use of safe and "walkable" streetscape design and signage standards. Design spaces for both pedestrian and vehicular circulation, comfort and safety. Consider conducting safe routes to schools audits.

5.3.3 Bike Shares - Develop a rent-a-bike or bike-sharing program. Pursue grants to help offset local costs.

5.3.4 Public Transit - Enhance public transit and mobility.

5.3.5 Funding - Identify alternative funding mechanisms for enhanced transit.

5.3.6 Ride Shares – Encourage ride sharing transportation on demand businesses such as Uber or Lyft.

Objective 5.4 AIR & RAIL NETWORKS

5.4.1 Promote Air & Rail - Promote alternate means of transportation and shipping such as aviation and rail.

5.4.2 Highways - Reconnect rail to major highways.

5.4.3 Airport - Use the airport as an economic opportunity.



Objective 5.5 SMART COMMUNITY Technologies

5.5.1 High Speed Internet - Provide high speed internet access to all areas. Investigate and pursue grant and other funding programs to offset local costs.

5.5.2 Telecommunications - Promote the proper placement and provision of telecommunication services.

5.5.3 Electric Charging Stations - Encourage the installation of electric car charging facilities.

Objective 5.6 WATER & WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

5.6.1 Distribution & Collection – Regularly evaluate water and sewer rates in conjunction with regular evaluation of current systems. Establish rates that will allow proper short- and long-term maintenance of Fostoria's water and waste water systems. Investigate and pursue funding programs to help offset local costs for improvements.

5.6.2 Utility Extensions – Extend utilities in accordance with local zoning and plans for future growth. Plan for future extensions when developing utility facilities management plans; forecast those needs when evaluating rates.



GOAL 6. STRONG COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE

Objective 6.1 CELEBRATE FOSTORIA

6.1.1 Publicity– Continually identify and develop an inventory of the reasons why Fostoria is a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business (brand reasons). Regularly emphasize those attributes in press releases, encourage positive stories every time Fostoria takes steps toward achieving its goals.

Objective 6.2 BRANDING & PROMOTION

6.2.1 Marketing – Advertise Fostoria activities and attractions to townships, villages and cities in Seneca, Hancock, and Wood Counties. Increase exposure to all assets, using a broad range of media including: social media, print, radio, television, local newsletters as well as various partners' websites.

6.2.2 Branding - Develop and/or implement a community brand to enhance the reputation and experience of the community as a great place to live, work, and operate a business.



Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

6.3.1 Strategic Planning – Develop and continually update a strategic plan for tourism development for Fostoria.

6.3.2 Railroad Heritage – Promote the Iron Triangle. Work with local partners to create "package" offerings for visitors, including retailers, restaurants, lodging and other







services needed by visitors, with an emphasis on telling Fostoria's train history.

6.3.3 Glass Heritage – Promote Fostoria's rich history in the glass industry. Work with the Museum and local partners to create "package" offerings (as above).

6.3.4 Public Art – Continue to commission public art and install at various locations throughout the community. Use local artists whenever possible, not only to build community pride, but also to celebrate the talent residing in the city. Celebrate and promote Downtown Fostoria as a destination using murals and other public art pieces.







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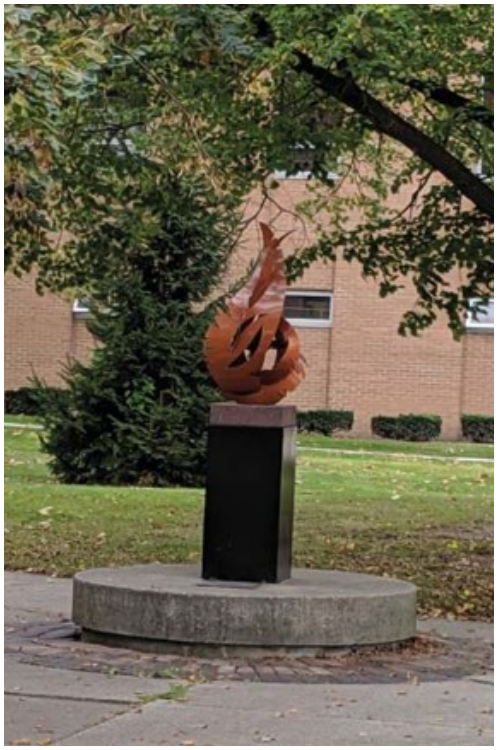


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Implementation Timeframe

This plan identifies a number of strategies that the City of Fostoria and its partners can take to move toward the City's vision for the future. Yet, we recognize that we cannot do everything at once. To this end, the matrix below identifies ongoing programs and initiatives that are important to maintain and allocates a preferred timeframe for expanding or enhancing existing programs and starting new initiatives, programs and projects.

Note: Existing programs/projects that will continue are noted in the "Ongoing" column. New programs/projects and enhancements to existing programs/projects are shown in the implementation timeframe based on anticipated start date.

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
Goal 1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy				
Objective 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING				
1.1.1 FEDC - Develop and/or update three- to five-year economic development strategic plan(s) for Fostoria on a routine basis; identify organizational partner(s) needed to implement the plan(s).	X			
1.1.2 Organizations - Ensure that the City and economic development organizations such as FEDC, Fostoria Learning Center (FLC), and other organizations tasked with implementation and oversight of the plan(s) have sufficient resources to do their work.	X			
1.1.3 Ongoing Dialogue – Maintain/strengthen the dialogue and collaboration among elected officials with respect to development.	X			
Objective 1.2: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT				
1.2.1 Workforce Plans - Update the City's workforce development strategic plan.		X		
1.2.2 Collaboration – Collaborate with Hancock, Seneca and Wood Counties in ways that enhance and strengthen Fostoria's workforce.		X		
1.2.3 Partnerships - Maintain and increase FLC's and FEDC's partnerships within the tri-county service area to strengthen, improve, and innovate workforce development.	X			
1.2.4 Marketing - Effectively market jobs, career opportunities, and employers to the local community and regionally, using available resources and outlets.	X			
1.2.5 Training & Assistance – Continue to promote FLC's and FEDC's existing curriculum, and expand the course catalogue based on skills expansion and retaining needs identified both by local businesses and by the FEDC and FLC Boards.	X			
1.2.6 Professional Development - Maintain and strengthen research, benchmarking, networking, and professional development opportunities for professionals and organizations engaged in workforce development.		X		
1.2.7 Attract Workers to Fostoria - Develop, strengthen, and maintain assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that encourage youth/young adults to stay or return to the city after college, and encourage in-migration of new residents.		X		
1.2.8 Apprenticeships and Shadowing Programs – Use FLC's partnerships with local businesses to create an apprenticeship and/or shadowing program.		X		

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.2.9 Remove Obstacles - Design and implement programs and needed support services, such as childcare and transportation, to remove obstacles for people who want to work locally.			X	
Objective 1.3 SUITABLE LOCATIONS				
1.3.1 Sites & Buildings – Identify, evaluate, rank and map vacant sites and facilities that are available for development and those suitable for redevelopment (adaptive re-use, rehabilitation) or demolition.	X			
1.3.2 Redevelopment – Rank, prioritize, promote and incentivize the redevelopment of declining, obsolete or severely underutilized commercial and industrial sites and facilities, including locations in Downtown Fostoria. See also 1.7 for Downtown redevelopment.		X		
1.3.3 Brownfields – Specifically identify and remediate (or assist property owners in remediating) brownfield sites and encourage redevelopment of those sites.		X		
1.3.4 Infrastructure– Create and maintain an updated database inventory of existing infrastructure and utilities (including broadband access) and associated GIS maps. Pursue grants and other incentives to defray costs.		X		
1.3.5 Development Agreements – Explore and implement mutually acceptable annexation and development agreements between the City and adjacent townships (in all three Counties) to increase supply of developable land.		X		
1.3.6 Zoning – Continue to review/update the Zoning Code and Land Development Regulations, as needed, with respect to development.	X			
1.3.7 Broadband – Increase access to and affordability of broadband access within the City.			X	
Objective 1.4 Business RETENTION, EXPANSION, & ATTRACTION				
1.4.1 Programs – Enhance and expand FEDC's existing Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) program.	X			
1.4.2 Incentives & Resources – Collect and distill information about existing local business resources; work with partners to cross-promote the programs.			X	
1.4.3 Industry Groups – Identify or develop industry councils or peer-to-peer networking groups to address industry-specific concerns, especially issues that prohibit or retard growth, expansion and/or retention.		X		
1.4.4 Marketing – Continue to promote Fostoria's assets and positive news both internally and externally, such as business openings and expansions, to multiple media outlets and local entities.	X			
1.4.5 Targeted Industries – Develop & maintain a targeted industry sector retention, expansion, and attraction strategy. See Objective 1.3 for additional information on suitable locations.		X		
1.4.6 Retail Strategy – Identify existing and desired retail clusters; identify improvements needed to ensure each cluster's success; conduct a market analysis; and convene a team of "champions" to meet with people looking to relocate to Fostoria.		X		

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.4.7 Economic Stability – Identify businesses that are having difficulties and work with them on strategies to recover or develop a succession plan.	X			
1.4.8 Regulation – Evaluate and streamline the zoning approval process and building permitting process to be more business-friendly.		X		
1.4.9 Technology –Work with local businesses, both start up and existing, so they are better able to use technology for efficiency and growth.			X	
Objective 1.5 AGRIBUSINESS				
1.5.1 Strategic Plan – Develop an agriculture and food industry cluster strategic plan and assign a group or organization to oversee its implementation.			X	
1.5.2 Local Food – Identify local entities that are engaged in the food industry. Develop programs dedicated to developing local assets, encouraging "buying local," and strengthening the local food industry			X	
1.5.3 Cluster Development – Enhance and encourage local agricultural capacity and viability, including expanding value added related accessory businesses and services			X	
1.5.4 Agribusiness – Make supporting local food systems a public policy priority.			X	
Objective 1.6 ENTRENEURSHIP				
1.6.1 Entrepreneurship Plan – Develop an entrepreneurship strategic plan as part of the City's Economic Development Strategy (see Objective 1.1); identify and/or develop group(s) or organization(s) to shepherd its implementation.	X			
1.6.2 Entrepreneurship Facilities – Expand Small Business Training programs and develop companion programs/services such as business incubators, accelerators, makerspaces, and pop-up stores.	X			
1.6.3 Resources – Identify, effectively leverage and develop more resources for entrepreneurs, start-up, and tech-based businesses.		X		
1.6.4 Capital – Work with local partners to create a pool of venture capital funds; pair with existing incentive programs (e.g. local Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)) and market these opportunities to potential developers, both inside Fostoria and out.		X		
1.6.5 Entrepreneurship Marketplace – Identify and vet existing and develop new entrepreneurial opportunities; connect entrepreneurs with those opportunities and capital; increase awareness of services provided by FEDC, FLC, the Chamber and CVB; and develop and promote classes geared toward helping local residents to build their own business.	X			
1.6.6 Culture – Support a culture of entrepreneurship in Fostoria; work with youth programs such as Junior Achievement (JA) to introduce young people.	X			
1.6.7 Collaboration –Continue to strengthen collaboration with entities and organizations most closely aligned with Fostoria's needs, and expand on-line and in-person learning opportunities.			X	
Objective 1.7 Revitalize DOWNTOWN FOSTORIA				
1.7.1 Plans - Update Fostoria's Downtown Plan.		X		

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.7.2 Downtown Resources – Catalogue and distribute a list of resources available to downtown property and business owners.		X		
1.7.3 Downtown Incentives - Develop and implement appropriate incentive programs to foster downtown revitalization; educate local property owners/developers on use of federal, state and local incentives.		X		
1.7.4 Protective Regulations – Adopt specific design standards and guidelines for Downtown Fostoria. Clarify/expand provisions of Chapter 1335 Preservation and Design Review Regulations; designate the boundaries of downtown where the design standards and guidelines apply, and depict on the Zoning Map as an overlay district.		X		
1.7.5 Building Codes – Educate local building code officials about the alternate building code section that allows exemptions for specific historic features, and help property owners find alternate solutions to common problems related to older buildings.		X		
1.7.6 Festivals and Events – Develop a calendar of events that bring people downtown, and distribute it annually to Downtown businesses.		X		
Goal 2. ATTRACTIVE, DESIRABLE & LIVABLE PLACES (Built Environment)				
Objective 2.1 Increase HOUSING OPTIONS				
2.1.1 Housing Development - Conduct a housing study to evaluate existing housing conditions and to determine the quantity, styles, and price-points of housing needed in Fostoria.	X			
2.1.2 Housing Resources - Increase awareness of housing resources that are available to residents, including Fair Housing materials. Consider launching a community development corporation (CDC) or similar organization to provide assistance programs designed to support housing renovation and construction.		X		
2.1.3 Adaptive Reuse – Encourage/facilitate adaptive reuse of vacant buildings (schools, churches, etc.) for new housing. Update the Zoning Code to include provisions to encourage this kind of re-development.		X		
2.1.4 Creative Design – Review/update the Zoning Code to include place-specific design standards and guidelines to new homes and new developments are integrated into the existing neighborhood fabric.		X		
2.1.5 Context Sensitive Development - Encourage new housing development to be sensitive to the natural environment, to avoid causing (or worsening) improper drainage or flooding.		X		
2.1.6 Fair Housing – Continue to educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities.	X			
2.1.7 Downtown Upper Floor - Encourage building owners to consider creating upper floor residential units when renovating downtown commercial structures.			X	
2.1.8 Historic Neighborhoods – Create local programs to incentivize renovation of older homes and reinvestment within the historic urban core.			X	
2.1.9 Incentive Programs - Educate local property owners and developers about federal and state incentives, such as LIHTCs, HRTCs, and NMTCs, and local incentives such as CRA.		X		

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
Objective 2.2 DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS				
2.2.1 Sidewalks & Lighting - Conduct a windshield inventory and assessment of all sidewalks and street lighting in the city. Maintain the inventory and use as a mechanism to systematically maintain these public improvements.		X		
2.2.2 Alleys – Maintain alley surfaces and regularly pick up debris to improve appearance of alleys throughout Fostoria.		X		
2.2.3 Public Safety – Organize and/or expand Neighborhood Block Watch programs.	X			
2.2.4 Neighborhood Appearance – Conduct regular neighborhood pride days.		X		
Objective 2.3 VALUED CULTURE AND PLACES				
2.3.1 Promotion (Events & Meetings) – Increase the use of Downtown Fostoria as a lively gathering place, with flexible multi-use spaces, meeting spaces, and event programming.		X		
2.3.2 Promotion (Culture & Entertainment) - Maintain and develop a variety of cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents, students and visitors.		X		
2.3.3 Design - Improve the overall appearance of Downtown Fostoria, both publicly and privately owned properties and spaces. See also 1.7 for specific strategies for Downtown.		X		
2.3.4 Historic Preservation & Resources - Create an inventory of notable historic structures and encourage their long-term preservation and economic well-being.		X		
2.3.5 Commercial Development - Encourage commercial development that will enhance, preserve, and strengthen downtown, including hotels.	X			
2.3.6 Sunshine Point – Continue endeavors like the Fostoria Gardeners' initiative at Sunshine Point to beautify areas throughout Fostoria.	X			
2.3.7 Lodging - Encourage the development of more lodging facilities; review/update the Zoning Code to appropriately regulate.		X		
2.3.8 Farmers Market - Encourage a year-round, indoor farmers market		X		
Objective 2.4 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE				
2.4.1 Property Maintenance and Building Codes - Maintain and strengthen property code enforcement, including minimum maintenance standards. See also 1.7.5 for additional discussion.	X			
2.4.2 Workshops - Conduct educational workshops to provide opportunities for homeowners to learn techniques for long-term maintenance. See also 1.7.5 for additional suggestions.			X	
2.4.3 Library – Create and manage a tool lending library.			X	
2.4.4 Vacant Property Clearinghouse – Inventory and evaluate all vacant buildings in the City; establish a vacant property registration to monitor vacant properties city-wide.	X			
2.4.5 Blight Abatement/Demolition – Create/enforce citywide blight abatement guidelines. Demolish vacant structures when rehabilitation or re-use is not viable.	X			

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
2.4.6 PACE – Educate residential and commercial property owners on the benefits of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs to improve energy efficiency.		X		
Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE				
2.5.1 Historic Districts – Identify and preserve historic neighborhoods; Install signage; Help property owners use state and federal historic rehab tax credits to improve buildings.		X		
2.5.2 Zoning Review – Review/update zoning regulations to encourage revitalization of downtown, and new development on vacant, underutilized and brownfield sites.	X			
Goal 3. Quality Community Facilities & Services				
Objective 3.1 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES				
3.1.1 Special Interest Groups - Create, strengthen, and support organizations and programs that address/serve the interests and needs of particular segments of our diverse population.			X	
3.1.2 Connection & Interaction – Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs, initiatives and assets that encourage interaction and foster connection between diverse groups/ individuals.				X
3.1.3 Events – Create, strengthen and support events that support, foster, and celebrate diversity, inclusivity, and uniqueness of individuals in the community.				X
3.1.4 Education & Training – Create and support programs and initiatives that educate, train, communicate about, and promote diversity and inclusivity, and support fair housing initiatives.			X	
3.1.5 ADA Transition Plan – Identify and correct any physical and psychological barriers throughout the community per guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act.				X
Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING				
3.2.1 Fostoria City Schools – Partner with the school district to increase the percentage of high school students graduating with college credit and/or an industry credential.	X			
3.2.2 Fostoria Learning Center - Maintain Fostoria Learning Center and partner with local public schools to increase technical and vocational study programs.	X			
3.2.3 Kaubisch Memorial Public Library - Continue community-wide programs via the public library.		X		
3.2.4 Head Start - Provide greater access to programs to assist children from low to moderate-income households.		X		
3.2.5 Higher Education - Develop programmatic connections to four-year institutions such as Heidelberg and Tiffin Universities, and two year programs such as Terra Tech and Owens Technical Colleges.		X		
Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING				
3.3.1 Walkability - Regularly conduct walkability audits of public spaces to assess accessibility challenges; prioritize and undertake projects as resources permit.			X	

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
3.3.2 City Parks - Evaluate current park locations for service coverage across the City.		X		
3.3.3 City Trails – Develop new trails and/or non-motorized connectors within the City limits, according to recommendation in the 2019 Active Transportation Plan.				X
3.3.4 Local History – Install interpretive signage, public art, and other media in public spaces to highlight key aspects of Fostoria's history.				X
3.3.5 Cooperative Programs – Build strong intra-park coordination between City and County Parks to increase program diversity and range of facilities available to City residents.			X	
Objective 3.4 HEALTH AND WELLNESS				
3.4.1 Behavioral and Mental Health - Continue to support and collaborate with local health care providers to campaign for education, awareness and support of mental health and behavioral health concerns.		X		
3.4.2 Hospital and Medical Coordination - Continue to support efforts with hospitals and other medical professionals to increase the number of programs and facilities to address mental and behavioral health issues including recovery programs for those struggling with drug addiction.		X		
3.4.3 Safe Communities – Develop and strengthen partnerships between Fostoria Police Department and local schools and neighborhoods.		X		
3.4.4 Emergency Services – Maintain police and fire departments with updated equipment; streamline overlapping services.	X			
3.4.5 Access – Explore options to provide public transportation to ensure all residents can access health and wellness facilities. (Also addressed in 5.2 and 5.3)				X
Objective 3.5 FOOD SECURITY & ACCESS				
3.5.1 Urban Gardening - Encourage urban gardening; create demonstration projects at strategic locations with poor access to grocery stores and fresh foods (i.e. food deserts).			X	
3.5.2 Farmers Market – Work with local vendors to expand the Farmers Market to a year-round market. Identify (and, if needed, refurbish) an indoor location in Downtown Fostoria.		X		
Goal 4. Environmental Stewardship -Valued Natural Resources				
Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION				
4.1.1 Cleanups - Organize cleanups and invasive species removal campaigns at Portage River, Lamberjack and Mosier Lake and other local greenspaces and parks.	X			
4.1.2 Stormwater Management - Update the City's stormwater management regulations to establish mandatory setbacks to maintain/protect riparian buffers along the East Branch of the Portage River, and employ best management practices.	X			
4.1.3 Planned Unit Development Design – Review and update the existing Planned Unit Development regulations (Chapter 1129) to encourage this form of development and ensure key natural areas such as riparian corridors, woodlands, and wetlands are conserved.		X		

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
4.1.4 Tree Preservation/Restoration - Plant and protect trees to maintain current and increase canopy coverage; consider adopting a tree preservation/conservation ordinance.		X		
Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE				
4.2.1 City Parks – Maintain and improve Portage, Gray and City Parks.	X			
4.2.2 Parks - Inventory and map existing greenspaces; determine need for additional park acreage.		X		
4.2.3 Fostoria Reservoir - Develop Fostoria Reservoir with facilities for non-motorized watercraft opportunities.		X		
4.2.4 Collaboration– Encourage regular communication and coordination among entities that manage and preserve Fostoria's greenspaces.	X			
Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE				
4.4.1 Water Trails: Investigate with ODNR the possibility of creating a blue trail to connect the City with the main expanse of the Portage River.				X
4.4.2 NPS-IS – Work with OEPA and other communities in the Portage River watershed to prepare/ update a Non-Point Source-Implementation Strategy (NPS-IS).		X		
4.4.3 Combined Sanitary and Storm Sewer Overflow (CSO) systems– Work with OEPA to find funding to separate the combined sewer.	X			
Objective 4.5 GREEN ENERGY				
4.5.1 Zoning – Review the Fostoria Zoning Code to ensure it allows for placement of alternative energy infrastructure in both residential and commercial/industrial areas.		X		
4.5.2 Partnerships - Encourage Hancock-Wood Electric Coop and North Central Electric Coop to make residential and commercial usage of solar and other alternative power resources easier.		X		
4.5.3 LEED (Leader in Energy and Environmental Design) – Encourage structures to become LEED certified. Investigate becoming LEED accredited professionals.		X		
Objective 4.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT				
4.6.1 Landfill Improvements – Work with the Health Department and Ottawa-Sandusky-Seneca Solid Waste District to monitor and address maintenance of the existing landfills.	X			
4.6.2 Recycling - Encourage recycling; work with Ottawa-Sandusky-Seneca Solid Waste District to maximize programs to reduce waste going into a landfill.			X	
GOAL 5. Enhance Mobility, Accessibility & Public Utilities				
Objective 5.1 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE				
5.1.1 Repairs – Inventory condition of all local bridges, overpasses, and roads; develop a roadway grading system; identify needed improvements; and create a long-term maintenance plan. Pursue funding programs to assist with these projects.	X			

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
5.1.2 Truck Routes - Evaluate and improve truck routes through Fostoria to ensure trucks can adequately maneuver through and avoid residential neighborhoods.	X			
5.1.3 Local Roads - Enhance the appearance of roadways through the City, especially the main routes with tree planting, other landscaping, etc.	X			
5.1.4 Signage - Improve signage and create a wayfinding system to enable visitors to maneuver throughout Fostoria.			X	
Objective 5.2 CONNECTED ROADWAY SYSTEM				
5.2.1 Fostoria Loop Road – Continue to investigate funding sources for the seven-phase loop around Fostoria.	X			
5.2.2 Transportation System - Improve and maintain transportation system in order to address present and future traffic challenges.	X			
5.2.3 Access Management – Employ access management techniques to limit points of ingress/egress, and maintain the level of service on commercial corridors.	X			
5.2.4 Transportation Networks - Support public transportation networks and other multi-modal transportation alternatives to link population centers with employment opportunities and other destinations.	X			
5.2.5 Collaboration - Collaborate with federal, state, and local planning agencies to enhance transportation networks in the region.	X			
5.2.6 Congestion - Implement congestion management techniques at key intersections through redesign, additional traffic lanes, and improved signalization.	X			
Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION				
5.3.1 Trails – Implement the trail recommendations in the recently completed Active Transportation Plan that are relevant to Fostoria.				X
5.3.2 Walkability - Develop infrastructure and educational campaigns that encourage people to commute to work and school on bike or on foot.		X		
5.3.3 Bike Shares - Develop a rent-a-bike or bike-sharing program. Pursue grants to help offset local costs.				X
5.3.4 Public Transit - Enhance public transit and mobility.	X			
5.3.5 Funding - Identify alternative funding mechanisms for enhanced transit.	X			
5.3.6 Ride Shares – Encourage ride-sharing transportation on demand businesses such as Uber or Lyft.		X		
Objective 5.4 AIR & RAIL NETWORKS				
5.4.1 Promote Air & Rail - Promote alternate means of transportation and shipping such as aviation and rail.	x			
5.4.2 Highways - Reconnect rail to major highways.	X			

FOSTORIA'S IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
5.4.3 Airport - Use the airport as an economic opportunity.	X			
Objective 5.5 Embrace SMART COMMUNITY Technologies				
5.5.1 High Speed Internet - Provide high-speed internet access to all areas. Investigate and pursue grant and other funding programs to offset local costs.	X			
5.5.2 Telecommunications - Promote the proper placement and provision of telecommunication services.	X			
5.5.3 Electric Charging Stations - Encourage the installation of electric car charging facilities.	X			
Objective 5.6 WATER & WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE				
5.6.1 Distribution & Collection – Regularly evaluate water and sewer rates in conjunction with regular evaluation of current systems.		X		
5.6.2 Utility Extensions – Plan for future utility extensions to accommodate future growth.				X
Goal 6. Strong Community Character & Image				
Objective 6.1 CELEBRATE FOSTORIA				
6.1.1 Publicity– Continually identify and publicize reasons why Fostoria is a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business (brand reasons).	X			
Objective 6.2 BRANDING & PROMOTION				
6.2.1 Marketing – Advertise Fostoria activities and attractions to townships, villages and cities in Seneca, Hancock, and Wood Counties.	X			
6.2.2 Branding - Develop and/or implement a community brand to enhance the reputation and experience of the community as a great place to live, work, and operate a business.	X			
Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT				
6.3.1 Strategic Planning – Develop and continually update a strategic plan for tourism development for Fostoria.		X		
6.3.2 Railroad Heritage – Promote the Iron Triangle; work with local partners to create "package" offerings for visitors.		X		
6.3.3 Glass Heritage – Promote Fostoria's rich history in the glass industry. Work with the Museum and local partners to create "package" offerings (as above).		X		
6.3.4 Public Art – Continue to commission, celebrate and promote Downtown Fostoria as a destination using murals and other public art pieces.	X			