

Licking Township

Comprehensive Plan



Licking Township
Licking County, Ohio



2025

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The Township contains several notable features. Much of the Township's western border aligns with the South Fork Licking River, which established the Township's historic western boundary. The Township also borders the north side of Buckeye Lake, which comprises Ohio's oldest state park. Buckeye Lake State Park draws thousands of visitors a year to experience the 3,100-acre through boating, fishing, and other recreational activities. Although bordering the Village of Buckeye Lake, the Township has experienced virtually no annexation around the lake. The majority of the land bordering Buckeye Lake within Licking Township has been developed with



Figure 3. Buckeye Lake. Photo Credit: Ohio Department of Natural Resources

single family homes and a small number of commercial businesses. While limited area remains for future lakefront development, the remaining land is likely to be a desired location for development. Moving north away from the lake's borders, the land quickly becomes rural. Development pressures may spread development further north into this area as the Buckeye Lake region is expected to experience growth.

For highway travelers, the Buckeye Lake area of the Township is accessible via the I-70/SR-13 interchange. I-70 runs through the southern portion of the Township, shuttling large numbers of commuters through the Townships borders. Other major routes include US-40, which traverses the Township from west to east. SR-13, or Jacksontown Road is a major north-south corridor that runs through the length of the Township.

Besides development along Buckeye Lake, the Jacksontown area contains the next most dense area of development. Jacksontown is located within central Licking Township and contains multiple businesses, restaurants, single family homes, a post office, and the Licking Township Fire Company station. The Lakewood Local School District's campus is located just to the west of Jacksontown along US-40. Just to the north of Jacksontown along SR-13 is the Dawes Arboretum ("the Arboretum"). The Arboretum is one of the largest landowners in the Township and was established through an endowment in 1929 with the goal of preserving land in perpetuity.

The City of Heath has annexed over 1,000 acres in the northwest portion of Licking Township and now completely borders the Township along its northern edge. In contrast, the Village of Buckeye Lake has annexed only two parcels along the southwestern edge of the Township near the lake.

The majority of Licking Township remains unannexed and unincorporated, characterized by large-lot residential and agricultural land uses. However, there are also pockets of higher-density single-family home developments on lots of an acre or less scattered throughout the Township.

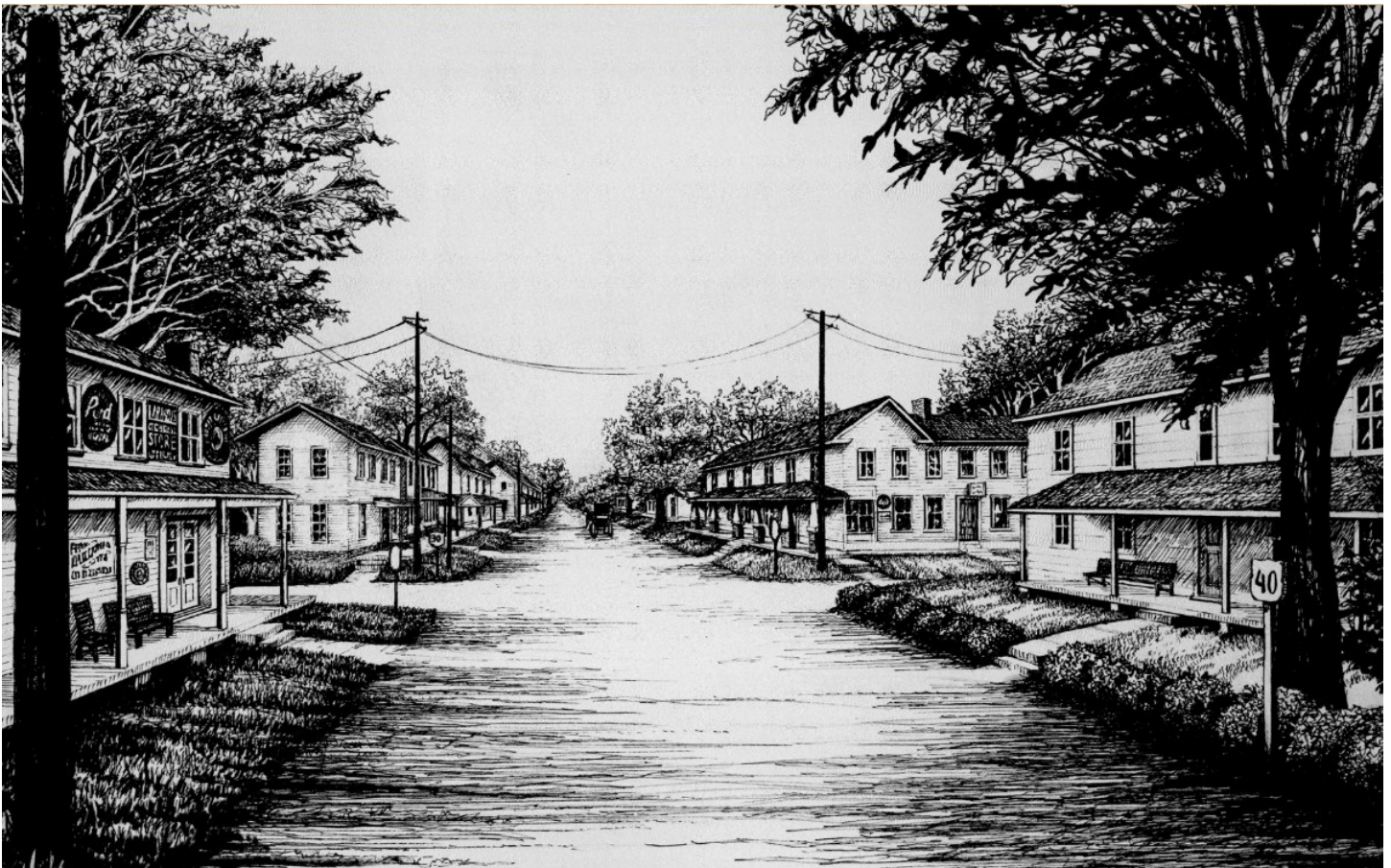


Figure 4. Artist's Depiction of Jacksontown circa 1920 by Mary Morrison. Photo Credit: Licking Town-

Vision Statement

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.”

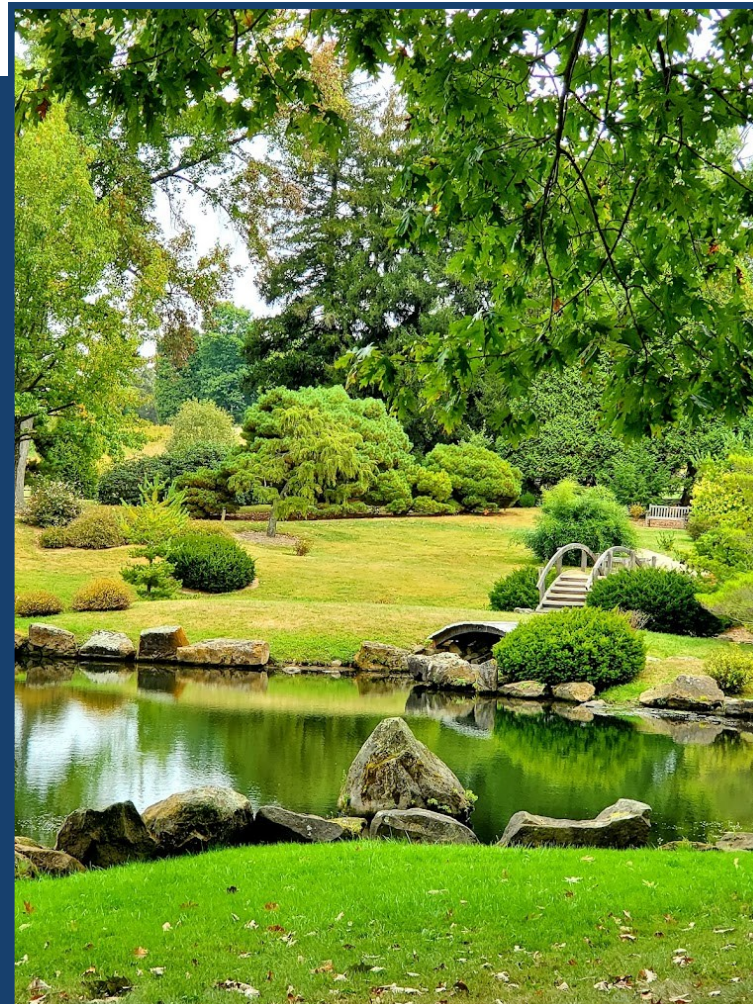


Figure 5. Dawes Arboretum. Photo Source: Krista Starr, Google Reviews.

Environment

Topography

The topography of Licking Township is relatively flat with some rolling hills in the north and southeast as shown in Figure 6. The topography of the Township is conducive for development and produces no significant limitations.

Watershed

Licking Township's irregular western border is largely shaped by the South Fork Licking River, which branches off the Licking River and is a tributary of the Muskingum River. Additionally, the Township contains smaller rivers and streams such as Dutch Fork, Swamp Run, Quarry Run, and Hog Run, as shown in Figure 7. Licking Township is located within three watersheds, as shown in Figure 7. The majority of the Township is within the South Fork Licking River watershed, with small portions of the northeast within the Rocky Fork Licking River watershed, and the southeast portion of the Township located within the Jonathon Creek watershed.

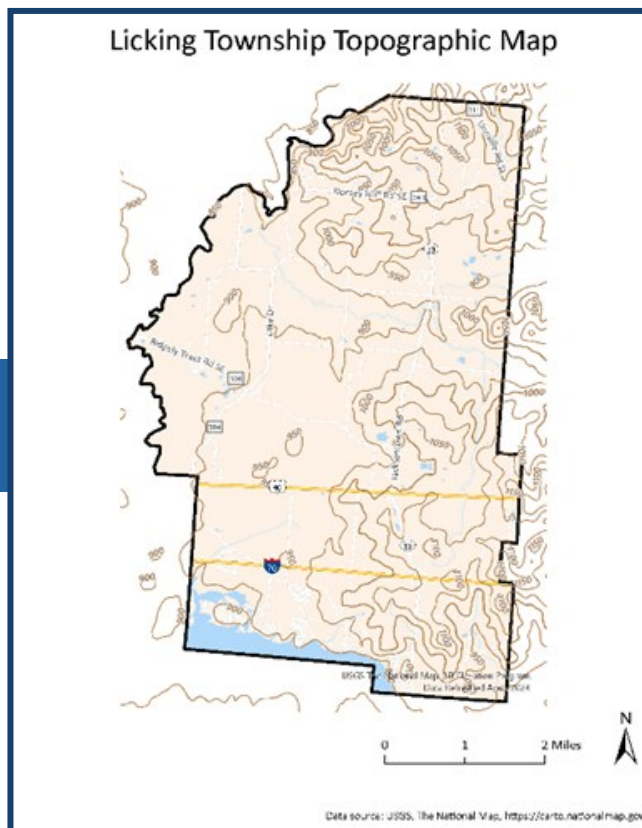


Figure 6. Topography in Licking Township.

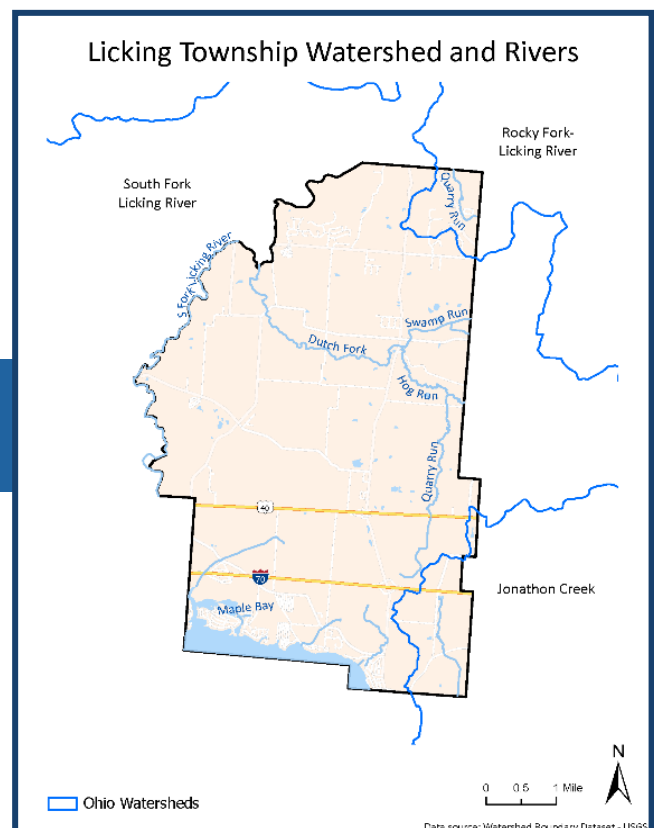


Figure 7. Watersheds and Rivers in Licking Township.

Floodplain and Wetlands

Figure 8 highlights the floodplains and wetlands within Licking Township. The floodplain within the Township is relatively limited, with the majority of floodplain area occurring within the southern portion of the Township surrounding Buckeye Lake. However, this floodplain area does not sprawl very far into the land area of Licking Township. There are additional floodplains surrounding the streams and rivers in the township including Dutch Fork, Swamp Run, Hog Run, and Quarry Run. Existing wetlands within the Township are minimal yet scattered throughout the Township with the largest being northwest of the Fairmount-White Chapel Road intersection and north of Swamp Run.

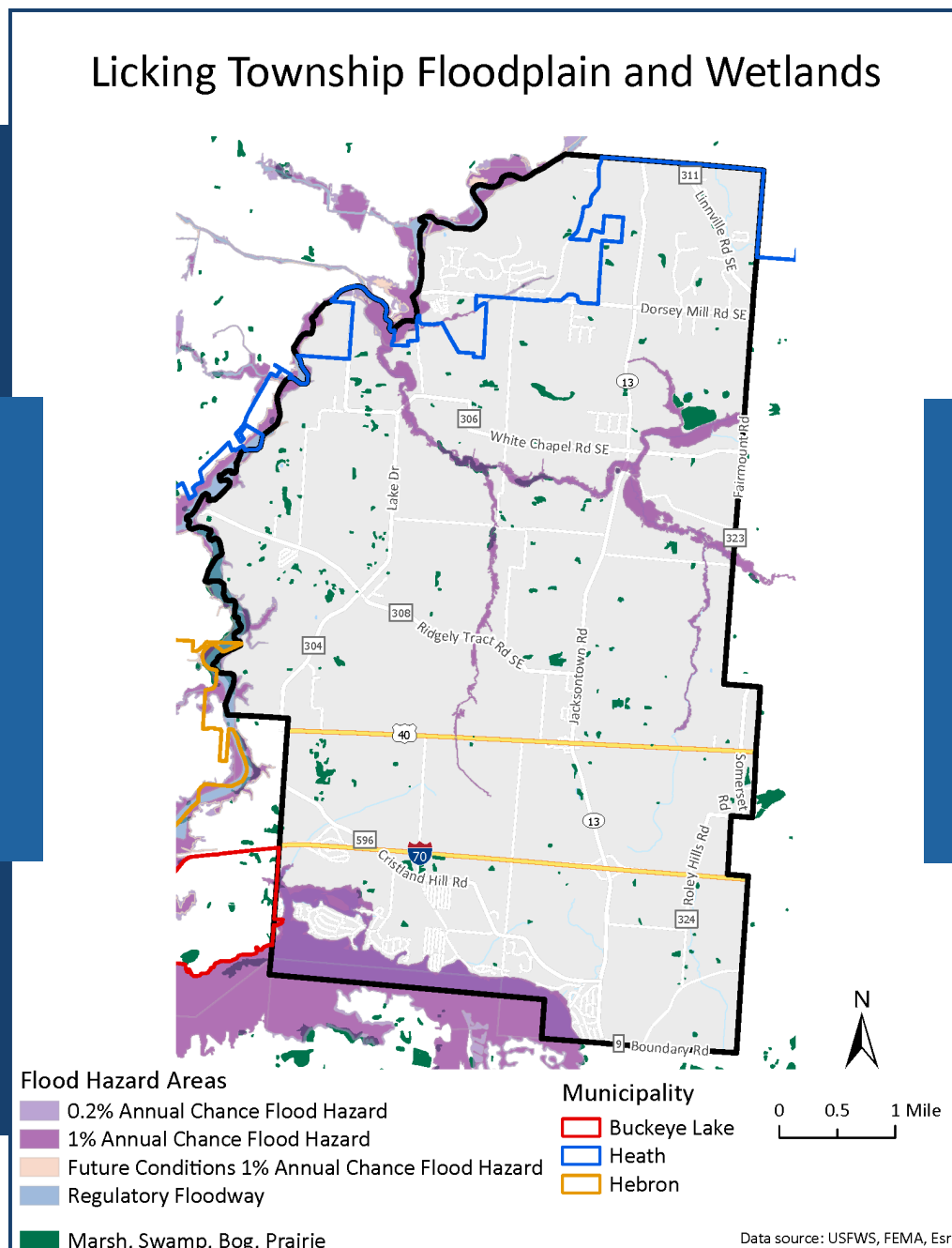


Figure 8. Floodplains and Wetlands in Licking Township.

Soils

Figure 9 shows the drainage classes of soil within Licking Township. Excessively drained soil means that water is evaporated or drained out very quickly. These soils often have a coarse texture and do not contain much, if any, free water or it occurs only very deeply within the soil.

Conversely, very poorly drained soils contain water at or just below ground level for much of the growing season. Without artificial drainage technologies, crops such as corn, wheat, and other mesophotic plants cannot be well grown. The western half of the Township contains large amounts of very poorly drained, poorly drained, or somewhat poorly drained soil with the eastern half containing large pockets of well drained or moderately well drained soil.

Additionally, the areas of the Township annexed to Heath contain the Township's largest consecutive area of well drained soil. Due

to a large groundwater presence, much of Central Ohio contains poorly drained soils. While these soil types require additional engineering practices to ensure proper drainage and construction, these mitigations are common and not an impediment to construction or agriculture production due to technological innovations.

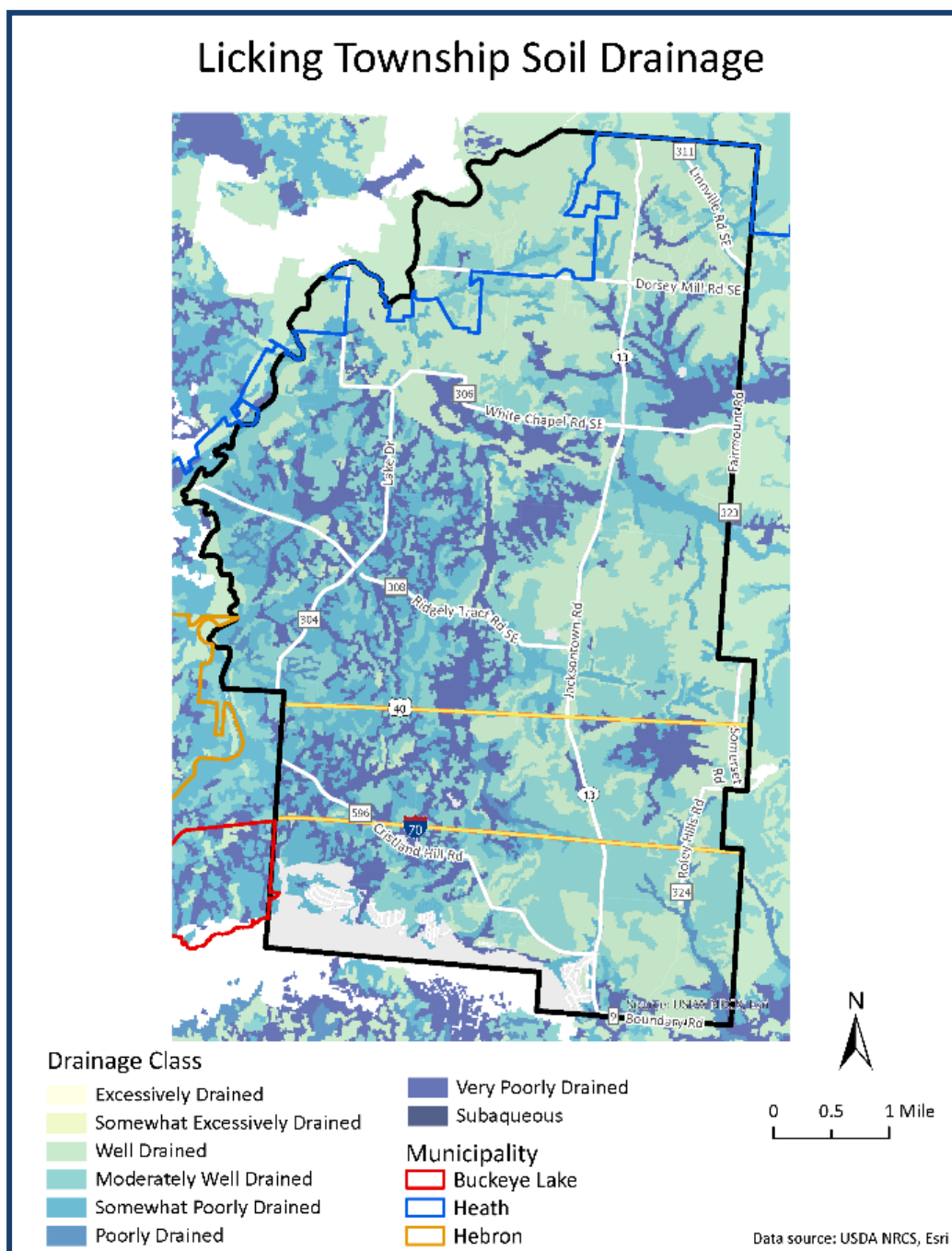


Figure 9. Soil Drainage in Licking Township.

Farmland

Figure 10 denotes the farmland classifications of Licking Township. Most of the Township's land is considered Prime Farmland, which is land that is best suited for agriculture due to soil quality, moisture, and growing season. Almost the entirety of the remaining land area in the Township is considered Farmland of Local Importance which signifies the land may or may not be in production or has the potential to be farmed based on soil quality.

Tree Cover

Licking Township's tree canopy cover is visualized in Figure 11. The majority of the western half of the Township has very limited tree cover, with the majority of this area being farmland. There is notable tree canopy cover along the streams within the Township, which assist in providing environmental benefits to these stream ecosystems. The Township also sees significant tree canopy cover in the southeast corner of the Township in the Buckeye Lake area as well as in the eastern areas north of US-40.

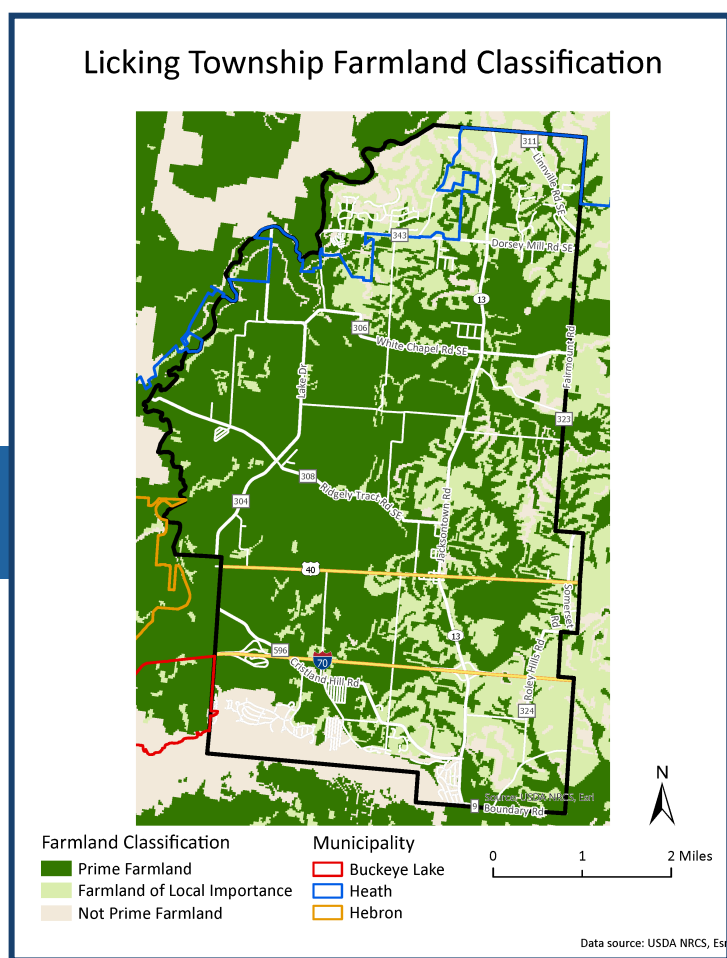


Figure 10. Farmland in Licking Township.

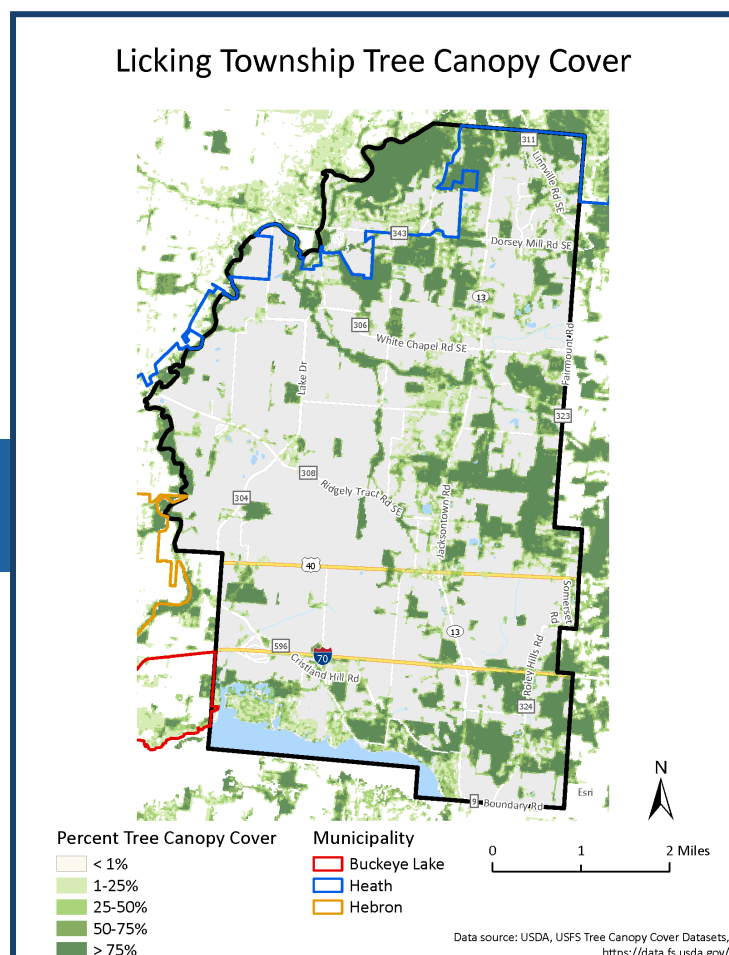


Figure 11. Tree Cover in Licking Township.

Parks and Preservation

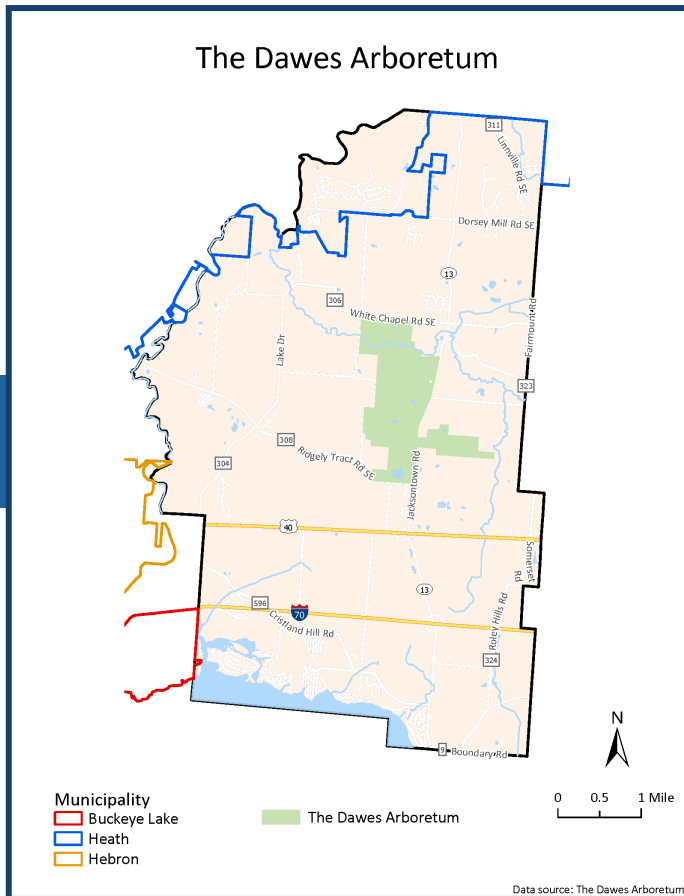


Figure 12. Publicly Accessible Areas Owned by Dawes Arboretum.

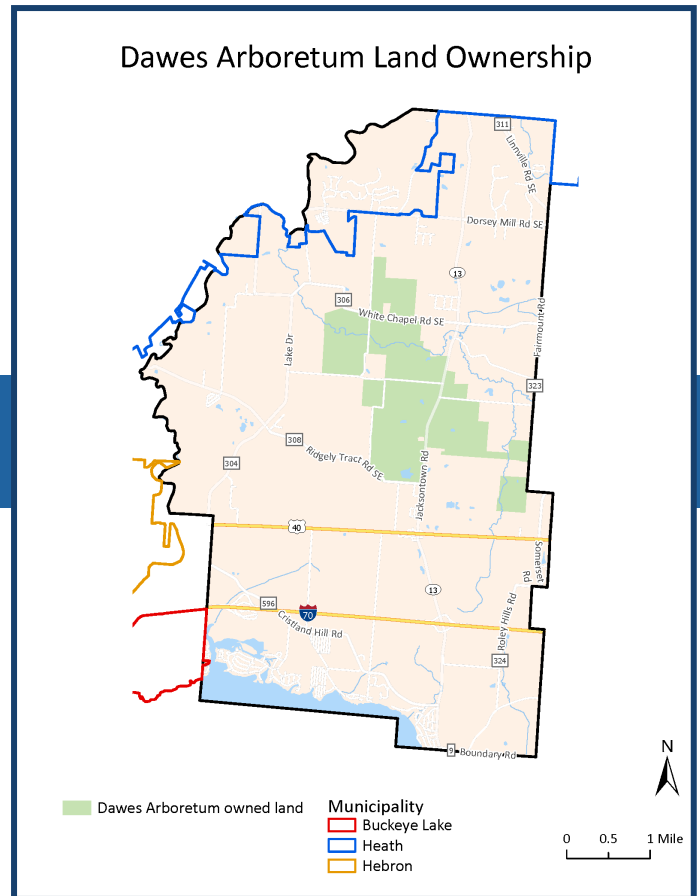


Figure 13. Land owned by Dawes Arboretum.

The Dawes Arboretum

One of the largest landowners in the Township is the Dawes Arboretum ("The Arboretum"). The Dawes Arboretum boundaries are shown in Figure 12. Additionally, the Arboretum owns additional land that is not part of the park that is open to visitors, as shown in Figure 13. With the rapid growth occurring in Licking County, the Arboretum's goal is to preserve land in perpetuity while also continuing to expand on their research and conservation work. The Arboretum has a high preference on future additions being contiguous to the existing property. Currently, the Arboretum is not actively pursuing additional land purchases, but is interested in working with landowners in the area who are interested in land preservation to expand the Arboretum. The Arboretum may be able to serve as a strategic partner to the Township in order to preserve essential tracts of land as permanent open space.

As the Arboretum works on improvements to their property such as event space and bathroom improvements, they are exploring the possibility of accessing central water by working with the Licking County Commissioners, which may increase the Township's ability to access central water. The Arboretum has the desire to improve water access and quality for their facility improvements which started their path toward accessing central water. While the Arboretum is planning to utilize water on preserved land, bringing water deeper into Licking Township will bring with it the likelihood of new development in the area. As growth occurs within Licking County and Licking Township, partnerships with the Arboretum should be explored by the Township regarding land preservation, development buffers, and community engagement.

South Fork Licking River

The South Licking Watershed Conservancy District ("SWLCD") was established in 1968 to create plans to reduce flooding throughout the watershed. The SWLCD has cosponsored multiple plans to perform flood damage reduction studies ranging in time from 1984 to the present day. Currently, the South Licking Watershed Conservancy District is planning a log jam removal project along the South Fork Licking River just east of the Industrial Park in Union Township, which aligns with the western border of Licking Township. This project would improve the flow of the river and may adjust the flood hazard mapping in the area.

Buckeye Lake State Park and Surrounding Community

Buckeye Lake State Park and the greater Buckeye Lake area is one piece of Licking County that is expected to see a boom in growth and development due to external development pressures from Intel and other major economic development projects in the region. Additionally, Buckeye Lake is growing as both a tourist destination and a year-round community. Buckeye Lake Regional Corporation ("BLRC") is one organization that is active in preparing for this growth. The BLRC was formed in 2017 as a tri-county alliance between Licking, Fairfield, and Perry Counties with the mission of executing initiatives that promote the Buckeye Lake region as the most popular tourist destination in the Midwest while supporting local businesses and improving the quality of life of residents in this region. Their members are shown in Figure 14. The BLRC has two main focus areas: infrastructure and public spaces. The BLRC is involved with two public space projects that may influence Licking Township. The BLRC is active in the planning process for a north shore park on Buckeye Lake. This project would create public beach access, amenities, and offer a way for people who do not own a boat to experience the Lake. This potential park would be located immediately to the west of Licking Township.

Buckeye Lake Regional Corporation Members

Counties	Villages
Fairfield County, Commissioner Dave Levacy	Village of Buckeye Lake
Fairfield County, Rick Szabrak	Village of Hebron
Licking County, Commissioner Duane Flowers	Village of Millersport
Perry County, Commissioner Ben Carpenter	Village of Somerset
Perry County, Commissioner Scott Owen	Village of Thornville
School Districts	Townships
Lakewood Local	Walnut Township Trustees
Walnut Township Local	Union Township Trustees
Members at Large	Thorn Township Trustees
Casey Clark	Civic and Charitable Organizations
Jordan Fromm	Buckeye Lake Area Civic Association, Ron Craig
Dave Kessler	Buckeye Lake Region Chamber of Commerce, Tim Ryan
Ken Morris	Buckeye Lake Community Foundation, Karen Cookston
Misty Nichols	Bike Buckeye Lake
Don Pinnell	Homeowners Associations
Doug Poorman	Cranberry Bay Homeowners Association, Barry Zwick
Rick Singer	Fairfield Beach Property Owners Association, Alex Fant
Rich Smith	Harbor Hills Civic Association, Matt Baumann
Yaromir Steiner	Heron Bay Master Association, Marsha Bendle
Lisa Stewart	Snug Harbor Community Association, Marty Finta
Dick Williams	The Landings at Maple Bay
Andy Wolfe	West Bank Home Owners Association, Brad Smith
	Moon River Lane Home Owners Association, Deana Reedy

Additionally, the BLRC is working on creating a plan in Thorn Township, just south of Licking Township, to create a public park that would include 2,400 feet of shoreline and provide public lake access. These two projects would allow developers interested in building near Buckeye Lake to advertise a lakefront experience without the lakefront cost. This may be an attractive draw for potential residents and developers alike and may spur an increase in housing development within this area.



Figure 15. Draft of North Shore Park Plan. Photo Source: Buckeye Lake Region Corporation

Looking toward future growth, the BLRC representatives believe development in the Buckeye Lake area should focus on tourism attractions that do not involve increased boat activity, as the Lake is reaching a critical mass of boats. While the Lake is a boating hot spot, there are few year-round amenities in the area that would serve both tourists and long-time residents.

Another organization working within the Buckeye Lake region is Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow, an organization focused on enhancing the water quality of the Buckeye Lake watershed and mitigating environmental impacts to the Lake. Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow stressed the importance of wetlands as they act as the lungs of the lake and greatly support Lake health. Development must be done in such a way that protects and promotes wetlands that provide essential ecosystem services.

Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow is working with the Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District (LCSWCD) to develop a five-acre wetland off of Cristland Hill Road to clean the stream coming into the north side of the Lake. Currently, this stream contributes the most pollution to Buckeye Lake due to chemical and fertilizer runoff from farming operations. They are also actively working to find locations to establish additional wetlands in the Licking Township area and the surrounding communities that border the Lake.



Figure 16. Area of Wetland. Photo Source: thereportproject.org

Additional projects that Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow is involved in include a bank improvement project for the Kirkersville Canal/main feeder for Buckeye Lake. This would include dead tree removal, erosion prevention, log jam clearing, and general bank improvements. Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow also has a long-term goal of reconnecting the main feeder to the South Fork River to improve the water level and quality of the Lake. Currently, algae blooms occur in the late summer months due to low water levels. Coupled together, the algae and low water levels create unsafe boating and swimming conditions as well as fish kills and water quality issues. Improvements to the water quality of Buckeye Lake would not only have environmental impacts but would create a better natural environment for residents in Licking Township and the greater Buckeye Lake Region.

Services

Electricity

The Township is served by American Electric Power (AEP) Ohio and Licking Rural Electrification, as shown in Figure 17. The Jacksontown area, one of the Township's densest areas, is mostly served by AEP Ohio. The Buckeye Lake area of the Township, another dense location, has mixed service between AEP Ohio and Licking Rural Electrification.

Water

The Licking County Board of Commissioners initiated a Licking County Water and Sewer Infrastructure Study ("LCWSS") in collaboration with GROW Licking County, the Licking County Health Department, and the Licking County Area Transportation Study ("LCATS")

to develop a comprehensive understanding of existing water and sanitary sewer systems and to identify areas of need for additional investment in water and sewer infrastructure. The LCWSS engaged in a survey of residents within Licking County to determine their opinions on water quality, water and sewer systems, and understand any additional community needs. From this, 10 priority projects were identified for new. One of these projects is located within Licking Township and would extend Heath's existing watermains to make a larger loop connecting Linnville Road, Dorsey Mill Rd and Jacksontown Rd SE. or improved water and sewer infrastructure.

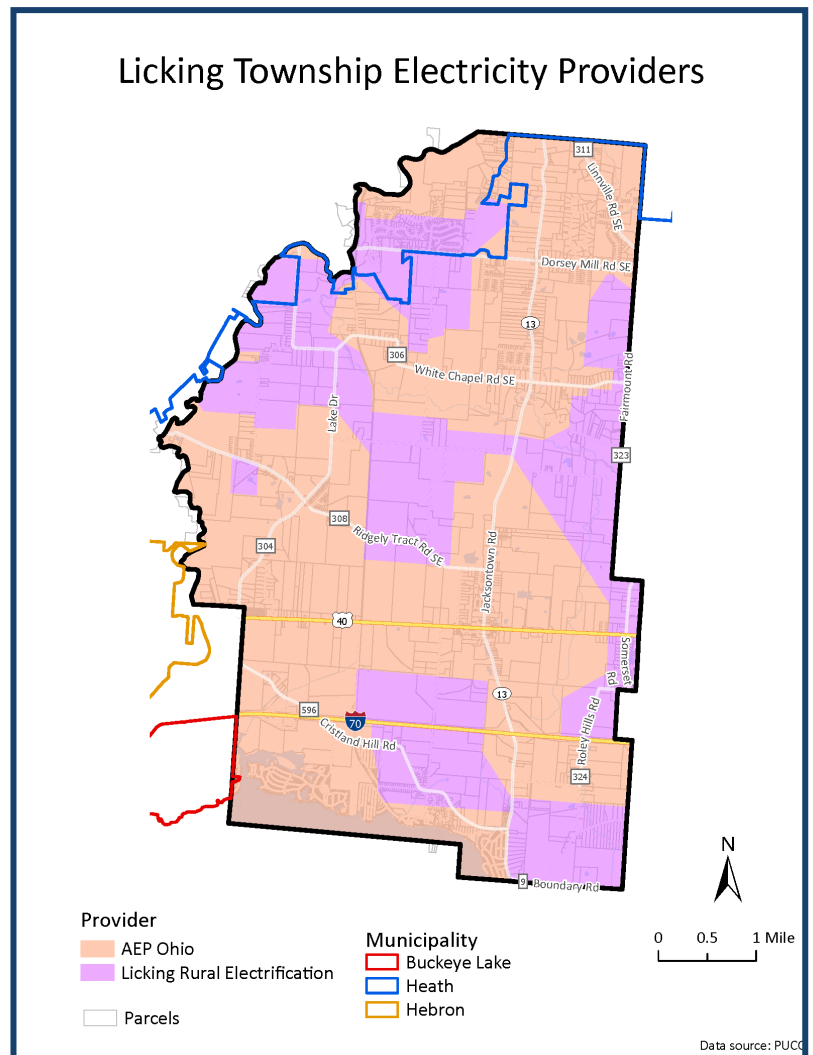


Figure 17. Electricity Providers in Licking Township.

This would connect 46 single family homes and over 100 acres of commercial land to Heath's central water system. A major goal of this project is to improve the water quality of the existing users in the area and eliminate the need for private wells. A map of this proposed project is shown in Figure 18. The interior subdivision was not included in the proposed service area and would be expected to be served by a second project phase if completed.

The LCWSS also identified and mapped existing service areas for all water and sewer providers in Licking County. Importantly, the LCWSS also mapped future service areas, providing insight into key municipalities plans for expansion, such as Heath and Hebron. Figure 19 on the following page shows Hebron's existing and future water service boundaries. The future service boundary extends into the eastern portion of Licking Township south of Ridgely Tract Rd SE. Figure 20 shows Heath's existing and future water and sewer service areas.

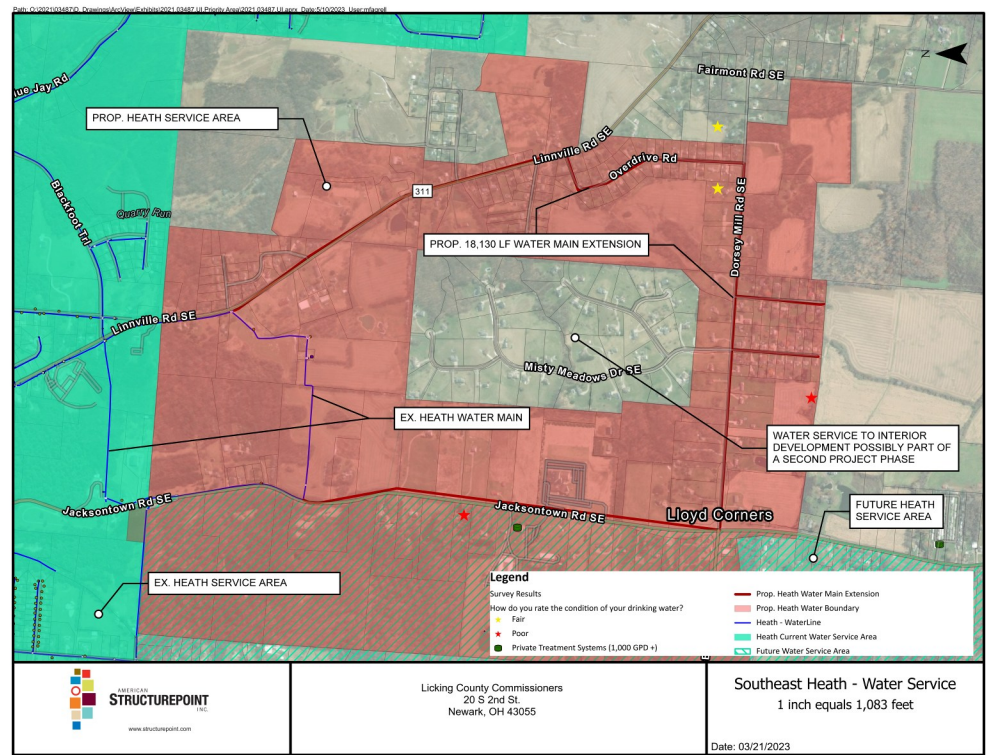


Figure 18. Proposed Water Service. Photo Source: Licking County Commissioners.

The future service boundary sweeps through a large portion of northern Licking Township. Central water and sewer can service higher densities and serve as an incentive for development. These future service boundaries for Heath and Hebron should be analyzed by the Township when formulating a long-term plan. Developing partnerships and enhanced zoning in these areas may help the Township prevent annexation and retain control on development within Licking Township's borders.

Water within Licking Township is provided by Licking County Water and Wastewater (LCWW). The LCWW sources water from the Village of Hebron and has run water lines along US-40 toward Jacksontown before turning south toward I-70.

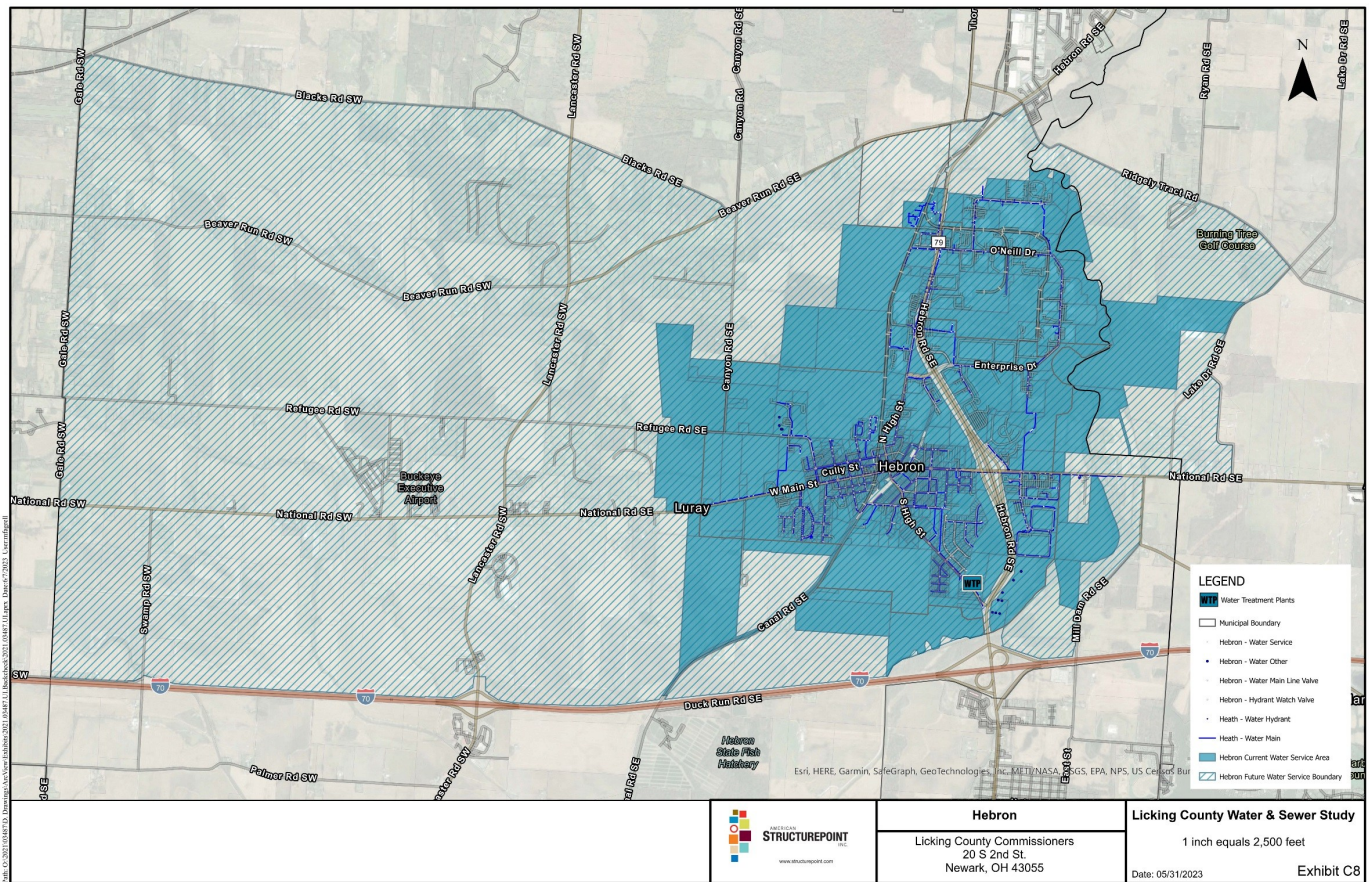


Figure 19. Future Sewer and Water in Hebron. Photo Source: Licking County Commissioners.

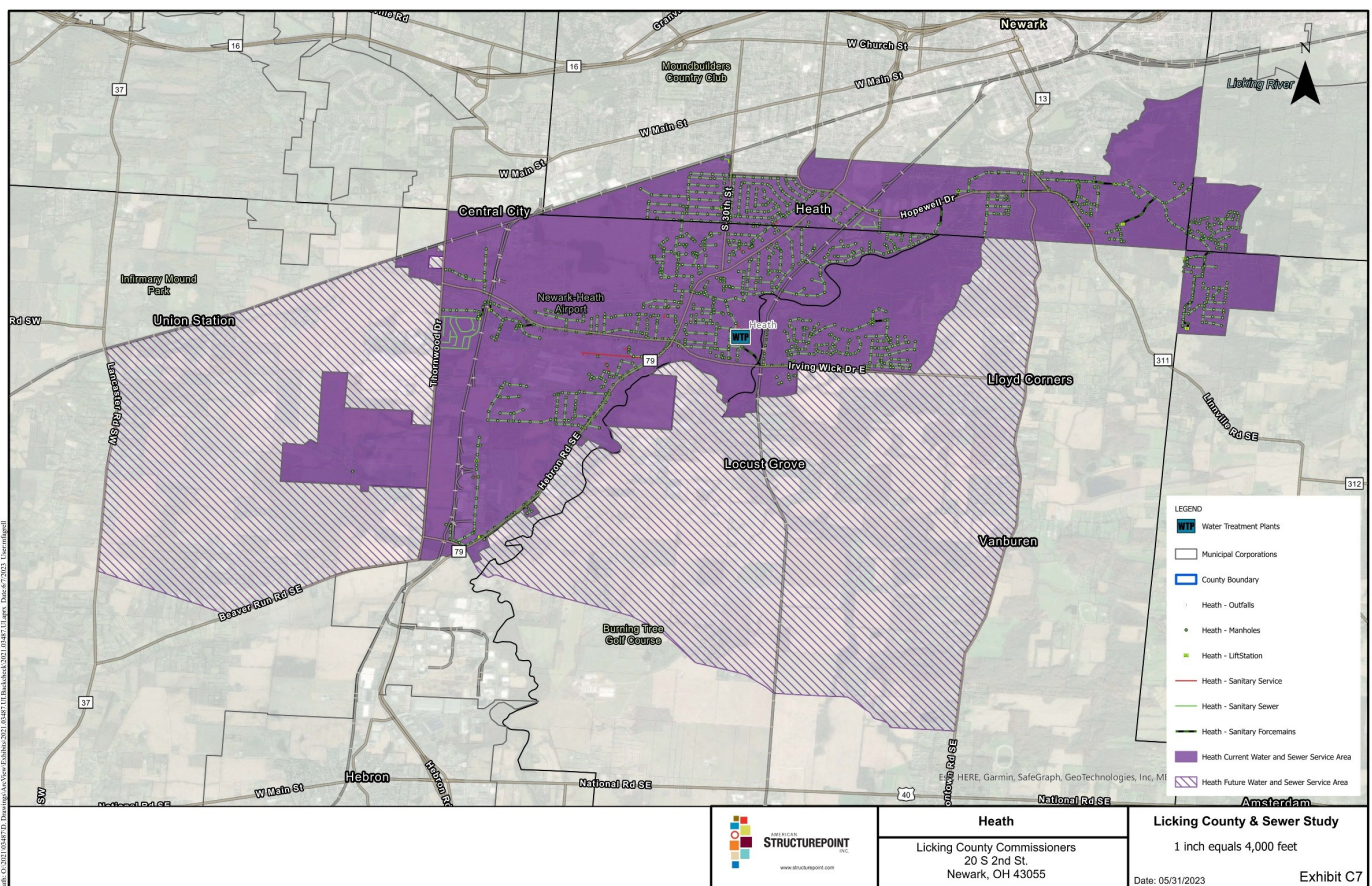


Figure 20. Future Sewer and Water in Heath. Photo Source: Licking County Commissioners.

Back towards Hebron, the water lines then run down Mill Dam Road to Cristland Hill Road and serves the Harbor Hills and Avondale communities. The LCWW has both existing and aspirational plans for expansion. The LCWW is working with the Dawes Arboretum to bring sewer to their property as the Arboretum plans to build an event venue and desires better quality and reliability of water resources. The LCWW also has a goal to plan the future water network within the areas of Jacksontown that are not currently serviced by LCWW water. The LCWW indicated that they have the ability to serve additional development within the Jacksontown area and further south toward the I-70/SR-13 interchange.

In addition to Jacksontown, the LCWW would aim to complete preliminary engineering for the Edgewater Beach area, near the intersection of Cristland Hill Road and SR-13. This project would provide water services for residents who already receive sewer services from the LCWW and would close the service gaps. Figures 21 show the LCWW's service areas in Licking Township for central sewer and water.

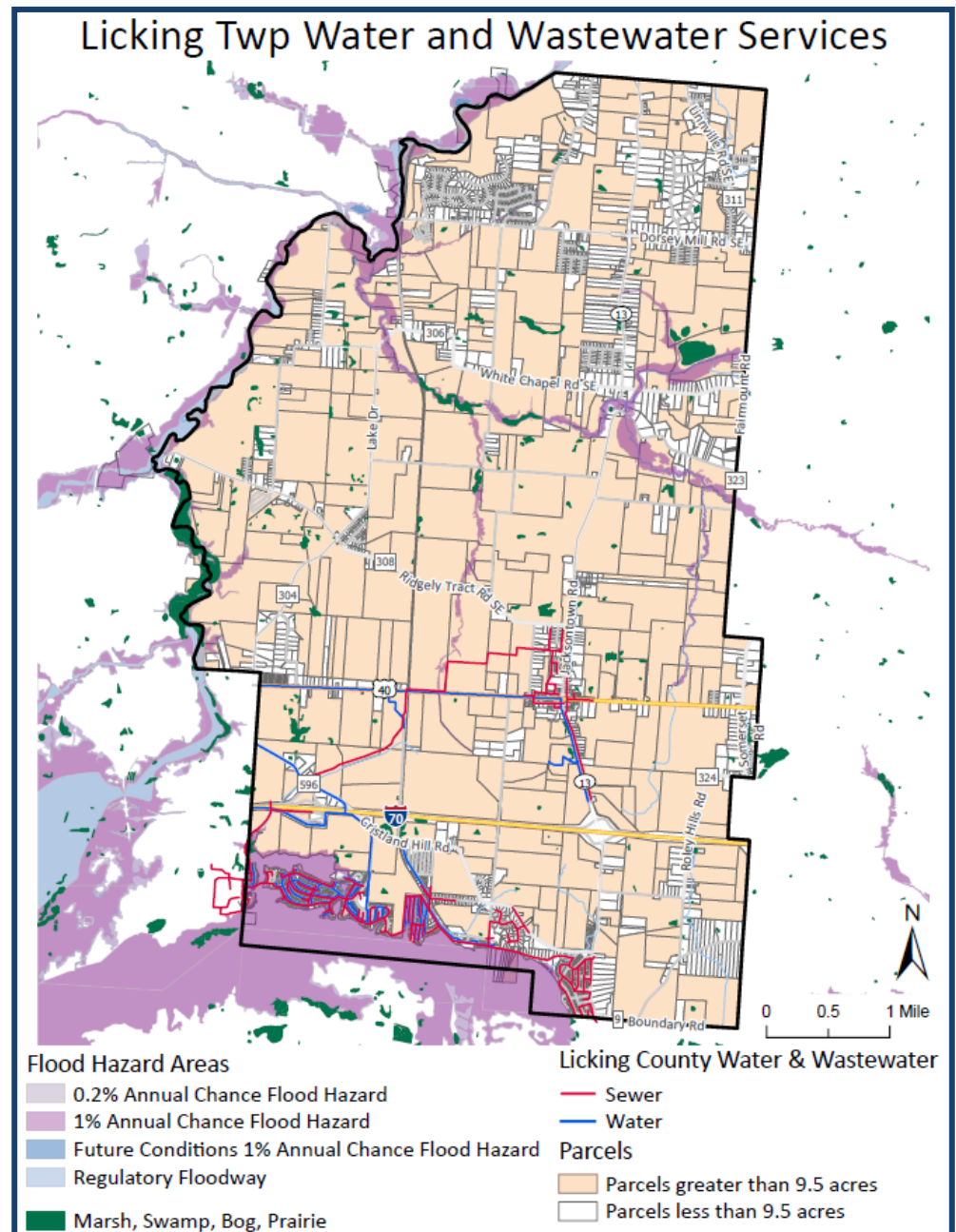


Figure 21. Proposed Water and Sewer in Licking Township.

Transportation

Conversations with the Licking County Transportation Improvement District and Representatives from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) identified two studies that may have an impact on Licking Township.

ODOT is conducting a two-phase study to assess and mitigate flooding at the I-70 and SR-79 interchange in the Village of Hebron just west of Licking Township. A flooding event in April of 2024 closed that east bound I-70 exit to SR-79 and westbound I-70 exit from SR-79 is pictured in Figure 22. ODOT is currently in phase 1 of the project where they are working to research applicable information from previous and current hydraulic work and studies within the project area to best define the hydrologic and hydraulic characteristics of the South Fork Licking River in the project area. They have created and are refining a 2-D hydraulic model which will be utilized when developing improvement recommendations. This phase will also include a public involvement session to gather resident concerns. One of the ultimate goals of this phase is to coordinate with the Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District on Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) submission to FEMA to amend the floodplain map.

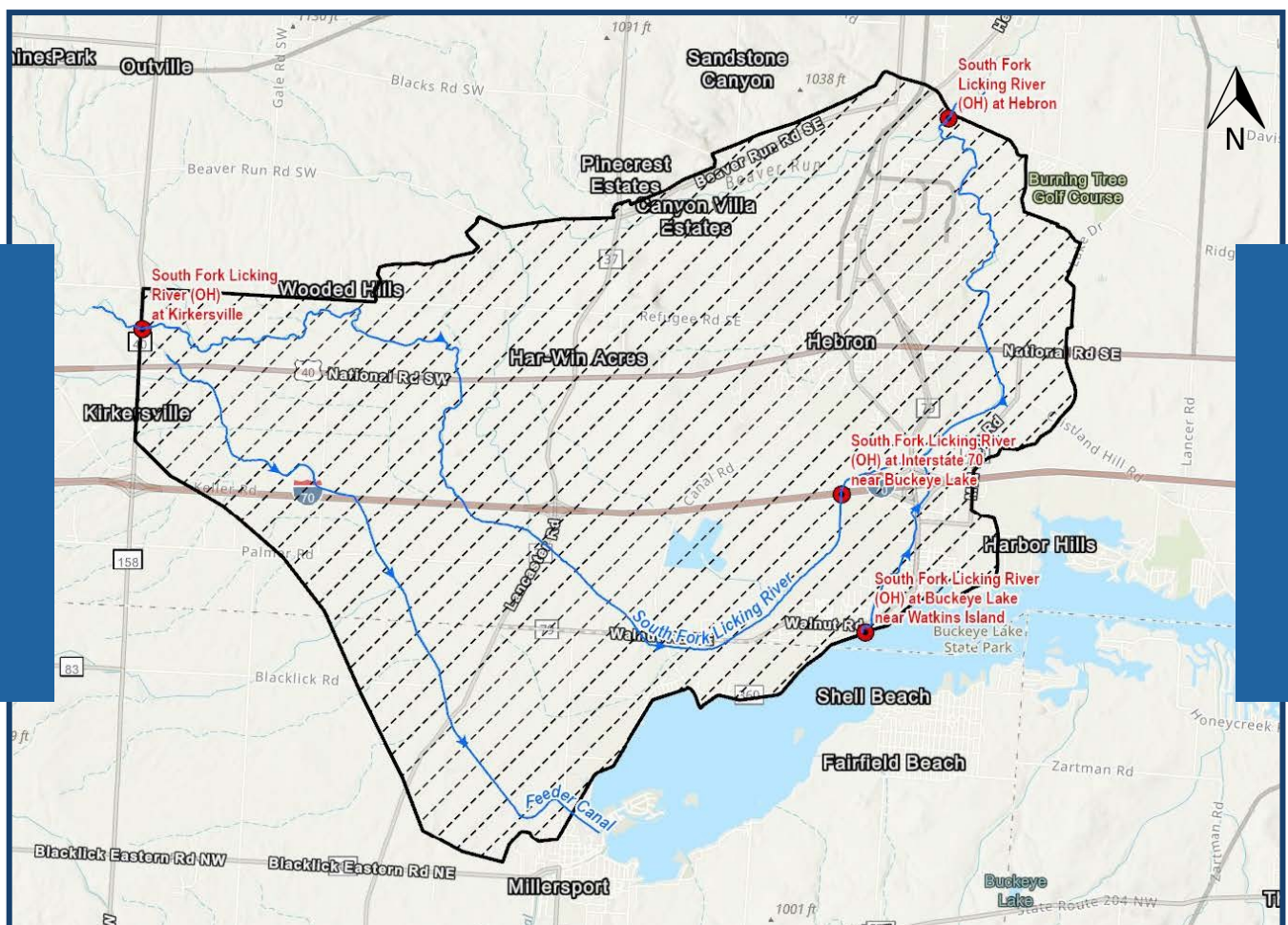


Figure 22. April 2024 Flooding Event Area. Photo Source: ODOT

Phase 2 of the study will investigate alternatives to eliminate flooding of I-70 roadway sections within the study area while mitigating any hydraulic changes as explained by the model developed in phase 1. Other state route sections with a history of roadway flooding within the study area will be examined as well for improvements. Figure 23 illustrates some of the impacts of these flooding events. Costs, environmental impacts, maintenance of traffic impacts, and other independent effects of each alternative are to be compared in this phase. As of April 2024, no options have been evaluated but should be developed over the next year.



Figure 23: I-70 Flooding. Photo Source: Gannett Fleming Engineers & Architects Drone photography

ODOT is also currently in the process of studying a connector between I-70 and SR 161. The study area currently encompasses the entire area between I-70 and SR 161 of western Licking County, as pictured in Figure 24.

The study is expected to move quickly to align with the increased traffic that is expected to be generated by Intel. The study leaders will be creating a stakeholder group to understand the needs and wants of the communities that have the potential to be affected by the connector.

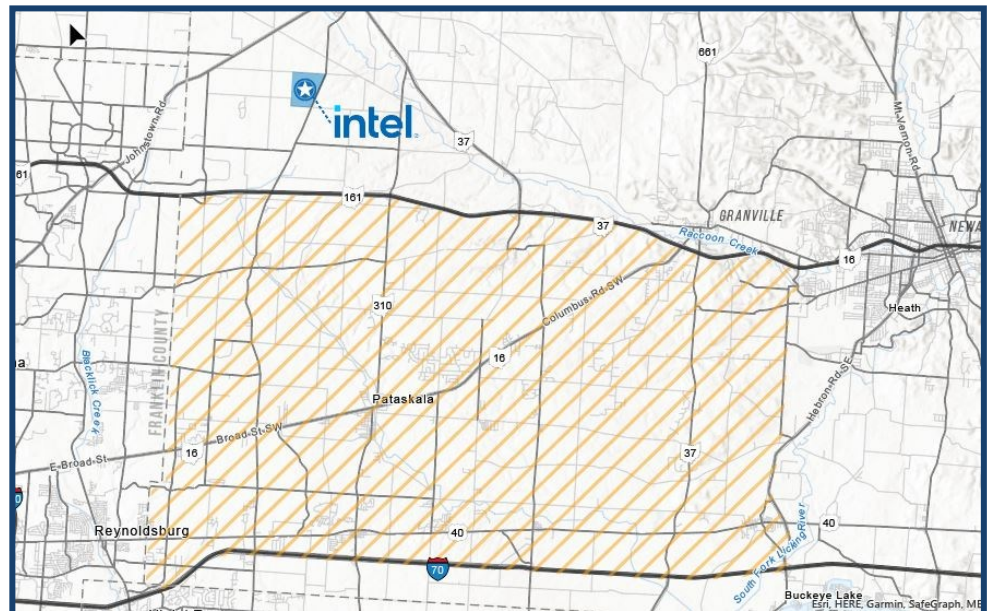


Figure 23: Study Area between I-70 and SR 161. Photo Source: ODOT

After conceptual recommendations were developed, a large public meeting will be held in the fall of 2024 to receive feedback from residents and make any changes before developing preliminary reports to be discussed with the Governor’s office by the end of 2024. The final results and reports from the study will be finalized in February of 2025, thus concluding the study and setting the stage for the next steps of the I-70 SR 161 connector project. While the study area does not extend far enough east to reach Licking Township, this proposed connector will serve as a new major transportation route in Licking County which will affect traffic patterns throughout the southwest region of the County.

Schools

The overwhelming majority of the Township is located within the Lakewood Local School District (“the School District”) as shown in Figure 24. There are four schools within the School District: Lakewood High School, Lakewood Middle School, Jackson Intermediate, and Lakewood Elementary School. Figure 25 shows the historical enrollment numbers for the school district, showing a slight downward trend. This downward trend could be largely caused by many empty nesters living within the School Districts borders, causing fewer students to enter the school system. Broadly, Licking County has a lack of senior living options, which may be a source of limited housing turnover. However, with the expected boom in growth in

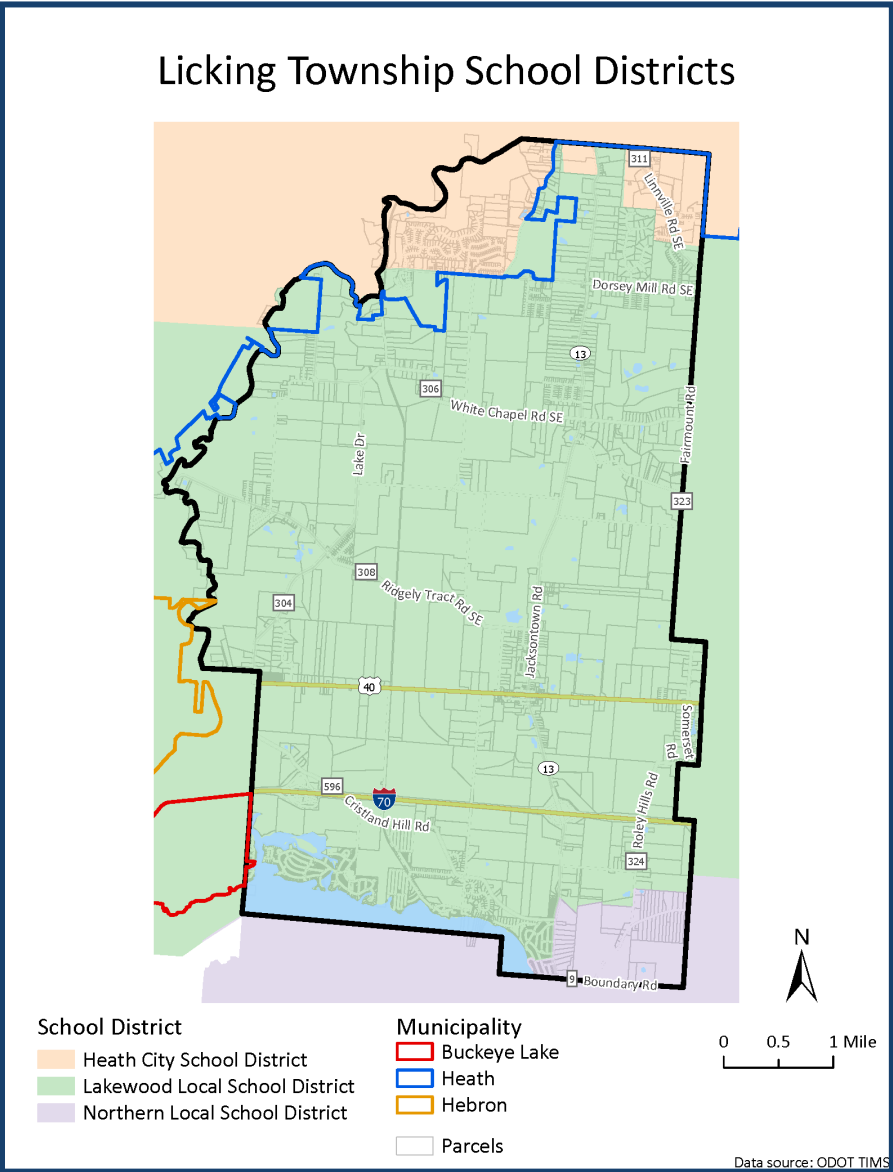


Figure 24. School Districts in Licking Township.

Licking County and the Buckeye Lake Region, the downward trend in the School District’s enrollment numbers is not expected to last.

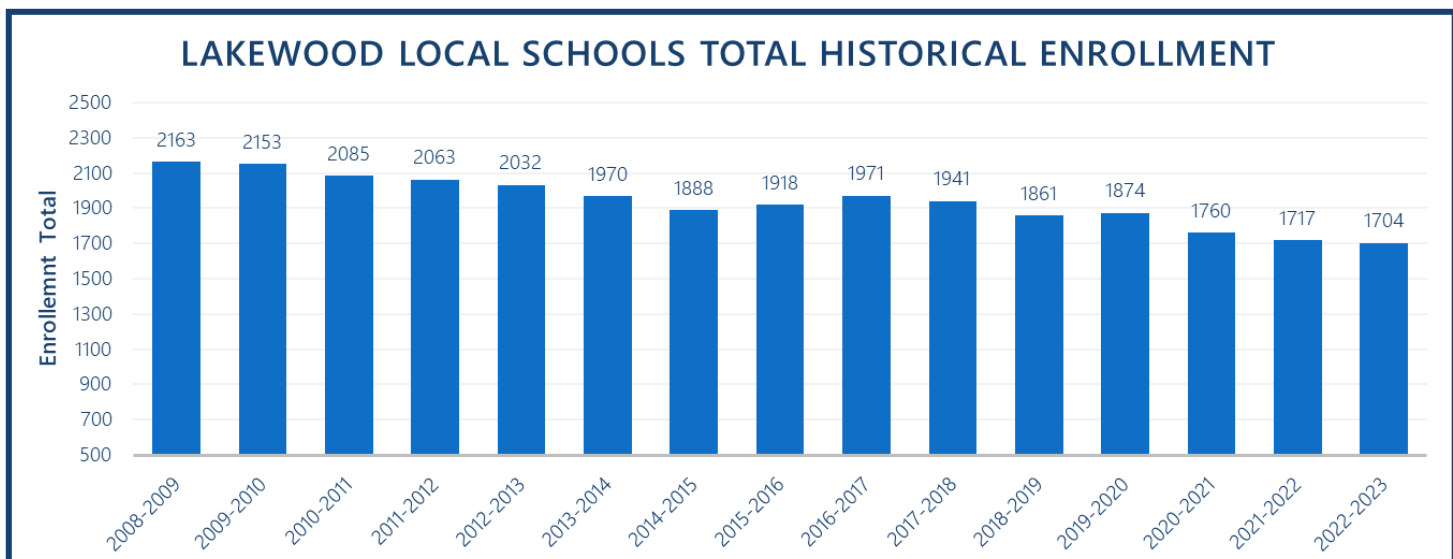


Figure 25. Lakewood Local Schools Enrollment since 2008.

Due to enrollment decline over the past 15 years, the current school infrastructure will be able to absorb new student growth to a certain extent. However, there is a need for a new elementary school building. The funding for this project has not yet been secured as a bond issue has been attempted five times within the past ten years and has failed to pass each time.

When Hebron Elementary was slated to be closed, all students in that building were moved to Jackson Intermediate. This move was a multi-step process necessitated when the levy to build a new elementary building was defeated. As part of the move, the students that were in the Jackson "Upper" building were all consolidated into the Jackson "Lower" building. Following the move, the Jackson "Upper" building was expanded with a new classroom wing consisting of 8 new classrooms. Construction was completed in 2023 in time for the 2023-2024 School Year. The building was renamed Lakewood Elementary as a K-2 building with Jackson Intermediate School becoming a grades 3-5 building.

The levy failure could be due to the large number of empty nesters within the School District who do not want to incur an additional tax. The School District is planning to be active in monitoring and reacting to growth within their borders to best plan for additional students. It will be important to keep the lines of communication open between the Lakewood School District and Licking Township to understand how planning and development in the latter will impact the schools. The School District is also working to prepare students for the workforce in Central Ohio as new industries are entering the region. Lakewood School District offers a Manufacturing Skills Standards Council Certified Logistics Technician credential and offers Innovation Lab courses for Manufacturing Operations, Engineering Design, and Robotics which aligns with many of the career opportunities that are arriving within Licking County.

Licking County Sheriff

The Licking County Sheriff's Office provides police services to Licking Township as part of the Sheriff's East District. Staffing for patrol shifts includes a minimum of five deputies on duty for the first (8 AM–4 PM) and third (12 AM–8 AM) shifts, while the second shift (4 PM–12 AM) maintains a minimum of six deputies. Patrol numbers can increase to up to 10 officers per shift based on need. Deputies are not permanently stationed in Licking Township; their assignments vary depending on call volumes, leading to variable response times.

To address ongoing staffing challenges, the Sheriff's Office has implemented significant recruitment and training initiatives. In 2024, a unique partnership with Central Ohio Technical College (COTC) led to 15 new deputies graduating from a Peace Officer Basic Training program specifically designed for the Sheriff's Office. These deputies were sworn in to replace retiring officers and meet the needs of Licking County's growing population. Tuition and related expenses for these cadets were fully covered by the Sheriff's Office, further incentivizing recruitment.



Figure 26: Licking County Justice Center.

The department also continues to actively recruit through local colleges and offers financial assistance and paid training to academy students in exchange for service contracts. This strategy is part of a broader effort to achieve full staffing levels and enhance community safety amidst the area's anticipated growth.

Licking Township Fire Company

The Licking Township Fire Company ("The Fire Company") was established in 1995 after the Township identified a need to provide additional fire safety and prevention efforts. The Township decided to move away from the private entity fire department with which they contracted. The creation of the Fire Company was a grassroots community-based effort, collecting donations for equipment, funding, and infrastructure with the first station operating out of an old hog barn. The Fire Company functioned entirely on a volunteer basis until 2002, when Mike Wilson was hired as the full-time Fire Chief. Following this, a part-time program was developed

while still retaining the volunteer force. The Fire Company is currently funded through a 3-mill permanent levy, which supports 24/7 coverage of Fire Station 601 by three personnel and the fire chief. The Fire Company operates two stations. The main one is Station 601, which is staffed 24/7, and Station 602, a satellite station located within Franklin Township, which is staffed only on Saturdays and Sundays with two personnel. Figure 27 shows the equipment owned by the Fire Company.

Station 601 was built in 2018 and the Fire Company does not foresee needing an additional station in the near future. However, they will need a new engine within the next few years and replacements for both medics in about 10 years.

The Fire Company’s biggest need relates to personnel. Figure 28 provides a breakdown of run totals from 2004 through 2024. In 2022, the Fire Companies busiest year to date, the average number of runs per day was 4.21. 2025 is expected to surpass this, as the Fire Company is averaging 4.25 runs per day, and expects over 1,500 calls this year. This figure highlights the clear trend of increased runs within Licking Township. Additionally, economic development efforts are underway in the Buckeye Lake region which may increase summertime runs. Licking Township is also conveniently located near the Intel site, the City of Columbus, and the Village of Hebron, among others, which will likely cause growth in the Licking Township area. All of these external growth pressures, coupled with the convenient location, will likely continue to increase calls for service. While the volunteer force is essential to the Fire Company’s success, additional full-time personnel are needed to meet the added demand. However, the current funding and existing effective millage cannot support hiring additional full-time personnel.

Licking Township Fire Company Equipment
2 Medics
2 Engines
2 Engine Tankers
2 Grass Trucks
2 Boats
1 Dive Rescue Trailer
1 Utility Task Vehicle

Figure 27. Equipment Owned by Licking Township Fire Company.

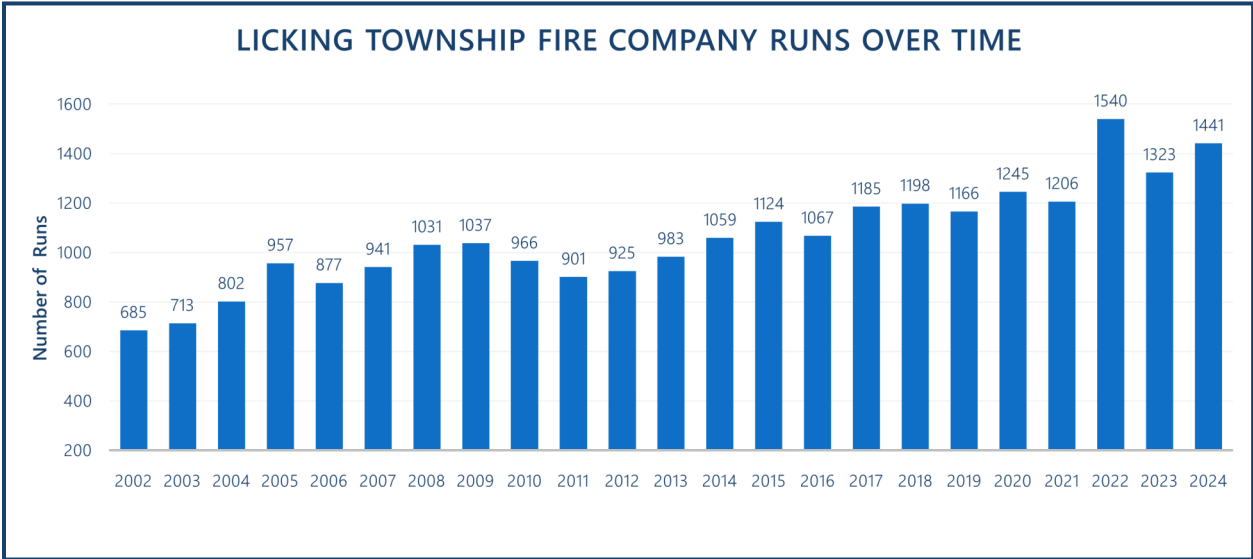


Figure 28. Fire Company Runs since 2002.

Demographics

Age

Licking Township's age distribution largely aligns with the age distribution of both Licking County and the State of Ohio, as shown in Figure 29. Licking Township contains a slightly larger 40+ population and a slightly smaller 0-39 population when compared to both Licking County and the State of Ohio. Despite this, the Township's population is quite stable, with almost a 50/50 split in the 0-39 and 40+ age group, 46.17% and 53.82% respectively. There is often a dip in the 20–39-year age group in rural areas, as is the case for Licking Township as seen in the left most columns in Figure 29. This is likely due to college aged residents leaving the Township for their education and then living within the rental market before settling down and returning to the Township.

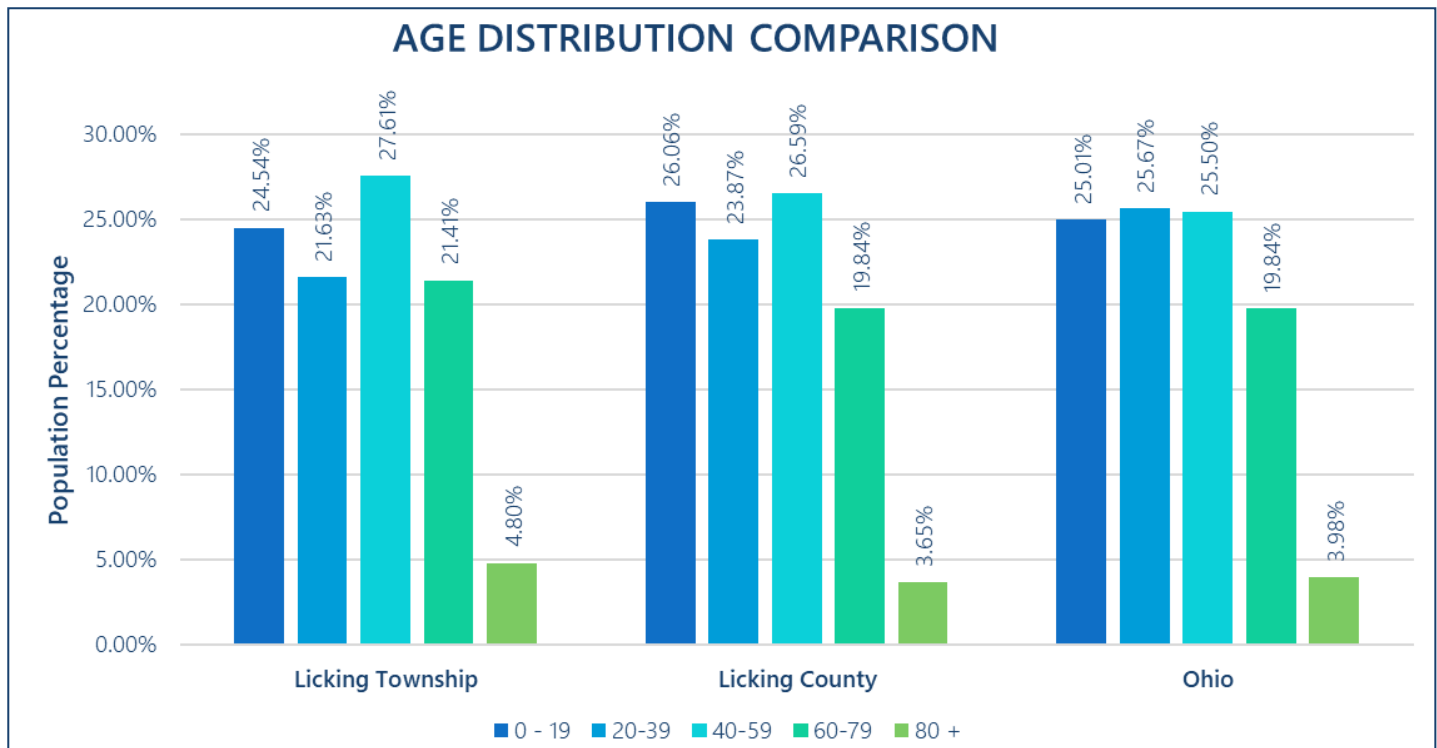


Figure 29 . Age Distribution Comparison Across Licking Township, Licking County, and Ohio.

Race

Similar to many comparable Township’s in Central Ohio, Licking Township contains a largely racially homogenous population, with the majority of residents, 93.5%, identifying themselves as white as shown in Figure 30. This number is higher than in Licking County, 86.30%, and in Ohio, 76.96%. 4.32% of Licking Township residents identify as two or more races. The next largest identified race is just 0.73% of residents who identified themselves as black or African American alone.

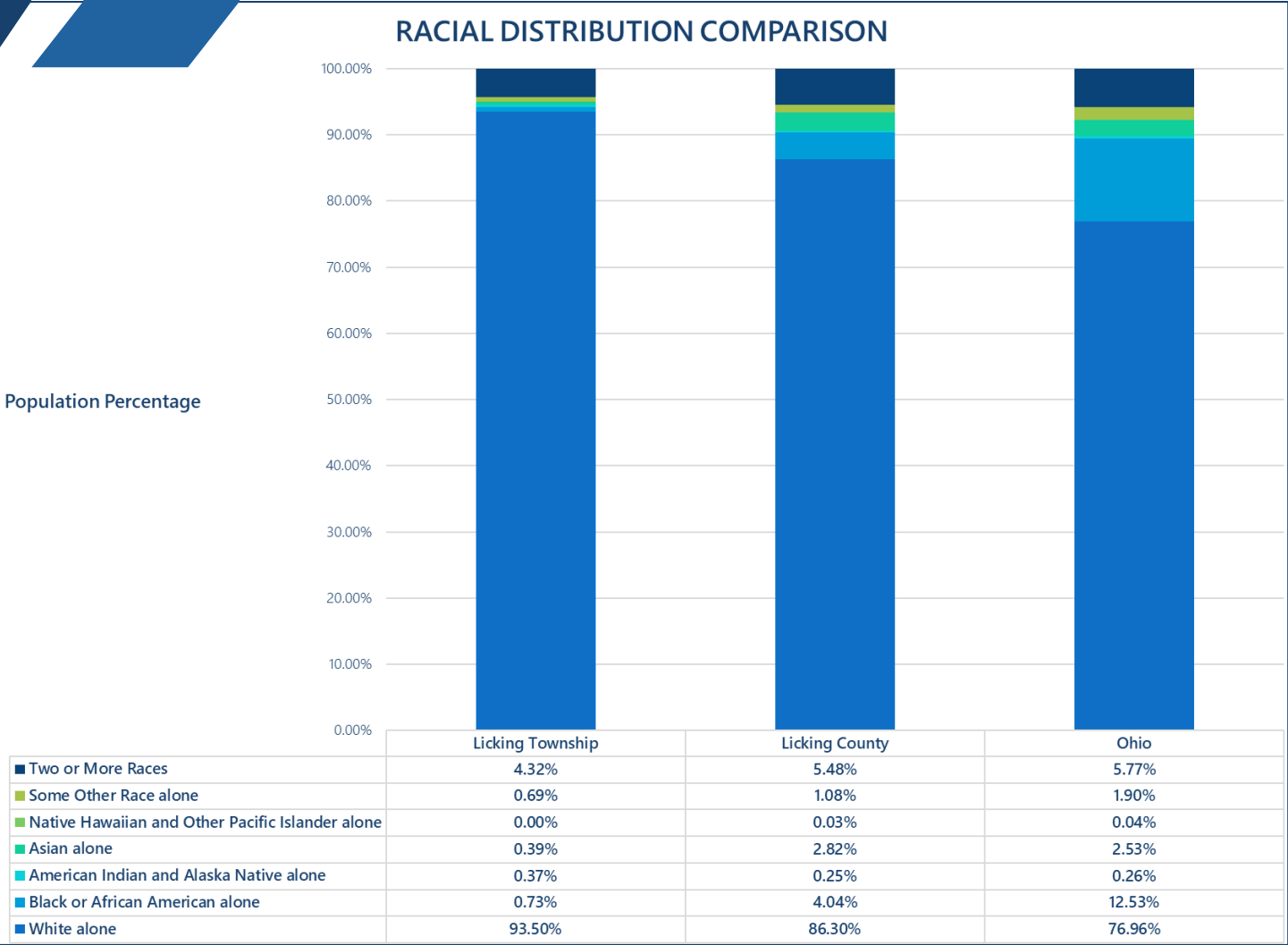


Figure 30 . Racial Distribution Comparison Across Licking Township, Licking County, and Ohio.

Education

Licking Township's educational profile, highlighted in Figure 31, shows similarities to both Licking County and the State of Ohio in most areas. Most of Licking Township residents have a high school diploma, associate's degree or bachelor's degree. Overall, Licking Township contains a well-educated population with higher levels of advanced education on average than Licking County or the state of Ohio.

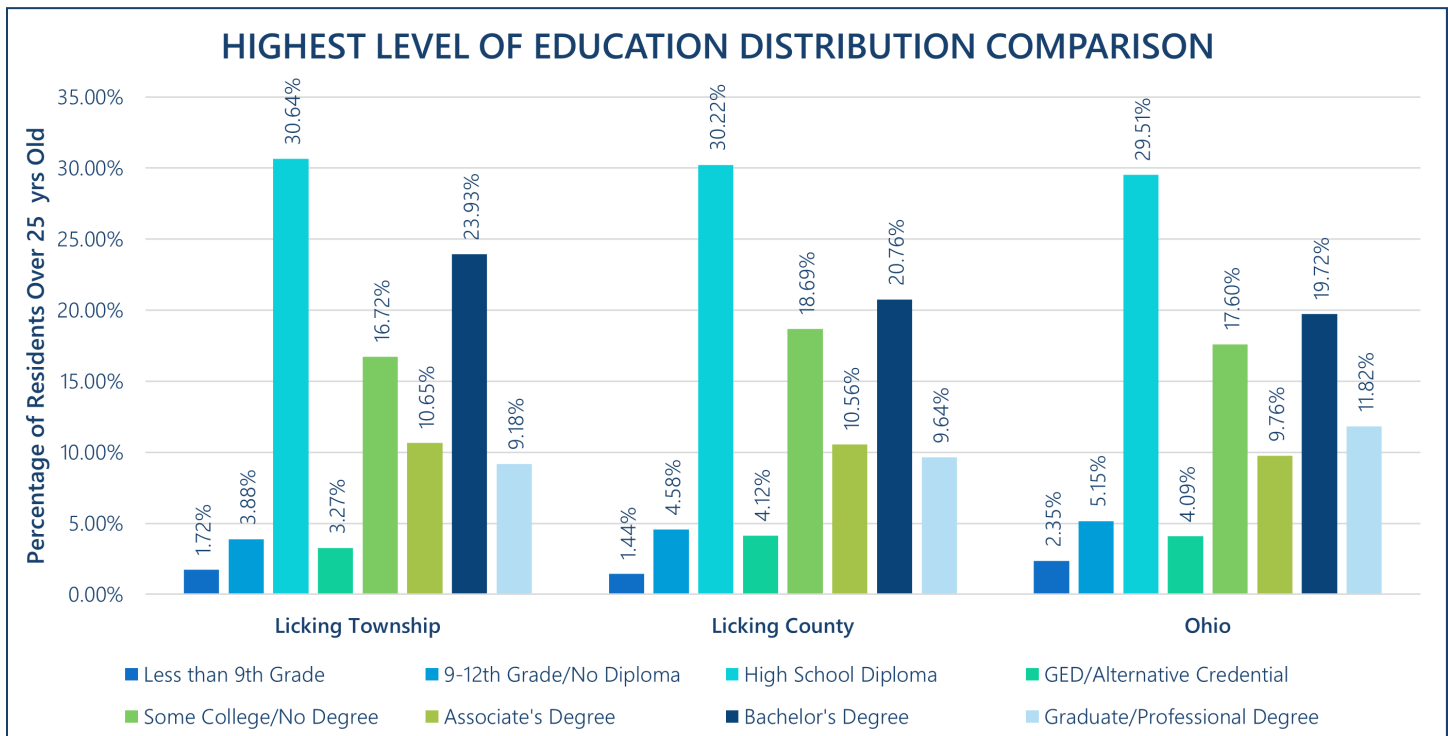


Figure 31. Highest level of Education Distribution Across Licking Township, Licking County, and Ohio.

Population

Licking Township has seen steady population growth over the past 20 years. Figure 32 highlights this population change. While Figure 32's trend line looks relatively level, it is important to note that Licking Township grew by 14.6% between 2000 and 2010, compared to Licking County which grew by 14.4% and the State of Ohio which grew by 1.6%, as shown in Figure 33. Between 2010 and 2020, the Township experienced growth of 4.8% which is less than Licking County which grew by 7.2% but more than the state which grew by 2.3%. With the expected continued growth of Licking County and the Central Ohio region, it is reasonable to expect the

43.76 %

of Licking Township residents have an Associate's Degree or higher.

population of Licking Township to continue to grow. Growth within the Township is expected to occur around Buckeye Lake in the southern portion of the Township and in Jacksontown in central Licking Township. The Buckeye Lake area is seeing a resurgence in growth due to dam improvements made several years ago, increasing development in Central Ohio, and Central Ohioans looking for additional recreational opportunities which will push growth into Licking Township and the areas north and east of the lake. Water and sewer from Licking County Water and Wastewater (LCWW) also has a limited presence within the Township with water coming into the Township from Hebron along US-40. LCWW has the ability to expand their service in the area to accommodate development and will serve as a development attractor. US-40 and I-70 which run through the Township will serve to facilitate this growth as these increase ease of access to and from Licking Township.

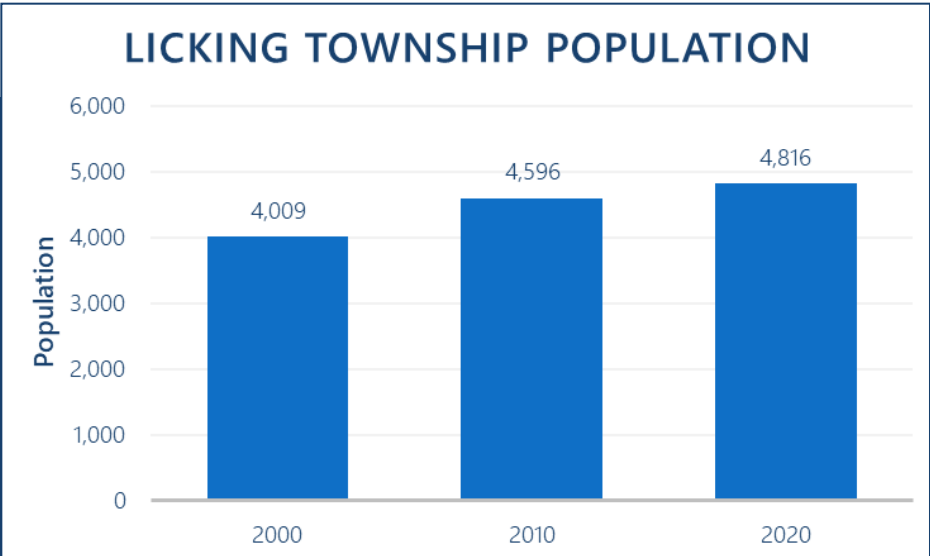
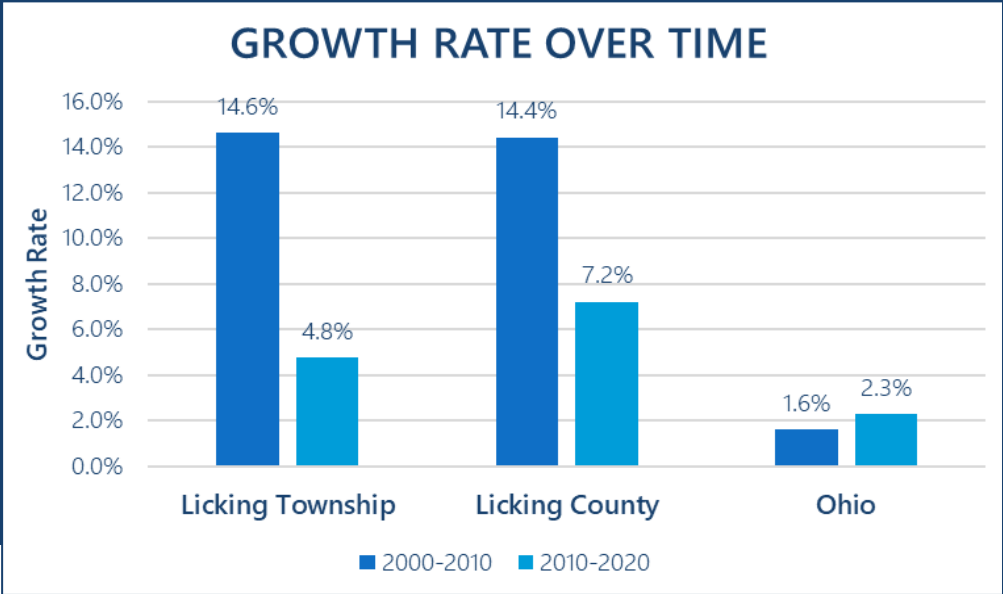


Figure 32. Licking Township Population Since 2000.



Figure 33. Growth Rate in Licking Township compared to Licking County and Ohio.



Occupation

Licking Township residents hold a wide variety of occupations which match the educational profile of the Township as shown in Figure 34. Residents in the Township hold a share of both blue- and white-collar jobs with the highest percentage of residents, 15.2%, working in “Management”. The next highest occupation category for Township residents is “Transport/Material Moving” followed by “Healthcare Practitioner/Technologists/Technicians.” It would be difficult to overstate the diversity of Licking Township’s workforce as there is no single occupation category that captures anything close to a majority of Township residents. Additional occupations included in the “other” category contain construction, architecture/engineering, science, farming, entertainment, and personal services.

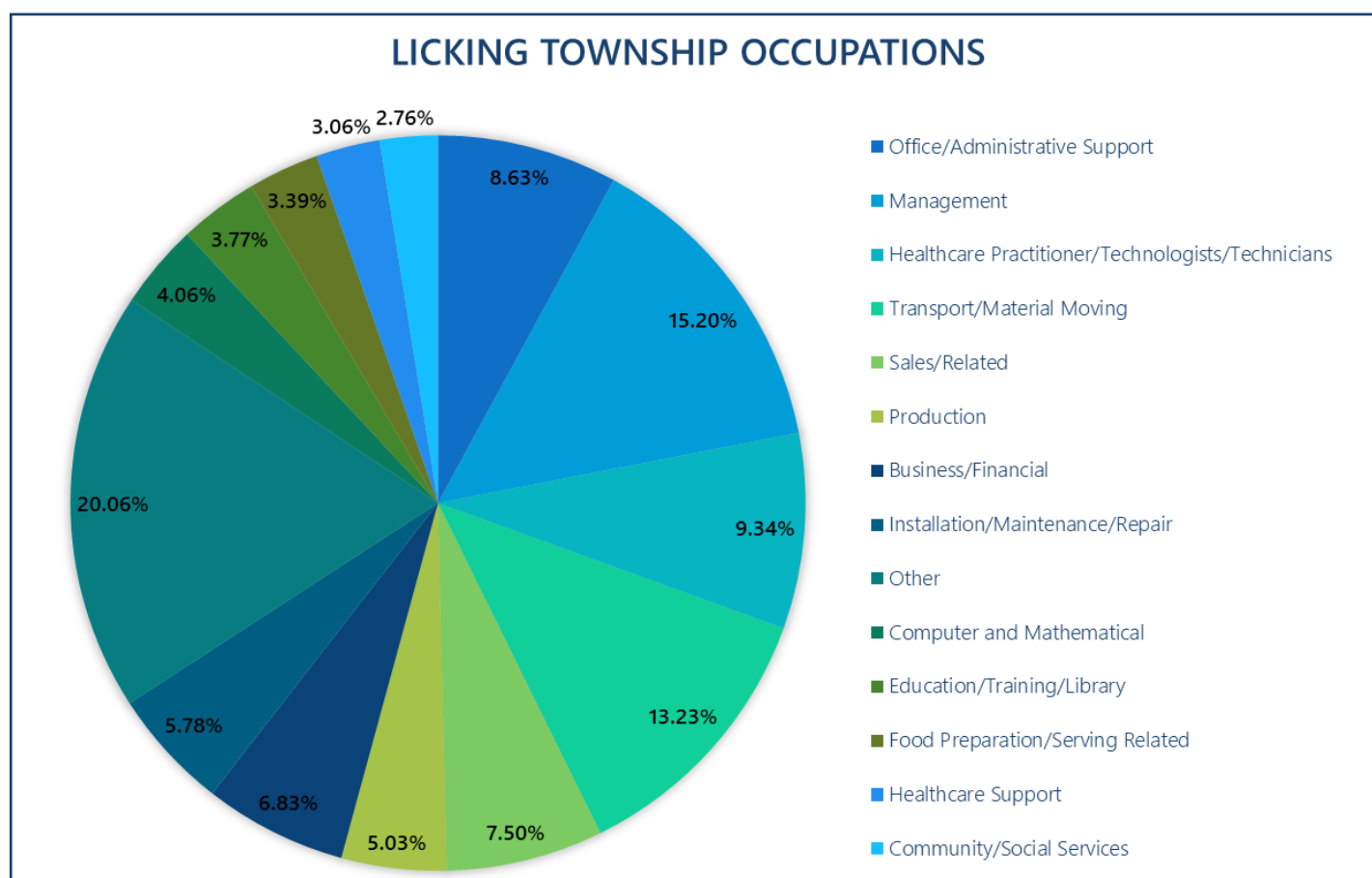


Figure 34 . Occupations Across Licking Township.

Major developments in Central Ohio such as Intel, Amazon, Microsoft, and others highlight the growth in the technology, manufacturing, logistics, and research and development industries. Licking Township’s resident educational and occupational profiles match the economic growth that is expected in the region. Specifically,

residents working in the “Transport/Material Moving”, “Production”, and “Computer and Mathematical” sectors could see direct job benefits from Intel as well as those working in “Office/Administrative Support”, “Management”, “Sales/Related”, and “Business/Financial” in supporting industries. This will be a benefit to Township residents and sets them up for success in career advancement.

Income

Licking Township’s high levels of educational attainment and occupational profile allow residents to earn more than Licking County and Ohio residents on average. The median household income of the Township is \$84,972 as shown in Figure 35. This income is almost \$8,000 more than the average Licking County household and \$21,000 more than the average Ohio household. However, the Township’s median household income is fairly moderate and does not signify a large percentage of extremely wealthy residents or a high prevalence of extremely low-income residents, rather it indicates a largely middle-class income and population.

32.9 %
higher average income in Licking Township than the State of Ohio.

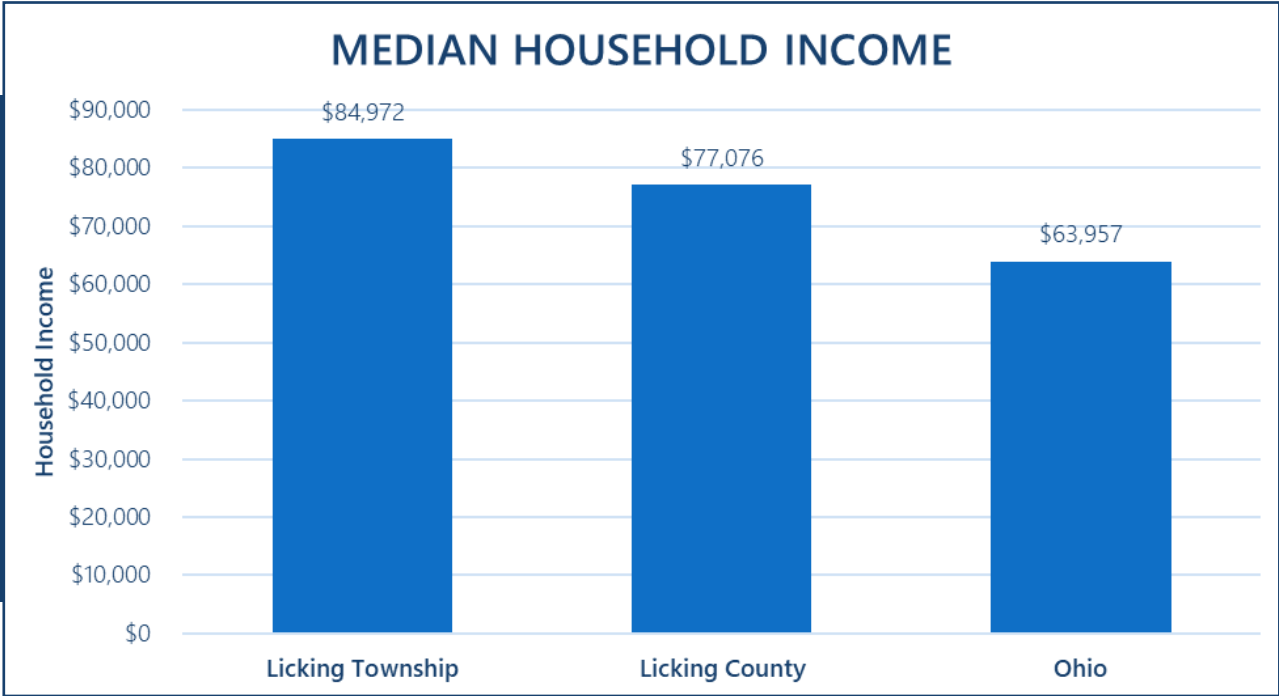


Figure 35. Average Income in Licking Township Compared to Licking County and Ohio.

Income Distribution

Aligning with the Township's median income, Licking Township's household income distribution as shown in Figure 36 contains most data at the center of the income ranges. Licking Township contains less residents making \$49,000 or less than both Licking County and the state of Ohio. The largest percentage of Township residents, 34.34%, are making between \$50,000 and \$100,000, which closely aligns with the Township's median income. Notably, the Township has more residents making \$150,000 or more than both the County and the state, indicating a slightly wealthier population.

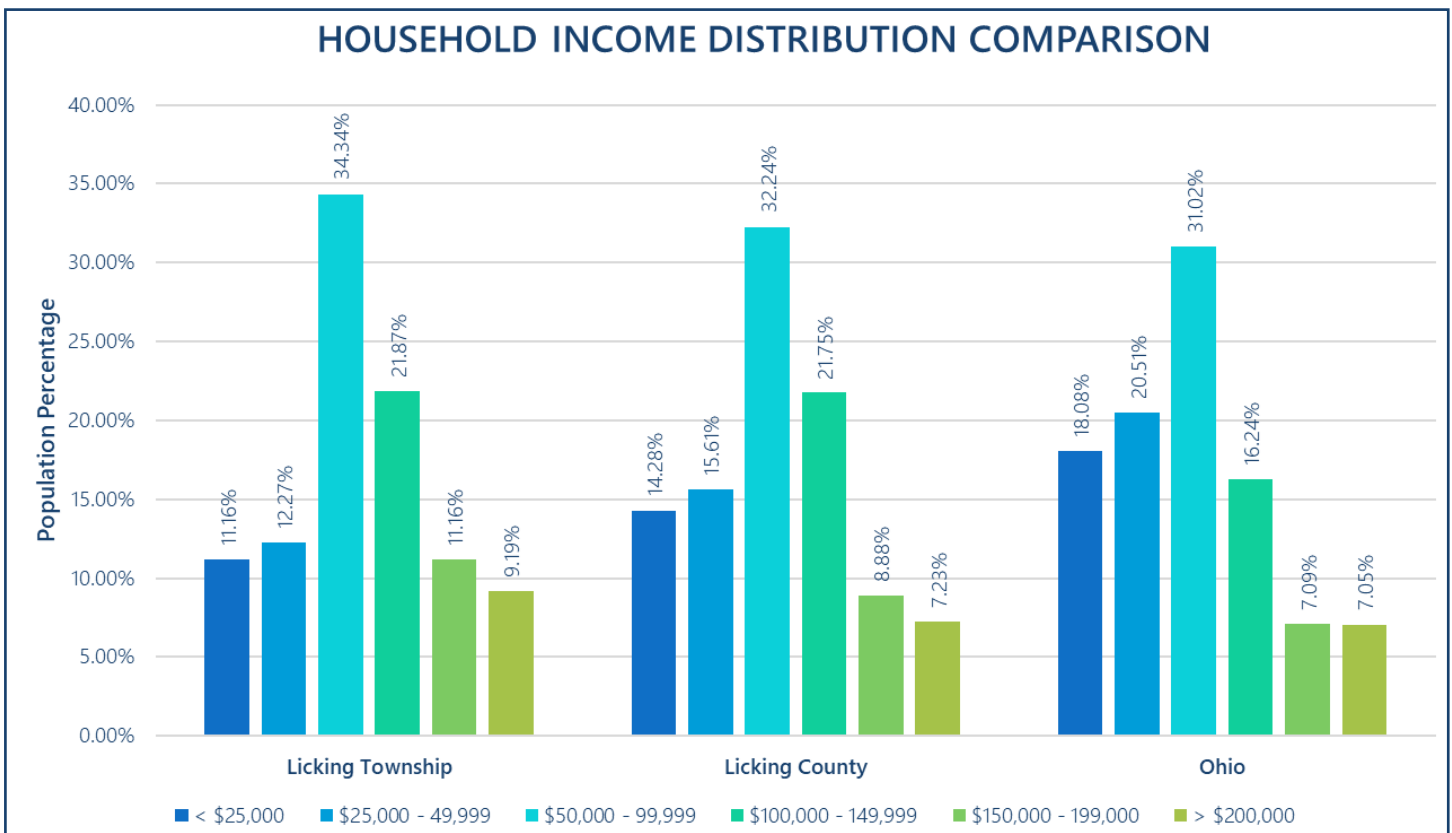


Figure 36. Household Income Distribution Across Licking Township, Licking County, and Ohio.

Home Price

The trends in home prices in Licking Township diverge from the trends in Licking County and the state of Ohio. The Township has far less moderately priced homes \$300,000 or under, 43.52%, than the County, 66.75%, or the state, 73.85%. This data shows that low- or moderate-income individuals looking to purchase a home within the Township would likely have a very difficult time achieving home ownership. The lack of moderately priced homes within the Township may reflect the desirability of living within Licking Township, such as the proximity to Buckeye Lake, Newark, Heath,

Columbus and the high quality of small town life which may be driving home prices up. The Township contains a higher percentage of homes within the \$300-399,999 range at 33.01% than the County, 18.4%, or the state, 13.69%. This trend continues into the \$400,000-\$999,999 price range. Notably, the Township has 13.76% of the housing stock within the \$500,000-\$749,999 price range while the County and state have just 5.6% and 4.68%, respectively, in this range.

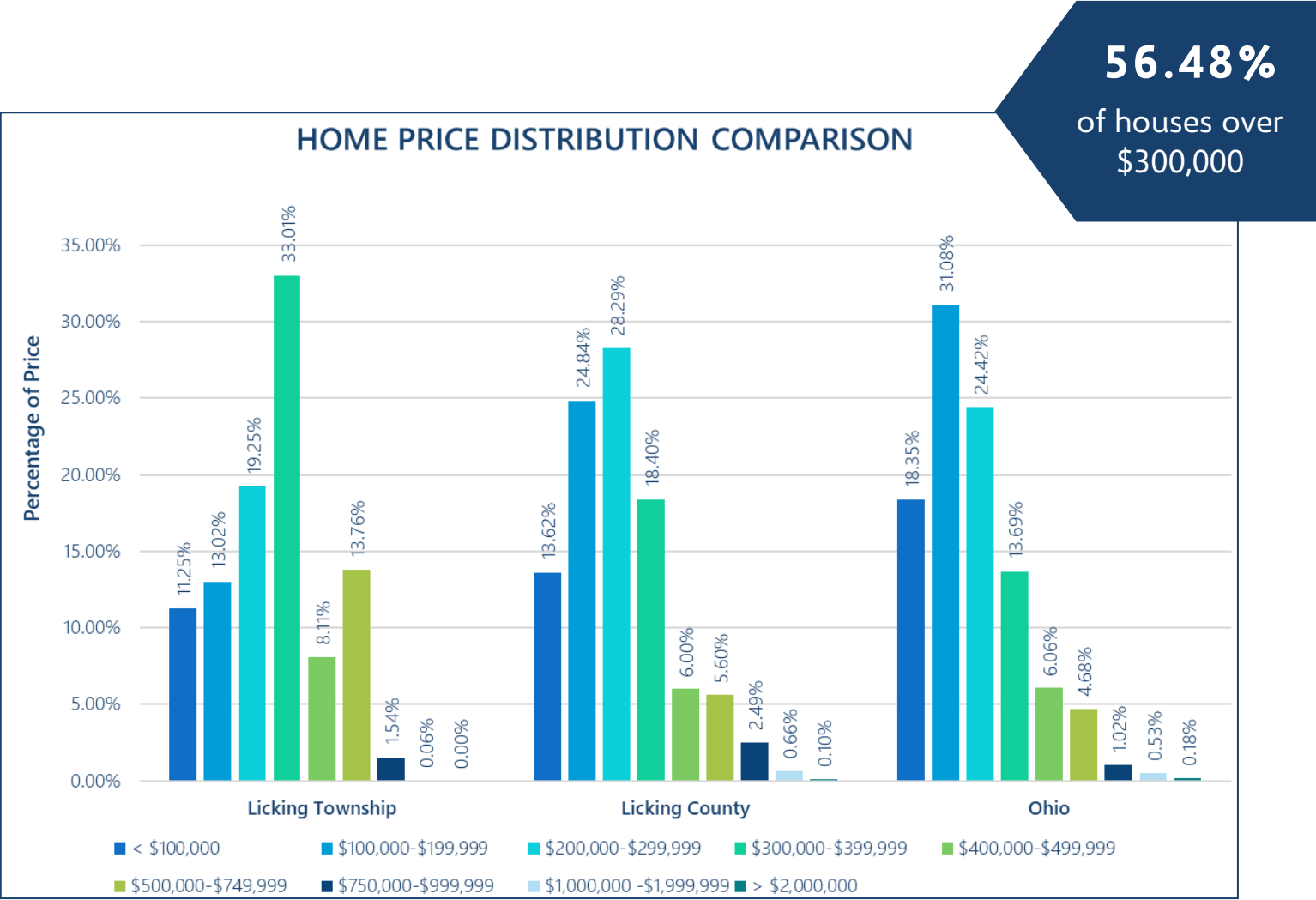


Figure 37. Home Price Distribution Across Licking Township, Licking County, and Ohio.

Home Age

As shown in Figure 38, Licking Township has only a small percentage of houses built before 1960, 19.63%, when compared to Licking County, 28.46%, and the state of Ohio, 39.18%. The Township saw a spike in housing development in the 1980s and 90s during which time almost 30% of the Township’s housing stock was built.

The Village of Buckeye Lake saw a housing construction boom in the 1970's, which may have brought attention to the possibility of building housing just outside the Village within Licking Township in the following decades. Housing has continued to be developed at a faster rate than Licking County or the state of Ohio through the 2000s.

The Township saw 23.28% of its housing stock developed in 2000 or later compared to 20.02% in Licking County and 13.89% in Ohio overall. This data shows that the Township contains a relatively new housing stock.

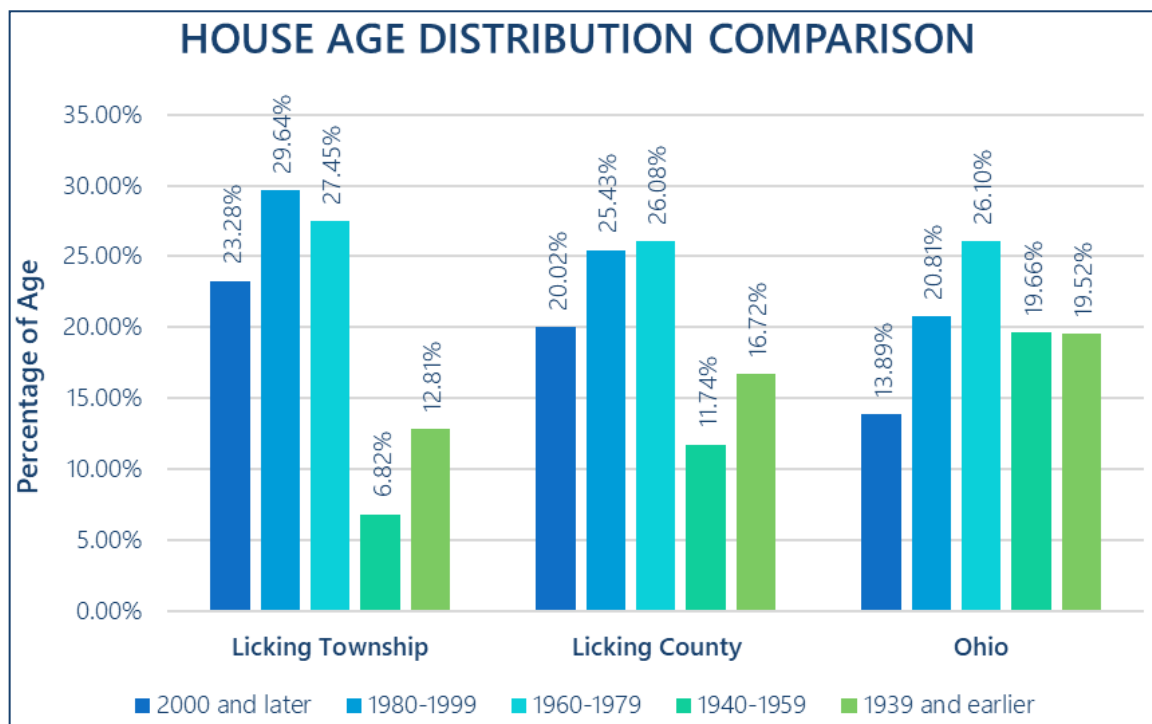


Figure 38. Home Age Distribution Across Licking Township, Licking County, and Ohio.

While housing development in the 2000s and beyond was less than in the periods between 1960-79 and 1980-99, the Township can expect increased housing development in the upcoming decades.

Central Ohio's growth is no secret and surrounding communities such as the Village of Buckeye Lake, the Village of Hebron, and the City of Heath are increasing their housing stock, which will put pressure on the Township as growth expands past municipal borders. In fact, single-family housing development can be seen in the areas of historic Licking Township that have been annexed by Heath. Single family, multifamily and mixed-use developments will likely continue to be in demand as general housing demand in Central Ohio grows.

It is important to note that Framework, the comprehensive planning document recently adopted for many Licking County communities, completed a housing development forecast with BIA data for the communities involved in the Framework planning effort. Figure 39 shows this forecast.

While Licking Township was not included in this analysis, it is important to note the growth expected in neighboring communities such as Heath, Hebron, and even Newark. Heath is expected to need an additional 5,278 homes, Newark is expected to need a whopping 25,148 new homes, and Hebron is expected to need 1,376 new homes. While this forecast assigns this growth to each respective municipality, it is key to understand the plans of these communities surrounding Licking Township to understand the impacts to the Township. For instance, Figure 40 shows Hebron’s land use map from their most up-to-date draft of their comprehensive plan.

Hebron is planning land uses for areas well into what is currently Licking Township, almost reaching the Jacksontown area. Hebron has identified the majority of the Licking Township area between Ridgely Tract Rd SE, Jacksontown, and I-70 as either rural residential or planned residential, with smaller pockets of neighborhood commercial and government (schools). While Hebron’s comprehensive plan and its effects on Licking Township will be discussed thoroughly in the following section, this visual shows that the 5,278 housing units expected to be needed in Hebron may *not* all be located within what is now the current Hebron municipal boundary and may extend into the Licking Township area if annexation occurs.

Location	BIA Forecast
Framework	61,604
Alexandria	261
Granville	1,857
Granville Twp	3,712
Harrison Twp	3,081
Heath	5,278
Hebron	1,376
Jersey Twp	1,506
Johnstown	2,122
Liberty Twp	953
Monroe Twp	3,194
Newark	25,148
Pataskala	6,830
St. Albans Twp	1,344
Union Twp	4,942

Figure 39. Bia Forecast

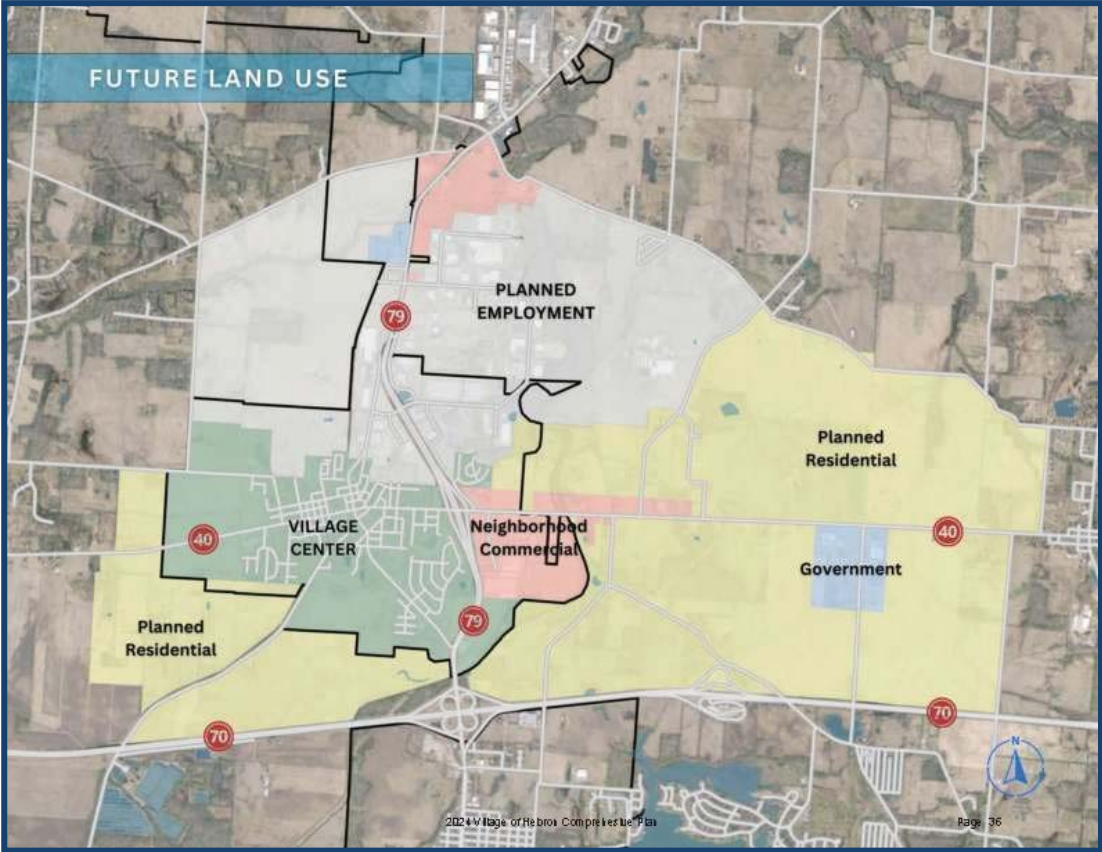


Figure 40. Hebron’s Future Land Use Map. Photo Source: Hebron 2024 Comprehensive Plan.

Additionally, MORPC has predicted the Licking County population to grow at rate of 30% by 2050, further highlighting the expected growth in the region, further highlighted the expected growth in the region.

Surrounding Area Plans

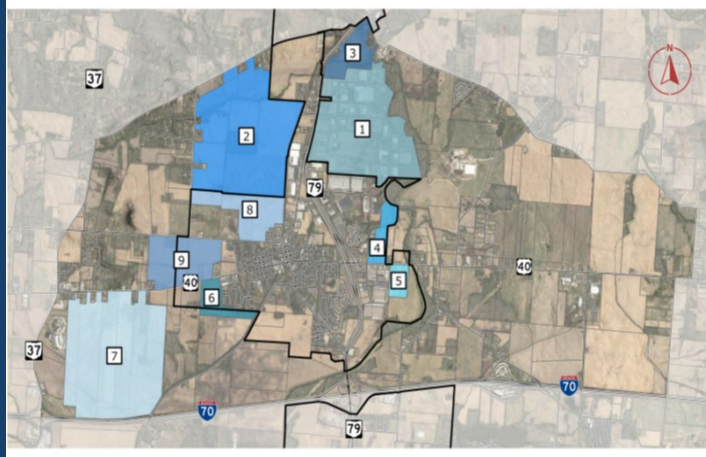
The Village of Hebron

The Village of Hebron named their comprehensive plan “Live Locally” to prioritize ideas and strategies such as creating vibrant neighborhoods, enhancing social cohesion, promoting mixed-use development, reducing personal automobile use, and increasing active transportation. With these concepts, Hebron plans to expand development east of the Village into Licking Township, pass Atherton, and stopping at Jacksonville, as shown in Figure 41. Still, Hebron has plans to respect current uses, maintain community character, preserve farmland, and reduce traffic and congestion within their borders. The growth and development expansions for Hebron that are the most pressing for Licking Township are their eastern plans. The plan includes a current land use map and a future land use map.

According to the future map, shown in Figure 41, most of the area within Licking Township is either planned residential or rural residential, with Atherton listed as government. In addition, four of Hebron’s Priority Growth Areas (PGA) border Licking Township, as shown in Figure 41.

MAP 5 - PRIORITY GROWTH AREA (PGA) MAP

To effectively develop a priority growth area, developers must engage with stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and government agencies, to gather input and build consensus on the vision for the area. Furthermore, developers must develop strategies and policies to address potential challenges, such as affordable housing, traffic congestion, and environmental impacts.



MAP 2 - PLANNING BOUNDARY

Hebron is a desirable place to live and establish a business. Therefore, it is appropriate to plan for future growth outside of the current Village boundary. The planning area depicted below is the boundary used as the basis for the Comprehensive Plan.



Figure 41. Hebron’s Priority Growth Area and Planning Boundary. Photo Source: Hebron Comprehensive Plan

These are 1: Newark Industrial Park, 3: Northern Village Gateway, 4: Eastern Village Gateway Part 1, and 5: Eastern Village Gateway Part 2. Next, the plan proposes an extension to Kingswood Drive (northwest of Atherton), signal intersection improvements for US 40/SR 79 Ramp and Kroger Center/US 40, and a safety intersection improvement for Mill Dam/Cristland Hill. In addition, the plan proposes active transportation improvement for US 40 into Licking Township. Lastly, the plan proposes a new waterline that crosses US 40 toward Atherton.

Hebron's plan includes goals and design ideas that illustrate the Village's understanding of the strong economic development pressures and population growth that have already occurred and will continue in Licking County. They want to plan accordingly to keep traffic and congestion at a minimum. To accomplish this, the Village desires to promote and expand active and public transportation throughout their plan. By providing alternative transportation options to cars, the Village believes they can improve community relationships, promote sustainability, and increase safety. To accomplish these, the plan takes inspiration from the Fifteen-Minute City framework and recommends infill development to prevent leapfrogging and discourage strip development, which would facilitate car use and increase traffic and congestion.

The Hebron plan also desires to promote tourism in the area. They especially want to emphasize the Village's culture, trails, and nature. With the likelihood of an increase in tourists to Hebron, Licking Township should also expect to feel the impacts of more tourists in the area as well.

The Village of Buckeye Lake

Buckeye Lake has no plans to expand their borders into Licking Township, see Figure 42. Buckeye Lake's comprehensive plan includes large employment centers for the northern portion of the village alongside I-70 and current farmland that borders Licking Township (p. 35), which could impact Licking Township.

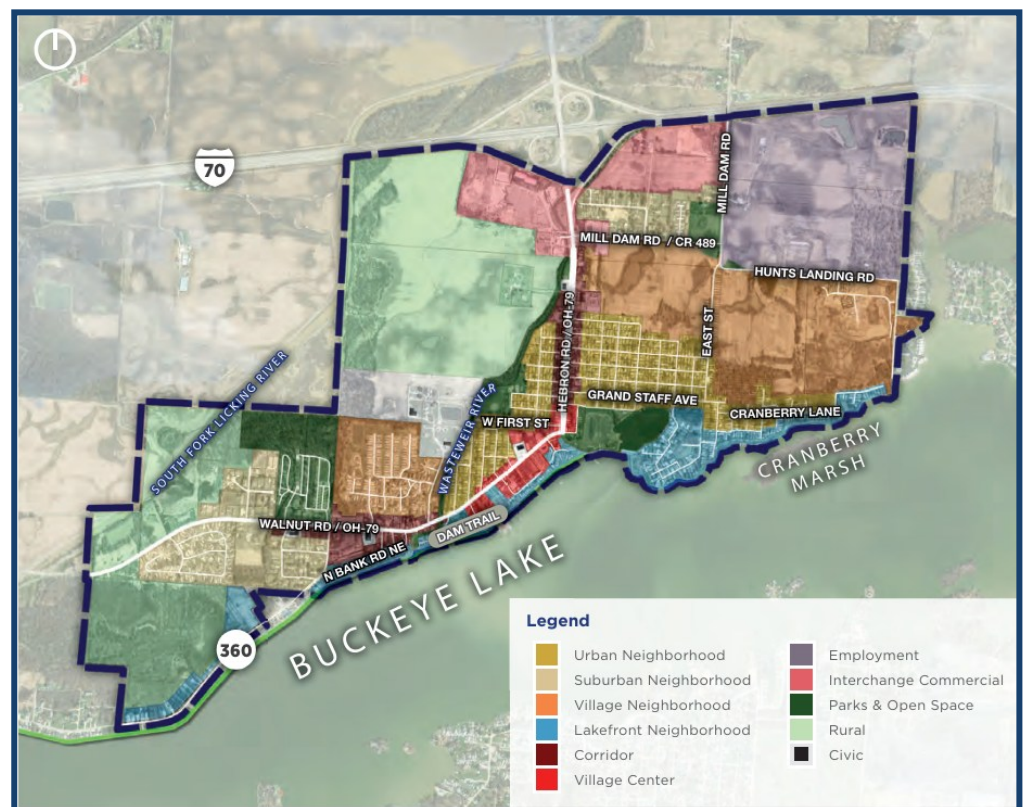


Figure 42. Buckeye Lake's Future Land Use Plan. Photo Source: Buckeye Lake 2023 Comprehensive Plan

Buckeye Lake prioritizes vertical growth with mixed-use development rather than horizontal sprawl. This approach stems from the significant portion of the village's land located in floodplains. Buckeye Lake plans to use these floodplain areas for parks and recreational spaces instead of intensive development.

However, areas north and northeast of the village, near I-70 and Licking Township, lie outside the floodplains. These regions are the focus for new development outside the village center and lakefront. Plans here emphasize commercial and industrial growth:

- Northeast Employment Zone: Designated for large-scale industrial, office, and research buildings ranging from one to five stories. A roundabout is proposed at East Street and Mill Dam Road to improve connectivity.
- I-70 Interchange Commercial Zone: This area is planned for small to medium-scale commercial uses alongside multifamily residential development with a 6:4 ratio of commercial to residential uses. A specific project example is highlighted on the western side of this zone.

Recognizing Buckeye Lake's historical and cultural significance, the village aims to revitalize tourism and capitalize on its potential. Similar to Hebron, Licking Township can expect increased tourism and visitor activity from Buckeye Lake's marketing efforts.

Additionally, to support recreation and tourism, Buckeye Lake is planning a scenic trail for cyclists and pedestrians around the lake. Led by Bike Buckeye Lake, the trail includes:

- Existing paths like the 4.1-mile Buckeye Lake Dam Trail and a 1-mile section at Fairfield Beach.
- Surface streets connecting Licking, Fairfield, and Perry Counties, including Licking, Thorn, Union, and Walnut Townships and key areas like Millersport, Buckeye Lake Village, and Thornport.
- A link to the OH 65 bike route, which connects Lancaster to the Erie to Ohio Trail.

Bike Buckeye Lake's ultimate goal is to create a complete, safe, and accessible trail system around Buckeye Lake for walkers and cyclists alike.

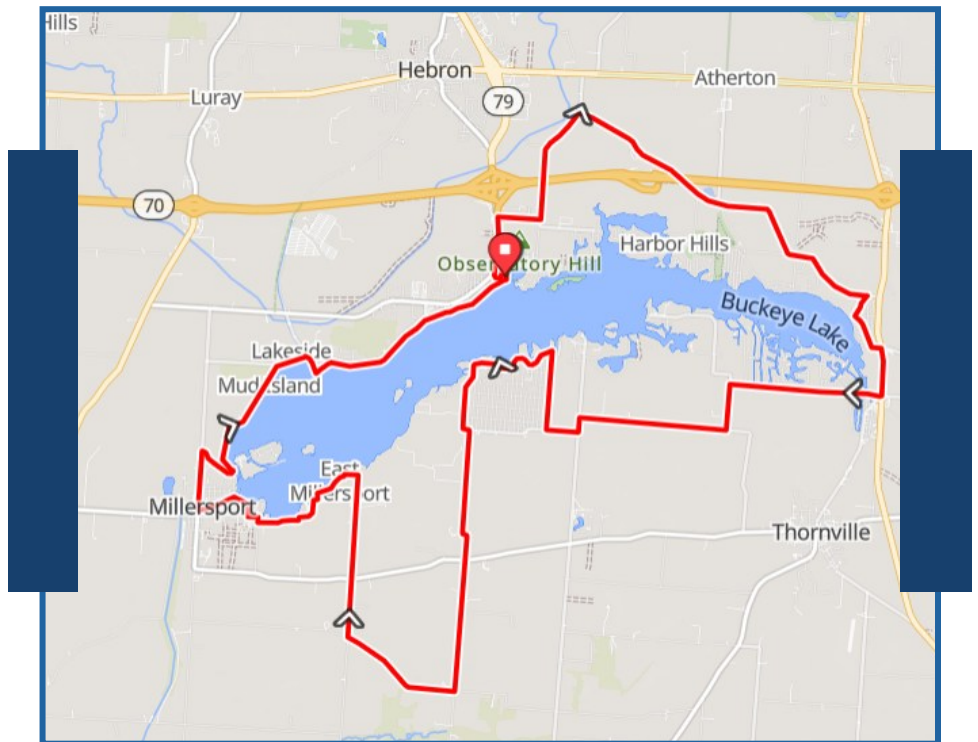


Figure 43. Buckeye Lake Trail. Photo Source: Bike Buckeye Trail

Newark

The City of Newark has not updated their comprehensive plan since December 2002 when they adopted the document. Therefore, most of the information in this plan is outdated for Licking Township's use. It is important to note that Newark's borders have remained mostly unchanged since 2002. The recently adopted County Thoroughfare Plan contains updated information regarding Newark, which will be discussed in the Thoroughfare Plan Section below. Based upon recent history and the updated data from the County Thoroughfare Plan, it is anticipated that Newark may continue to annex north and east.

Licking County Thoroughfare Plan

The Thoroughfare Plan is a comprehensive assessment of past and current trends in Licking County regarding transportation and a set of recommendations for the County to enact. The most notable aspect of the plan is that it lists nearly all of Licking Township as suburban transitional, Figure 44.

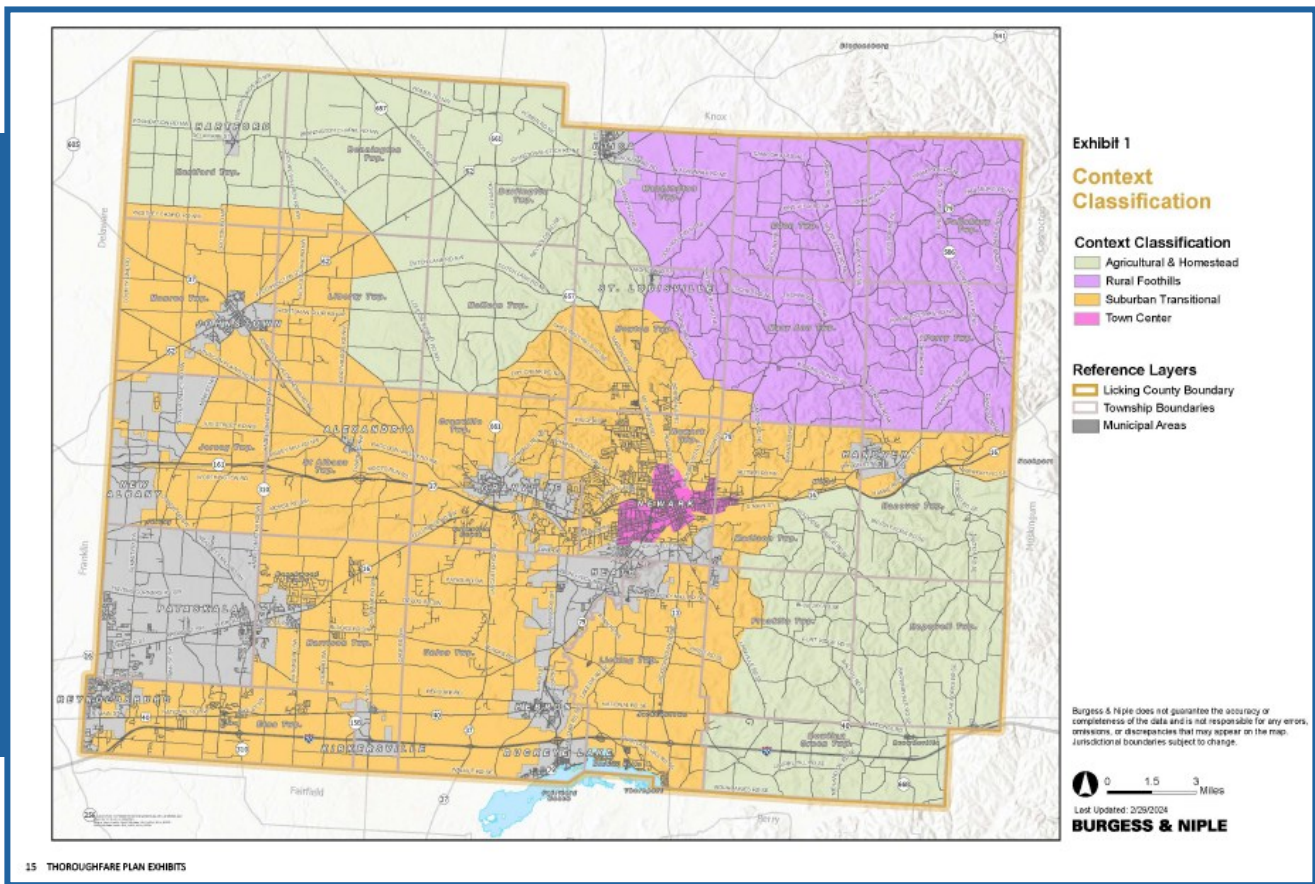


Figure 44. Map Depicting the Various Land Use Contexts Throughout Licking County. Photo Source: Licking County thoroughfare Plan

The Southern section, primarily along Hebron Road, is mostly general business, with some multi-family and "other" uses. The suburban transitional classification "may contain low-to-medium density residential developments, mixed-use developments,

or commercial zones, including regional retail and commercial activity or economic development sites". These areas may also have increased speed limits and roadways, along with options for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. Rural and farmland uses are likely not to be in suburban transitional areas.

The Thoroughfare plan provides an updated assessment of Newark compared to the City's comprehensive plan from 2002. Still, much like in the old Newark Comprehensive Plan, the City still wishes to expand development north and east of downtown.

The Intel Project has and will continue to impact Licking County. In the short term, most of Intel's effects will be on the western side of the County, though Newark and Heath will also experience similar levels of development. Mid to long term effects will still concentrate in these areas, though will also come with expanding utilities. The plan identifies the north and center sections of the border with Heath as areas that are key for future development, due to current access to utilities, as shown in Figure 45.

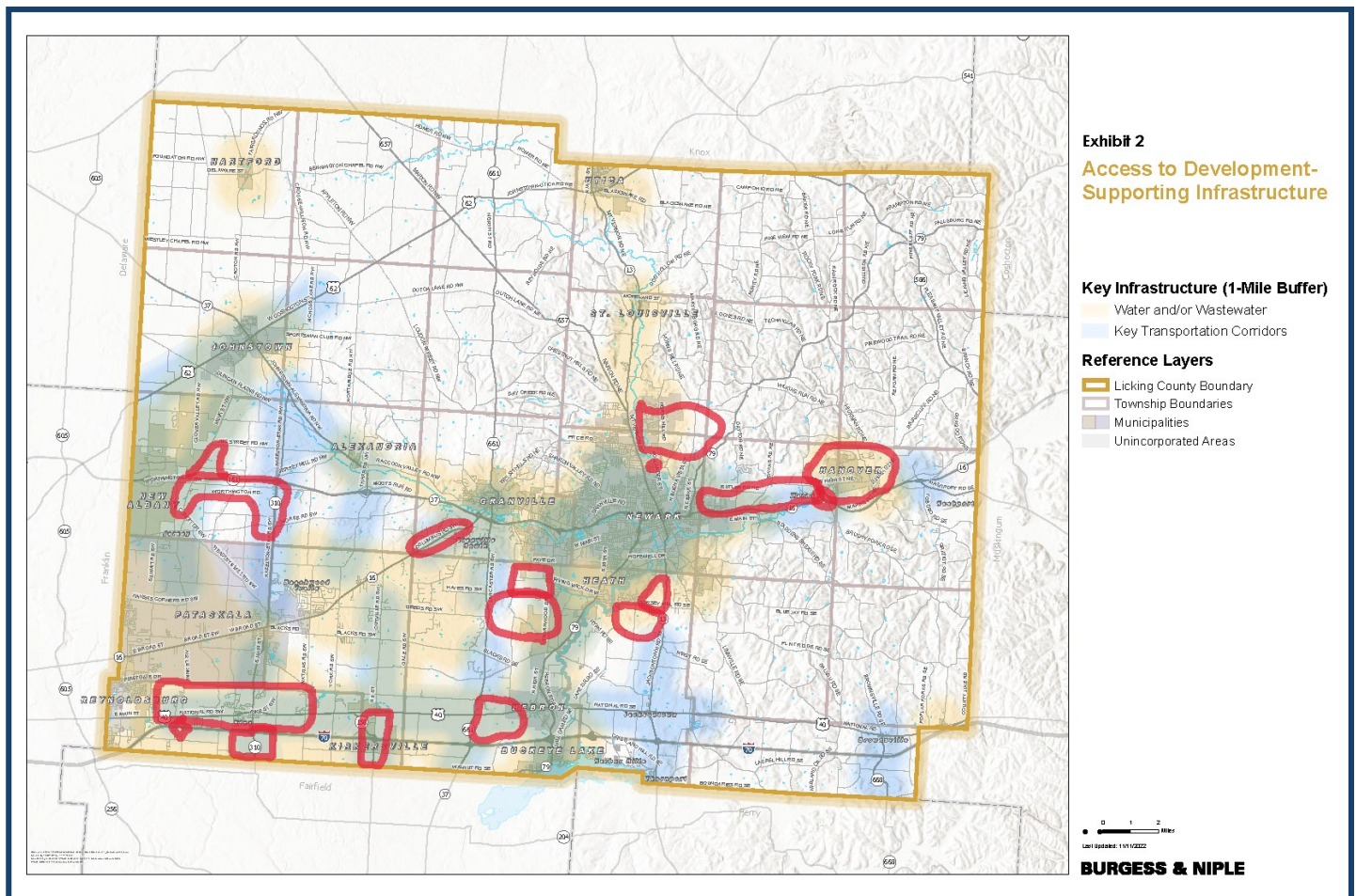


Figure 45. Access to Development Supporting Infrastructure. Photo Source: Licking County Thoroughfare Plan

One pressing matter in the Thoroughfare Plan is road safety in Licking County. Even though most accidents occur in Newark, the accidents in Licking Township still need to be addressed. According to this plan, most car crashes in Licking Township are concentrated on Jacksontown Road and US 40 (on the edges of the Township bordering Hebron and Franklin Township). The Fatal and Serious Injury map also clarifies this trend, Figure 46, as well as the pedestrian and bicycle accident map, Figure 47. Especially with projected development outside and within Licking Township, the number of cars, bicycles, and pedestrians will increase, making it paramount to address safety concerns. Jacksontown Road is expected to increase to 1,000-5,000 daily vehicular volumes, while US 40 is expected to increase to 1,000 daily vehicular volumes.

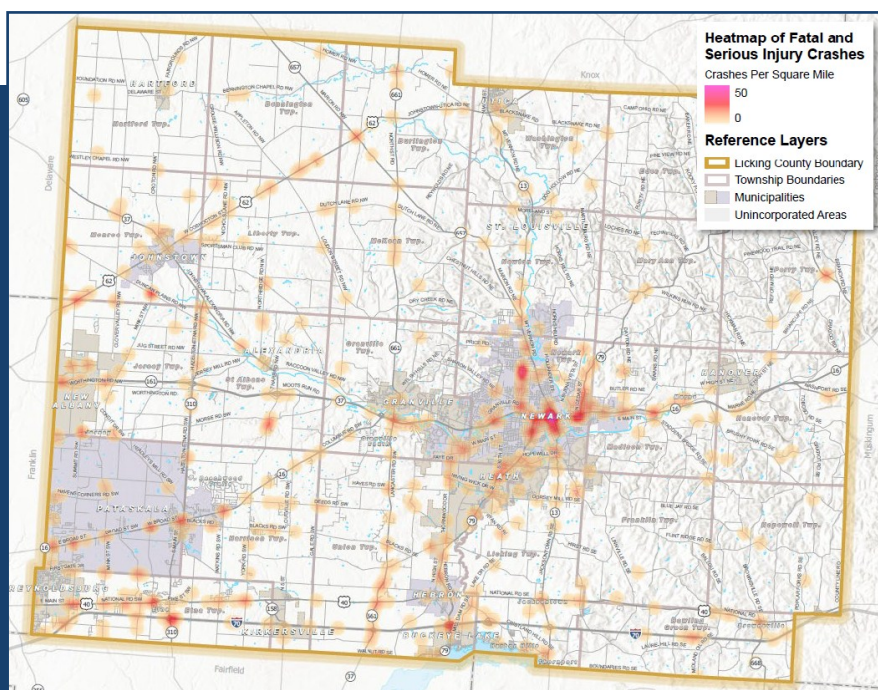
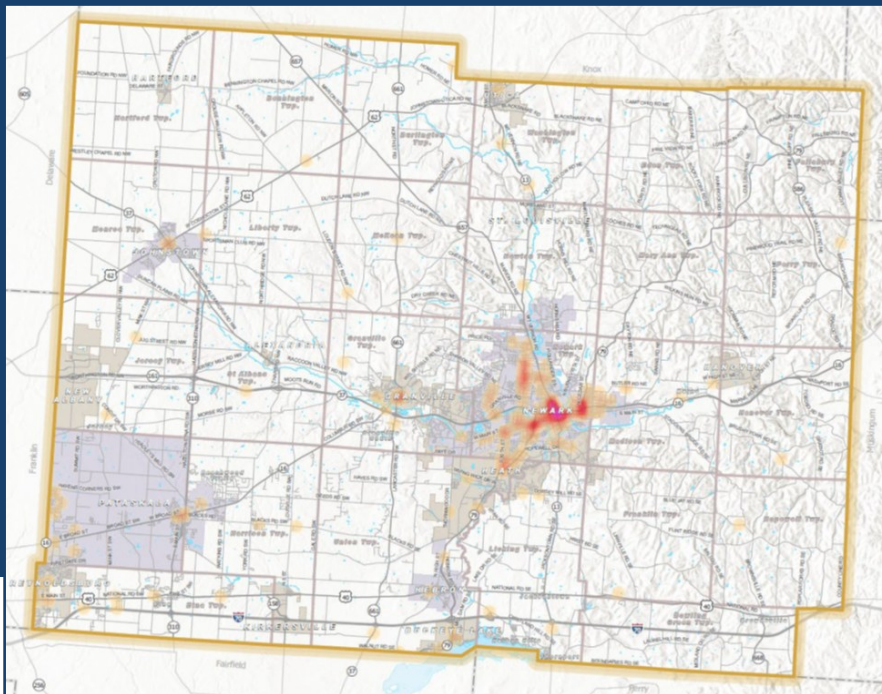


Figure 46. Heatmap of Automobile Accident Serious Injury and Death. Photo Source: Licking County Thoroughfare Plan

Figure 47. Heatmap of Pedestrian and Bicycle Accidents. Photo Source: Licking County Thoroughfare Plan



Licking County Planning Commission– Residential and Commercial Development

Multiple parcels on Buckeye Lake's Maple Bay have been considered for residential development over the years but have not been successful. This area is one of the last areas along the north side of the Lake that has not been developed, making it a very attractive area.

The main development challenges include floodplains, wetlands, drainage, water quality and access.

Previously, there have been considerations

of extending access from Mill Dam Road SE and From Freeman Memorial Drive, even potentially creating a connector between the two to solve the access issue. However, there are no existing studies or plans for this idea.

Additionally, the Licking County Planning Commission (LCPC) has had developers approach them with plans to develop condominiums near Avon Place SE. Sheridan Place in Harbor Hills has multiple lots platted but the road was never constructed. In addition, there have been historic issues regarding who builds the road, runs the water and sewer, and implements a stormwater system to allow the lots to be built on. Grants or public-private partnerships will likely be needed finance the infrastructure to see development in this area. Additionally, the Avondale Park allotment (Hebron Ave, Delaware Ave, Coshocton Ave, Mt. Vernon Ave, Lexington Ave, Lancaster Ave, Zanesville Ave, Newark, Ave, and Cambridge Street) was platted, but the infrastructure was not built. The lots were initially platted for seasonal trailer homes, so for permanent residential development to occur, the area would likely need to be replatted to see development.

LCPC has also been approached by a developer with plans to develop commercial uses that would cater to I-70 travelers and tourists along Jacksontown Road near the ODOT District 5 facility. If completed, this development could bring additional restaurants and other businesses to the Jacksontown neighborhood.

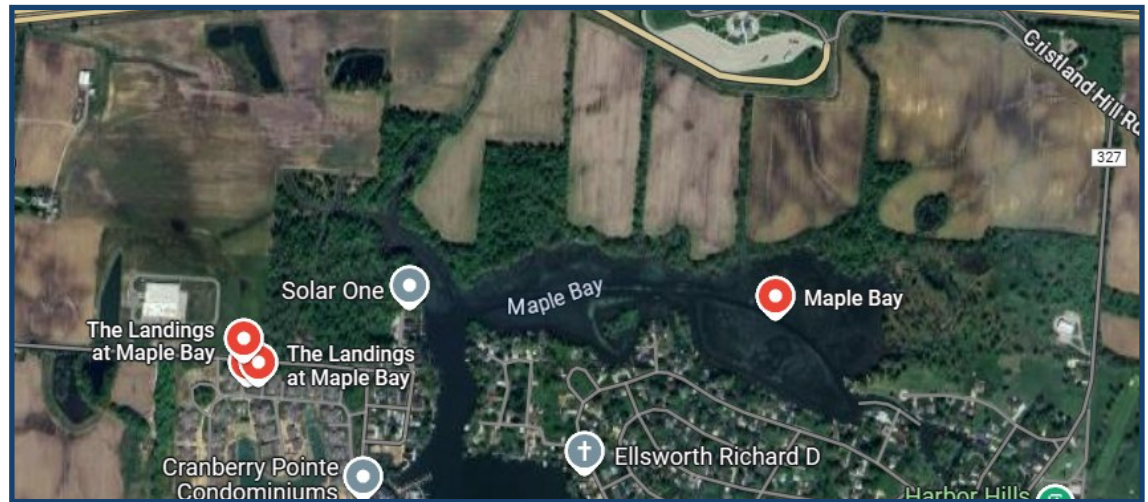


Figure 48 Undeveloped Farm Land North of Maple Bay

Additionally, the City of Heath has several housing development projects that border Licking Township under consideration. These developments highlight the increased demand for housing within Licking County and are likely examples of development still to come both in communities surrounding Licking Township and within the Township itself.

Newark-Heath Airport

Portions of the northern areas of Licking Township are located within the Newark-Heath Airport Airspace Conical Zone which is subject to the Newark-Heath Airport Airspace Zoning Resolution, which is administered by the LCPC, mostly affecting building height in this area. The Newark-Heath Airport is increasingly being used and attracting larger planes due to development in the region, including Intel and the industrial parks in Heath and Hebron, and surrounding Townships. Therefore, the preservation of airspace zones in Licking Township and the region as a whole are very important. The limitation on building heights in this area could prevent development, or could prevent certain use types due to the nature of needed buildings. Variances regarding height should be carefully considered in this area as to not negatively impact the safety of the airspace and Township residents.



Figure 49. Newark Heath Airport. Photo Credit: Aviation Works Inc.

Heath

The City of Heath does not have a comprehensive plan, but they have a zoning map, Figure 51, and a Community Reinvestment (CRA) boundary map, Figure 50, which can help Licking Township understand the City's plans for the future. In short, there are no indications on Heath's plan for annexations, but given the various uses in the City that border Licking Township, it is likely the Township will face some development pressure.

Heath's CRA is a portion of the City where businesses can apply for tax abatements. The CRA

covers the lower half of the southern section of the B-3 zone along Hebron that borders Licking Township. The CRA incentive and existing business zoning could potentially encourage business development along this border.

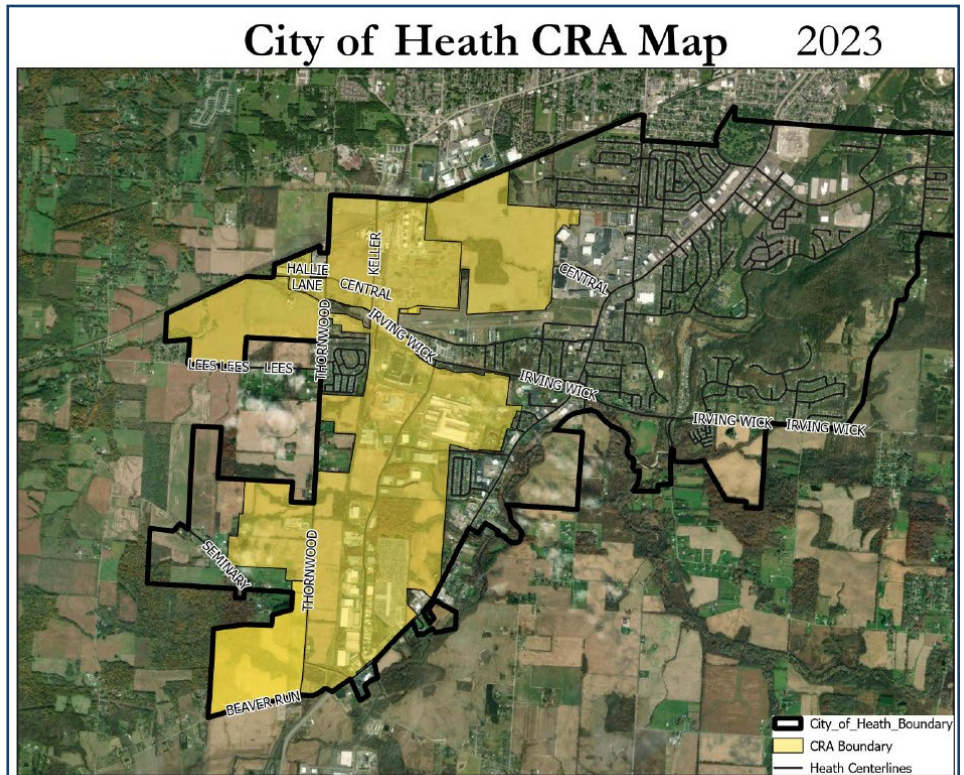


Figure 50. City of Heath Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Map.

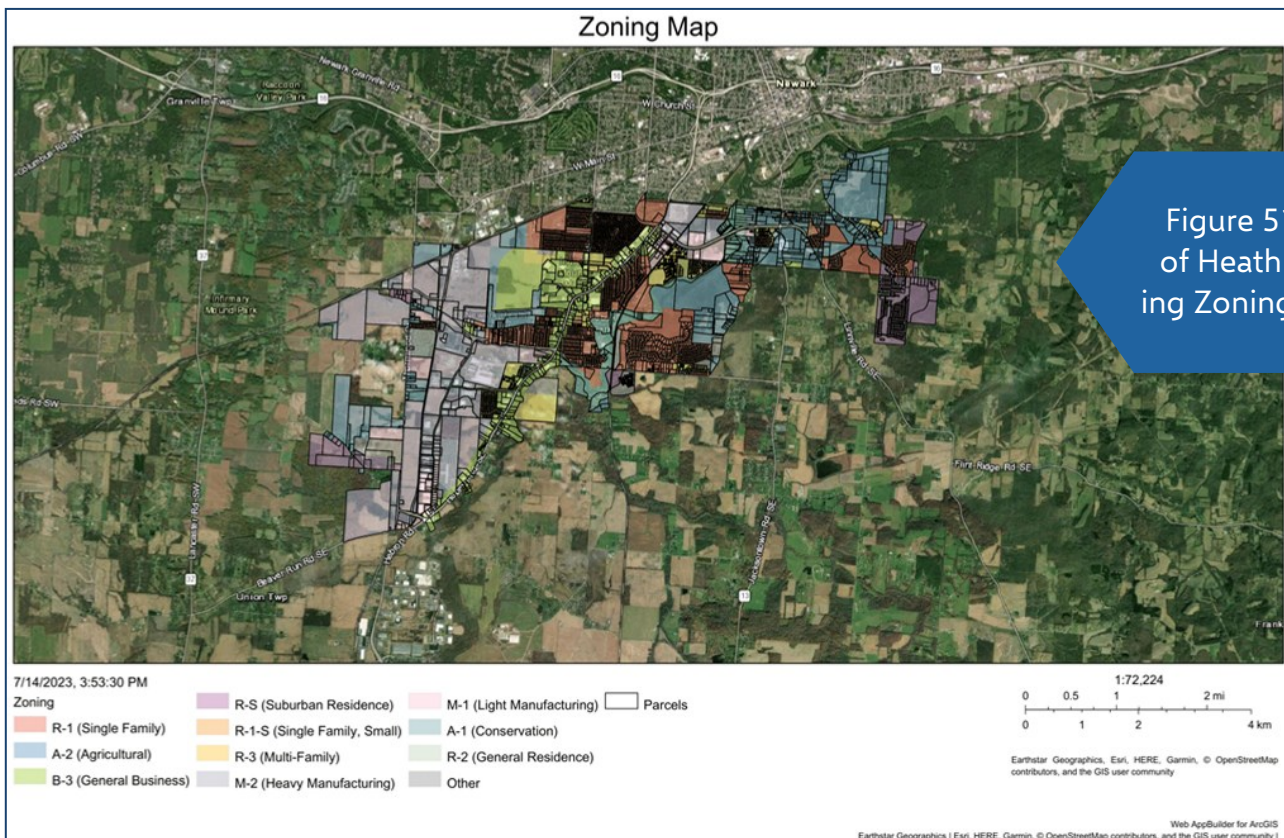


Figure 51. City of Heath Existing Zoning Map

Survey

Introduction

From April 17 to May 20, 2024, Licking Township conducted a survey for residents regarding future development in the Township. Residents of the Township received a flier with a QR code that directed them to the survey. Residents who could not obtain access to the internet were given the opportunity to complete a paper copy of the survey. At the end of the survey period, Licking Township received responses from 245 individuals.

Demographics and State of Township

A majority of respondents are above the age of 55, with around a third of the respondents over the age of 65. Similarly, a majority of respondents have lived or owned land in Licking Township for at least 20 years. In addition, a third of the respondents have lived in the township for less than 10 years. This demonstrates that most respondents are middle-aged to elderly and longtime residents of the Township, while an increasing number have recently moved to the Township, demonstrating a growing population trend that requires a plan for the expected growth. The respondents' ages are a close match to the overall demographics of the Township.

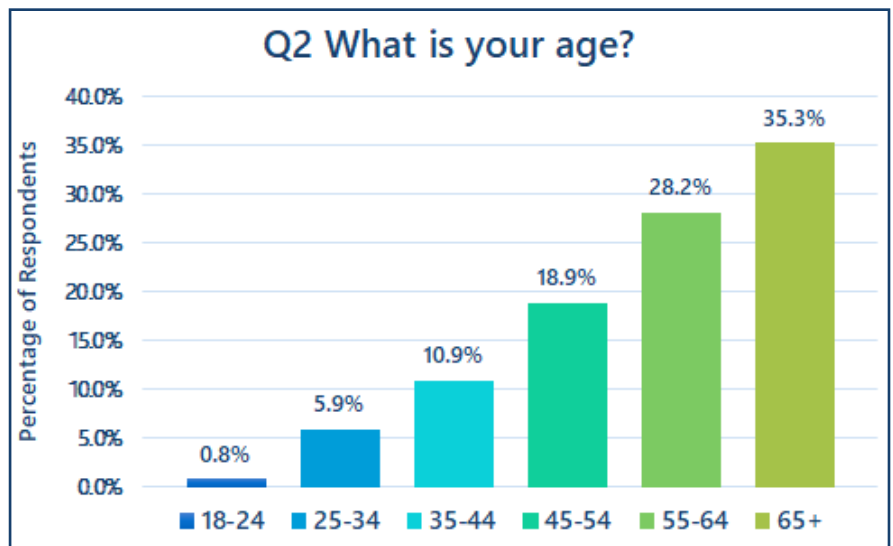


Figure 52. Age of Survey Respondents.

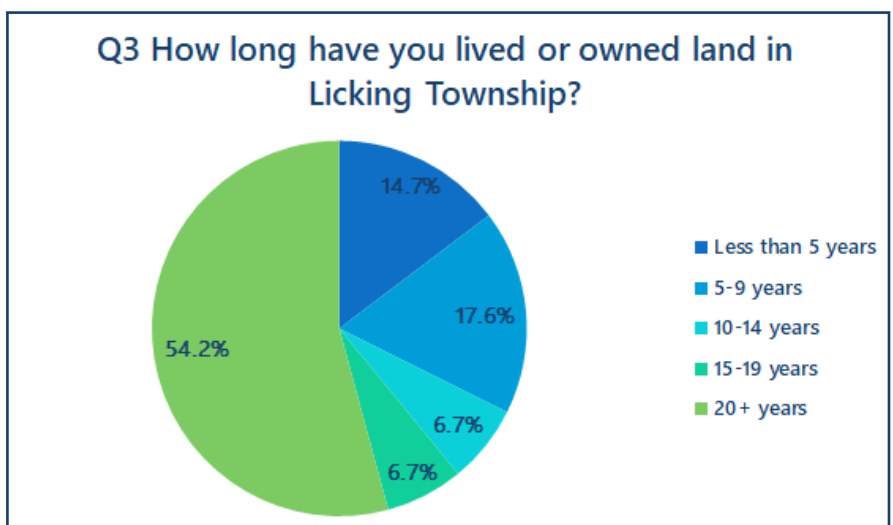


Figure 53. Length of Residency and Land Ownership.

A significant majority find that the quality of life in the Township is excellent (one-third) or good (one-half). Only a tenth of respondents listed the quality of life as average, and only a few rated it as fair or poor.

Most primary wage earners in the respondents' households work in Columbus, followed by Licking Township and Newark. In addition, almost two-thirds of the respondents prefer to drive to neighboring communities for services such as groceries, restaurants, and doctors' offices. Responses to a later question show that many respondents are not interested in these types of commercial uses in the township, further supporting the above findings.

Most respondents view the possibility of annexation as a large threat to the Township. As annexations of townships usually coincide with increased development and reduction of farmland, this concern among the respondents is expected, given other responses.

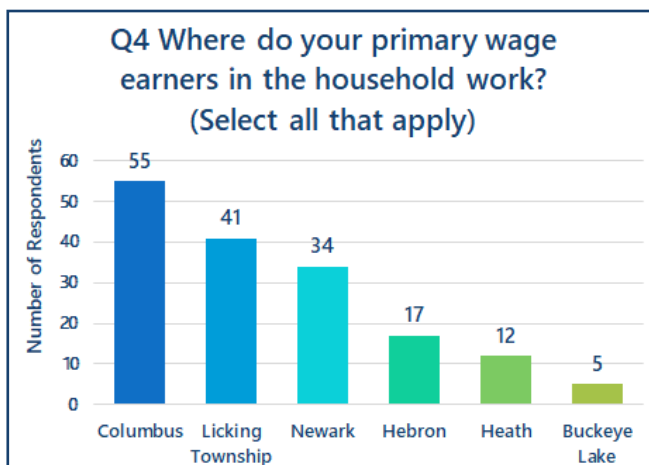


Figure 54. Work Locations of Primary Wage Earners

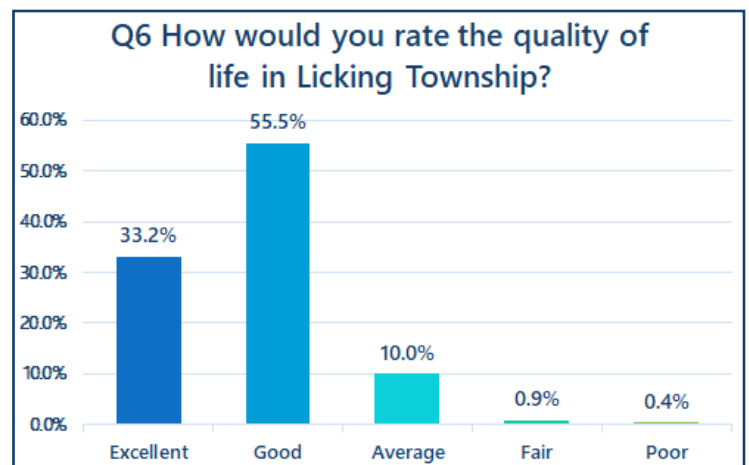


Figure 55. Quality of Life Rating

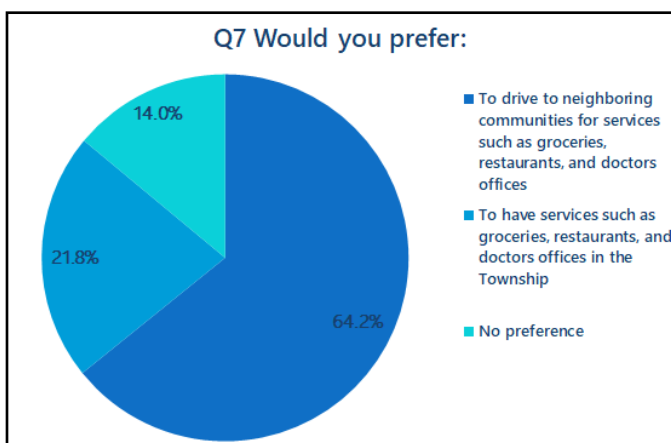


Figure 56. Preference on Local Services Location

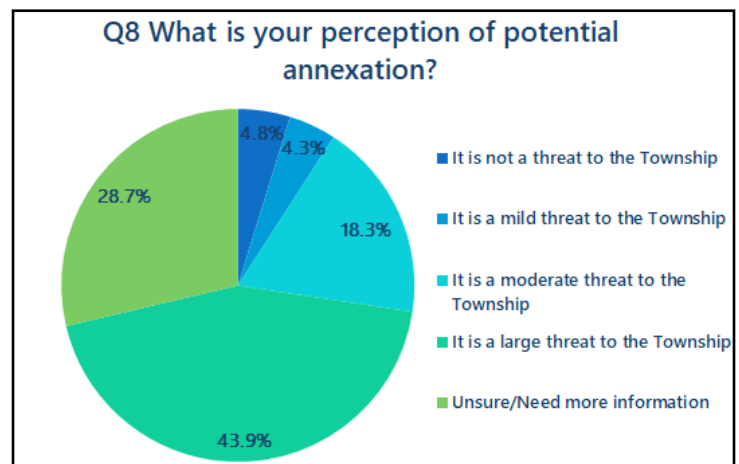


Figure 57. Thoughts on Annexation

Services

Question 9 asked the respondents to rank the quality of six Township services, with “1” meaning the service is inadequate and “5” meaning the service is top quality. Among these services, the respondents scored “Fire Rescue/First Responder/EMS” as the highest-ranked service, with a majority of respondents ranking it as “5” and with a weighted average of 4.35. “Quality of Housing” and “Access to Parks and Recreation” also received favorable ratings from the respondents. However, “Roads,” “Availability of Housing,” and “Bikeways and Sidewalks” received lower scores. In addition, most respondents indicated that the Townships’ road infrastructure is the service they want to see improved. This

demonstrates that the services in most need of improvement are the roads, availability of housing, bikeways, and sidewalks, with the roads as the top priority among the respondents.

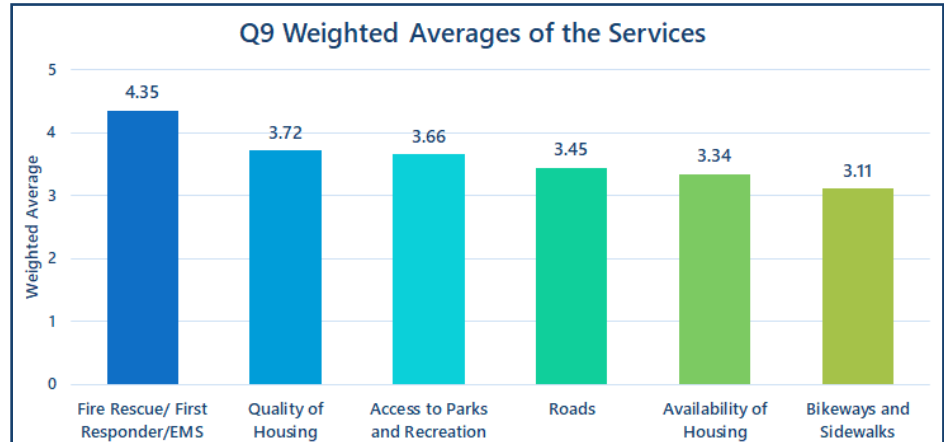


Figure 58. Averages of Township Services

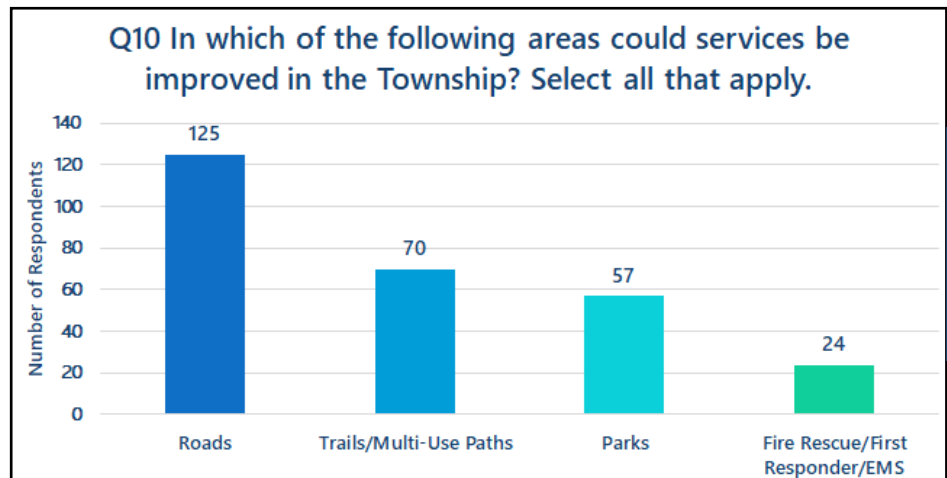


Figure 59. Areas of Improvement

Parks

Many respondents are active park visitors, with nearly seven-tenths visiting a park at least once a month. Dawes Arboretum and Buckeye Lake State Park are popular destinations, with around 60% of respondents visiting at least one of these two places at least once a month. In addition, over half of the respondents would like to see a multi-use path that connects Licking Township to Buckeye Lake, with a third open to the idea but would need more information to decide yes or no. These responses show that public and private parks are popular among the respondents and that some expansions could receive support from residents.

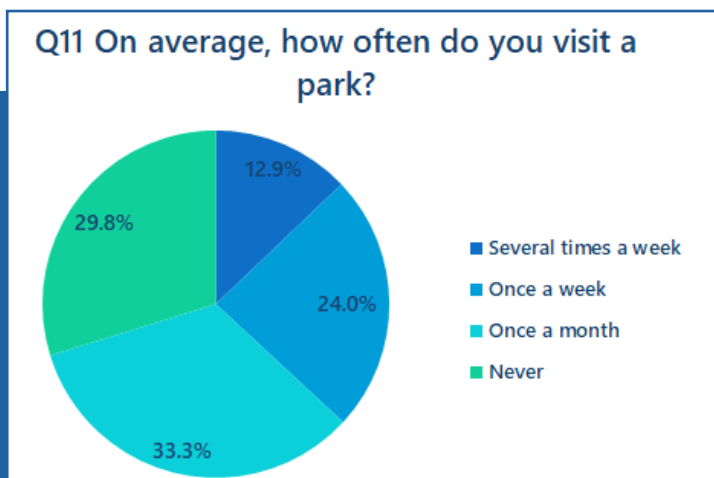


Figure 60. Average Visits to a Park.

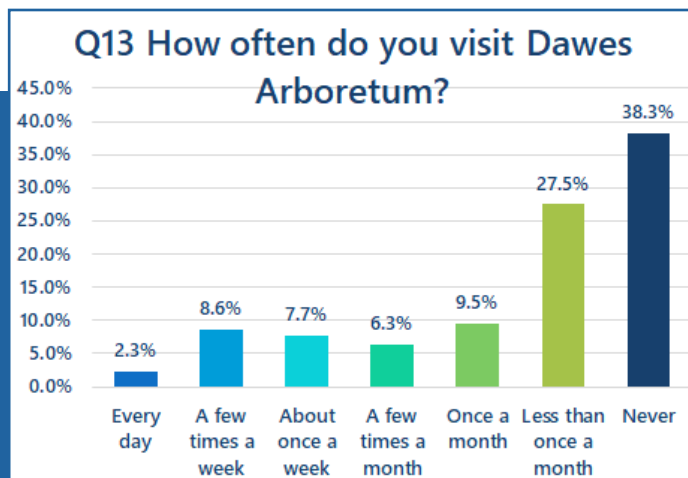


Figure 61. Visits to Dawes Arboretum.

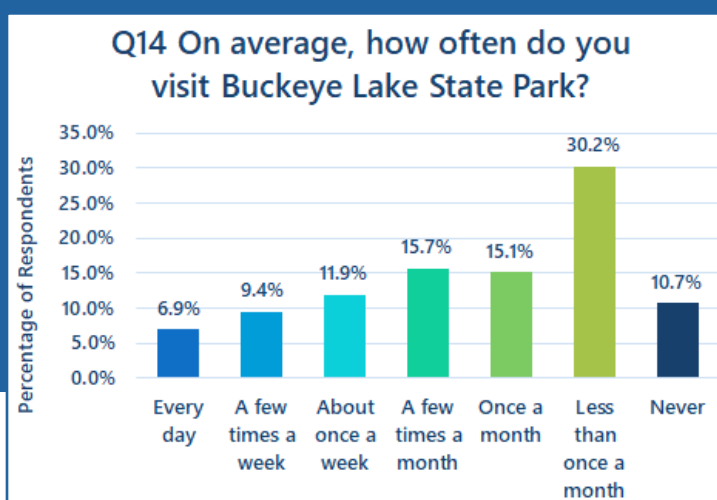


Figure 62. Average Visits to Buckeye Lake State Park.

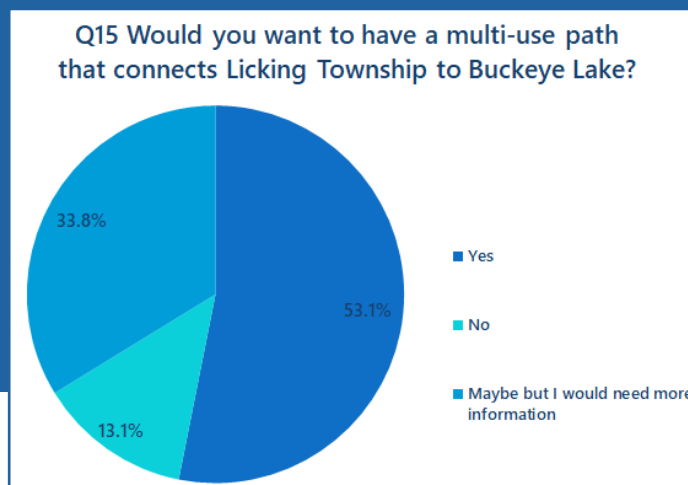
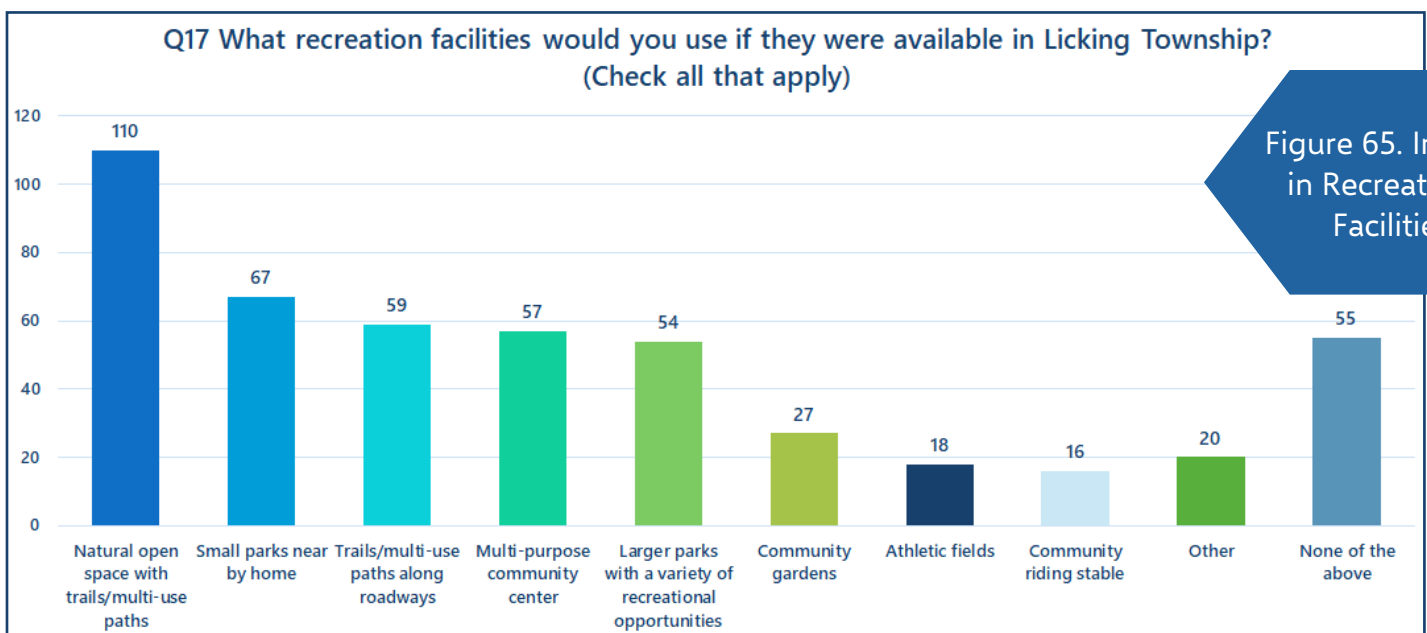
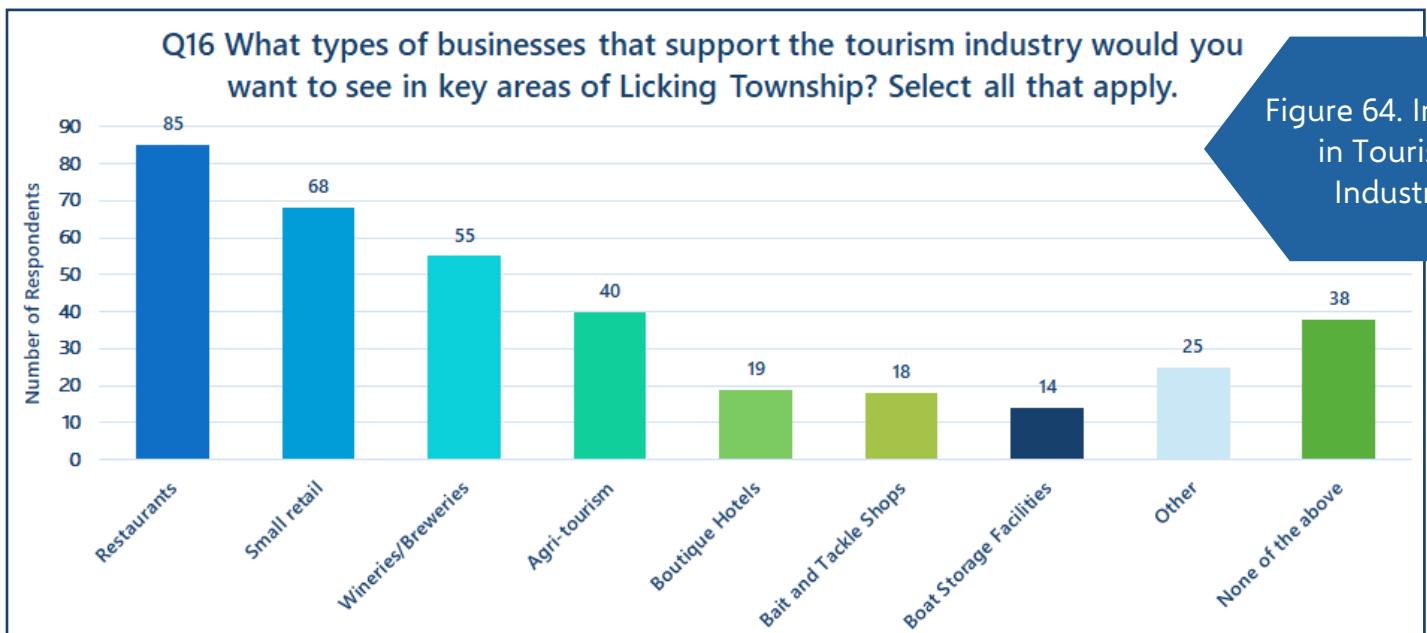


Figure 63. Interest in a Multi-Use Path Connecting Licking Twp to Buckeye Lake.

Development and Land-Use

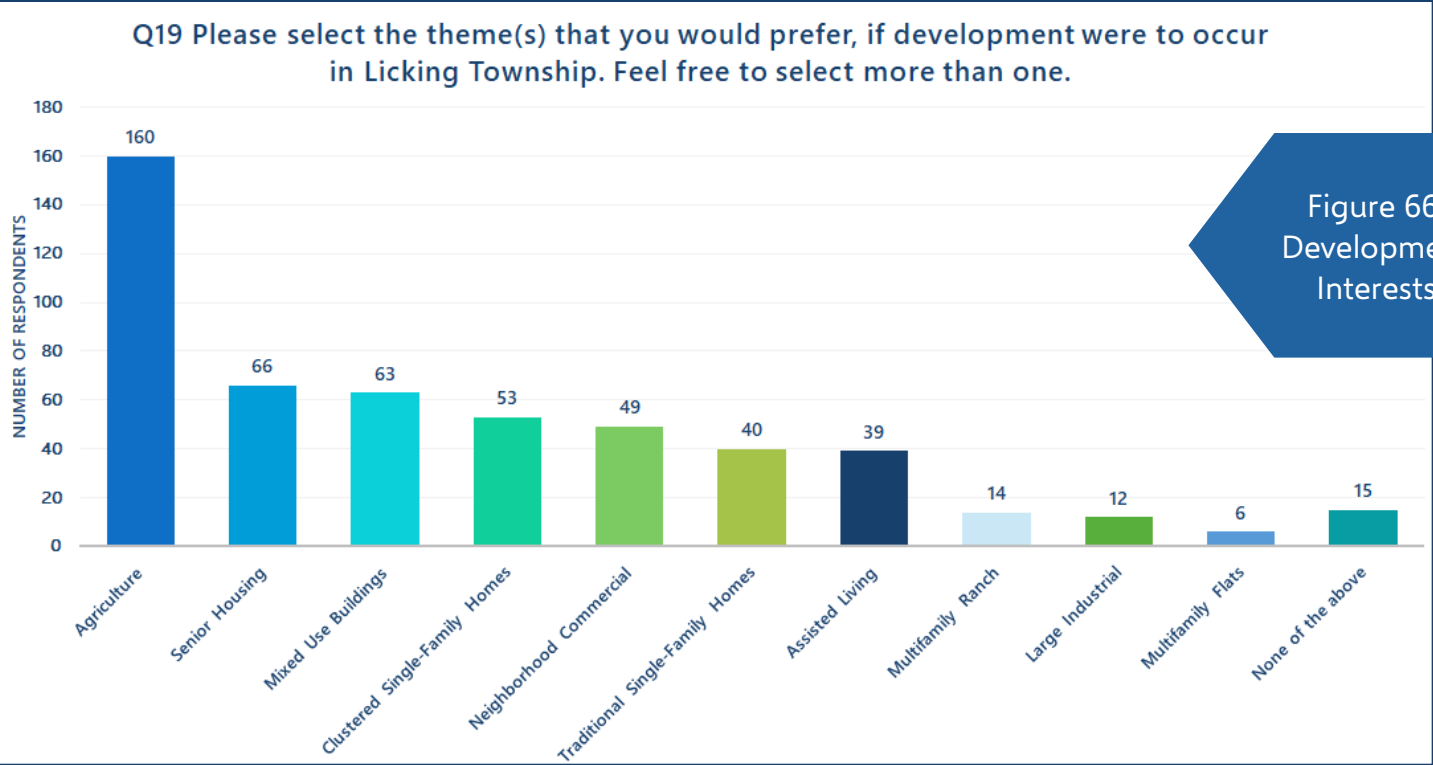
When asked what types of tourism supporting businesses residents would like to see, residents selected restaurants, followed by small retail, wineries/breweries, and agritourism. Boat storage facilities were the business type that respondents least wanted to see. However, it is important to note that this question was the most skipped question within the survey. Only 85 respondents selected restaurants, which is just about 1/3 of respondents. This shows that even though some business types such as restaurants have limited support from respondents, adding additional tourism-focused businesses to the Township is an unpopular idea overall. This response brings up the interesting question of would more respondents feel more favorable toward restaurants, small retail, wineries, etc. if they were geared more towards the local population, versus tourists.



Among potential recreation facilities that respondents would like to use in Licking Township if available, “Natural open space with trails/multi-use paths” received the most support with 110 respondents. Other popular recreation facilities were “Small parks near my home,” “trails/multi-use paths along roadways,” “Multi-purpose community center,” and “Larger parks with a variety of recreational opportunities.” However, 55 respondents indicated they would not use any of the proposed recreation facilities. Even though many respondents are interested in using new recreational facilities, a significant portion also has no interest in these uses.

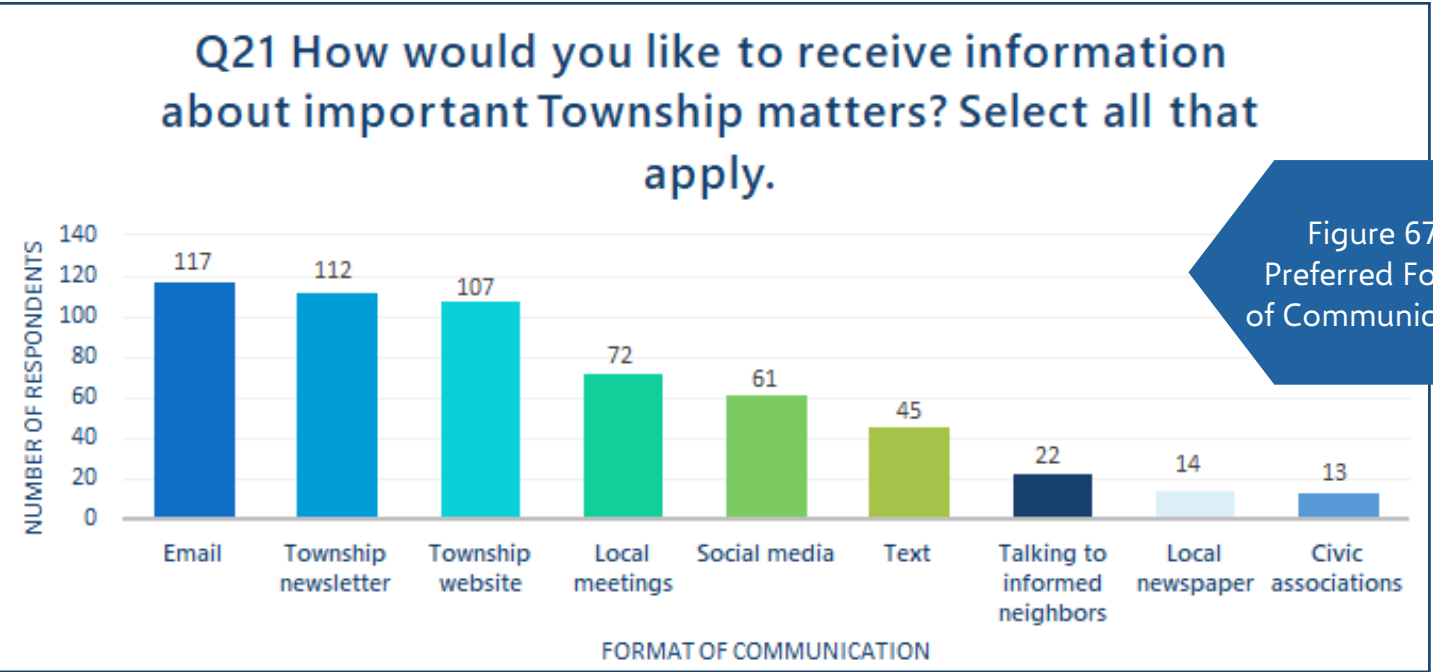
Agriculture was the overall favorite land-use theme among the respondents. Senior housing, mixed-use buildings, and clustered single-family homes were also popular choices, while multifamily ranch, large industrial, and multifamily flats were the least

popular. Provided with responses to other questions, there may be some pushback from residents regarding development that encroaches on existing farmland. Still, especially with an aging population, senior housing and mixed-use buildings has some support and may be worth exploring for Licking Township.



Contact

Most respondents would like to receive future Licking Township information through email, the Township newsletter, and the township website. Many respondents also provided their email addresses and cellular phone numbers for text messages.



Summary of Survey Results

Who Responded?

Most respondents: Middle-aged to senior citizens.

Residents' longevity: Majority have lived here for over 20 years.

A number have lived here less than 10 years — hinting at future population growth!

How Do Residents Feel?

Quality of Life: Favorable.

Satisfied With: Parks, first responder services, and EMS.

Concerns: Roads, housing availability, and bikeways/sidewalks need improvement.

Services & Annexation

Services: Most drive to neighboring towns.

Annexation: Seen as a threat to the Township.

Thoughts on Development

Support for Some Development: Restaurants, senior housing, small parks & natural open space.

Worries: A significant number oppose development in favor of preserving farmland.

Economic Development Tools

What is a JEDD?

A Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) is a special-purpose territorial district created by contract between municipal corporations and townships for the purpose of encouraging economic development, creating jobs, and improving the economic welfare of citizens. Typically, such objectives are accomplished by levying an income tax in the district. The tax revenue is shared by the parties to the JEDD and is



used to provide additional services, new facilities or enhanced infrastructure in the JEDD, depending on the terms of the contract. A JEDD agreement enables townships, cities, and villages to cooperatively address concerns associated with economic development, diminishing local revenues, growth, and annexation pressures. A JEDD provides a local-community approach to solving economic development issues by allowing local governments to enter into legal agreements that have the potential to increase revenues and create jobs. JEDD contractual agreements, which vary by jurisdiction, serve as a significant economic development tool for local communities.

What is a TIF?

A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public financing tool used by local governments to promote economic development in underdeveloped areas. When a TIF district is created, the current property values are assessed to establish a baseline tax revenue. As the area develops and property values increase, the additional tax revenue generated from the rise in property values is captured and used to fund public infrastructure improvements within the district. This approach helps attract private investment by enhancing the area's appeal without raising taxes.

No Tax Increases for Current Residents

TIFs typically have a set duration, after which the increased tax revenue returns to the general tax base.

Infrastructure Improvements

What is an NCA?

A New Community Authority (NCA) is a separate public body governed by a board of trustees that may oversee, coordinate, construct and finance public infrastructure improvements and community facilities. An NCA promotes a well-planned, diversified and economically sound community, or an addition to an existing community, that includes facilities for the conduct of industrial, commercial, residential, cultural, educational and/or recreational activities. It is designed in accordance with planning concepts for the placement of utility, open space and other supportive facilities.

**Promotes
Community Oriented
Development**

The creation of an NCA in the Buckeye Lake Mixed-Use area will provide a structured framework for managing growth, funding infrastructure, and maintaining community services. By establishing an NCA, Licking Township can ensure that new developments contribute to the township's long-term goals of economic sustainability, community appeal, and quality of life. The NCA will enable local control over essential aspects such as maintenance, infrastructure investment, and community amenities in a way that aligns with residents' interests.



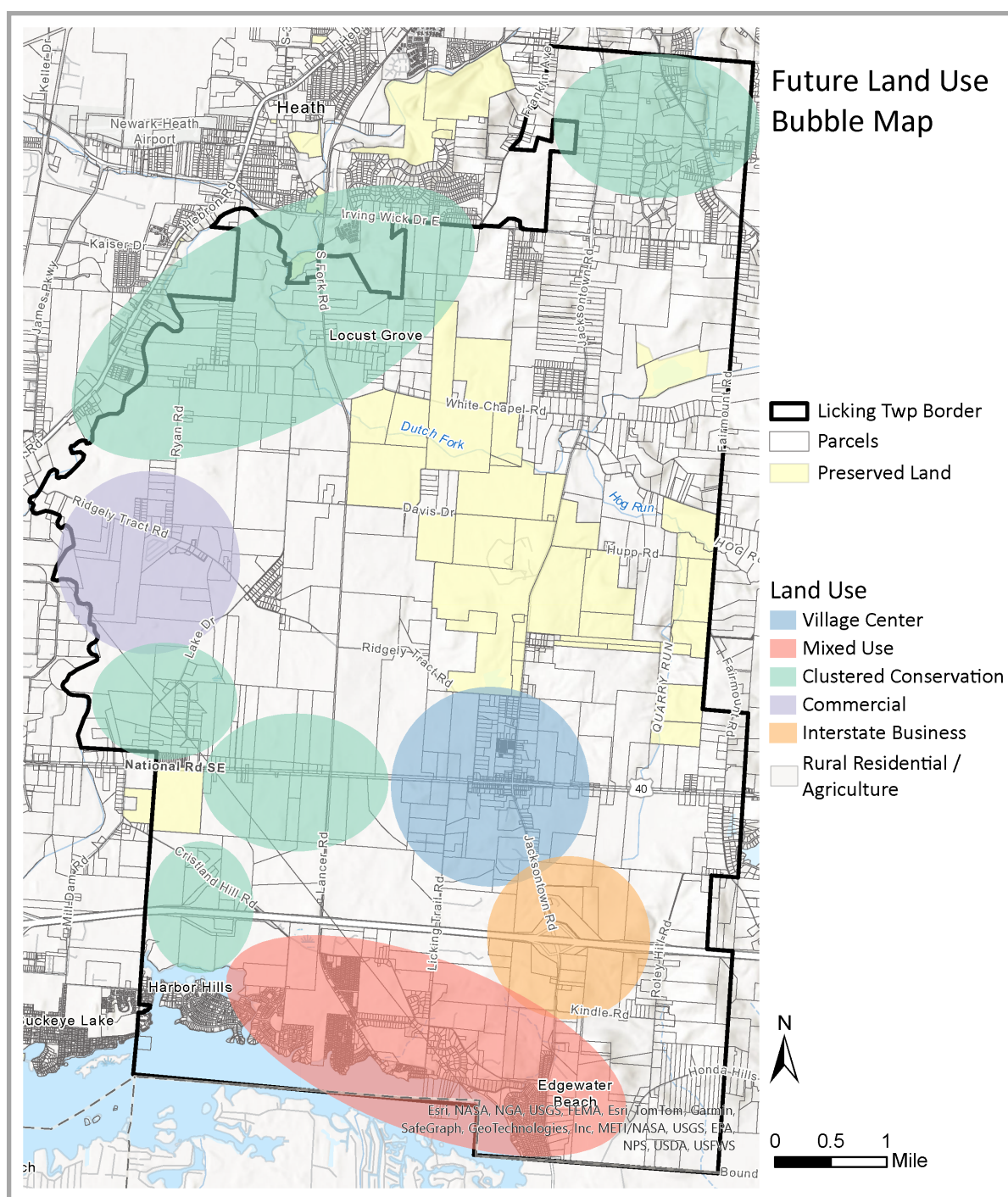
Figure 68. Buckeye Lake State Park. Photo Source: Buckeye Lake State Park

Future Land Use Map

The land use map serves 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.

By supporting informed decisions about land use, infrastructure planning, and community engagement, the map ensures that development aligns with the Township's current needs and long-term goals.

Figure 69. Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Map

Explanations

Agriculture

These areas are planned to remain as agricultural or rural residential uses. These areas do not face strong development pressures and are expected to retain their current uses looking toward the future.

Rural Residential

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.

Preserved Land

This area consists of land predominately preserved by Dawes Arboretum, safeguarding vital natural resources and landscapes from future development. This protection helps maintain the ecological integrity and scenic beauty of the region for generations to come.

Mixed Use

The purpose of these areas is to create a vibrant, walkable community near Buckeye Lake, where restaurants, housing, office spaces, and more come together in a single, dynamic space.

Interstate Business

This district is designed for automobile-oriented businesses like gas stations, car washes, and similar services. Its prime location alongside I-70 offers convenient access for travelers passing through, making it an ideal stop for essential roadside needs.



Village Center

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

Clustered Conservation

These homes will be situated closer together, with at least 50% of the land preserved as open space. This design not only helps maintain valuable green areas but also reduces infrastructure and maintenance cost while offering additional recreational opportunities to residents.

Commercial

This area is designated for businesses and retail, creating a hub for commercial activity that serves residents and visitors. Conveniently located east of I-79 and Hebron Road, it offers easy access, making it ideal for shops and services.





Economic Development Goals and Recommendations

- 1 Create a Vibrant Village Center
- 2 Locate Automobile-Oriented Businesses Along Interstate 70 And SR-13
- 3 Commercial Development Near Ridgley Tract
- 4 Mixed-Use Development near Buckeye Lake
- 5 Utilize Economic Development Tools Tailored to Each Area
- 6 Create an Economic Development Team

Recommendation 1: Establish a 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.

Implement Design Standards

To ensure that the Village Center reflects the character and charm of the township, specific design guidelines should be established. These may include requirements for building materials, signage, and landscaping. The goal is to create a visually appealing environment that complements the township's rural character while allowing for modern conveniences.

The zoning should include provisions for the preservation of historic buildings and the adaptive reuse of existing structures.

Create a Sense of Community

Community Hub: This is a place where residents gather for social events, community meetings, and recreational activities. The design should include spaces like a village green or public plaza where community events, farmers' markets, festivals, etc. can take place. Worthington utilizes a 3.5 acre Village Green, located in the middle of their downtown. These spaces will encourage interaction among residents, fostering a stronger sense of belonging and community pride.



Figure 70. Village Green in Worthington, Ohio. Photo Source: Marissa C, Yelp.

Walkability and Connectivity: The layout of the Village Center should prioritize pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, including wide sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths. This walkable environment will connect the Village Center with surrounding neighborhoods, potentially Buckeye Lake, encouraging residents to walk or bike.

Bring in Neighborhood Businesses

Supporting Local Economy: This approach not only provides convenience for residents but also keeps the economic benefits within the community, supporting local job creation and entrepreneurship. The Village Center should feature a curated mix of businesses that cater to various tastes and interests. Based off the survey, main things residents want to see are:

1. **Small Restaurants:** Examples include cafés, bistros, delis, family diners, pizzerias, bakeries, ethnic eateries, and ice cream parlors. These small-scale establishments offer diverse dining options, foster a sense of community, and provide opportunities for local entrepreneurship.
2. **Small Retail:** Specialty shops, boutiques, and artisanal stores that provide unique products and services not typically found in larger commercial areas, enhancing the village's charm and appeal.
3. **Wineries and Breweries:** Establishments like wineries, craft breweries, or local distilleries will add to the village's attractiveness as a destination, drawing visitors from outside the township and creating a lively atmosphere for residents.



Figure 71. A Cluster of Neighborhood Businesses Photo
Source: SmallBizSurvival—Photo by: Julia McCray

Recommendation 2: Focus Interstate Businesses Along I-70 and SR-13

Licking Township's strategic location along major transportation corridors, such as Interstate 70 (I-70) and State Route 13 (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. This approach aligns with the township's goals of preserving its rural character, promoting safety, and fostering balanced growth that respects community values and environmental stewardship.

Maximize Economic Benefits Through Strategic Location

Proximity to Major Transportation Corridors: I-70 and SR-13 are heavily traveled routes, frequented by both local commuters and long-distance travelers. By situating automobile-oriented businesses like gas stations, fast-food restaurants, and auto



repair shops near these highways, Licking Township can attract visitors and capture economic activity that would otherwise bypass the area.

Economic Boost:

These businesses can generate increased sales tax revenue, create jobs, and stimulate commercial activity. Visitors stopping for fuel, food, or rest will also increase

Figure 72. Interstate Businesses Sign Example. Photo Source: Grand Canyon State Logo Signs

demand for other local services, contributing to a broader economic ripple effect throughout the township.

Recommendation 3: Focus Commercial By Western Ridgely Track

The existing General Business (GB) zoning provides a foundation for this expansion, enabling the building upon current commercial zones while maintaining a structured 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.

Recommendation 4: Focus Mixed-Use Near Buckeye Lake

This zoning district will enhance Licking Township's economic prosperity and community appeal. This strategy will create a tourism-centered zone to generate revenue while maintaining a clear distinction from residential areas. The development will 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.

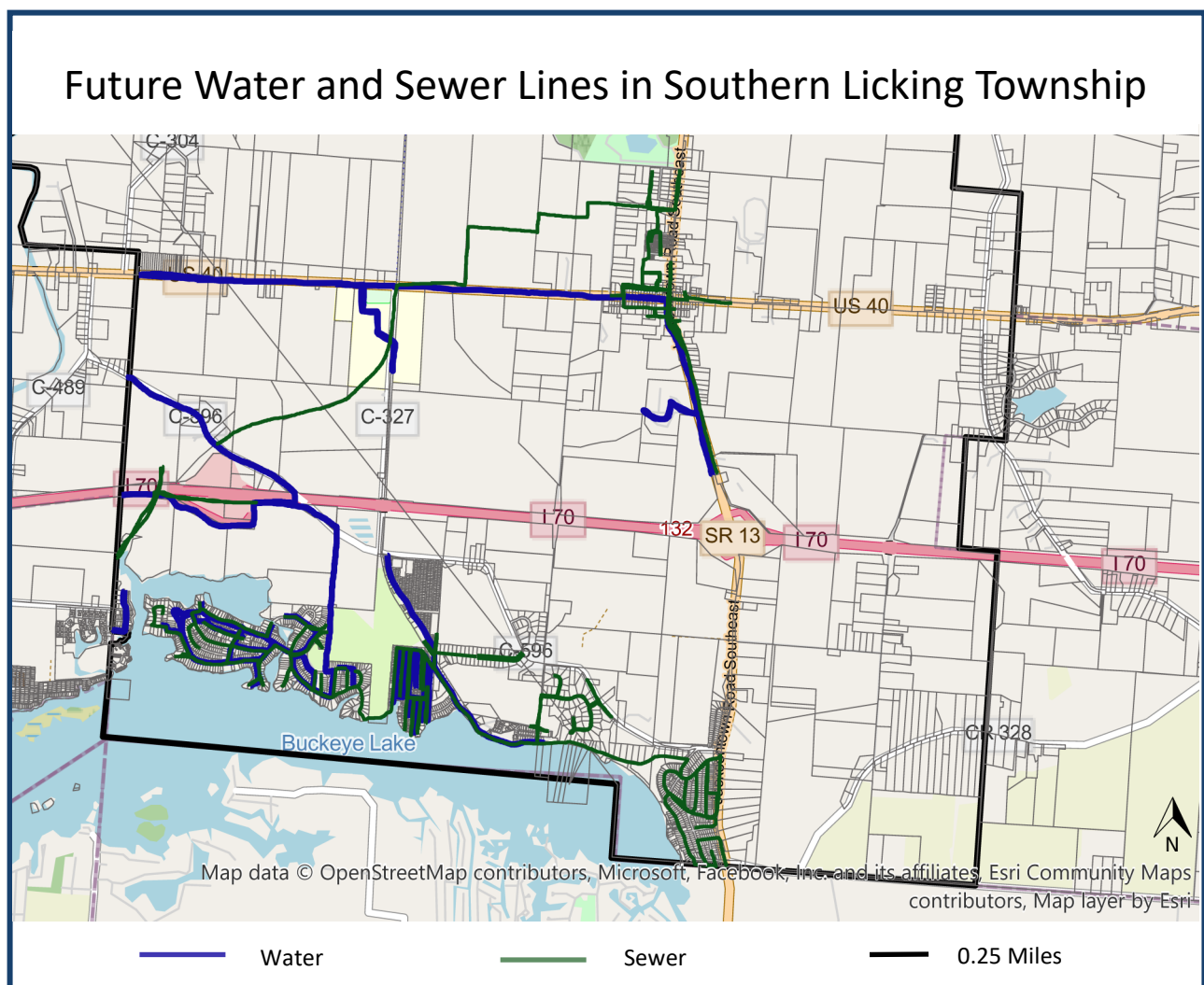


Figure 73: Water and Sewer in Licking Township

Recommendation 5: Utilize Economic Development Tools Tailored to Each Area

New Community Authority (NCA) in Mixed-Use Buckeye Lake Area

The creation of an NCA in this area supports the development of infrastructure needed to sustain residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. Given that Buckeye Lake is a regional destination for recreation and tourism, establishing an NCA would help fund necessary improvements such as roadways, utilities, public spaces, and waterfront development.

Benefit to Township: The NCA would allow Licking Township to generate revenue to fund these improvements without overburdening taxpayers. It would also allow developers to contribute to the infrastructure improvements through special assessments, making it financially sustainable.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in the Commercial, Village Center, and Interstate Business Overlays

A TIF is a tool utilized to capture the increased property tax revenues from new development to fund public infrastructure improvements. This would help modernize the township's infrastructure and improve its attractiveness to businesses and investors.

Benefit to Township: By utilizing a TIF, the township can reinvest tax revenue generated by new commercial and residential properties back into the local community. It would facilitate essential infrastructure upgrades such as roads, utilities, and stormwater management without relying on general township funds.

Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) for the Interstate Business Overlay

This area could benefit from the collaboration between the township and a neighboring municipality such as Buckeye Lake or Heath, to provide urban-level services such as water, sewer, and public safety. Given the potential for high-density growth along the interstate, a JEDD would help provide these services. The Township should begin to evaluate municipal partners who align with the Township's vision for the establishment of a JEDD district.

Benefit to Township: A JEDD enables the township to retain control over zoning and development while sharing tax revenues with neighboring municipalities to help cover the costs of urban-level services. This arrangement allows Licking Township to foster economic growth while managing infrastructure demands efficiently.

Recommendation 6: Create an Economic Development Team

As Licking Township enters a period of significant growth and transformation, it is essential to establish a dedicated Economic Development Team. This would include the need for a Township Administrator and a Planner/Economic Developer. This team will play a crucial role in guiding the township's development initiatives, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that projects move forward efficiently and strategically.

Benefits of an Economic Development Team

Coordinated and Strategic Growth - By having a group solely dedicated to economic initiatives, Licking Township can ensure that all development projects align with the community's long-term goals.

Streamlining Project Management - With the many changes expected in the near future—such as new residential and commercial developments, infrastructure improvements, and increasing demands for services—having an Economic Development Team will be essential for moving projects forward. The team will ensure that initiatives are properly scoped, prioritized, and managed, helping to avoid delays and bottlenecks.

Leveraging Funding and Incentives - The Economic Development Team will be instrumental in identifying and securing funding opportunities for infrastructure improvements, business incentives, and community development projects. They will stay informed about available grants, tax incentives, and economic development programs, ensuring that the township can take full advantage of resources to support growth. Their expertise will be valuable in leveraging financial tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), New Community Authorities (NCA), and other economic development mechanisms to fund necessary improvements.

Building Relationships and Partnerships - The team will be key in fostering relationships with local businesses, developers, and regional stakeholders. They will serve as the point of contact for all economic development inquiries, helping to build trust and collaboration between the township and its partners. The team will also work to create connections with state and regional agencies to ensure that Licking Township remains competitive in attracting investments and funding opportunities.

Filling the Gap

Until a full-time economic development staff member is hired, a contractor or planner can temporarily manage key initiatives, including project planning, grant applications, and supporting leadership.

This flexible solution will maintain momentum and ensure quality oversight while the township prepares for a permanent hire.

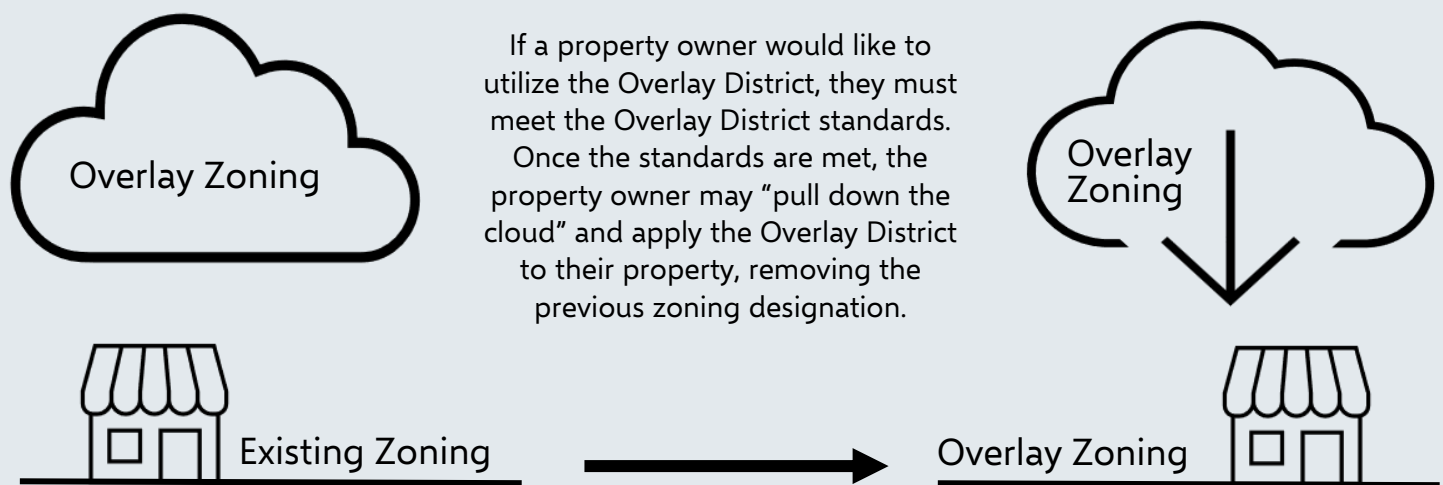


Rural Lifestyle Goals and Recommendations

- 1 Preserve Natural Views and Enhance Buffering and Landscaping Standards
- 2 Preserve Rural Residential Zoning
- 3 Cluster Housing to Preserve Land and Prevent Sprawl
- 4 Preserve and Promote the Agriculture Base

Recommendation 1: Update Zoning Code

Overlay districts serve as an essential tool in guiding development while preserving the rural charm and environmental integrity of the community. To maintain the rural aesthetic that residents value, it is crucial to ensure that these districts have stringent standards.



Landscaping Standards: Develop and enforce high-quality landscaping standards that include:

- ⇒ **Native Plantings** - Define native species and mandate landscape plans specifying at least 50% native plants. These plants are drought-resistant, reduce flooding by absorbing excess water, support pollinators, and require less maintenance.
- ⇒ **Woodland Buffering**- Incorporate between different land uses, 100–150 feet for areas bordering farmland, natural preserves, or major roadways to maintain scenic views and protect rural aesthetics.
- ⇒ **Preservation of Existing Vegetation** - Retain mature trees and natural features whenever possible, integrating them into the buffer.
- ⇒ **Stormwater Features** - Incorporate bioswales, rain gardens, or retention ponds to handle runoff, prevent flooding, and protect nearby farmland and waterways.

These not only enhances the visual appeal but also supports local biodiversity.

Rural Viewshed Protection: Mandate that developments preserve the visual continuity of rural landscapes. This can be achieved by regulating the height and

placement of structures to ensure new developments blend seamlessly with the natural surroundings. Additionally, implement increased setbacks along existing roadways to protect and maintain the scenic viewsheds. This can be achieved by:

⇒ Limiting building height to 35 feet.

⇒ Implementing setback of 200 feet along main roads such as I-70.

Watershed Protection: Prioritize the preservation and restoration of watersheds within overlay districts to maintain water quality and reduce flooding risks. Establish buffer zones around streams, rivers, and other water bodies to limit impervious surfaces and promote natural filtration. Encourage low-impact development (LID) techniques, such as permeable pavement and rain gardens, to manage stormwater sustainably and protect watershed health, especially near Buckeye Lake.

Aesthetics Standards: Incorporate development standards for features such as signage, lighting, and building design to ensure adherence to a rural development style and limit impacts on neighboring homes and businesses.

Recommendation 2: 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 in balance of the community. This area also serves as a buffer to significant, preserved areas such as Dawes Arboretum.



Example of Large Lot,
Rural Residential
Currently in the
Township.

Recommendation 3: Clustered Housing on Western and Northern Border

Align Development with Community Preferences

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.

Promote the Benefits of Clustered Housing

Clustered housing offers a range of advantages for the township:

Efficient Land Use: By concentrating homes on smaller lots, Licking Township can preserve larger areas of open space while accommodating new growth. This efficient use of land reduces the environmental impact and helps maintain the township's rural feel.



Figure 74. The Greens at Clarenton, New Albany, Ohio

Conservation of Natural Resources: Focusing development in specific areas helps protect environmentally sensitive regions, such as wetlands, woodlands, and streams, while promoting biodiversity and better stormwater management.

Infrastructure Efficiency: Clustered developments require less infrastructure—fewer roads, utilities, and sewage systems—leading to reduced development and maintenance costs for both developers and the township. This results in more sustainable growth.

Recreational Integration: Clustered developments allow for the inclusion of multi-use paths, parks, and outdoor recreation areas. These amenities, identified as important in resident surveys, foster a healthy, active lifestyle within the community.

Parks and Green Spaces: Set aside portions of land in clustered developments for

parks, playgrounds, and community gardens. These green spaces enhance social interaction and connect residents with nature while maintaining the rural aesthetic through natural landscaping and native plants.

Implement Design Standards for Clustered Housing

Clear design standards ensure that clustered housing developments fit the township’s rural character:

Design Standards: Establish guidelines for housing layouts, green space integration, and street design to align with Licking Township’s aesthetic. Encourage the use of sustainable materials and architectural styles that complement the township’s rural identity.

By clustering new housing on smaller lots, Licking Township can accommodate growth while preserving its rural character, enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, and fostering a strong sense of community.



Figure 75. Design Example of Clustered Housing. Photo Source: National Association of Realtors



Figure 76. Design Example of Clustered Housing. Photo Source: Robert Knopes/ Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Recommendation 4: Preserve and Promote Agriculture

Agriculture is essential to the character of Licking Township and will continue to be an important facet of the community as we look toward the future. While the Township faces development pressures in certain areas, the future land use map retains agriculture and rural residential land uses as the primary uses outside of the growth nodes.

The Township has a strong local agricultural base, with many family businesses either directly engaged in agriculture, providing agricultural support services, agritourism. These businesses fuel the local economy and align with the Township's agricultural history while propelling agriculture and farming into the future.

Additionally, this Plan recommends the development of a village center and mixed-use areas. While the establishment of these areas will necessitate additional development, these land uses also present a key opportunity for the establishment of additional agricultural related shops, experiences, or farmers markets that sell local products to further integrate agriculture into Licking Township, even as growth occurs while connecting residents and visitors alike with the agricultural businesses within the Township.



Agricultural businesses within the Township. Clockwise: Mapleline Farms, Green Ash Farm, Barals Farm



Keller Market House, in Lancaster, Ohio sells local goods and fresh food year round.

Additionally, developing and expanding agritourism operations within the Township such as U-pick operations, educational tours, or seasonal festivals can generate additional revenue for farmers and support the Township's agricultural base while building upon the existing tourism in and around the Township that is currently centered around Buckeye Lake.



Community Relationship Goals and Recommendations

- 1 Improve Resident Communication Through Clear and Accessible Updates
- 2 Educate Residents on Annexation

Recommendation 1: Create a Community Outreach Team

The Township should consider hiring an Outreach Specialist to enhance communication with residents and keep them informed about township activities, events, and key updates. This position will focus on developing educational materials, planning community engagement events, and ensuring accessible communication channels between the township and its residents.

Increase Communication with Residents

The Outreach Specialist will should manage the township's communication efforts across multiple platforms, including social media, newsletters, and other outreach channels. Since there is currently no official social media presence, the specialist will create and oversee a Licking Township Facebook, Instagram, and/or X (formerly Twitter) page to provide real-time updates, event information, and essential news. These platforms will serve as central hubs for communication, allowing residents to interact directly with the township and stay informed.

The Outreach Specialist should also plan and execute community education programs, workshops, and informational sessions on important topics such as zoning, development plans, annexation, and township services.

By providing regular updates, educational events, and managing a dedicated social media presence, the Outreach Specialist will strengthen relationships between township leadership and residents, creating a more informed and engaged community. Social media platforms are a cost-effective way to reach a broad audience, offering real-time updates and facilitating two-way communication. This will help the township respond quickly to concerns, reduce misunderstandings, and build trust in local governance. Through effective event promotion, the Outreach Specialist will increase community participation and ensure that residents stay connected with the changes occurring in the township.

Funding: The township could consider using a portion of its general fund to cover the salary of the Outreach Specialist. Since this position will help improve communication and community engagement, it could be seen as an essential service that supports township goals.

Filling the Gap With a Public Consulting Firm/Contractor

Until a full-time outreach specialist is hired, a contractor or public relations firm can temporarily oversee key initiatives, including project coordination, community engagement, and supporting leadership. This flexible arrangement will sustain progress and provide effective oversight while the township prepares for a permanent appointment.

Recommendation 2: Minimize Annexation Through Landowner Engagement

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.

Identify Key Landowners and Build Relationships

To minimize annexation, Licking Township must first identify and engage with landowners along its western border, where large tracts of land are most at risk. This involves:

Landowner Identification: Mapping large parcels of land, including agricultural and undeveloped areas, to target for outreach efforts.

Personal Outreach: Establishing direct communication with landowners through meetings to discuss the township's goals and build trust, ensuring these landowners are informed and less likely to be influenced by developers or neighboring municipalities.

Educate Landowners on Annexation

An informed landowner is more likely to resist annexation efforts. Licking Township should:

1. Educate landowners on the economic consequences of annexation, such as potential increases in property taxes, changes in zoning regulations, and land use restrictions, which could impact agricultural operations and long-term property value.
2. Emphasize the importance of preserving the township's rural character, highlighting the potential loss of farmland, open spaces, and scenic landscapes if annexation occurs.

Offer Easement Information

Empowering landowners with options to preserve and protect their property is a vital strategy. By offering information on conservation and agricultural easements, landowners can explore opportunities to safeguard their land while enjoying potential benefits.

The following pages provide a comprehensive overview of agricultural and conservation easements. For a clearer understanding of their distinctions, here is a brief summary of each type:

Agricultural Easements

These focus on protecting farmland from development, ensuring that the land remains dedicated to agricultural use. This type of easement is vital for sustaining local farming communities and maintaining agricultural production.

Conservation Easements

These are broader in scope, designed to protect various natural and cultural resources by preventing harmful development. They help preserve the land's ecological integrity or historical significance.

Educating Landowners on Agricultural Easements

An agricultural easement ensures that your land remains dedicated to farming, safeguarding it from being developed for non-agricultural purposes and preserving the long-term viability of agriculture in your community. By maintaining the scenic beauty and rural character of the area, these easements protect the landscape that defines your community's identity and appeal. Additionally, agricultural easements can offer financial incentives, such as tax benefits, making you eligible for federal, state, or local deductions or credits. Establishing an agricultural easement allows you to leave a legacy of land stewardship, ensuring that your land remains productive and valuable for agriculture long into the future. Moreover, easements give landowners control over the future use of their land, protecting it from unwanted development pressures and helping to prevent urban sprawl.



Figure 77. Preserved Land in Lancaster, Ohio.
Photo Source: Fairfield Soil and Water
Conservation District

Simplified Steps to Obtaining an Agricultural Easement

1. Connect with Local Organizations

Reach out to organizations like the Licking Land Trust or the Ohio Farmland Preservation Association. These groups specialize in agricultural easements and can provide tailored guidance for preserving farmland in Licking Township.

2. Consult Licking County Agencies

Contact the Licking County Planning and Development Department or the OSU Extension Office for resources and information about local programs that support agricultural preservation.

4. Prepare and Submit the Application

Work closely with the organization to complete the application process. This may include a site visit to evaluate your property, determining the land's value, and drafting the terms of the easement agreement.

3. Start the Process

Schedule a consultation with your chosen organization or county agency to discuss your land, your preservation goals, and the specific requirements for establishing an agricultural easement in Licking Township.

5. Finalize and Record the Easement

Once approved, sign the easement agreement and file it with the Licking County Recorder's Office to make it legally binding and ensure the preservation of your land for future generations.

Educating Landowners on Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization or government agency that restricts certain types of development on the property to protect its natural, scenic, or historical values. This agreement ensures that the land is preserved in its current state or managed according to specific conservation goals. In return, landowners may benefit from various tax incentives, including federal income tax deductions, state tax credits, and potential property tax reductions. The easement also typically requires ongoing stewardship and monitoring to ensure that the conservation goals are met and that the property is managed properly. Importantly, the agreement remains in effect with the land, regardless of changes in ownership, thereby ensuring that the property's conservation values are preserved for future generations.

Simplified Steps to Obtaining a Conservation Easement

1. Assess Your Land

Determine if your land has significant natural, scenic, agricultural, or historical value that aligns with Licking Township's priorities for preserving its rural character and natural resources.

2. Find a Partner

Reach out to local organizations like the Licking Land Trust or consult with Licking County's Soil and Water Conservation District to explore conservation options and resources.

3. Evaluate the Property

Collaborate with your conservation partner to assess your property's unique features and establish specific goals for preservation and use restrictions that benefit Licking Township's community values.

4. Draft and Sign the Agreement

Work with legal and conservation experts to create a conservation easement agreement tailored to protect your land while meeting your needs and the community's priorities.

5. Finalize and Record the Easement

Once approved, sign the easement agreement and file it with the Licking County Recorder's Office to make it legally binding and ensure the preservation of your land for future generations.



Environmental Goals and Recommendations

- 1 Protect Wetlands and Biodiversity
- 2 Increase Outdoor Recreation

Recommendation 1: Consider Wetlands and Floodplains

Considerations for the Southern Mixed-Use Areas

The proposed mixed-use area near Buckeye Lake presents a unique opportunity to balance development with environmental stewardship. Recognizing and preserving floodplains and wetlands in this region is crucial for the following reasons:

Mitigating Development Impacts - The area's proximity to Buckeye Lake and its surrounding wetlands makes it susceptible to water quality degradation and increased flood risks from impervious surfaces. Incorporating green infrastructure, such as

bioswales and rain gardens, can mitigate these impacts while enhancing community aesthetics.

Enhancing Tourism and Recreation -

Preserving wetlands and floodplains in their natural state supports Buckeye Lake's role as a regional tourism and recreation destination. Trails, boardwalks, and educational signage can be integrated to promote eco-tourism and raise awareness about these resources.

Supporting Sustainable Growth -

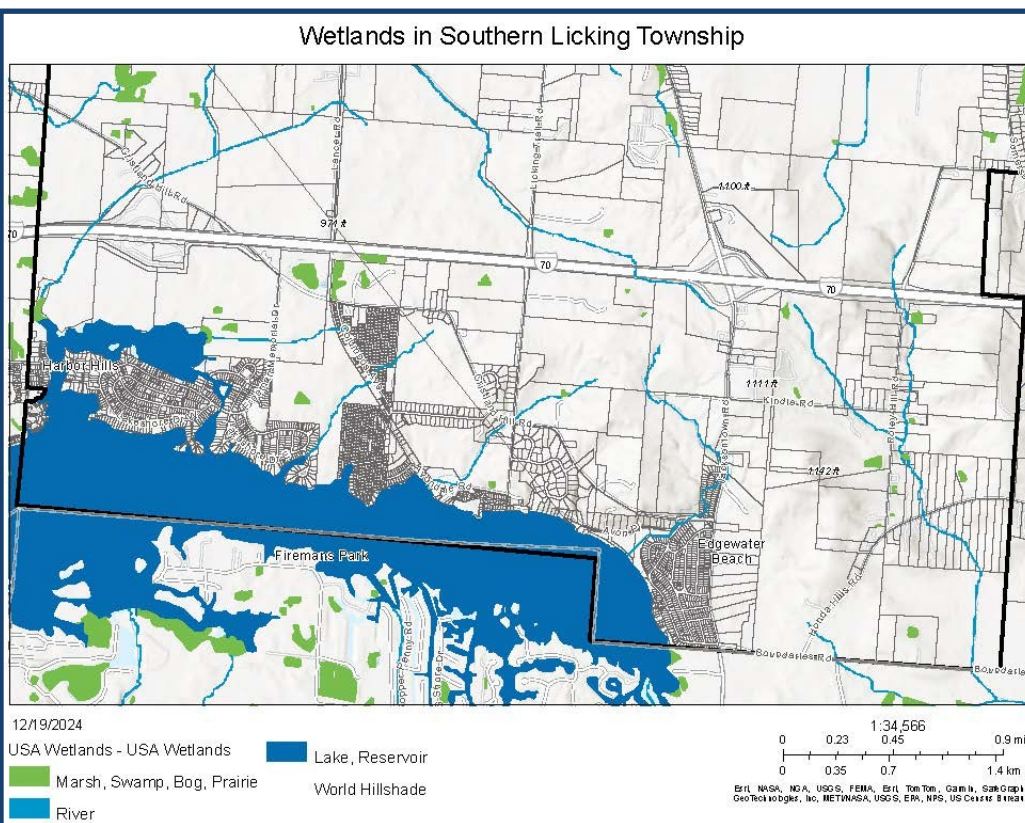


Figure 78: Wetlands in Southern Licking Township

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.

Complying with Regulations - 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.

Recommendation 2: Expand Upon Outdoor Resources Such as Multi-Use Trails and Parks

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.

Promote the Benefits of Multi-Use Paths

Promotes Walkability and Connectivity: Paths create safe, scenic routes between neighborhoods, parks, and the village center, making the community more walkable and cohesive. This aligns with the township's rural values, emphasizing connection and accessibility.

Increases Property Value: Proximity to well-maintained trails and parks has been shown to boost property values, enhancing the township's appeal to families and individuals seeking a balance of natural amenities and community life. According to a study by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)¹, homeowners are willing to pay a premium to live near recreational outdoor spaces. Properties with easy access to a trail—defined as within a ½ mile walking distance or 1 mile biking distance—can experience a value premium of approximately 4 percent. This increase not only benefits individual homeowners but also raises the overall value of housing stock in neighboring communities.

53.7%

of survey respondents would like to see a trail connecting Dawes Arboretum to Buckeye Lake.

Encourages Community Interaction and Recreation: Multi-use paths offer versatile spaces for residents to engage in various activities, such as organized walking groups, charity 5K runs, and community nature days, fostering a sense of community and healthy living.

Enhances Outdoor Access: By providing increased access to nature and recreation, multi-use paths encourage residents to spend time outdoors, supporting physical wellness and mental well-being.

¹ <https://www.morpc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/08-19-22-Economic-Impact-of-the-Central-Ohio-Greenways.pdf>

Create a Path from Dawes Arboretum to Buckeye Lake

Creating a path from Dawes Arboretum to Buckeye Lake would significantly enhance connectivity between two key natural areas, providing a scenic and accessible route for walking, biking, and outdoor recreation. By linking the Arboretum's educational plant collections and Buckeye Lake's recreational opportunities, the path would foster environmental awareness and support local tourism. Additionally, it would offer eco-friendly transportation options, reduce reliance on cars, and help preserve open spaces, aligning with the township's sustainability goals while benefiting the local economy and community.

Plan and Secure Funding

Develop a Community Connectivity Plan: Map out the route(s) from Dawes Arboretum to Buckeye Lake in a similar fashion to the Connectivity Plan in Fairfield, Ohio.

COMPREHENSIVE CONNECTIVITY PLAN

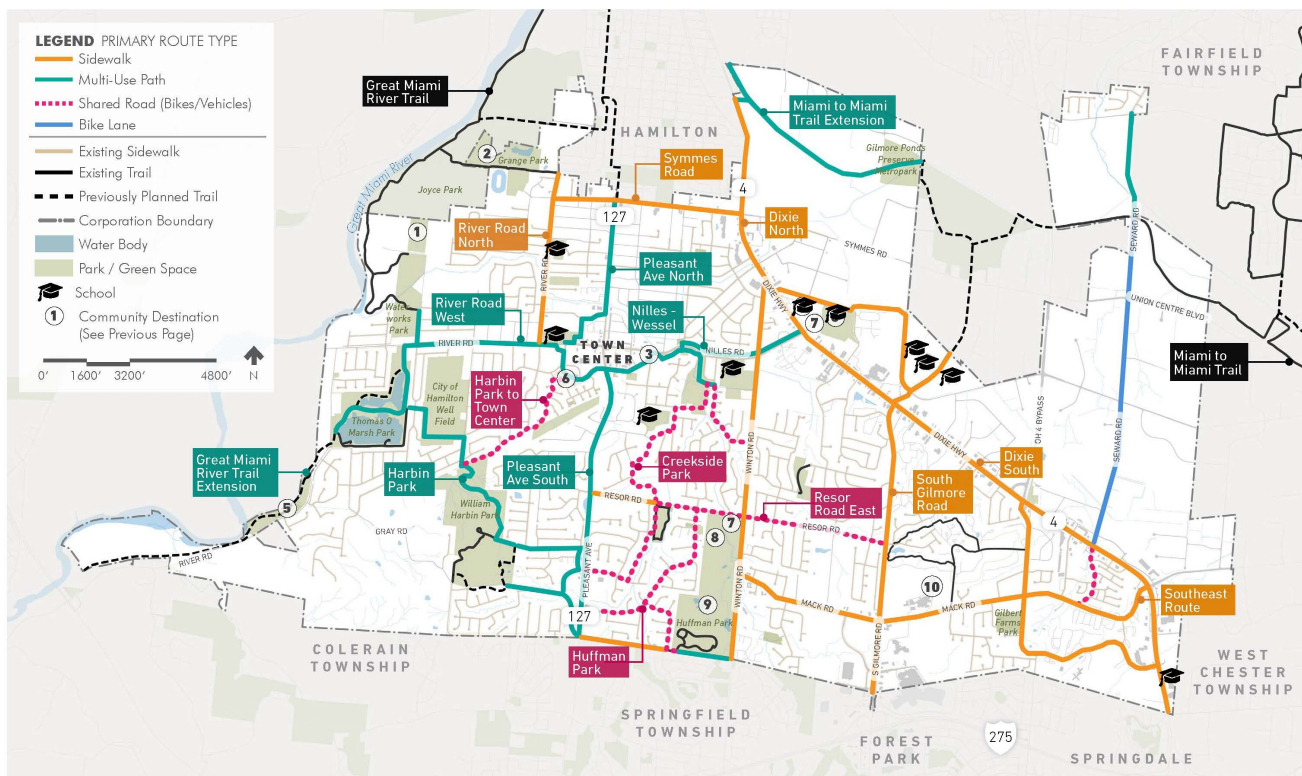


Figure 79. Connectivity Plan in Fairfield, Ohio. Photo Source: Fairfield Connects Connectivity Master Plan

Utilize Funding Opportunities: Ohio offers several grant programs for park and trail development. Resources include:

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Up to 80% in matching federal funds is available for urban trail linkages, trailheads, maintenance, restoration, accessibility improvements, land acquisition, new trail construction, equipment purchase or lease, and trail-related environmental or safety education programs.

Clean Ohio Trails Fund

The State of Ohio will reimburse up to 75% of eligible costs under Clean Ohio Trail Fund with a grantee match of 25 percent. Projects include: Land acquisition for a trail, new trails or connector-trail development, and construction grants might cover the cost of engineering and design

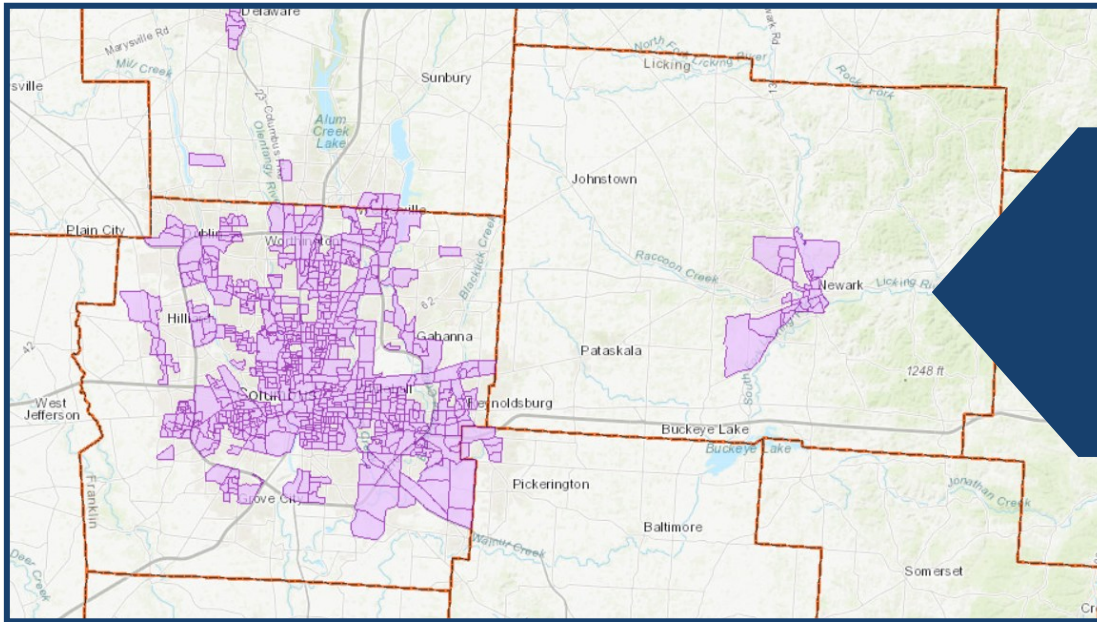


Figure 80. High Need Trail Areas in Central Ohio as Identified by ODNR.

NatureWorks Grant Program

Provides up to 75% reimbursement assistance for local government subdivisions to for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Provides up to 50% reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.

Implementation

The Implementation Matrix serves as a critical accountability tool, clearly delineating responsibility for the recommendation within the Comprehensive Plan. This matrix identifies specific officials, committees, and partners tasked with implementation, establishes realistic timeframes (short-term: 1-2 years, mid-term: 3-5 years, long-term: 5+ years). The implementation matrix will assist the Township in advancement toward its vision while maintaining transparency with residents. Regular review of this matrix during will ensure the Comprehensive Plan remains an active guiding document rather than becoming dormant after adoption, ultimately transforming aspirations into measurable achievements.

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Economic Development Recommendations		
Implement design standards for Village Center.	Zoning Commission	Short Term
Study and assess pedestrian connections between the Village Center, Buckeye Lake, and surrounding neighborhoods.	County, ODOT, Engineering Consultant, and Trustees	Mid-Term
Revise zoning to promote small restaurants, small local retail, and wineries and breweries within the Village Center.	Zoning Commission	Mid-Term
Concentrate auto oriented businesses along I-70 and SR-13, make zoning revisions as necessary.	Zoning Commission	Short-Term
Create a mixed-use overlay near Buckeye Lake.	Zoning Commission	Short-Term

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Economic Development Recommendations		
Analyze economic development tools such as JEDDs, TIFs, and NCAs to determine if and how these could be used to achieve Township goals.	Consultant, Grow Licking County, Municipal Partner	Short-Term
Assess the need for an economic development team, with potential personnel additions to the Township in the form of a Township Administrator and Planner.	Trustees	Long-Term
Rural Lifestyle Recommendations		
Update zoning code to include an overlay for clustered residential development that will include standards to protect the Township's rural character.	Zoning Commission	Short-Term
Preserve large lot rural residential zoning outside of growth nodes.	Zoning Commission	Short-Term
Expand land uses in village center areas to emphasize agricultural related and agritourism operations.	Zoning Commission	Short-Term
Community Relationship Recommendations		
Improve communication with residents by more frequently updating the website and using social media outlets such as Facebook to provide real time updates on events and news.	Trustees	Short-Term

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Community Relationship Recommendations		
Engage with residents to educate them about the impacts of annexation. Provide educational materials and hold events.	Trustees	Short-Term, Mid-Term
Educate landowners about agriculture and conservation easements to protect their land. Provide educational materials or hold events.	Trustees	Mid-Term
Environmental Recommendations		
Protect the land and water near Buckeye Lake as development occurs by requiring the incorporation of green infrastructure and the protection of wetlands.	County, Ohio EPA, Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District	Mid-Term
Update zoning code to include an overlay for clustered residential development that will include standards to protect the Township's rural character.	Zoning Commission	Short-Term