



PORTAGE

COUNTY

2050

A Comprehensive Plan

DRAFT

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

A

ACS	American Community Survey
AMATS	Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study
APA	American Planning Association
ASA	Agricultural Security Area

B

BCC	Board of County Commissioners
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C

CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
CAUV	Current Agricultural Use Value
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CPI	Consumer Price Index

E

EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency

F

FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map

G

GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GPM	Gallons Per Minute

H

HBA	Home Builder's Association
HSTS	Home Sewage Treatment System
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
HUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development

L

LAEPP	Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program
LOS	Level of Service

M

MBPS	Megabits Per Seconds
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System

N

NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NASS	National Agricultural Statistics Service
NBI	National Bridge Index
NDS	Neighborhood Development Services
NEFCO	Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization
NEOMED	Northeast Ohio Medical University
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPRA	National Parks and Recreation Association
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetland Inventory

O

OAC	Ohio Administrative Code
ODA	Ohio Department of Agriculture
ODNR	Ohio Department of Natural Resources
ODOD	Ohio Department of Development
ODOT	Ohio Department of Transportation
OHI	Ohio Historic Inventory
ORC	Ohio Revised Code

P

PARTA	Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority
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PCHD	Portage County General Combined Health District
PCLRC	Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation
PCR	Pavement Condition Rating
PCRA	Portage County Realtor’s Association
PCRPC	Portage County Regional Planning Commission
PCWR	Portage County Water Resources
PDB	Portage Development Board
PM	Particulate Matter
PMHA	Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority
PPD	Portage Park District

S

SBA	Small Business Association
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
SWMP	Stormwater Management Program

T

TIMS	Transportation Information Mapping System
TIP	Transportation Improvement Plan
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TOD	Transit Oriented Development

U

USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service

1 Introduction

What is a Plan?

A Land Use Plan is a document that provides the framework and policy direction for future development decisions. It is a forward-thinking, long-range document that looks ahead up to 30 years to anticipate future challenges and needs of the community. The Land Use Plan once adopted, becomes a flexible guide for the County to follow in order to achieve the desired vision for the community. While not legally binding, the Plan is important to consider in all decision-making because its recommendations reflect the desire of the community. To ensure that the Plan does not end up on a shelf, an annual report on its status should be provided to the County Commissioners, including initiatives that have begun and goals that have been achieved.

Why does Portage County Need a Plan?

The Plan provides guidance to the County Commissioners, County Department Heads, and County Agencies on developing the County in a coordinated and unified manner. It can continuously be referred to in deciding issues and avoids continuous reliance on case-by-case studies to make development decisions. The Plan gives the County a method and the rationale to broadly coordinate development.

The Plan encourages intergovernmental coordination and development in areas that can best accommodate growth and provide services to people, preventing wasting of valuable land and resources. For if uncontrolled, unplanned development is allowed to proceed, the following kinds of problems can occur:

- Excessive costs for extension of public utilities and services
- Damage to environmentally sensitive areas
- Loss of valuable resources such as agricultural land, recreation and open space, sand, and gravel.

Planning Process

The Plan begins with an identification of major issues and resulting planning principles that provide an

overall glimpse of the most pressing concerns and priorities for the County. The planning principles are the overarching ideas and recommendations that should be taken into consideration in each development proposal and during coordination with other jurisdictions. The Plan is then broken down into multiple elements that each play a role in the future growth and development of the community. These include: Demographics, Housing, Environment, Community Facilities, Economic Development, Transportation, and Land Use. The significant issues in each of these elements, along with the interaction between them, must be considered for their relation to the overall growth and vision of the County. One chapter is devoted to each element. The goals, objectives, and strategies are presented in Chapter 10.

Public Engagement

Public participation in the Portage County 2050 Comprehensive Plan was solicited several ways including through staffing booths at Art on Main and the Randolph Fair, an online survey also made available in hard copy format at Town Halls, and through websites and notices. A business survey was also sent to local industries. Additional opportunities to comment on the draft plan were provided via the Portage County Regional Planning Commission's

INTRODUCTION

(PCRPC) website. The community responses provided feedback on how County residents view the county and what they think about facilities, environmental issues, land use, and future priorities. There were also open-ended questions to gather feedback on any topic the survey missed but was important to residents. The goals and actions provided in this Plan reflect the feedback received from the community.

The Comprehensive Plan survey was open from September 2021 to March 2022. Over 350 responses were gathered. A summary of resident responses is listed below:

- Location and access are viewed as the biggest benefits to living in Portage County followed by rural living and housing affordability
- The biggest challenges to living or working in Portage County were viewed as loss of farmland and access to broadband especially in rural areas
- Approximately 41.7% of residents would like to see more parks while 33.8% think the County needs more farmland

Infrastructure improvements to roads, water, and sewer; improved education quality as well as community support for schools; rural character and farmland preservation; and blight or redevelopment of properties, especially improvements to civic spaces and occupancy of empty buildings were top four pressing concerns mentioned in the comments portion of the survey. Appendix A contains more information on survey results.

History

Portage County is in northeast Ohio and is bordered by Cuyahoga, Summit, Trumbull, Geauga, Mahoning, and Stark Counties. Several major cities are within a day's drive of the County including Cleveland, Akron, Columbus, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Indianapolis (see Map 1.1). The County is 503 square miles and is comprised of five cities, six villages, and 18 townships (see Map 1.2). The cities, villages and townships are listed below:

Cities

- Aurora
- Kent
- Ravenna
- Streetsboro
- Tallmadge



Map 1.1 Regional Location.

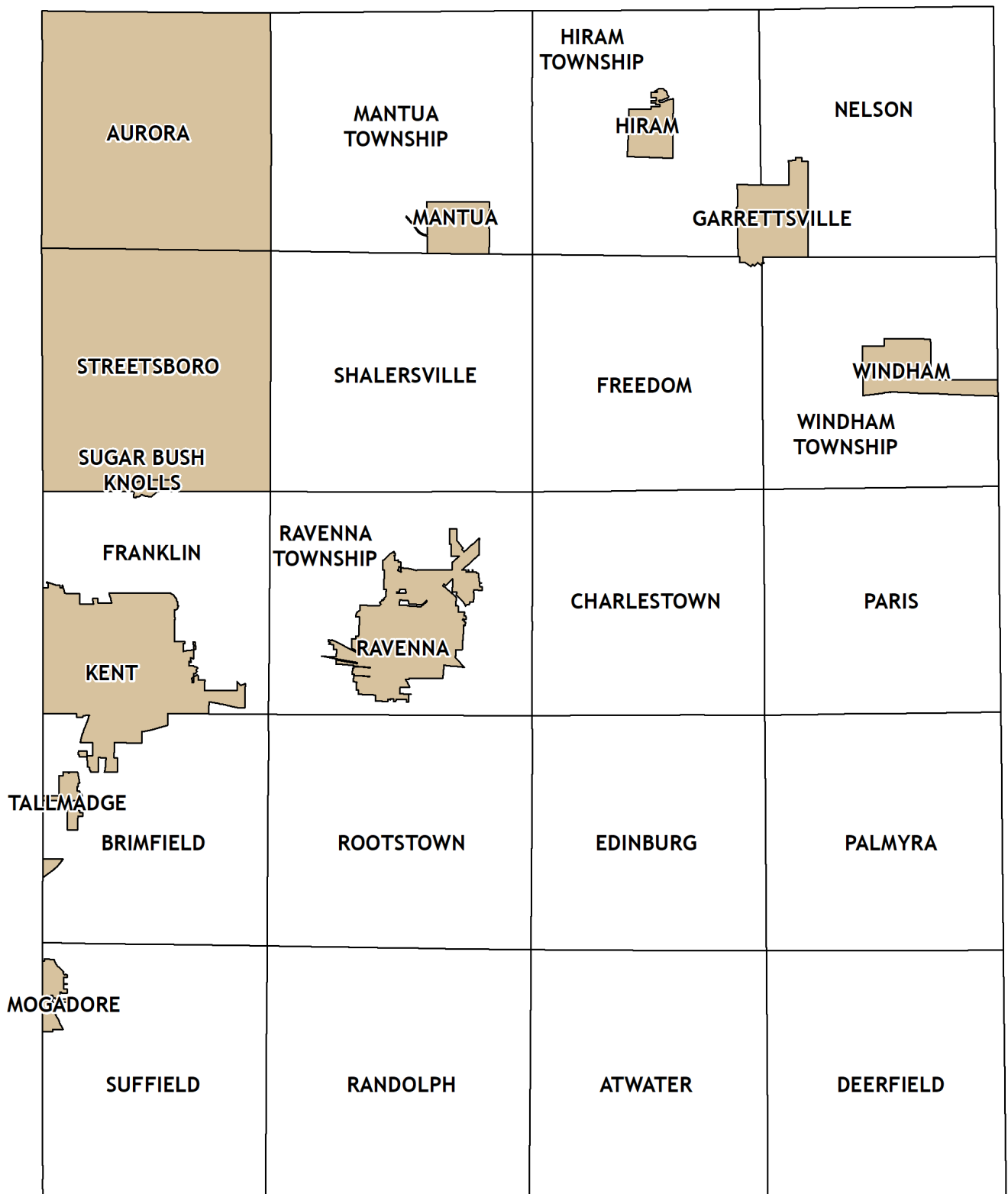
Villages

- Garrettsville
- Hiram
- Mantua
- Mogadore
- Sugar Bush Knolls
- Windham

Townships

- Atwater
- Brimfield
- Charlestown
- Deerfield
- Edinburg
- Franklin
- Freedom
- Hiram
- Mantua
- Nelson
- Palmyra
- Paris
- Randolph
- Ravenna
- Rootstown
- Shalersville
- Suffield
- Windham

Portage County was originally part of the Connecticut Western Reserve. It is named for the portage between the Cuyahoga and Tuscarawas Rivers (Ohio History Connection, 2021). The first European settler arrived in Portage County in 1798 in what is now Mantua Township followed by the arrival of settlers to Atwater Township and Ravenna City the next year. In 1807, the General Assembly authorized the creation of Portage County from parts of Trumbull County. By 1810, the population was 2,995 and by 1820, the county had quadrupled in size (Ohio Department of Development, 2020).



Map 1.2 Portage County Political Subdivisions

2 Population Trends

An understanding of the present characteristics of Portage County establishes a framework for considering the County's future. Recent trends in population and housing growth can be analyzed through a review of census statistics and building records. Below is a summary of Portage County's demographic statistics from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 5-Year Estimates.

Brief Summary of Portage County Statistics

- Total Population: 161,791 (2020 Census)
- Median Age: 38.1
- Median Household Income: \$57,618
- High School Diploma: 92.4%
- Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 29.00%
- Employment Rate: 61.1%
- Total Housing Units: 69,138
- Without Health Care Coverage: 5.1%
- Total Employer Establishments: 3,000
- Total Households: 61,817
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 1.8%

These statistics will be covered in more detail this chapter and in Chapter 3 Housing Trends.

Portage, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Mahoning, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull Counties is shown in Table 2.1. In general, the region experienced growth between 1990 and 2000, and then decline between 2000 and 2010. Portage and Geauga Counties are the only counties in the region that gained population from 2000 to 2020. Cuyahoga, Mahoning, and Trumbull Counties have experienced significant population

Population Trends

Historic Population Growth

As shown in Figure 2.1, most of Portage County's population growth was between 1950 and 1970. By 1950, the population was just over 60,000 residents and had doubled by 1970 to over 120,000. After 1970, the population continued to increase at a slower, but consistent rate through 2010. As of the 2020 decennial census, Portage County had a population of 161,791 (US Census Bureau, 2020).

A Regional Perspective Population Change

A comparison of population changes recorded through the decennial censuses from 1990 through 2020 between

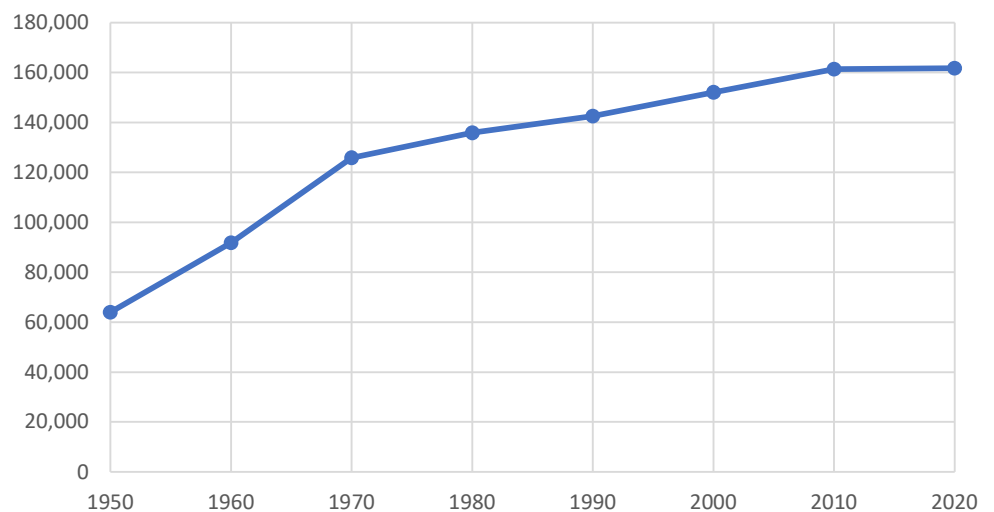


Figure 2.1 Total Population of Portage County 1950 to 2020. Sources: Ohio Department of Development, County Profiles: Portage County, 2020; US Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.

decline for several decades.

From 1990 to 2000, Portage County grew by 6.65%, going from 142,585 residents to 152,061 residents. Between 2000 and 2010, the county grew to 161,419 residents, an increase of 6.15%. The consistency of the growth rate seen in Portage County over this 20-year period is unique compared to the region as the surrounding counties' have experienced dramatic fluctuations in population instead of steady shifts.

Between 2010 and 2020, population rates fluctuated less throughout the region than in the previous decade. Portage County grew by 0.23%, and, while this is a seemingly insignificant change, the county maintained the second highest growth rate of adjacent counties. Portage, Geauga, Summit, and Stark Counties have maintained relatively consistent populations. Cuyahoga, Mahoning, and Trumbull Counties continued to see decline, though at lesser rates, between 2010 and 2020.

Age

Figure 2.2 indicates the county is growing older. Between 2000 and 2019, the median age increased from 34.4 years old to 38 years old. By comparison, Ohio has a median age of 39.4 and the United States has a median age of 38.1 (ACS, 2019). This continues the trend seen for the past several decades, with median ages across the nation increasing. This could be due to a combination of factors including:

- Aging baby boomers. Between 2010 and 2019, the amount of residents age 65 and over increased by over 3% from 12.2% of the population to 15.8% (ACS, 2010; ACS, 2019)
- Longer life expectancies. National life expectancies have increased from 76.8 in 2000 to 78.7 in 2018 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2019).
- Decreasing birth rates. Nationally birth rates have decreased from 24.1 % in 1950 to 11.6% in 2018 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2019)

Table 2.1 Regional Population Change by County 1990 – 2020

	Portage	Cuyahoga	Geauga	Mahoning	Stark	Summit	Trumbull
1990-2000	6.65%	-1.29%	12.04%	-2.74%	2.86%	5.42%	-1.18%
2000-2010	6.15%	-8.17%	2.74%	-7.27%	-0.66%	-0.21%	-6.58%
2010-2020	0.23%	-1.20%	2.15%	-4.27%	-0.20%	-0.25%	-3.96%
30-Year Change (1990-2020)	13.47%	-10.43%	17.59%	-13.67%	1.94%	4.94%	-11.34%

Sources: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses 1990 - 2020.

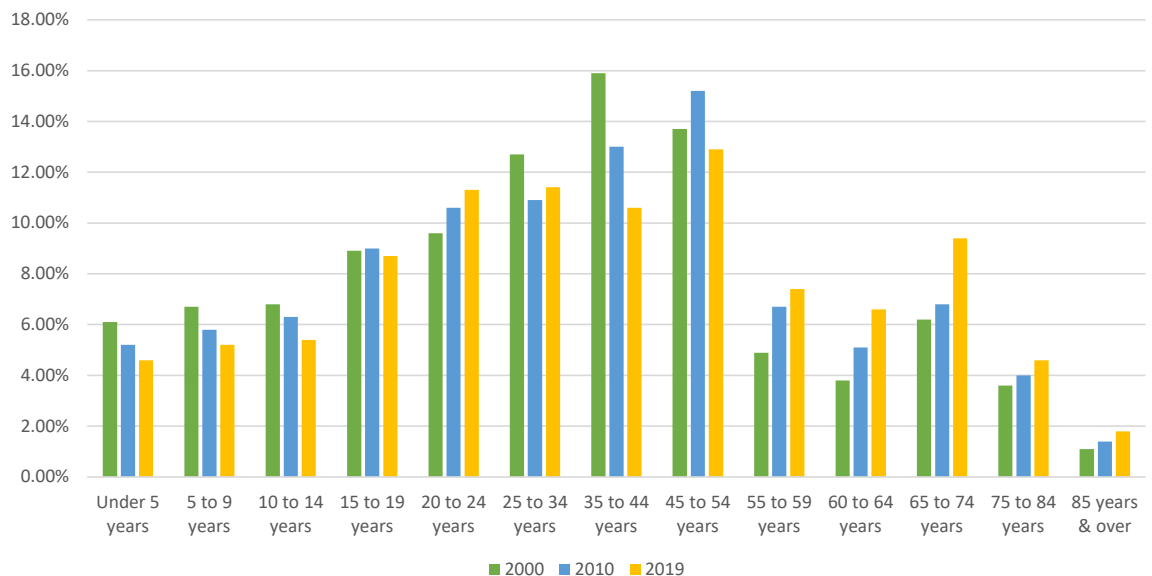


Figure 2.2 Population Age. Source: US Census Bureau 2000 Decennial Census, 2010 ACS 5-year estimates; 2019 ACS 5-year estimates.

POPULATION TRENDS

The consistent decrease in the number of children younger than 14 years of age since 2000 may also indicate decreasing numbers of families choosing to live in the county (ACS, 2010; ACS, 2019). There has also been a decrease in residents ages 25 to 44 years who typically raise families, so it is unlikely that younger age groups will maintain current population rates going forward without immigration from outside the county. Providing housing and services to accommodate an aging population will be essential to allow residents to remain within the County (see Chapter 3, Senior Housing for continued discussion).

Education

As shown in Table 2.2, Portage County resident’s education varies as 92% of residents have a high school diploma compared to Ohio at 91% and the U.S. at 89%. The amount of residents who have a bachelor’s degrees, 28.7%, is slightly behind the State’s rate of 29.3% and U.S. at 33.1%. Portage County is fortunate to have Kent State University, Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) and Hiram College; as well as the many other universities and colleges in Ohio so there is no shortage of academic opportunities. Local businesses have stressed that they have a need for skilled laborers. Other workforce related opportunities may still need to be identified and addressed.

few” (APA, 2019). Ultimately, this will encourage a community will full and equal participation among all groups of the community. To measure diversity, the US Census Bureau has separate questions for race and ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino or non-Hispanic/Latino).

Race

As shown in Table 2.3, the county has become gradually more diverse since 2000. Although the county is still mainly comprised of white residents, the number of Black or African American, Asian, and residents of two or more races increased between 2000 and 2020.

Black or African American residents rose from 3.18% of the total population in 2000 to 5.0% in 2020. Asian residents rose from 0.82% of the total population in 2000 to 2.1% in 2020. Residents of two or more races rose from 1.19% of the total population in 2000 to

Table 2.2 Highest level of education by percent of total population

	Portage County	Ohio	United States
No Degree	8%	9.2%	11.4%
High School	38.4%	32.6%	26.9%
Some College	24.9%	28.9%	28.6%
Bachelor’s	17.2%	18.2%	20.3%
Post-Grad	11.5%	11.1%	12.8%

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year estimates

Race and Ethnicity

Understanding the changes in the racial and ethnic diversity of Portage County over the past two decades is important part of creating and implementing policies that emphasize racial and community equity. The American Planning Association (APA) defines community equity as the “expansion of opportunities for betterment that are available to those communities most in need of them, creating more choices for those who have

Table 2.3 Race by Population 2000 to 2020

	2000	2010	2020	Percent of 2020 Population
Total Population	152,061	161,419	161,791	100%
White	143,545	148,936	139,778	86.4%
Black or African American	4,840	6,687	8,037	5.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	277	296	277	0.2%
Asian	1,246	2,305	3,425	2.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	20	40	46	0.0%
Some other race	328	413	1,280	0.8%
Two or more races	1,805	2,742	8,948	5.5%

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census Summary File 3; US Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census Summary File 1; US Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

5.5% in 2020.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is defined as a having a common language, culture, or national origin. In order to measure ethnicity, the US Census Bureau records Hispanic or Latino counts. Those who identify as Hispanic or Latino may also be part of one or more of the minorities listed in the race table above. According to the 2010 and 2020 decennial census, the percent of Hispanic and Latino populations have increased in Portage County, although the population remains below Ohio’s overall percentage as well as the United States (Table 2.4).

Income and Poverty

Median Household Income

According to the ACS 2019 5-year estimates, the median household income for Portage County is \$57,618, which is a bit higher than the State’s at \$56,602. Compared to the surrounding counties (Table 2.5), Portage County has the second highest median household income (ACS, 2019). Table 2.3 shows median household income within the region based on data from the ACS 2019 and 2010 5-year

estimates. The median household income from 2010 has been adjusted to 2019 numbers using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation calculator. The buying power from 2019 and 2010 median household income has decreased by \$983.

Poverty

Portage County is doing better than the rest of Ohio or the U.S. in general with approximately 9.9% of the population living in poverty according to the US Census Bureau’s 2019 Quick Facts. The State of Ohio and the US are higher with 12.6% and 11.4% respectfully of the population living in poverty for the same time period (July 2019).

More recent information related to unemployment for Portage County is shows the poverty rate at 3.6% compared to Ohio at 5.1% and the US at 4.6 % according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (October 2021). This may indicate that poverty could be less than 2019 and that household income has increased. These increases may be offset by an approximate 6% increase in the cost of living for 2021. Inflation has been less than 3% over the past 10 years.

Table 2.4 Hispanic and Latino Populations

	Portage County (2010)	Portage County (2020)	Ohio	United States
Hispanic or Latino	1.28%	2.17%	4.42%	18.73%
Non-Hispanic or Latino	98.72%	97.83%	95.58%	81.27%

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census Redistricting data (PL 94-171); US Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census Redistricting data (PL 94-171).

Table 2.5 Median Household Income

	2019 Median Household Income	2010 Median Household Income	2010 Median Household Income (adjusted to 2019 dollars)
Portage County	\$ 57,618	\$50,447	\$58,601.19
Cuyahoga County	\$ 50,366	\$43,603	\$50,650.93
Geauga County	\$ 82,303	\$65,663	\$76,276.68
Mahoning County	\$ 46,042	\$40,123	\$46,608.43
Stark County	\$ 53,860	\$44,941	\$52,205.20
Summit County	\$ 57,181	\$47,926	\$55,672.70
Trumbull County	\$ 47,280	\$42,296	\$49,132.67
Ohio	\$ 56,602	\$47,358	\$55,012.88
United States	\$ 62,843	\$62,982	\$73,162.33

Sources: US Census Bureau, ACS 2019 5-year estimates; US Census Bureau, ACS 2010 5-year estimates.

3 Housing

Housing stock that has attainable options for all income levels and lifestyles is an integral part of what makes a community thrive. Providing housing that meets the needs of the community is what makes a community balanced and diverse. Development of commercial and industrial businesses is dependent on the provision of housing choice. While Portage County communities may be growing, not all housing needs to be built new. Renovation of existing housing and infill or redevelopment of parcels with connections to existing infrastructure are viable opportunities for future housing.

The housing chapter provides information to guide future development patterns sensitive to the needs of the current population that also complement a robust business climate by concentrating on housing trends and housing diversity. Housing diversity provides the following benefits to communities:

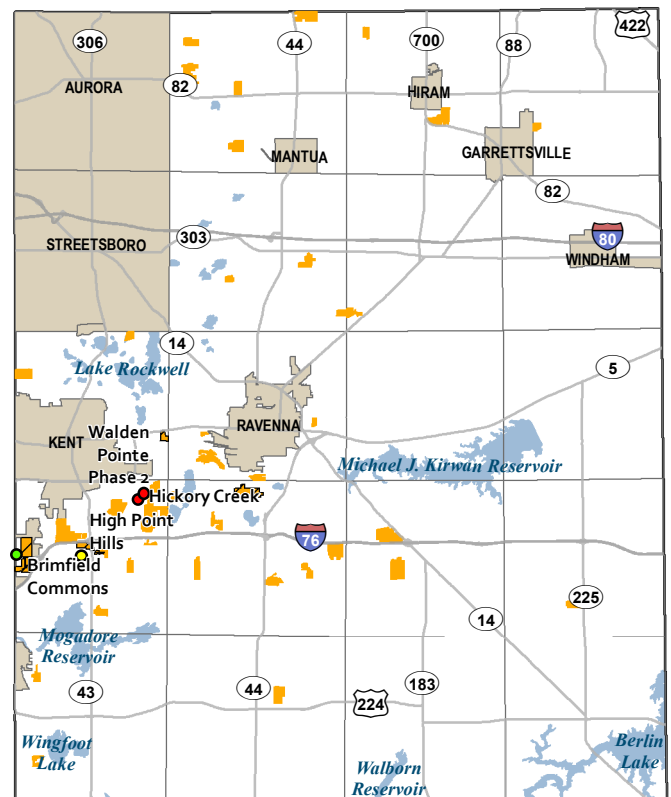
- Diversified housing promotes housing accessibility and affordability for all people in the community including seniors, the workforce, low income, and the disabled.
- Economic stability: Providing housing that the workforce can afford directly impacts the ability of employers to hire and retain workers.
- Commute times and traffic: affordable housing closer to employment areas reduces commute times and traffic congestion across the region as well as cost to employees.

To have housing choice, communities need to allow for it by providing flexibility through their ordinances.

Development Trends

Map 3.1 shows subdivision development in the Townships since 2000. Most of the new residential and commercial subdivisions have been concentrated in Brimfield and Rootstown Township. Preliminary plans for three residential subdivisions have been approved or conditionally approved since 2019. One commercial subdivision and one residential subdivision (Franklin Township) were conditionally

Map 3.1 Subdivisions 2000 - 2020. Data Sources: PCRPC records, 2021; Portage County Auditor, 2021.



Subdivision Status

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ● Conditional Approval | ■ Subdivisions |
| ● Preliminary Plan Approved | ▨ Commercial Subdivision |
| ● Preliminary Plan Conditionally Approved | |

approved in 2021. If built out as planned, the new residential subdivisions will add 360 housing units to the County.

Construction Trends

As in most of the country, Portage County experienced a housing boom from 1997 through 2006. During this period, over 700 housing units¹ per year were built reaching a height of 883 units in 1999 and 859 units in 2003. Between 1997 and 2006, approximately 7,794 units were built in Portage County¹. From 2007 through 2011, housing construction steeply declined following the free fall of the US economy known as the Great Recession. By 2016, the US had recovered from the recession as household income had finally increased (Field, 2021). Portage County’s housing construction returned to pre-housing boom levels in 2015.

Housing Age

According to the 2019 ACS 5-year estimates, almost 60% of the housing units in the county were built before 1980. Approximately 17.2% of all housing units are less than 20 years old (Figure 3.1). This is

much higher than Ohio’s rate of 12.5% and on par with the national estimate of approximately 19.2% of all housing units being less than 20 years old. Figure 3.2 shows a series of maps displaying housing age and the progression of construction across the county from farm homes in the 1800s to city centers in the early 1900s to urban sprawl and suburban areas in the 1980s through 2000s.

Housing Types

Figure 3.3 shows that housing in the county is mainly comprised of single family detached homes, accounting for 65% of all housing units. By comparison, 68.6% of housing units in Ohio and 61.6% of housing units nationally are single-family detached homes. The county lacks apartment buildings with 20 or more units as an affordable style of housing but does have an abundance of manufactured homes compared to the state. Manufactured homes, including manufactured home parks, account for 7.5% of the county’s housing stock which is almost twice as much as the state at 3.7%.

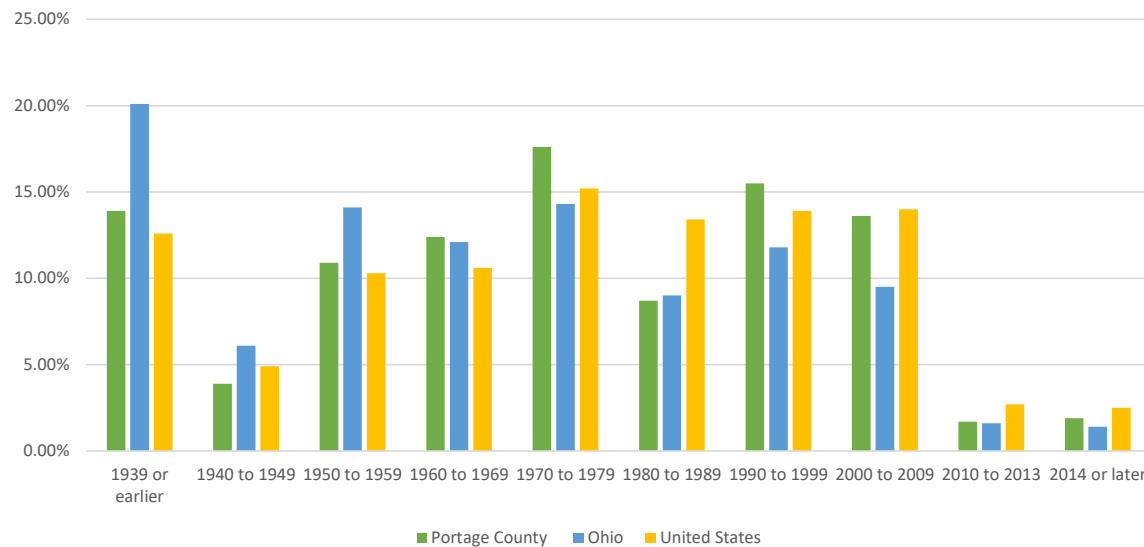
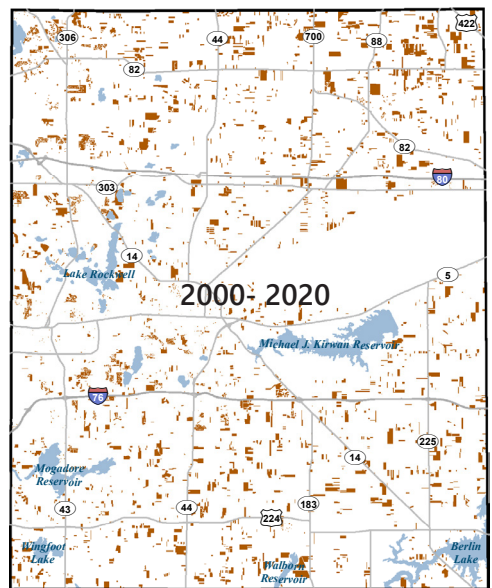
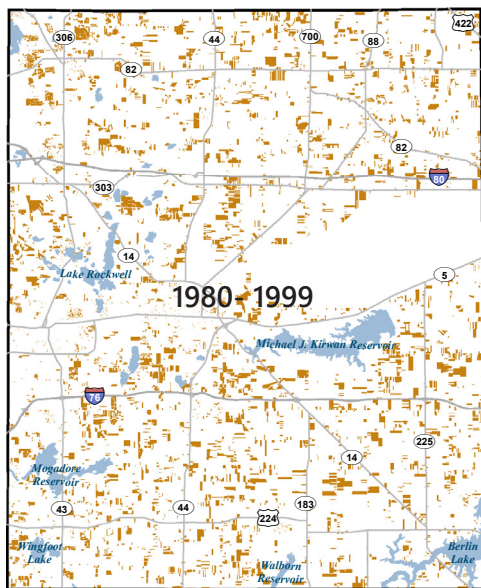
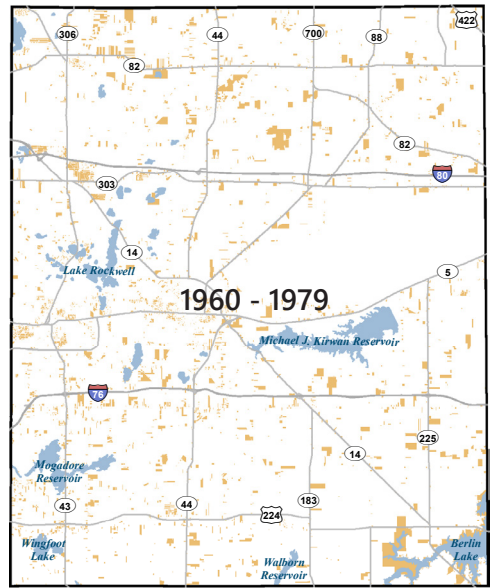
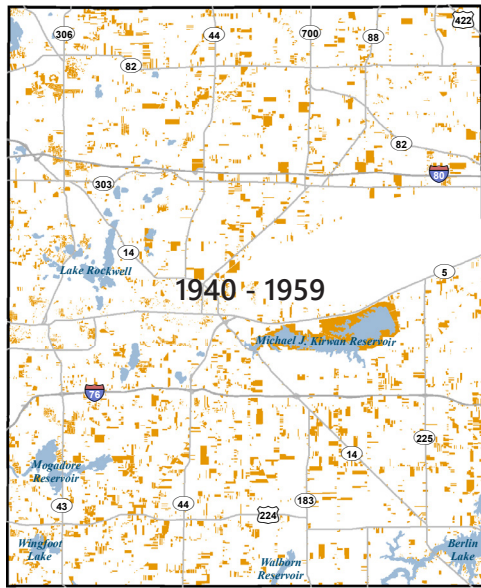
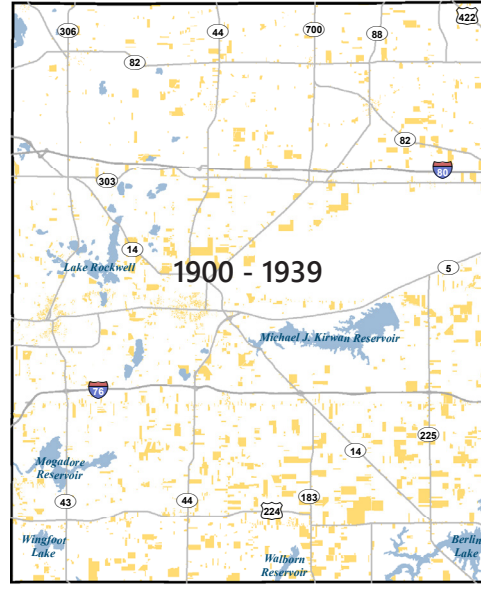
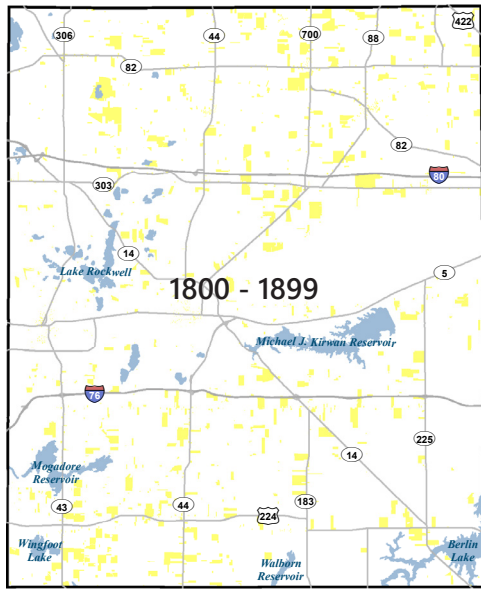


Figure 3.1 Housing Units by Year Built. Sources: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year estimates.

¹ Excludes apartment buildings of 4 units and over. Housing with 2-3 units is counted as one using the Portage County Auditor’s parcel data.

HOUSING

Figure 3.2 Housing by Year Built. Based on parcel data from the Portage County Auditor



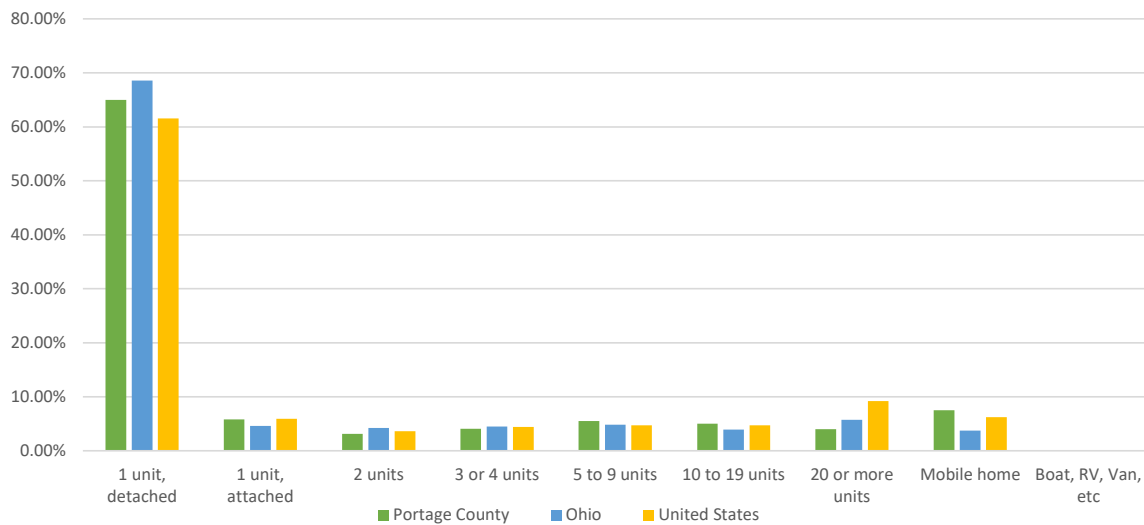


Figure 3.3 Housing Units by Type. Sources: 2019 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census Bureau

Housing Occupancy Occupancy Rates

According to the US Census Bureau’s decennial censuses from 2000 to 2020, the total number of housing units in Portage County increased 17.6% from 60,096 housing units to 70,672 housing units. Of the 70,672 housing units recorded in 2020, 65,624 housing units were occupied. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of occupied housing units decreased slightly, with an occupancy rate of 93.9% in 2000 and a rate of 92.8% in 2020. During the same timeframe, the number of vacant housing units increased from 6.1% to 7.1 % of the total housing stock, which is slightly lower than the state’s vacancy rate of 8.27% and below the national rate of 9.74% (US Census Bureau, 2020).

Most of the communities in the county have vacancy rates under 10% of the total housing stock, but there are a few communities that have higher rates. The communities with the highest estimated vacancy rates are Windham Village at 12.6%, the City of Kent at 11.2%, and Deerfield Township at 23.0% (US Census Bureau, 2020). Lingering effects from the foreclosure crisis and the loss of manufacturing jobs could be attributed to this decline. Deerfield Township has a high concentration of summer homes that may explain the higher vacancy rate.

Rent versus Own

The overall occupancy rate of the county has remained consistent since 2010, but owner occupancy has slowly declined, decreasing by 1.46% between

2000 and 2010. According to the ACS 2019 5-year estimates, owner housing occupancy has decreased another 0.34% since 2010. This slight decline may be for several reasons including impacts still felt from the Great Recession from 2007 to 2009. The Great Recession forced many homeowners into foreclosure and prevented others from buying homes. Home ownership has fallen nationally since the recession with the impact being the most severe among younger generations (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2021). Impacts from COVID-19 are addressed under Housing Affordability in this chapter.

Currently, out of 61,817 occupied housing units, 69.5 % are owner occupied, and 30.5% are renter occupied. Most of the renter occupied housing is in the southwest portion of the county which accounts for 37.9% of the housing stock in that region (ACS, 2019).

Value and Affordability Median Housing Value

The median housing value of owner-occupied units in Portage County is \$159,200, which is the second highest in the region (see Table 3.1) and is higher compared to the state at \$145,700. The median value has increased 1.34% since 2010, and 29.43 % since 2000 (ACS, 2010; ACS, 2019; US Census Bureau, DEC Summary File 3, 2000).

Affordability

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines cost-burden, or financial burden,

HOUSING

	Median Housing Value
Portage County	\$ 159,200
Cuyahoga County	\$ 132,800
Geauga County	\$ 240,900
Mahoning County	\$ 105,400
Stark County	\$ 134,300
Summit County	\$ 146,800
Trumbull County	\$ 102,600
Ohio	\$ 145,700
United States	\$ 217,500

Sources: US Census Bureau, ACS 2019 5-year estimates, Selected housing characteristics

as those who spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, including utilities and associated housing costs. These individuals may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.

In terms of household spending, 28.9% of occupied units (rented and owned) spend 30% or more of their monthly income on housing costs. This means approximately 17,351 housing units are considered financially burdened (ACS, 2019). Table 3.2 contains a breakdown of monthly costs by housing unit, occupancy type, and financial costs.

Affordable housing options allow residents to live close to where they work. Not only does this help alleviate issues that lower and moderate-income residents experience in getting to work like lacking reliable transportation or long commutes, but it also promotes a more efficient transportation network. It may even help retain population rates over time by deterring people with lower incomes from leaving the county due to unaffordable options. Neighborhoods that feature mixed housing types are optimal locations to create and sustain mixed-income neighborhoods attractive to a diverse workforce.

Impact of COVID-19 on Housing Affordability

Like the Great Recession, COVID-19 will have lasting impacts on the housing market and housing affordability. During the recession, the high foreclosure rate caused housing prices to plummet while placing increasing pressure on the rental market for affordable housing, which was in limited supply. This in turn caused rents to skyrocket, ultimately increasing the cost-burden of renters. COVID-19 is expected to have a similar impact on housing affordability. A decade after the recession, owner-occupied housing is in high demand and in short supply (Brookings Institution, 2021) causing home sale prices to rise. While the CARES Act temporarily granted mortgage forbearance and established an eviction moratorium, which delayed immediate impact of the pandemic on the housing market, prolonged distress could cause rents to rise and housing values to drop (US Government Accountability Office, 2020). According to several reports from the US Government and financial institutions, COVID-19 is having the following impacts on housing affordability:

- Housing prices are rising at the fastest pace in 40 years, reflecting the nationwide housing shortage. Household income is not rising proportionally (JP Morgan, 2021).
- The pandemic has been disproportionately more harmful on low income and minority households, especially Blacks and Hispanics or Latinos.
- Indebted households can slow economic recovery as it limits the ability to spend.

Senior Housing

As the United States population ages, there has been an increasing desire to age in place; however, senior housing choices are limited, which is especially true for Portage County. Portage County currently has: 14 nursing homes and assisted living facilities, two of which, the Anna Maria of Aurora and Kentridge Senior

Occupancy & Cost Type	Portage County	State	Percent of Cost Burdened Residents
Home w/ Mortgage	\$1,327	\$1,282	21.41%
Home w/o Mortgage	\$503	\$479	14.69%
Rent	\$860	\$808	53.20%

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year estimates, selected housing characteristics

Living, are continuing care facilities which provides for several stages of aging (Ohio Department of Health, 2021). A new senior housing facility is also being constructed in Brimfield Township. Lack of senior housing options results in senior residents moving out of the county to accommodate their housing situations.

Many dwelling units in the county are single-family homes which older residents, especially those that live alone, may find challenging for the following reasons

- Home maintenance and yard care tasks
- Navigating the home and property due to:
- Long walking distances to mailboxes,
- Steep stairs
- Second floor master bed and bathrooms

Opportunities for senior housing should be directed to areas that have the amenities, resources, and residents to support this type of development. Strategies that can be used to encourage senior housing and retain residents include flexible zoning, increased density or density bonuses, universal design concepts, affordable housing, home repair programs, social services and healthcare, and diverse housing choices. Policies to promote service enriched housing may be another possible strategy to help alleviate gaps in the housing supply. Options and services geared toward seniors and residents wishing to age in place may need to be further evaluated.

4 Land Resources

Topography

The elevation of Portage County ranges 892 to 1346 feet above mean sea level. The north central townships are characterized by rolling hills dissected by several major rivers and streams including the Cuyahoga River. Hilltops over 1300 feet are not uncommon in Hiram, Mantua, Shalersville, and Freedom Townships although most areas are between 1100 and 1200 feet. The highest elevation is in Hiram Township on State Route 82 near Alpha Road at 1346 feet above mean sea level. The southwest and south-central portions also have more rolling topography and elevations between 1100 and 1200 feet. In general, lower elevations are found in the eastern part of the County ranging from 892 to 1050 feet. The lowest elevation is in Nelson Township near the Geauga County border at 892 feet above mean sea level.

Areas with dramatic variations in topography are less suitable for development due to limitations on building design and high susceptibility to erosion. Development of areas over 15% slope are generally considered steep and should be restrict development. Steep slopes are located along major waterways and their valleys as well as in the southwest corner of the County. Map 4.1 shows the topography of Portage County.

Surface Water Resources

Surface water resources include watersheds, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and floodplains.

Watersheds

A watershed is an area of land that drains water from tributaries and rainfall to a common body of water, such as a larger tributary, pond, lake, or ocean. Watersheds are divided into hydrologic units cataloged as hydrologic unit codes (HUC). The Lake Erie and Ohio River Basins split Portage County in half along a north-south line. Between the two basins, there are five major subbasins: the Cuyahoga River, Chagrin River, Grand River, Mahoning River, and Tuscarawas River (see Table 4.1) and ten main watersheds.

The Tuscarawas, Chagrin, and Grand watersheds cover small areas whereas the Cuyahoga and Mahoning watersheds dominate most of the county.

Water planning and water diversions

In 2008, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact was ratified and codified in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). Under the compact, new or increased inter-basin transfers out of the Lake Erie Basin are prohibited with the goal being to achieve no net loss of water from the Great Lakes Basin. As shown on Map 4.2, the Lake Erie and Ohio River divide splits the county in half. This affects water sources and withdrawals available to new development in the County as a development located in the Ohio River Basin is unable to draw water from a location in the Lake Erie Basin without applying for a new diversion under the Compact. Since Portage County meets the definition of a "Straddling County", new diversions may be permissible if rigorous standards are met and if the

**GREAT LAKES ST.
LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN
COMPACT**

Water Resources Council

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Table 4.1 Watersheds by Basin			
Basin (HUC 4)	Subbasin (HUC 8)	Watershed (HUC 10)	Acres*
Lake Erie			151,800 Total
	Cuyahoga River	Breakneck Creek	136,400
		Little Cuyahoga	
		Tinkers Creek	
		Headwaters	
	Ashtabula - Chagrin	Aurora Branch	12,900
		Headwaters	
Grand River	Headwaters	2,500	
Ohio River			170,800 Total
	Mahoning River	Eagle Creek	169,500
		Deer Creek	
		West Branch Mahoning	
	Tuscarawas River	Headwaters	1,300

Note: *Calculated in GIS for Portage County area only.
Sources: USDA NRCS Watershed Boundary Dataset (WBD), Official Snapshot for Current Fiscal Year, Sept 2020.

Reservoir are operated by the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) and have specific authorized uses. These uses include flood protection, low flow augmentation, water supply (Berlin Lake), fish and wildlife enhancement, and recreation. Recreation is also provided for by Wingfoot Lake, Mogadore Reservoir, Walborn Reservoir and Lake Hodgson.

Rivers and Streams

The Cuyahoga River and the West Branch of the Mahoning River are major rivers in the County. The Cuyahoga River flows south/southwest through the county from Hiram Township to Kent, flowing on through Akron where it bends north and flows through Cleveland to Lake Erie. The West Branch of the Mahoning river flows from Freedom Township south through Ravenna Township to the Michael J. Kirwan Reservoir.

From the reservoir, the West Branch of the Mahoning River flows through Paris Township into Trumbull County where it joins the Mahoning River near Newton Falls. Other major streams include Breakneck Creek, Eagle Creek, the South Fork of Eagle Creek, the Aurora Branch of the Chagrin River and small portions of large tributaries to the Cuyahoga River including Fish Creek, Tinkers Creek, and the Little Cuyahoga.

diversion is reviewed by the Great Lakes-St Lawrence River Basin Regional Body and approved by the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resource Council. To date, only one new diversion for the City of Waukesha, WI has been approved by the Water Resource Council (Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resource Council, 2021), making approval of diversions for development within the Ohio River Basin section of Portage County unlikely.

Lakes, Rivers, and Streams

Lakes and Reservoirs

Portage County’s lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and streams provide water, flood control, water augmentation during times of drought, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat. As shown in Map 4.3, there are several major water bodies in the County.

Lake Rockwell, Lake Hodgson, Muzzy Lake, and Crystal Lake provide water to the Cities of Akron and Ravenna. Other water bodies with the potential to supply water to nearby communities include Mogadore Reservoir, Berlin Lake, Walborn Reservoir and Lake Pippen. Berlin Lake and Michael J. Kirwan

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains a list of high quality and superior waterways. The Cuyahoga River from the county line with Geauga to SR 14 is considered an Outstanding Water of the State. The Aurora Branch of the Chagrin River from SR 82 north to its mouth is also classified as an Outstanding Water of the State. The South Fork of Eagle Creek is classified as Superior High-Quality Waters. Both the Aurora Branch of the Chagrin River and the Cuyahoga River north of SR 14 (also called the Upper Cuyahoga) are State Scenic Rivers. Under the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Rule 3745-1-05, any discharge from a home sewage treatment system (HSTS), except for a replacement or updated system

LAND RESOURCES

meeting the eligibility criteria, to outstanding state waters, superior high-quality waters or outstanding national resource waters, other than Lake Erie, are not eligible for a national pollutant discharge system permit. Additionally, discharges from new HSTS to tributaries within one mile upstream of these waters are not eligible.

Wetlands

The Clean Water Act defines wetlands as those “areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soils.” Wetlands include swamps, marshes and other similar areas. To be characterized as a wetland, sites must have hydric soils and predominantly hydrophytic vegetation species. Wetlands are critical landscape features, which hold and slowly release water. As the water is released or absorbed, wetlands filter and clean, remove impurities and allow sediment to settle out, facilitating the recycling of nutrients and recharging groundwater. Due to the nature of the habitat, wetlands tend to be rich in flora and fauna.

Wetlands have important economic and ecological functions that benefit both human and wildlife populations. Since the late 18th century, 90 percent of Ohio’s wetlands have been destroyed or degraded through draining, filling, and other modifications. Because of the valuable functions the remaining wetlands perform, it is imperative to ensure that all impacts to wetlands are mitigated (Ohio EPA, 2016). Main causes of wetlands loss are drainage, dredging and stream channelization, deposition of fill material, diking and damming, overgrazing by domestic animals, mining, and alteration of hydrology. Many of the County’s threatened and endangered plants and animals make wetlands their home. Wetlands and floodplains are shown on Map 4.3. The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) shows potential wetland areas mostly along drainage ways and a few scattered isolated areas accounting for 7.58% of the county. High quality wetlands are found throughout the county.

Sensitive treatment of wetland areas is essential to the preservation of Portage County’s natural resources. Proposed development in these areas

requires consultation with the Portage County Soil and Water Conservation District and may also require a permit from the both the Ohio EPA and the USACE under Sections 401 and 404 respectively of the Clean Water Act of 1972. The Ohio EPA also regulates isolated wetlands under ORC Section 6111. Possible regulations implementable by the townships, villages, and cities include clustering new buildings, setting aside wetlands designated as open space, and establishing buffer zones known as setbacks between wetlands and other land uses.

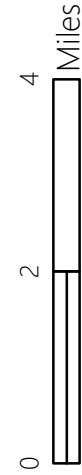
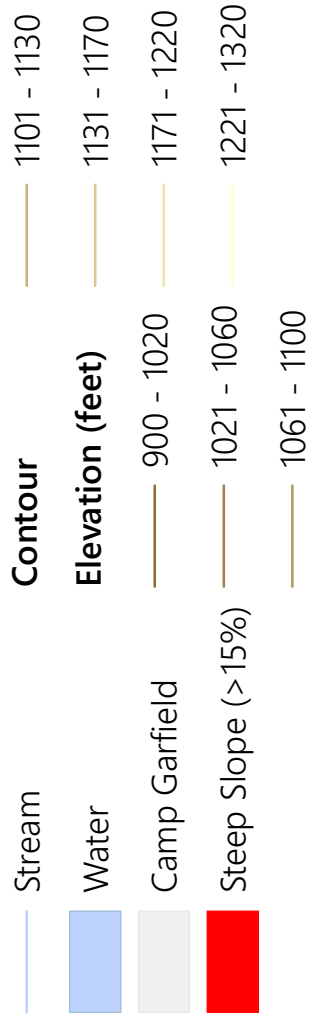
Floodplains

The 100-year floodplain, also known as the base flood, Zone A or Zone AE, is located throughout Portage County. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) data, 100-year floodplains are located along most rivers, streams, and large water bodies accounting for approximately 9.03% of the county. The 500-year floodplain, identified by FEMA as 0.2% annual chance flood or moderate flood hazard area, is present along the Cuyahoga River in Mantua Village, Mantua Township, Shalersville Township and Kent as well as along Fish Creek in Kent.

Building within the floodplain may alter the natural landscape and increase stormwater runoff. It can change the shape and size of the floodway as well as the base flood elevation, resulting in increased flood risk. Communities have several options to protect themselves from increased flood risk including adopting standards exceeding minimum floodplain regulations, prohibiting fill and development in floodplain areas, establish riparian setbacks, and strictly regulating stream alteration. Properly managed floodplains increase property value, improve water quality, and provide valuable wildlife habitat while reducing direct and indirect costs associated with flood hazards, erosion, and stormwater runoff.

Water Quality

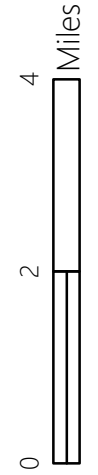
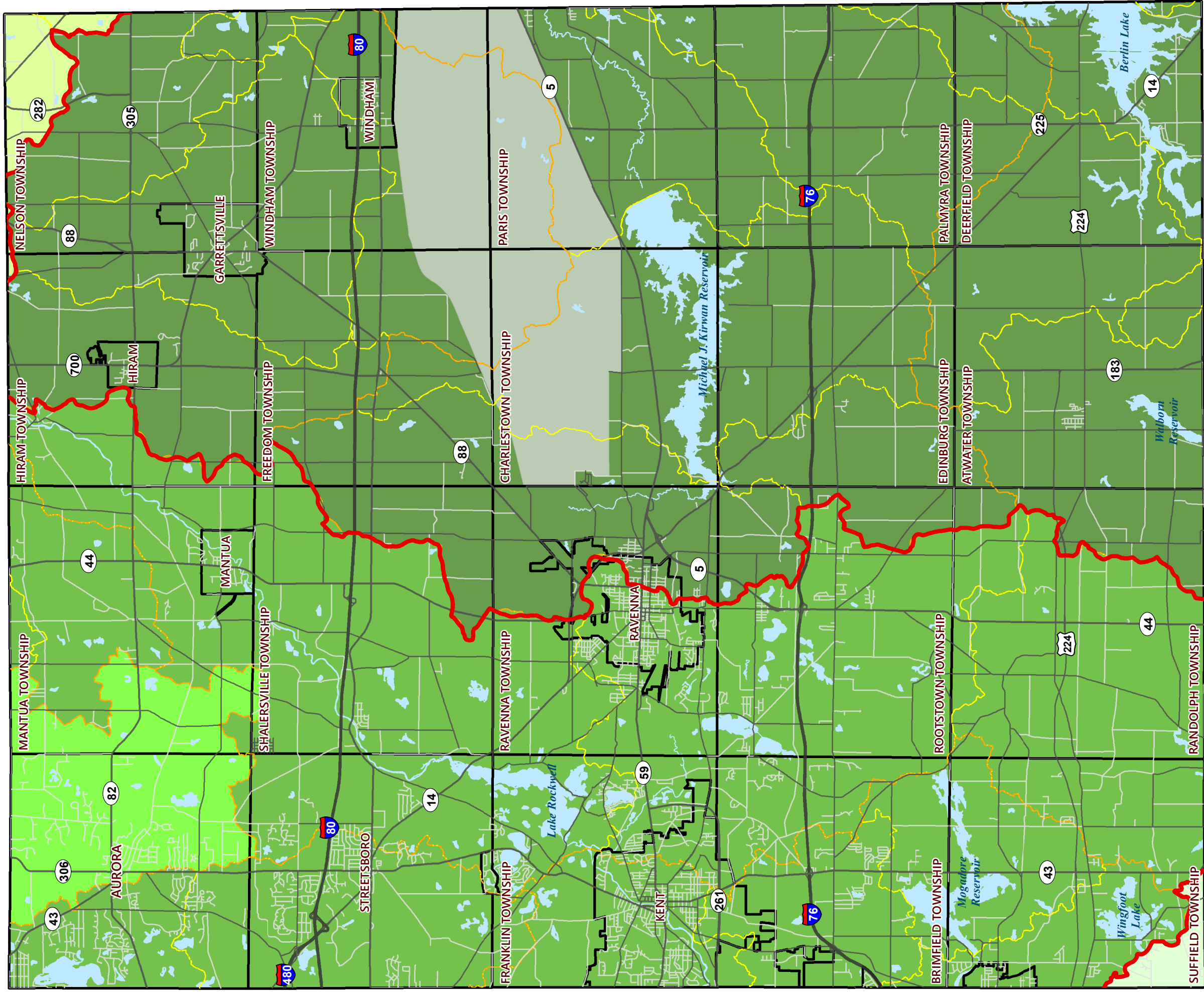
The United States has one of the safest water supplies in the world with over 90% of Americans getting their tap water from community water systems; however, water contamination can still occur (CDC, 2020). Among the many possible sources of contamination are sewage releases, naturally occurring chemicals and minerals like arsenic and radon, local land use



Map date: 6/28/2021

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Contours, Portage County GIS, 2016; Slope & Hillshade from Contours, PCRPC, 2021

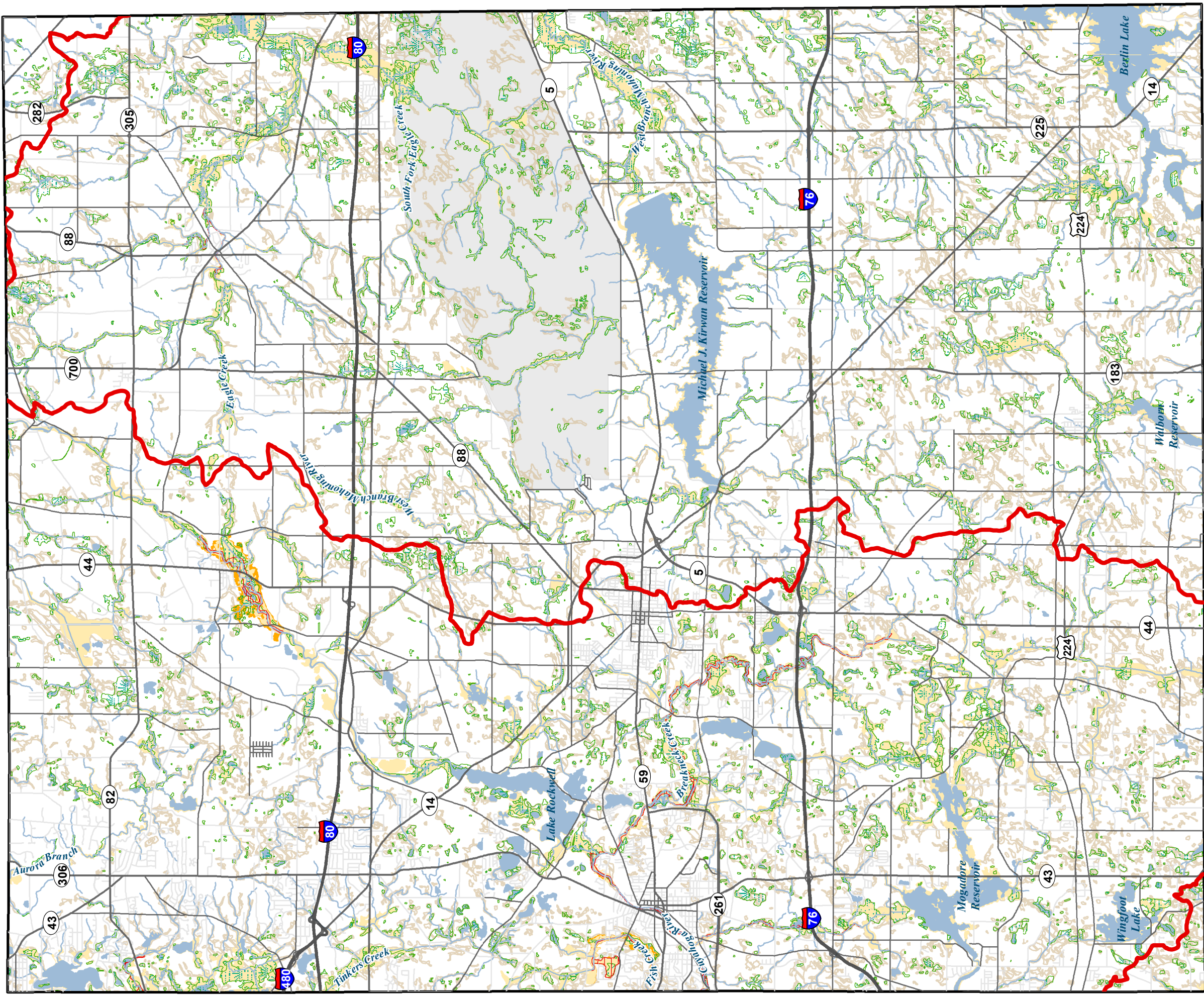
Map 4.1 Topography



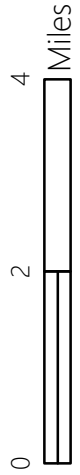
Map date: 6/28/21

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Watersheds, USDA-NRCS, USGS, EPA, 2020

Map 4.2 Watersheds



- Ohio-Erie Divide
- Streams & Rivers
- Water
- Wetlands
- Hydric Soils
- Camp Garfield
- Flood Hazard Area
- Floodway
- 100-Year Floodplain
- 500-Year Floodplain



Map date: 8/19/21

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Flood Hazard Areas, FEMA FIRM, 2013; Wetlands, NWI USFWS, imagery date 2007, updated 2019; Hydric Soils, Portage County Soil Survey digital version, updated 2017.

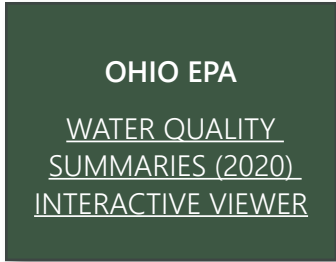
Map 4.3 Surface Water Resources

practices like fertilizer and pesticide applications, manufacturing processes, malfunctioning on-site wastewater treatment systems, and other illicit discharges.

Under the Clean Water Act, every state must adopt water quality standards to protect, maintain, and improve water quality. The goal is to restore water quality to a level suitable for fishing and swimming (also known as fishable/swimmable). The water quality standards feed into total maximum daily load (TMDL) calculations which create a foundation for permit limitations regulating the discharge of pollutants to surface waters under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program.

Total Maximum Daily Loads

All waters in Ohio are evaluated based on Aquatic Life (Warmwater or Coldwater Habitats), Fish Consumption, Recreation, and Water Supply. Under these four categories are over 30 parameters that are evaluated and considered. Any water body above acceptable levels for a parameter is considered impaired. Under the Clean Waters Act, Ohio must develop a TMDL for all waters identified on the Section 303(d) list which are considered impaired according to the state's priority rankings. Total Maximum Daily Loads or TMDLs specify the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed to enter a water body and still allow that water body to meet water quality standards for that specific pollutant. Waters in Ohio are evaluated by watershed at the HUC 12 level for impairments. There are portions of 30 HUC 12 watersheds in Portage County. For more information on impaired waters visit the US EPA's website at mywaterway.epa.gov and search by community. The Ohio EPA also has developed a website for viewing TMDL status as identified in the 2020 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report.



Stormwater

Stormwater is rainwater that runs off impervious or compact surfaces such as driveways, streets, parking lots, farm fields, lawns, and drains down storm drains

or through open ditch systems emptying untreated into local rivers, streams, lakes, or ponds. Anything dumped down a storm drain goes directly to the local water body.

In 1990, the NPDES program was formulated under the Clean Water Act to address stormwater runoff and reduce or eliminate the amount of pollution entering the waterways ultimately increasing water quality. NPDES Phase I targets medium to large municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) serving populations greater than 100,000 along with runoff from construction activity disturbing an area greater than five acres. Phase II covers small operators of MS4s and small construction activities that disturb greater than one acre but less than five acres.

Communities affected by NPDES Phase II include Portage County, City of Aurora, City of Kent, City of Ravenna, City of Streetsboro, Sugar Bush Knolls, Kent State University, Brimfield Township, Franklin Township, Ravenna Township, Rootstown Township, and Suffield Township (Portage SWCD, 2020). Each of these communities must develop and implement a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) addressing six minimum control measures stipulated by the EPA. Portage County has a current SWMP; however, illicit discharges still impact water quality. The Portage County Stormwater Management Program was created to help township homeowners repair or replace failing septic systems. A letter from the Portage County Combined Health District stating that there is an illicit discharge from the HSTS is necessary to qualify for the program.

Riparian Corridors

One of the recommendations from TMDL reports, the Portage County Watershed Plan, and from the Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization (NEFCO) is the creation of designated riparian corridors. These corridors run along streams, lakes, and wetlands and contain stripes of vegetation which are provide a buffer against pollution entering the water system. Vegetation slows down the rate of runoff giving time for sediment to settle and water to percolate filtering through the soil, removing pollutants, and recharging the groundwater. In addition, trees and shrub roots help stabilize stream banks and prevent

LAND RESOURCES

erosion.

Damages and associated repairs from flooding have been high for both homeowners and communities in Portage County (see 4.2.4 Floodplains). Riparian corridor protection is encouraged as a method of improving water quality and floodplain protection. Many communities chose to delineate riparian corridors through zoning. Zoning can be used to establish:

- An overlay district which retains the regulations of the underlying district.
- Performance standards which establish objectives that must meet a minimum standard before development is approved. An example of this is when a minimum threshold for reducing pollutant runoff must be met. Performance standards may be incentivized to exceed the minimum threshold by allowing density bonuses.
- Resource protection zoning which establishes a natural resource right-of-way with either a fixed buffer width or a floating width determined before construction begins.

In general, the first 25 feet is the most important area to protect between the stream and any development. To reduce pollution, a 100-foot buffer must be protected by a setback or have

**CHAGRIN RIVER
WATERSHED PARTNERS:
RIPARIAN SETBACKS**
<https://crwp.org/riparian-setbacks/>

limited development to low impact development (Otto, B., 2004). The Chagrin River Watered Partners have dedicated resources to guide communities through establishing riparian setbacks.

Groundwater

Groundwater provides most of Portage County's drinking and industrial water supplies, making it one of the County's most valuable resources to protect. Quality, quantity, and availability are important aspects to consider when planning for future development types and densities.

Among the questions that must be asked before developing a new groundwater supply include the potential aquifer yield rate and the long-term safe yield rate of a well field. Care must also be taken to prevent pollution of groundwater by man-made contaminants such as chemicals, farm runoff, septic tank seepage, and sedimentation from poorly managed development.

Availability

Portage County has two types of aquifers: unconsolidated sand and gravel aquifers and sandstone bedrock (consolidated) aquifers. Unconsolidated sand and gravel aquifers, also called buried valley aquifers, are typically the most productive water bearing formations. Buried valleys were created by pre-glacial and glacial streams which were backfilled with sand, gravel, and other glacial drift deposits as the glaciers advanced and receded. As shown in Map 4.5, the western side of Portage County has access to sand and gravel aquifers with yield rates from five gallons per minute (gpm) to over 500 gpm. The sandstone bedrock aquifers (Map 4.4)



Map 4.4 Groundwater Availability: Bedrock Aquifers. See Map 4.5 for legend and unconsolidated aquifer information.

provide rates from five gpm to 100 gpm and cover most of Portage County. Wells need a rate of at least five gpm to be considered a sustainable source of domestic water supply.

Pollution Potential

Groundwater is growing in importance as population, production, and consumption increase nationwide. Groundwater resources may be vulnerable to contamination from faulty septic systems, improper chemical storage containers, seepage from landfills, and agricultural runoff. Buried valley aquifers, in particular, are sensitive to pollution due to the rapid or short recharge pathways which allow both water and pollution to quickly enter the aquifer.

Portage County lies within the Glaciated Central hydrogeologic region. The county is covered by a variable thickness glacial till and outwash sands and gravels that have a moderate to high pollution potential index. The county is crossed by a network of buried valley aquifers that constitute a major groundwater resource and have a moderate to high vulnerability to contamination (Angle & Sprowls, 2011). In general, Portage County's hydrogeology is comprised of buried valleys, glacial outwash, and kames. These glacial deposits are underlain by sandstone; both are used for domestic and industrial supplies. In the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) report, Ground Water Pollution Potential of Portage County, Ohio, eleven hydrogeologic settings were identified with groundwater pollution potential indexes ranging from 71 to 204 for general pollution potential and 87 to 230 for pesticide pollution potential. Map 4.6 shows both pollution potential indices for both the general pollution potential of 140 and above and for the pesticide pollution potential of 160 and above. The highest pollution potential in the County follows the buried valley system although moderate to high vulnerability to pollution also follows the major drainage ways.

There are several source water protection areas with defined one and five-year travel times as well as corridor management zones and emergency management zones found throughout the County. These source water protection areas assist in the protection of drinking water by restricting certain activities such as animal feed operations, landfills, and other operations that may result in a spill that

could contaminate the ground and surface waters. According to the Ohio EPA, Portage County, Garrettsville, Kent, and Ravenna have developed drinking water source protection plans as of April 2, 2021 to protect their public water systems.

Hazardous Waste

Hazardous materials and waste are generated by many industries. The EPA regulates three categories of hazardous waste generators by amount of waste produced per month: very small, small, and large quantity generators. There are 17 large quantity generators in Portage County. Large quantity generators generate 1,000 kilograms per month or more of hazardous waste or one kilogram or more of acutely hazardous waste. In addition, there are several contaminated or brownfield sites which are undergoing or have completed cleanup activities including:

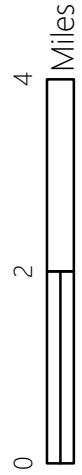
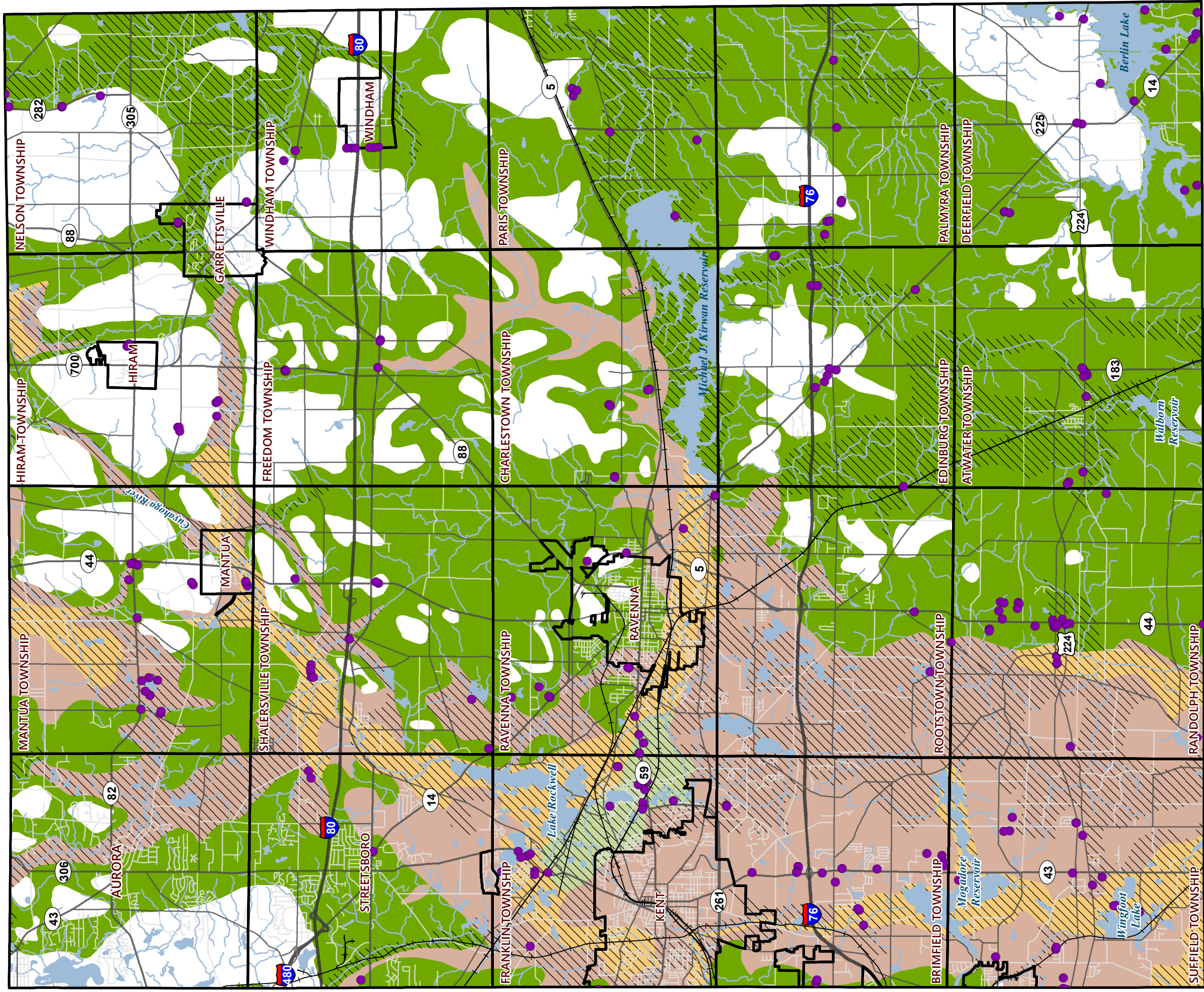
- One site on the National Priorities List
- Nine sites listed under Superfund
- Several RCRA cleanup sites
- Several brownfield properties

Air Quality

The Clean Air Act required the EPA to designate National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) which set a maximum level for six criteria pollutants that may be harmful to human health and the environment. Portage County's air quality is monitored by the Akron Regional Air Quality Management District. The Akron Regional Air Quality Management District monitors for particulate matter (PM) 2.5 and PM10, ozone and sulfur dioxide. Portage County, along with Summit, Medina, Lorain, Cuyahoga, Geauga, and Lake Counties was designated as moderate nonattainment for the 2015 eight-hour ozone standard at the end of 2020. The region has six years to come into compliance.

Industrial Operations

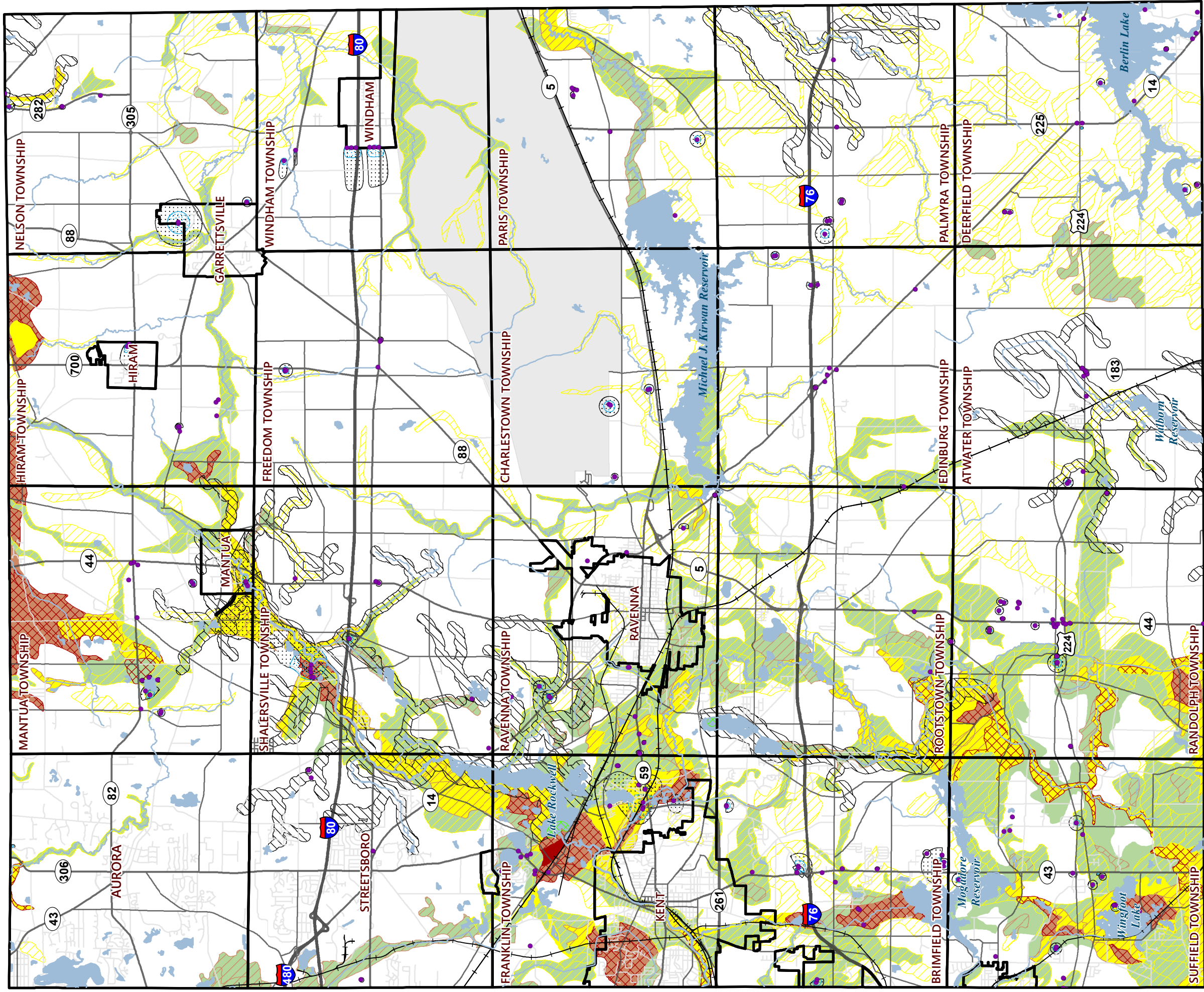
Sand and gravel are common raw materials used in asphalt, concrete, mortar, landscaping, shingles, soil additives and many other items. Portage County is the second highest sand and gravel producer in the state by ton and accounts for 13.2% of statewide sales as of the 2019 Annual Industrial Minerals Report by ODNR's Division of Geologic Survey. There are fifteen active sand and gravel mines found mostly



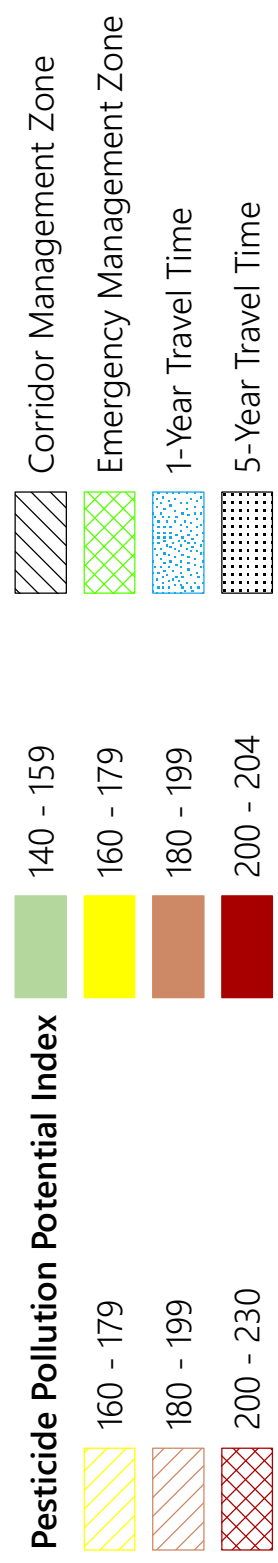
Map date: 6/29/21

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Aquifers, ODNR, 2000, updated 2018; Wells, OEPA, 2018; Railroad, ODOT TIMS, 2020

Map 4.5 Groundwater Availability: Unconsolidated Aquifers



Pollution Potential Index Source Water Protection Areas

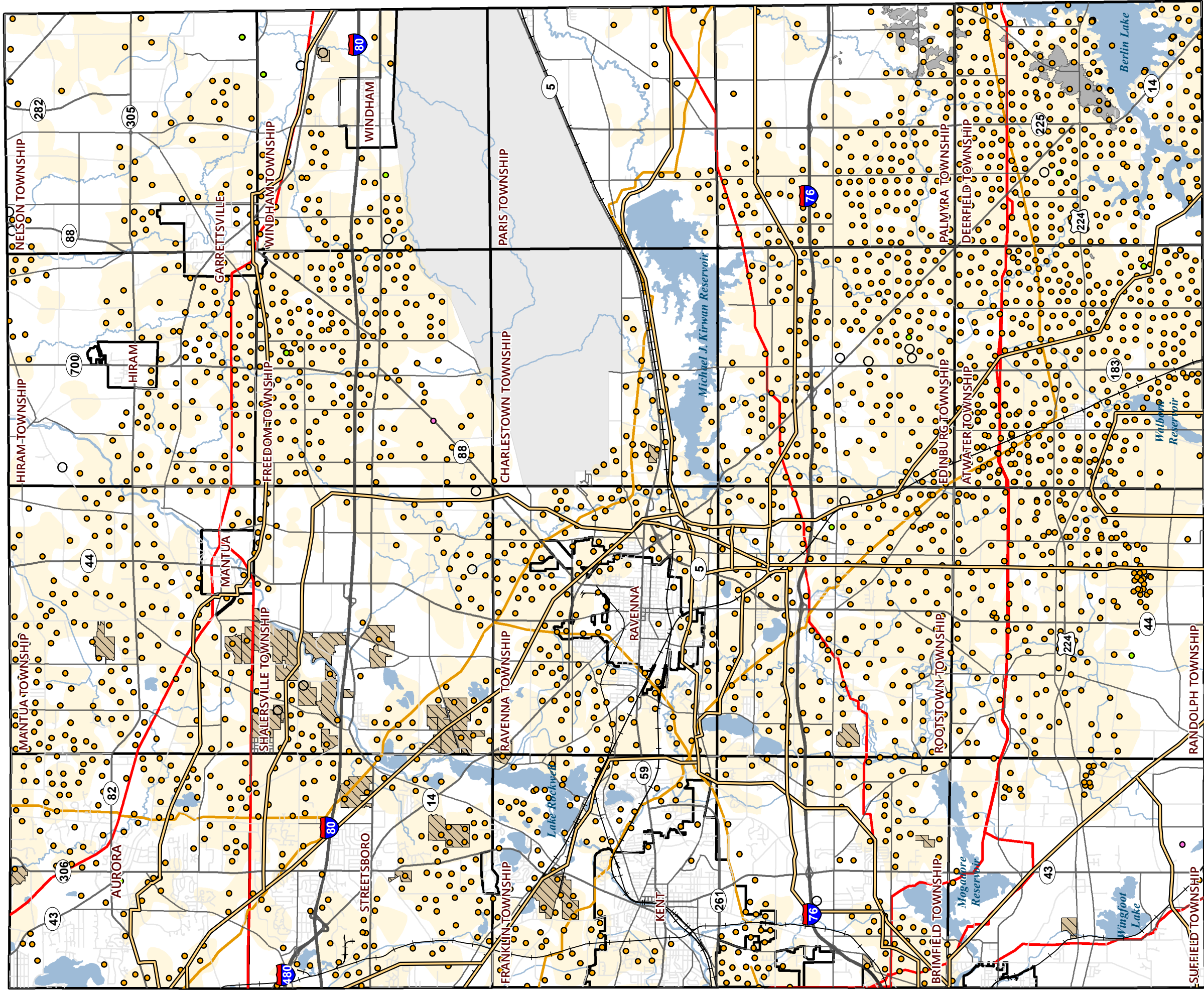


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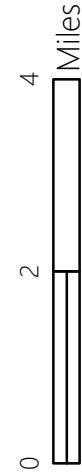
Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; GWPP, ODNr, 1998; SWPA, OEPA, 2020; Wells, OEPA, 2018; Railroad, ODOT TMS, 2020



Map 4.6 Groundwater Pollution Potential



- Oil/Gas Fields
- Gravel
- Transmission Line
- Sand
- Abandoned Mine
- Camp Garfield
- Gas and/or oil well
- Injection well
- Permitted location
- Stratigraphy test
- Pipelines
- Natural Gas
- Oil, Other



Map date: July 1, 2021

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Wells, ODNR, 2021; Mines & Minerals, ODNR, 2018; Major Pipelines, AMATS, updated by PCRPC, 2015; Transmission Lines, AMATS, updated by PCRPC, 2006.

Map 4.7 Industrial Operations

Threatened and Endangered Species

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the ORC 1531.25 protect species that are in danger of becoming extinct throughout or in a significant portion of their range as well as species like to become endangered in the foreseeable future. The ODNR Division of Wildlife Management recognizes four additional categories which it regulates including species of special concern, special interest, extirpated, and

extinct. Table 4.2 lists plant and animal species listed as threatened or endangered with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the state of Ohio. The table is in alphabetical order by status and by common name; scientific names are not listed unless there is no common name. Conservation efforts and funding are prioritized by ODNR and by the USFWS by the species' classification. There are no designated critical habitats in Portage County, Ohio.



Bunchberry. Photo Credit: ODNR



Common Tern. Photo Credit: USFWS

Table 4.2 Portage County's Threatened and Endangered Species		
Species	Federal Status	State Status
Eastern massasauga	Threatened	
Indiana bat	Endangered	
Mitchell's satyr butterfly	Endangered	
Northern long-eared bat	Threatened	Threatened
Northern monkshood	Threatened	Endangered
American bittern		Endangered
American emerald		Endangered
American water-milfoil		Endangered
Bayberry		Endangered
Black bear		Endangered
Black tern		Endangered
Bog bedstraw		Endangered
Bristly smartweed		Endangered
Brownish sedge		Endangered
Brush-tipped emerald		Endangered
Bunchberry		Endangered
Common tern		Endangered
Dragon's mouth		Endangered
Drooping wood sedge		Endangered
Early coral-root		Endangered
Eastern pondmussel		Endangered
Frosted whiteface		Endangered
Fuzzy hypnum moss		Endangered
Graceful underwing		Endangered
Handsome sedge		Endangered
Iowa darter		Endangered
Labrador-tea		Endangered
Lilypad forktail		Endangered
Little prickly sedge		Endangered
Long's sedge		Endangered
Mountain bindweed		Endangered
Mountain brook lamprey		Endangered
Mud sedge		Endangered

LAND RESOURCES

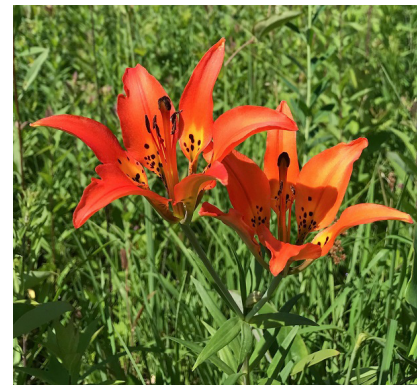
Table 4.2 Portage County's Threatened and Endangered Species		
Species	Federal Status	State Status
Narrow-necked Pohl's moss		Endangered
Navelwort		Endangered
Northern harrier		Endangered
Northern St. John's wort		Endangered
One-coned club-moss		Endangered
Philadelphia panic grass		Endangered
Pocketbook		Endangered
Pointed sallow		Endangered
Primrose-leaved violet		Endangered
Racket-tailed emerald		Endangered
Robbins' pondweed		Endangered
Robbins' spike-rush		Endangered
Small bur-reed		Endangered
Smooth greensnake		Endangered
Swaying-rush		Endangered
Tall cinquefoil		Endangered
Torrey's bulrush		Endangered
Thread-like naiad		Endangered
Tufted moisture-loving moss		Endangered
Two-scaped bladderwort		Endangered
Two-seeded sedge		Endangered
Upland sandpiper		Endangered
Variiegated scouring-rush		Endangered
Variable yellow-eyed grass		Endangered
Western mountain-ash		Endangered
White-buttons		Endangered
White fringed orchid		Endangered
White lady's slipper		Endangered
White-stemmed pondweed		Endangered
Wood lily		Endangered
Wrinkled-leaved marsh hypnum		Endangered
American eel		Threatened
Bearded wheat grass		Threatened
Bog willow		Threatened
Buckbean		Threatened
Bunchflower		Threatened
Bush's sedge		Threatened
Fagitana littera		Threatened
False melic		Threatened
Few-seeded sedge		Threatened



Northern Monkshood. Photo Credit: ODNR



Showy Lady's Slipper. Photo Credit: USFWS/Charles Peirce



Wood Lily. Photo Credit: ODNR



Pitcher Plant. Photo Credit: The Nature Conservancy/Emily Speelman



Trumpeter Swan. Photo Credit: USFWS

Table 4.2 Portage County's Threatened and Endangered Species		
Species	Federal Status	State Status
Flat-leaved bladderwort		Threatened
Flat-stemmed pondweed		Threatened
Grass-pink		Threatened
Green spike-rush		Threatened
Harlequin darter		Threatened
Highbush-cranberry		Threatened
Hoary willow		Threatened
Keeled bur-reed		Threatened
Lake chubsucker		Threatened
Least bittern		Threatened
Leggett's pinweed		Threatened
Lesser panicled sedge		Threatened
Marsh five-finger		Threatened
Mountain-fringe		Threatened
Narrow-leaved blue-eyed grass		Threatened
Northern blue-eyed grass		Threatened
Northern bluet		Threatened
Pitcher-plant		Threatened
Psilotreta indecisa		Threatened
Rock-harlequin		Threatened
Rose pogonia		Threatened
Sharp-glumed manna grass		Threatened
Showy lady's slipper		Threatened
Silvery sedge		Threatened
Simple willow-herb		Threatened
Sloan's crayfish		Threatened
Small cranberry		Threatened
Southern hairy panic grass		Threatened
Spotted turtle		Threatened
Swamp birch		Threatened
Tawny cotton-grass		Threatened
Trumpeter swan		Threatened

Data sources: ODNR Portage County State Listed Animal Species, March 2020; ODNR Portage County State Listed Plant Species, July 2016; USFWS Ohio: County Distribution of Federally-Listed Endangered, Threatened, and Proposed Species, January 2018.

LAND RESOURCES

on the western side of the County with the majority of the mines being located in Shalersville Township and Streetsboro. Potential oil and gas fields cover the entire County, many of which have active oil and gas wells (Map 4.7).

Local sand and gravel extraction may provide economical construction materials to nearby communities; however, drawbacks include truck traffic, noise, disruption of scenic rural views, safety concerns, and potential pollution. Oil and gas wells may impact surrounding homes and businesses as well as local roads due to truck traffic.

Cultural Resources

Preserving cultural and archeological sites is crucial to retaining heritage and history. By preserving the

past, preservation can strengthen the current and future community. There are many benefits to historic preservation which can be categorized by four major groups.

1. Culture. Historic buildings connect people to the past and create a sense of identity and place for a community.
2. Education. Maintaining historic sites provides a connection to the past for students, architects, builders, and communities
3. Economy. Historic buildings and sites can create vibrant and cultural downtowns which draw tourism and festivals. This creates investment, revenue and economic growth over the long term.
4. Environment. Rehabilitating and reusing existing structures can help reduce urban sprawl, the cost

NAME	ADDRESS	CITY/TOWNSHIP	LISTED YEAR	AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE
Atwater Congregational Church	1237 SR 183	Atwater	1973	Architecture
Aurora Center Historic District	Both sides of SR 306 from and including Pioneer Trail to SR 82, also Maple Lane	Aurora	1974	Industry, Commerce, Architecture, Religion, Social History
Aurora Train Station	13 New Hudson Rd.	Aurora	1986	Commerce, Transportation, Architecture
C. R. Howard House	411 E. Garfield St.	Aurora	1974	Architecture
Kent, Zeno, House	2.5 miles S.W. of Aurora on Aurora-Hudson Rd.	Aurora	1973	Architecture
John Diver House and Store Building	9465 Akron-Canfield Rd.	Deerfield	1982	Commerce, Architecture
Frederick Wadsworth House	4889 SR 14	Edinburg	1975	Architecture, Social History
Freedom Congregational Church	Town Green on SR 88	Freedom	1975	Architecture
Mott Drug Store	8107 Main St	Garrettsville	1996	Architecture, Commerce
Ellenwood House	NW of Garrettsville on SR 82	Garrettsville	1975	Architecture
James A. Garfield House	6825 Hinsdale St.	Hiram	1975	Architecture, Politics / Government
John Johnson Farm	6203 Pioneer Trail	Hiram	1976	Religion, Social History
Thomas F. Young House	Wakefield and Garfield Streets.	Hiram	1976	Commerce, Architecture

Table 4.3 National Register of Historic Places Listings in Portage County				
NAME	ADDRESS	CITY/TOWNSHIP	LISTED YEAR	AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE
John Davey House	338 Woodard St	Kent	1975	Architecture
Aaron Ferrey House	5058 Sunny Brook Rd	Kent	1974	Architecture
Franklin Hotel	176 E. Main St.	Kent	2013	Social History, Community Planning and Development
Franklin Township Hall	218 Gougler Ave.	Kent	1975	Social History
L.N. Gross Company Building	315 Gougler Ave.	Kent	2016	Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Architecture
Hopkins, Benjamin F., Stone Building	Standing Rock Cemetery	Kent	1982	Industry, Architecture
Kent Industrial District	Roughly bounded by Main, River, and S. Franklin Streets. and S property line of Portage Co.	Kent	1974	Industry, Commerce, Transportation, Architecture
Kent Jail	947 Middlebury Rd.	Kent	2001	Architecture
Kent, Charles House	125 N. Pearl St.	Kent	1978	Architecture
Masonic Temple	409 W. Main St.	Kent	1974	Politics/Government, Architecture
May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site	.5 mi. SE of the intersection of E. Main St. and S. Lincoln St.	Kent	2010	Social History, Politics/Government, Law
Ohio State Normal College At Kent	Hilltop Dr. on Kent State University campus	Kent	1975	Landscape Architecture, Education, Architecture
Olin, Arvin, House	1425 Ravenna Rd.	Kent	1995	Exploration/Settlement, Architecture
West Main Street District	409-625 W. Main St.	Kent	1977	Landscape Architecture, Commerce, Architecture, Social History
Crafts William H., House	4619 W. Prospect St.	Mantua	1982	Commerce, Politics/Government, Architecture
Hine, Horace L., House	4624 W. Prospect St.	Mantua	1976	Architecture, Social History
Mantua Center School	11741 Mantua Center Rd.	Mantua Township	2013	Architecture, Community Planning and Development
Mantua Station Brick Commercial District	Main and Prospect Streets.	Mantua	1974	Commerce, Architecture

LAND RESOURCES

Table 4.3 National Register of Historic Places Listings in Portage County				
NAME	ADDRESS	CITY/TOWNSHIP	LISTED YEAR	AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE
Mantua Center District	Roughly bounded by OH 82 and Mantua Center Rd.	Mantua Township	1974	Architecture
Palmyra Center Hotel	OH 225 and SR 18	Palmyra	1976	Commerce, Architecture
Crystal Lake Stock Farm	4655 Hayes Rd.	Ravenna	1986	Agriculture, Architecture
Beebe, Horace Y., House	6538 Cleveland Rd.	Ravenna	1983	Politics/Government, Architecture
Byers, John F., House	5551 S. Prospect	Ravenna	2008	Architecture
Cleveland Worsted Mills Redfern Mill	S. Chestnut St.	Ravenna	1988	Industry, Architecture
Cottage Hill Farm	5555 Newton Falls Rd., Ravenna Township	Ravenna	1993	Industry, Architecture
East Main Street Historic District	E. Main St. between Clinton and Linden Streets.	Ravenna	1985	Commerce, Architecture
Etna House	219 1/2 W. Main St.	Ravenna	1985	Commerce, Architecture
Griffin, A. B.,-O. H. Griffin House	409 S. Walnut St.	Ravenna	1985	Art; Politics/Government; Architecture
Alexander B. Griffin House	417 S. Walnut St.	Ravenna	1987	Industry, Politics/Government, Architecture
Nelson, Luman, House	8219 SR 44	Ravenna	1993	Architecture
Phoenix Block	NE corner of Main and Chestnut Streets.	Ravenna	1985	Architecture
Reed, C. A., House	299 W. Riddle St.	Ravenna	1985	Architecture, Social History
Riddle Block	Public Sq., Chestnut, and Main Streets.	Ravenna	1976	Commerce, Architecture
Riddle Block #11	133-137 E. Main St.	Ravenna	1985	Industry, Architecture
Riddle Block #5	141--145 E. Main St.	Ravenna	1985	Industry
Riddle Block #9	113-115 W. Main St.	Ravenna	1985	Industry, Architecture

Data source: NPS 2021. Listed Properties, National Register of Historic Places.<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>

of extending utilities, and conversion of agriculture and greenspace.

OHIO HISTORY CONNECTION

State Historic Preservation Office

614-298-2000

<https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve>

Federal

The National Park Service (NPS) maintains a list of the Nation's places which are worthy of preservation called the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The goal of the NRHP is "to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological sites" (NPS, 2021). Portage County has 41 buildings, one site, and seven districts are listed on the NRHP (see Table 4.3 and Map 4.7). The Kent State Shootings Site is also a National Historic Landmark and is considered significant to history on a national scale.

State

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) maintains the Ohio Historic Inventory (OHI) which was created in 1973 to document historic architectural resources. It contains any building over 50 years old which has been surveyed for eligibility on the NRHP, surveyed under Section 106 for federal funds, or that was submitted by an interested party. Some of the structures shown on the OHI may have been demolished or abandoned. Several locations in Portage County were surveyed and added to the OHI in the 1980s with numerous sites being added since then. Local township historical societies, the Portage County Historical Society, and the Ohio History Connection have more information on these sites. Townships interested in historic preservation may want to conduct a more recent survey to identify potential historic structures and sites.

Conservation

Critical Natural Areas

In 2006, Portage County finalized the Portage County Watershed Plan which was meant to conserve natural resources and foster natural resources stewardship. It used aerial imagery from 2000 to identify and rate wetlands and woodlands by conservation priority. The highest number of points were awarded for:

- large undisturbed areas
- areas that provided an important buffer
- places that had multiple vegetation communities
- proximity to riparian corridors, mature woods, or significant wetlands
- vernal pool
- connectivity to protected areas
- areas within 500 feet of an EPA designated high quality stream
- areas within 300 feet of a named stream
- areas adjacent to source water protection areas

Although some of these ratings have likely changed since this plan was written, the priority areas provide a guide for the location critical natural areas throughout the County. Map 4.9 shows critical natural areas identified by the 2006 Portage County Watershed Plan as well as protected areas including conservation areas, and parks. Areas with the highest ranked priority wetlands and woodlands are predominantly in riparian areas, floodplains and lakes, bordering existing preserved lands, and in and around Camp Garfield.

The Ohio EPA maintains a stream and wetland mitigation application as well as potential vernal pool restoration site application which provide more detail on high quality woodlands and wetlands. These applications are located at <https://epa.ohio.gov/gis>.

Land Suitability Analysis

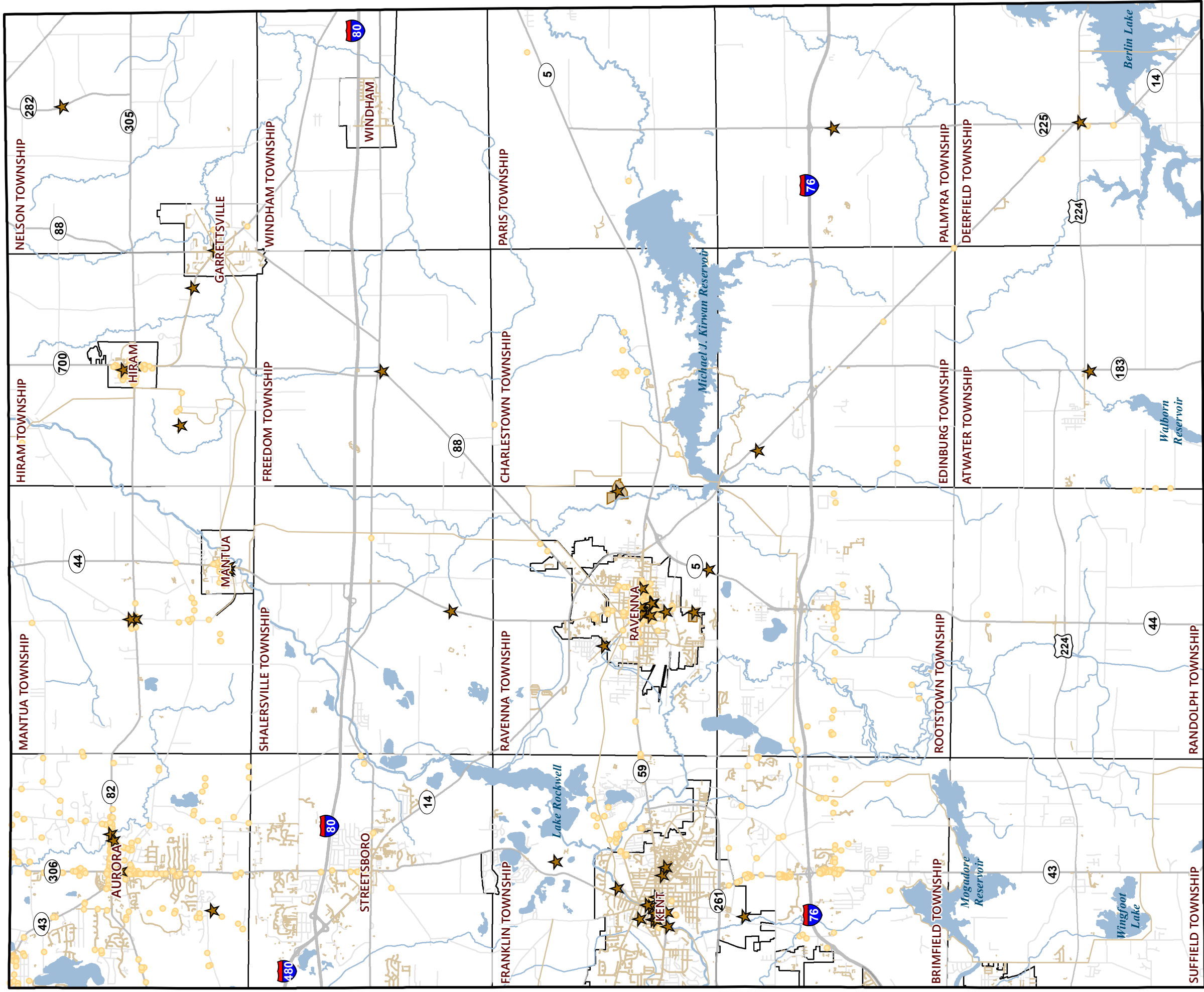
Map 4.10 shows the composite environmental constraints for Portage County. The environmental constraints map includes:

- Wetlands, streams, and other waterbodies from the NWI and National Hydrologic Dataset (NHD).
- Floodplains from FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps.
- Steep slopes, meaning slopes over 15%.
- Presence of conservation areas and/or high-quality wetlands and woodlands.
- Source water protection and designated emergency management areas. These are areas which may limit certain land uses to protect drinking water.

It is important to note that wetlands from the NWI are an estimate, not exact. Any development near a wetland location will need a wetland assessment and permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers

LAND RESOURCES

and Ohio EPA before construction begins. Locations with the environmental factors listed above are least suitable to development and should be avoided when possible. This map will be combined with information in Chapter 9, Developable Areas, to display areas by development suitability



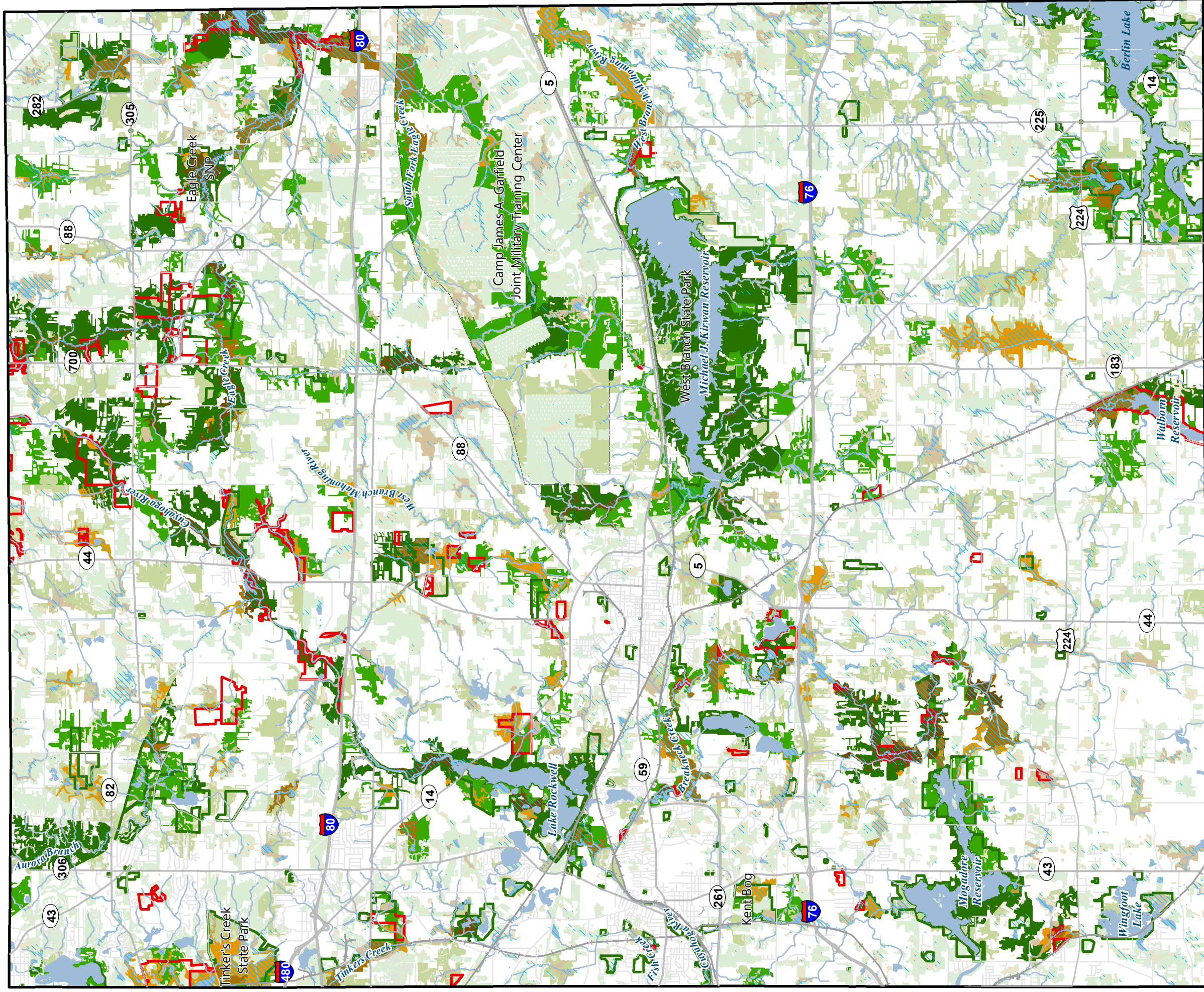
- ★ Historic Buildings & Sites
- Ohio Historic Inventory Location
- Sidewalks & Trails
- Stream
- Water
- Historic District



Map date: 9/22/2021

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Historic Buildings & Districts, NRHP / NPS, 2021; Ohio Historic Inventory, Ohio History Connection, 2020 & 2002.

Map 4.8 Cultural Resources

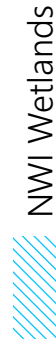


Priority Rankings

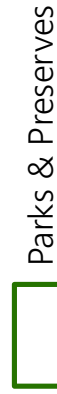
Streams & Rivers



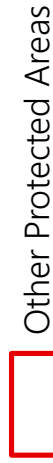
Water



NWI Wetlands



Parks & Preserves



Other Protected Areas

Wetlands

Low

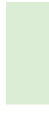


High



Woodlands

Low



High



Map date: 8/19/21

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Parks & Protected Areas, PCRPC and various Park Departments, 2021; Wetlands & Woodlands, PCWP, 2006.

Map 4.9 Critical Natural Areas

5 Community Services

Community services includes schools, police and fire services, sewer and water provisions (discussed further in Chapter 7 Infrastructure), parks, recreation, and civic facilities. These services ensure the basic needs of residents such as health, safety, and recreation as well as provide for community involvement. They help residents, businesses, and visitors feel like they are part of a community and are being provided for. Their provision is essential for the long-term success of the County.

Civic Facilities

Civic facilities create the Core of the County. The core functions of the county are clustered in two locations:

- Downtown Ravenna (County Administration Building, Courthouse, Engineer’s Office)
- Infirmary Road in Shalersville Township (Water Resources, Sheriff’s Office, Jail, Juvenile Detention, Airport)

There are also several outlying offices in Brimfield and Ravenna Township. Map 5.1 shows civic facilities for county government as well as fire and police, health care facilities, airport, jail, universities, food banks, etc.

Each Township holds a festival throughout the summer months. The Randolph Fair is a six-day event held in August each year that also serves as the County Fair. This is the main community event for the whole county and is a great opportunity to promote organizations and other events to a wide range of people. It is well attended by the county departments and agencies.

Other Civic Facilities

Other civic facilities in Portage County include:

- Camp Garfield Joint Military Training Center located in eastern Portage County
- Several Post offices
- Social Security Office, Ravenna
- And several other federal office buildings

Police and Fire

Portage County has 21 fire departments across 27 jurisdictions. The National Fire Protection Agency Standard 1710 specifies a total response time for the first fire engine of 5 minutes and 20 seconds for 90% of high priority incidents. Using four-, six-, and ten-minute drive times, a network analysis was run to develop an EMS Response Time map. Map 5.2 shows the response areas generated for each station. Note the following restrictions and assumptions:

- The response time map assumes that neighboring fire departments, such as the Garrettsville-Freedom-Nelson Joint Fire District and Hiram Fire Department, have functioning Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to share coverage.
- Avoids travel on roads labelled “Through Traffic Prohibited” and roads which prohibit “Emergency Vehicles” when another route is available.
- The analysis prioritizes the fastest route over shortest distance based on speed limits and cloud-sourced historical traffic data.

Map 5.2 shows a gap in service in Freedom, Nelson, Mantua, and Shalersville Townships; however, the majority of the unserved area is woodland and farmland with very few to no homes.

Health Care and Social Services

Health care and social services work to reduce the social determinants of health facing Portage County. According to the CDC, social determinants of health are defined as conditions in the places

COMMUNITY SERVICES

where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. The CDC's Healthy Outcomes 2030 identifies five key areas for improvement:

1. Healthcare Access and Quality
2. Education Access and Quality
3. Social and Community Context
4. Economic Stability
5. Neighborhood and Built Environment (CDC, 2021)

These issues can be addressed through better planning and coordination.

Portage County has one hospital, three health centers, and multiple urgent care facilities. University Hospitals (UH) Portage Medical Center is the County's only hospital. It is a 302-bed facility with a Level 3 Emergency Department, urgent care facilities, and a maternity ward. Other medical facilities in the County include:

- UH Streetsboro Health Center
- Akron Children's Hospital Pediatrics Portage Health Center
- UH Kent Health Center
- Federally Qualified Health Center (AxessPointe)

Health Departments:

- Portage County Combined General Health District
- Kent City Health Department

Health assessment information

In 2019, the Portage County Community Health Partners completed the 2019 Portage County Community Health Needs Assessment. The assessment is a comprehensive report on health and well-being of all Portage County residents, which identifies emerging issues and works to implement a vision of providing and maintaining quality of health and human services for all (Portage County Community Health Partners, 2019). Three priority areas were identified by the Community Health Needs Assessment and will be addressed through the Community Health Improvement Plan:

- Mental health, substance use and addiction
- Chronic disease
- Maternal, infant and child health

Additionally, community stakeholders and partners

will focus on the following factors that affect all three priority areas.

- Healthcare systems and access
- Social determinants of health
- Health equity

Social Services

The provision of social services play an important role in the well-being of County residents, helping to combat substance abuse, food insecurity, fiscal insecurity, and a range of other issues. In addition to the Mental Health and Recovery Board and the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities, there are eight mental health facilities in the County, listed below.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Townhall II | 4. Compass Recovery |
| 2. Family & Community Services | 5. Hope Village |
| 3. Coleman Professional Services | 6. AxessPointe |
| | 7. MedMark |
| | 8. Hope Town |

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is an issue for the County and falls under the CDC Healthy Outcomes key areas to address. A lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life due to insufficient money or other resources is defined as food insecurity. The USDA estimates that 10.5% or 13.8 million US households were food insecure at some point in 2020. Among households with children, this increases to 14.8% (USDA, 2021).

In 2019, the food insecurity rate was 12.7% in Portage County and was projected to be 15.2% in 2020 and 13.5% in 2021 (Feeding America, 2022). Nationally, COVID-19 has caused a large increase in food insecure households which is reflected in Portage County as well. According to the USDA, before the pandemic, food insecurity was at the lowest point in over 20 years (USDA 2021).

Portage County is served by several food pantries, as shown in Map 5.1, as well as the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank which provides food to many of the County's pantries. In 2020, the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank provided over 1.5 million meals and over 330,000 pounds of free produce to residents in Portage County. However, food pantries are primarily located in suburban and urban areas, leaving many of the rural communities unserved

or with long distances to travel to reach a location. According to the USDA, in general, rural communities often face hunger at higher rates to those who reside in urban areas due to lack of transportation to the nearest grocery store, food pantry, or food bank, higher rates of unemployment or underemployment, and lower wage industries. Addressing food deserts, operating mobile food pantries, assisting community members in enrolling in SNAP or other federal programs can help combat food insecurity.

Educational Institutions

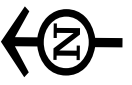
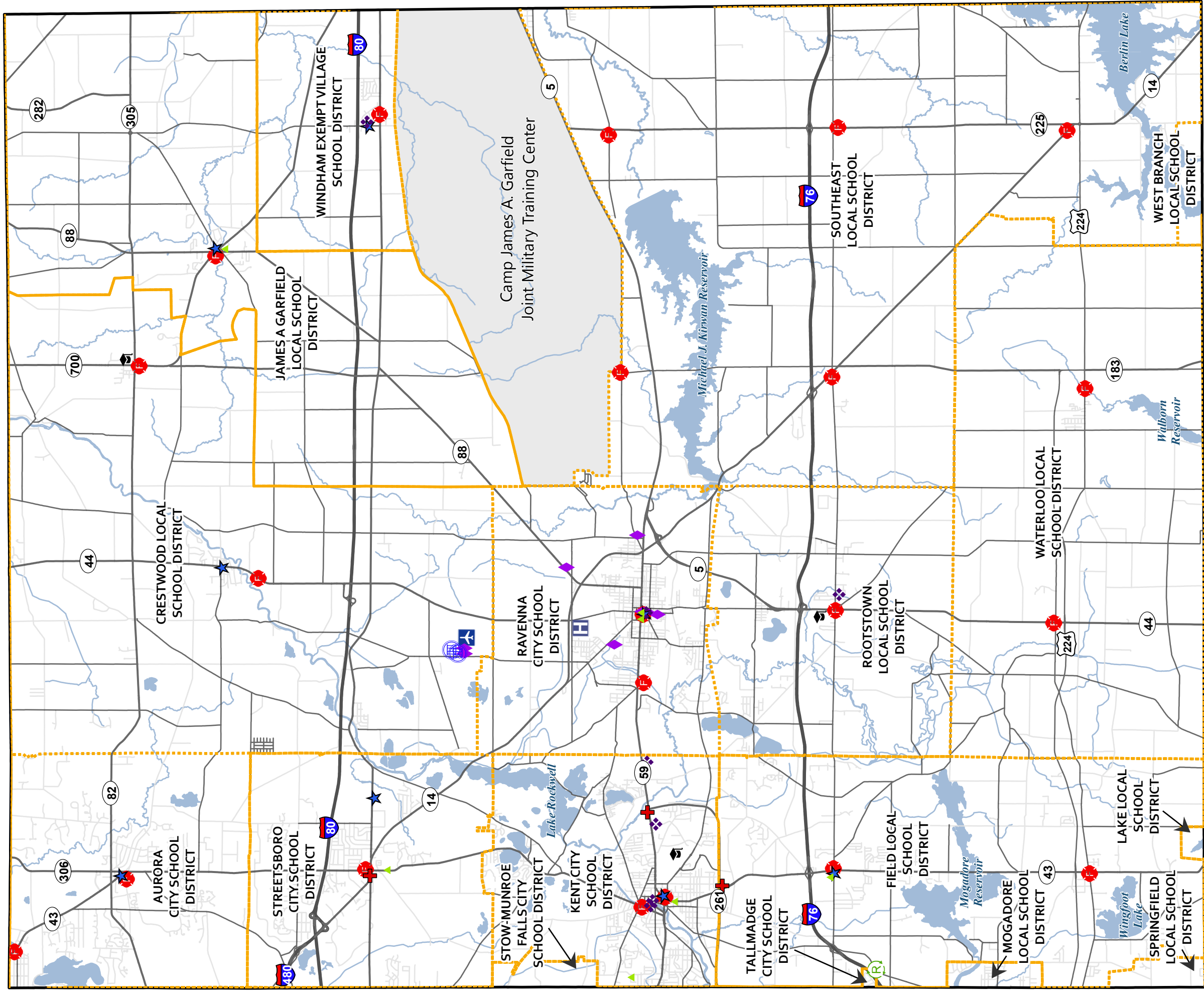
Portage County is home to three colleges and parts of 16 school districts. Kent State University and

NEOMED are publicly operated universities located in Kent and Rootstown Township. Hiram College is a private liberal arts college in Hiram Village. Portage County's school districts are listed in Table 5.1 and shown in Map 5.1 There were no school district ratings listed for the 2020-2021 school year district report cards due to changes in Ohio law. Reporting will begin again with the 2021-2022 school year.

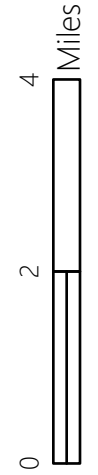
There are two vocational training centers that offer programs for high school students to gain experience in the trades before they graduate. Maplewood Career Center, located in the City of Ravenna, offers 22 vocational and career programs for high school

School District	Portage County Jurisdiction	School District Total Enrollment
Aurora City	Aurora	2,943
Bio-Med Science Academy STEM School (Public, Independent, STEM School)	Mahoning, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, and Portage Counties (located in Rootstown)	976
Crestwood Local	Hiram Village and Township, Mantua Village and Township, Shalersville Township	1,445
Field Local	Brimfield and Suffield Township	1,865
James A Garfield Local	Charlestown, Freedom, Garrettsville, Hiram Township, Nelson	1,217
Kent City	Kent, Sugar Bush Knolls, Franklin Township	2,293
Lake Local	Suffield Township (small corner of Township)	3,321
Mogadore Local	Mogadore	801
Ravenna City	Ravenna City, Ravenna Township, Shalersville Township	2,109
Rootstown Local	Ravenna and Rootstown Townships	989
Southeast Local	Charlestown, Deerfield, Edinburg, Palmyra, Paris Townships	1,371
Springfield Local	Suffield Township	1,977
Stow-Munroe Falls City	Franklin Township	5,112
Streetsboro City	Streetsboro	2,017
Tallmadge City	Tallmadge	2,363
Waterloo Local	Atwater, Deerfield, and Randolph Townships	863
West Branch Local	Deerfield Township	1,739
Windham Exempted Village	Windham Village and Township	468

Sources: Ohio Department of Education (October 2021). Ohio School Report Cards. Retrieved March 1, 2022 <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/home>



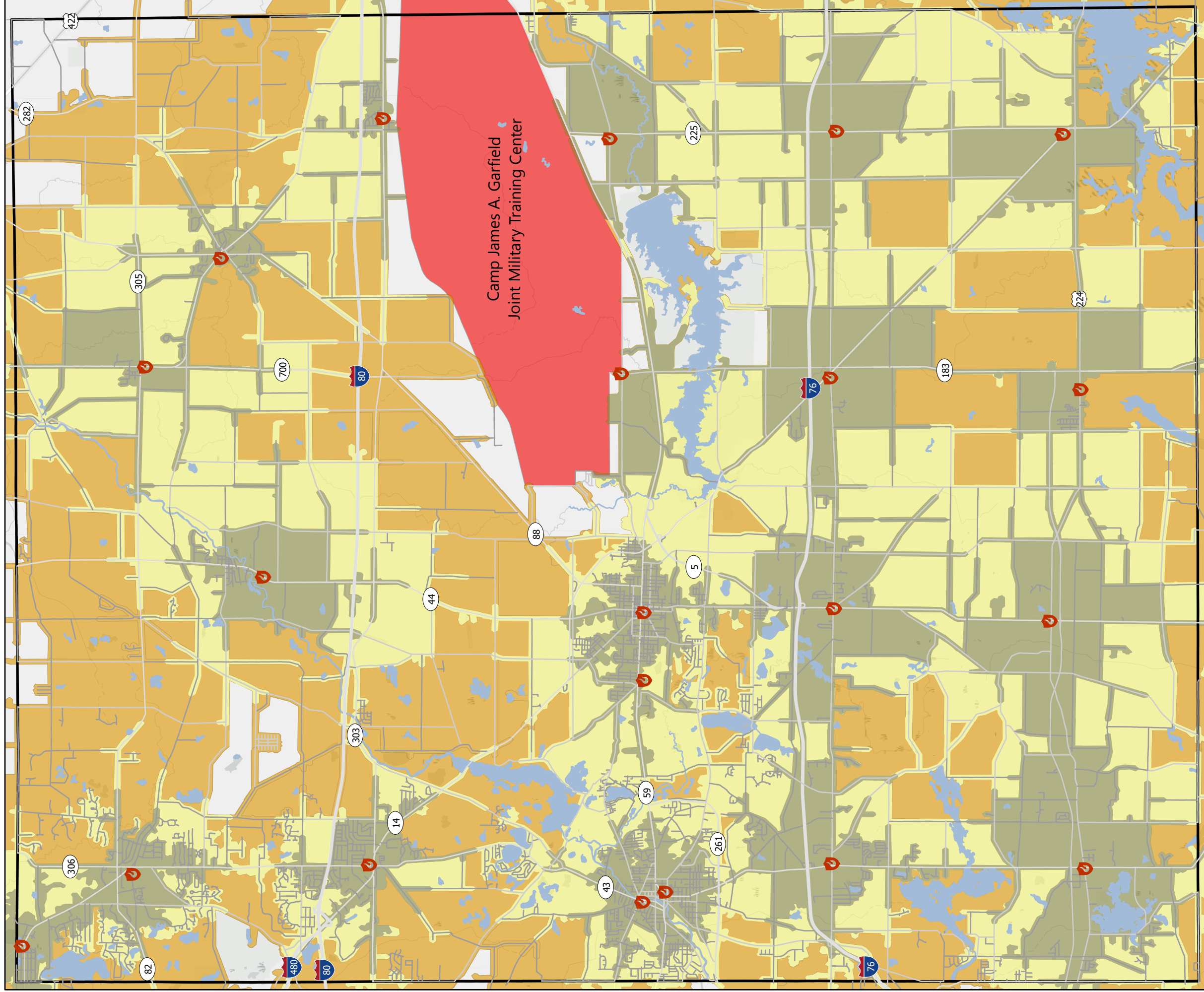
- Airport
- Courthouse
- Fire Department
- County Offices
- Hospital
- Jail
- Police Department
- Recycling Center
- Mental Health Facility
- College/University
- Health Center
- Food Bank or Pantry
- School Districts
- Camp Garfield








Map date: 2/15/22

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Community Facilities, PCRPC, 2022; Railroads, ODOT, 2021; School Districts, ODOT, 2021

Map 5.1 Community Facilities



-  Fire Department
-  Camp Garfield
-  10 minutes
-  6 minutes
-  4 minutes



Map date: 10/29/21

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2021; Water, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC 2012; EMS Response Times, PCRPC/ESRI, 2021
 Basemap: ESRI, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, MET/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA

Map 5.2 EMS Response Time

students as well as many different instructional courses and certification options for adults. Maplewood is open to most students in Portage County aside from students from Aurora, Kent, and Tallmadge High Schools. Kent Theodore Roosevelt Career Technical Education, located in the City of Kent, offers 28 vocational and career programs for high school students only. Kent Theodore Roosevelt Career Technical Education is open to students from Cuyahoga Falls, Hudson, Kent, Stow-Munroe Falls, Tallmadge City Schools and Woodridge Local Schools.

The Manufacturing Mentorship Program was established in 2020 by Ohio House Bill 166 which allows companies to host in-house mentee programs that teach high school students the basics of manufacturing through part-time employment. Any 16- or 17-year-old who wants to participate in the program is eligible without the requirement that they commit to a technical education program or career center. Not all students are able to enroll in technical education programs through their school districts and this program is a new opportunity to expand the school to work pipeline in the county.

Parks and Recreation

Portage County has several tiers of parks and recreation offerings from state parks and preserves to county parks to local parks as shown in Map 5.3. The Portage Park District administers 17 parks and three regional trails as well as programs and events throughout the year. A breakdown of state, county, and non-profit parks is contained in Table 5.2 along with the approximate acreage calculated using geographic information systems (GIS). All parklands contained in Table 5.2 account for 25,802 acres or 8% of Portage County.

Park Planning

Trends from the Ohio SCORP

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was developed to guide investment in outdoor recreation lands, facilities, and programming through 2023 as well as recommend ways public agencies might work to meet identified needs. Developing the SCORP qualifies the state to receive funds through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. The SCORP considers Ohio’s changing demographics, public and recreation provider input,

and national recreation trends. Based on public input, the following goals were developed:

- Advance the trail network
- Improve and adapt recreational facilities
- Emphasize rivers, lakes, and wetlands with an emphasis on providing access and recreational opportunities
- Improve awareness and access to outdoor recreation opportunities
- Protect and sustain the natural environment

Portage Park District Future Plans

The Portage Park District completed a Master Plan in 2016 and is currently working to update it. Updates include generating a five and ten-year strategic plan to guide acquisition of parkland, types of park facilities, trail development, land management and programming. Promoting connectivity, creating, and branding greenways are a priority under this plan. Possible greenway connections the Park District is exploring are:

- Tinker’s Creek Greenway: connection from Summit County to Seneca Ponds to Franklin Bog
- West Branch Greenway: connection from Shaw Woods and Camp James A Garfield to West Branch State Park
- Breakneck Creek Greenway: connection from Kent to West Branch State Park following Breakneck Creek

Other plans include restoring and developing trails at Eagle Creek Greenway Phase 1 as well as increasing communication with other agencies to inform the Portage Park District of opportunities to acquire land for conservation. Map 5.4 shows proposed trails and

For more information on Ohio’s SCORP visit:
https://ohiodnr.gov/static/documents/real-estate/2018_SCORP_Appendices.pdf

For more information on current park planning efforts or the Portage Park District Master Plan visit:
<https://www.portagecounty-oh.gov/portage-park-district>

COMMUNITY SERVICES

parkland in addition to current parks and regional trails.

Table 5.2 State and County Parks and Preserves		
Map Key	Park Name	Description
<i>State Parks and Preserves: 15,871 acres</i>		
1	Berlin Lake Wildlife Area	8,518-acre wildlife area adjacent to Berlin Lake, partially located in Deerfield Township Boating, hunting, hiking, birding, fishing
2	Tummonds State Nature Preserve	Protects 1.5 miles of shoreline along the Cuyahoga River south of Mantua Village Accessible from Mantua Village's Glacial Esker Trail Hiking, birding
3	Eagle Creek State Nature Preserve	477-acre preserve east of Garrettsville Hiking, birding
4	Gott Fen State Nature Preserve	SR 303, Streetsboro Access by permit only
5	Cooperrider Kent Bog State Nature Preserve	1028 Meloy Road, Kent Accessible facilities, hiking, birding
6	LaDue Public Hunting Area	8,856 acres mostly in southern Geauga County with a small portion in northern Portage County Boating, hiking, hunting, birding, fishing
7	Mantua Bog (also called Mantua Swamp)	Mennonite Road, Mantua Township Designated National Natural Landmark in 1976 Access by permit only
8	Marsh Wetlands State Nature Preserve	152-acre preserve off Peck Road in Mantua Township Hiking, hunting
9	Nelson Kennedy Ledges	167-acre park off SR 282 in Nelson Township Hiking, picnicking
10	Tinker's Creek State Park & State Nature Preserve	1,141 acres, part of which is in Streetsboro and Aurora Managed by Summit County Metroparks Hiking, boating, fishing, archery, birding
11	Triangle Lake Bog	3216 Sandy Lake Road in Rootstown Township Hiking, birding
12	Upper Cuyahoga Scenic River & Cuyahoga River Water Trail	Accessible from multiple points Boating, fishing
13	West Branch State Park	5570 Esworthy Road, Ravenna Boating, camping, disc golf, dog park, fishing, hunting, picnicking (including reservable shelter houses), swimming, hiking, winter recreation activities, playgrounds, volleyball courts
14	Wingfoot Lake State Park & Wildlife Area	121 acres adjacent to Wingfoot Lake Archery range, boating, disc golf, dog park, fishing, hunting, nature center, picnicking (including reservable shelters), playgrounds, hiking, winter recreation activities
<i>Portage Park District: 2,475 acres</i>		
15	Berlin Lake Trail	2.2-mile trail at Berlin Lake, Deerfield Township

Table 5.2 State and County Parks and Preserves		
Map Key	Park Name	Description
16	Camp Spelman	58-acre property in Franklin Township Accessible only by permit
17	Dix Park	103-acre park, SR 44, Ravenna Township Cross country skiing, hiking, nature and historic appreciation,
18	Headwaters Trail	8.5-mile trail from Garrettsville to Mantua Village
19	Morgan Park	544 acres off SR 44, Shalersville Township Cross country skiing, hiking, nature and historic appreciation, picnicking
20	Portage Hike and Bike Trail	7.07-mile trail from Ravenna City to Kent
21	Red Fox River Access Site	9263 Price Road, Ravenna Canoe / boat removal, fishing, nature and historic appreciation
22	Seneca Ponds Park	48-acre park on Mondial Parkway in Streetsboro Fishing, hiking, nature and historic appreciation, picnicking
23	Shaw Woods	145-acre park off Beery Road Cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, nature and historic appreciation, picnicking, primitive camping
24	Towner’s Woods Park	234-acre park, Ravenna Road, Franklin and Ravenna Township Cross-country skiing, hiking, nature and historic appreciation, sledding, picnicking
25	Trail Lake Park	222-acre park off Ravenna Road in Streetsboro Cross-country skiing, hiking, biking, nature and historic appreciation, fishing, canoeing and kayaking, picnicking
26	Breakneck Creek Preserve	66-acre preserve along Breakneck Creek in Ravenna Township Undeveloped
27	Chagrin Headwaters Preserve	95-acre preserve along the Aurora Branch of the Chagrin River in Mantua Township Undeveloped
28	Dix Preserve	10-acre preserve off S. Prospect St in Rootstown Township Undeveloped
29	Eagle Creek Greenway	325-acre property off SR 82 in Hiram Township Undeveloped, acquired March 2021
30	Franklin Bog	58-acre preserve on SR 43 in Franklin Township south of Lake Rockwell Undeveloped
31	Gray Birch Bog	22-acre preserve in Brimfield Township Undeveloped
32	Kent Bog Expansion	215-acre undeveloped park in Brimfield Township
33	Verna Beck Preserve	63-acre preserve in Streetsboro Undeveloped
34	Walter Preserve	80-acre preserve off SR 225 in Palmyra Township Undeveloped
<i>The Nature Conservancy & Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland: 664 acres</i>		
35	Beck Fen	10-acre preserve in Streetsboro Closed to the public

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Table 5.2 State and County Parks and Preserves		
Map Key	Park Name	Description
36	Flatiron Lake Bog	97-acre bog off Randolph Road in Suffield Township Closed to the public
37	Herrick Fen	144-acre preserve managed by the Nature Conservancy Hiking, birding
38	Aurora Sanctuary	East Pioneer Trail, Aurora Hiking, birding
39	Blanche-Katherine Novak Sanctuary	Townline Road, Aurora and Mantua Township Hiking, birding
40	Michael and Lenore Molnar Sanctuary	113-acre preserve off Page Road in Aurora Hiking, birding
<i>City of Akron: 5,041 acres</i>		
41	Lake Rockwell	564 acres plus Lake Rockwell Akron's primary source of drinking water Closed to the public
42	Mogadore Reservoir	Recreation managed by ODNR Hunting, boating, fishing, hiking
<i>Stark County: 598 acres</i>		
43	Walborn Reservoir	2,448-acre reservoir a small part of which extends into Atwater Township Hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, horseback riding
<i>Summit County: 1,153 acres</i>		
44	Pond Brook Conservation Area	Part of Liberty Park Hiking, observation areas
<i>Buckeye Trail Association: Crooked River Chapter</i>		
45	Buckeye Trail	Statewide trail accessible from various parks and trail connections Portage County segment is over 60 miles long
Sources: Greater Cleveland Audubon Society, 2022; Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Property Search, 2022; Portage Park District, Parks & Maps, 2021; Stark Parks, 2021; The Nature Conservancy, Places We Protect, 2022; Akron, Watershed Division, 2022; Summit County Metroparks, 2022; Buckeye Trail Association, 2022		

Park Service Areas

The Portage Park District Master Plan breaks the county parks out into service areas and points out gaps in facilities and recreation options. The Needs Analysis section of the master plan shows 10-minute drive times from state, county, and large municipal parks. A gap in all park service areas is shown in Mantua, Hiram, Freedom, Randolph, Atwater, and Palmyra Townships. The northeast and southern portions of the county are not served by county parks (Portage Park District, 2016).

In 2009, the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) released a Parks Metrics benchmarking tool

to replace their Area and Facility Standards. The Park Metrics are performance standards designed to create flexible recommendations for park managers based on community needs, desires, and size. The NPRA 2021 Performance Review has some key takeaways, shown in Table 5.3, based on use of the benchmarking tool from 2018 to 2020.

On average, nationally there are 9.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, although this number varies greatly based on jurisdiction type, population size,

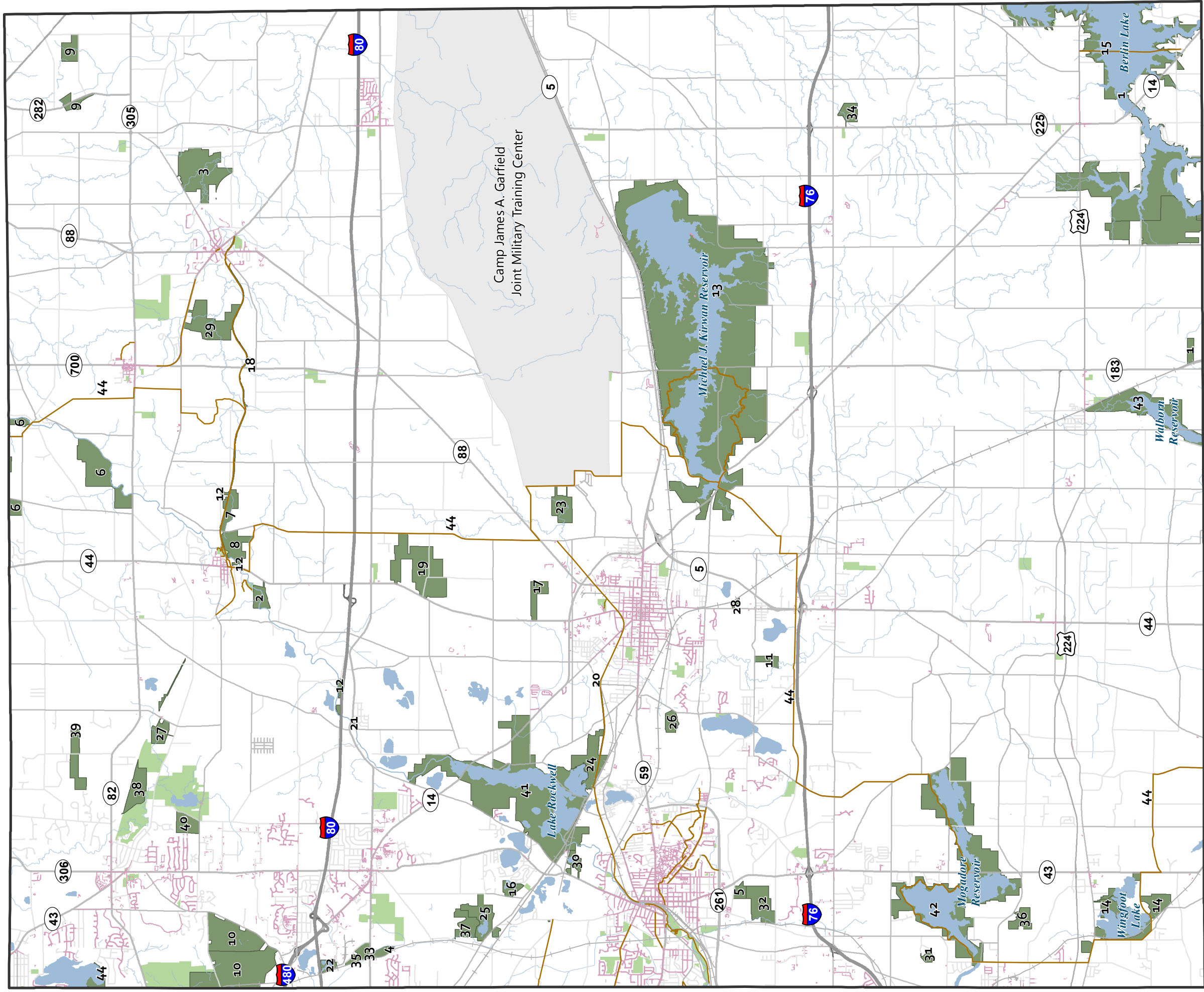
NPRA

Performance Review

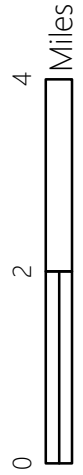
<https://www.nprpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>

park budget, region of the country and several other factors. The full performance review provides details on park services, staffing, budget, and policies and is available on the NPRA website. Using the seven county parks listed above which are regularly open to the public, there are 23,113 residents per park; however, if calculated with all state parks and non-profit conservation lands (totaling 26 parks with public access), this number becomes 6,223 residents per park. The majority of parks with public access used for this calculation provide passive recreation. Township, Village, City, and other local parks which are not included here provide for active recreation.

Table 5.3 Key Takeaways from NRPA Performance Review	
<i>Residents per park by jurisdiction size</i>	
Less than 20,000 residents	1,235
20,000 to 49,999	1,900
100,000 to 250,000	3,104
<i>Residents per park by budget size</i>	
Less than \$500,000	2,118.5
\$500,000-\$1 Million	1,948.4
\$1-\$5 Million	1,970.4
<i>Residents per park by jurisdiction type</i>	
Special District	2,182
County	7,881
City	1,996
Town	1,901
Sources: NRPA 2021 Performance Review, https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/	



- Sidewalks (2017)
- Trails
- Regional Parks
- Local Parks
- Camp Garfield



Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Parks, PCRPC & Various Parks Departments, 2021; Bike Lanes, Trails, PCRPC & AMATS, 2020; Sidewalks, AMATS, 2017.

Map date: February 15, 2022

Map 5.3 Parks and Regional Trails

6 Agriculture

Agriculture is the science of cultivating soil, growing crops, and raising livestock. This includes grains, beans, vegetables, fruit, nuts, trees, hay, cows, chickens, pigs, sheep, horses, and other products. Agriculture is the number one industry in Ohio with an estimated economic impact of \$124 billion and a production value of \$9.34 billion. Farming, food, and other ag-related businesses provide jobs for one in eight Ohioans (ODA, 2021). In Portage County, farms, by production value alone, contribute over \$34 million to the economy. Another \$4.4 million is contributed to the economy through farm-related operations.

Importance of Agriculture

Agriculture is an industry with economic, environmental, and aesthetic values that contributes to the quality of life of County residents. Local farms provide fresh foods for residents, including produce, grains, and meats. Farmland contributes to open space with vegetated open space providing many environmental benefits as well as aesthetic ones. Farms contribute to the local tax base, paying more in taxes than they require in services. Protecting farmland now preserves this important resource for generations to come.

In 1950, Portage County had over 225,602 acres in farmland according to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (PCRPC, 2000). As of the 2017 Census, Portage County has 85,877 acres of farmland, comprising a loss of approximately 61.9% of county farmland. Figure 6.1 shows acres of farmland in Portage County by year since 1950. After a steep decline from 1950 to 1997, loss of farmland has leveled off over the past 20 years. Portage County

is not alone in the loss of farmland. According to the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, more than seven million acres of farmland has been lost in Ohio since 1950 with over 700,000 acres lost in a nine-county area of Northeast Ohio.

Many things contribute to farmland loss. The most notable of which include:

- Rising land costs due to residential development which makes purchasing new farmland unaffordable
- Extension of water and sewer lines
- Increasing costs of farming outpacing farm income

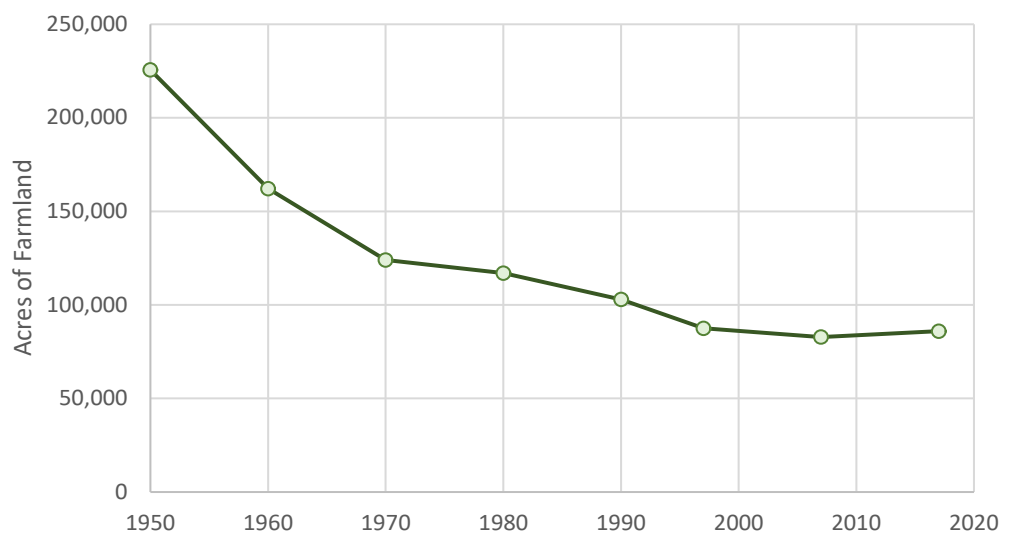


Figure 6.1. Acres of Farmland in Portage County by Year. Data Source: Ohio Department of Agriculture Annual Reports and Records, USDA NASS Census of Agriculture (1997-2017).

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- Patterns of development along road frontage which fragment farms
- Many farmers reaching retirement age, in need of retirement income, or with no one to take over the farm

Farming Trends Census of Agriculture

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years on years ending with two and seven. This census provides information useful for identifying trends in the farming industry. In Portage County, the number of farms has increased to 1,118 in 2017 from 847 in 2012 although the average farm size is smaller at 77 acres compared to 98 acres in 2012. Half of all farms in Portage County are 10 to 49 acres. Approximately 95% of Portage County farms are family owned. Small family-farms, such as those characterizing Portage County, account for 19% of agricultural sales and 45% of direct sales to customers nationally.

Nationally, farm operators and/or producers are becoming more diverse with an increasing number of farmers being women or of a minority race. In Portage County, the number of women producers increased to 41% in 2017 up from 17% in 2012. Minority producers increased to 2.1% from less than 1%.

Table 6.1 below contains a list of statistics from the 2017 census which inform farming trends in the county:

Most farms in Portage County are cropland (see Figure 6.2) followed by woodland and pastureland. In 2017, soybeans were the most common crop by acres and cattle were the most common livestock.

Table 6.1 Farming and Producer Statistics		
	Portage County	Ohio
Farms with internet access	78%	75%
Organic Farms	Less than 1%	1%
Farms selling directly to consumers	12%	8%
Family Farms	95%	96%
New or Beginning Farmers	35% of producers	26% of producers
Producer age 35-64	58%	60%
Producer age 65 and older	30%	29%

Data Sources: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2017 Census of Agriculture.

The census of agriculture contains additional details on farming in Portage County and is available on the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) website.

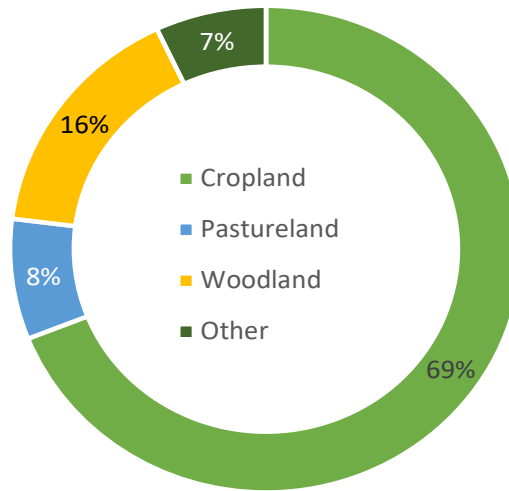


Figure 6.2 Farmland by Use

Farming Practices and Priorities

Soils

Land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops is considered prime farmland. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high crop yields when managed properly. Prime farmland soils are found throughout the county according to the 2021 update to the Portage County Soil Survey digital version (see Map 6.1). Areas with prime farmland soils and soils of local importance to farming cover 47% of the County. Another 35% of the County is covered by soils considered prime farmland if drained. Approximately 3% of the County is considered prime farmland if the fields are drained,

protected from flooding and/or not flooded frequently. These last soils are typically found along streams and other water bodies in Portage County, making them unlikely to be farmed. The remaining 15% of the County is not considered prime farmland.

Protected Land and CAUV Lands

In 1973, the State of Ohio enacted the Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV) Law. This allows for farmland devoted to commercial agriculture to be valued according to its current use rather than its highest best potential use. This typically sets the farmland value much lower than the market value resulting in lower tax bills for farmers. The CAUV program is administered by the Portage County Auditor's Office.

A useful method for identifying farmland is to determine the location of CAUV parcels. As shown in Map 6.2, farmland and CAUV farms increase moving east across the County. According to the Auditor's parcel data from July 2021, there are approximately 131,597.54 acres of farmland including vacant farmland in the County. Approximately 91% of the farmland are in the CAUV program.

In addition to the CAUV program, Portage County has 16 agricultural easements and one agricultural security area. The agricultural easements preserve approximately 1,372 acres of farmland in perpetuity. The agricultural security area preserves 516 acres of farmland. There are also several wetland reserve, wellhead protection, and other conservation easements within the County (see Map 6.3).

Emerging trends

Agriculture is a rapidly changing field driven by advancements in technology, evolving food demand, access to the market and infrastructure, and population growth and density. Regenerative agriculture has taken off in much of the United States in recent years and is expected to be the next big trend. Regenerative agriculture is a broad term for holistic farming methods which focus on restoring soil, improving biodiversity, increasing crop production, and improving water quality. These farming and grazing practices include the use of cover crops, no or reduced till, minimization of chemical use, etc. In Portage County, 25% of farms use no till or reduced till methods and 9% use cover crops. These numbers are expected to rise in the future as regenerative agriculture becomes mainstream.

In 2019, General Mills announced the company would commit to sourcing food from farms employing regenerative agriculture practices (Food Business News, 2019). PepsiCo, Walmart, Target, Land o'

Lakes, and several other companies quickly followed (Forbes, 2021). Business interest in regenerative agriculture, as whole, increased by 138% over the course of 2020 despite the pandemic (Forbes 2021). As certification and labeling becomes available and standardized, regenerative agriculture is expected to begin influencing shopping habits.

Farmland Preservation Overview of Programs

The Portage County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is actively involved with farmland preservation efforts in the County. The SWCD provides planning and technical assistance to farmers, maintains a rental program, and maintains a list of crops grown within Portage County. Their website has an extensive list of programs run by the state and federal government.

Federal

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) operates several programs for preserving and protecting farmland, grasslands, and wetlands including the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, the Healthy Forest Reserve Program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and the Agricultural Management Assistance Program. SWCD offers details on these programs as well as application assistance via their website. The USDA NRCS Local Service Center also offers aid to potential applicants. The most widely used program in the county is currently the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

State

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) offers several programs for preserving farmland.

Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP)

The LAEPP provides funding for farmland owners for placing an agricultural easement on their property. The ODA issues monies up to 75% of the appraised value of the farm's development rights up to \$2,000 per acre with a maximum of \$500,000 per farm. The easement is in perpetuity. Funding of this program is currently suspended but expected to become available in 2023.

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program

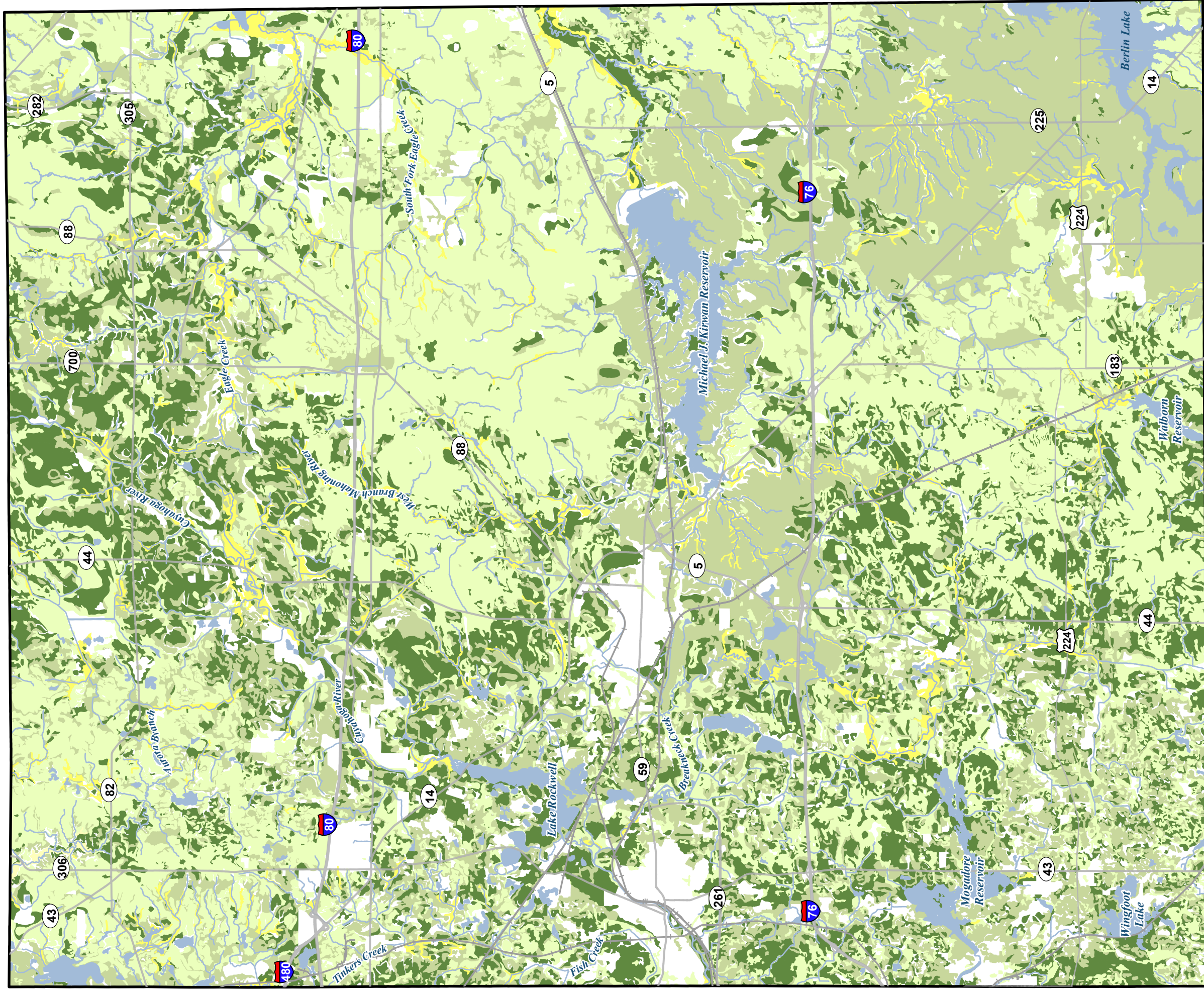
The ASA program promotes agricultural retention by creating areas in which agriculture is encouraged and promoted. This program authorizes one or more landowners with at least 500 contiguous acres of farmland to request enrollment into an ASA for a ten-year period from the county commissioners and township trustees. Portage County currently has one ASA located in Hiram Township which is enrolled through 2029.

Historic Family Farms

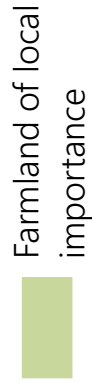
In 1993, the ODA began an historic farm program to recognize the social, economic, and historic contributions of Ohio’s farm families. The program has three designations: Century Farms, Sesquicentennial Farms, and Bicentennial Farms. To qualify, farms must show ownership by the same family for a minimum of 100 years, must consist of at least ten acres, and must produce a yearly gross income of \$2,500. Qualified registrants receive an heirloom certificate signed by the Governor. To maintain the historic farm certification, the family must continue ownership of the farm and the farm must continue to be engaged in agricultural activities. Portage County has 13 designated historic family farms (see Table 6.3).

Last Name	County	Farm Name	Year Established
Villers	Portage		1832
Church	Portage		1883
Moore	Portage	Mapleside Farms	1813
	Portage	Beckwith Orchards	1878
Groselle	Portage	Ryder Groselle Farms	1851
Goodell	Portage	Goodell Family Farm LLC	1825
Schaefer	Portage		1883
Sampson, III	Portage		1906
Mitchell	Portage		1884
	Portage	Roberts Family	1896
Derthick	Portage	Riverview Farm	1812
Herchek	Portage		1919

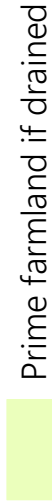
Data source: ODA. (2021). Ohio Historic Family Farms Program. <https://agri.ohio.gov/programs/farmland-preservation-office/ohio-historic-family-farms>



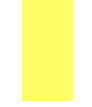
All areas are prime farmland



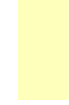
Farmland of local importance



Prime farmland if drained



Prime farmland if drained and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season



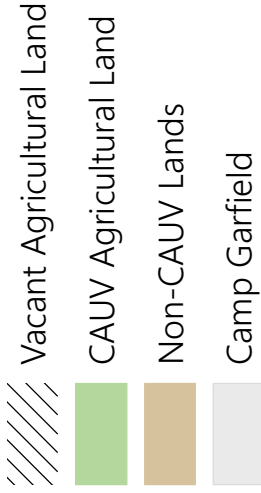
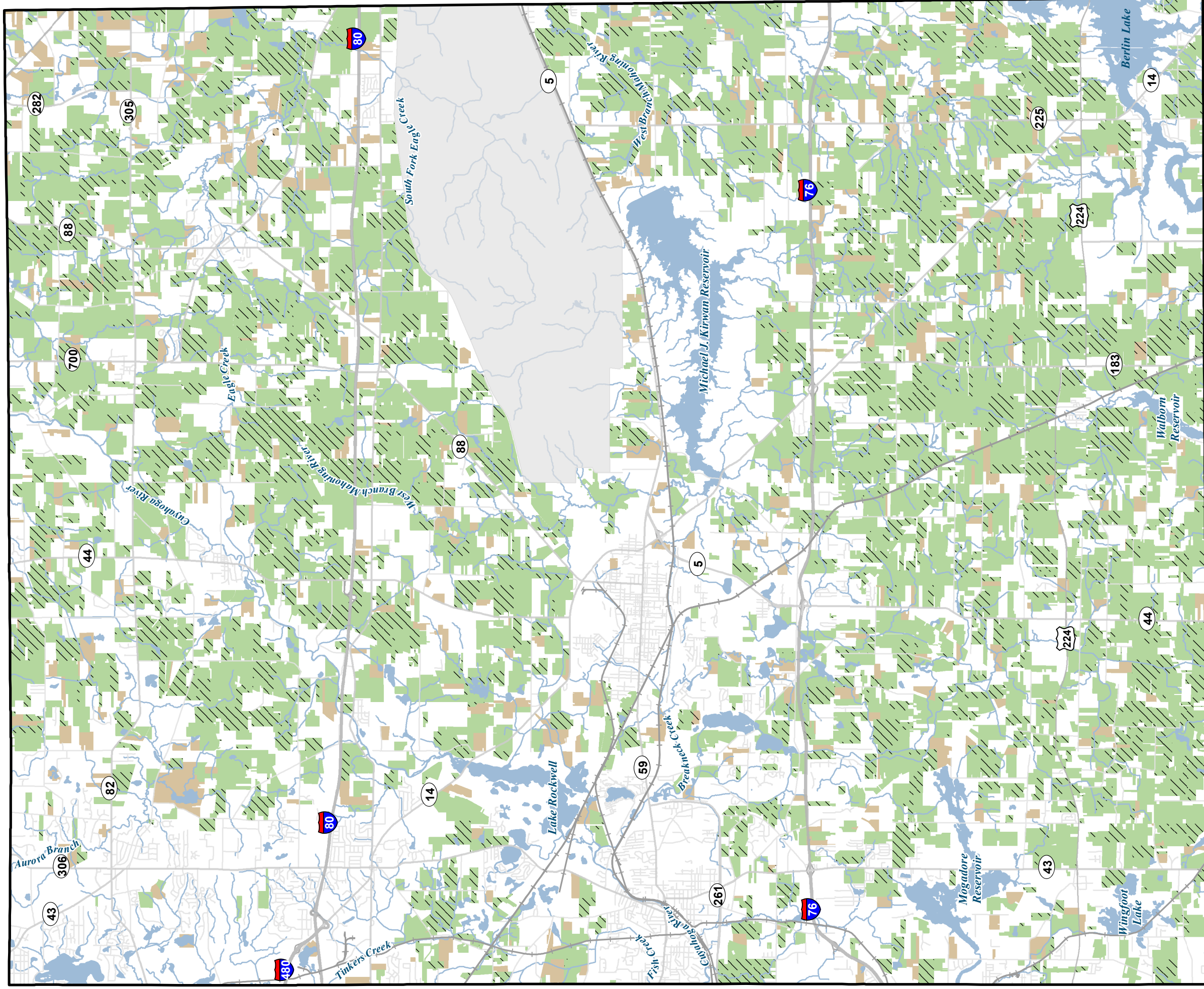
Prime farmland if protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season



Map date: 7/22/21

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Soils, Portage County Soil Survey digital version, updated 2020

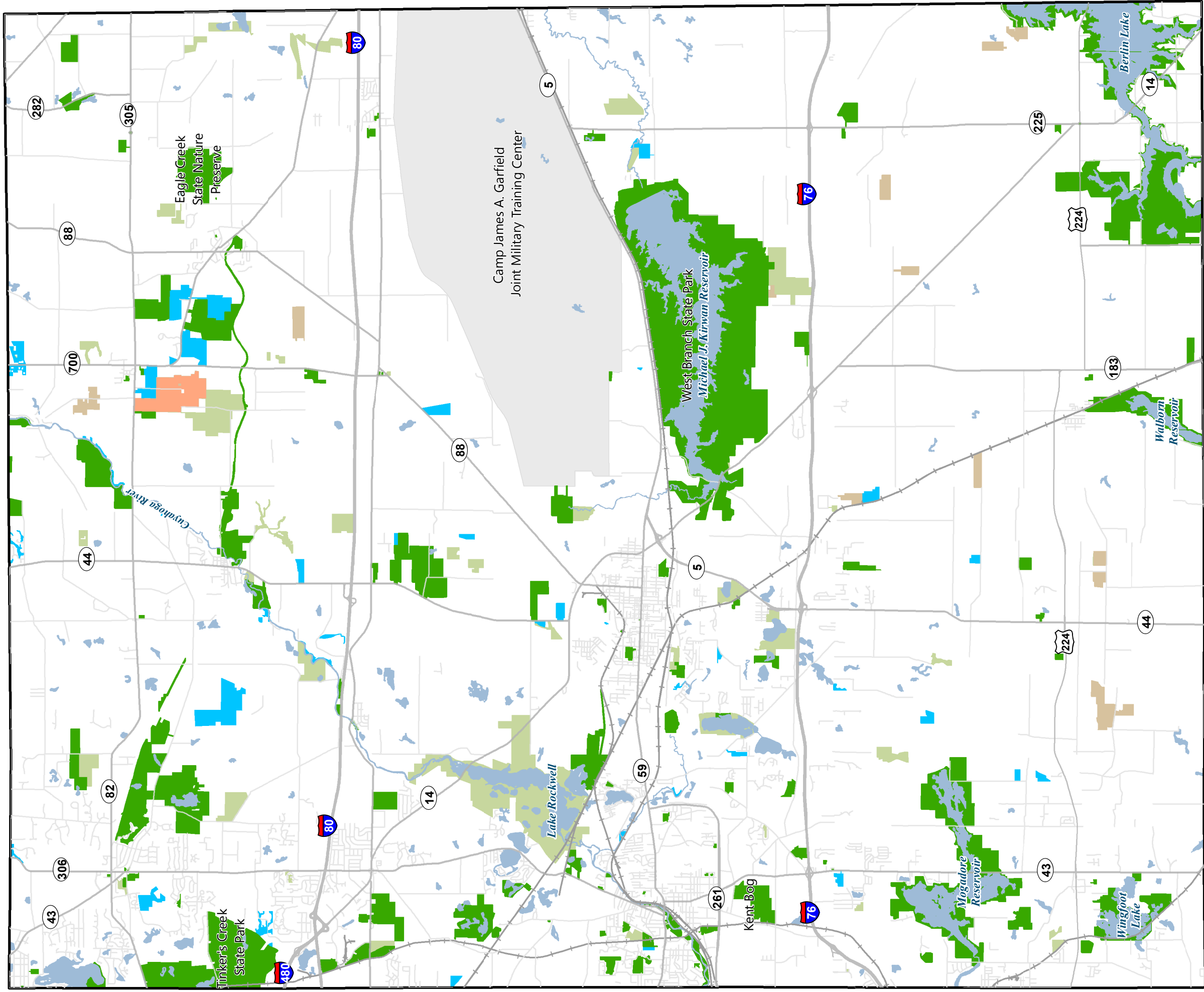
Map 6.1 Prime Farmland



Map date: 7/28/21

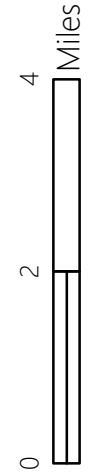
Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary and Parcels, Portage County GIS, 2021; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020.

Map 6.2 Farmland



- Park
- Agricultural Security Area
- Agricultural Easement

- Conservation Easement
- Other Protected Area



Map date: 2/24/22

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Parks & Protected Areas, PCRPC and various Park Departments, 2021; AEPP Farms & Conservation Easements, PCRPC and WRLC, 2021;

Map 6.3 Protected Areas

7 Infrastructure

Transportation

In 1962, the Federal Aid Highway Act created metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) to facilitate the metropolitan transportation planning process. MPOs are responsible for the planning and programming of highway and transit projects using federal funds. The Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) is the MPO for all of Portage County.

Existing Transportation Network

Roads

Federal Functional Class

The Federal Functional Classification of Highways is an effort to group streets and highways based on their general characteristics. Map 7.1 shows Portage County roads are part of the functional class system. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) updates functional classes annually in January. AMATS creates and maintains public transportation, capital improvement, and alternative transportation plans for the County, making open communication with them very important for receiving funds. Designated roads in Portage County are part of the following categories:

- Interstate: I-76, I-80
- Principal arterials: SR 43, SR 261, SR 59, SR 5, part of SR 14, SR 306 and part of US 224
- Minor Arterial: Part of SR 14, part of US 224, Summit Rd, Brady Lake Road, Freedom St
- Collectors: Waterloo Road, SR 183, Hartville Road, New Milford Road, Congress Lake Road, Old Forge Road, Tallmadge Road, Diamond Street, Newton Falls Road, Infirmary Road, Diagonal Road, Ravenna Road, Hudson Road, Page Road, Frost Road, Mennonite Road, SR 700, SR 88, SR 82, SR 303, SR 225, Cable Line Road, Wayland Road, Parkman Road, South Bissell Road

Traffic Levels

Map 7.2 shows the average annual daily traffic for Portage County. This information is based on 2019

traffic counts. Level of Service (LOS) ratings measure traffic congestion on state roads and interstates by the quality of traffic service to a given rate of flow. A LOS rating of "A" is perfect, while a rating of "F" is fail as defined by the Highway Capacity Manual. In Portage County, the following roads have "E" and "D" ratings:

D: Approaching unstable traffic flow

- SR 224 from east of Martin Road to Summit County Line
- SR 44 from Pletzer Boulevard to Fairground Road
- SR 14 from south of SR 5 to Tallmadge Road
- I-76 from Exit 33 to Exit 38
- SR 5 from north of Cummings Road to south of Sandy Lake Road
- SR 261 from east of Cherry Street to Summit County Line and from west of Burnett Road to Summit Road
- SR 44 from Lake Rockwell Road to Enterprise Parkway
- Aurora Road from Walden Place East to the Summit County line
- SR 306 from the Geauga County line to south of Treat Road

E: Unstable flow, operating at capacity

- SR 14 from east of Infirmary Road to Dear Meadow Boulevard,
- SR 14 from Harding Way to SR 59
- SR 44 from Jude Avenue to River Bend Boulevard
- I-76 from Exit 33 to the Summit County Line

INFRASTRUCTURE

All other road segments in the county have ratings of “C” or higher.

High Crash Intersections and Road Segments

AMATS maintains a list of high crash intersections and roadway segments for Portage County. High crash intersections, as defined by AMATS, are intersections with a minimum of ten crashes and a crash rate of one or more over a three-year period. The following intersections were ranked in the top 10 in the AMATS region from 2017 to 2019 for high crash intersections based on a composite score of number of crashes, crash rate and severity of crashes (AMATS, 2020).

- SR 14 / SR 303 and SR 43, Streetsboro
- SR 14 and Mondial Parkway/Singletary Drive, Streetsboro
- US 224 and SR 225, Deerfield Township

High crash roadway sections ranked in the top 10 in the AMATS region include:

- SR 44 from Tallmadge Road to SR 5, Rootstown Township
- West and East Main Street from Sycamore Street to Prospect Street, Ravenna City
- SR 14 from SR 303 West to SR 303 East, Streetsboro
- River Street from Haymaker Parkway to West Main Street, Kent
- East Main Street (SR 59) from Willow Street to Luther Avenue, Kent

There have been 20 pedestrian-involved crashes and seven bicyclist-involved crashes within the County between 2017 and 2019. Although not listed in the 2017-2019 high crash indices, SR14 between Price Road and Diagonal Road is one of the most dangerous road sections in Portage County with approximately four fatal crashes between 2012 and 2019. The Portage County Engineer has participated in a policy committee for several years working to address areas of high fatalities. ODOT will begin construction on a project designed to address safety concerns on this segment in 2023 (shown as 9 in Table 7.1 and on Map 7.4). See AMATS’ website for more details on crash ratings and road safety.

Pavement and Bridge Condition Ratings

Pavement and bridge ratings are shown in Map 7.3. Pavement condition

AMATS
<https://amatsplanning.org/>

ratings (PCR) are available based on ODOTs pavement condition rating manual and visual observations of pavement distress. Ratings range from 100 or very good to zero or very poor. On average, Portage County’s roads are rated as good. Only four road segments in the county have a rating of poor and there are no segments rated as very poor.

Bridge condition ratings are assigned by the National Bridge Index (NBI) scale. Bridges are rated on a scale of one to nine with poor condition being assigned to bridges rated four or below while bridges with a rating of seven or above are in good condition. Ratings of five or six are assigned as fair condition. According to the Transportation Information Mapping System (TIMS) database maintained by ODOT, 173 are rated good, 140 are rated fair and 47 are poor.

The Portage County Engineer developed a system for paving roads based on oldest pavement, road condition, and amount of traffic. County roads have been classified into levels 1, 2, and 3 based on traffic with levels 1 and 2 being paved on a rotating basis. Roads with the oldest pavement, worst condition, and most traffic receive the highest priority rating each year.

Public Transportation

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) is the public transit operator for Portage County. Currently PARTA operates 15 fixed bus routes, five bus routes in and around Kent State University, and an express route to Akron. They also offer on demand Dial-A-Ride service which is door-to-door transportation throughout the County. Rides must be scheduled one to three days in advance. Certain areas of the County may only take advantage of this on specific days of the week. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PARTA is currently operating a reduced schedule and has indefinitely suspended the express route to Cleveland. The Cleveland express route provided service to Streetsboro. According to the 2020 Transit Plan completed by AMATS, the 2019 average monthly ridership of all PARTA routes was 89,018 with the highest numbers of riders on the interurban (Kent and Ravenna) and campus routes.

CURRENT PARTA ROUTES
<https://www.partaonline.org/maps-and-schedules>

The coverage analysis of the PARTA region performed by AMATS shows older, high density cities have better transit access while rural communities have no to limited access. Coverage was determined by a 1/4-mile buffer of PARTA's fixed routes. According to the 2020 Transit Plan, PARTA's coverage ranges from 0.2% of the total population in Shalersville and Nelson Townships to 66.7% of the population in Kent. The communities of Aurora, Atwater, Deerfield, Edinburg, Mantua, Palmyra, Paris, Randolph, Rootstown, and Suffield have no service. The full transit plan and analyses are available on AMATS website.

Recommendations from the 2020 Transit Plan included:

- Increase service to Streetsboro for low income, minority, and disabled populations
- Add frequent service to busy routes
- Add a midday trip to Cleveland
- Ensure sidewalks and network connections to transit routes for better access



**AMATS 2020
TRANSIT PLAN**

Freight Rail

Freight rail is a vital component of the transportation system. It is the backbone of industry and commerce throughout Ohio. Portage County has four freight lines: two Class I lines, one Class II line, and one Class III line. According to the US Surface Transportation Board, railroad classes are defined as the following based on their annual operating revenue in 2018 numbers:

- Class I Railroads: over \$447.6 million
- Class II or Regional Railroads: more than \$35.8 million and less than \$447.6 million
- Class III or Local Railroads: less than \$35.8 million

There is one Class I line is operated by Norfolk Southern that runs through Streetsboro, Franklin Township, Ravenna, and Atwater to provide local connections from Cleveland to Pittsburgh. The other Class I line is operated by CSX Transportation and runs through Akron, Kent, Ravenna, and onto Newton Falls to provide local connections from Pittsburgh to Chicago. The companies' lines intersect at Diamond Street in Ravenna.

Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway Company operates a Class II line that runs through Aurora down to Suffield. They also operate Class III line under the subsidiary company Akron Barberton Cluster Railway that runs from Akron to Ravenna as shown in Map 7.1.

AMATS' 2020 Freight Plan does not identify any congestion areas. Only one high volume at grade crossing has been identified. It is on West Summit Street in Kent and has an average of 27 trains per day and an ADT of 5,438 vehicles (AMATS 2020). In 2017, Norfolk Southern abandoned 5.5 miles of track in Aurora which was the latest section of track to be abandoned in Portage County (State of Ohio Rail Plan, 2019).

Airport

The Portage County Regional Airport is a general aviation facility managed by the Portage County Regional Airport Authority that accommodates small aircraft and helicopters. It has one runway, Runway 9/27, which is 3,499 feet long. Average aircraft operations per day are approximately 51 and include private, business, and military aircraft (airnav.com, 2021). The Portage County Regional Airport is part of the National Air Transportation System, making it eligible to receive federal funds. Over the past 15 years, the airport has received over \$6 million in Federal Aviation Administration improvement and land acquisition funds. The airport is estimated to have an economic impact of \$6.7 million and supports 59 jobs (Portage County Regional Airport, 2021).

The airport is currently considering undertaking a master plan update. Based on the website and the previous master plan, future plans for the airport include:

- Expansion of the runway, associated taxiways, and aprons to accommodate larger aircraft
- Improvements to attract small to mid-sized business aircraft as local and regional businesses grow
- Expansion of industrial and business activity around the airport.

Bicycles and Pedestrians

In 2019, AMATS developed an Active Transportation Plan. The 2019 Active Transportation Plan places an emphasis on accommodating pedestrians and

INFRASTRUCTURE

bicyclists. Among other things, the plan emphasizes:

- Development of shared use paths alongside major road improvement projects, especially those with regional importance
- Use of AMATS funding to improve bicycle routes and sidewalks
- Maintain, invest, and improve pavement and road surface to ensure smoother road conditions for cyclists
- Ensure that networks include pedestrian-friendly bus stops and related amenities
- Participation in the Ohio Safe Routes to School program.

AMATS has recently completed a sidewalk inventory update, which will help with planning for improvements.

Complete Streets

Streets are a vital part of every community. They play an essential role when it comes to making a community attractive and livable. The foundation of complete street principles and policies is the idea that streets are for everyone. Complete streets are designed and operated to ensure safe use for all modes of transportation and users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all abilities and ages. Policies implementing complete streets may be set at the state, regional, and local levels and are often included as part of roadway design guidelines. Transportation agencies must often change their approach to roadway development to implement complete streets by creating streets that prioritize safety for slower modes of transportation instead of the high speeds of cars across the entire right of way. Approaches vary by community context, so a complete street in a rural community such as Atwater Township may be very different from one in a city such as Kent. These streets typically incorporate a range of elements such as sidewalks, bike lanes, bus lanes, median islands, curb extensions, accessible pedestrian signals, modified travel lanes, benches, and other streetscape and landscape treatments. Benefits of complete streets include:

- Reduced vehicle crashes, pedestrian risk, and bicyclist risk through the separation of uses and other safety features
- Improved health of the general population through safe access to walking and biking corridors

- Reduced contribution to air pollution by providing alternative transportation options

Ohio Policies & Plans

ODOT encourages complete streets via the active transportation program which

includes alternative transportation project funding through MPOs. As part of the active transportation program, the state developed its first plan with a focus on bicyclists and pedestrians, Walk.Bike.Ohio, which launched in July 2021. It is meant to guide Ohio's pedestrian and bicyclist transportation policies, investments in infrastructure, and investments in programs. The state plan provides design suggestions and guidance which can be applied to a range of environments from urban to suburban to rural. Among the suggestions are the following based on community context:

Rural Improvements

- Wider, advisory, or paved shoulders
- Bicycle route signs
- Yield roadways
- Shared use paths

Suburban Improvements

- Wider sidewalks
- Enhanced crossings
- Shared use paths
- Sharrows

Urban Improvements

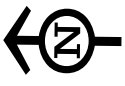
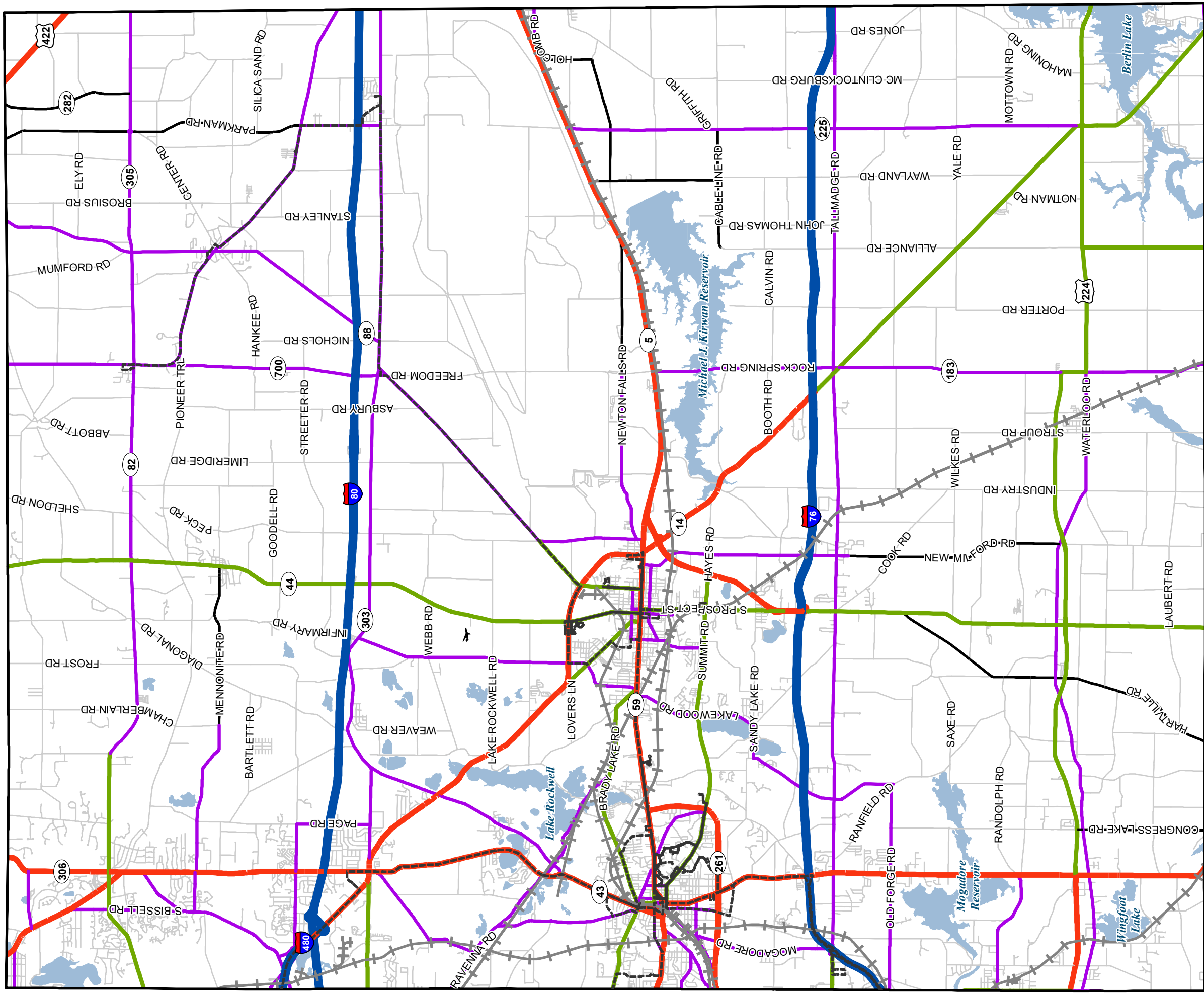
- Sidewalks on both sides of the roadway
- Marked crosswalks and pedestrian signals
- Bike lanes, separated bike lanes, bike boulevards (Walk.Bike.Ohio, 2021)











The plan has suggestions to accommodate user types and facilities, maintenance of facilities, and estimated health, environment and economic impacts.

SMART GROWTH AMERICA is an organization that can provide technical assistance, help with complete streets demonstration projects, and further community support and understanding.

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/>

Walk.Bike.Ohio
[Statewide Bike and Pedestrian Plan](#)



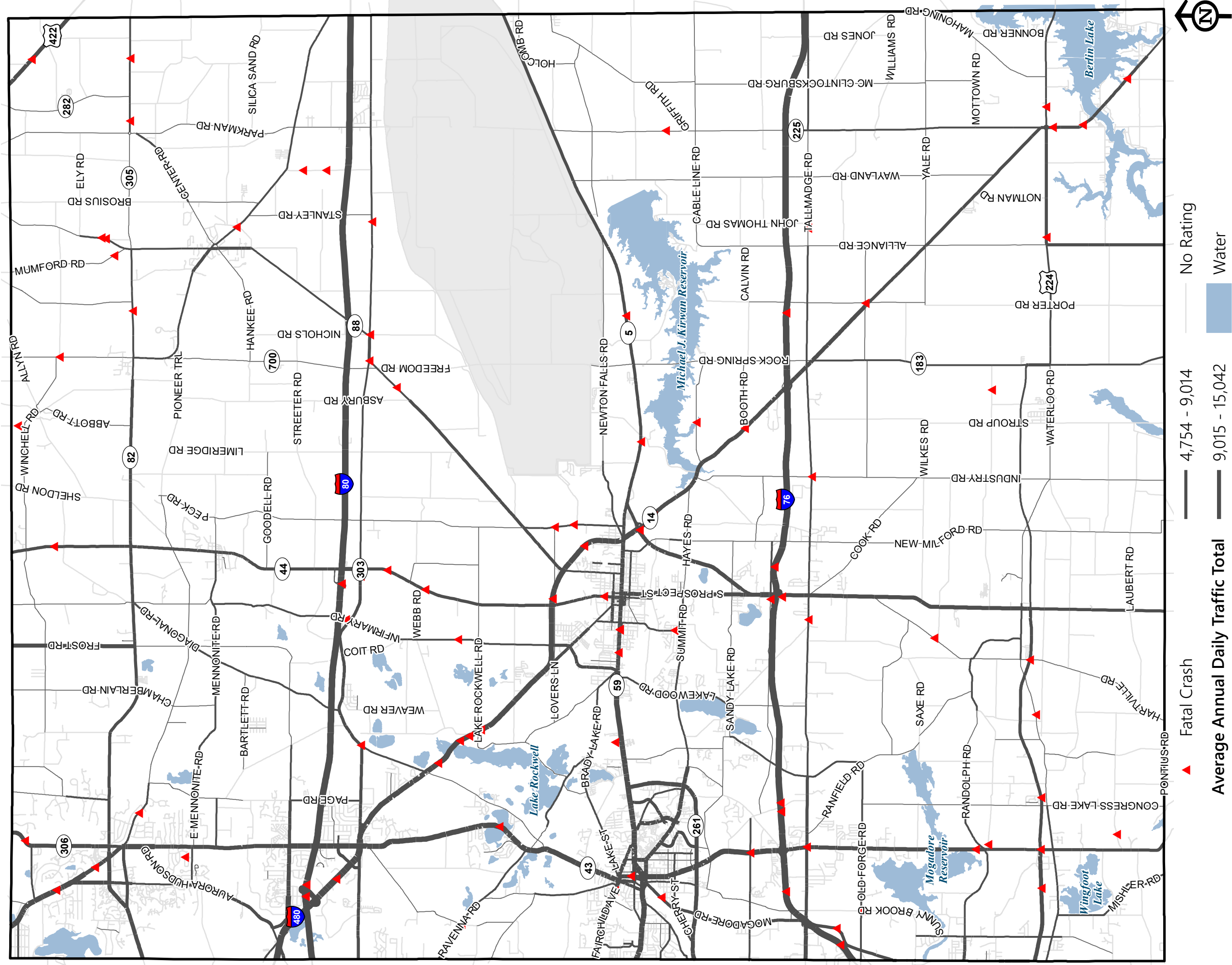
- | Functional Class | |
|---|--------------------------|
|  | Airport |
|  | Bus Routes |
|  | Active Railroad |
|  | Water |
|  | Interstate |
|  | Other Principal Arterial |
|  | Minor Arterial |
|  | Major Collector |
|  | Minor Collector |
|  | Local Road |



Map date: 8/25/2021

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Federal Functional Class, ODOT, 2021; Water, NHD-USGS, 2012; Railroads, ODOT, May 2020; Bus Routes, PARTA, 2019

Map 7.1 Federal Functional Class



Map date: 9/9/2021



▲ Fatal Crash

— 4,754 - 9,014

No Rating

Average Annual Daily Traffic Total

— 9,015 - 15,042

Water

— 19 - 2,055

— 15,043 - 26,101

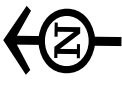
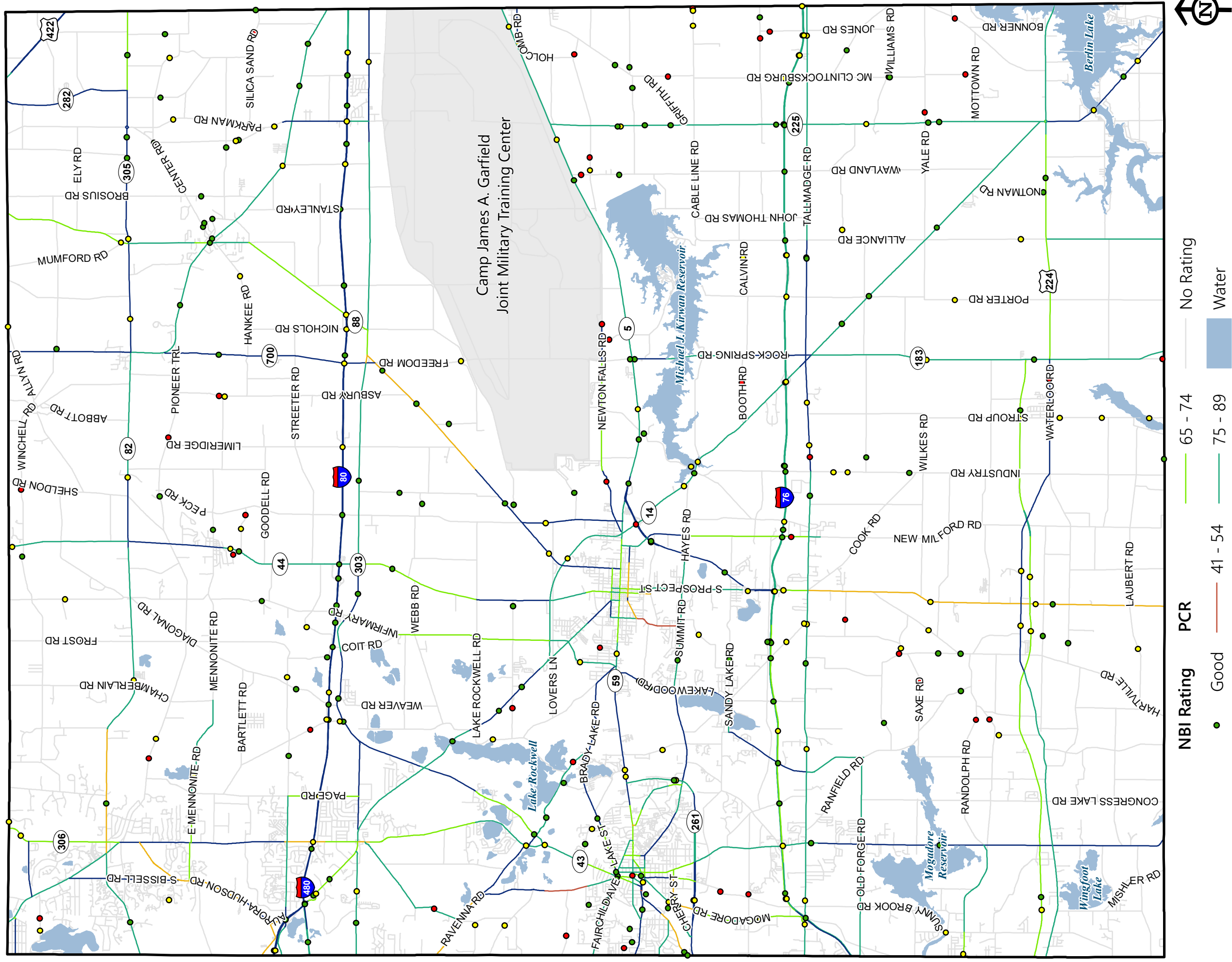
Camp Garfield

— 2,056 - 4,753

— 26,102 - 59,899

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; ADT, AMATS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; PCR, ODOT, 2021.

Map 7.2 Average Annual Daily Traffic



Map date: 9/21/2021

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; ADT, AMATS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; PCR, NBI, ODOT, 2021.

Map 7.3 Bridge & Pavement Condition Ratings

Impact of COVID-19

With the advent of the pandemic, use of streets and sidewalks in many cities across the US changed. After the shutdowns ended, many people resumed a more typical life by going shopping and out to restaurants. To accommodate CDC guidelines, many cities allowed restaurants and shops to extend their business onto the sidewalks and streets. This has begun a policy push to change how streets in community and commercial centers look by emphasizing pedestrians and bicyclists.

Benefit to Portage County and Funding Sources

Between 2012 and 2019, there were 17,255 property damage accidents, 7,967 injury accidents, and 91 fatal crashes or injury accidents in Portage County (Map 7.2). Of these, 125 accidents involved bicycles and 191 involved pedestrians. Out of the fatal crashes, two were bicycle related and 11 were pedestrian related. One of the goals if implementing complete streets would be to reduce the number of crashes and fatalities.

The Federal Highway Administration published a guide for developing a complete streets network in small and rural communities. Funding for complete streets or alternative transportation projects can be obtained through AMATS via the Connecting Communities grants. Other funding opportunities may be identified in the Walk.Bike.Ohio plan.

Capital Improvements

Every five years the MPOs update and submit a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) to ODOT. These plans include bridge repairs and replacements, operational improvements, safety improvements, capacity projects, preservation projects, and alternative transportation projects. AMATS also maintains a 2045 Transportation Outlook with recommendations for highway, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Table 7.1 and Map 7.4 summarize projects contained in AMATS 2020-2024 TIP planned for Portage County. Several countywide and statewide projects are not included here including resurfacing and minor bridge repairs along State Routes being implemented by ODOT, microsurfacing, culvert repairs and replacements, and pavement marking projects.

The 2045 Transportation Outlook finalized by AMATS in May 2021 contains long term recommendations and goals for the next 24 years. Those projects are not listed here.

The State of Ohio has implemented a Walk.Bike. Ohio Policy Plan encouraging the development of alternative transportation networks. The 2019 Active Transportation Plan developed by AMATS emphasizes developing connections of regional significance in addition to local connections. Map 7.4 shows shared-use paths recommended by the 2019 Active Transportation Plan. AMATS recommends the development of a regional shared use paths including the following:

- Headwaters Trail connection from Mantua Village through Aurora
- Headwaters Trail connection from Garrettsville to Hiram Village
- Bike n' Hike Trail extension from Portage County trail to Summit County trail
- The Portage missing segment in Kent
- Creation of a new trail along the south boundary of Camp Garfield
- Creation of a trail from Kent to Mogadore Reservoir
- Extension of the Berlin Lake trail north into Trumbull County and south to Mahoning County
- Creation of a new trail along SR 261

Several of these trails which interconnect with existing portage Park District trails are also on the Park Master Plan.

Utilities

Sewer and Water

Water

Water is supplied to the unincorporated areas of Portage County by Portage County Water Resources (PCWR), individual wells, and private water companies. PCWR purchases, produces, distributes, and sells public water for various communities within Portage County. In addition to owning and operating four groundwater Water Treatment Plants (WTP), PCWR purchases water from the Village of Windham and the City of Cleveland.

PCWR provides water to the cities of Streetsboro and Aurora as well as the Aqua Ohio Water Company in Shalersville and Brimfield Townships. Residential and

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Map #	Route	Location	City	Type of Work	Year	Project Cost (\$000)
1	S. Chestnut St.	S. Chestnut Street from Lake Ave. to Main St.	Ravenna	Resurfacing	2024	2,444.3
2	S. Diamond St / Mill Rd.	S. Diamond St. from Summit Rd. to Mill St; Mill St. from S. Diamond St. to Sycamore St.	Ravenna	Resurfacing and ADA Ramps	2023	338.0
3	New Milford Rd.	New Milford Rd. from Tallmadge Rd. to SR 5 / SR 44 Bypass	Ravenna Township/ Rootstown Township	Resurfacing	2024	752.8
4	Riddle St.	Riddle St. from Meridian St. to Liberty St.	Ravenna	Resurfacing	2024	254.5
5	Ravenna Rd (CR 145) Bridge	Ravenna Rd. over Norfolk and Southern Railroad	Franklin Township	Bridge Replacement	2022	1,512.1
6	SR 43	SR 43 from SR 14 to Frost Rd.	Streetsboro	Left turn lane and additional southbound land from Evergreen to I-80	2023	7,754.8
7	SR 59	SR 59 (E Main St) from Willow St to Horning Rd	Kent	Reconstruction with Medians, Roundabouts, Bus Pull Offs, Replace Sidewalks and Lighting	2023	17,555.6
8	US 224	US 224 at intersections of New Milford and Waterloo Rd	Randolph Township	Intersection safety improvements	2023	1,170.0
9	SR 14	3,809 linear feet SR 14 near Lake Rockwell and Price Rd	Streetsboro, Ravenna Township, Shalersville Township	Safety improvements	2023	1,120.0

Sources: AMATS. 2020. Transportation Improvement Plan: Fiscal Year 2021-2024. Retrieved from <https://amatsplanning.org/>

commercial water services are provided to Brimfield, Franklin, Freedom, Mantua, Ravenna, Rootstown, Shalersville, and Suffield Townships and to Camp James A. Garfield and the Village of Mantua. PCWR has emergency water interconnections with the cities of Ravenna and Tallmadge.

Sewer

The 208 Plan is a water quality management plan that addresses municipal wastewater treatment issues and nonpoint source pollution management

and control. A portion of the plan is dedicated to facility planning areas which identify wastewater management options for an area for the next 20 years. The facility planning area identifies a wastewater treatment plant's current and projected service area as well as additional areas where wastewater may be handled by other acceptable means. There are 14 facility planning areas in Portage County.

Map 7.5 shows the facility planning areas and sewer prescriptions from the 208 Plan. Areas shown in

yellow are currently served with sanitary sewer. Orange areas represent areas that are expected to be served with sewer in the next 20 years, and light yellow (cream) are areas that will be served by home sewage or semi-public sewage disposal systems. Green areas are places that will be served by a publicly owned treatment works, home sewage, or semi-public sewage disposal system. White areas have no wastewater treatment prescription; however, the best available technology is required.

Portage County has 12 wastewater treatment plants operated by PCWR along with several wastewater treatment agreements to provide sanitary sewer service in various areas of the County. As of 2021, approximately 5.4 million gallons are treated per day. Currently, sanitary sewer service is available in portions of the City of Streetsboro; Atwater, Brimfield, Charlestown, Franklin, Freedom, Mantua, Nelson, Randolph, Ravenna, Rootstown, Shalersville, and Suffield Townships; Camp James A. Garfield and the villages of Mantua and Sugar Bush Knolls.

Future Projects

PCWR maintains a five-year Capital Improvement Plan for water and wastewater infrastructure. Projects are balanced to maintain existing infrastructure as well as increase current treatment capacities to support the development of the County. PCWR works with developers to coordinate water and sewer extensions to meet project needs. Coordination is also driven by service area agreements and negotiations which are done on an as needed basis. Future projects include the following:

- Upgrade and/or replace existing equipment
- Address capacity issues
- Repair and replace collection system piping to eliminate inflow/infiltration (I/I) issues
- Public and private water and sewer extension projects

Broadband

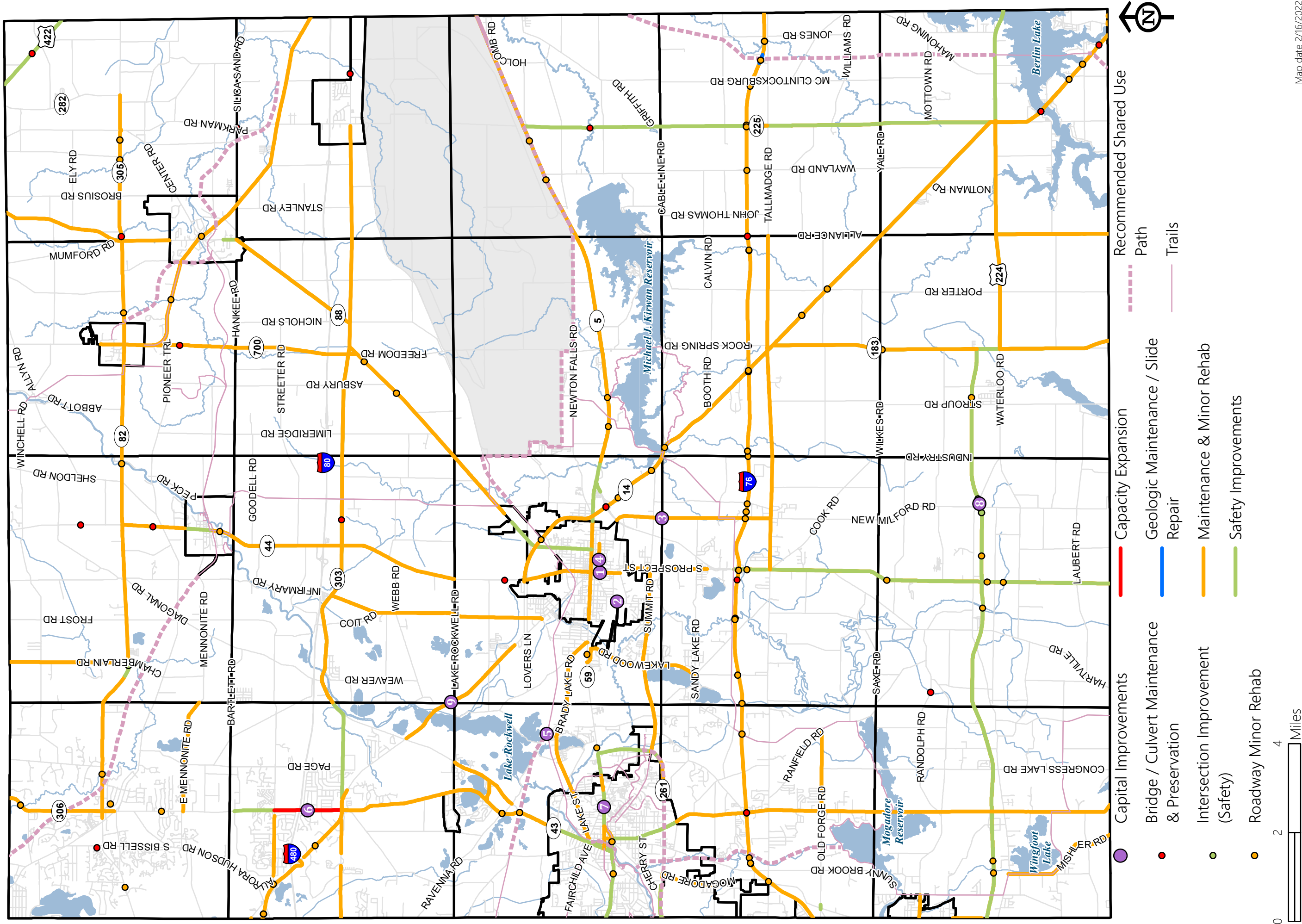
In 2021, the Governor of Ohio began a broadband initiative working to expand and improve broadband access, affordability, and digital literacy throughout the state. COVID-19 highlighted the digital divide caused by lack of availability and affordability of internet. This was especially felt by rural communities, minorities, and low-income households without adequate access to or an affordable price for

internet. In Portage County, Garrettsville, Nelson Township, Hiram Township, Windham Village, and Windham Township have either no internet or low internet speeds. Broadband Ohio has several projects working to change this.

According to Connected Nation Ohio, a non-profit that works to further broadband, the majority of Portage County, except for the northeast Townships, has an average speed of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. Preliminary estimates show 94% of households have access to 25Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds (Connected Nation, 2020). This meets the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) definition of high-speed internet. Where there is access to internet in the northeastern portion of the county, it is at slower speeds of approximately 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload. Only the western portion of the county has access to internet speeds of 100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload and coverage may still be spotty (Connected Nation, 2020). It should be noted that these average speeds do not account for intermittency. A letter was sent to the FCC in March 2021 requesting the definition of "fast" internet be changed to 100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload. Table 7.2 is taken from the FCC Broadband Speed Guide and shows common uses of the internet as well as the estimated speed required. The speeds are based on one device using the internet. Higher speeds are required for households with multiple devices.

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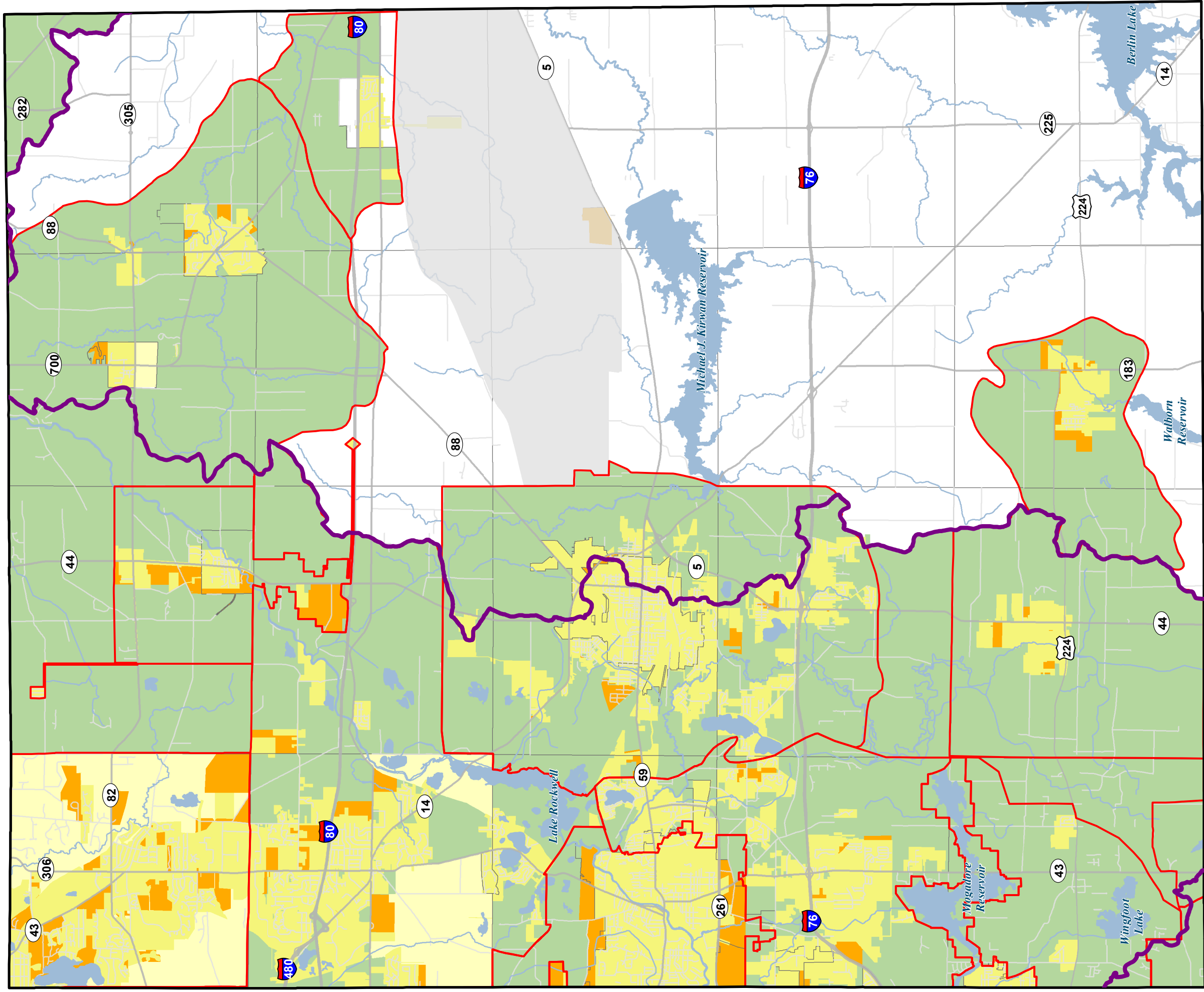
Table 7.2 Required Internet Speeds by Activity	
Activity	Speed (Mbps)
General Browsing and Email	1
Streaming Online Radio	Less than 0.5
VoIP Calls	Less than 0.5
Student	5 - 25
Telecommuting	5 -25
File Downloading	10
Social Media	1
Watching Video	
Streaming Standard Definition Video	3 - 4
Streaming High Definition (HD) Video	5 - 8
Streaming Ultra HD 4k Video	25
Video Conferencing	
Standard Personal Video Call	1
HD Video Call (Personal)	1.5
HD Video Teleconferencing	6
Gaming	
Game Console Connecting to the Internet	3
Online multiplayer	4
Source: FCC (February 5, 2020). Broadband Speed Guide. Retrieved January 10, 2022 https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/broadband-speed-guide	



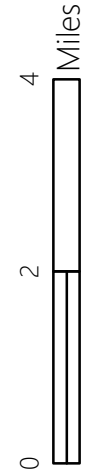
Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; ODOT Project Improvements, ODOT, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012

Map date 2/16/2022

Map 7.4 Capital Improvements



- Ohio River-Lake Erie Divide
- Facility Planning Area Boundary
- Camp Garfield
- Water
- Sewerage
- Sewer Perceptions
- Future Sewer
- POTW
- Without Prescription
- Unsewered



Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary & Roads, Portage County GIS, 2022; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Facility Planning Areas & Sewer Perceptions, NEFCO, 2022

Map date 7/25/22

Map 7.5 Facility Planning Areas

8 Economic Development

What Is Economic Development?

Community economic development (CED) or local economic development (LED) is a community driven process where communities identify and initiate their own solutions to economic, social and environmental issues to build healthy, economically vibrant communities.

Economic development is essential to have a high-quality and stable economy and to create a tax base. Personal and corporate taxes provide for police, fire, roadway, environmental and other local government programs and services. Communities that promote sustainability encourage different types of businesses and employment which provide opportunities for all members of the population to work. Also inherent in economic sustainability is a wide range of businesses to ensure future stability if there are declines in any one sector.

Location and Access

Portage County is regionally situated in the middle of northeast Ohio with the four major cities: Cleveland, Akron, Canton and Youngstown within a 45-minute drive. Pittsburgh and Columbus markets are just 2 hours away and looking at Map 1-1, other major markets are within a one-day trip. Proximity with 2 interchanges on I-76 and close proximity to the Turnpike and I-77 help to facilitate transportation movement.

A look at Table 8.1, shows that approximately 33% of people living in Portage County travel 30 minutes or more to their jobs and also may show the flexibility for others to come and work in Portage County.

Labor Force and Projections

According to the 2015 to 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, an average of 83,100 residents were in the labor force. Approximately 2,660 residents were unemployed. Portage County's estimated unemployment rate in December 2020 was 4.6% which decreased to 3.2% in December 2021. As unemployment decreases the availability of reliable workers also decreases.

Travel Time	Percent Total Population
Less than 10 minutes	14.3%
10 to 14 minutes	11.6%
15 to 19 minutes	12.2%
20 to 24 minutes	14.2%
25 to 29 minutes	8.7%
30 to 34 minutes	13.6%
35 to 44 minutes	5.1%
45 to 59 minutes	10.0%
60 or more minutes	4.9%
Mean travel time to work	24.3 minutes
Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, US Census Bureau	

In the income table, Table 8.2, there is a mix of household income levels within the County. Of the household incomes listed 25% make greater than \$100,000. While the majority of households make less than that, the table shows a relatively diverse set of income levels.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Population Trends, over

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Table 8.2 Household Income in the Past 12 Months

Income	Number of Residents
Less than \$50,000	26,987
\$50,000 to \$100,000	19,014
\$100,001 to \$200,000	12,573
\$200,001 or more	2,444
Median Household Income	\$56,679

Note: 2019 Inflation Adjusted Dollars
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Table 8.3 Employment Sectors

Employment by Industry	Estimated Percent
Manufacturing	20.2
Education Services	15.7
Health Care and Social Assistance	11.4
Retail Trade	10.9
Accommodations and Food Services	9.2
Wholesale Trade	6.5
Construction	4.1
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3.6
Public Administration	3.5
Transportation and Warehousing	3.2
Other Services (Except Administration)	3.0
Administrative and Supportive Services	2.3
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1.6
Finance and Insurance	1.1
Information	1.0
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.9
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0.8
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.5
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	0.3
Utilities	0.2

Note: May not sum to 100 due to variations in rounding and US Census Bureau methodology
Source: US Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, excluding federal government.

half of Portage County residents have at least some college or greater educational attainment which provides for a diverse workforce in the community.

The type of employment varies considerably in Portage County, see Table 8.3. More than 70% of the workforce are involved in manufacturing, education, health care, warehousing, or retail trade. Having six different industries suggests a diversified economy. The remaining 30% is comprised largely of support related services; however, this indicates the workforce is diverse.

Portage and Summit Counties comprise the Akron Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Information available at the MSA level through the 2026 Job Outlook predicted creating 16,865 jobs by 2026 which would be an increase of 4.5% from 2016. The greatest gain is expected to be in the education and health services industry with an increase of 10,502 jobs or 13.8%. Since the 2026 Job Outlook was published, efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 caused high unemployment rates, layoffs, reduced job openings and new job postings. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics notes that employment predictions like the 2016 to 2026 prediction are meant to capture structural changes in the economy instead of cyclical changes; however, the effects of the pandemic may result in new structural changes to the economy which will be captured in future projections (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). The job market may continue to change based off how COVID-19 impacted the workforce.

Commercial and Industrial Businesses

Portage County has a diverse commercial business base. Commercial areas are primarily located along State Routes 14, 43, 44, 59, 82, 88 and 303 as well as Tallmadge Road (County Highway 18). The newest and most robust commercial activity can be found west of I-76 on Tallmadge Road. Both the Cascades and Maple Crest commercial developments have greatly added to the County's vibrancy and making it a local shopping destination.

Industrial uses and industrial parks are primarily located off State Routes 14, 43, 44, and 88 as well as Tallmadge Road. Often industrial uses have clustered near highway interchanges and rail lines. Historically rail lines played a more important role for industrial

development.

The Portage Development Board (PDB) maintains a list of available commercial and industrial properties on their website at <https://www.portagedevbd.org/available-property/>.

Actions

There are a number of activities that the County can do by collaborating and working together which has been a successful tactic thus far. These include in some sense the following:

- Public Private-Partnerships / Intergovernmental Coordination / Marketing and Promotion
- Key Development Areas / Infrastructure Investment
- Zoning
- Supporting Initiatives

I. Public and Private Partnerships / Intergovernmental Coordination / Marketing and Promotion

Economic Development has many facets from which to work, but partnerships especially with the existing local businesses are critical to understanding the marketplace and how the County can assist. Public and Private Partnerships include working with landowners as well as existing businesses. Economic development is both retention and new opportunities. Partnerships include working with Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) partners such as the Cities of Aurora, Kent and Tallmadge. Other partnerships include the Area Chambers of Commerce, Portage Development Board, Portage County Regional Planning Commission, Portage County Engineer's Office, PCWR, Greater Akron Chamber, NEFCO, Team NEO, NEOTEC, Portage County Land Bank, County Tourism and Convention Bureaus and several other agencies and organizations. These entities all need to work together to market and promote the region.

II. Key Development Areas

There are many areas where both commercial and industrial can be cost-effective to build or redevelop. There are a few limiting factors such as water and or sewer availability or adequate line capacity. Areas without water and sewer service should be evaluated for feasibility of water and sewer extensions. Water

and sewer service provision should be coordinated as appropriate among the providers and the JEDD collaborative partners as development is able to occur.

III. Zoning

Zoning resolutions set the minimum standards for the community. They should be reviewed frequently to ensure those standards are being met but also to determine if those standards need to be updated. Changing economic conditions can cause the need for zoning changes, but also changing technology, industry standards and State and Federal laws. Zoning generally provides assurances of what uses can or cannot go in certain areas. It protects resident and business investments. With economic development, it is important to provide a balance of residential uses and non-residential opportunities for overall economic health. Compatibility between uses should be paramount to a healthy and happy development.

IV. Supporting Initiatives and Tools

The following are the better known tools in the toolbox for encouraging and supporting new development. The JEDDs, as appropriate, have worked well for Kent, Tallmadge and Franklin and Brimfield Townships. This has provided the Cities of Kent and Tallmadge as well as the Townships with a vital source of revenue for the Township. Lesser used tools include

- Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) which provides short-term tax incentives.
- The Enterprise Zone Program which has been instrumental in bringing in projects like the Rubber Maid warehouse on Progress Drive.
- Tax increment financing (TIF) is a way to finance infrastructure improvements by using the increase in tax value or tax collected to go directly for those improvements over a certain period of time.

Additional information on grants and loan programs that are offered through JobsOhio and the Ohio Department of Development is also provided (Table 8.4). There are a variety of programs that may be able to craft a project and help make work. Map 8.1 shows the location of development programs in Portage County.

Joint Economic Development Districts

The Ohio Revised Code allows cities and townships

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to enter into Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD) which levies taxes and encourages economic development. The goal of a JEDD is for the city and township to work together to develop industrial and commercial areas of the district in conjunction with the zoning code and the development plan. The city receives a portion of the taxes on the industrial and commercial development in the township without annexing the land. In return, the township collects the property taxes, a portion of the income tax generated, and water and/or sewer may potentially be extended to Township from the incorporated area. Other benefits of a JEDD include development of new employment opportunities and increased funds through income tax. New businesses are automatically included in the JEDD while existing businesses can petition to be in it. The following jurisdictions have active JEDD agreements:

- Aurora JEDD with Bainbridge Township in Geauga County
- Kent JEDDs with Brimfield and Franklin Townships
- Tallmadge JEDD with Brimfield Township

Community Reinvestment Area

Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA) are an economic development tool administered by municipal or county governments that provide tax incentives for investing in real property improvements. The program permits counties or municipalities to designate areas where investment has been discouraged as a CRA to encourage revitalization of existing housing stock and development of new structures. Portage County has 20 CRAs as shown in Map 8.1, of which seven have active agreements with businesses. For more information on CRAs visit the Ohio Department of Development's webpage at <https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/ohio-community-reinvestment-area>.

Enterprise Zone Program

The Ohio Enterprise Zone program is an economic development tool used by communities to retain and expand their economic base. It provides real and personal property tax exemptions to businesses making investments in Ohio. Through the enterprise zone, local officials can negotiate with businesses to encourage new investment in the zone. Portage County has 12 zones, 105C, 107C, 138C, 139C, 143C, 161C, 177C, 229C, 238C, 325C, 358C, and 397C as

shown on Map 8.1.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development tool available to local governments to finance local infrastructure improvements and, in some circumstances, residential rehabilitation. A TIF may be created by the township and implemented at the local level. In order to create a TIF, local jurisdictions must

- Designate the parcels exempt from taxation.
- Declare improvements to private property within specified areas as serving a public purpose.
- Delineate public infrastructure improvements that will directly benefit the parcels.
- Specify the equivalent funds to be created from the redirected monies.

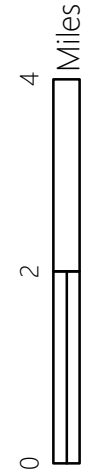
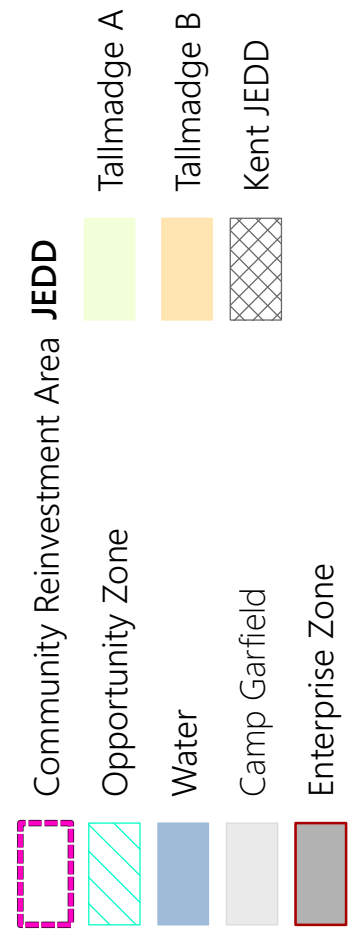
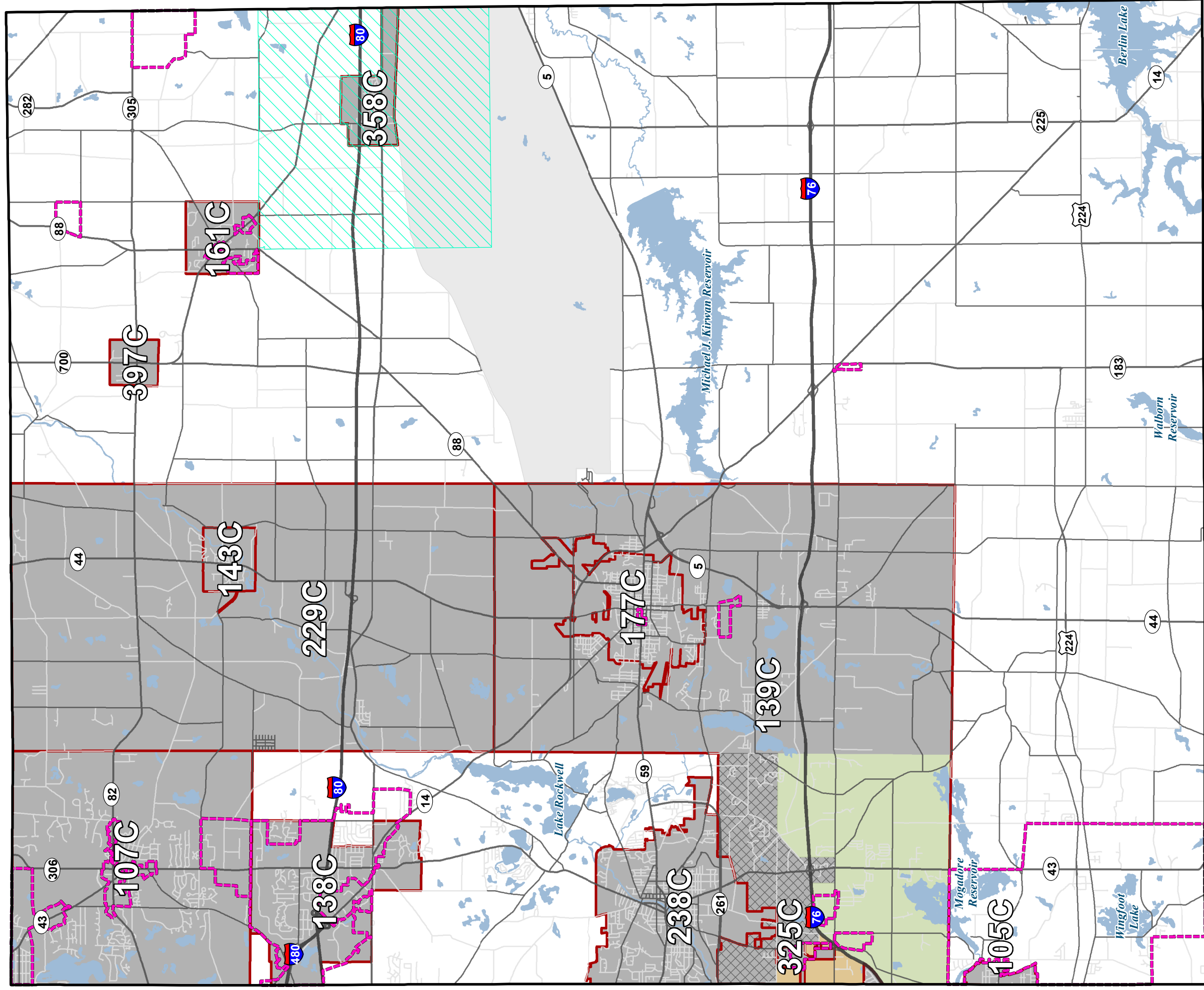
Only public infrastructure improvements directly serving the increased demand from the development are eligible for TIF financing. Examples of a TIFs can be found in Brimfield Township which has four active TIFs. TIFs help to defer some of the cost of improvements which may help a project be constructed.

Opportunity Zone

Opportunity Zones are an economic development tool that allows people to invest in distressed areas in the United States. Their purpose is to spur economic growth and job creation in low-income communities while providing tax benefits to investors.

Opportunity Zones were created under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (Public Law No. 115-97). Thousands of low-income communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories are designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones. Taxpayers can invest in these zones through Qualified Opportunity Funds.

The only Opportunity Zone in Portage County is Windham Village and Windham Township. The primary benefit for investing in areas designated as an Opportunity Zone is to defer taxes on capital gains, possibly to the point of no tax on value appreciation. It is a complicated incentive that will require both legal and financial assistance to properly qualify opportunity zone property. The program effectively sunsets for investing in 2026 with the potential of an extension to that timeline, which is to be determined.



Map date: 10/25/21

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; CRA, PCRPC & Various City Departments, 2021; JEDDs, PCRPC, 2015; Enterprise Zones, ODOT, 2015.

Map 8.1 Economic Development Tools

Table 8.4 Additional Economic Development Tools		
Funding Name	Issuing Agency	Project Details
Onsite Stormwater Loan Program	Ohio Water Development Authority	Design and construction of green infrastructure as part of economic development projects. Financial assistance is provided for stormwater management projects that focus on treating stormwater at its source to minimize, avoid, or offset impacts on water resources and reduce flow to sewers or surface waters. https://www.owda.org/Onsite-Stormwater-Loan
Brownfield Remediation Program	Ohio Department of Development	The Ohio Brownfield Fund is a collection of funding sources that can be used to help plan, assess, and remediate brownfields throughout the state. The program can provide loans up to \$500,000 for Phase II Environmental Assessment. The program can provide loans up to \$5,000,000 for environment cleanup. https://development.ohio.gov/community/redevelopment/brownfield-remediation-program
Ohio Site Inventory Program (OSIP)	JobsOhio	The primary goal of OSIP is to fill gaps in Ohio’s real estate inventory with real estate targeting near-term sector wins to ensure our state is more competitive for reactive site selection projects. https://www.jobsohio.com/osip/
Economic Development Grant	JobsOhio	The JobsOhio Economic Development Grant was created to promote economic development, business expansion, and job creation by providing funding for eligible projects. https://www.jobsohio.com/why-ohio/incentives/
Growth Fund Loan	JobsOhio	The JobsOhio Growth Fund provides capital for expansion projects to companies that have limited access to capital and funding from conventional, private sources of financing. JobsOhio will consider loans to companies that are in the growth, established or expansion stage, and that have generated revenues through a proven business plan. https://www.jobsohio.com/why-ohio/incentives/
Revitalization Program	JobsOhio	The JobsOhio Revitalization Program is designed to support the acceleration of redevelopment sites. An eligible site is an abandoned or under-utilized contiguous property where redevelopment for the immediate and primary purpose of job creation and retention are challenged by significant redevelopment constraints. https://www.jobsohio.com/programs-services/sites/
Workforce Grant	JobsOhio	The JobsOhio Workforce Grant was created to promote economic development, business expansion, and job creation by providing funding for the improvement of worker skills and abilities in the State of Ohio. https://www.jobsohio.com/programs-services/incentives/

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Table 8.4 Additional Economic Development Tools		
Funding Name	Issuing Agency	Project Details
Job Creation Tax Credit Program (JCTC)	JobsOhio	<p>The Ohio JCTC is a refundable and performance-based tax credit provided to companies generally creating at least 10 new jobs with a minimum annual payroll of \$660,000 and pay at least 150 percent of the federal minimum wage. The Ohio Tax Credit Authority approves applications.</p> <p>https://www.jobsohio.com/programs-services/incentives/job-creation-tax-credit/</p>
Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program	Ohio Department Services Agency and State Historic Preservation Office	<p>The Ohio HPTC provides a tax credit to owners and long-term lessees of historically significant buildings up to 25 percent of the qualified rehabilitation expenses (QRE), not to exceed the QRE estimates in the application, up to a maximum of \$5 million. A building is eligible if it is individually listed on the Nation Register of Historic Places, located in a registered historic district, certified by Ohio's preservation officer as being of historic significance to the district or listed as a historic landmark by a certified local government.</p> <p>https://development.ohio.gov/community/redevelopment/ohio-historic-preservation-tax-credit-program</p>
Ohio New Markets Tax Credit Program	Ohio Department of Development	<p>The program is a nonrefundable tax credit designed to incentivize investors to fund businesses in qualified active low-income communities.</p> <p>https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/ohio-new-markets-tax-credit-program</p>
Enterprise Zone Program	County	<p>The Ohio Enterprise Zone Program is a locally administered economic development tool providing real property and/or personal property tax incentives to eligible employers (i.e., enterprises) expanding or locating in Ohio.</p> <p>https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/ohio-enterprise-zone-program</p>
CRA Program	County	<p>The CRA Program is another locally administered real property tax abatement program benefiting property owners who renovate existing buildings or construct new buildings. The CRA Program permits municipal corporations or counties to designate areas in which investment has been discouraged.</p> <p>https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/ohio-community-reinvestment-area</p>

Table 8.4 Additional Economic Development Tools		
Funding Name	Issuing Agency	Project Details
TIF	County	<p>TIF is an infrastructure financing tool authorized under the Ohio Revised Code and administered by local jurisdictions. It is usually viewed as a bedrock economic development tool because it helps fund public infrastructure improvements that “directly benefit” private development. These structures are commonly used in connection with commercial development, but in limited circumstances (parcel TIFs located in impacted cities and incentive district TIFs) they may serve to capture incremental improvement values in connection with residential development.</p> <p>https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/tax-increment-financing</p>
629 Roadwork Development Grant Program	JobsOhio and Ohio Department of Development	<p>Funds are available for public roadway improvements, including engineering and design costs. Funds are available for projects primarily involving manufacturing, research and development, high technology, corporate headquarters, and distribution activity. Projects must create or retain jobs. Retail projects are ineligible.</p> <p>https://www.jobsohio.com/programs-services/incentives/</p>
166 Direct Loan Program	Ohio Department of Development	<p>The 166 Direct Loan Program provides low interest loan financing assistance to businesses for the allowable costs of eligible projects. Eligible projects include those related to industry, commerce, distribution, or research activities. Allowable costs include land and building acquisition, construction, expansion, or renovation, and equipment purchases. The program provides low-interest loans typically ranging from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million.</p> <p>https://www.jobsohio.com/programs-services/incentives/166-direct-loan/</p>
Regional 166 Direct Loan	Ohio Department of Development	<p>The Regional 166 Direct Loan Program promotes economic development, business expansion, and job creation or retention by providing low interest loans to business that may have limited access to capital from private financing sources. Eligible projects include those related to industry, commerce, distribution, or research activities. The program provides low-interest loans up to 40 % of an eligible project not to exceed \$1 million.</p> <p>https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/regional-166-direct-loan</p>
Minority Business Direct Loan Program	Ohio Department of Development	<p>The program provides low-interest rate loans to certified minority-owned businesses that are purchasing or improving fixed assets and creating or retaining jobs.</p> <p>https://development.ohio.gov/business/minority-business</p>

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Table 8.4 Additional Economic Development Tools		
Funding Name	Issuing Agency	Project Details
Women’s Business Enterprise Loan Program	Ohio Department of Development	Loan program designed to stimulate growth of existing women-owned businesses by providing loans at or below market rate interest. Loans range from \$45,000 to \$500,000. https://development.ohio.gov/business/minority-business
Enterprise Bond Fund Program	Ohio Development of Department	The Program the Ohio Treasurer issues bonds, the proceeds of which are loaned to businesses for allowable costs of eligible projects. The OEBF Loan provides long-term, fixed-rate project financing for qualifying businesses that create or preserve employment opportunities in Ohio. The OEBF Loan provides capital to developed companies with limited access to funding at costs comparable to those of rated multi-national corporations. https://www.jobsohio.com/programs-services/incentives/ohio-enterprise-bond-fund/
Research and Development Investment Loans	Ohio Department of Development	The Research and Development Investment Loan Fund provides loan financing ranging from \$500,000 to \$5 million for projects primarily engaging in R&D activity. The loans have fixed rates (at or below market rates) and other loan terms similar to those of commercial bank financing. Companies receive a dollar-for-dollar, nonrefundable Ohio commercial activity tax credit for principal and interest payments made during the year up to \$150,000 during the loan term. The credit is non-refundable and any unused credits may be carried forward until expended. https://www.jobsohio.com/programs-services/incentives/research-and-development-investment-loan-fund/

Workforce Development

“Workforce development” is a broad term meaning to match a workforce skill with the needs of employers. Portage County, like many manufacturing-based economies, has experienced the negative impacts of automation and new technologies on an aging workforce. This includes a lack of appropriately skilled workers as changes in skill requirements are leaving some behind, especially older workers and those whose skills were honed on now obsolete technologies. Without a combination of job growth, high-quality housing or a good amenity base, businesses also find it hard to retain good workers. Job readiness, sometimes called work ethics or workplace readiness, is frequently discussed in Portage County. Prospective workers are not attuned to the requirements for work or suffer from a growing array of problems.

Community Business Survey

A survey was distributed to Portage Development Board members, local area chambers of commerce and economic development persons around the county. The survey size was relatively small with 41 respondents. It should be noted that just over 50% of the respondents considered themselves as manufacturing and all other industries were roughly 10% or less. A summary of the results is listed below:

- 70.7% of the respondents have less than 50 employees.
- Over 50% of the respondents said their market area is national or international.
- 51% of respondents believe workforce is the most impeding to business success followed by the economy.
- 34% of respondents think that quality of life for employees as well as location and access to markets are the most beneficial reasons to do business in Portage County.

Economic development opportunities are diverse in Portage County. The County needs to take advantage of all their tools in the toolbox starting with intergovernmental coordination and their public and private partnerships that they have worked to build and develop. The need by local communities to review zoning and infrastructure capabilities and determine what changes, if any, need to be made to support the economy and promote and adapt to a future economy. Incentive packages need to be utilized as appropriate. Work with state agencies that may be able to add to a proposed project for retention or new construction. Marketing the County is key to retaining and attracting businesses and customers. Marketing should be emphasized as a strategy to tell the story of Portage County. Finally, developing quality-of-life attractions like parks and town centers are crucial to further the overall enjoyment of the community.

9 Land Use & Zoning

Examining land use patterns is a strategy communities can use to manage future growth and development. When land use planning is executed appropriately, it serves to promote attractive development, encourage strong partnerships between businesses and communities, and help address compatibility issues related to development.

Character Areas

A set of existing character areas was created to identify areas with common development patterns, intensity of use, land use patterns, lifestyles, and other factors. Although land use mapping is commonly done parcel to parcel in townships, villages, and cities, grouping areas by the prevalence of an existing use is beneficial across large regions like Portage County. Character areas

- Describe the intent of an area without implying regulations
- Provide for flexible use and remain general so as not to force development
- Provide a clear expectation of design and physical characteristics but allows Portage County jurisdictions to be flexible in reflecting them
- Provide a basis for zoning revisions

Recommendations are included under each character area to guide development patterns and to reflect general trends and desires of the community. Map 9.1 shows character areas. Appendix C contains a list of Township Land Use Plans which were used to create these character areas.

Downtown Core

Downtown cores are the historic, civic, and cultural centers of the community. Buildings are built to the sidewalk edge, are attached or very close together, and contain a range of uses from commercial to residential, to light industrial. Street blocks are typically short with a gridded street pattern that often intersects with a main strip or town green. Examples of traditional downtown cores are Ravenna City, Kent, Mantua Village, and Garrettsville. Downtown cores cover less than one percent of the county.

Characteristics:

- Mixed use establishments such as restaurants, small shops, apartments, print shops, townhomes
- Dense network of gridded streets
- Town green and main strip
- Wide sidewalks with street furniture such as benches, tables, chairs, trees, and parking meters
- Slow traffic speeds
- Walkable and bikeable areas
- Stores fronting directly on the sidewalk with no setback
- Small and local businesses are more prevalent
- On street parking with minimal surface lots
- May also include other pedestrian features, such as: murals, fountains, pocket sitting areas and public art

Recommendations:

- Infill vacant spaces with existing access to sewer, water, and other utilities
- Determine parking requirements, reduce and consolidate surface parking
- Adapt and reuse existing buildings
- Encourage vertical mixed use spaces
- Create and maintain public gathering spaces
- Emphasize a pedestrian and bike friendly environment over vehicle convenience
- Establish consistent signs and lighting features
- Encourage multi-modal transportation options



Public art, small shops, and restaurants in downtown Kent.



Shops along State Route 88 in Garrettsville.



Example Downtown Core development pattern

LAND USE & ZONING

Commercial Center

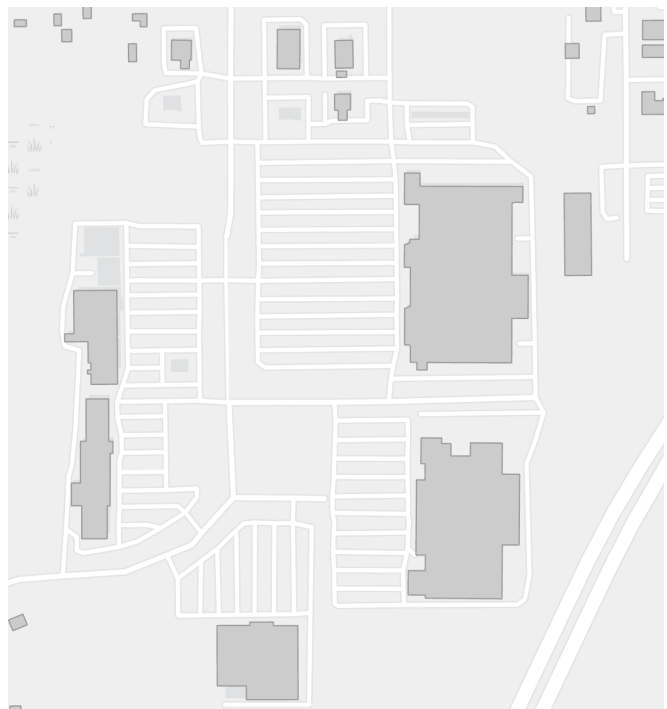
A commercial center is primarily characterized by the presence of larger retailers and commercial companies located on major thoroughfares that serve the local or regional market. Parking separates the street from the buildings. Bigger building footprints and large parking lots tend to be necessary in these areas and are designed to promote efficiency and connectivity to nearby businesses, other uses, and activities. Commercial trends are shifting toward buildings models that feature facades close to the street with parking to the rear or in the center of a complex. Examples of commercial centers include Streetsboro Commons, Streetsboro and The Cascades, Brimfield Township. A smaller-scale example of a commercial center is in Mantua Township at the intersection of SR 82 and SR 44. Less than one percent of the county is designated as commercial centers

Characteristics:

- Large retailers including chain and box stores
- Located along major thoroughfares
- Serves a regional market
- Expansive, often oversized, parking lots

Recommendations:

- Locate parking to the side or rear of the buildings
- Locate buildings near the street and provide connectivity to nearby locations
- Evaluate parking requirements and consolidate surface parking including encouraging shared parking and access
- Encourage bike parking facilities
- Provide landscaping, sidewalks, and other pedestrian oriented features
- Encourage mass transit



Community Center

Community centers are similar to downtown cores on a smaller scale and are more common in the Townships. These areas are characterized by civic, commercial, mixed, institutional, and residential uses and typically serve the local community. Brimfield, Rootstown, and Deerfield Townships have good examples of community centers. Less than one percent of the county contains community centers.

Characteristics:

- Small gathering area for the community typically a town square, green, park or Town Hall.
- Civic buildings, mixed use areas, small commercial shops
- Higher density residential, sometimes clustered residential with farms or large lots surrounding the area

Recommendations:

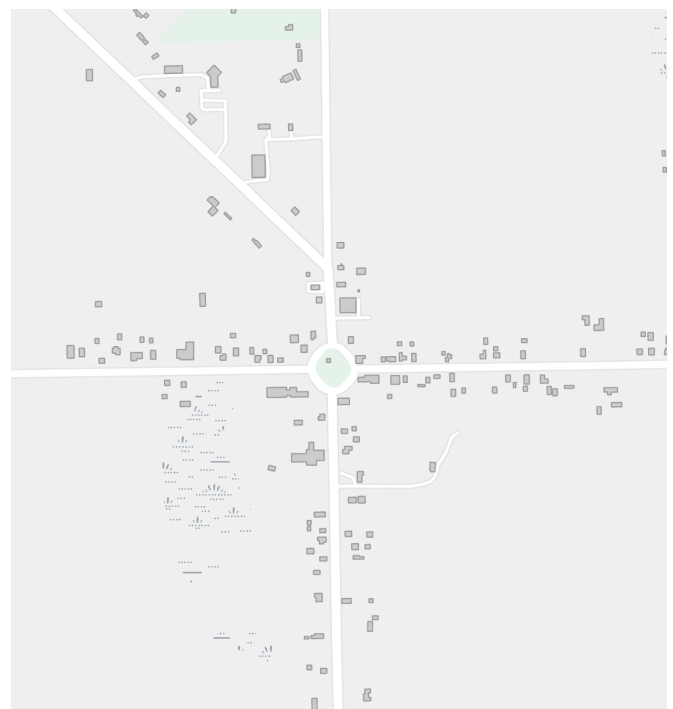
- Maintain attractive architecture through site design standards
- Pedestrian-friendly connections between public gathering areas, civic facilities, and small commercial shops
- Maintain or establish local recreation facilities and/or community centers



Nelson Township Town Hall.



Deerfield Township Circle.



LAND USE & ZONING

Employment Center

Older employment centers are located close to downtown cores with large buildings set close to the street. Newer employment centers are usually situated in suburban industrial parks with large buildings setback from the street. These areas tend to be located close to major thoroughfares and rail lines. Communities should encourage high occupancy rates and connectivity within existing industrial spaces, as well as infill development and brownfield remediation to maximize shared resources and economic benefits. Approximately 1.5% of the county is classified as an employment center. Streetsboro’s industrial park, Aurora Industrial Park, and Rubbermaid in Brimfield Township are examples of employment centers.

Characteristics:

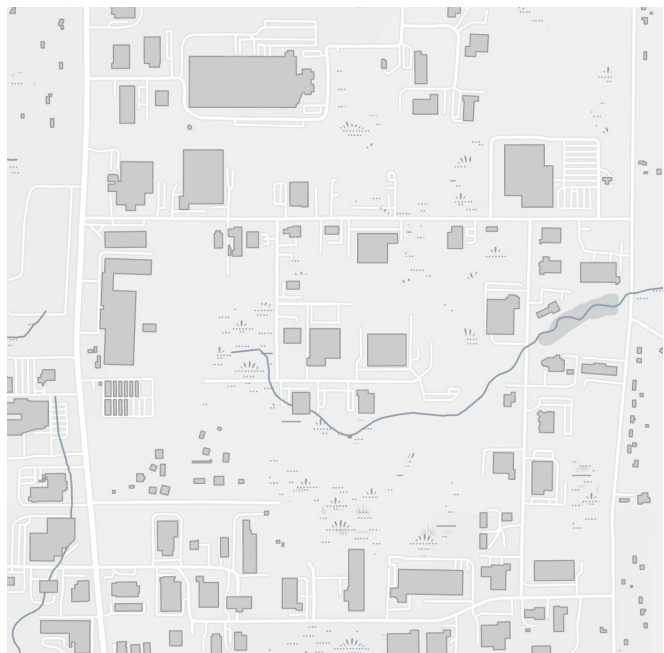
- Large scale buildings accommodating a variety of industrial processes, manufacturing or office and research spaces,
- Often characterized as an industrial or office/ research park with large setbacks, green areas, and boulevards,
- Typically separated from residential with a buffer,
- May have “nuisance” uses that cause odors, dust, noise, and other things typical of industry,
- Large parking lots to accommodate shift changes.

Recommendations:

- Preserve environmentally sensitive features and coordinate during site plan design
- Buffer from residential areas view setbacks and/ or landscaping requirements
- Incorporate green infrastructure into site design especially in areas where there would otherwise be large stretches of impervious surfaces
- Encourage transportation options including mass transit, biking, and electric vehicles.



*Top: Shalersville Township Geis Property
Bottom: Streetsboro Industrial Park*



Examples of employment center character and pattern.

Institutional Campus

These areas are characterized by academic, medical, and religious, and associated secondary uses. Streets are generally located on the periphery of the campus with major buildings and walking connections within the core. Smaller commercial and retail establishments and parking areas are on the outskirts of the core or adjacent to the campus. Walkable connections and economic links are typically major design considerations when planning for expansion. Portage County has three institutions, Hiram College, Kent State University, and NEOMED in Rootstown Township covering less than one percent of the county.

Characteristics:

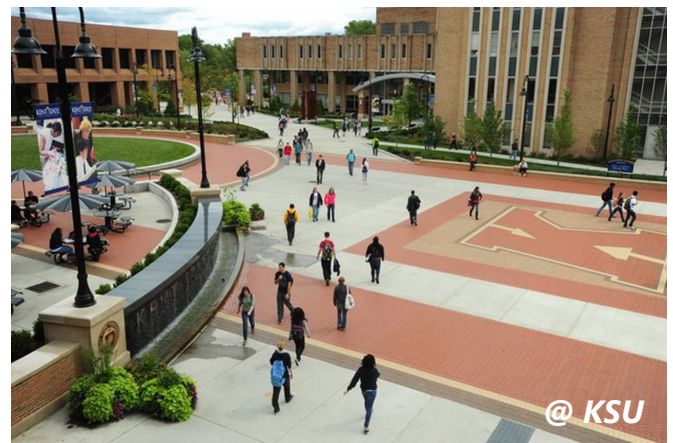
- Campus-like setting with large buildings for classes or research
- Pedestrian and cyclist-oriented atmosphere and streetscaping such as benches, bike racks, bike repair stations, and water fountains
- Large periphery streets and smaller interior streets with large sidewalks, biking routes, and many walking connections
- May have uses which support a campus life such as small restaurants and shops, roadside stands, dormitories, townhomes, and apartments

Recommendations:

- Create town-gown connections, bringing the college into the city or village.
- Encourage and emphasize community interactions.
- Encourage mass transit options
- Incorporate green infrastructure and sustainability into site design and preserve sensitive environmental features.



@ Inside Higher Ed



@ KSU

Top: Hiram College
Bottom: KSU



Kent State University campus development pattern.

LAND USE & ZONING

Suburban Living

Suburban areas are characterized by the presence of single-family homes situated in curvilinear subdivisions with shared open space set aside from development. Home sizes, lot sizes, and yard setbacks remain relatively consistent within a development, but minimum requirements vary from community to community. Connectivity to other areas serving different uses and styles of housing is designed around the automobile. Approximately 6.5% of the county is classified as suburban living. Aurora, Streetsboro, Sugar Bush Knolls, Franklin Township, Ravenna City and Township, Brimfield Township, Kent, Rootstown Township, Mantua Village, Tallmadge, and Garrettsville have suburban living areas.

Characteristics:

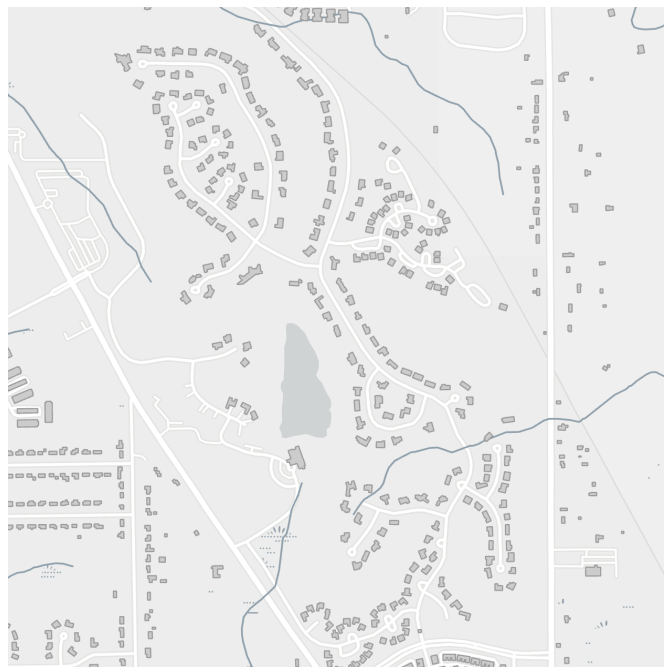
- Curved streets, boulevards at entrance, and cul-de-sacs
- Single family or duplex homes
- Sidewalks and community common areas such as a pond, playground, gazebo, etc.
- Side, front yard and rear setbacks to ensure separation of buildings
- Encouraged to be constructed in a manner that preserves environmental features

Recommendations:

- Preserve environmentally sensitive features
- Encourage walkability and bikeability through street design including sidewalks and connectivity to other neighborhoods, nearby commercial, and employment centers
- Encourage community interactions by creating gathering places, play areas, decreasing setbacks, etc.
- Locate neighborhoods near existing development and limit sprawl into greenfields



Germaine Reserve , Franklin Township.



Examples of a suburban living development pattern.

Traditional Neighborhood

Traditional Neighborhoods are located adjacent to downtown cores or community centers, and the streets are laid out in a grid. Single family homes with limited setbacks are aesthetically associated with these areas, but other housing styles are also very common. These areas usually are developed to a higher intensity than Suburban Living areas. The proximity of these residential areas to their downtown cores creates potential to expand connectivity centered around non-auto centric nodes of transportation. Traditional neighborhoods cover 1.5% of the county and are found in Ravenna City, Kent, Hiram Village, Mantua Village, Garrettsville, Windham Village, Mogadore, and Atwater Township.

Characteristics:

- Gridded street layout close to the downtown core
- Single family homes, townhomes, and apartments
- Typically, smaller setbacks than suburban areas
- Neighborhood shops and other essentials within walking and biking distance, sometimes framing neighborhoods
- Sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities

Recommendations:

- Maximize built infrastructure by densifying where feasible
- Encourage vertical growth
- Establish pocket or small community parks
- Maintain neighborhood character
- Emphasize walkability, bikeability, and transit options
- Build housing diversity by allowing a variety of housing types including duplexes, apartments, townhomes, accessory dwelling units, etc.



Ravenna City neighborhoods.



Examples of a traditional neighborhood development pattern.

LAND USE & ZONING

Transitional / Mixed Rural

These areas are characterized by the presence of smaller farms and large lots with single family homes, duplexes, or mobile homes with occasional clusters of subdivisions. Agricultural activities occur behind homes that are generally setback from the road. Commercial establishments are moderately present on main thoroughfares. In Portage County, these areas are typically found in developing areas of the Townships where farmland is being converted to residential homes (see Chapter 6, Agriculture, for a discussion of farmland preservation). Approximately 23.3% of the county is classified as mixed rural.

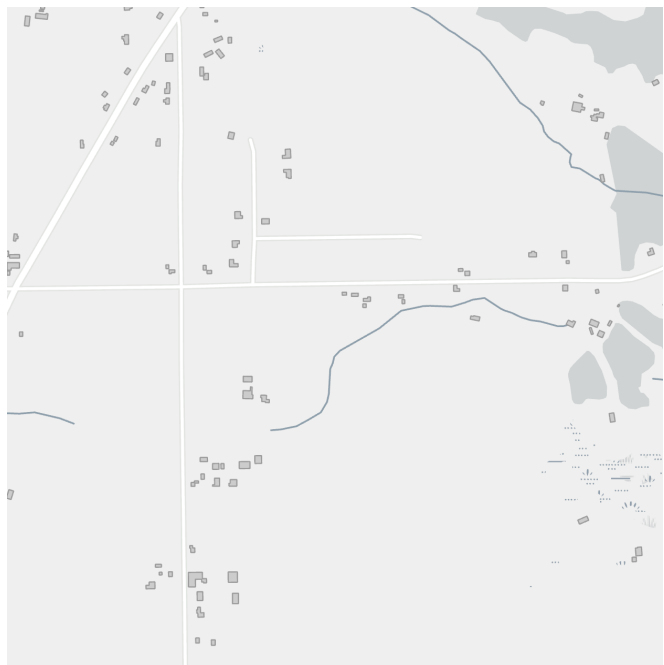
It is in the mixed rural areas where agricultural farmland is threatened by the desire to further expand residential and commercial development. This directly leads to a decline in the rural atmosphere many communities enjoy and identify with.

Characteristics:

- Homes on larger lots, usually single-family or duplex
- Some utilities may be present near subdivisions, but most areas are likely unsewered with no central water
- Fragmented farmland
- Farmland located behind homes
- Fragmented habitat and open space
- Small commercial establishments and may have limited industrial which may or may not be connected to utilities

Recommendations:

- Locate at crossroads or major/minor arterial intersections
- Focus areas of development immediately adjacent to existing areas of growth and development
- Preserve unbroken tracts of farmland and habitat
- Limit sprawl



Example of a mixed rural development pattern.

Rural

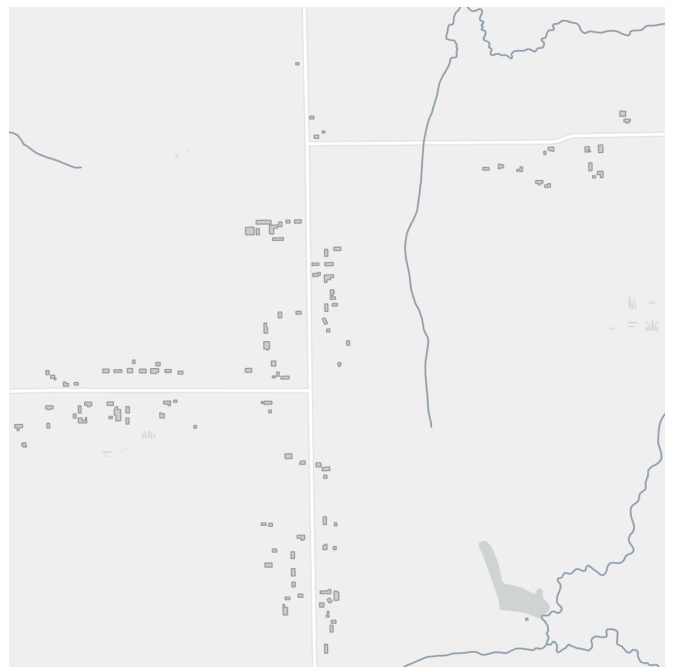
Rural areas are characterized by a higher concentration of farmland than mixed rural areas. Single-family homes, duplexes, or mobile homes are on large lots and are not serviced by central water or sanitary sewer. Commercial establishments may be present at major intersections. Residents have long trips to commercial centers for regularly needed items. Rural areas are primarily found on the eastern side of the county and cover approximately 49.4% of the land.

Characteristics:

- Large lot residential areas
- Large expanses of farmland and undeveloped areas
- Commercial may be present at major highway intersections

Recommendations:

- Maintain rural views and character through establishment of farmland preservation plans, agricultural zoning, or other methods
- Promote local food production via farm markets, farm to table restaurants, CSAs, etc.



Example of a rural development pattern.

LAND USE & ZONING

Industrial Operations

Approximately 1.6% of the county is classified as industrial operations due to heavy concentrations of sand and gravel mines and associated extraction activities. Buffers are usually present between these areas and residential zones to protect communities from noise and dust created by extraction activities and shipping.

Military Training Center

Camp James A. Garfield Joint Military Training Center is 21,000-acre facility in Portage and Trumbull Counties. The facility is operated by the Ohio Army National Guard and is being upgraded to become a world class training facility for various units within the Department of Defense. The facility has several training ranges such as firing and vehicle maneuver ranges, a rappel tower, rotary wing (helicopter) training areas, convoy routes, and bivouac areas (Ohio Adjutant General's Department, 2021). Camp Garfield was previously known as the Ravenna Army Ammunition Plant (RVAAP), or locally as the Ravenna Arsenal, and was dedicated to the war time production of bombs and artillery. The Army has been working to clean contamination found on the facility for 30 years and has several sites under investigation. Long-term monitoring of groundwater is done on a facility wide basis. An Installation Action Plan and Community Relations Plan were developed in 2021 to guide continued cleanup efforts (RVAAP Access, 2021). Camp James A. Garfield covers approximately 6.3% of Portage County.



Camp James A. Garfield Joint Military Training Center renaming ceremony.

Generalized Zoning

Zoning is the authority communities are granted to regulate urban growth and development permitted in each area. It determines type of development, intensity of use and the minimum standards that development should meet for each zone. Unlike a land use plan, a zoning resolution carries police powers and can be legally enforced. Municipalities and villages have more extensive zoning powers included with their code of ordinances, but most townships adopt zoning resolutions to create balanced development and promote health, safety, and welfare. Map 9.2 shows zoning districts in Portage County communities. Zoning districts have been generalized for comparison between jurisdictions.

Residential Districts accommodate residential

development in way that protects communities from the negative effects of industrial and commercial uses. Density levels within the residential districts vary throughout the county. Rural communities mainly adopt lower density zones that limits development to allow single-family homes and larger lot sizes. Urban communities tend to adopt high density zones that allow smaller lots, and varied housing styles such as townhomes and apartment buildings. Lower density zones help to promote rural character and protect areas that are ecologically sensitive or unable to support intense development while higher density zones encourage a more organized and efficient extension of existing infrastructure. Higher density zones tend to be situated adjacent to community and commercial centers.

Commercial Districts provide business and retail opportunities and encourage the efficient flow of goods and services along major transportation corridors. Uses are usually retail and professional services. Noxious or noisy uses associated with industrial zones are not permitted. Residential uses can be permitted on a limited basis, but these zones are usually exclusively dedicated to uses that involve frequent and brief visits from the public and should be designed to reduce impacts on traffic flows.

Industrial Districts provide appropriate locations for manufacturing, processing, and distribution activities that may involve the generation of dust, smoke, fumes, glares, odors, noise, or other undesirable elements that can negatively impact a community's residential and commercial atmosphere. Industrial zones are commonly connected to water and sewer and situated adjacent to major highways and freight rail. Because many industrial uses require a connection to water and sewer, industrial zones are frequently on the outskirts of developed areas.

Mixed Use Districts allow high density development consisting of a combination of uses, whether commercial, residential, or light industrial, adjacent to each other or mixed vertically within the same building. Regulations within these districts are typically more flexible and require the installation of fire barriers or suppression systems in uses that are vertically mixed. Ground floor retail, offices, restaurants, or light industrial (like print shops) with apartments on upper floors are common examples

of mixed-use situations. These districts have access to water and sewer and tend to be in town centers or in lifestyle centers like Crocker Park or the Geauga Lake area. Mixed use districts are often surrounded by districts that are exclusively residential, commercial, or industrial.

College Research Districts are tailored to the needs of the institution they are adopted to regulate. These zones allow an institution to plan for expansion and educational development while encouraging public and private partnerships. College Research Districts allow for a mix of uses that are not traditionally permitted together but are rational for the benefit of the institution, surrounding business, and services. Uses include but are not limited to dormitories, dining halls, retail facilities, gymnasiums, classrooms, sports facilities, restaurants, laboratories, offices, laundromats, libraries, and museums. Note, college districts such as these have limited ability to regulate public universities as the land is typically held by the State; however, colleges often have their own planners who work with their host city to meet the city's regulations.

Open Space Conservation Districts protect sensitive or important ecological, scenic, and archeological features. Regulations can help offset groundwater pollution and flooding issues, preserve unique environmental features, prevent habitat degradation, and protect farmland. Open Space Conservation Districts are tailored to meet the specific needs of the city, village, or township. Residential is permitted on a very limited basis.

Examples of features protected under Portage County's open space conservation districts include:

- Open fields, ponds, streams, hills, woodlands, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, stream corridors including the riparian, hedgerows, and rock outcroppings.
- Large, aggregated, undeveloped land areas, fields, and land in agriculture.
- Scenic vistas and rural views.
- Recreation areas and nature preserves.

Overlay Districts

Overlay districts are useful regulatory tools that communities can establish through zoning to preserve specific areas and features deemed essential

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to the character or function of the community. In Portage County, these districts were established to provide greater control over development in the rural landscape, environmentally sensitive areas, and historic features.


The purpose of overlay districts include:


- allowing for innovative land use decisions,
- focusing on certain types of development,
- compatibility of design and use between neighboring properties,
- more efficient uses of land and public services,
- reducing quantities and improving qualities of storm water runoff,
- reducing erosion,
- more efficient and aesthetic housing environments, and
- enhancing shopping, traffic circulation, pedestrian accessibility, and recreational opportunities.

Appendix B contains a comparison of zoning codes for common and emerging zoning issues that may concern Portage County communities.


Developable Areas

Map 9.3 displays land in Portage County by potential for development over the next 20 to 30 years. The ranking of developable areas was determined by proximity to existing water and sewer lines, likelihood of sewer expansion, proximity to cities and villages, and presence of environmentally sensitive features or protected lands. Urbanized areas within the townships are considered equal to undeveloped land in this map unless water or sewer is present.

 **Developable Area 1**, or the areas most favorable to development, are shown in green is comprised on cities and villages as well as areas located within 1/4-mile of water and sewer lines. Areas where development projects have been proposed, as underway, or have been recently completed are included in this category.

 **Developable Area 2**, or areas favorable to development, are shown in yellow. These locations have access to water or sewer within 1/4-mile. Places likely to be sewerred in the next 20 years from the 208 Plan are also included in this category.

White areas are least favorable to development. These places have no immediate access to utilities and may be primarily agricultural.

 Environmentally sensitive features and other protected areas are shown in red. Wetlands, floodplains, streams, waterbodies, parks, conservation easements (including farmland) comprise this category. Floodplain limitations include the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. Riparian buffers were generalized from local zoning codes to produce an estimated setback from the environmental feature. Buffers were as follows

- Stream centerlines and waterbodies: 50 feet
- Cuyahoga River: 300 feet
- Wetlands: 100

The actual required riparian setback will vary by jurisdiction, the quality of the environmental feature, and location of the ordinary high-water mark.

Several other factors may affect development in the future which are not shown on this map. Those include, but are not limited to:

- Zoning including zoning type, allowable uses, density of use
- Hydric Soils
- Steep slopes: although not prohibitive, it will increase development cost
- Source Protection Areas: limits certain type of development
- Area with high water pollution potential may restrict certain development types
- Proximity to existing road network: Areas closer to existing roads or able to create connectivity with roads will likely develop first
- Proximity to bike paths and park: areas close to parks, especially active recreation parks, will likely be favorable for development

Opportunity Areas

Opportunities have been identified throughout the County, shown on Map 9.4. This map is meant to broadly conceptualize Portage County’s resources and opportunities, not define development down to the parcel level. Each concept is explained below:

- 

City Core: Strengthen and build vibrant mixed use traditional downtowns and communities with an emphasis on walkability and bikeability. Infill and restore buildings, support local shops, and attract a variety of entertainment options and events. Create unique public spaces.
- 

Community Center: Maintain the existing character of a rural, small township center while improving public and private infrastructure and buildings. Enhance community identity.
- 

Town Center: Expand and develop into a higher density mixed use core complete with public spaces, small shops, offices, and higher density residential. Emphasize live-work-play dynamics while maintaining community identity.
- 

Village Stabilization: Stabilize and enhance the village core. Maintain the existing character of the area and enhance community identity. Improve infrastructure, public spaces, and buildings.
- 

Emerging Commercial: Encourage continued commercial development.
- 

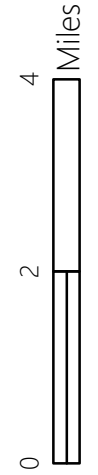
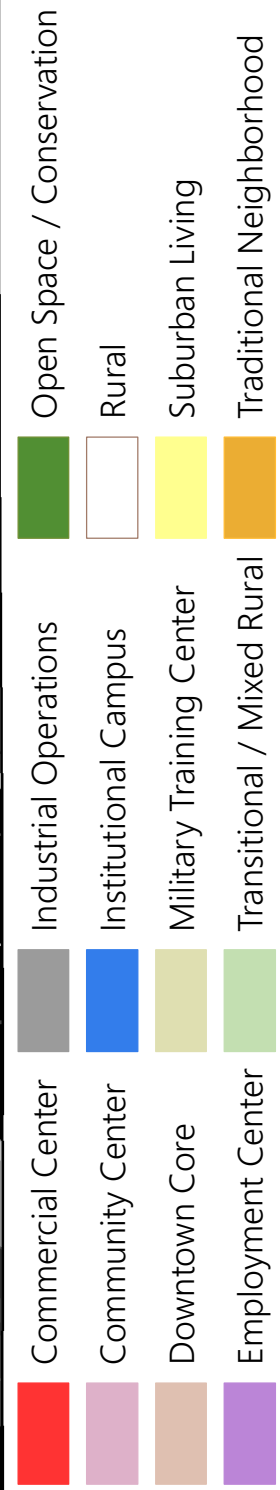
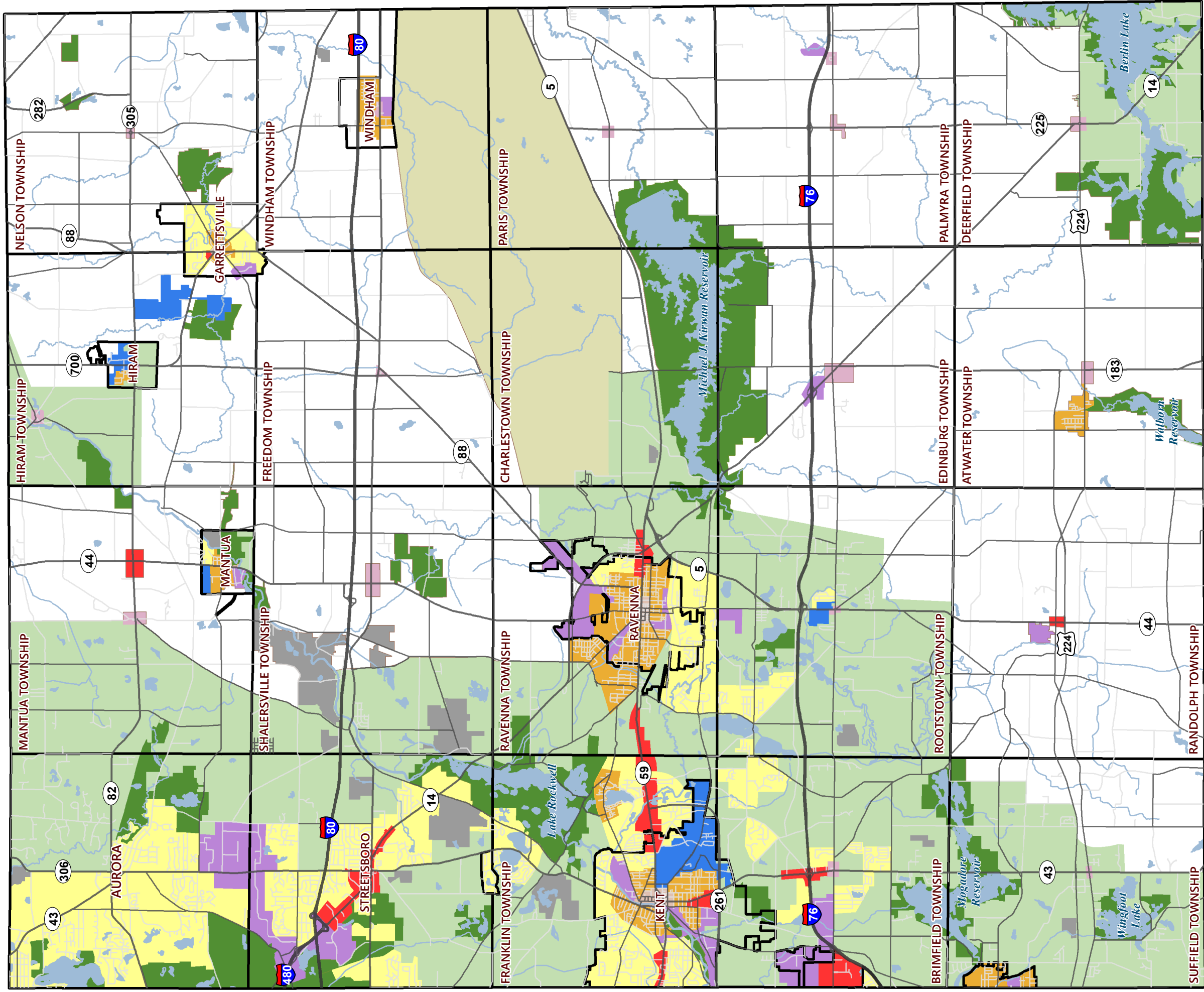
Corridor Enhancement: Strengthen the corridor appearance and pattern of development. Promote safety for all users.
- 

Growth Area: Future growth area. Promote interconnectivity, controlled, and thoughtful development patterns. Establish development character.
- 

Industrial Growth Area: Promote industrial development within existing centers. Strategically expand centers and infill development to strengthen the County.
- 

Residential Growth Area: Promote responsible development patterns and growth. Ensure quality workforce housing development with connectivity to surrounding areas.
- White or Gray Areas:** Edge maintenance or transitional area. Focus inward to promote infill development supported by existing utilities, community facilities, and services as opposed to low density expansion. Identify areas for targeted expansion and provide for strategic development where services can easily be provided.
- 

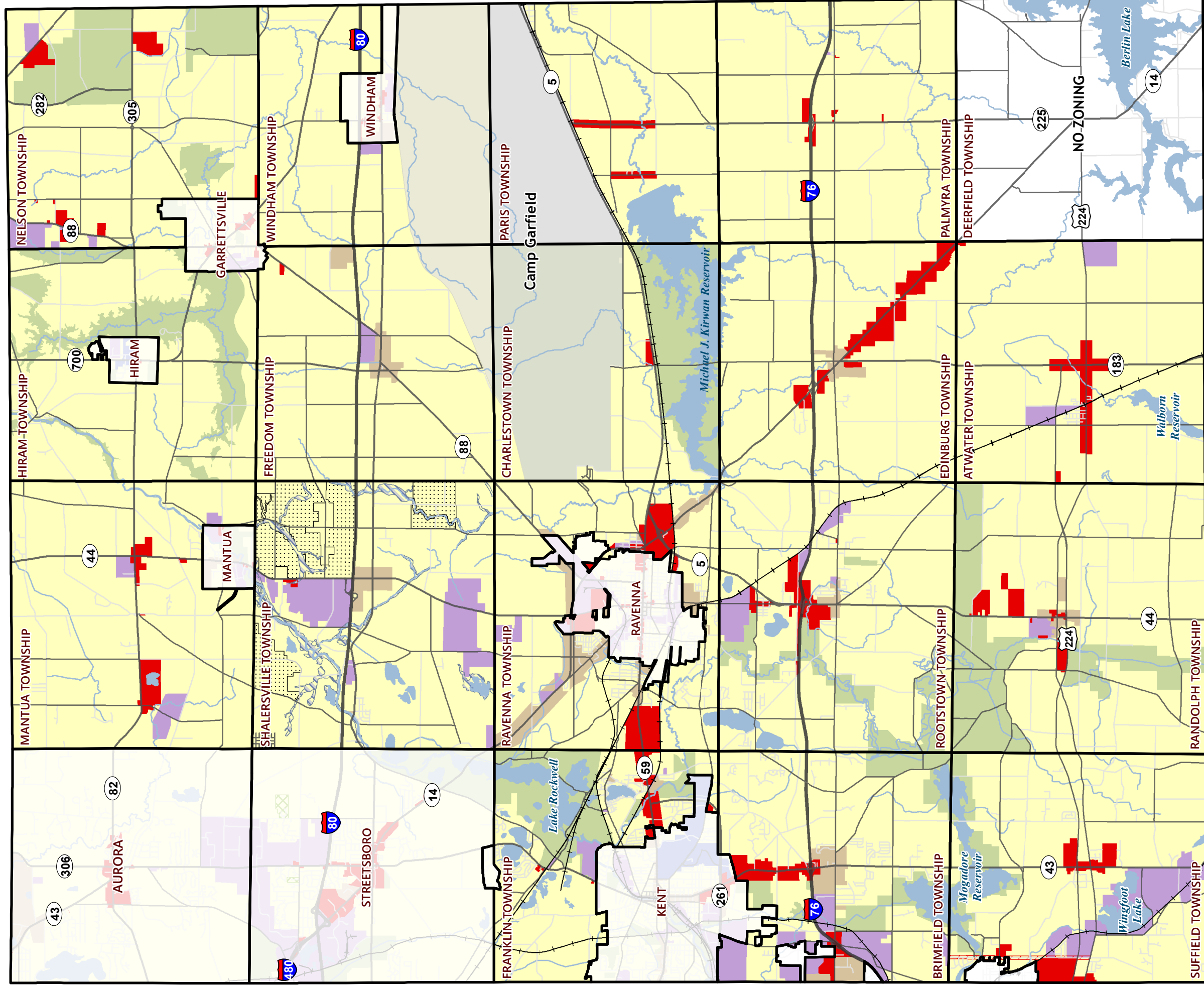
Agriculture Heritage & Preservation: Conserve agricultural areas, promote agricultural tourism, and maintain the rural character of the area. Preserve areas important to Portage County’s agricultural economy by limiting or concentrating development in order to maintain large areas for fa



Map date: 2/22/22

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Character Areas, PCRPC, 2021.

Map 9.1 Existing Character Areas



Overlay Districts

- Flood
- TDR/Agricultural

- Residential-Open Space
- Residential Business
- Historic District

Zoning District

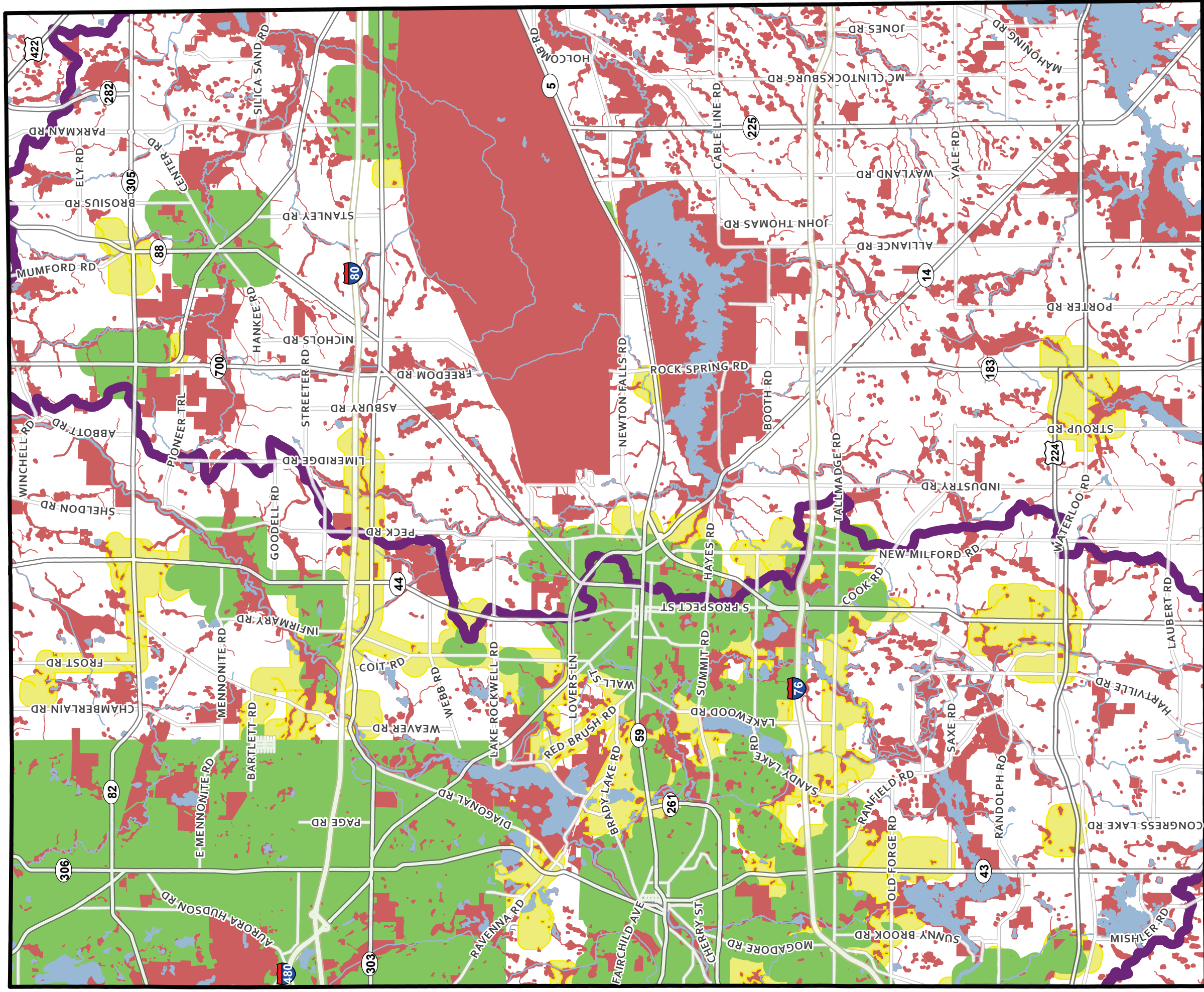
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Open Space Conservation
- College Research
- Residential
- Mixed Use
- NO ZONING









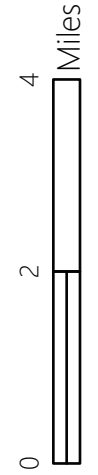
Map date: August, 2022

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary, Portage County GIS, 2021; Roads, Portage County GIS, 2020; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Zoning & Overlay Districts, PCRPC and Various Zoning Departments, 1999 - 2021.

Map 9.2 Generalized Zoning



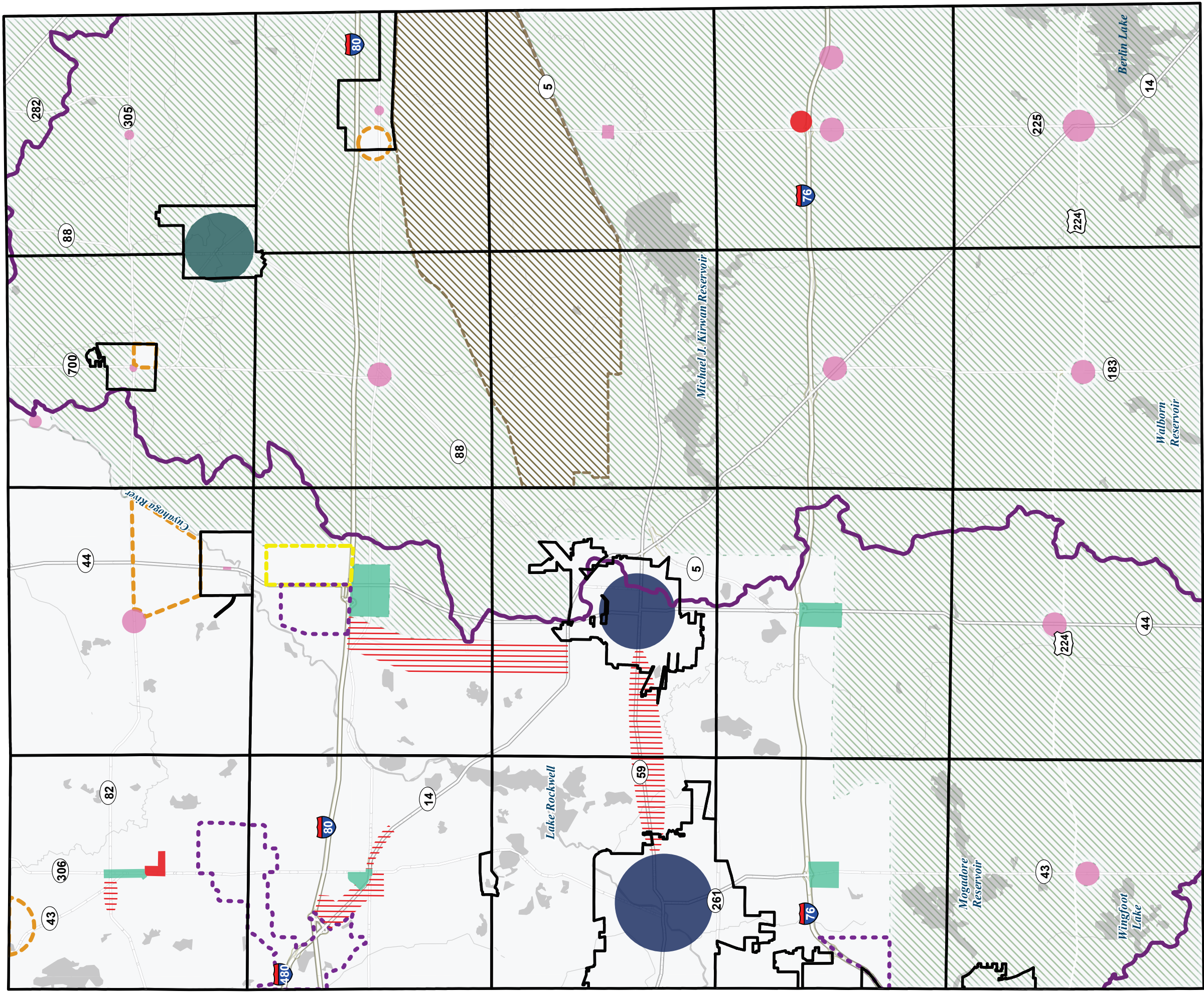
-  Portage County
-  Ohio River-Lake Erie Divide
-  Water
-  Developable Area 1
-  Developable Area 2
-  Sensitive, Protected, or Environmental Areas



Map date: 4/19/22

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary & Roads, Portage County GIS, 2021; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Ohio River-Lake Erie Divide, 2012; Developable Areas, PCRPC, 2022

Map 9.3 Developable Areas



City Core

Community Center

Corridor Enhancement

Emerging Commercial

Growth Area

Industrial Growth Area

Residential Growth Area

Town Center

Village Stabilization

Agriculture Heritage & Preservation

Ohio River-Lake Erie Divide

Camp Garfield



Map date: 4/19/22

Data Sources: Jurisdictional Boundary & Roads, Portage County GIS, 2021; Water & Streams, NHD USGS, edited by PCRPC, 2012; Ohio River-Lake Erie Divide, 2012; Opportunity Areas, PCRPC, 2022; ESRI Basemap, 2022

Map 9.4 Opportunities

10 Implementation

Perhaps the most important piece of the land use plan is implementation. The implementation chapter details the actions specified in each section and what parties should be responsible for their undertaking. Without this piece, the Plan is simply a stack of paper on a shelf. Elements such as creating long-term capital improvement plans which support the comprehensive plan are imperative to the Plan's effectiveness and value. Some recommendations need to be acted upon immediately while others might take ten to 20 years to implement. These items will need to be taken on by entities such as the County Commissioners, the Portage County Regional Planning Commission, PCWR, the Portage Development Board, Portage County Engineer, etc. Regardless of who is in charge, collaboration and communication are key to ensuring actions are taken to achieve the intent of the comprehensive plan's goals and objectives.

Implementation Actions

In order to implement the goals, objectives, and strategies of Portage County 2050, it is recommended that the County:

1. **Adopt the Plan as the official policy.** The County Commissioners must adopt the Plan by passage of a resolution. Once adopted, the Plan becomes official and should be followed when making development and planning decisions. The Plan is a first step in creating a more legally stable and enforceable system.
2. **Educate the public about the Plan to increase awareness.** The public should be aware of the Plan and its potential impact on the County. Proposals should conform with Portage County 2050 and the applicable policies applied.
3. **Require compliance with the Plan for development and capital improvement requests.** It must be documented that decisions being made comply with the recommendations in the existing comprehensive plan. Staff reports presented to the County Commissioners and to the Regional Planning Board, should include planning principles or goals of the Plan and should discuss the proposal's conformity with them. Decisions must be consistent for the County to avoid legal trouble.
4. **Maintain and update the opportunities map.**
5. **Obtain and allocate funding, such as grants, to achieve goals and objectives.** The process of securing funding is challenging and must be taken on by individuals who are assertive and organized. These individuals must determine who the key players are regarding funding of priorities, available grants, innovative programs, government assistance, and those willing to donate money or land to achieve the goals in the comprehensive plan.
6. **Involve stakeholders and community members in the Plan implementation.** To retain community trust and make the comprehensive plan a true reflection of the communities' best interests, the public must be involved in implementation. This can be accomplished through promoting the Plan, residents starting block watches and local events, or business leaders introducing sustainable initiatives into their practices.
7. **Coordinate and communicate with Portage County jurisdictions, surrounding counties, and county agencies.** Many of the recommendations in the Plan are dependent on partnerships and

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collaboration with surrounding jurisdictions, external agencies and organizations. A regional perspective on growth and assistance will help Portage County move forward.

8. **Be proactive versus reactive.** The County should take an aggressive stance on preferred development, capital improvements, property acquisition for key preservation areas, and funding opportunities. The Regional Planning Commission, County Administrator, and Commissioners should also seek education, training opportunities, and resources to stay informed of current planning issues and trends.

Plan Review and Amendments

To ensure the Plan does not sit on the shelf, it should be reviewed once a year by the end of April and any necessary amendments made. This annual review will refresh the mind of legislators and other officials on the policies and thinking that led to the main ideas in the Plan. It will also introduce the Plan to new Commissioners, County Department Directors, and other elected officials. The annual review should become a routine process.

A major reconsideration and update of the entire Plan should occur every five years. Current and changing conditions in the community and region will need to be incorporated.

The Plan may also be amended at any time during the year where it is found that certain provisions are unworkable. Policies may need to be rethought in some instances. Whatever the situation, the Plan should be kept as current as possible to be a useful tool in guiding development decisions.

Goals, Objectives and Actions

This section contains the plan's goals, objectives and actions which are intended to guide the future of the County. There are five goals which represent the highest and broadest level ideas for the future direction of the County. Objectives are identified under each goal and actions are assigned to each objective. Actions are projects, programs, or tasks that can be implemented to accomplish the given objective and the broader goal.

Quality of Life

Goal 1: To enhance quality of life while continuing to grow and provide opportunities to meet the needs of the community through programs and services.

Objective 1. Promote local parks and recreation facilities.

Action 1.1.A. Conduct a study and create a master plan for major trail corridors and extensions as well as connections to nearby neighborhoods.

1.1.B. Pursue grants that support park development, park master plans, and establish natural corridors.

1.1.C. Utilize web platforms to expand knowledge of park facilities, activities, and events.

1.1.D. Discuss opening school facilities and playgrounds to the communities with the school boards.

Objective 2. Support a wide variety of housing types and opportunities at a range of prices to meet current and future needs.

1.2.A. Conduct a countywide housing study to identify housing gaps and needs of the communities.

1.2.B. Pursue grants to implement the housing study and expand affordability.

1.2.C. Support senior, multi-generational, and empty nester housing.

1.2.D. Permit a variety of housing types via the Building Code.

1.2.E. Encourage new neighborhoods to have a mix of housing types.

1.2.F. Coordinate with the Portage County Housing Services Council and other municipal, regional, state, and federal programs that are designed to provide housing opportunities for low to moderate income groups.

1.2.G. Continue to use Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Community Initiative Program (CHIP) funds, Revolving Loan Funds (RLF), and seek legislative authorization of other designated funding sources for the

provision of very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing.

Objective 3. Support the creation of healthy and safe communities.

- 1.3.A. Develop guidelines for aging in place.
- 1.3.B. Work with healthcare agencies to address health equity and the social determinants of health.
- 1.3.C. Support neighborhood walkability and recreation space.
- 1.3.D. Coordinate with the sheriff's office to determine a variety of needs within the community.
- 1.3.E. Increase community involvement, outreach, and/or awareness between residents and emergency services.
- 1.3.F. Convene local leaders to discuss health issues, including mental health, and safety within the communities.
- 1.3.G. Ensure a smooth transition from a local emergency to state and federally declared disasters.

Objective 4. Enhance and support educational institutions.

- 1.4.A. Create awareness of our local schools, trade schools, colleges, and universities.
- 1.4.B. Build relationships between schools and the community.
- 1.4.C. Recognize school initiatives.

Objective 5. Foster a sense of place unique to Portage County that communities can build on and enhance to create their own distinctive identity.

- 1.5.A. Promote tourism within the County by taking advantage of offerings from TourismOhio.
- 1.5.B. Define communities by identifying community gateways.
- 1.5.C. Support establishment of cultural events and entertainment options.
- 1.5.D. Coordinate branding Portage County

through design and public information.

Objective 6. Recognize diversity and further community equity.

- 1.6.A. Identify the County's underserved communities and strive to connect the communities with agencies and local government.
- 1.6.B. Celebrate the diversity of County residents.
- 1.6.C. Incorporate equity and inclusion into everyday practices.
- 1.6.D. Organize implicit bias training.

Objective 7. Facilitate open discussion on issues the County is facing.

- 1.7.A. Create a Public Information Officer to disseminate information to the public from all county departments, boards and/or commissions, and county agencies.
- 1.7.B. Develop a communication plan to further government transparency, actively reach citizens and improve participation in local government.
- 1.7.C. Communicate with local governments and agencies about programs and projects that benefit the community with the intention of sharing information to be efficient and cost effective by better defining roles, responsibilities, and collaboration opportunities.
- 1.7.D. Communicate success stories or the completion of projects, receipts of grants and a myriad of other information to provide more transparency and improve community image.

Objective 8. Empower residents to engage in their community.

- 1.8.A. Prepare guidelines to promote equitable engagement.
- 1.8.B. Create a communication strategy to better inform the public.
- 1.8.C. Create a user-friendly digital presence that is regularly updated.

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Objective 9. Participate in data sharing internally as well as with local governments and other agencies for the purposes of improving communication, creating efficient provision of services, and encouraging cooperative planning efforts.

1.9.A. Establish a common data clearinghouse to improve information sharing among county agencies, commissions, and departments.

1.9.B. Coordinate and participate in technical committees related to geographic data used with Geographic Information Systems.

1.9.C. Initiate meetings with cities, agencies, and other units of local government to jointly discuss, write, and implement planning studies for areas of mutual interest.

Infrastructure

Goal 2: Improve infrastructure by promoting transportation and utilities that support development priorities and community well-being.

Objective 1. Coordinate infrastructure improvements and capital facilities, as well as establish acceptable levels of service for county facilities.

2.1.A. Create a needs assessment committee(s) including county departments, agencies, and other service providers.

2.1.B. Determine existing levels of service for various services, i.e., Roads, Potable Water, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Water and Parks.

2.1.C. Identify where deficiencies may exist over the next 5 to 15 years.

2.1.D. Develop a cohesive capital improvement plan to address deficiencies by budgeting and setting aside funding to address major improvement projects over a 5-year to 10-year planning period.

Objective 2. Promote safe, efficient, and cost-effective access to transportation options and connectivity throughout the County.

2.2.A. Create an access management plan to improve traffic movement and enhance safety.

2.2.B. Build road network connections and cross-access management that foster ease of access and community connectivity.

2.2.C. Strive to identify transportation needs and develop and maintain a viable and financially feasible transportation network.

2.2.D. Develop complete streets guidelines for use by local governments that breaks down recommendations by community context.

2.2.E. Improve and align the design of major corridors.

Objective 3. Promote mass transit through PARTA and other transportation providers especially in urbanized areas and to job centers.

2.3.A. Identify employment centers, underserved populations, and shopping destinations without access to mass transit.

2.3.B. Evaluate and coordinate economic development opportunities for mass transit with PARTA.

2.3.C. Collaborate with PARTA on their strategic plan and work to identify areas for potential expansion.

2.3.D. Identify alternative funding mechanisms for enhanced transit.

Objective 4. Provide public utilities, in an efficient planned manner, responsive to rapidly growing areas and community needs.

2.4.A. Maintain and work with land developers to upgrade existing utility systems especially in rapidly growing areas.

2.4.B. Plan for expansion and/or upgrades to increase density and intensity in growth areas while adhering to local future land use plans and zoning.

2.4.C. Utilize creative financing to fund expansion into areas with failing septic systems (grants, loans, assessments, etc).

2.4.D. Create looped connections and/or redundancy in water service areas.

2.4.E. Work with all service providers operating within the County and regionally for better

coordination and collaboration to be more cost effective and efficient with service delivery.

Objective 5. Coordinate potential transit-oriented development to be a hub of activity and utilize an array of transportation options.

2.5.A. Evaluate locations for and the feasibility of transit-oriented design.

2.5.B. Work to develop and promote transit-oriented design (bus bays, electric vehicles, bikes, and other transportation modes).

Objective 6. Coordinate the development of an electric vehicle network, autonomous vehicles, and requirements associated with emerging technologies.

2.6.A. Develop an EV charging station siting plan using grant funds.

2.6.B. Encourage existing development to be EV compatible.

2.6.C. Encourage development to hard wire for current and projected expansion of EV use per the Ohio Building Code or similar development applications.

2.6.D. Actively coordinate or pursue funding opportunities to help existing businesses to set up for the EV and other emerging technologies.

2.6.E. Analyze the potential impact of emerging technologies such as connected vehicles and autonomous vehicles in Portage County.

2.6.F. Prepare for intelligent transportation systems.

Objective 7. Increase and expand multmodal transportation facilities such as rail and air as appropriate.

2.7.A. Coordinate with AMATS and ODOT on potential expansion of railroad and airport use within the County.

2.7.B. Strive to implement the airport master plan.

2.7.C. Examine the existing rail system and plans and collaborate with the railroad companies for expansion.

Objective 8. Increase opportunities for car share systems, biking, walking, and other alternative transportation options.

2.8.A. Coordinate with AMATS to implement the transportation plans..

2.8.B. Improve streetscapes in urbanized areas, especially addressing gaps in sidewalks.

2.8.C. Investigate traffic calming treatments on roadways to improve safety.

Objective 9. Improve broadband access.

2.9.A. Conduct a county wide assessment of existing broadband networks and the feasibility of extending or establishing broadband in underserved areas and communities.

2.9.B. Coordinate broadband systems to be available and functional countywide.

2.9.C. Expand access to high-speed internet.

Objective 10. Improve and promote recycling services.

2.10.A. Create new outlets for the waste stream.

2.10.B. Implement and update the Solid Waste Plan.

2.10.C. Promote a positive message about recycling.

Objective 11. Enhance coordinated fire services and safety with the Emergency Management Agency.

2.11.A. Coordinate with townships to address gaps in the emergency response network.

2.11.B. Address consistency, collaboration, and reporting among emergency services and the Emergency Management Agency.

2.11.C. Work to identify ways to improve sheriff response times, especially to the farthest areas of the county.

Objective 12: Encourage alternative energy sources.

2.12.A. Develop a county action plan to better utilize alternative energy sources or products as they become available and financially feasible.

2.12.B. Encourage new developments to explore

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wind and solar usage.

Environmental

Goal 3: Preserve our heritage and environment through land use and infrastructure decision making.

Objective 1. Conserve agricultural land and limit development in agricultural areas to maintain local heritage and provide diverse food choices.

3.1.A. Coordinate with the Portage County Farm Bureau and/or Ohio Department of Agriculture to determine agricultural needs for Portage County.

3.1.B. Update the farmland preservation plan and engage communities to implement the strategies contained in the plan.

3.1.C. Create a baseline of agricultural diversity.

3.1.D. Preserve high quality farmland from development.

3.1.E. Designate areas for agriculture where utilities will not be expanded.

Objective 2. Promote local foods and agritourism.

3.2.A. Promote agricultural tourism associated with farmer's markets, wineries, self-harvest, summer and falls festivals and agricultural event centers.

3.2.B. Celebrate Portage County's Historic Family Farms.

3.2.C. Promote agritourism and local foods through TourismOhio.

3.2.D. Create regional food aggregation and distribution hubs by leveraging state and federal funds.

Objective 3. Promote, protect, and enhance natural resources.

3.3.A. Protect sensitive species by preventing habitat fragmentation, preserving habitat nodes, and corridors.

3.3.B. Update the priority wetlands and woodlands map and protect areas of high priority from development.

3.3.C. Protect wetlands and flood hazard areas to ensure resiliency to increasingly larger and more severe storms.

3.3.D. Protect and improve water quality and critical habitats.

3.3.E. Minimize the negative impacts that cause climate change.

3.3.F. Promote resilience and adaptation.

3.3.G. Create an all-inclusive map of various environmental features to show baseline conditions to accurately track loss.

3.3.H. Educate the public on the value of ecosystem benefits, including its resources.

Objective 4. Preserve Portage County's historic and archaeological resources, as appropriate, and view them as value added to the community.

3.4.A. Create an all-inclusive map of known historic and archaeological resources.

3.4.B. Work with Townships and other communities to coordinate awareness and/or protection.

3.4.C. Celebrate our history by promoting events and market as appropriate.

Objective 5. Promote alternative energy.

3.5.A. Coordinate with appropriate agencies about the benefits of alternative energy.

3.5.B. Educate township officials and the public about the benefits of alternative energy.

Economic Development

Goal 4: Promote a resilient economy.

Objective 1. Address land supply and reinvest in existing industrial areas.

4.1.A. Identify growth areas and/or areas where growth should be limited.

4.1.B. Redevelop vacant and distressed properties as key locations for industrial development by addressing impediments to revitalization.

4.1.C. Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing industrial structures.

4.1.D. Promote industrial development in areas with infrastructure and access.

4.1.E. Promote public-private collaborations to facilitate infill development, redevelopment of brownfield sites, underutilized industrial and commercial properties and assemble additional land supply for specific projects as necessary.

4.1.F. Collaborate and encourage facilitation of regional stakeholders to explore opportunities to repurpose the excess capacity and/or surplus of real estate.

Objective 2. Develop incentives and financing.

4.2.A. Identify sources of funding and secure funds to facilitate business development.

4.2.B. Build a pipeline of funding opportunities for different clusters in the region by identifying enough capital deal flow to attract resources of venture capital firms.

4.2.C. Create stable funding appropriations for economic development from the County and local governments to be utilized by the Portage Development Board.

4.2.D. Meet with private equity and venture capital organizations to better learn what their industries require to locate or expand regionally.

4.2.E. Collaborate on securing state and federal grants, other public financing vehicles, and tax incentive programs to facilitate community development and rehabilitation.

Objective 3. Promote revitalization of town centers and downtowns.

4.3.A. Coordinate forums for information sharing by local and national development community representatives.

4.3.B. Cluster development near existing communities.

Objective 4. Attract and retain businesses.

4.4.A. Package incentives for locating in Portage County.

4.4.B. Target industries to locate in Portage County through multifaceted campaigns.

4.4.C. Market Portage County's affordability.

4.4.D. Assist in developing retail and businesses which support services for residential, larger business and industries.

4.4.E. Coordinate with local communities to support business, industrial, and/or specialty district outreach activities.

4.4.F. Spearhead efforts to pursue grant opportunities through County departments and agencies that facilitate new investment countywide.

4.4.G. Orient local events to a day visitor marketing effort.

4.4.H. Build on local strengths and leverage tourism branding to support economic development.

Objective 5. Develop workforce and job readiness through collaboration with local schools, businesses, and universities.

4.5.A. Create a program that works to retain high school, trade school, and college graduates within the County.

4.5.B. Establish and promote a business-friendly environment to create and retain good quality jobs.

4.5.C. Encourage partnerships between industries and educational institutions to create sponsorship and/or internship programs which feed into local businesses and enhances job readiness.

Objective 6. Encourage business development, incubators, and entrepreneurship.

4.6.A. Collaborate with the Summit Medina Business Alliance to create and maintain an up-to-date Small Business One Stop Resource web page containing resources for started and growing a business.

4.6.B. Seek funds for more competitive marketing and business start-up assistance programs, as both are needed to raise the profile of Portage County and make the process of locating in the region easier.

IMPLEMENTATION

4.6.C. Explore ways to support a local culture of entrepreneurial risk taking.

Land Use

Goal 5: Support the development of distinct and desirable places to live.

Objective 1. Improve the physical appearance of the built environment.

5.1.A. Evaluate and amend the subdivision regulations to encourage contiguous open space blocks providing habitat corridors and recreation; emphasize walkable neighborhoods; and create a connected road network.

5.1.B. Encourage development to existing clean sites rather than extending infrastructure into "greenfields".

5.1.C. Develop a comprehensive list of abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial sites.

5.1.D. Proactively coordinate with landowners and the Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation (PCLRC or Land Bank) to provide access to evaluate sites through Phase I, II, and III assessments and clean up.

5.1.E. Work with a multidisciplinary team to obtain funding to assess sites, clean identified sites, and place the sites into active reuse.

Objective 2. Coordinate land use and infrastructure planning with and between local units of government.

5.2.A. Coordinate land use and infrastructure between local units of government.

5.2.B. Encourage local economic development managers to collaborate and identify locations for infrastructure needs.

Objective 3. Protect rural character.

5.3.A. Work with Portage County Soil and Water and the Western Reserve Land Conservancy to promote agricultural preservation.

5.3.B. Evaluate the subdivision regulations to encourage farmland preservation.

5.3.C. Establish periodic zoning reviews to

further promote rural character.

5.3.D. Limit expansion of water and sewer lines into rural areas to limit development.

5.3.E. Discourage fragmentation of farmland into large lot residential which often results in loss of rural character and farmland.

Objective 4. Promote, maintain, and assist in the development of parks, recreation, and entertainment opportunities.

5.4.A. Coordinate with the Portage Park District and local governments to promote and maintain parks.

5.4.B. Encourage and support local governments to apply for grants as appropriate.

Objective 5. Engage with townships, villages, and cities.

5.5.A. Routinely coordinate with local governments to assure that messaging is being shared.

5.5.B. Meet with local governments to gauge opinions on successes and challenges of existing regulatory and planning tools.

5.5.C. Share information about existing tools, tools not being utilized, and emerging trends.

Objective 6. Encourage cities, villages, and townships to update their comprehensive plans, master plans, and zoning on a regular basis.

5.6.A. Encourage local governments to keep the land use or comprehensive plan current.

5.6.B. Promote the concept of visioning and goal setting by local governments.

5.6.C. Collaborate on updating zoning regulations based on the community's vision or land use/ comprehensive plan.

Objective 7. Promote fiscally sustainable development practices.

5.7.A. Establish a 5-year capital budget for necessary county expenditures.

5.7.B. Update annually the 5-year budget as projects are completed and add new projects as

appropriate.

5.7.C. Develop a process to identify current and upcoming issues to apply for grant funding and have design-ready projects.

Objective 8. Coordinate county wide and regional planning efforts.

5.8.A. Utilize the Regional Planning Commission's expertise to administer subdivision regulations, zoning amendments and Community Development Block Grants.

5.8.B. Develop and maintain a report or website tracking demographic changes and the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

5.8.C. Support special projects that promote, enhance and benefit Portage County, the communities and/or the public.

5.8.D. Utilize geographic mapping by both the County Auditor's Office and Regional Planning Commission to assist projects, planning, and transparency efforts.

5.8.E. Maintain compatible level of service standards and sound growth management.

5.8.F. Participate on technical committees and subcommittees by providing information and technical assistance for coordinating services.

5.8.G. Coordinate with all adjacent counties and local governments on issues which may affect the region.

Objective 9. Encourage communities to limit urban sprawl.

5.9.A. Develop strategies to create a more unified development pattern.

5.9.B. Encourage review of zoning regulations to limit urban sprawl potential.

5.9.C. Promote a collaborative process of working with land use, economic development, and local government officials with property owners to seek out shared opportunities.

Objective 10. Encourage standards for new development that promote sustainability.

5.10.A. Support local governments in developing design guidelines for development.

5.10.B. Incorporate vision plans into the zoning code.

Objective 11. Direct public realm improvements in "high impact" locations.

5.11.A. Seek to maximize location opportunities of public improvements. This would include satellite offices, court houses and other government offices.

5.11.B. Collaborate with other local governments to best implement future government office projects.

5.11.C. Develop a cohesive plan for all county-owned properties.

5.11.D. Evaluate efficiencies.

Objective 12. Align the Capital Improvement Plan and Subdivision Regulations with the Comprehensive Plan.

5.12.A. Develop an all-inclusive Capital Improvement Plan.

5.12.B. Link land use planning to fiscal policy.

5.12.C. Amend the Comprehensive Plan to include the 5-year budget and or Capital Improvement Plan.

5.12.D. Establish collaborative agreements to implement goals, objectives, and policies of the Portage County Comprehensive Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

Action Tables

The following tables summarize the plan’s objectives and actions. Each table is organized by the plan’s five goals and indicates a timeframe for completion. These timeframes are defined as the following:

- Ongoing: Currently underway and should continue
- Short Term: Begin within 0-5 years
- Mid-Term: Within 6-15 years
- Long Term: Beyond 15 years

Lead coordinators and secondary partners are identified to provide responsibility for each action. An anticipated measure for achievement of the action is included so that implementation of the plan may be evaluated. Although the Portage County Board of Commissioners (BCC) are not listed in the table below, they are available to help any agency or department.

GOAL 1. ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE WHILE CONTINUING TO GROW AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 1. Promote local parks and recreation facilities.					
1.1.A	Conduct a study and create a master plan for major trail corridors and extensions as well as connections to nearby neighborhoods.	PPD	Local Park Departments ODNR	Short Term	Trail Study completed. Trail Master Plan completed or integrated into the Park Master Plan.
1.1.B	Pursue grants that support park development, park master plans, and establish natural corridors.	PPD	WRLC ODNR Local Park Departments	Ongoing	
1.1.C	Utilize web platforms to expand knowledge of park facilities, activities, and events.	PPD	PCRPC ODNR	Ongoing	
1.1.D	Discuss opening school facilities and playgrounds to the communities with the school boards.	Local Communities	School District Boards of Education	Mid-Term	

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 2. Support a wide variety of housing types and opportunities at a range of prices to meet current and future needs.					
1.2.A	Conduct a countywide housing study to identify housing gaps and needs of the communities.	PCRPC	Housing Services Council Other Planning Commissions	Short Term	Countywide housing study completed.
1.2.B	Pursue grants to implement housing study and expand affordability.	PCRPC	Housing Services Council HBA Grants Administrator*	Mid to Long Term	Applied for and obtained grants. Implement recommendations from the housing study.
1.2.C.	Support senior and multigenerational, and empty nester housing.	Local Communities PCRPC		Ongoing	Number of existing living units in 2020 increased.
1.2.D	Permit a variety of housing types via the Building Code.	Local Communities	Building Department*	Ongoing	Ensure local communities and the Portage County Building Department allow a variety of housing. Adapt local zoning codes, while meeting the Residential Building Code of Ohio, to permit diverse housing types.
1.2.E	Encourage new neighborhoods to have a mix of housing types.	PCRPC Local Communities	PCLRC HBA PCRA PMHA	Short Term	Discuss benefits of allowing diverse housing types with the communities on an annual to biannual basis. Review subdivision regulations to ensure diverse housing types are permitted. Review zoning codes during updates and provide recommendations to encourage diverse housing types (1-2 per year).

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
1.2.F	Coordinate with the Portage County Housing Services Council and other municipal, regional, state, and federal programs that are designed to provide housing opportunities for low to moderate income groups.	PCRPC	Housing Services Council ODOD HUD	Short Term Long Term	Implement the housing study and plan to address recommendations. Identify housing challenges in underserved neighborhoods and populations. Obtain grants to address challenges.
1.2.G	Continue to use Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Community Initiative Program (CHIP) funds, Revolving Loan Funds (RLF), and seek legislative authorization of other designated funding sources for the provision of very low-, low-, and moderate -income housing.	PCRPC NDS	Local Communities County Commissioners Private Sector Non-Profits	Ongoing	Continue to support and implement current housing programs. Actively look for additional programs which will benefit the county.
Objective 3. Support the creation of healthy and safe communities.					
1.3.A	Develop guidelines for aging in place.	PCRPC Direction Home Akron-Canton Area Agency on Aging	Senior Services Local Communities Other Planning Commissions Mental Health & Recovery Board	Short Term	Adoption of county-wide guidelines for aging in place.
1.3.B	Work with healthcare agencies to address health equity and the social determinants of health.	PCRPC County Commissioners	UH Portage NEOMED Local Communities	Mid-Term	Meet with healthcare stakeholders on a biannual basis to discuss challenges in health planning and strategies to address them. Implement recommendations.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
1.3.C	Support neighborhood walkability and recreation space.	PCRPC Local Communities AMATS	County Commissioners PPD	Short to Mid-Term	Determine a baseline walkability score for interested communities and then regularly analyze walkability scores. Require pedestrian connections to nearby neighborhoods and commercial areas. Update the subdivision regulations to encourage pedestrian and bike connectivity as well as active recreation areas.
1.3.D	Coordinate with the sheriff's office to determine a variety of needs within the community.	Portage County Sheriff Local Communities	County Commissioners and/or Administrator	Short to Long Term	Facilitate meetings between various Portage County communities and the Portage County Sheriff's office on an annual or biannual basis. Determine Township and/or Village concerns with emergency service provision and work to alleviate them.
1.3.E	Increase community involvement, outreach, and/or awareness between residents and emergency services.	Portage County Sheriff EMA*	Local Communities	Short to Long Term	Meet with or take part in community events on an annual basis so that Portage County communities become familiar with the Sheriffs.
1.3.F	Convene local leaders to discuss health issues, including mental health, and safety within the communities.	Mental Health & Recovery Board	Portage County Sheriff Community Elected Officials UH Portage NEOMED County Commissioners and/or Administrator Other Mental Health Agencies	Ongoing	Facilitate annual meetings between mental health providers, law enforcement, and community leaders to determine pressing health issues among County communities.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
1.3.G	Ensure a smooth transition from a local emergency to state and federally declared disasters.	EMA* County Commissioners	Local Communities	Mid-Term	Disaster recovery training conducted. Donations Management Program created. Debris Management Plan created and approved by FEMA.
Objective 4. Enhance and support educational institutions.					
1.4.A	Create awareness of our local schools, trade schools, colleges, and universities.	Public Information Officer	PCRPC	Short Term	
1.4.B	Build relationships between schools and the community.	Educational Service Centers	Local School Districts Township Trustees PCRPC	Mid-Term	Facilitate meetings as needed between the board of education and township trustees to build understanding.
1.4.C	Recognize school initiatives.	Educational Service Centers	Local School Districts PCRPC County Commissioners	Mid-Term	Create a school pride initiative.
Objective 5. Foster a sense of place unique to Portage County that communities can build on and enhance to create their own distinctive identity.					
1.5.A	Promote tourism within the County by taking advantage of offerings from TourismOhio.	Visitors Bureau	Chambers of Commerce Main Street Programs Local Communities	Ongoing	Increased Portage County presence on TourismOhio website.
1.5.B	Define communities by identifying community gateways.	Local Communities PCRPC	Chambers of Commerce Historical Societies	Long Term	Gateway signage, monuments, and other attributes established.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
1.5.C	Support establishment of cultural events and entertainment options.	Visitor Bureau Chambers of Commerce Main Street Programs	Local Communities	Ongoing	
1.5.D	Coordinate branding Portage County through design and public information.	County Commissioners	Visitor Bureaus Chambers of Commerce Main Street Programs	Mid-Term	Implement branding.
Objective 6. Recognize diversity and further community equity.					
1.6.A	Identify the County's underserved communities and strive to connect the communities with agencies and local government.	Housing Services Council PCRPC	NAACP PMHA NDS	Short Term Mid-Term	Communities identified and mapped. Annual meetings with agencies and community leaders.
1.6.B	Celebrate the diversity of County residents.	Visitor Bureaus Local Communities	Chamber of Commerce Portage County	Ongoing	Increase in attendance at cultural events.
1.6.C	Incorporate equity and inclusion into everyday practices.	Human Resources*	PCRPC Department / Agency Directors County Administrator*	Ongoing	Continue to further social justice in the County, including in its hiring practices, external communications, and in how the County targets areas for projects.
1.6.D	Organize implicit bias training.	Human Resources*	Department / Agency Directors	Short Term	Create and implement implicit bias training for Portage County Employees.
		PCRPC		Short Term	Hold implicit bias training for Township Trustees and Zoning Inspectors on an annual basis to capture new employees and elected officials.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 7. Facilitate open discussion on issues the County is facing.					
1.7.A	Create a Public Information Officer to disseminate information to the public from all county departments, boards and/or commissions, and county agencies.	County Commissioners	County Administrator*	Short Term	Hire an experienced County Public Information Officer.
1.7.B	Develop a communication plan to further government transparency, actively reach citizens and improve participation in local government.	Public Information Officer*	County Administrator*	Short Term	Communication plan for coordinated public outreach developed.
1.7.C	Communicate with local governments and agencies about programs and projects that benefit the community with the intention of sharing information to be efficient and cost effective by better defining roles, responsibilities, and collaboration opportunities.	Public Information Officer*	Local Communities Department / Agency Directors	Mid-Term	Regular lines of communication established.
1.7.D	Communicate success stories or the completion of projects, receipts of grants and a myriad of other information to provide more transparency and improve community image.	Public Information Officer* County Administrator*	Department / Agency Directors Grant Administrator*	Mid-Term	Increased press releases and social media presence about county activities.
Objective 8. Empower residents to engage in their community.					
1.8.A	Prepare guidelines to promote equitable engagement.	Public Information Officer*	Department / Agency Directors	Short Term	Equitable community engagement strategy created.
1.8.B	Create a communication strategy to better inform the public.	Public Information Officer*	Department / Agency Directors	Short Term	Communication strategy created.
1.8.C	Create a user-friendly digital presence that is regularly updated.	IT	Department / Agency Directors	Ongoing	Increased public participation in local government.
Objective 9. Participate in data sharing internally as well as with local governments and other agencies for the purpose of improving communication, creating efficient provision of services, and encouraging cooperative planning efforts.					
1.9.A	Establish a common data clearinghouse to improve information sharing among county agencies, commissions, and departments.	IT	Portage County	Mid-Term	Clearinghouse established.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
1.9.B	Coordinate and participate in technical committees related to geographic data used with Geographic Information Systems.	IT	All County GIS Users	Ongoing	
1.9.C	Initiate meetings with cities, agencies, and other units of local government to jointly discuss, write, and implement planning studies for areas of mutual interest.	PCRPC	Local Communities	Ongoing	1 to 3 studies completed annually.

GOAL 2. IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE BY PROMOTING TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES THAT SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING.

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
<i>Objective 1. Coordinate infrastructure improvements and capital facilities, as well as establish acceptable levels of service for county facilities.</i>					
2.1.A	Create a needs assessment committee(s) including county departments, agencies, and other service providers.	County Administrator*	County Departments & Agencies Service Providers	Short Term	Committee created and regular meetings established.
2.1.B	Determine existing levels of service for various services, i.e., Roads, Potable Water, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Water and Parks.	PCWR* Engineer PPD SWCD	AMATS	Ongoing	Develop a system to identify and track existing levels of service of facilities.
2.1.C	Identify where deficiencies may exist over the next 5 to 15 years.	PCWR* Engineer PPD SWCD PCHD	AMATS	Ongoing Short Term	Create a list of failing systems or facilities nearing capacity.
2.1.D	Develop a cohesive capital improvement plan to address deficiencies by budgeting and setting aside funding to address major improvement projects over a 5-year to 10-year planning period.	PCWR* Engineer PPD SWCD PC Solid Waste*	AMATS NEFCO Grants Administrator* PCHD	Mid-Term	Prioritize a list of major improvements for funding and have a plan in place to address them if funding becomes available. Search for grants to fund major improvements.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 2. Promote safe, efficient, and cost-effective access to transportation options and connectivity throughout the County.					
2.2.A	Create an access management plan to improve traffic movement and enhance safety.	PCRPC	AMATS Engineer	Mid-Term	Access management guidelines created.
2.2.B	Build road network connections and cross-access management that foster ease of access and community connectivity.	PCRPC Townships	Engineer	Ongoing	Identify key locations for road network connections and construct. Work with the Townships to develop connectivity plans.
2.2.C.	Strive to identify transportation needs and develop and maintain a viable and financially feasible transportation network.	AMATS	PARTA Engineer	Mid-Term	Analysis specifying specific opportunities and vulnerabilities conducted.
2.2.D	Develop complete streets guidelines for use by local governments that breaks down recommendations by community context.	PCRPC	Townships Engineer AMATS	Mid-Term	Complete streets guidelines developed and model examples for Townships created.
2.2.E	Improve and align the design of major corridors.	AMATS Engineer ODOT	Local Communities	Long Term	Amount of funding provided through federal and state grants.
Objective 3. Promote mass transit through PARTA and other transportation providers especially in urbanized areas and to job centers.					
2.3.A	Identify employment centers, underserved populations, and shopping destinations without access to mass transit.	PARTA Local Communities	PCRPC AMATS	Short Term	Points of Interest mapped alongside mass transit. Gaps identified.
2.3.B	Evaluate and coordinate economic development opportunities for mass transit with PARTA.	PARTA PCRPC Local Communities	PDB	Ongoing	Economic development opportunities mapped, and gaps identified.
2.3.C	Collaborate with PARTA on their strategic plan and work to identify areas for potential expansion.	PARTA	PCRPC Local Communities	Short to Mid-Term	Complete community engagement and outreach for the strategic plan. Countywide strategic plan updated.
2.3.D	Identify alternative funding mechanisms for enhanced transit.	PARTA Local Communities	AMATS	Long Term	Study of funding mechanisms to enhance transit conducted.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 4. Provide public utilities, in an efficient planned manner, responsive to rapidly growing areas and community needs.					
2.4.A	Maintain and work with land developers to upgrade existing utility systems especially in rapidly growing areas.	PCWR* Other Service Providers	Local Communities PDB Economic Development Agencies	Ongoing	Rapid growth areas reaching capacity and/or likely to have shortfalls identified. Target areas for upgrades to meet development needs and encourage increasing density.
2.4.B	Plan for expansion and/or upgrades to increase density and intensity in growth areas while adhering to local future land use plans and zoning.	Local Communities	Other Service Providers NEFCO PCWR*	Short Term	Periodic review of recent development relative to the Future Land Use Plan which encourages development in areas where utilities are provided.
				Long Term	Coordinated local utility master plans.
2.4.C	Utilize creative financing to fund expansion into areas with failing septic systems (grants, loans, assessments, etc).	Finance*	PCWR* PCHD Grants Administrator*	Ongoing	Current alternative financing methods or incentives utilized Explore feasibility of financing methods used in other communities such as impact fees / special assessments.
2.4.D	Create looped connections and/or redundancy in water service areas.	PCWR*	Other Service Providers	Ongoing to Long Term	Reduction in dead-end or terminal sections.
2.4.E	Work with all service providers operating within the County and regionally for better coordination and collaboration to be more cost effective and efficient with service delivery.	PCWR* PCHD	Other Service Providers Ohio EPA NEFCO	Ongoing to Mid-Term	Maintain and periodically review service area agreements and work with regional partners.
Objective 5. Coordinate potential transit-oriented development to be a hub of activity and utilize an array of transportation options.					
2.5.A	Evaluate locations for and the feasibility of transit-oriented design.	PCRPC Local Communities	Engineer AMATS	Mid-Term	TODs reviewed for feasibility.
2.5.B	Work to develop and promote transit-oriented design (bus bays, electric vehicles, bikes, and other transportation modes).	AMATS PARTA	PCRPC Local Communities Engineer	Mid-Term	Feasible areas for TODs prioritized.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 6. Coordinate the development of an electric vehicle network, autonomous vehicles, and requirements associated with emerging technologies.					
2.6.A	Develop an EV charging station siting plan using grant funds.	PCRPC	AMATS Engineer	Short Term	Siting plan created.
2.6.B	Encourage existing development to be EV compatible.	PCRPC	Building Department* Local Communities	Short Term	Increase in EV in existing development.
2.6.C	Encourage development to hard wire for current and projected expansion of EV use per the Ohio Building Code or similar development applications.	PCRPC Local Communities	Building Department*	Short Term	Meet and discuss opportunities.
2.6.D	Actively coordinate or pursue funding opportunities to help existing businesses to set up for the EV and other emerging technologies.	Private Sector	PCRPC Grant Administrator* PDB	Mid-Term	Private sector investment encouraged and/or assist with funding opportunities as available.
2.6.E	Analyze the potential impact of emerging technologies such as connected vehicles and autonomous vehicles in Portage County.	PCRPC AMATS	Engineer ODOT / DriveOhio	Mid-Term	Analysis of emerging technologies conducted. The analyze should include opportunities presented as well as shortfalls and needs to accommodate the technology.
2.6.F	Prepare for intelligent transportation systems.	AMATS Local Communities	PCRPC ODOT / DriveOhio Engineer	Short Term	Committee established to share information about alternative transportation technology.
Objective 7. Increase and expand multimodal transportation facilities such as rail and air as appropriate.					
2.7.A	Coordinate with AMATS and ODOT on potential expansion of railroad and airport use within the County.	AMATS ODOT	PCRPC PDB	Mid to Long Term	Open discussion on potential opportunities. Envision possibilities with stakeholders.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
2.7.B	Strive to implement the airport master plan.	Portage County Airport	County Administrator* Grant Administrator* Public Information Officer*	Mid-Term	Show political support for the airport by attending grant meetings with the FAA. Obtain grant funds to implement planned improvements and/or expansions.
2.7.C	Examine the existing rail system and plans and collaborate with the railroad companies for expansion.	AMATS ODOT Rail Companies Ohio Rail Development Commission	PDB Economic Development Agencies	Mid to Long Term	Open discussion about feasibility.
Objective 8. Increase opportunities for car share systems, biking, walking, and other alternative transportation options.					
2.8.A	Coordinate with AMATS to implement the transportation plans.	PCRPC	AMATS Local Communities Engineer	Short to Mid-Term	Implementation of AMATS approved transportation documents.
2.8.B	Improve streetscapes in urbanized areas, especially addressing gaps in sidewalks.	PCRPC Local Communities	AMATS Engineer	Ongoing	Opportunities to improve sidewalk connections mapped. Sidewalk improvements prioritized to allow for construction when funding is available. Follow AMATS design principles established in the Active Transportation Plan.
2.8.C	Investigate traffic calming treatments on roadways to improve safety.	AMATS	ODOT Engineer Local Communities	Long Term	Reduction in crashes and fatalities using pre-treatment conditions as baseline.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 9. Improve broadband access.					
2.9.A	Conduct a countywide assessment of existing broadband networks and the feasibility of extending or establishing broadband in underserved areas and communities.	County Administrator*	ODOD EMA* PCRPC	Short Term	Participate in state's digital equity plan. BroadbandOhio coordinated with and assessment conducted.
2.9.B	Coordinate broadband systems to be available and functional countywide.	Private Sector	ODOD Grant Administrator*	Short Term	BroadbandOhio tools used (link). Explore option to allow ODOD to solicit providers under the residential expansion grant (link).
2.9.C	Expand access to high-speed internet.	County Administrator* Private Sector	ODOD Broadband Companies Municipal Broadband Utilities	Mid-Term	Number of residents and business served by high-speed internet increased.
Objective 10. Improve and promote recycling services.					
2.10.A	Create new outlets for the waste stream.	PC Solid Waste*	Local Communities	Ongoing	Increased usage/demand for service.
2.10.B	Implement and update the Solid Waste Plan.	PC Solid Waste*		Short Term	Implement and update the Solid Waste Plan as required by Ohio EPA in the next 5 years.
2.10.C	Promote a positive message about recycling.	PC Solid Waste*	Public Information Officer* Townships	Ongoing	Regular newsletters or website updates.
Objective 11. Enhance coordinated fire services and safety with the Emergency Management Agency.					
2.11.A	Coordinate with townships to address gaps in the emergency response network.	EMA*	Township Fire Departments	Ongoing	Gaps filled as possible.
2.11.B	Address consistency, collaboration, and reporting among emergency services and the Emergency Management Agency.	EMA*	Township Fire Departments Police	Ongoing	Based on number of annual events.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
2.11.C	Work to identify ways to improve sheriff response times, especially to the farthest areas of the county.	Sheriff	Local Communities	Mid-Term	Improvement in response times compared to 2023 response times.
Objective 12. Encourage alternative energy sources.					
2.12.A	Develop a county action plan to better utilize alternative energy sources or products as they become available and financially feasible.	PCRPC	Local Communities KSU	Short Term	County Action Plan developed to provide guides for use of alternative energy.
2.12.B	Encourage new developments to explore wind and solar usage.	PCRPC	Local Communities	Mid-Term	Identify options for development incentives to encourage renewable energy in new developments.

GOAL 3. PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT THROUGH LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE DECISION MAKING.

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 1. Conserve agricultural land and limit development in agricultural areas to maintain local heritage and provide diverse food choices.					
3.1.A	Coordinate with the Portage County Farm Bureau and/or Ohio Department of Agriculture to determine agricultural needs for Portage County.	SWCD OSU Extension	Farm Bureau ODA	Ongoing	Continue to coordinate.
3.1.B	Update the farmland preservation plan and engage communities to implement the strategies contained in the plan.	SWCD OSU Extension	PCRPC WRLC Farm Bureau Local Communities State Legislators	Short Term	Farmland preservation plan updated.
3.1.C	Create a baseline of agricultural diversity.	SWCD OSU Extension	Farm Bureau	Short Term	Existing agricultural diversity determined in terms of number of farms and amount produced.
3.1.D	Preserve high quality farmland from development.	SWCD WRLC OSU Extension	Farm Bureau ODA USDA-NRCS	Ongoing	Continue to work with farmers to preserve farmland through easements and other protection programs.
3.1.E	Designate areas for agriculture where utilities will not be expanded.	SWCD PCRPC OSU Extension	Local Communities	Long Term	No utilities present in designated agricultural areas. This should be verified during updates to the comprehensive plan and local land use plans.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 2. Promote local foods and agritourism.					
3.2.A	Promote agricultural tourism associated with farmer's markets, wineries, self-harvest, summer and falls festivals and agricultural event centers.	SWCD OSU Extension	TourismOhio WRLC Visitors Bureaus	Ongoing	Active promotion of agricultural-related events.
3.2.B	Celebrate Portage County's Historic Family Farms.	SWCD Farm Bureau WRLC OSU Extension	TourismOhio ODA	Ongoing	
3.2.C.	Promote agritourism and local foods through TourismOhio.	SWCD Farm Bureau OSU Extension	TourismOhio	Ongoing	Increased farm visibility on state websites.
3.2.D	Create regional food aggregation and distribution hubs by leveraging state and federal funds.	SWCD Farm Bureau Local Growers OSU Extension	PCRPC	Mid-Term	Funds obtained and regional food hubs established.
Objective 3. Promote, protect, and enhance natural resources.					
3.3.A	Protect sensitive species by preventing habitat fragmentation, preserving habitat nodes, and corridors.	PPD WRLC SWCD	PCRPC The Nature Conservancy	Ongoing to Long Term	Continue to acquire easements or environmentally sensitive lands, waters, and/or critical habitats. Work to modify subdivision regulations and zoning codes to encourage protection of natural corridors and nodes. Development coordinated / concentrated near existing development reducing sprawl to greenfields.
3.3.B	Update the priority wetlands and woodlands map and protect areas of high priority from development.	PCRPC	NEFCO PPD	Short to Mid-Term	Map updated. Modify the subdivision regulations and zoning codes as needed to limit and/or prevent development of high priority areas.

NOTE: * County Department reporting to the BCC.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
3.3.C	Protect wetlands and flood hazard areas to ensure resiliency to increasingly larger and more severe storms.	PPD SWCD Building Department*	EMA* WRLC PCRPC Local Communities USACE Ohio EPA	Ongoing	No net loss of wetland and flood storage areas. Create a minimum countywide standard for riparian setbacks implemented through the Portage County Subdivision Regulations.
3.3.D	Protect and improve water quality and critical habitats.	PCHD SWCD Engineer PPD	Local Communities WRLC Ohio EPA PCWR* NEFCO PCRPC	Long Term	Failing septic systems addressed. TMDL reports created or updated as required by Ohio EPA. Establish priorities and/or benchmarks to measure surface water quality improvements.
3.3.E	Minimize the negative impacts that cause climate change.	PPD Akron Air Quality PCRPC	Ohio EPA WRLC Engineer Building Department*	Ongoing to Long Term	Innovative methods to reduce impacts implemented.
3.3.F	Promote resilience and adaptation.	Local Communities	Ohio EPA Engineer Building Department*	Ongoing to Long Term	Buildings constructed to LEED standards. Renewable energy used.
3.3.G	Create an all-inclusive map of various environmental features to show baseline conditions to accurately track loss.	PCRPC	IT	Short Term	Map developed in an interactive or other format and available on the website.
3.3.H	Educate the public on the value of ecosystem benefits, including its resources.	PPD SWCD	WRLC The Nature Conservancy Audubon	Ongoing	Increased awareness of economic and intrinsic benefits.

Objective 4. Preserve Portage County's historic and archeological resources, as appropriate, and view them as value added to the community.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
3.4.A	Create an all-inclusive map of known historic and archaeological resources.	PCRPC	Local Communities IT Historical Societies	Short Term	Map developed in an interactive or other format and available on the website.
3.4.B	Work with Townships and other communities to coordinate awareness and/or protection.	Historical Societies	Ohio History Connection	Long Term	Meetings discussing BMPs established.
3.4.C	Celebrate our history by promoting events and market as appropriate.	Historical Societies	Visitor Bureaus Main Street Programs	Ongoing	Local history incorporated into community events.
Objective 5. Promote alternative energy.					
3.5.A	Coordinate with appropriate agencies about the benefits of alternative energy.	AMATS PCRPC	Utility Providers	Mid-Term	Avenues for discussion created.
3.5.B	Educate township officials and the public about the benefits of alternative energy.	PCRPC	Local Communities	Mid-Term	Facts about alternative energy and zoning discussed with Townships.

GOAL 4. PROMOTE A RESILIENT ECONOMY.

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 1. Address land supply and reinvest in existing industrial areas.					
4.1.A	Identify growth areas and/or areas where growth should be limited.	PCRPC Local Communities	PDB	Short Term	Growth areas mapped.
4.1.B	Redevelop vacant and distressed properties as key locations for industrial development by addressing impediments to revitalization.	PCRPC Local Communities Property Owners	PCLRC PDB Zoning Inspectors	Short to Mid-Term	Master list of vacant and distress properties created. Key locations identified.
4.1.C	Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing industrial structures.	Local Communities	Chambers of Commerce PDB PCLRC	Ongoing	Method for tracking vacant spaces developed.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
4.1.D	Promote industrial development in areas with infrastructure and access.	Local Communities	PDB PCWR*	Ongoing	Amount of new or redevelopment within areas previously designated for industrial.
4.1.E	Promote public-private collaborations to facilitate infill development, redevelopment of brownfield sites, underutilized industrial and commercial properties and assemble additional land supply for specific projects as necessary.	Local Communities County Commissioners	PDB PCRPC PCLRC TeamNEO Ohio EPA	Ongoing	Meeting held with stakeholders. Brownfield redevelopment grants applied for and received.
4.1.F	Collaborate and encourage facilitation of regional stakeholders to explore opportunities to repurpose the excess capacity and/or surplus of real estate.	PDB	PCRPC Economic Dev. Agencies County Commissioners Local Communities	Short Term	Having Quarterly, Bi-annual or Annual meetings to address stakeholder needs.
Objective 2. Develop incentives and financing.					
4.2.A	Identify sources of funding and secure funds to facilitate business development.	SBA County Commissioners Local Communities Private Sector	PCRPC NDS	Ongoing to Short Term	Sources of funding identified by local communities. Continue to meet with NDS and PCRPC on a quarterly basis.
4.2.B	Build a pipeline of funding opportunities for different clusters in the region by identifying enough capital deal flow to attract resources of venture capital firms.	County Commissioners Local Communities TeamNEO	PDB Private Sector Banking	Mid-Term	Need to develop funding pipeline and funding network to participate in different regional clusters.
4.2.C.	Create stable funding appropriations for economic development from the County and local governments to be utilized by the Portage Development Board.	County Commissioners Local Communities Private Sector PDB	State and Federal Finance* Grant Administrator*	Ongoing to Mid-Term	Continue current funding levels. PDB master plan implemented and gaps in the financial commitments determined.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
4.2.D	Meet with private equity and venture capital organizations to better learn what their industries require to locate or expand regionally.	County Commissioners PDB	Private Sector Financial Institutes	Ongoing	Review what private equity and venture capital looks for in locating to a community and how to best market our positive attributes.
4.2.E	Collaborate on securing state and federal grants, other public financing vehicles, and tax incentive programs to facilitate community development and rehabilitation.	Grant Administrator* PCRPC	PDB	Ongoing	Periodic meetings held to discuss opportunities.
Objective 3. Promote revitalization of town centers and downtowns.					
4.3.A	Coordinate forums for information sharing by local and national development community representatives.	PCRPC Local Communities	Zoning Inspectors PDB	Ongoing	Quarterly or Bi-annual meeting for local community stakeholders established.
4.3.B	Cluster development near existing communities.	PCRPC Local Communities	Water and Sewer Providers Engineer	Ongoing	Develop a proximity to infrastructure map/ areas. Zoning codes and subdivision regulations modified with map amendments to support.
Objective 4. Attract and retain businesses.					
4.4.A	Package incentives for locating in Portage County.	PDB JFS*	County Commissioners Local Communities Chambers of Commerce PCRPC NDS SBA	Short Term	Incentive package/marketing program for locating in the county created. List of economic incentives compiled.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
4.4.B	Target industries to locate in Portage County through multifaceted campaigns.	PDB JFS*	County Commissioners Local Communities Chambers of Commerce PCRPC NDS	Short Term	Continue working with businesses to locate in Portage County.
4.4.C	Market Portage County's affordability.	PDB JFS*	County Commissioners Local Communities Chambers of Commerce PCRPC NDS	Short Term	Incentive package/marketing program for locating in the county created.
4.4.D	Assist in developing retail and businesses which support services for residential, larger business and industries.	PDB JFS*	County Commissioners Local Communities Chambers of Commerce PCRPC NDS	Short Term	Incentive package/marketing program for locating in the county created.
4.4.E	Coordinate with local communities to support business, industrial, and/or specialty district outreach activities.	PDB	County Commissioners Local Communities	Ongoing	

IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
4.4.F	Spearhead efforts to pursue grant opportunities through County departments and agencies that facilitate new investment countywide.	Local Communities County Departments & Agencies	Water and Sewer Providers Engineer PCRPC NDS Grant Administrator*	Short to Mid-Term	Create a collaboration mechanism to implement a full array of grant opportunities.
4.4.G	Orient local events to a day visitor marketing effort.	Chambers of Commerce Visitor Bureaus Local Communities	TourismOhio	Ongoing	Regular website postings and/or newsletters.
4.4.H	Build on local strengths and leverage tourism branding to support economic development.	Visitor Bureaus Chambers of Commerce Main Street Programs	County Commissioners Local Communities	Short Term	With the preceding strategies, develop a brand or marketing strategy and implantation.
Objective 5. Develop workforce and job readiness through collaboration with local schools, businesses, and universities.					
4.5.A	Create a program that works to retain high school, trade school, and college graduates within the County.	High Schools Trade Schools Universities Private Sector	Local Communities JFS* PDB	Short to Mid-Term	Educational programs which meet gaps in local industries' worker skill set established.
4.5.B	Establish and promote a business-friendly environment to create and retain good quality jobs.	Local Communities	PDB Zoning Inspectors Building Department* Other Review Entities	Ongoing	Meet biannually. Discuss and implement opportunities.
4.5.C	Encourage partnerships between industries and educational institutions to create sponsorship and/or internship programs which feed into local businesses and enhances job readiness.	High Schools Trade Schools Universities Private Sector	Local Communities JFS* PDB	Short to Mid-Term	Biannual meeting with stakeholders established. Sponsorships and programs discussed and implemented.

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PORTAGE COUNTY 2050

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 6. Encourage business development, incubators, and entrepreneurship.					
4.6.A	Collaborate with the Summit Medina Business Alliance to create and maintain an up-to-date Small Business One Stop Resource webpage containing resources for started and growing a business.	Local Communities	JFS* PDB	Short Term	Coordinate with Summit Medina Business Alliance. Create a webpage as a One-Stop Resource.
4.6.B	Seek funds for more competitive marketing and business start-up assistance programs, as both are needed to raise the profile of Portage County and make the process of locating in the region easier.	County Commissioners Local Communities	Grant Administrator* Private Sector Chambers of Commerce Main Street Programs	Short Term	Collaborate and develop a Marketing Plan.
4.6.C	Explore ways to support a local culture of entrepreneurial risk taking.	County Commissioners Local Communities Local Universities	PDB Private Sector	Short Term	Entrepreneurial opportunities determined. Strategy to support and further develop entrepreneurship created.

GOAL 5. SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTINCT AND DESIRABLE PLACES TO LIVE.

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 1. Improve the physical appearance of the built environment.					
5.1.A	Evaluate and amend the subdivision regulations to encourage contiguous open space blocks providing habitat corridors and recreation; emphasize walkable neighborhoods; and create a connected road network.	PCRPC Subdivision Review Committee Local Communities	ODNR	Short Term	Committee created and regular meetings established.
5.1.B	Encourage development to existing clean sites rather than extending infrastructure into "greenfields".	Local Communities PCRPC	PDB Zoning Inspectors	Short Term	"Ready-to-develop" sites identified.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
5.1.C	Develop a comprehensive list of abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial sites.	Local Communities PCRPC	Ohio EPA PCLRC	Short Term	Map of underutilized or abandoned commercial and industrial sites created.
5.1.D	Proactively coordinate with landowners and the Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation (PCLRC or Land Bank) to provide access to evaluate sites through Phase I, II, and III assessments and clean up.	Local Communities	Ohio EPA PCLRC	Short Term	Quarterly meetings with representatives from local communities held to discuss opportunities and implement them through Ohio EPA.
5.1.E	Work with a multidisciplinary team to obtain funding to assess sites, clean identified sites, and place the sites into active reuse.	Local Communities Ohio EPA	PCRPC PDB PCLRC	Short Term	Regularly meet with Ohio EPA and grants obtained. Increased number of sites assessed and cleaned.
Objective 2. Coordinate land use and infrastructure planning with and between local units of government.					
5.2.A	Coordinate land use and infrastructure between local units of government.	Local Communities PCWR* Engineer	PCRPC	Short Term	Determine actual infrastructure boundaries and capacities. Determine growth trends and needs for future development.
5.2.B	Encourage local economic development managers to collaborate and identify locations for infrastructure needs.	Local Communities PCRPC	PDB Zoning Inspectors	Short Term	"Ready-to-develop" sites identified.
Objective 3. Protect rural character.					
5.3.A	Work with Portage County Soil and Water and the Western Reserve Land Conservancy to promote agricultural preservation.	SWCD Local Communities WRLC	PCRPC	Short Term	Farmland Preservation Plan updated.
5.3.B	Evaluate the subdivision regulations to encourage farmland preservation.	PCRPC Local Communities	Farm Bureau SWCD WRLC	Short to Mid-Term	Include in the 2024 Subdivision Regulations update.
5.3.C	Establish periodic zoning reviews to further promote rural character.	Local Communities PCRPC	Farm Bureau	Ongoing	Continue to work with local communities to update zoning regulations.

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PORTAGE COUNTY 2050

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
5.3.D	Limit expansion of water and sewer lines into rural areas to limit development.	SWCD Local Communities PCRPC	PDB PCWR* Zoning Inspectors	Ongoing Long Term	Continue to work with local communities and review the 208 map. Development focused in areas currently served by utilities and on identified “ready to develop” sites.
5.3.E	Discourage fragmentation of farmland into large lot residential which often results in loss of rural character and farmland.	Local Communities WRLC	PCRPC	Ongoing	Decrease large lot homes fronting rural roads.
Objective 4. Promote, maintain, and assist in the development of parks, recreation, and entertainment opportunities.					
5.4.A	Coordinate with the Portage Park District and local governments to promote and maintain parks.	PPD Local Communities	ODNR	Ongoing	Annual meeting held to discuss opportunities.
5.4.B	Encourage and support local governments to apply for grants as appropriate.	Engineer Local Communities PCRPC	PPD ODNR Grant Administrator*	Ongoing	Meet twice per year at appropriate times to finalize grants.
Objective 5. Engage with townships, villages, and cities.					
5.5.A	Routinely coordinate with local governments to assure that messaging is being shared.	Local Communities Township Trustees Association	PCRPC County Administrator* Public Information Officer*	Ongoing to Short Term	Communication plan developed.
5.5.B	Meet with local governments to gauge opinions on successes and challenges of existing regulatory and planning tools.	Local Communities PCRPC	PDB	Short Term	Periodic meetings with trustees and zoning boards to determine needs.
5.5.C	Share information about existing tools, tools not being utilized, and emerging trends.	PCRPC NDS PDB	Local Communities	Short Term	Bi-annual or annual meeting to discuss Portage County happenings and opportunities held.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
Objective 6. Encourage cities, villages, and townships to update their comprehensive plans, master plans, and zoning on a regular basis.					
5.6.A	Encourage local governments to keep the land use or comprehensive plan current.	Local Communities PCRPC		Short to Mid-Term	Update schedule created for land use plan, comprehensive plan, vision plans or other studies. Plans updated every 5-7 years.
5.6.B	Promote the concept of visioning and goal setting by local governments.	Local Communities PCRPC		Short Term	Accomplishments presented to Township Trustees and Trustee Association.
2.6.C	Collaborate on updating zoning regulations based on the community's vision or land use / comprehensive plan.	PCRPC Local Communities	Zoning Inspectors Land Development Review Committee	Ongoing	Annual discussions held with communities to track zoning needs, provide updates on trends and emerging technology.
Objective 7. Promote fiscally sustainable development practices.					
5.7.A	Establish a 5-year capital budget for necessary county expenditures.	Finance*	County Departments & Agencies	Ongoing to Short Term	Create a functional 5-year budget that is updated annually.
5.7.B	Update annually the 5-year budget as projects are completed and add new projects as appropriate.	Finance*	County Departments & Agencies	Ongoing to Short Term	Implementation of the 5-year budget process.
5.7.C	Develop a process to identify current and upcoming issues to apply for grant funding and have design-ready projects.	Grant Administrator* County Departments & Agencies	County Administrator* Finance*	Short Term	Process created for grants to be identified, searched, prepared, and tracked.
Objective 8. Coordinate countywide and regional planning efforts.					
5.8.A	Utilize the Regional Planning Commission's expertise to administer subdivision regulations, zoning amendments and Community Development Block Grants.	PCRPC Local Communities	Development Review Committee	Ongoing	Continue to administer both the CDBG and subdivision regulations.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
5.8.B	Develop and maintain a report or website tracking demographic changes and the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.	PCRPC Local Communities	IT	Short Term	Website created to track comprehensive plan progress, community land use plan implementation, and community census data.
5.8.C	Support special projects that promote, enhance and benefit Portage County, the communities and/or the public.	Local Communities PCRPC	County Commissioners	Short Term	Create a process to provide letters of support and or financial, material, or voluntary support.
5.8.D	Utilize geographic mapping by both the County Auditor's Office and Regional Planning Commission to assist projects, planning, and transparency efforts.	PCRPC IT Auditor	Local Communities	Short Term	Integrate zoning and other related local community information with the Auditor's data.
5.8.E	Maintain compatible level of service standards and sound growth management.	PCWR* Engineer Other Service Providers	PCHD SWCD Local Communities	Short Term	Agreed upon standards established.
5.8.F	Participate on technical committees and subcommittees by providing information and technical assistance for coordinating services.	PCWR* Engineer Other Service Providers	PCHD SWCD Local Communities	Ongoing	Continue to participate on committees.
5.8.G	Coordinate with all adjacent counties and local governments on issues which may affect the region.	PCWR* Engineer Other Service Providers	PCRPC	Mid to Long Term	Dialogue with surrounding counties initiated. Adjustments made to plans and development standards as necessary to provide for cohesive regional growth.
Objective 9. Encourage communities to limit urban sprawl.					
5.9.A	Develop strategies to create a more unified development pattern.	Local Communities PCRPC Other Service Providers		Short Term	Development and redevelopment opportunities discussed with communities.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
5.9.B	Encourage review of zoning regulations to limit urban sprawl potential.	Local Communities PCRPC Development Review Committee	Zoning Inspectors PDB	Short Term	Reduction of urban sprawl with new developments being more compact and located near or in existing development. Consider zoning changes, protecting rural character and compatibility service provision when development occurs.
5.9.C	Promote a collaborative process of working with land use, economic development, and local government officials with property owners to seek out shared opportunities.	Local Communities PCRPC Other Service Providers	PDB	Mid-Term	Collaborative meetings held on a biennial or more frequent basis.
Objective 10. Encourage standards for new development that promote sustainability.					
5.10.A	Support local governments in developing design guidelines for development.	PCRPC Local Communities	Zoning Inspectors	Short Term	Design guidelines developed or updated as needed.
5.10.B	Incorporate vision plans into the zoning code.	PCRPC Local Communities	Zoning Inspectors	Mid to Long Term	Vision Plans developed for each community. Determine what can be accomplished through the zoning code.
Objective 11. Direct public realm improvements in "high impact" locations.					
5.11.A	Seek to maximize location opportunities of public improvements. This would include satellite offices, court houses and other government offices.	Local Communities County Departments & Agencies	County Administrator* Finance* PCRPC PDB	Short to Mid-Term	Service needs and locations reviewed on an annual or biennial basis. Determine if additional locations are needed or if they should be consolidated.
5.11.B	Collaborate with other local governments to best implement future government office projects.	Local Communities County Departments & Agencies	County Administrator* Finance* PCRPC PDB	Short to Mid-Term	Meetings held with local governments which may be affected by future government office projects.

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Code	Strategy	Lead Coordinator	Secondary Partners	Timeframe	Measurement
5.11.C	Develop a cohesive plan for all county-owned properties.	County Departments & Agencies Internal Services*	County Administrator* Finance* Local Communities	Short Term Mid-Term	Master or site plan developed for all county-owned properties. Plan implemented.
5.11.D	Evaluate efficiencies.	Local Communities County Departments & Agencies Internal Services*	County Administrator* Finance*	Short to Mid-Term	Conditions evaluated and goals set for improvements of or to maintain existing service levels depending on the type of service being considered.
Objective 12. Align the Capital Improvement Plan and Subdivision Regulations with the Comprehensive Plan.					
5.12.A	Develop an all-inclusive Capital Improvement Plan.	Finance* County Departments & Agencies	County Administrator*	Short Term	Assembled once the County Departments provide a 5-year budget.
5.12.B	Link land use planning to fiscal policy.	Service Providers PCRPC	PDB Finance*	Short to Mid-Term	Meet and discuss opportunities and weaknesses. Timing and costs of needed maintenance and improvements determined.
5.12.C	Amend the Comprehensive Plan to include the 5-year budget and or Capital Improvement Plan.	Finance* County Departments & Agencies	PCRPC County Administrator*	Short Term	Comprehensive Plan priority implementation list updated annually.
5.12.D	Establish collaborative agreements to implement goals, objectives, and policies of the Portage County Comprehensive Plan.	County Departments & Agencies Local Communities Service Providers	County Administrator*	Short to Mid-Term	Collaborative agreements established.

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Appendix A: Survey Results

Portage County Comprehensive Plan Survey

The survey results from the 2021 Portage County Comprehensive Plan Survey are detailed in this section. The survey was distributed online through SurveyMonkey, through paper copies at Town Halls, emailed out to participants in the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and posted on social media by PCRPC as well as city and township social media accounts. Respondent totals may vary due to the type of question asked and responses received. Percents may not add to 100 due to rounding.

	Respondents	Percent
1. Do you live or work in Portage County?		
Live	255	63.0%
Work	7	2.0%
Live and Work	124	34.7%
None of the above (end survey)	1	0.3%
2. Where do you live?		
Atwater	20	5.8%
Aurora	0	0%
Brimfield	20	5.8%
Charlestown	9	2.6%
Deerfield	10	2.9%
Edinburg	1	0.3%
Franklin	2	0.6%
Freedom	29	8.4%
Garrettsville	6	1.7%
Hiram Village	2	0.6%
Hiram Township	2	0.6%
Kent	6	1.7%
Mantua Village	1	0.3%
Mantua Township	1	0.3%
Mogadore	0	0%
Nelson	6	1.7%
Palmyra	0	0%
Paris	1	0.3%
Randolph	9	2.6%
Ravenna City	9	2.6%
Ravenna Township	5	1.5%
Rootstown	60	17.4%
Shalersville	4	1.2%

Streetsboro	135	39.2%
Suffield	5	1.5%
Sugar Bush Knolls	1	0.3%
Tallmadge	0	0%
Windham Village	0	0%
Windham Township	0	0%

3. How long have you lived here?

0 - 5 years	79	22.4%
6 - 10 years	34	9.6%
11 - 20 years	61	17.3%
21 - 30 years	61	17.3%
30+ years	118	33.4%

4. How old are you?

Under 18	1	0.3%
18 - 24	4	1.1%
25 - 34	42	11.8%
35 - 44	77	21.6%
45 - 54	69	19.4%
55 - 64	76	21.3%
65+	87	24.4%

5. What are the benefits to living and/or working in Portage County? Choose all that apply.

Location and access to surrounding areas	246
Jobs	39
Education	58
Housing Affordability	163
Rural Living	225
Sense of Community	136
Parks	118
Quality of Life	156
Shopping	60
None of the above	10

6. What are the challenges to living and/or working in Portage County? Choose all that apply.

Jobs	72
Education	68
Housing Affordability	41
Rural Living	11
Access to Broadband	112
Access to centralized water and sewer	67
Blight	43
Traffic	106

APPENDIX A

Economic Development	106
Loss of Farmland	143
None of the above	33

7. Broadly speaking, do we need more:

Apartments	11	3.1%
Senior Housing	67	18.9%
Manufacturing	58	16.3%
Single Family Homes	51	14.4%
Farmland	120	33.8%
Parks	148	41.7%
Medical Centers	42	11.8%
Shopping	96	27%
None of the above	54	15.2%

8. What transportation options do you want more of:

Bus Routes	59	16.8%
Bike Lanes	95	27.0%
Rideshares	23	6.5%
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	61	17.3%
Passenger Rail	53	15.1%
None of the above	182	51.7%

9. If you were in charge of a budget and had extra resources to spend on your community, where would you put your money? Choose 3.

Transportation	56
Transit Options	47
Economic Development	134
Fire and Police	153
Senior Living	66
Water and Sewer Utilities	101
Parks	159
Education	151
Housing	26
Medical/Health	60
Farmland Preservation	155
None of the above	14

10. What other comments do you have?

Over 350 comments were received. The following is a summary of topics and concerns mentioned by respondents:

- Infrastructure improvements to roads, water, and sewer
- Improve education quality as well as support for schools
- Rural character and farmland preservation
- Blight or redevelopment of properties, especially improvements to civic spaces and occupancy of empty buildings

Business Survey for Portage County Comprehensive Plan

The business survey was distributed by the Portage Development Board and by area Chambers of Commerce to business owners. Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

	Respondents	Percent
1. What industry best describes your business? Please pick the sector that best applies.		
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	0	0%
Construction	1	2.4%
Manufacturing	21	51.2%
Wholesale Trade	2	4.9%
Retail	5	12.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	0	0%
Information, Electronics	1	2.4%
Professional, Scientific, Consulting	2	4.9%
Healthcare	3	7.3%
Arts and Entertainment	1	2.4%
Finances and/or real estate	1	2.4%
None of the above	4	9.8%

2. How long has your business been located in Portage County?

0 - 5 years	10	24.4%
6 - 10 years	1	2.4%
11 - 20 years	5	12.2%
21 - 30 years	5	12.2%
31+ years	20	48.8%

3. Where is your business located?

No businesses responded from Atwater, Brimfield, Charlestown, Deerfield, Edinburg, Franklin, Freedom, Hiram, Nelson, Palmyra, Paris, Randolph, Rootstown, Shalersville and Windham Townships as well as Hiram, Mantua, Mogadore, and Sugar Bush Knolls Villages and the City of Tallmadge.

Aurora	4	9.8%
Garrettsville	1	2.4%
Kent	22	53.7%
Mantua Township	1	2.4%
Ravenna City	6	14.6%
Ravenna Township	1	2.4%

APPENDIX A

Streetsboro	3	7.3%
Suffield	3	7.3%

4. How many employees do you have?

1-49	29	70.7%
50-99	2	4.9%
100-299	6	14.6%
300-499	0	0%
500+	4	9.8%

5. What is your market area? Choose the most inclusive option.

International	9	22.0%
National	13	31.7%
State	8	19.5%
Local	11	26.8%

6. What are your impediments to business success? Please rank with 1 being most impeding and 8 being least impeding (responses shown in percents, totaling 41 respondents for each category).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total Rating
Workforce	51.2%	22.0%	12.2%	4.9%	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%	0%	6.93
Economy	26.8%	34.2%	17.1%	12.2%	4.9%	0%	0%	4.9%	6.41
Taxes	7.3%	9.8%	17.1%	34.2%	14.6%	7.3%	2.4%	7.3%	4.93
Infrastructure availability (roads, electric, broadband, water, sewer, etc)	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%	17.1%	17.1%	14.6%	29.3%	12.2%	3.39
Local and/or State regulations	4.9%	7.3%	17.1%	9.8%	26.8%	17.1%	14.6%	2.4%	4.32
Competition	2.4%	12.2%	17.1%	17.1%	12.2%	26.8%	7.3%	4.9%	4.41
Ability to locate or expand in Portage County	0%	4.9%	4.9%	2.4%	7.3%	9.8%	31.7%	39.0%	2.37
Education and/or education requirements	2.4%	7.3%	12.2%	2.4%	12.2%	22.0%	12.2%	29.3%	3.24

7. What are the benefits of doing business in Portage County? Please rank the following with 1 being the most beneficial to 7 being least beneficial.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total Rating
Workforce	9.8%	19.5%	24.4%	12.2%	12.2%	12.2%	9.8%	4.27
Tax rates/incentives	0%	4.9%	9.8%	14.6%	29.3%	17.1%	24.4%	2.83
Infrastructure availability (roads, electric, broadband, water, sewer, etc)	2.4%	7.3%	17.1%	24.4%	12.2%	22.0%	14.6%	3.39

Competition	2.4%	7.3%	9.8%	14.6%	17.1%	9.8%	39.0%	3.39
Ability to be successful	17.1%	26.8%	17.1%	12.2%	14.6%	9.8%	2.4%	4.8
Location and access to markets	34.2%	17.1%	2.4%	17.1%	9.8%	14.6%	4.9%	4.85
Quality of life (for employees)	34.2%	17.1%	19.5%	4.9%	4.9%	14.6%	4.9%	5.07

8. What, if anything, should we be doing differently or better?

Responses range from high city income taxes to need less regulations to business and education connections to tax incentives for start-ups.

9. What are we doing locally that is hindering business opportunity?

Responses include high city income taxes, local laws, labor wages, commercial property taxes, mishandling COVID relief dollars, and needing improved coordination among employers and schools.

Appendix B: Zoning Trends

Table A.1 contains a comparison of local zoning resolutions and codified ordinances against common and upcoming zoning trends. The zoning trends identified here are a brief overview of commonly requested information from Townships as well as zoning issues common to jurisdictions across the state and nation.

Riparian Setbacks: Setback from the ordinary high-water mark of waterbodies and wetlands which is also inclusive of the 100-year floodplain. Setbacks vary between 25 feet and 300 feet depending upon the goal of the setback (flood damage reduction, sediment and erosion control, pollution control, etc.) and the quality and quantity of the waterbody or wetland. Chapter 4, Riparian Corridors, discusses setbacks and their benefits in detail.

Tiny Homes: Home under 400 square feet which can be used as a principal or accessory dwelling unit.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU): ADUs, sometimes called in-law suites or granny flats, are smaller independent residential dwelling units located on the same lot as a detached single-family home. They can be converted portions of existing homes, additions to new or existing homes, or stand-alone accessory structures. In some communities, ADUs are used to increase housing affordability for both the homeowners and tenants, create a wider range of housing options within a community, provide for senior housing especially near family, and facilitate better use of existing housing in established neighborhoods (American Planning Association, 2022).

Agritourism / Event Centers: Wedding barns or event centers for parties located in residential zoning districts has been an increasing concern of the Townships.

Historic Preservation District or Overlay: District or overlay with the main goal of preserving the historic character of a neighborhood. Overlays maintain the underlying zoning restrictions as well as add some additional, sometimes optional, criteria for property use and development.

Design Guidelines: Design guidelines, sometimes called architectural design guidelines or architectural review, provide a standard for the look and feel of a community. They detail minimum standards for construction, engineering, and renovation of structures in a community and are applied to residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.

Table A.1. Local Zoning Code Comparison with Zoning Trends						
	Riparian Setback ¹	Tiny Homes	Accessory Dwelling Units (In-Law Suites)	Agritourism / Event Centers ²	Historic Preservation District	Design Guidelines (Architectural Guidelines)
Atwater Township						
Aurora	X					X
Brimfield Township	X					

Table A.1. Local Zoning Code Comparison with Zoning Trends						
	Riparian Setback ¹	Tiny Homes	Accessory Dwelling Units (In-Law Suites)	Agritourism / Event Centers ²	Historic Preservation District	Design Guidelines (Architectural Guidelines)
Charlestown Township						
Deerfield Township	No Zoning					
Edinburg Township				X		
Franklin Township	X					X
Freedom Township						
Garrettsville					X	
Hiram Township			X			
Hiram Village						
Kent						X
Mantua Township	X					X
Mantua Village			X ³			
Nelson Township						
Palmyra Township						
Paris Township						
Randolph Township	X		X ³			X
Ravenna City	X					
Ravenna Township	X					X
Rootstown Township						X
Shalersville Township						X
Streetsboro	X		X			
Suffield Township			X			
Sugar Bush Knolls						

APPENDIX B

Table A.1. Local Zoning Code Comparison with Zoning Trends						
	Riparian Setback ¹	Tiny Homes	Accessory Dwelling Units (In-Law Suites)	Agritourism / Event Centers ²	Historic Preservation District	Design Guidelines (Architectural Guidelines)
Windham Township						
Windham Village						
<p><u>Note:</u> 1. Inclusive of all zoning districts and development types. 2. Specifically event centers and wedding barns 3. Conditional use in certain districts.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> Zoning Resolutions obtained from Township websites: Atwater Township Zoning Resolution, 2008; City of Aurora Codified Ordinances, January 2022; Charlestown Township Zoning Resoltuion, 2010; Edinburg Township, 2010; Franklin Township, 2020; Freedom Township, 2020; Garrettsville, 2021; Hiram Township, 2014; Hiram Village, 2019; Kent, 2021; Mantua Township, 2021; Mantua Village, 2007; Palmyra Township, 2011; Paris Township, 2008; Randolph Township, 2013; Ravenna City, 2021; Ravenna Township, 2019; Rootstown Township, 2022; Shalersville Township, 2022; City of Streetsboro, 2022; Suffield Township, 2008; Sugar Bush Knolls, 2016; Windham Township, 2015; Windham Village, 2021</p>						

Appendix C

Below is a list of Township, Village, and City plans reviewed during the creation of the character areas contained in Chapter 9.

City Plans

City of Aurora 2017 Master Plan. Revised February 22, 2018

City of Ravenna Land Use Plan. October 18, 2018

City of Streetsboro Comprehensive Master Plan. April 2019

Township Plans

Brimfield Township 250 Land Use Plan. May 2021

Hiram Township Land Use Plan. March 2014

Ravenna Township Land Use Plan. 2004

Rootstown Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2016

Shalersville Township Land Use Plan. November 2011

Suffield Township Land Use Plan. November 15, 2018

Village Plans

Windham Village Land Use Plan. July 2020

Glossary

208-FACILITIES PLAN: A plan intended to provide for the development of cost-effective, environmentally sound, and implementable sewage treatment works that will meet the objectives of the Clean Water Act. This plan is developed for Portage County by the Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU): An ADU is a second housing unit occupying the same building site as the principal use. ADUs can be converted portions of existing homes, new additions, or separate buildings. Also called granny flats, mother-in-law suites, basement apartments, carriage house, etc.

BASE FLOOD ELEVATION: The elevation of surface water resulting from a flood that has a 1% chance of equaling or exceeding that level in any given year. The BFE is shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map. Clean Water Act of 1972- The Clean Water Act establishes the basic structure for regulating the discharge of pollutants into waters of the US and regulates the quality of surface waters.

BROWNFIELD: A property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: A capital improvement plan (CIP) contains all the individual capital projects, equipment purchases, and major studies for a local government and includes construction schedules, completion dates, and financing plans. The plan provides a blueprint for improving the community's infrastructure. It is updated on an annual basis to reflect changing needs, priorities and funding opportunities. There are two parts to a CIP: the capital budget and capital program.

COMMUNITY IMAGE/BRAND: An identity that comes from the history, culture, geography, values or society of a place that can be used to increase pride and further the economic, political and social goals of the community.

COMPLETE STREETS: Streets designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, ages, and abilities including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders. Complete Street designs may include sidewalks, bike lanes, bus lanes, accessible public transportation stops, frequent pedestrian crossings, median islands, and narrower travel lanes. These designs vary from rural to urban areas and from city to city.

FLOOD HAZARD AREA: Also known as "areas of special flood hazard," it is the land in the floodplain subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. Special flood hazard areas are designated by the federal emergency management agency as zone A, AE, AH, AO, A1-30, and A99 on flood insurance rate maps, flood insurance studies, flood boundary and floodway maps and flood hazard boundary maps. Special flood hazard areas may also refer to areas that are flood prone and designated from other federal, state or local sources of data including but not limited to historical flood information reflecting high water marks, previous flood inundation areas, and flood prone soils associated with a watercourse.

GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN WATER RESOURCES COMPACT: A legally binding compact among the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The compact details how the states manage the use of the Great Lakes Basin's water supply and is the means by which the states implement the governors' commitments under the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement that includes Ontario and Quebec.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: Refers to a network for solving climate and urban challenges through building with nature. Green infrastructure is often used to manage stormwater, reduce heat islands, improve air quality, produce energy and food and improve water quality. Examples of green infrastructure include rain gardens, bioswales, urban forests, and low-impact development.

GREENFIELD: Land not previously developed, polluted, or exploited.

IMPLICIT BIAS: A form of bias that occurs automatically or unintentionally that affects judgments and behaviors. Types of implicit bias common in urban planning and the community include race and ethnicity bias, gender bias, and age bias.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT: Low Impact Development (LID) is an innovative storm water management approach with a basic principle that is modeled after nature: manage rainfall at the source using uniformly distributed decentralized micro-scale controls. LID's goal is to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source. Techniques are based on the premise that storm water management should not be seen as storm water disposal. Instead of conveying and managing / treating storm water in large, costly end-of-pipe facilities located at the bottom of drainage areas, LID addresses storm water through small, cost-effective landscape features located at the lot level.

MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORMWATER SYSTEM (MS4): An MS4 is a system of conveyances owned by a public entity that discharges to waters of the U.S., is designed or used to collect and convey storm water and is not a combined sewer or part of a sewage treatment plant. To prevent harmful pollutants from being dumped or washed into MS4s, operators are required to obtain NPDES permits and develop storm water management programs.

NPDES: The NPDES permit program was created by the Clean Water Act of 1972 and addresses water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants to waters of the United States. Ohio Scenic Rivers Program (may not be necessary)- The program protects the aquatic resources and terrestrial communities dependent on healthy riparian habitats. Over 830 river miles are protected by this program.

OVERLAY DISTRICT: An area with additional zoning requirements and standards placed on top of the existing zoning that is intended to protect natural resources, promote health or maintain the character of an area. Typically used in downtowns, historic areas, scenic corridors and floodplains.

RIPARIAN SETBACK: The area set back from each bank of a stream to protect the riparian area (lands adjacent to water bodies) and stream from impacts of development, and streamside residents from impacts of flooding and land loss through erosion.

SOCIAL EQUITY: Social equity means all community members can participate, prosper and reach their full potential. Furthering social equity includes recognizing practices that have had a disparate impact on certain communities and actively working with affected residents to create better communities for all.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Refers to the fair treatment and equitable status of all individuals and social groups within the community.

GLOSSARY

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION AREA: (1 & 5year travel times; see also corridor management zone and emergency management zones)

INNER MANAGEMENT ZONE: Surface and subsurface area surrounding a public water supply well that will provide water to the well within one year as delineated by the agency under the wellhead protections program and the source water and protection program. Also known as the one-year travel time.

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION AREA: Surface and subsurface area surrounding a public water supply well that will provide water to the well within one year as delineated by the agency under the wellhead protection program and the sourcee water protection program. Also known as the 5-year travel time.

CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ZONE: Surface and subsurface water where the potential for drinking water contamination warrants delination, inventory, and management because of its proximity to a public water system intake.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ZONE: Surface and subsurface area in the immediate vicinity of a public water system intake.

STREETSCAPE: A street or sidewalk related enhancement for community identity and beautification in the public right of way, including streetlights, trees, crosswalks, street furniture, bus stops and landscape plantings.

SUSTAINABILITY: Refers to practices which balance the environment, economy, and equity without compromising the needs of the present and the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF): A public financing method used for redevelopment and community improvement projects where the increase in property taxes generated from project improvements is used to finance the debt used to pay for those improvements originally.

WATERSHED: The land area that channels water into streams, creeks, and rivers and eventually to lakes, reservoirs, and oceans.

WETLAND: An area that is inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, including swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

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