

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

It is a document that guides the growth and development of a community. The ultimate goal of a comprehensive plan is to gather input from residents, businesses and public officials in order to form a vision for the community. It serves as:

A way for the community to unite around shared values.

A blueprint used by public officials when making decisions regarding growth.

A tool for residents to help shape their neighborhoods.

It is designed to bring out the needs, desires and aspirations of a community.

It identifies measurable goals, objections, and action steps to implement the identified vision.

It should address all aspects of the community: land use, housing, infrastructure, economics, and recreation/open space. It should answer these questions:

What kind of development should occur? Where and what should it look like?

What kind of aesthetic does a community want?

How should a community balance land uses-for example, residential vs. commercial?

Does a community need new or updated facilities or recreational spaces?

Does the community need updated roads, multi-use paths, or bike paths?

What kind of infrastructure is needed?

WHY DOES A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN NEED TO BE UPDATED?

A comprehensive plan is a flexible document that guides every nuance of a community. Ideally it becomes a living document that is updated regularly and adapts to changing realities. Change is a constant, and requires communities to continually adapt their plans and strategies while ensuring any long term changes are in line with the overall values that have been established.

Imagine your community 15 years ago, or how it will look 15 years from now. The change that has occurred may be substantial, and it would be inappropriate to rely on a 15+ year old plan to guide today’s community. This is why plans should be updated regularly, and a “deep dive” planning process should occur at least every 15 years. This captures changes in the community’s desires and goals, as well as external changes that have occurred and are anticipated to occur.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Involves several steps that are designed to solicit input from the public and community stakeholders and synthesizes this input for approval by the community officials. This ensures that the final product meets the community’s needs.

The Stakeholder Committee

A group of community members that provide overall direction for the plan. They are appointed at the beginning stages of the planning process and guide the process to its conclusion along with the consultant.

Public Input

Meetings are held where the public is brought together to share their input. These sessions gather input through a structured process that ensures a good understanding of the community’s vision.

Elected Officials

The plan is reviewed and recommended by the Zoning Commission and approved by the Township Trustees. Once adopted, the plan is used to guide and inform future community growth and development.

PLANNING TIMEFRAME

The goal of the planning process is to provide guidance for growth over the next **15** years.

THE LICKING TOWNSHIP VISION

The vision statement serves as the guiding principle for the Comprehensive Plan. All recommendations and actions taken regarding the Plan should align with the established vision. The vision provides the basis to create general goals, which in turn creates the basis for specific action step recommendations to work toward achieving the vision.

The vision statement for this Comprehensive Plan was created from resident input via the survey, meetings with the Steering Committee, and information gained from conversations with various Township stakeholders.

Licking Township seeks to preserve the natural beauty, friendly atmosphere, and small town feel of the community while planning ahead to balance growth and development within the Township's borders to ensure the enhancement of the vital aspects of the Township that residents love.



Dupler's Pumpkin Land.
From Dupler's Facebook



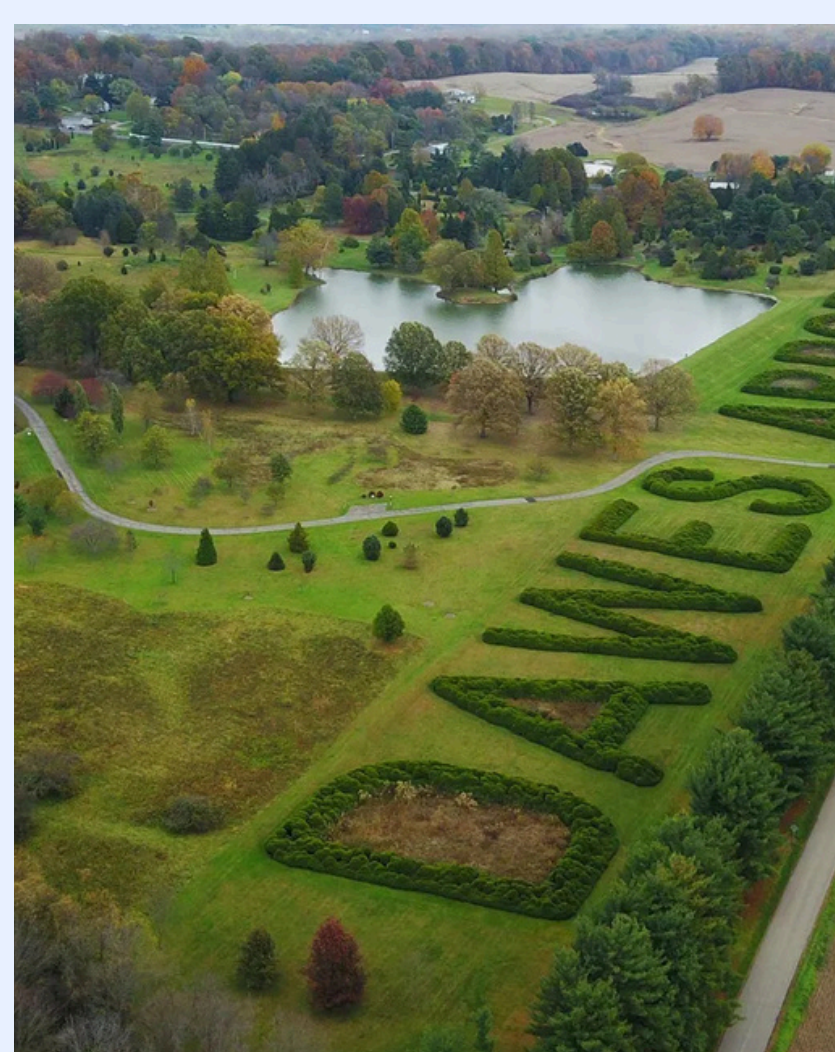
From 22 Acres Farm



Buckeye Lake Recreating.
From Explore Licking County



Crossroads Pub 'n Grub.
By Megan Swaney Google Review



The Dawes Arboretum. From
The Columbus Dispatch



Licking Township Fire Company
Vehicle. From LTFC Facebook

PLANNING GOALS

The following goals have been identified by the Steering Committee based on community feedback, stakeholder interviews, and an assessment of the evolving conditions affecting Licking Township. The goals align with three broad categories centered around economic development, rural lifestyle, and community relationships. The goals guide the recommendations and action steps within the Comprehensive Plan and guide Township decision making.

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP GOALS

01 Improve Resident Communication Through Clear and Accessible Updates.

Strengthen relationships between Township leadership and residents through multiple avenues to create a more informed and engaged community. Utilize social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to engage with residents in a high-impact low-cost format that offers real-time updates and two-way communication. This will help the Township respond quickly to concerns, reduce misunderstandings, build trust in local governance and inform residents on local events.

02 Educate Residents About Annexation

Licking Township is experiencing increased development pressure from the west, especially as the City of Heath recently annexed approximately 94 acres of Township land for residential use. It is crucial to engage landowners to understand their future plans and ensure they are informed about current and upcoming annexations. This outreach will raise awareness of the implications, including the shift in zoning control upon annexation, which can influence property values and land-use options. Educating landowners on these changes will support informed decision-making and protect the Township’s interests in preserving local land-use priorities.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

01 Protect Wetlands and Biodiversity

It is crucial to preserve wetlands and floodplains as development occurs to balance development with environmental stewardship. Thoughtful planning in the mixed-use area can integrate floodplain and wetland protection into site design through setbacks, conservation easements, and open space requirements. These measures can reduce long-term infrastructure and maintenance costs while promoting resilient development. Local, state, and federal regulations require careful consideration of floodplains and wetlands during development. Proactive planning ensures compliance with these regulations, avoiding costly delays and penalties.

02 Increase Outdoor Recreation

Incorporating multi-use paths within the Township can significantly enhance walkability, linking residential areas with the village center and creating a cohesive, accessible community layout. This approach fosters a rural, connected feel by reducing reliance on vehicles and encouraging outdoor activity, ultimately enhancing quality of life for residents. Over 53% of survey respondents said they would want to see a path connecting Dawes Arboretum to Buckeye Lake. Multi-use paths promote walkability and connectivity, can enhance nearby property values, enhance outdoor access, and encourage community interaction and recreation.

PLANNING GOALS CONTINUED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

01

Create a Vibrant Village Center

The development of a Village Center is a strategic initiative designed to foster a sense of community and enhance the quality of life within the Township. By creating a centralized hub, the Village Center will serve as a focal point for social activities, reinforcing the Township's identity and providing a gathering place for residents.

02

Locate Automobile-Oriented Businesses Along Interstate 70 and SR-13

The Township's strategic location along major transportation corridors, such as I-70 and SR-13, presents significant opportunities for economic development. By concentrating automobile-oriented businesses in these areas, the Township can capitalize on its accessibility, boost the local economy, and minimize traffic impacts on residential areas.

03

Commercial Development Near Ridgely Tract

The existing General Business zoning provides a foundation for commercial development in this area, building upon commercial zones while maintaining a balanced development approach. By focusing larger commercial developments within this designated area, we can ensure that high-traffic businesses remain centralized, allowing smaller neighborhood-oriented businesses to thrive in the village center. This approach supports a cohesive land-use strategy, preserving the village center's community-oriented feel while promoting economic activity in a distinct commercial district.

04

Mixed-Use Development Near Buckeye Lake

This strategy would create a tourism-centered zone to generate revenue while maintaining a clear distinction from residential areas. Development would accommodate a variety of businesses and amenities, such as apartments, bait shops, and restaurants, while ensuring that the village center remains focused on resident needs. Sewer and water lines are set to be established in this southwestern area of the township, which are important for development to take place.

05

Utilize Tailored Economic Development Tools Tailored to Specific Township Areas

Evaluate and utilize tools such as New Community Authorities (NCA), Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD), or Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in strategic areas of the Township that are targeted for economic development.

06

Create an Economic Development Team

As Licking Township enters a period of significant growth and transformation, it is recommended to establish a dedicated Economic Development Team. This would include the need for a Township Administrator and a Planner/Economic Developer. This team would ensure coordinated and strategic growth, streamline project management, leverage funding and incentives, and build relationships and partnerships.

PLANNING GOALS CONTINUED

RURAL LIFESTYLE GOALS

01

Preserve Natural Views and Enhance Landscaping

Utilize zoning tools to develop and enforce high-quality landscaping standards that include native plantings, woodland buffering, preservation of existing vegetation and viewshed protection to preserve the visual continuity of rural landscapes.

02

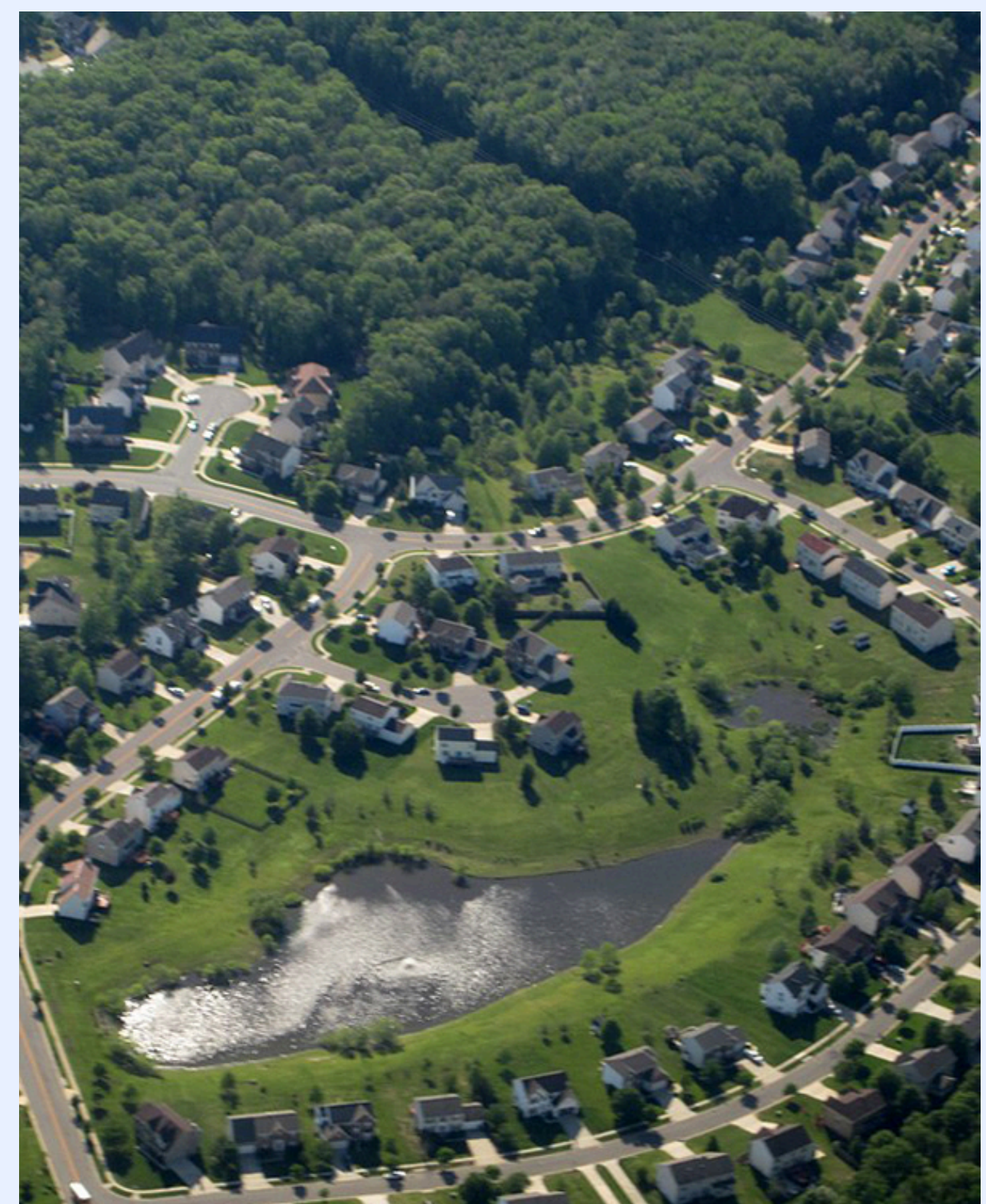
Preserve Rural Residential Land

Provide large lot zoning for areas where water and sewer services are not expected in the near future. By providing more density where water and sewer services are proposed it allows the Township to retain its rural character and balance preservation with development.

03

Cluster Housing to Preserve Land

As Licking Township grows, planning residential development in a way that reflects the community's values while preserving rural character and natural resources is crucial. Recent survey results show a strong preference among residents for clustered housing over traditional single-family homes. This approach not only aligns with community desires but also offers several benefits, including increased green space, enhanced recreational opportunities, and more efficient land use.



Clustered Conservation Housing.
From the American Planning Association

These 13 goals guide the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations and determine the action steps the Township leadership should take to achieve the established goals. The enactment of these goals are an important step in achieving the Township Vision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the goal topics in the Comprehensive Plan are paired with recommendations to achieve the respective goals. The following information provides an overview of the planning recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

- Preserve large lot zoning for areas where water and sewer services are not expected in the near future.
- These areas are meant to preserve the rural character of the community while allowing for residential development that is compatible with farming activities, reflecting the areas agricultural roots.
- Mandate that new developments preserve the visual continuity of rural landscapes.



Examples of Rural Residential

AGRICULTURE

- Agriculture is central to Licking Township’s character and will continue to be an important feature of the Township as we look toward the future.
- The future land use map retains agriculture and rural residential uses as the primary land uses in the Township outside of growth nodes.
- The Township is home to many agricultural and agriculture adjacent businesses which fuel the local economy and align with the Township’s agricultural history.
- The village center or mixed-use areas present an opportunity for the establishment of a farm market that could sell local agricultural products, building upon the Township’s agricultural legacy even in areas where development occurs.



From Barals Farm



From Mapleine Farms



From Green Ash Farm

PRESERVATION

- This area consists of land predominately preserved by the Dawes Arboretum.
- Safeguards vital natural resources and landscapes from future development while providing recreation for residents and visitors.
- This protection helps maintain the ecological integrity and scenic beauty of the region for generations to come.



RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

CLUSTERED CONSERVATION HOUSING

Targeted for the northern and western areas of the Township.

- Promotes efficient land use by reducing environmental impact and maintains the Township's rural feel.
- Conserves natural resources by targeting development to specific areas and helps protect environmentally sensitive regions, such as wetlands, woodlands, and streams.
- Requires less infrastructure, leading to reduced development and maintenance costs for the developer and the Township.
- Allows for the inclusion of parks, multi-use paths, playgrounds and more that connect residents to nature and each other while maintaining a rural aesthetic.



TARGETED MIXED-USE

- Works to enhance and create a vibrant, walkable community near Buckeye Lake.
- Restaurants, housing, office spaces, and more come together in a single, dynamic area.
- Paths provide pedestrian connections to nature, amenities, and businesses.

VILLAGE CENTER

This area is designed to be the heart of the community, functioning as a gathering space for residents. It will feature key public buildings like the Township Hall and serve as a hub for civic and social activities.

- Design guidelines should be established to create an appealing environment that complements the Township's rural character.
- Preserve historic buildings and promote the adaptive reuse of existing structures.
- The design should include spaces where community events, farmers' markets, etc can take place and should prioritize pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, including wide sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths.
- Feature a curated mix of businesses. Based on the survey, the main things residents want to see are small restaurants, small local retail, and wineries/breweries. This would provide convenience for residents and provide economic benefits within the community, supporting local job creation and entrepreneurship.



FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The land use map is not a zoning map, but instead serve as a key tool for guiding future growth and development in Licking Township. It provides insights into the potential uses for different areas, helping planners, developers, and residents collaborate on organized and sustainable development. This map balances growth with the preservation of farmland and open spaces, protecting the Township’s rural character while accommodating new housing and commercial demands driven by the presence of major employers like Intel, Amazon, and Google. The map works to ensure that development aligns with the Township’s current needs and long-term goals.

