



ONTARIO

Comprehensive Community Plan

2024



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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A special thanks to all of those who attended the Old Ontario Focus Group public meeting on July 2, 2024.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
HISTORICAL TIMELINE.....	6
PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.....	8
PAST PLANNING PROGRESS.....	8
MAJOR THEMES AND ASPIRATIONS.....	9
HOW TO USE THE PLAN.....	11
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....	12
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....	13
COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS.....	16
COMMUNITY PREFERENCES SURVEY RESULTS.....	17
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS.....	18
PLANNING CONDITIONS.....	19
DEMOGRAPHICS.....	20
EXISTING LAND USE CONDITIONS AND VALUATIONS.....	24
EXISTING LAND USE CONDITIONS AND VALUATIONS MAP.....	25
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....	26
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE AREAS MAP.....	27
ZONING.....	28
ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS.....	28
ZONING MAP.....	29
ROADS, MAINTENANCE, AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY.....	30
PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY MAP.....	31
PARKS AND RECREATION.....	33
LEARNING INSTITUTIONS.....	34
SAFETY SERVICES.....	35
UTILITIES.....	36
INFRASTRUCTURE MAP.....	37

PLANNING AREAS.....	39
PLANNING AREAS MAP.....	40
LEXINGTON-SPRINGMILL COMMERCIAL CORE PLANNING AREA.....	41
PARK EAST PLANNING AREA.....	44
INDUSTRIAL CORE PLANNING AREA.....	46
OLD ONTARIO TOWN CENTER PLANNING AREA.....	48
OLD ONTARIO OPPORTUNITIES MAP.....	50
OLD ONTARIO FOCUS GROUP VISIONING SUMMARY.....	52
OLD ONTARIO CORRIDOR PLANNING AREA.....	53
MARSHALL PARK PLANNING AREA.....	54
WALKER LAKE PLANNING AREA.....	56
PLAN THEMES AND STRATEGIES.....	58
PLAN THEMES AND STRATEGIES.....	59
COMMUNITY GROWTH AND REVITALIZATION.....	59
CONNECTED COMMUNITY.....	66
UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.....	73
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....	76
COMMUNITY GROWTH AND REVITALIZATION IMPLEMENTATION TABLE.....	77
CONNECTED COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION TABLE.....	78
UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION TABLE.....	79

01

02

03

04

05

06



An aerial photograph of a large industrial or commercial complex, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. On the left, a tall water tower is visible, with the word "ONTARIO" written across its top section. The facility includes several large buildings, extensive parking lots filled with cars, and various structures. The overall scene is captured from a high-angle perspective.

01

Executive Summary



The purpose of the 2024 Ontario Comprehensive Community Plan is to **unify the passion** of the various Ontario Community stakeholders into Implementing: Implementing ideas old and new and everything in between.

This Plan was framed by **every city department and key stakeholders**, ideas from over 1,500 survey responses from residents and students.

While some ideas may simply be the reiteration of current and ongoing capital projects, some of them are broad ideas that may or may not come to fruition, but nevertheless could be worthy investments in promoting Ontario's **quality of life**.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1834 The settlement of Ontario was platted in December 1834 by Hiram Cook, who named it in honor of his birthplace of Ontario County, New York. The settlement of New Castle was platted at the same time approximately a half mile east (Rock Road and PAW intersection today). Along with the village of Millsborough to the south (modern-day Rock Road and Lexington-Ontario Road), the three settlements were the nexus of commerce and trade in the largely rural Springfield Township. New Castle was eventually incorporated into Ontario.

1853 The Ontario Academy was built. The academy trained future teachers and served as a preparatory school for students in the area.

1913 The Lincoln Highway is first dedicated with a portion of the route traveling through Ontario, roughly along the lines of modern US 30. Historical signs mark its original routes along Mabee Road and elsewhere in the city.



A stretch of the old Lincoln Highway on Mabee Road in Ontario with a portion of the route.

1928 Residents vote to incorporate as a village, with Frank Stumbo sworn-in as the village's first mayor. Within a few years, the growing community had over 3,000 residents and had established a local government, village council, police force, and its first park.

1956 The Richland Mall opens. Lazarus and F.W. Woolworth's department stores were the original anchors.



A 1969 aerial photograph looking west toward the newly-built Richland Mall and the General Motors stamping plant. One of the city's oldest neighborhoods, centered on Rosewood Drive, is visible in the foreground. Photo courtesy of the John Sherman Room, Mansfield/Richland County Public Library.

1958 The village acquires part of the land that will become Marshall Park. Over the following years, the parks footprint and park amenities have expanded to include professional baseball fields, basketball courts, a splash pad, a disc golf course, and dog park.

1834

1853

1859

1913

1928

1956

1958

1969

1977

1978

1859 The Atlantic and Great Western Railroad (later the Erie Railroad) comes through town and a train depot is established.



A map of Springfield Township in 1856. The settlement of Ontario is listed along the Atlantic and G.W.R.R. (Great Western Railroad). Image courtesy of the John Sherman Room, Mansfield/Richland County Public Library.

1928 The Springfield Township School District (later Ontario Local Schools) builds a consolidated K-12 school in Old Ontario to replace their existing one-room schoolhouses located throughout the township. The school would later serve as the district's junior high school until being demolished in 2007. The site is now home to Ontario Park Meadows, a senior living complex.



The former Springfield Township School/Ontario Junior High School.

1956 General Motors builds the Fisher Body metal stamping plant on a 180-acre site in Springfield Township.



The General Motors Fisher Body Stamping Plant under construction in 1956. Photo courtesy of the John Sherman Room, Mansfield/Richland County Public Library.

1978 The Nussbaum Industrial Park is dedicated. PepsiCo becomes the first business to open in the industrial park.





A 1971 aerial photograph looking west at the intersection of Walker Lake Road and Lexington-Springmill Road. Prior to commercial development, the area was all farmland. Photo courtesy of the John Sherman Room, Mansfield/Richland County Public Library.

□ The village's municipal building and police station are built. The village building is named for former three-term Mayor Charles Hellinger.

1986

1990s

□ Retail, restaurants, and other commercial businesses boom along Lexington-Springmill Road and West Fourth Street.

2001

□ After the 2000 Census showed that the population of Ontario had grown to more than 5,000 residents, the village officially became a city on April 30, 2001.

2009

□ After operating for more than 50 years, General Motors announced it would close the Ontario stamping plant. The remaining 1,200 workers are offered buy-outs or relocation to other plants. By the end of 2013, the last of the former GM buildings were demolished.

2013

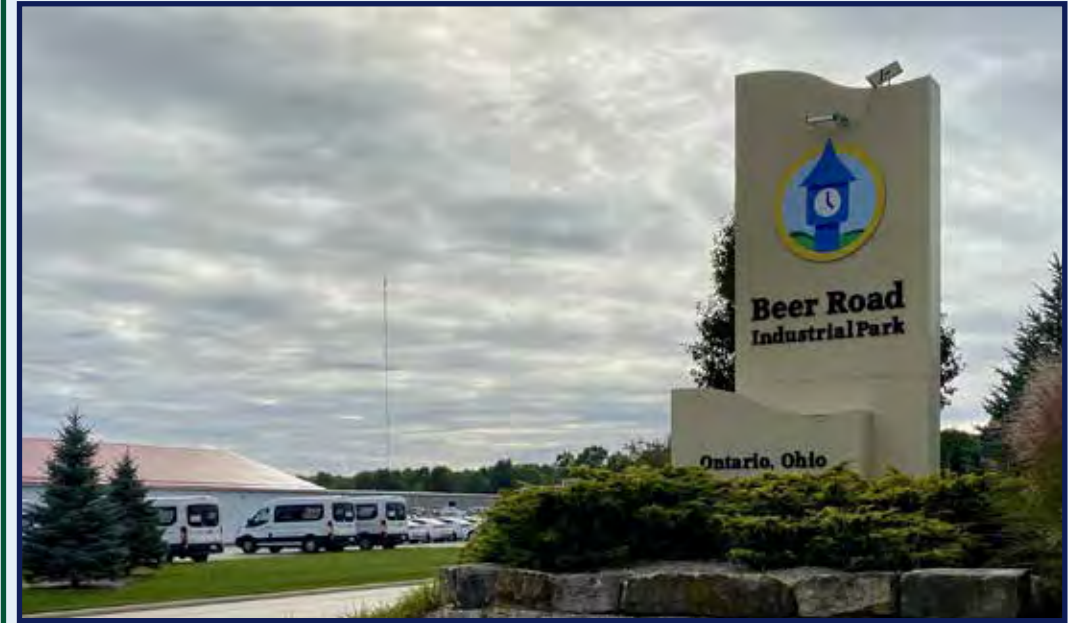
Avita Health Systems purchases the former Lazarus anchor store in the Richland Mall and begins transforming the location into a medical facility. In 2019, Avita purchased the former Sears anchor store in the mall and began developing the site as a cancer center, due to open in 2025.

2014

Charter Next Generation is the first tenant to occupy part of the former General Motors site. Efforts to develop the rest of the site are underway by Industrial Commercial Properties, LLC in partnership with the city.

2021

□ The city dedicates the Beer Road Industrial Park.



Beer Road Industrial Park.

2023-24

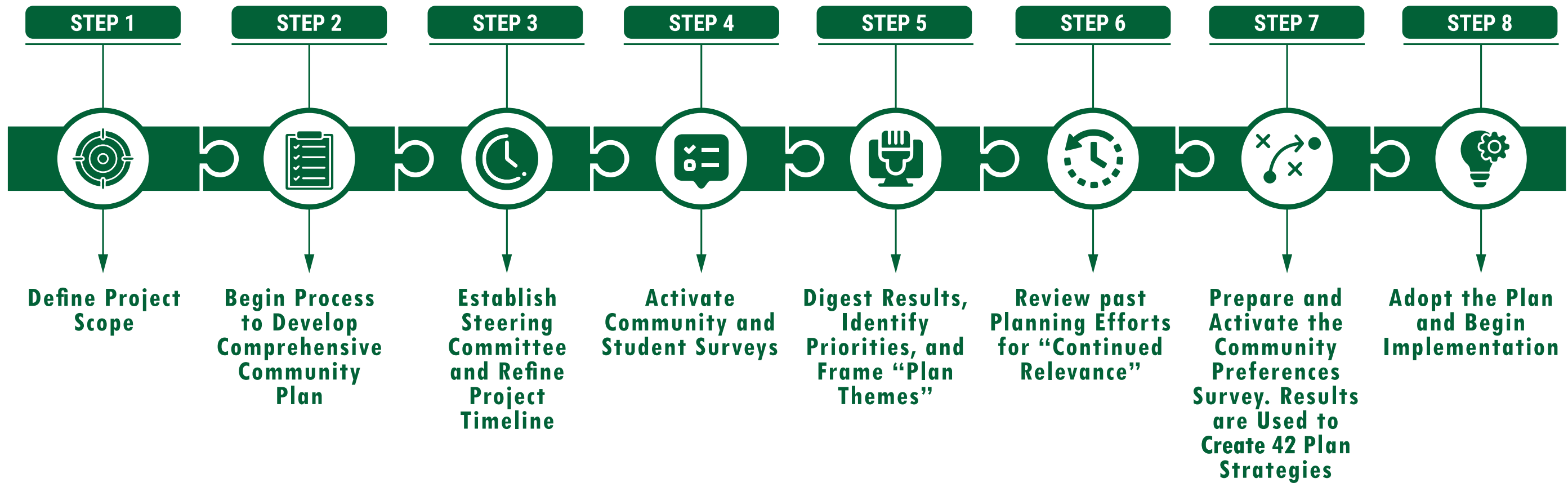
□ The city undertakes its first comprehensive planning process.



Since 2013, Avita Health Systems has repurposed portions of the Richland Mall into a hospital and medical facilities, helping making Ontario a regional destination for healthcare services.



PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



PAST PLANNING PROGRESS

Village and later city officials and residents have long-recognized the need for planning to effectively manage the development of the community. As a review of local news media has shown, discussions over land use, infrastructure, and economic development incentives date back to the earliest years of municipal government. Some notable past planning efforts include:

1973 – Ontario undertook its first planning efforts and articulated two paths of development: “the village could let development take its own course, often destructively” or “the village could direct development according to the goals consciously set by the community”. These planning efforts were never adopted by the

village and development was in many ways left to it take its own course.

1977 – The Ontario Development Corporation was created to aid local growth efforts. The corporation was dissolved in 2023. At the present time, local growth efforts are guided by the Richland County Growth Corporation (RCGC).

1997 – OSU-Mansfield students studied the impacts of business and residential development in Ontario, finding that the boom in businesses following Wal-Mart’s opening in 1990 and Meijer in 1993 had now employed over 4,000 people along Lexington-Springmill Road.

1998 – the village undertook long-term comprehensive planning efforts. While the plan was never adopted, the efforts proposed creating a cohesiveness to the community through consistency in zoning and land use regulations.

2011 – Mayor Larry Collins and city officials created a city vision team with the goal of promoting long-term development in the community to mitigate the impacts of General Motor’s closing. The vision team proposed prioritized committing Ontario to redeveloping its disused industrial sites and attracting new manufacturers.



MAJOR THEMES AND ASPIRATIONS

Several Plan Themes and common stories emerged over the course of the 14-month planning process that included 3 surveys and numerous planning exercises. The themes help to form the foundation of this Plan. These major Plan themes are:

Economic Prosperity



Once known as the town that GM built, all things changed in 2010 when operations at the plant ceased.

But not all was lost. Within 4 years or so after GM's departure, the city's income tax coffers had surpassed the years when the plant was running at full steam. Today, Ontario's economy, fiscal health, and identity are all critically dependent on its longstanding reputation as a regional commercial destination.

Retaining and expanding the commercial and industrial base to keep the residents' property tax burden manageable and framing in effective public-private partnerships that promote full absorption of Ontario Commerce Park (former GM Site) and Tappan Industrial Park are important community goals.

To this end, city officials should encourage a development pattern that is incremental, yet proactive. The City should also evaluate future development and annexations to ensure growth does not significantly impact the fiscal health of the City and distract it from infrastructure investments needed elsewhere.

Improved Community Connectivity



The City of Ontario is a very auto centric community with an expansive footprint. It generally lacks a network of interconnected, walkable neighborhoods with public spaces, and commercial/employment nodes where people of all ages and stages of life can enjoy without a vehicle. At the present time, transit services vis-à-vis Richland Transit, generally do not go west of Lexington Springmill Road.

According to demographic and market trends, the percentage of people seeking to go without a vehicle is expected to continue to increase. Expanding sidewalks and trails and adding local transit to improve the walkability and bike-ability in Ontario is going to be important for both residents and employers.

And aside from the physical connections, Ontario could be better

served by improve social interaction. The schools and parks – especially Marshall Park- are adored by residents and visitors. The community's elders and senior-most residents are also cherished. Better interconnecting the community towards preferred outcomes identified in this Plan will require close coordination with many entities that include Ontario Local Schools, Ontario Senior Center, Springfield Township, Ontario Recreation Department and the various organizations that promote and provide recreational programs and community events in Ontario.

Neighborhoods

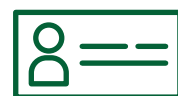


It's all about neighborhoods when it comes to what makes a community thrive.

While some residents came to Ontario over 60 years ago to work for General Motors, today's residents are residents not by chance but by choice. This has translated into a high level of community pride. But some neighborhood pockets exhibit signs of stress, and there is a concern by residents that property maintenance issues may be linked to a growing number of single-family rentals and vacant properties.

Increasing owners' responsibility may be facilitated by updated nuisance and maintenance codes that ensure property upkeep. Implementing and enforcing these programs effectively will require the right level of resources. Reducing property-based nuisances, while providing for new residential developments, will be a key ingredient in retaining residents, attracting new ones, and maintaining property values. Making tactical investments in sidewalks and other public infrastructure through a well-planned approach will also help to encourage additional private sector neighborhood reinvestment.

Community Identity



Many residents feel that Ontario lacks the "small-town feel" that other communities due to the lack of a historic downtown. There appears to be a lack of community identity and no unifying consensus for "who or what Ontario is." While elements like the updated clock tower and logo can be important components of community identity, physical elements such as streetscaping, pedestrian connectivity amenities, and overall appearance and attractiveness can speak louder than a symbolic brand or logo.

This Plan aims to assist city officials in fostering a sense of character and identity by recommending various strategies that aim to improve the look and feel of the built environment while establishing a framework to reclaim "Old Ontario" as the nucleus of the community.

Old Ontario

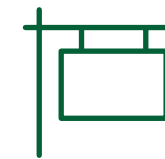


Residents in many places around the globe have a destination or a landmark in their community that they identify with. This is not true in Ontario. Absent this "destination", there is a grand desire to have something that unifies them.

Enter "Old Ontario". Founded in 1834 as a platted village at the crossroads of what was then Mansfield Street (now PAW) and Paris Street (now Shelby-Ontario), this "node" is near all the community's most beloved institutions- Ontario Schools and Marshall Park. During this Planning Process, it became clear that this area should become a place where more experience-based and locally-owned businesses can thrive – particularly with a focus on well-connected mixed uses, arts and entertainment.

The use of various design guidelines and standards, as implemented through piecemeal redevelopment requirements (and site planning) and community-wide incentive programs, will be an effective means of improving the physical appearance and the Old Ontario identity. This Plan highlights many steps that aim to activate this important community area.

Enhanced Curb Appeal

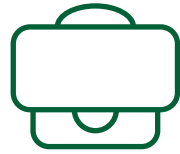


As a poster child of highway oriented suburban sprawl development born of the 1960s, portions of Ontario's main corridors like Lexington Springmill Road, W. Fourth Street and Park Ave. West are in need of additional and revived curb aesthetics.

To this end, City officials should continue to take a systematic and phased approach to creating and encouraging unique community design elements that compete with other regional markets in attracting and retaining residents and businesses. The visual aesthetics of Ontario should be improved in the areas of gateways, signage, wayfinding, landscaping and lighting. This Plan recommends the updating of the zoning code which should assist

Ontario's Planning Commission and Zoning Commissioner to improve the community's sightlines.

Enhanced Living Opportunities



Providing additional living opportunities may provide a variety of economic benefits to Ontario if planned properly. As a rule of thumb, communities usually see its greatest return when it increases the percentage of people that both live and work in the community.

According to Census Bureau Inflow/Outflow Analysis numbers (2021), of the City's total workforce of 10,629 only 339 residents both lived and worked in Ontario. Approximately 8,256 nonresidents commuted into the community only to return home elsewhere, potentially taking their income taxes and disposable income with them. When coupled with the 2023 Richland County Housing Study, all signs indicate a need for more housing. This Plan will help to further facilitate this discussion.

Improved Family Entertainment, Shopping and Dining Opportunities



Although Ontario is the bar-none, regional destination fed by nine surrounding counties, residents and students alike were aligned in the need for additional family entertainment and restaurant opportunities as well as by a desire to expand small, boutique style shopping and arts-based businesses and activities. This desire should be kept in mind when allocating resources for parks and framing in public private partnerships on future development projects.

Sustainable Development



Future development can contribute to the vitality of the whole community when land uses are sited, developed, and serviced adjacent to existing infrastructure (See Map: Infrastructure).

Stormwater management and other infrastructure constraints may limit the location and intensity of development in Ontario. To maximize the greatest return of property tax revenues and city resources, city officials should look to maximize building density where feasible. Densification has a range of benefits especially if it can be served by existing infrastructure.

This Plan highlights various infrastructure-related initiatives that should be deployed to help city officials and private developers alike in developing and redeveloping the community.



Effective Community Resources, Outreach and Implementation

A conclusion can be drawn after digesting the survey results and the public's preferences: there is a desire for Ontario to be better. This "better" was described in many ways and tones from over 1,500 residents, student, and local officials that were surveyed and interviewed.

For the community to be activated in a manner supported by this Plan, city officials will need to be resourceful in being more resourceful to attract and retain city staff and employees, and in staffing the right talent in the right places. From an outreach position, residents will need to be educated on the importance of the need for additional revenue and tools necessary to create the community they desire.

The time has come to mobilize the resources to implement. Additional efforts to develop a city charter, pass street and park levies, and create a local community improvement corporation and community development department are just a few activities that need more discussion.

Building Ontario 2.0 will require patience and dedicated people. Implementing the Ontario Comprehensive Community Plan will require annual review and a dedication to "Stay on Task". This Plan is full of community and capital improvements that can be accomplished by dedicated people through deliberate incrementalism, if not distracted.



HOW TO USE THE PLAN

Ontario's Comprehensive Community Plan should be utilized when working to promote the **overall quality of life** in the community, promoting investments, and in making capital improvement decisions. Whether it is the extension of pedestrian connectivity elements, the extension of infrastructure, new development, or any other neighborhood improvements, it should be done in accordance with this Plan.

The Plan's strategies were developed in conjunction with public input, and consider past, current and projected issues. Many of these recommendations will take several years to complete, but this Plan will allow community leaders to **embrace plan strategies** and activities on a priority level, and allocate funding in future budgets for the costlier projects. Over time, each strategy may need to be revised or amended to reflect the current planning environment and removed when accomplished.

To this end, the Plan should be used in the following situations:



DEVELOPMENT, ZONING, AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING

The usual processes for reviewing projects, processing zoning amendments, development plans, and subdivision plans provide significant opportunities for implementing the Comprehensive Community Plan. Each Plan project, zoning change and development proposal should be evaluated and weighed against applicable recommendations and policies contained within this Plan, especially in the Planning Areas Section, that highlights specific conditions, trends, and needs of that unique area of the community.

Ontario officials may encounter projects and development proposals that may not be addressed or highlighted in this Plan. When this happens, a consistent process should be utilized that allows local officials, developers and residents to request an update to this Plan and other supportive tools like the Zoning Ordinance, Transportation Master Plan, and Capital Improvement Plan.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Many of the initiatives in this Plan may require Ontario officials to coordinate and work with other political subdivisions like Springfield Township, City of Mansfield and Richland County; and organizations like Richland Area Chamber and Economic Development, Ontario Local Schools, Richland County Planning Commission and Park District, to name a few. This Plan could be helpful to advance programs and initiatives that these entities could mutually benefit from.



PLAN REVIEW

The Plan should be reviewed annually by Ontario's elected officials, Planning Commission, and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to ensure progress is being made. This discussion should identify the Plan's beneficial impacts and recognize areas where the Plan may not have assisted in facilitating the visions and strategies. To further assist discussion, planning stakeholders can assign a "percentage complete" to each Plan strategy (See: Plan Implementation Table). Major plan amendments should not be made without thorough analysis of immediate needs, as well as consideration for long-term effects of proposed amendments.

A photograph of a public participation meeting held in a library. A man in a dark suit stands on the left, gesturing towards a large map displayed on a projector screen at the front of the room. The map shows a geographical area with various colored zones. Several people are seated at tables in the foreground and middle ground, looking towards the screen. The room is filled with bookshelves and framed pictures on the walls. The overall lighting is dim, with the projector screen providing the main source of light.

02

Public Participation

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The 2024 Ontario Comprehensive Community Plan was formed with the assistance of more than 1,500 responses gathered through the deployment of three surveys: a community survey, a student survey, and a community preferences survey. The planning team also interviewed local City and county government departments, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders. A detailed breakdown of the results of the three surveys can be found on the following pages.

Steering Committee

A group of residents representing a broad array of knowledge, interests, and occupations assisted the comprehensive planning consultants in guiding the planning effort. Several meetings were held over the course of the planning period and were geared toward accomplishing two objectives: (1) Educating the committee members on the basics of local government land and resource planning; and (2) Establishing general goals and defined objectives to serve as a foundation of the Plan.

A multi-tiered public participation process was created to help the steering committee best address the many opportunities and challenges currently affecting the city. The structure for public input was organized at a variety of distinctive levels of involvement. First, a community survey for residents and a student survey for high school students were administered. Next, a community preferences survey was developed with input received from the previous surveys and administered.

Community Survey

A total of 547 residents participated in the Community Survey between September 2023 and March 2024. Respondents' ages ranged from 17 to over 75. 88% of survey respondents were homeowners, 8% were renters, 5% were business owners, 2% were visiting shoppers, and 1% were non-residents employed in the city. 39% had resided in the city for more than 20 years, 23% had resided in the city for 11 to 20 years, 16% had resided in the city for 6 to 10 years, and 11% had resided in the city for 5 years or less.

16% of respondents were not in the paid labor force, as either students, homemakers, or retirees. 24% were employed in Ontario, 22% were employed in Mansfield, 11% worked elsewhere in Richland County, and 17% worked outside of Richland County.



Respondents were asked to rate their quality of life in Ontario. 31% of respondents rated their quality of life in Ontario as “excellent”, 53% rated it as “good”, 13% rated it as “adequate” and 3% rated it as “needs improvement” or poor”.

In open-ended survey questions, respondents identified several main improvements they would like to see in the city. The most common responses centered around improved infrastructure and amenities, more recreational opportunities, economic development and job growth, affordable housing and cost of living, and safety and security.

Respondents ranked their support for several potential activities that the city can pursue from 1 “low priority” to 4 “high priority”. The top five priorities identified based on mean scores were: revitalizing vacant and under-utilized commercial properties (mean score of 3.34), pedestrian connectivity and/or walkability improvements (mean score of 3.12), improved park and recreational opportunities (mean score of 3.12), street maintenance and improvements (mean score of 2.96), and neighborhood improvements and revitalization (mean score of 2.89).

Respondents were asked to rank the types of land uses they would like to see more or less of in the community. Respondents could choose 1 “yes”, 0 “unsure”, or -1 “no. The types of land use

that respondents wished to see expanded based on mean scores were: parks and recreation (0.74), community public spaces (0.72), single-family residential housing (0.54), commercial spaces (0.27), residential senior-living opportunities (0.23), industrial (0.16), condominiums/townhomes (0.01), office spaces (-0.03), and apartments (-0.28).

As a community that incorporated and grew substantially in the second half of the 20th century, Ontario lacks a traditional “downtown” of older commercial storefronts. Residents were asked if the idea of having a “town center” should be explored and if so, where should it be located. 61% of those surveyed said the idea should be explored, with 23% unsure, and 16% saying no. Of those that wished to explore having a town center, several areas emerged as the location. Most prominent was “Old Ontario”/near Ontario Local Schools and Marshall Park, followed by areas on or near the Richland Mall and the former GM site.

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to identify community services they would like to see expanded or introduced, the most prominent were a public pool, a community center, sidewalks and walking/biking paths, more family activities, and improved public transportation options.

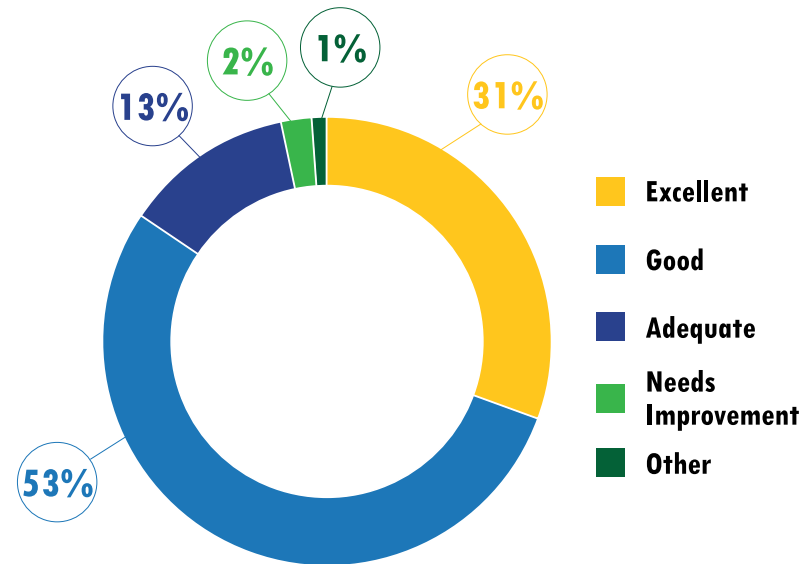
In an open-ended question, respondents identified numerous potential enhancements and amenities they would like to see in the city. The most prominent of these were a community pool, improved sidewalk connectivity – particularly around Marshall Park and the schools but also throughout the community, a community center, more youth activities, and better walking and biking paths.

Respondents also identified the types of businesses they would like to see more of in Ontario. There was a strong desire among respondents to have more locally owned, sit-down, and/or diverse restaurant options. Other types of businesses identified included retail stores (particularly clothing, home goods, and locally owned shops), entertainment options (such as a bowling alley, ice skating rink, and an arcade), a variety of service businesses (childcare, gyms, car repair), and more manufacturing and industrial businesses.

Respondents were asked about locations in the community in need of improved access, improved safety, or better pedestrian connectivity. The most prominent of these responses centered



Rate your "Quality of Life" in Ontario.



around Park Avenue West, Marshall Park and the schools, and Lexington-Springmill Road. Park Avenue West was mentioned multiple times as needing wider lanes, better signage, and sidewalks, particularly where the mostly 2-lane roadway become 4 lanes near the intersection with Lexington-Springmill Road. In open-ended comments, respondents desired more sidewalks leading from residential neighborhoods to Marshall Park as well as more sidewalks throughout the park. Respondents noted that while Lexington-Springmill Road has sidewalks on at least one side along most of the roadway, they would like to see them connected to several large retailers such as Walmart and Meijer.

The survey also gauged respondents' biggest concerns for the future of Ontario. The most prominent concerns identified were economic development and job growth, taxes and cost of living issues, overdevelopment and growth, the continued quality of the local schools, and safety and crime. See the Community Survey Results infographic for a full summary of the survey results.

Student Survey



"I love Ontario, but I feel it's becoming so commercial that it's losing its community identity. We need a place to call "downtown"."

Ontario High School students participated in a student survey in the Fall of 2023. In total, 635 students in grades 6 through 12 responded. 70% of students surveyed lived in the Ontario Local School District, 27% lived outside the district, and 3% reported other

(mostly one parent living in the school district and the other parent living outside the school district). 45% reported that one or more of their parents and/or guardians were originally from Ontario or the area, and 55% reported that none of their parents and/or guardians were originally from Ontario or the area.

74% of student survey takers rated their quality of life in Ontario as "good" or "excellent", 18% rated their quality of life "adequate", and 8% rated their quality of life as "needs improvement" or "poor". 72% said that they planned to move away after high school. Of those, 73% said they planned to leave for college, another 22% said they were leaving for a job or to pursue other opportunities, and 5% said they planned on leaving to enter military service or attend trade school. Students were asked how likely they felt they would return to live in Ontario as an adult at some point later in life. Of those who reported they would likely move away after high school, 32% said that it was "very likely" or "likely" that they would return, 43% said they were unsure, and 25% said it was "unlikely" or "very unlikely" that they would return.

Students were asked if they thought Ontario would be better, the same, or worse by 2040. 62% of those surveyed reported "better", 28% reported "the same", and 10% reported "worse".

Students were asked to rate the quality of youth and teen activities in Ontario. 13% reported "excellent", 39% reported "good", 22% reported "adequate", 22% reported "needs improvement", and 5% reported "poor".

Students were asked in an open-ended question what they would like to see more of in Ontario, with responses ranging from amenities like a community pool, to more and improved athletic facilities, a wider range of stores and hangout places, improvements to the mall, and a downtown, among other services, improvements, and amenities.

Community Preferences Survey

Following the completion and analysis of the Community Survey, a follow-up Community Preferences Survey was conducted where more specific questions were created based on the results of the community survey, the student survey, and interviews with city departments, agencies, and other community stakeholders. 333 responses were collected between May and September 2024.

Respondents were surveyed on the types of pedestrian connectivity improvements they would like to see pursued by the city. 46%

responded that they would focus on improving pedestrian connectivity impediments to key destinations like the school complex, Marshall Park, and key shopping areas along Lexington-Springmill Road. 39% reported that they would like to see new trails, paths, and pedestrian connections. 10% reported they would like to see improvements and fixes to the existing sidewalk network and 6% reported that no improvements were needed.

Respondents were given a list of options covering how the city could pursue park and recreational opportunity enhancements. 44% of respondents wished to maintain and improve Marshall Park.

If you had ten dollars to invest in one community area, where would you invest it?

- 50%** Developing a "town center" in Old Ontario that is connected to the schools and Marshall Park and has all-ages activities and supportive land uses
- 15%** Towards a fund to improve connectivity like sidewalks and bike paths
- 14%** Fixing the city's existing infrastructure
- 14%** Other (including infrastructure and new businesses)
- 8%** Better parks and recreation programs

19% wished to pursue initiatives and levies to generate revenues to maintain and improve parks and recreational programs for all ages. 18% wished to develop new neighborhood parks. 14% wished to improve programming and partnerships with area recreation providers.

Respondents were asked to identify specific mechanisms they would support in order for the city to repair local infrastructure. 32% of respondents favored levying special assessments for targeted improvements, 3% supported raising property and income taxes, 10% supported increasing water/sewer rates, and 42% favored a mixture of all of the above. 14% identified other and specified a range of concerns and suggestions, including a sentiment that taxes and water/sewer rates were already too high, and that the city should investigate and apply for grants to repair/improve existing infrastructure.

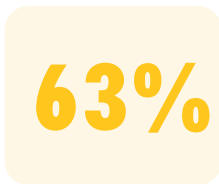
Respondents were asked what they considered the biggest



impediment to the marketability of Ontario and given a range of options to choose from. 27% identified the "lack of vision and 'wow' factor". 25% identified the "lack of 'quality of life' and lifestyle amenities like parks, diverse shopping, etc.". 18% identified the "lack of job opportunities". 13% identified the "lack of new/updated housing stock." 17% identified "other" and listed a range of factors they felt inhibited the marketability of the community, including the lack of a downtown or town center, the lack of walkability and the lack of a sense of "community" these factors contribute to. Others identified the continuing lack of development of the former GM site.

Which statement do you identify with most?

I am okay with paying additional taxes as long as the city has a good plan to use the additional revenue



I am not okay with paying additional taxes, the city should live within its current means



Respondents were asked about potential ways to reactivate the Richland Mall and given a range of options to choose from. 17% supported creating

new zoning guidelines that would provide for new development opportunities. 9% supported financial incentives and grants to help encourage private reinvestment. 5% supported reactivating the mall through long-range planning efforts. 53% favored a combination of the above tools and 16% felt it should be left up to the private property owners.

Respondents were given information from the 2023 Richland County Housing Study indicating that the county will need a substantial number of new housing units to accommodate exiting and new residents in the coming years and given a list of options. 20% supported expanding economic incentives and property maintenance enforcement to encourage revitalization of existing neighborhoods and properties. 7% supported updating the city's zoning with a new residential district that would allow for smaller lot sizes. 3% favored encouraging housing density and infill development. A further 30% favored a combination of all of the above (60% in total), while 40% felt that the city had the right mixture of residential land uses at the moment, and that the city should be thoughtful on new residential developments until

infrastructure capacity is better understood. Respondents were asked if more tools should be developed to protect neighborhoods from nuisances and issues arising from property maintenance and vacancies. 76% of those surveyed favored doing so, while 24% were opposed.

The survey asked respondents to choose to invest a hypothetical ten dollars into one of five areas. 51% chose to invest in developing a "town center" in Old Ontario that is connected to the schools. 15% chose to invest in fixing the city's existing infrastructure. 14% chose to invest in a fund to improve connectivity like sidewalks and bike paths. 7% chose to invest in better parks and recreation programs. 13% chose "other" and proposed a variety of other options, most notably were a city pool and building a city-owned water and sewer treatment plant.

Noting that many in the community have identified a community pool as a priority, the survey asked respondents how willing they would be to fund an initiative to do so. 35% responded they were "very likely" to fund it, 20% responded that they were "likely". 25% responded that they were "neutral". 10% responded that they were "unlikely" and 11% responded that they were "very unlikely"

Survey takers were asked to identify with one of two statements that were designed to gauge residents' attitudes toward city taxes and spending. 63% identified with the statement "I am okay with paying additional taxes as long as the city has a good plan to use the additional revenue" whereas 37% identified with the statement "I am not okay with paying additional taxes, the city should live within its current means".

Old Ontario Focus Group

To garner further ideas for what residents would like to see in terms of development in Old Ontario, a public meeting and focus group session was held at Ontario High School in July 2024. Residents were asked to weigh in on what they felt the boundaries of "Old Ontario" are, what types of streetscape improvements they would

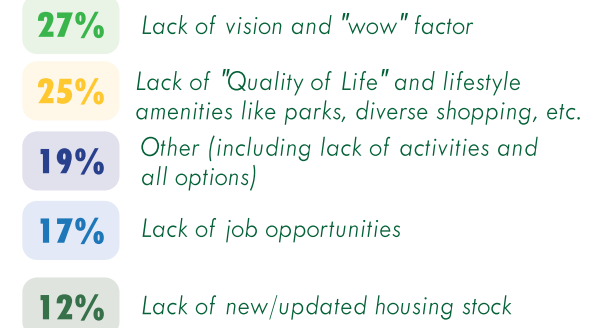
"The community lacks a "downtown area." Old Ontario would make a great location for Ontario's version of a Main Street/ downtown area due to the school, Marshall Park & recreation activities, and the commercial and residential activity near by."

like to see, and what types of land uses and activities they would like to see.

Most participants felt that "Old Ontario" was bounded by Rock Road to the east, the Ontario

Senior Center and the Ontario Local Schools property line to the west, Milligan Road to the north, and the abandoned rail line/Railroad Street to the south. Some felt "Old Ontario" encompasses a wider area north to West Fourth Street and south to Millsboro Road.

What's the biggest impediment to the marketability of this community?



Many participants wished to see some kind of unifying design & landscaping elements such as wayfinding signage, a town center area, and lamp posts among other ideas that would help with community identity and branding. Participants voiced support for more housing in the Old Ontario area, primarily more single-family residential units as well as condominiums and townhomes, as well as more local/neighborhood commercial establishments such as a book shop, bakery/pastry shop, a pet store, and restaurants). Participants also wished to see more gathering spaces such as an open space for a farmer's market, an event center that could be rented out for weddings and other events, and a venue for concerts and other entertainment.

Several transportation and connectivity improvement ideas for the area were voiced during the session. Participants wished to see sidewalks throughout and around Marshall Park (Milligan Road, Rock Road, Cal Miller Lane, and Dunlap Drive), as well as north along Shelby-Ontario Road and Rock Road, and south along Rudy Road to connect to existing residential neighborhoods. Participants also wished to see the abandoned rail line utilized as a shared use path (SUP).

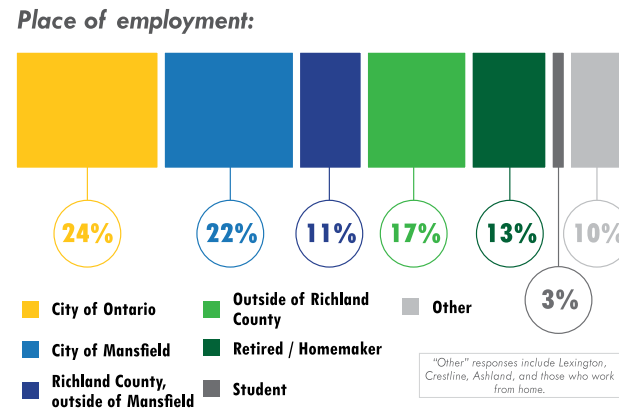
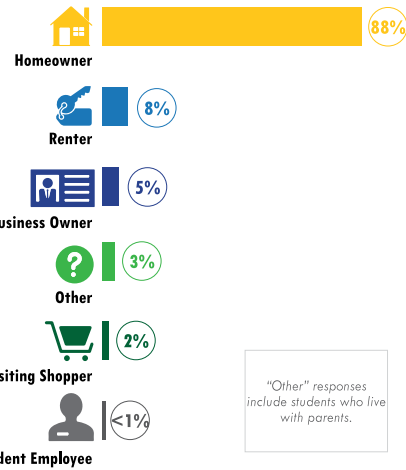
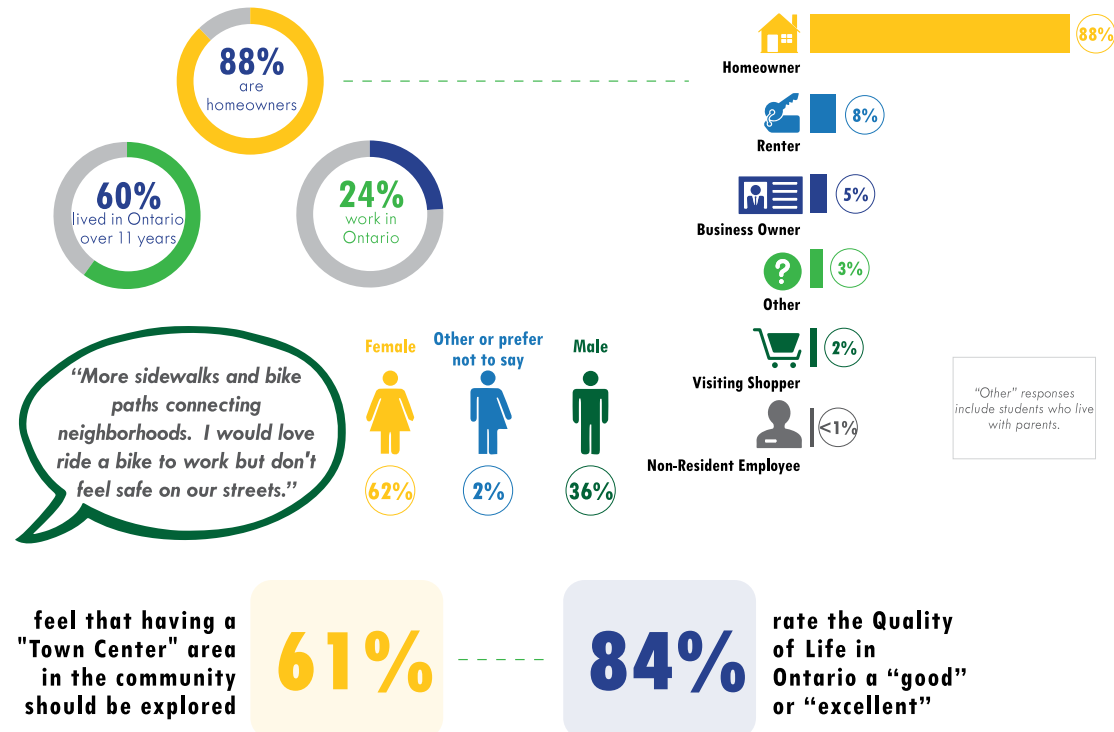
Most in attendance voiced a shared concern about the heavy traffic at the intersection of the Shelby-Ontario Road and Park Avenue West (SR 309). Many supported either a roundabout or left turn lanes at each point to help increase traffic flow, especially during peak work/school hours.

(For more information on the Old Ontario area, see the Planning Areas chapter).



Ontario Comprehensive Community Plan Survey Results

547 participants



Residents support the following activities:

- Revitalize vacant and under-utilized commercial properties**
- Pedestrian connectivity and/or walkability improvements**
- Improved park and recreational opportunities**
- Street maintenance and improvements**
- Neighborhood improvements and revitalization (lighting, curbs, etc.)**

Residents **want** or **do not want** the following land uses expanded:

- Parks and recreation**
- Community public spaces**
- Residential, single family**
- Commercial**
- Industrial**
- Residential, condos / townhomes**
- Office**
- Residential, apartments**

Top 5 improvements residents would make to the community include:

- Improved infrastructure and amenities**
This includes requests for sidewalks, better roads, a community pool, a community center, and a "Town Center". Residents also mentioned the need for improved water quality and infrastructure, as well as better traffic flow and management.
- More recreational opportunities**
Residents expressed a desire for more things to do for all ages, such as a community pool, indoor sports facilities, walking/biking trails, and parks. They also mentioned a need for more activities for teenagers and young adults.
- Economic development and job growth**
Residents are concerned about the lack of good paying jobs in the community and want to see the city attract new businesses and industries. They also mentioned the desire to keep heavy industrial zoning in the GM area.
- Affordable housing and cost of living**
Residents are concerned about the rising cost of living, including property taxes, water bills, and the cost of everyday goods and services. They want to see the city offer more affordable housing options and keep taxes under control.
- Safety and security**
Residents want to see the city invest in its police force and community programs to help reduce crime. They also mentioned concerns about speeding traffic and noise pollution.

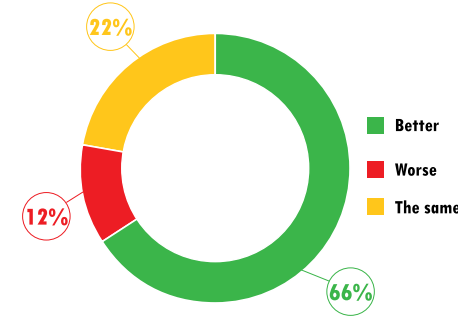
Residents would love to see:

- A community pool**
- More sidewalks**
- A community center**
- More things for kids to do**
- Better walking and biking paths**

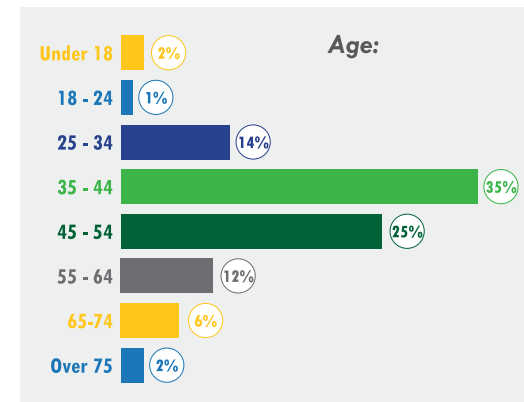
"I love Ontario, but I feel it's becoming so commercial that it's losing its community identity. We need a place to call 'downtown'."

"The neighborhoods around the school should all have sidewalks and even bike paths that are safe for the kids to walk and ride to school and to Marshall Park."

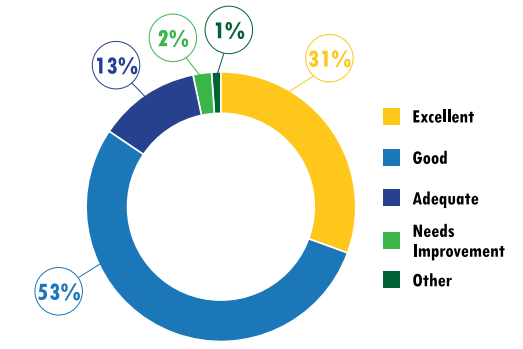
By 2040, Ontario will be:



"I would like to see the overpasses on US-30 cleaned up. Maybe some trees and an 'Ontario' sign. I also would like to see 'Welcome To Ontario' signs at key intersections."



Rate your "Quality of Life" in Ontario.



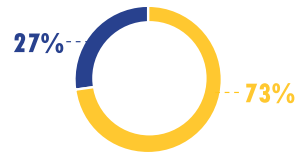
Ontario Community Preferences Survey Results



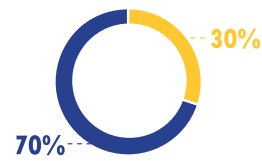
333
participants

When I think of Ontario, I think of "gray". It seems very urban, dark, dirty, and unwelcoming. Even Mansfield, Lex, and Bellville have the red bricks, bike paths, sidewalks, and greenery everywhere so it looks more like a friendly small town. Ontario seems disconnected from itself.

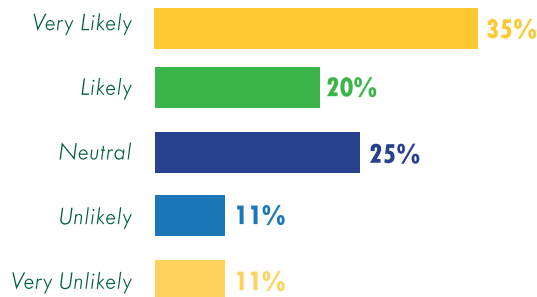
Should more tools be developed that protect neighborhoods from nuisances and issues from property maintenance and vacancy?



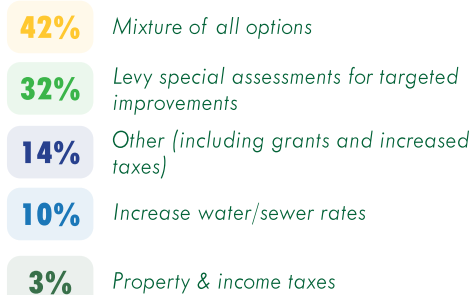
I am familiar with programs and incentives that Ontario has to promote residential, commercial and industrial development and housing renovation.



The development of a community pool appears to be something desirable of residents and students. How likely would you be to fund an initiative like this?



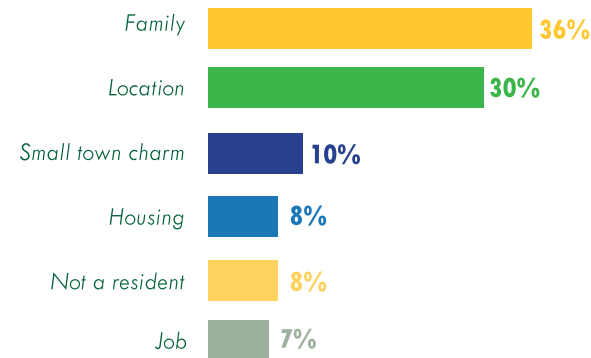
Residents completing the community survey noted a need to address failing infrastructure, public health, and water quality/capacity. What mechanisms would you support to enable the City to repair local infrastructure?



- Yes
- No
- More Information

"The community lacks a "downtown area." Old Ontario would make a great location for Ontario's version of a Main Street/ downtown area due to the school, Marshall Park & recreation activities, and the commercial and residential activity near by."

Why do you live in Ontario?

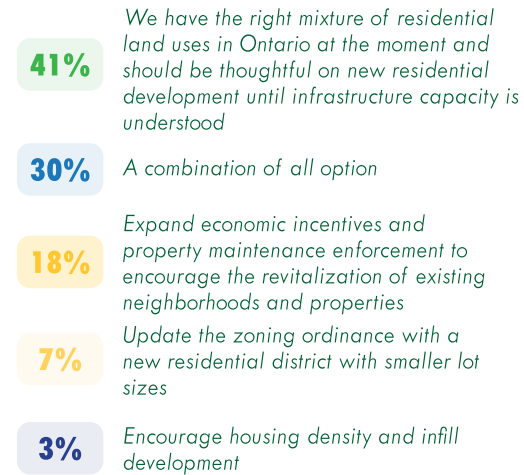


Residents noted a desire for improved and safe pedestrian mobility and connectivity choices. How would you like to see this happen? Select the option you prefer best.

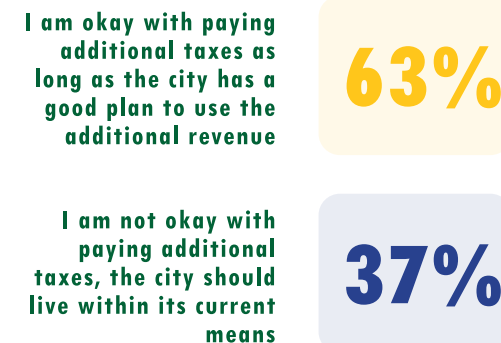


"There is no downtown or community feel. Marshall Park is not free for residents to use, its overrun by sports tournaments and out of town visitors that dont invest dollars in our community due to lack of desirable shopping and dining options nearby."

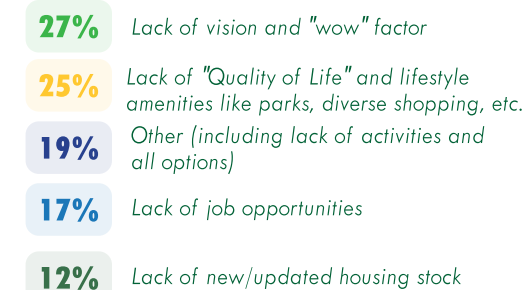
According to the 2023 Richland County Housing Study, the county will need a substantial number of new housing units to accommodate existing and new residents. What methods should Ontario utilize to encourage new housing development?



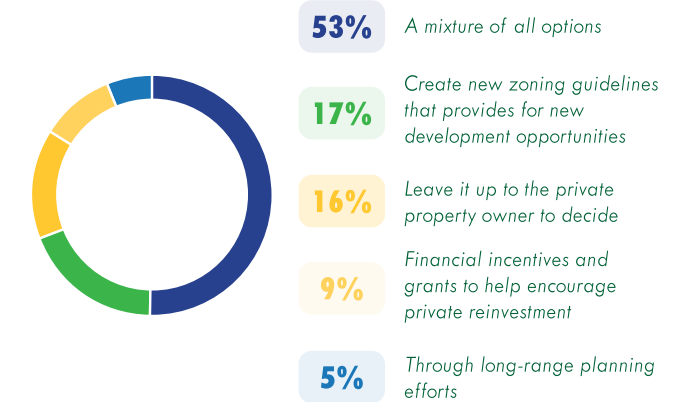
Which statement do you identify with most?



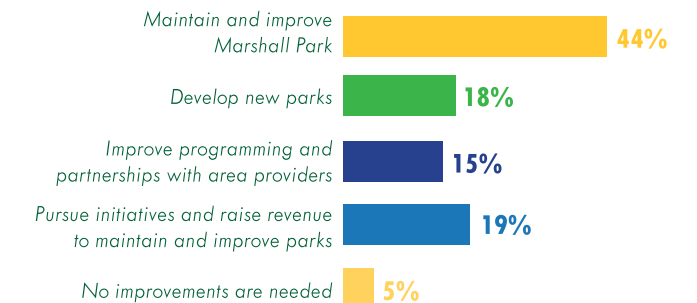
What's the biggest impediment to the marketability of this community?



A majority of survey respondents believe that Richland Mall is currently under-utilized. What's the best way to reactivate this area?



Residents noted a desire for enhanced park and recreational opportunities. How would you like to see this happen?



If you had ten dollars to invest in one community area, where would you invest it?



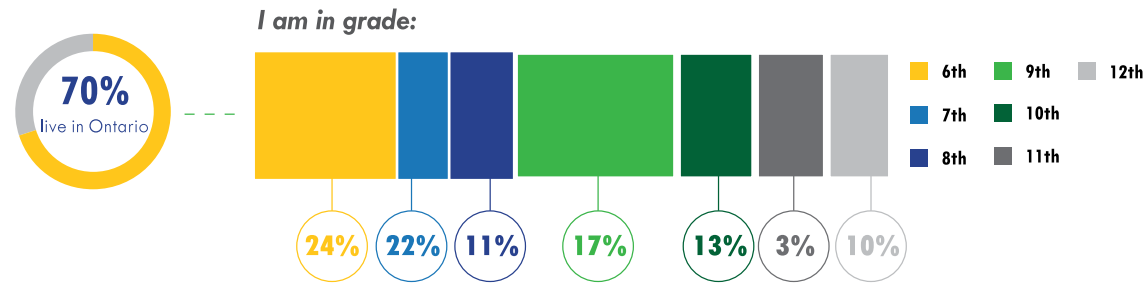
*** Responses may not total 100 due to rounding



Ontario Student Survey Results



635
participants

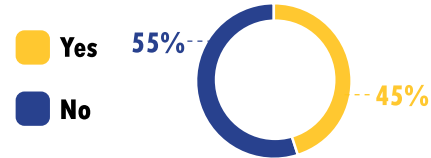


- Top 5 additional things students would like to see more of in the community**
- 1 Food Options**
 - 2 Activities**
 - 3 Entertainment**
 - 4 Community Gathering Places**
 - 5 Kindness and Respect**

"I came from Mansfield City, and I feel that Ontario is much better. The school system here is better too and so are the students in the school. I really like Marshall Park near the school and think adding more stuff to it will be better. I do think that Lex-Springmill strip malls can be improved."

"It is a very safe and nice place to live in. With better places to eat, and some fixing of roads, it will become better very soon."

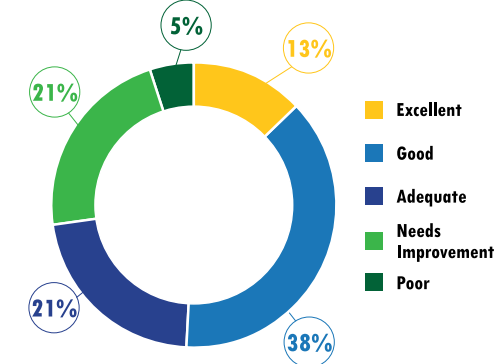
One or more parents/guardians originally from Ontario:



Do you plan on moving away from the community after High School?

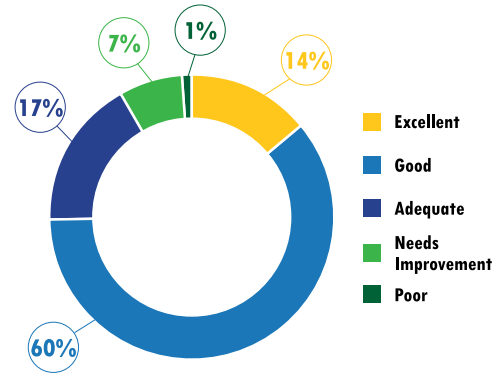


How would you rate the level and quality of youth and teen activities in this community?



"I think the Ontario community is great and just could use some more curb appeal and more popular businesses."

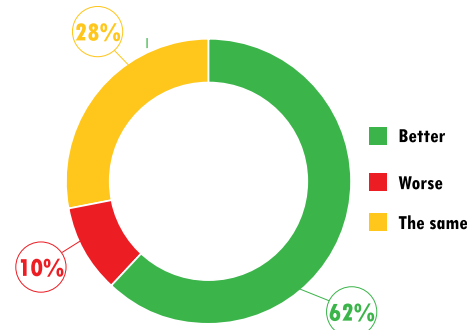
Rate your "Quality of Life" in Ontario.



If you plan on moving away, why?

- 58%** Attend College
- <1%** Trade School
- 3%** Military Service
- 11%** Job
- 17%** N/A
- 10%** Pursue other opportunities

By 2040, Ontario will be:

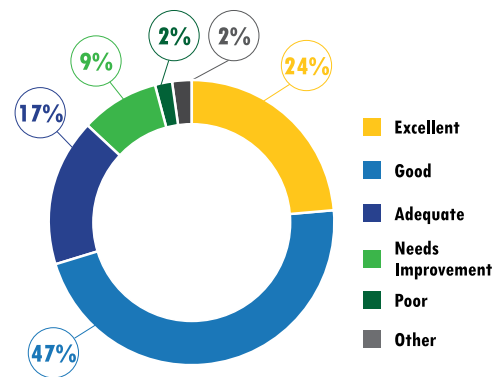


If you were in charge of Ontario, what one improvement would you make?

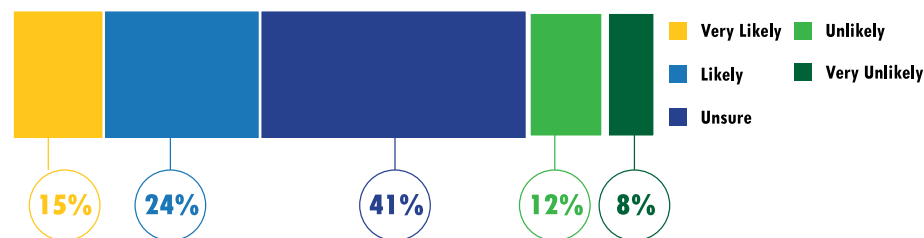
- 1 Public Places**
This includes things like pools, community centers, skating rinks, and dog parks. Students mentioned these places 38 times in their responses.
- 2 Roads and Transportation**
This includes improving existing roads, adding sidewalks, and better public transportation options. Students mentioned these improvements 32 times.
- 3 Shopping and Entertainment**
This includes improving the mall, adding more stores and restaurants, and creating places to hang out. Students mentioned these improvements 31 times.
- 4 Activities**
This includes adding more after-school activities, creating places for teens to hang out, and improving existing facilities like tennis courts. Students mentioned these improvements 29 times.
- 5 Schools**
This includes improving the quality of education, making schools safer, and changing school rules. Students mentioned these improvements 18 times.

"I feel we should have a public pool. It would help get us active and more physically outside. Also a rollerskating rink. It would get us more socially connected and would help with physical activity."

How would you rate Ontario when compared to other communities you lived in or visited?



How likely is it that you'll return to live in Ontario as an adult sometime in your life?



Top 3 connectivity improvements

- 1 Sidewalks**
- 2 Bike Paths**
- 3 Crosswalks**



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent filter. A road runs vertically through the center-left. To the left of the road is a residential area with houses and trees. To the right is a large, open field with visible plowing patterns. The overall scene is peaceful and rural.

03

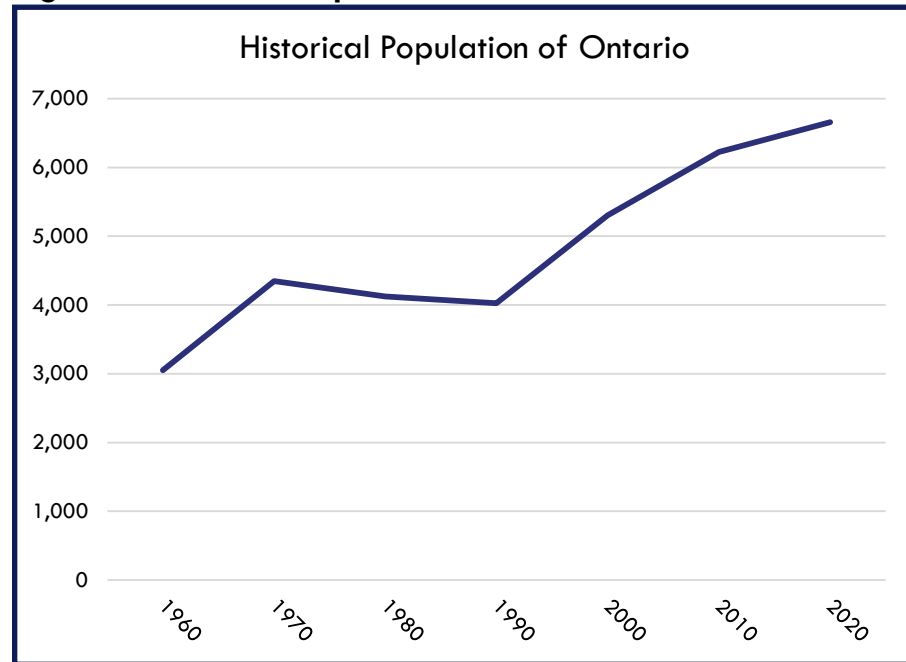
Planning Conditions

DEMOGRAPHICS

*Data is derived from the Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022) unless otherwise noted.

Population Trends: Since incorporating in 1958, Ontario's population has more than doubled. From 1960 to 1970, the population grew by more than 40% from 3,049 to 4,325. The 1970s and 1980s saw modest population loss, with the 1990 census recording 4,026 residents. The 1990s again saw substantial growth, with the population increasing by more than 30% to 5,303 at the 2000 Census. After 2000, the village met the population requirements of more than 5,000 residents to become a city under the Ohio Revised Code, and Ontario was officially granted city status on April 30, 2001. The first two decades of the 21st century saw continued but more modest population growth. From 2000 to 2010,

Figure 1. Historical Population of Ontario

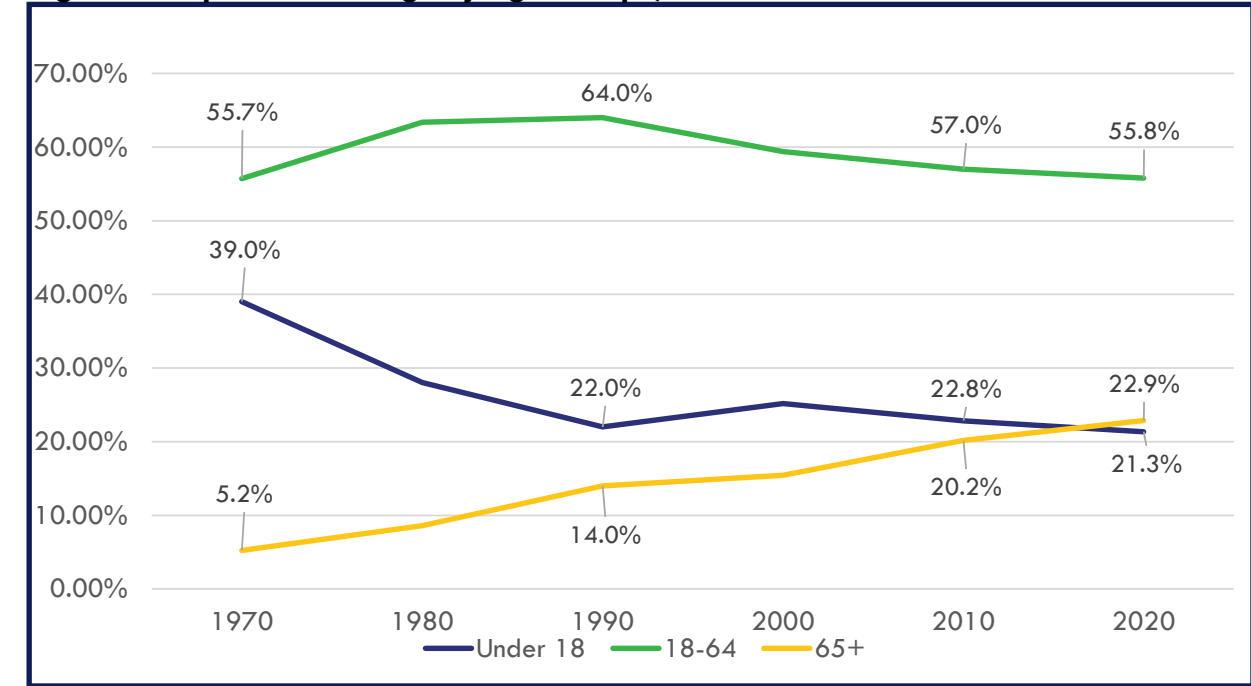


the population grew by 17% percent to 6,225. From 2010 to 2020, the population grew by 7% to 6,656. The 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates (the most recent available), place Ontario's population at 6,642, with a margin of error of +/- 19. See Figure 1. Historical Population of Ontario for a graph of the community's population change from 1960 to 2020 and Figure 2. Population Over Time for the population counts covering the same period.

Figure 2. Population Over Time

Historical Population		
Year	Population	%+/-
1960	3,049	
1970	4,345	42.5%
1980	4,123	-5.1%
1990	4,026	-2.4%
2000	5,303	31.7%
2010	6,225	17.4%
2020	6,656	6.9%

Figure 3. Population Change by Age Groups, 1970-2020



Age: Like many communities in Ohio and throughout the nation, Ontario's population is aging. In 2022, the median age in Ontario was 47.4 years, an increase from 45.0 in 2010 and 40.4 in 2000. Figure 3. shows population change by age groups. In 1970 (the earliest year age-specific data is available), nearly 40% of Ontario's population was under 18 years of age, 55% were between ages 18 and 64 ("working age"), and approximately 5% were 65+ (retirement age/senior citizens). While the percentage of residents aged 18-64 has remained virtually unchanged at approximately 55% of all residents, the share of residents over 65 has increased substantially over the decades to 22.9%, while the share of the population under 18 has declined to 21.4%. See Figure 3. Population Change by Age Groups, 1970-2020.

To better illustrate these long-term changes, Figure 4. presents an age-structure diagram or "population pyramid" of Ontario in 1970 and 2020. In both diagrams, the city's population is broken up by sex and 5-year age groups. In 1970, 42% of the population was less than 20 years old and the diagram has a "pyramid" appearance with a high proportion of youth at the base and a progressively declining proportion of older adults. In 2020, 24% of the population was less than 20 years old and the diagram no longer reflects a "pyramid".

This reflects several demographic trends including long-term increases in life expectancy and declines in birthrates that have made the population age structure of Ontario, and many similar communities in Ohio to become less youth dominant.

In 1970, those under 20 (a sizeable portion of the "Baby Boom" generation) make up the largest chunk of age groups in the community. In 2020 by comparison, the "Baby Boom" age group are now between the ages of 50 and 69 and continue to make up a sizeable percentage of the city's population. As this older Baby Boom generation continues to age out of the workforce the need for greater healthcare services, housing, and desire for more senior-focused activities are likely to increase.

It is important to understand the city in the context of broader regional, state, and national trends. To provide this, Figure 5. presents several key socio-economic and demographic statistics for the city as well as Richland County, the State of Ohio, and the nation as whole.

Income & Poverty: In 2022, the median household income in the city was \$62,313, higher than Richland County (\$56,557), but lower than Ohio (\$66,990), and the national figure (\$75,149). The



Figure 4. Population Pyramid of Ontario, 1970 and 2020

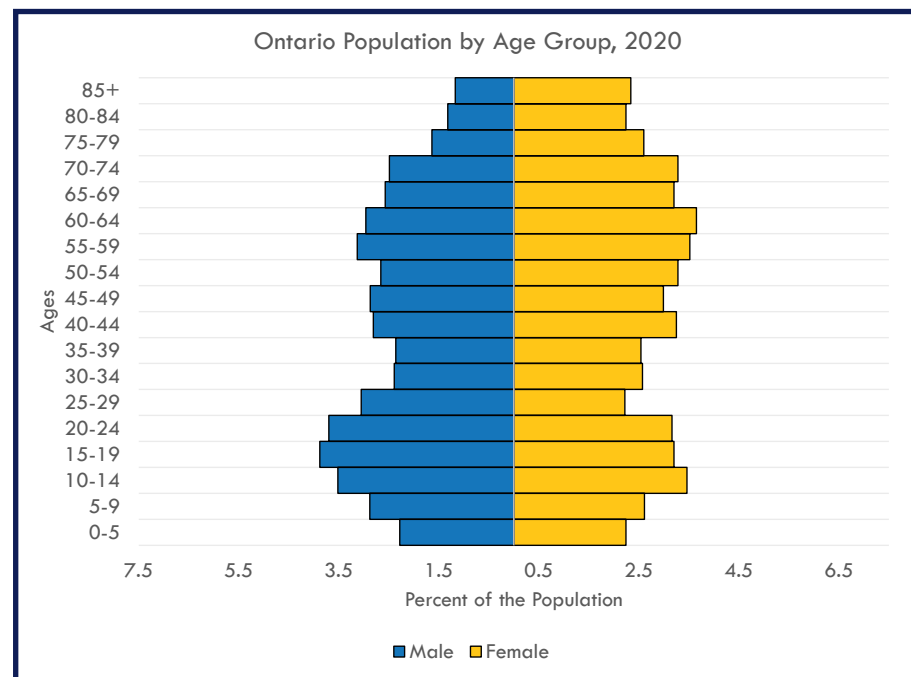
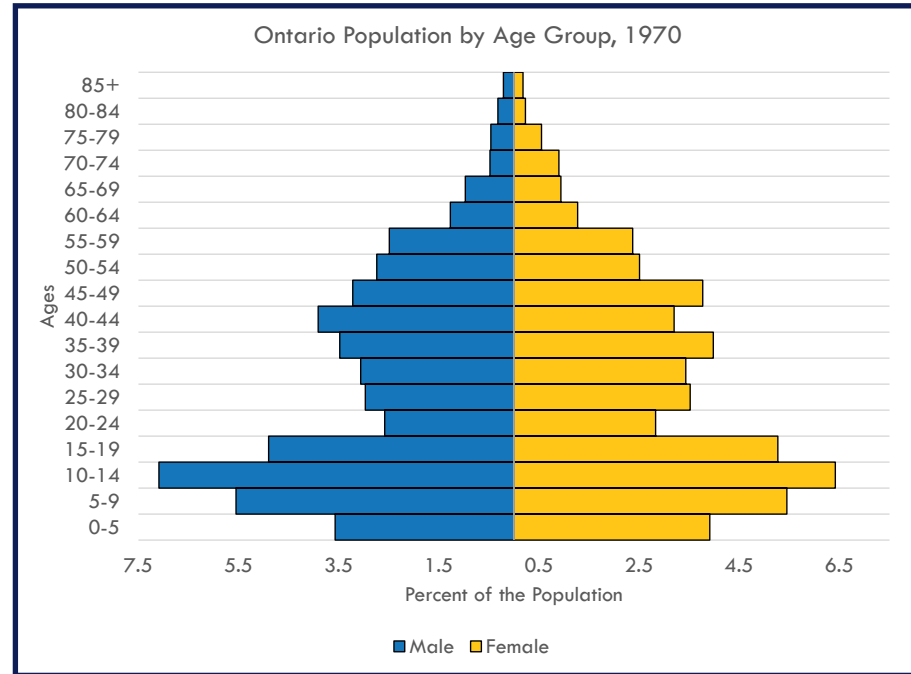


Figure 5. Community Comparisons

Indicators	Ontario	Richland County	Ohio	U.S.
Demographics				
Population (2020)	6,656	124,936	11,799,448	331,449,281
Pct. Population Change (2010-2020)	6.9%	0.4%	2.3%	7.4%
Pct. Population Change (2000-2020)	25.5%	-3.0%	3.9%	17.8%
Median Age	47.4	40.9	39.6	38.5
Pct. of Population 65+	22.9%	20.2%	18.0%	16.8%
Pct. Hispanic or Latino	1.4%	2.1%	4.2%	18.7%
Pct. Non-Hispanic Black	1.2%	7.7%	12.2%	12.1%
Pct. Non-Hispanic White	89.8%	84.5%	77.2%	58.9%
Pct. Non-Hispanic 2+ Races or Other Race	7.6%	10.3%	6.4%	10.4%
Income & Education				
Median Household Income	\$62,313	\$56,557	\$66,990	\$75,149
Per Capita Income	\$34,613	\$29,570	\$37,729	\$41,261
Pct. Individuals Below Poverty	7.3%	13.9%	13.4%	12.5%
Pct. Families Below Poverty	7.2%	10.2%	9.3%	8.8%
Labor Force Participation Rate	68.7%	54.8%	63.2%	63.5%
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	4.8%	5.0%	5.3%
Pct. Population 25 Years or Older without a High School Degree	5.6%	10.4%	8.6%	10.4%
Pct. Population 25 Years or Older with Bachelor's Degree or Higher	24.9%	17.8%	30.4%	34.3%
Housing				
Median Year Structure Built	1982	1964	1970	1979
Median House Value (Owner-Occupied Units)	\$147,300	\$140,500	\$183,300	\$281,900
Pct. Vacant Housing Units	5.7%	9.0%	8.8%	10.8%
Pct. Owner-Occupied Housing Units	65.2%	68.0%	66.8%	64.8%
Pct. Renter-Occupied Housing Units	34.8%	32.0%	33.2%	35.2%
Median Housing Costs (Housing Units with a Mortgage)	\$1,207	\$1,173	\$1,429	\$1,828
Median Rent (Renter-Occupied Units)	\$1,013	\$768	\$945	\$1,268
Owner-Occupied Homes with a Mortgage where > 30% of Household Income is Spent on Housing Costs	18.0%	21.9%	20.5%	27.2%
Renter-Occupied Homes where > 30% of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs	43.9%	45.1%	44.5%	49.9%

Note: All data derived from the 2022 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates), unless noted as 2020 or 2010 (Decennial Censuses).

Figure 6. Commuting Patterns

Commuting Patterns					
Year	Total Workforce	Workforce in City	Non-Residents Commuting In	Residents Living and Working	Residents Commuting Out
2021	10,629	8,256	7,917	339	2,373
2011	9,596	7,670	7,349	321	1,926
2002	9,027	7,289	7,054	235	1,738

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics.

per capita income was \$34,613, again higher than Richland County (\$29,570), but lower than Ohio (\$37,729), and the national figure (\$41,261).

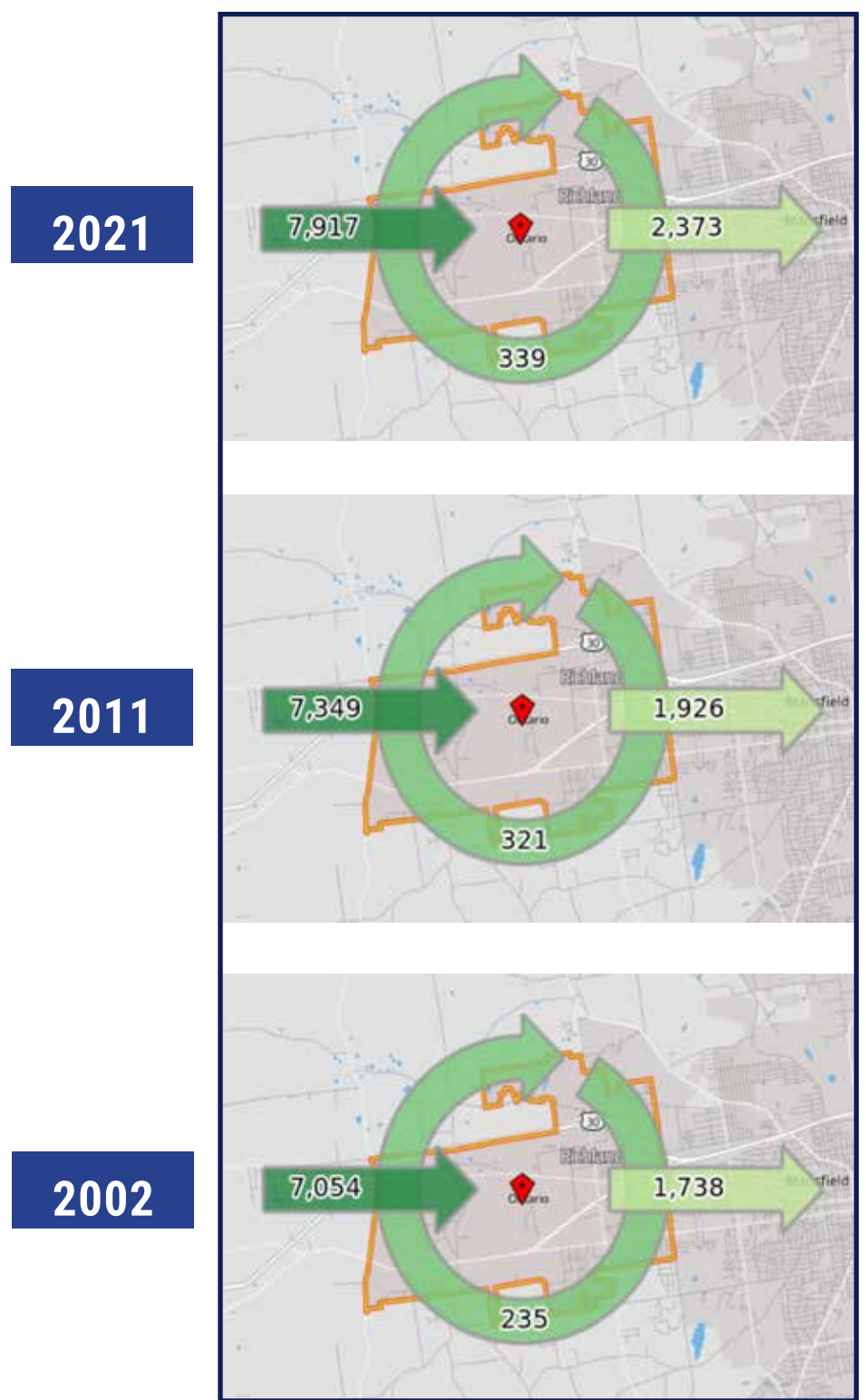
Compared to county, state, and national figures, Ontario has lower rates of family and individual poverty. In 2022, the percentage of family households living below the poverty line in the city was 7.2%, lower than Richland County (10.2%), Ohio (9.3%), and the national figure (8.8%). The percentage of individuals living below the poverty line in the city was 7.3%, lower than Richland County (13.9%), Ohio (13.4%), and the national figure (10.4%).

Employment: The ACS estimates that are 5,585 Ontario residents aged 16 and over, of which 3,839 are in the labor force, resulting in a labor force participation rate of 68.7%.

Ontario residents are employed in a variety of industries. Based on the 2022 ACS, the largest industries that employed Ontario residents were: educational services, health care, and social assistance (25.5%); retail trade (16.1%); manufacturing (14.5%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (9.6%), construction (8.2%); and finance and insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (8.1%).

In terms of occupations, 34% of Ontario's residents in the labor force were in management, business, science, and arts occupations; 25% were in sales and office occupations; 16.2% were in production, transportation, and material moving occupations;

Figure 7. Ontario Commuting Patterns 2002-21



15.7% were service occupations; and 9.2% were in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.

Based on analysis from the Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies. The number of jobs within the City of Ontario increased by 967 or 13.3% from 2002 (the first-year data was made available) to 2021 (the most recent year available). The single largest change in the number of jobs occurred during the Great Recession, when the city lost an estimated 688 or 9.2% of all jobs between 2008 and 2009. However, the total number of jobs had bounced back to be consistently higher than pre-recession levels by 2013.

Based on the city's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), the city collected \$6,938,180 in income taxes in 2022, an increase of 104% from \$3,407,290 in 2010 (the first year the city adopted a 1.5% income tax for residents).

Commuting Patterns & Worker Mobility:

Approximately 87.2% of Ontario's residents in the labor force drove alone to work, 7% carpooled, 3.4% worked from home, and 2.4% walked. The ACS estimated that no Ontario residents in the used public transportation to commute to work.

Educational Attainment: Approximately a quarter (24.9%) of Ontario's population 25 years of age and older have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is higher than Richland County (17.8%) but lower than Ohio (30.4%), and the national average (34.3%). 5.6% of Ontario residents 25 years of age and older did not have a high school degree or equivalency, lower than Richland County (10.4%), Ohio (8.6%), and the national average (10.4%).

Housing: Ontario's housing stock is predominantly a mix of mid-20th century and late 20th/early 21st century housing developments. The oldest homes tend to be in the "Old Ontario" area, but homes that predate the post-war housing boom are dotted throughout the city. Large-scale residential developments began in earnest in the late 1940s and 1950s with the construction of the streets and residential lots east of Lexington-Springmill Road, north of West Fourth Street, and along Park Avenue West in the eastern portion of the city. Lots continued to be filled in the following decades as new streets and residential lots were developed in other parts of the city along major thoroughfares.

Based on the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the median year in which housing units were built in Ontario was 1982, more recent than Richland County (1964), Ohio (1970) and the nation (1979). 8% of Ontario's housing units were built before 1950, 32% were built between 1950 and 1969, 19% were built between 1970 and 1989, 36% were built between 1990 and 2009, and 5% were built from

2010 to the present.

The ACS estimates that there are 2,949 housing units in the city, of which 2,781 or 94.3% are occupied and 168 or 5.7% are vacant. Of the 2,781 occupied housing units, the ACS estimates that 1,812 or 65.2% are owner-occupied and 969 or 34.8% are renter-occupied. Among owner-occupied housing units, 59.4% had a mortgage. Median housing costs for owner-occupied households with a mortgage was \$1,207 and the median gross rent for renter-occupied households was \$1,013. Approximately 18.5% of homeowners with a mortgage spent more than 30% their household income on housing costs and 43.9% of renters spent 30% or more of their household income on rent (excluding other housing costs).

In 2023, Richland County Regional Planning (RCRP) published a housing needs assessment for the county as a whole and individual cities and sub-regions. Their research noted that over one-third of homeowners in Ontario were over the age of 65, indicating that there will be a need in the immediate and near future for new senior living for older adults who wish to age in place.



A majority of Ontario's housing was built in two periods: before and after incorporation in the 1950s/1960s and at the turn of the century (1990s/2000s).

EXISTING LAND USE CONDITIONS AND VALUATIONS

Agricultural Land Use: Agricultural land uses account for approximately 28.7% or 1,939 acres of the city's total acreage. Agricultural lands are most prevalent in the central and western portions of the city, but are present throughout, with some pockets of agricultural lands in the northeast and in more recently annexed land north of US 30. Based on data provided by the Richland County Auditor's Office, the total valuation of agricultural land in 2022 was \$17,288,771, an increase of 159% since 2008. The valuation per acre was \$8,917.

Residential Land Use: Residential land uses account for approximately 36.4% or 2,459 acres of the city's total acreage. Residential lands are largely made up of subdivision developments, with a smaller footprint of large-lot single family homes on main roadways and multi-family/condominium/senior living developments. The earliest of these subdivisions were platted and were built up in the 1950s and 1960s, with newer subdivisions being platted in the 1990s and 2000s. These subdivisions are mostly located near the municipal corporation limits as much of the geographic center of the city is comprised of the Lexington-Springmill commercial corridor, the former GM site, agricultural, and public/institutional lands. Based on data provided by the Richland County Auditor's Office, the total valuation of residential land in 2022 was \$360,946,514, an increase of 12.6% since 2008. The valuation per acre was \$146,559.

Commercial Land Use: Commercial land uses account for approximately 15.4% or 1,039 acres of the city's total acreage. Many of Ontario's main thoroughfares are dominated by commercial land uses, most notably Lexington-Springmill Road, as well as Park Avenue West (SR 319), West Fourth Street, and Walker Lake Road. Based on data provided by the Richland County Auditor's Office, the total valuation of commercial land in 2022 was \$172,012,771, a decrease of 12.6% since 2008. The valuation per acre was \$165,594.

Industrial Land Use: Industrial land uses account for approximately 8.5% or 576 acres of the city's total acreage. Parcels comprising the former GM site make up a sizeable chunk of the city's total industrial land use footprint, but parcels at the Tappan Industrial Park off Tappan Drive in the south, and the Ontario Industrial Park on Nussbaum Rd are also prominent industrial lands in the city. Based on data provided by the Richland County Auditor's Office, the total valuation of industrial land in 2022 was \$15,504,143, a decrease of 50.8% since 2008. The valuation per acre was \$26,938.

Exempt (Public/Institutional) Land Use: Public/Institutional land uses comprise approximately 11% or 739 acres of the city's total acreage. These parcels are a mix of local government, parks, schools, churches, and cemeteries. The largest public/institutional footprints in the city are Marshall Park, Ontario Local Schools, and Mansfield Memorial Park.

For a better illustration of Ontario's existing land uses, see Map: Existing Land Use Conditions.



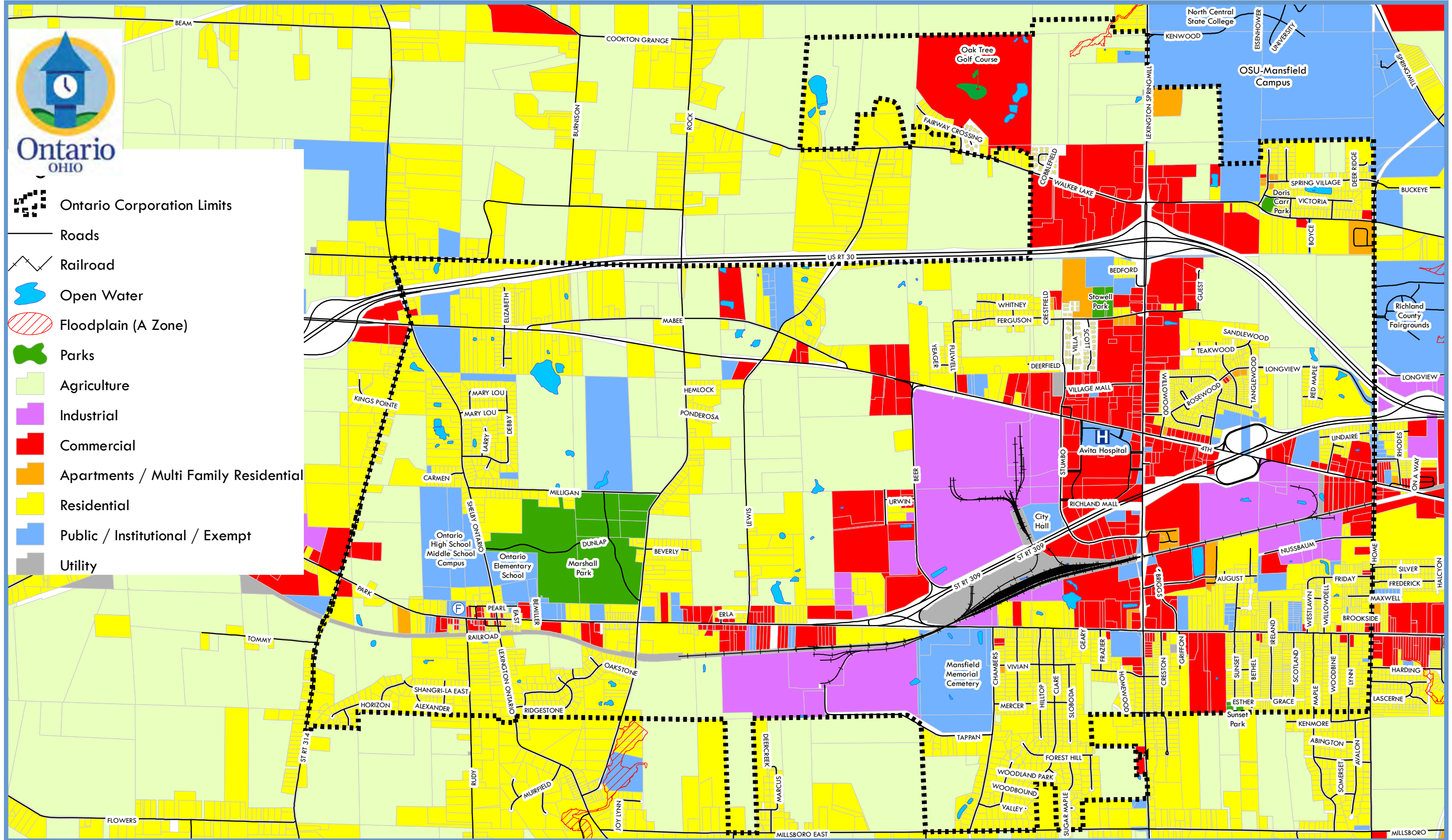
Figure 8. Property Valuation by Land Use, 2008-2022

Property Valuation by Land Use, 2008-2022						
Land Use Category	Total Value, 2022	% +/-	Total Acreage, 2022	% +/-	Valuation per Acre	% +/-
Agricultural	\$17,288,771	158.8%	1,939	-4.9%	\$8,917	172.1%
Commercial	\$172,012,771	-16.5%	1,039	9.0%	\$165,594	-23.3%
Industrial	\$15,504,143	-50.8%	576	-5.0%	\$26,938	-48.2%
Residential	\$360,389,057	12.6%	2,459	93.0%	\$146,559	-41.7%
Public / Exempt	\$104,946,514	125.7%	739	16.6%	\$142,002	93.5%

Source: DTE-93 (2008 and 2022), Richland County Auditor. Total Value (100%).



EXISTING LAND USE CONDITIONS AND VALUATIONS MAP



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Source: Richland County Auditor, Engineer, OEPA, FEMA, Reveille



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Trends

Since Ontario last undertook planning efforts in 1998, several major transformations have taken place: The closing of the General Motors stamping plant, the repurposing of much of the Richland Mall by Avita Health Systems, and continued business development along the Lexington-Springmill Road commercial corridor.

In 2010, General Motors' stamping plant closed during the Great Recession after previous rounds of downsizing. The General Motors plant had been a mainstay and anchor of the community (indeed, much of the reason for the community's original incorporation as a village in the 1950s was due to the development of the GM site). Since then, the city has worked with two different development companies to initiate long-term plans for the marketing and redevelopment of the site. In 2021, Charter Next Generation, an industrial plastic film company, began production in two buildings on a portion of the GM site. As of 2024, much of the former GM site remains a focus of the city and Industrial Commercial Properties to redevelop.

Like malls nationwide, the Richland Mall had suffered from economic downturns and changing consumer patterns, leaving a sizeable vacancy rate and a mall in transition. Macy's acquired the Lazarus department store in 2003, and the anchor storefront was vacated in 2005. By 2013, Avita Health Systems purchased the former Lazarus storefront site and began transforming the site into



Charter Next Generation began operations on a part of the former General Motors site in 2021.

a medical center. In 2019, Avita acquired the former Sears anchor store at the southern end of the mall and in 2024 announced it would be developed as a comprehensive cancer center, opening in fall 2025. In 2024, Brait Fund LLC purchased the remainder of the mall for \$4 million and renamed the property The Ontario Center.

In the past 20 years, the city has seen continued commercial development along the Lexington-Springmill Road corridor, with several big box retailers (Furniture Row, Target, Menard's), commercial strips, and standalone retail and restaurant establishments.

In 2017, city officials worked alongside Richland County Economic Development and local corporation Adena in developing a gateway district in hopes to create Ontario's first town center area that could build synergy with the OSU-Mansfield/North Central State College campus. Included in this gateway district was an idea to have a new city hall, a wellness center, along with various supportive commercial retailers. However, due to issues with site control and economic conditions, the project stalled, with no new plans to revive it. However, two projects to come out of these efforts were the Buckeye Village Apartments built by Adena in 2014 and a new vehicle and pedestrian entrance to the campus off Lexington-Springmill Road.

Results from the community surveys, conversations with stakeholders, and an analysis of recent development trends indicate a strong desire for small-scale neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment of Old Ontario to support synergy with Marshall Park and the schools. Additional information on Old Ontario can be found in the Planning Areas Chapter (page 48)

Incentives

Economic development efforts are tasks primarily headed by the Mayor of Ontario, with support of the Richland Area Chamber and Richland County Growth Corporation operating as the city's proxy community improvement corporation. Ontario was once guided by its own community improvement corporation called the Ontario Growth Corporation, but it was dissolved in 2023.

The City of Ontario utilizes incentive programs to maximize development and revitalization efforts. This includes the Enterprise Zone (EZ) program (the entire city is Enterprise Zone 125) that provides property tax abatement primary to industrial projects, and

the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program that provides property tax abatement to residential, commercial, and industrial projects. Two Post-94 CRA zones (Mixed-Use CRA and Industrial CRA) currently exist in the city which offer up to 100% abatement for up to 15 years on new property improvements, and 100% abatement, up to 12 years for renovation projects.



Since 2014, Avita Health Systems has redeveloped parts of the Richland Mall into health care facilities

The city also deploys tax increment financing districts (TIF) to help finance necessary public infrastructure to support economic development projects. At the present time, six parcel TIF districts are active: Beer Road TIF (100%-30-year), Campus Area TIF (100%-30-year), Ferguson Lex-Springmill Road TIF (100%-30-year), and Ontario Hospitality LLC TIF (75%-10-year), all created in 2014; Walker Lake TIF (100%-25-year) passed in 2007; and Ultimate Shine Car Wash TIF (75%-10-year) passed in 2023. Most of these TIF districts are immediately north of US 30. For a better understanding of the city's CRA and TIF Districts, please see Map: Economic Development Incentive Areas.

As of 2023, there is one active EZ agreement with Shambaugh Cleaning and Restoration, and two active CRA agreements in support of projects at the Richland Mall (Ontario Hospitality LLC-Avita) and the former GM site and Ontario Commerce Park (Ontario Stumbo I LLC). The city requires incentivized businesses to have school compensation agreements with Ontario Local Schools.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE AREAS MAP



Legend

Ontario Corporation Limits

Streets

Railroad

Open Water

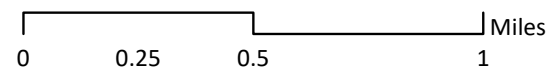
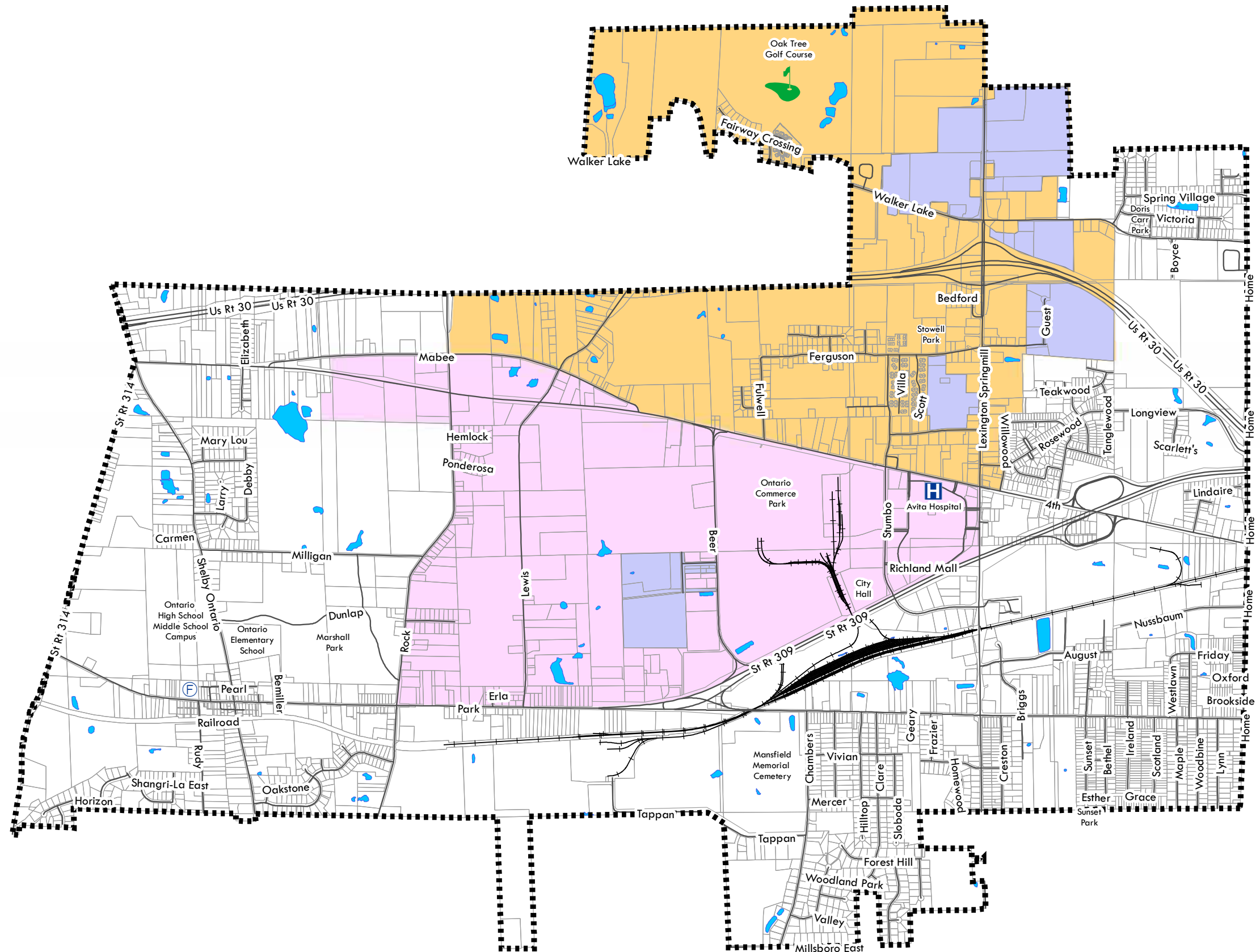
Parcels

TIF Districts

CRA Zone

Industrial CRA

Mixed Use CRA



Source: Richland County Auditor, Engineer, Ontario, Reveille



ZONING

The City of Ontario currently has a total of seven zoning districts. Two commercial districts: B – Business District and OS – Office Service District; two industrial districts: GI – General Industry and IP – Industrial Park, and three residential zoning districts: R-1 Low Density, R-2 Medium Density, and R-3 High Density.

Residential: Land zoned for residential use comprises 56%, or 3,815 acres of the city's total land. The R-1 Low Density Residential comprises most residential zoning districts (2,931 acres), followed by R-2 Medium Density (754 acres), and R-3 High Density (130 acres).

Commercial: Land zoned for commercial use comprises 26.5% or 1,774 acres of the city's total land. Most commercially zoned land is in B- Business District, which encompasses nearly the entire Lexington-Springmill Road corridor from the city limits in the north to Park Avenue West in the south. The business district

also encompasses most of Park Avenue West/ SR 309 and much of West Fourth Street. The Office Service District (OS) covers much of Park Avenue West in the southeastern portion of the city (120 acres).

Industrial: Land zoned for industrial use comprises 17.5% or 1,195 acres of the city's total land. Land zoned GI – General Industry covers the entirety of the former GM site, bounded by West Fourth Street to the north, Stumbo Road to the east, the rail line south of SR 309 to the south, and Beer Road to the west, as well as two undeveloped parcels immediately south of the West Fourth Street/ SR 309 interchange. Lands zoned IP – Industrial Park are located immediately to the west of Beer Road (including the Beer Road Industrial Park), the Tappan Industrial Park south of Park Ave West/ SR 309 and the rail line, the Ontario Industrial Park located on Nussbaum Road, and several parcels in the southwest along Park Avenue West/SR 309 and SR 314.

Overlay Zoning Districts: The city currently has two overlay zoning districts: the Wellhead Protection Overlay District (WHP) and the Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Floating Overlay District (AMTFO). Ontario's zoning code also provides for Planned Unit Developments (PUD) to encourage innovative development designs and/or to protect environmental assets.

For a better understanding of the city's Zoning Districts, please see Map: Zoning.

Figure 9. Zoning Conditions

Zoning District	Acres	% of Total
B - Business District	1,644	25.0%
GI - General Industry	481	7.0%
IP - Industrial Park	708	10.5%
OS - Office Service District	101	1.5%
R-1 Low Density Residential	2,931	43.0%
R-2 Medium Density Residential	754	11.0%
R-3 High Density Residential	135	2.0%

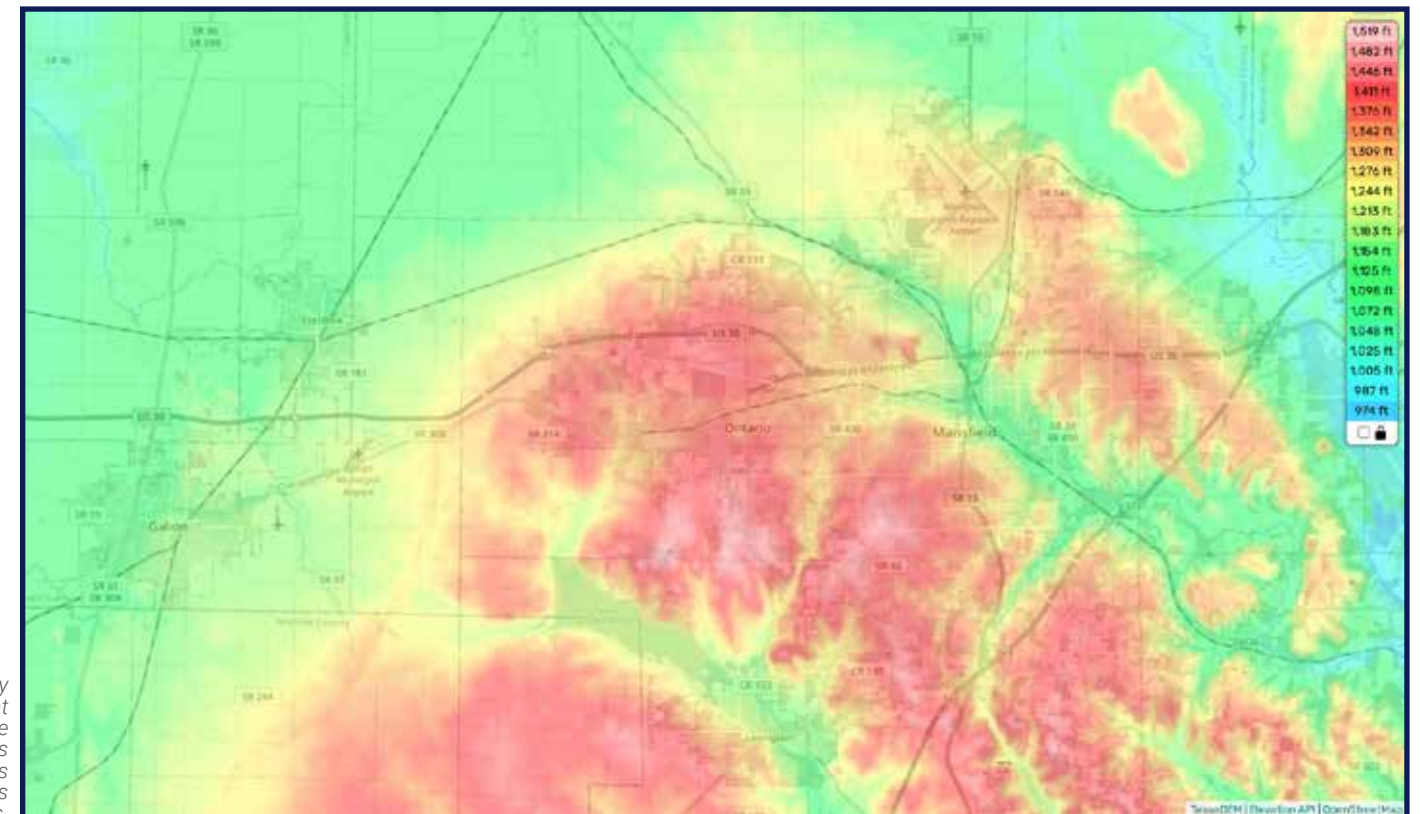
ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Ontario lies partially on the continental divide between the wider Great Lakes/Saint Lawrence River and the Ohio River/Mississippi River watersheds. A small portion in the northwest of the city lies in the Sandusky River watershed which flows west-northwest to Lake Erie. The remainder of the city lies in the Ohio River watershed, with water draining to three tributaries of the Mohican River: the Black Fork River, the Clear Fork River, and the Rocky Fork River. Small portions of the city lie in a FEMA Floodplain Zone A: two parcels at the northern end of the current municipal boundaries on Lexington-Springmill Road.

The City of Ontario is currently engaged in a comprehensive Wellhead Protection Program to protect groundwater resources and the public water supply from potential sources of contamination. Although contamination is unlikely in the water supply, the Wellhead Protection Plan formulates and implements a set of actions and management practices to protect our groundwater.

The topography and contouring in Ontario can vary as it sits on a relatively high part of the western edge of the Allegheny Plateau between 1,200 and 1,450 feet above sea level, higher than much of

the surrounding Springfield Township and Mansfield to the east. The elevation changes in certain sections of the community, especially between Beer Road going west to Rock Road, and areas south of Park Avenue West that can add additional challenges for certain types of development and infrastructure.




Located on relatively high and hilly terrain at the western edge of the Allegheny Plateau, Ontario's topography adds to its beauty but also presents development constraints.

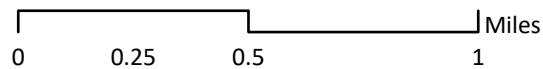
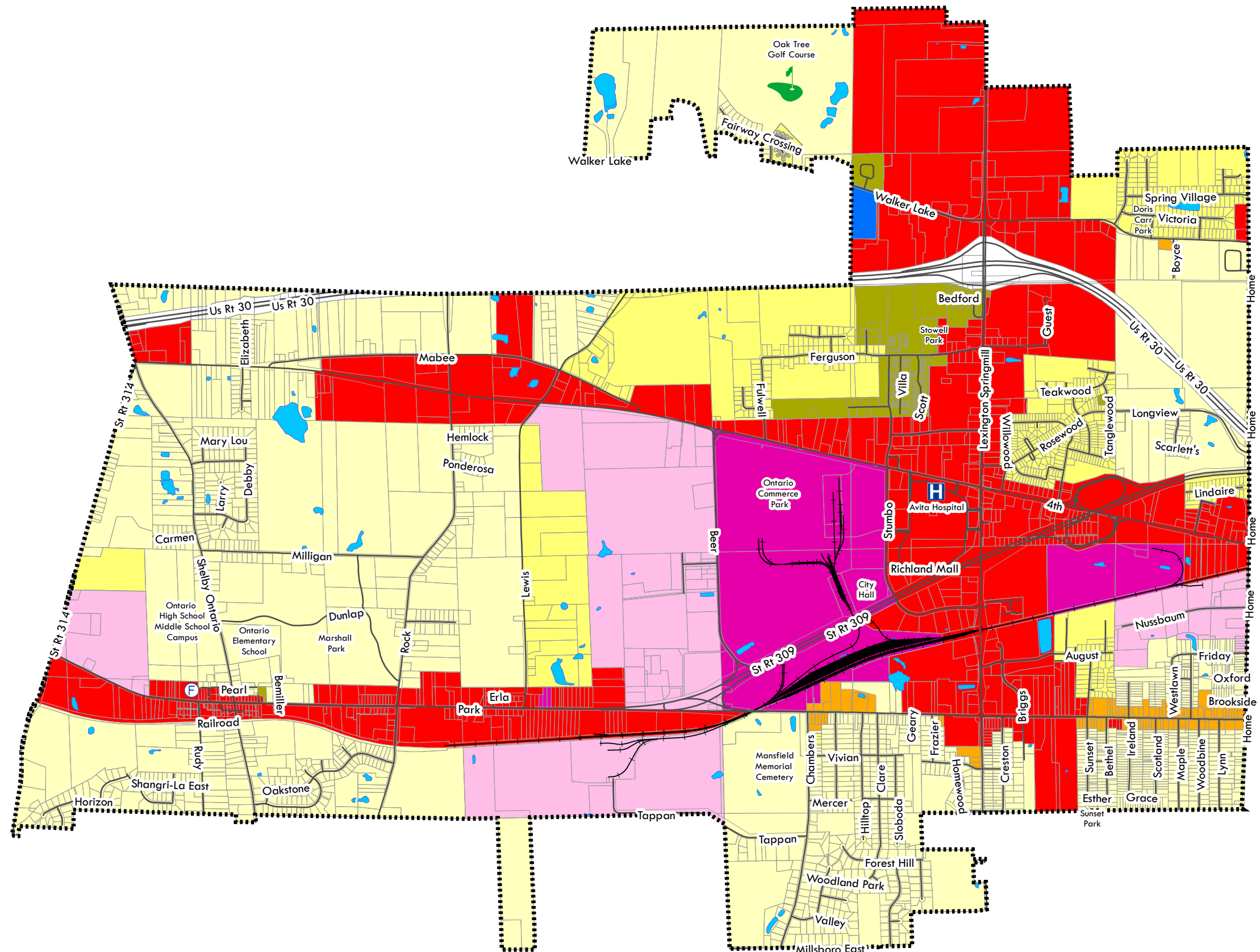


ZONING MAP



Legend

-  Ontario Corporation Limits
-  Streets
-  Railroad
-  Open Water
-  Parcels
-  B - Business District
-  GI - General Industry
-  IP - Industrial Park
-  OS - Office Service District
-  PUD - Planned Unit Development
-  R-1 - Low Density Residential
-  R-2 - Medium Density Residential
-  R-3 - High Density Residential



Source: Richland County Auditor, Engineer, Ontario, Reville. Map current as of 11/27/24.



ROADS, MAINTENANCE, AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

Functional Classification System

The function of roadways and the pedestrian connectivity grid in Ontario is important to consider when planning future land use locations and street expansions. Ontario's roadways have six (6) of the seven federal functional classification categories within the corporation limits, including Principal Arterial Freeway, Principal Arterial Other, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector, and Local.

The Principal Arterial Freeways provide access to regional areas, resulting in a portion of the volume being due to through traffic. The Principal Arterial Freeway in Ontario is US 30, which runs along the northern portion of the city from east to west.

The Principal Arterial Other classification is similar to principal arterial freeways except that they are not access-controlled and can directly serve adjacent land uses. The Principal Arterial Other roadway in Ontario is SR 309, which serves as the community's main east-west connector. The Minor Arterial classification is found on three roadways in Ontario, and includes West Fourth Street, Lexington-Springmill Road, and the section of Park Avenue West that is not shared with SR 309 (in the southeastern portion of the city). These roadways provide service for trips of moderate length and offer connectivity to the higher Principal Arterial roadways.

Major and Minor Collectors serve an important role of collecting traffic from Local Roads and channeling it to the Arterial network. Generally, a major collector is a longer route that has fewer connecting driveways and has higher posted speed limits and traffic volumes than Minor Collectors. Major collectors in Ontario include SR 314 on the western boundary of the corporation limit, Rock Road between West Fourth Street and Park Avenue West/SR 309, Lewis Road, Beer Road, Stumbo Road, Ferguson Road, and Chambers Road. Ontario has one roadway classified as Minor Collector, the stretch of Rock Road north of West Fourth Street that runs north toward the City of Shelby.

The remainder of the roadways within Ontario are Local Roads that service adjacent land parcels found in the community. The Local Roads are those facilities not listed previously with the other higher classification of roadways.



Residents who completed the community survey indicated a strong desire for greater sidewalk connectivity throughout the community, particularly along Park Avenue West.

Traffic Volume/Safety

Traffic volumes were reviewed via use the ODOT online database provided by the TIMS web-based program measuring active daily traffic (ADT) volumes. The TIMS traffic data reveals that the highest corridors with traffic volume include US 30 (50,001-100,000 ADT), Lexington-Springmill Road (5,001-25,000 ADT), West Fourth Street (5,001-25,000 ADT), Park Avenue West from SR 314 to Beer Road

and Lexington-Springmill Road to Home Road (5,001-25,000 ADT). Roads with ADT in the range of 1,001-5,000 include SR 314, Shelby-Ontario Road, Rock Road, Stumbo Road, and Ferguson Road from Lexington-Springmill Road to Stumbo Road.

A review of high crash mapping (2021-2023) by ODOT indicates that the key traffic safety concerns in Ontario include:

- Lexington-Springmill Road from the intersection with Walker Lake Road to the intersection with Park Avenue West (3 serious injury crashes and 1 fatal injury crash)
- West Fourth Street from the 5-point intersection with SR 314 and Shelby-Ontario Road to Lewis Road (3 serious injury crashes)
- West Fourth Street from the intersection with Stumbo Road to Home Road (6 serious injury crashes)
- Park Avenue West from Chambers Road to Home Road (3 serious injury crashes)

Pedestrian Connectivity

Many neighborhoods and key thoroughfares lack sidewalks throughout the community. During the planning process, many residents and students wanted to see sidewalks installed throughout the community, and to connect neighborhoods to Marshall Park and Ontario Local Schools as well as along Park Avenue West.

Other areas residents noted needed improved with connectivity solutions include:

- Park Avenue West from Shelby-Ontario Road to Home Road
- West Fourth Street from Rock Road to Willowood Drive East
- Walker Lake Road from Old Oak Trail to Home Road
- Stumbo Road from West Fourth Street to Lexington-Springmill Road
- Marshall Park


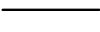







For a better understanding of Ontario's pedestrian connectivity environment, see Map: Pedestrian Connectivity.

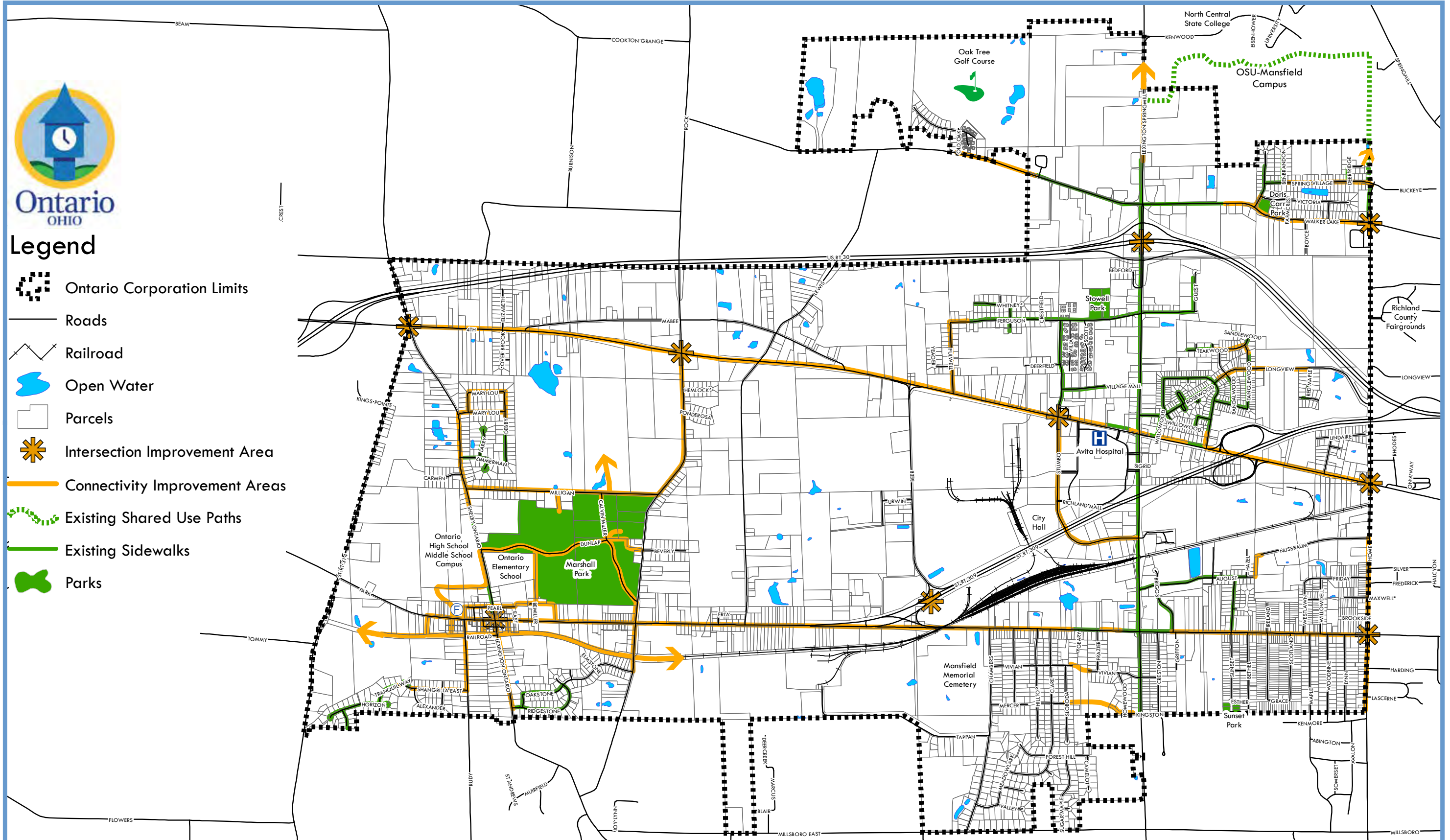


PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY MAP



Legend

-  Ontario Corporation Limits
-  Roads
-  Railroad
-  Open Water
-  Parcels
-  Intersection Improvement Area
-  Connectivity Improvement Areas
-  Existing Shared Use Paths
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Parks



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Source: Richland County Auditor, Engineer, OEPA, Reveille.

Note: Connectivity improvement areas were developed from survey comments from residents.



Road Maintenance and Planned Improvements

The city's Street Department is currently responsible for ensuring Ontario's road system is functional. While the city adopted a pavement condition rating system in 2023 to help identify road conditions, no capital improvement program is utilized to help prioritize road improvements in any given year. With no street levy, the city's general fund is the primary source of funds for street improvements. Funding for improvements can vary in any year, from \$200,000 to \$1.5mm.

"We enjoy taking walks at Marshall Park but it gets so busy. It would be great to have a walking path throughout the park so we are not walking on the roads and in parking lots."

A key item identified in discussions with city staff centers on budgeting and appropriations for pavement improvement projects. Current programming for pavement improvements has generally been

reactionary rather than programmed and the funds are typically distributed from the city's General Fund. In addition, a specific challenge of becoming a statutory city is that ODOT participation and funding for local state routes under their Urban Paving Program is significantly different from when Ontario was a village. The current program requires 20% match from the city, as well as additional costs for improvements at intersections and approaches. The sizeable footprint of SR 309 through the city and SR 314 on the westerly edge causes significant pressure on the budgeting process when paving improvements on SR 309 and SR 314 occur.

In 2023, the West Fourth Street Corridor was studied by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), with the assistance of Richland County Planning Commission (RCPC) and an outside

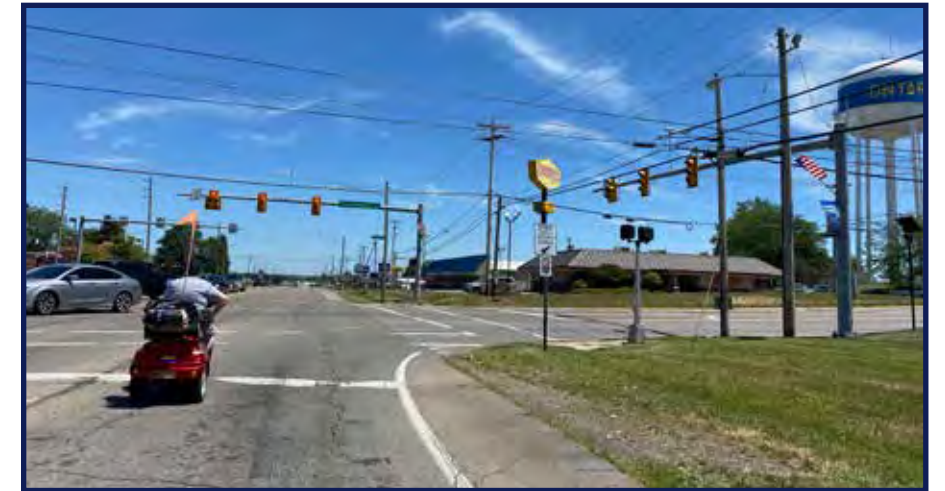
consultant, Gannet Fleming. The study recommended potential treatments including varying roundabout intersections, restricted crossing U-turn (RCUT) intersections, access management measures, quadrant

roadways, capacity improvements and realignments. A list of alternative treatments to improve capacity and safety while minimizing right of way and construction costs by location was provided for selection of two preferred alternatives to be developed.

"Mandatory sidewalks. I live on Walker Lake Road (east end) and would use the sidewalks to walk or bike to the grocery. Many people walk or bike now on the road, but it is a safety concern."

Transit Services

Richland County Transit operates a fixed-route scheduled service throughout Richland County, including two (2) fixed routes that service Ontario, but only in limited locations: Route 1 servicing Park Avenue West and Route 9 servicing West Fourth Street and the Lexington-Springmill Road corridor. At the present time, the only pick up / drop off locations in Ontario are along Park Avenue West and Lexington Springmill Road at Discount Drug Mart, the Area Agency on Aging, and the Walmart Supercenter (Route 1), and West Fourth Street/Home Road, Walker Lake Road/Home Road, Walker Lake Road/Lexington-Springmill Road, Village Mall Drive/Lexington-Springmill Road, and at OhioHealth Urgent Care on West Fourth Street.



Traffic at the intersection of West Fourth Street and Lexington-Springmill Road facing east.

Residents who completed the community survey identified the following areas as their top five in terms of seeing improved sidewalks and paths.

- 1 Park Avenue West**
This area was mentioned multiple times as needing wider lanes, better signage, and sidewalks, particularly between the 4-lane section that constricts to a 2-lane section and the 314 interchange.
- 2 Marshall Park**
Many residents requested improved pedestrian safety around Marshall Park, including sidewalks along the perimeter and connecting neighborhoods, crosswalks, and better lighting.
- 3 Lexington-Springmill Road**
This area was mentioned multiple times as needing sidewalks, particularly in the areas around Walmart, Meijer, and the schools.
- 4 Rock Road**
Residents requested improved safety and sidewalks on Rock Road, especially in the areas around Marshall Park and the high school.
- 5 School areas**
Several comments mentioned the need for improved sidewalks and crosswalks around the schools, especially the high school on PAW and the elementary schools on Lexington-Springmill.



The 2023 Fourth Street Corridor Study recommended various improvements along the busy corridor to promote safe traffic flow. Recommendations were made at five intersections along the corridor, with included roundabouts at the "Five Points" intersection area at SR 314, Rock Road, and Stumbo, and access management solutions at Lexington Springmill Road and Home Road.



PARKS AND RECREATION

The City of Ontario Recreation Department maintains three parks across the community, two of which are smaller neighborhood parks: Doris Carr Park, Stowell Park, and then the largest, Marshall Park. Doris Carr Park is a 2-acre site located in the Spring Village neighborhood in northeastern Ontario and features a basketball court, a playground, and open greenspace. Stowell Park is an 8-acre site located on Ferguson Road and features a baseball diamond, tennis courts, a playground, and open greenspace. While inside the city limits, Sunset Park is a small park maintained by Springfield Township located on Esther Drive. The park features an open greenspace and a playground.

As a community without a traditional “downtown,” many residents that completed the survey identified Marshall Park as well as the adjacent schools as the center of Ontario and the main hub of community events and activities. The city acquired additional land for Marshall Park in 2000 and has made substantial investments in the years since. As of 2024, the sprawling park encompasses approximately 135 acres and features soccer fields, baseball and softball diamonds, tennis and basketball courts, two playground areas, and a bandstand area for summer concerts. Additionally, the park is home to the Ontario Spray Park (splash pad), Maize Memorial Dog Park, and the Woodsman Disc Golf Course.

“I would love to have public park areas on the east side of town. Marshall park is a such a gem! But we’re missing parks in the Rosewood area that the kids and adults can easily get to and walk safely.”



Marshall Park has grown considerably over the years and features several sub-parks and recreational facilities.

LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Schools: Public K-12 education is provided by Ontario Local School District. The district serves students in the City of Ontario, the adjacent Springfield Township, and portions of Sandusky Township to the north. The district has 2,046 students across three facilities located along Shelby-Ontario Road: Stingel Elementary School (grades K-5), Ontario Middle School (grades 6-8), and Ontario High School (grades 9-12). The district estimates that their facilities are at approximately 98% capacity and enrollment is expected to stay stable in the next decade. In the medium-to-long term, the district is looking to upgrade the interior of their facilities and build a multi-sport indoor facility to meet the demand for year-round athletic opportunities.

Library: The city is home to the Ontario branch of the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library. The branch opened in 2001 and has become one of the most heavily visited of the library system's nine branches. The library offers a collection of adult, teen, and juvenile book titles, media, meeting rooms, as well as year-round adult and youth programs. The branch also maintains the library's Little Free Library location at Marshall Park. In Spring 2024, the library began a \$3.4 million dollar renovation project to make the facility more ADA-compliant, increase the capacity of meeting spaces, and create an outdoor reading area, among other renovations. The project is slated to be completed in Summer 2025.



The Ontario High School, Middle School, and Stingel Elementary on Lexington-Ontario Road. The high quality of Ontario Local Schools has helped make the school district a destination for young families.



SAFETY SERVICES

Fire/EMS: The Springfield Township Fire Department provides fire and emergency medical services to the city, the surrounding Springfield Township, and nearby Sandusky Township. The department operates two (2) firehouses and has five (5) full-time employees cross-trained as firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) as well as several volunteer firefighters. The department is currently funded through six levies, the most recent of which passed in 2022. Between 2019 and 2023, the department reported an average of 2,220 incidents per year, with 66% occurring in the City of Ontario. Over the 5-year period, 67% were EMS calls (excluding motor vehicle crashes). The other most common incidents were unintentional alarm system activation, no fire (5.2%), motor vehicle crashes with injuries (4.2%), assistance to invalid (3.7%), and dispatch cancelled enroute (3.5%).

In the past 15 years, the department has taken on the responsibility of EMS transport but has not increased their staffing. Longer term, Fire/EMS personnel would like to build a third fire station to the north of US 30 to reduce response times and increase coverage. Currently, the department has one part-time fire inspector, which the department has indicated is insufficient to maintain compliance with visiting over 600 commercial establishments on an annual basis for fire inspections in their coverage area.

Other planning concerns noted by Fire-EMS officials include:

- Lack of staffing to meet a growing population and increased responsibility of local EMS transport.
- Need for a full-time fire inspector.
- Slow responses times to areas north of US 30.

Police: The city is served by the Ontario Police Department. The department has twenty-three (23) officers including the chief of police, as well as five (5) non-sworn communications officers. In 2023, the department fielded a total of 17,418 calls, of which 636 (3.7%) were summons for adult/juvenile, 472 (2.0%) were adult arrests, 209 (1.2%) were non-injury motor vehicle crashes, 57 (0.3%) were injury motor vehicle crashes, and 31 (0.2%) were juvenile

arrests.

The department identified four areas with significant safety concerns:

- West Fourth Street/Rock Road intersection
- West Fourth Street/Beer Road intersection
- 2727 West Fourth Street (entrance to Tractor Supply Co.)
- Lack of fencing over bridges throughout the city.



Springfield Township Fire Station #1 on Park Avenue West in the Old Ontario area.

UTILITIES

Water Treatment & Distribution

The City of Ontario owns and operates its own water treatment plant (WTP). Raw water is drawn from three (3) wells located on the WTP campus just to the west of Lexington-Springmill Road and south of State Route 309. The Ontario WTP is a Class III pressure filter and softening facility with a rated capacity of 3.5 million gallons per day (MGD) and an average daily flow of about 680,000 to 700,000 gallons per day, or 0.68 to 0.70 MGD, with current peak demands less than 0.75 MGD. Due to limited consumption, the WTP operates for one (1) shift daily.

The WTP maintains high quality potable water for the local residents and businesses, removing iron, manganese and hydrogen sulfide from the groundwater supply and also reducing the total hardness of the water. The WTP was most recently upgraded in 1999 with regular maintenance performed by city staff. The high service pumps that provide pressure to the distributions system have all been replaced within the past five (5) years. However, the high service motors that drive the pumps have not been replaced or refurbished. No other significant capital improvements have

been undertaken within the WTP since its original construction in 1999. While the WTP appears to work well for the city, a detailed evaluation of the WTP should be undertaken by a consulting engineer to provide an assessment of the existing WTP equipment and facilities to provide a capital plan/program to update and upgrade this vital resource for the community and ensure long-term resiliency.

The City of Ontario water distribution system is a network of just over 90 total miles of pipes ranging from 6" to 16" and consisting of primarily of cast and ductile iron pipe materials. Approximately 75 miles of the water mains are publicly owned, with the remaining 15 miles as private mains serving commercial and high-density residential sites. This is an exceptionally high number of private mains for a community of this size and could easily result in challenges for the city if/when a leak or other failure were to occur.

The existing cast iron mains represent about 35% of the distribution system and were primarily installed in the late 1950's through the 1960's as part of the rapid growth within the city following World War II and the Korean War. Unfortunately, these pipes were produced rapidly in response to industrial and residential growth

nationwide and resulted in lesser quality products that are prone to leaks and breaks. In addition, the local soil and groundwater conditions tend to be corrosive to cast iron pipe and fittings, resulting in additional potential for failures.

As noted above, the system is pressurized by three (3) high service pumps operated at a pressure of about 60 to 65 PSI. The city operates three (3) elevated storage tanks with a total storage volume of 2.0 million gallons (MG). The towers currently operate on a fill and draw cycle and do not have mixing systems installed. The distribution system includes 803 fire hydrants, 867 valves, 2,778 service connections and four (4) master meters for the private systems above. All but 33 of the city's customers are located within the corporation limits. Many of the city's distribution mains, valves and hydrants have been in continuous operation for at least 50 years.

The city has a current GIS system for mapping of the distribution system but does not currently have a system-wide distribution model. Historically water main upgrades and replacements have been generally reactionary to repair leaking and failing mains, as well as correcting issues with broken valves and hydrants. Most water main repairs are completed by in-house staff. Future anticipated efforts for water main replacement projects should be proactive and coordinated with other planned street improvements to avoid impacts to recently paved or reconstructed streets.

In general, the WTP and distribution system are in reasonable operating condition and provide sufficient capacity for current/existing system demands, as well as significant additional capacity for infill and redevelopment of former industrial, commercial and residential areas. However, a capital program for upgrading and maintaining the WTP facilities and a well-calibrated water distribution model should both be developed. These analyses for the treatment and distributions systems will greatly enhance the city's ability to refine operation of the systems and improve long-range planning and budgeting for capital investments.

Additionally, as system-wide demands remain consistently significantly less than the available storage capacity of the elevated tanks (i.e. – 0.7 MGD demand vs. 2.0 MG storage), consideration should be given to adding tank mixing systems to ensure complete turnover of the water within the tanks to aid in maintaining chlorine residuals in the finished water.



An above-grade flow equalization basin at Rock Road.



Ontario's water treatment plant was constructed in 1999. This plan recommends the City pursue a capital improvement plan/program to ensure long-term resiliency.

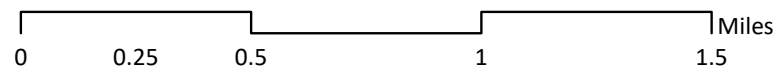
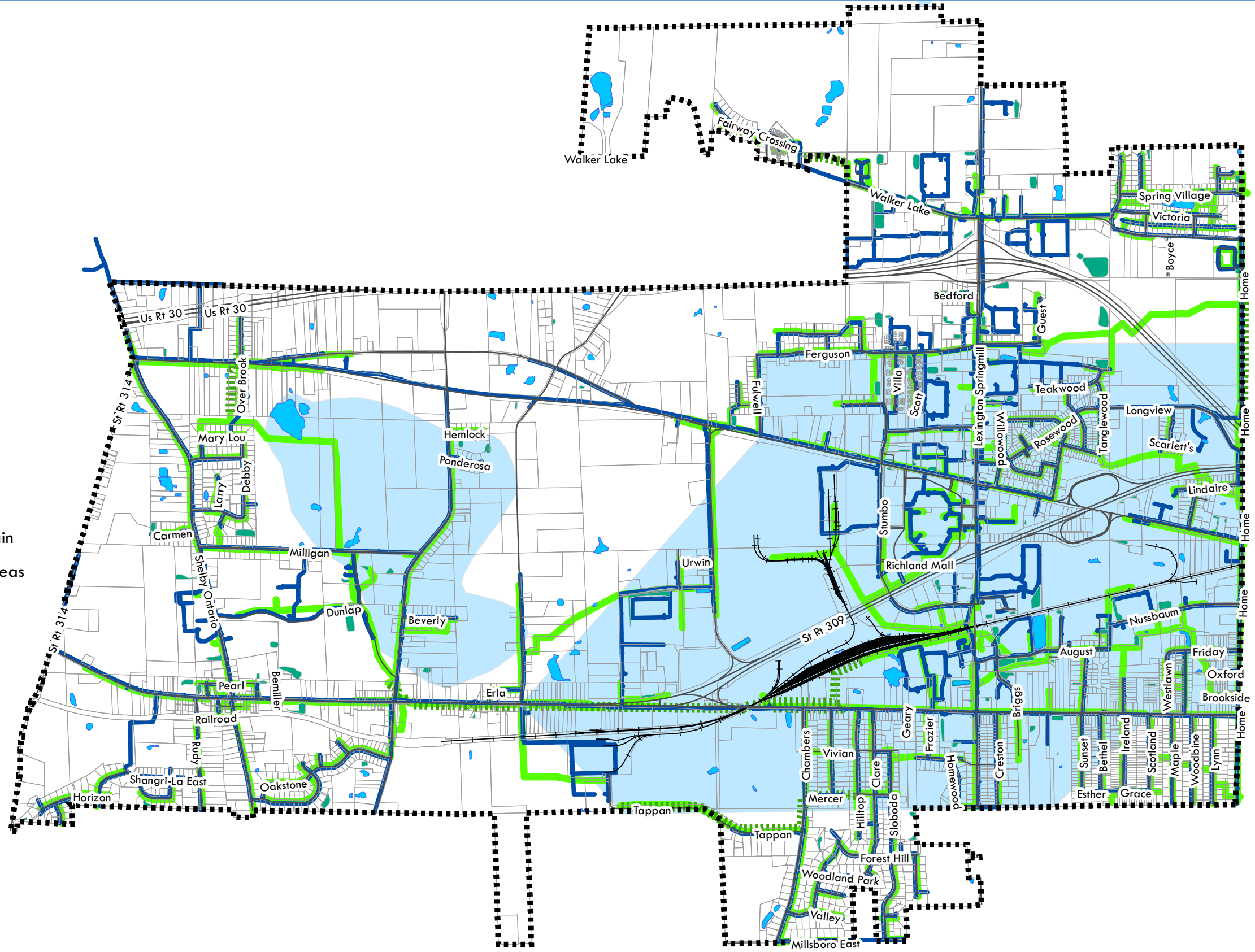


INFRASTRUCTURE MAP



Legend

- Ontario Corporation Limits
- Streets
- Railroad
- Open Water
- Parcels
- Stormwater Detention Basin
- Water Main
- Sanitary Sewer Force Main
- Sanitary Sewer Gravity Main
- Source Water Protection Areas



Source: Richland County Auditor, Engineer, OEPA, Reveille



See Map: Infrastructure for a better understanding of the water distribution system.

Wellhead Protection Areas

The City of Ontario has organized a Wellhead Protection Management Team to conduct an inventory of potential pollution sources to protect groundwater resources and the public water supply from potential sources of contamination. Two special wellhead protection areas were created out of this effort, and these areas can be found on the Infrastructure Map found in this section. Although contamination is unlikely in the water supply, the Wellhead Protection Plan formulates and implements a set of actions and management practices to protect the community's groundwater.

Sanitary Sewers

The city owns and operates its sanitary sewer system that discharges to the City of Mansfield through six (6) connection points along Home Road on the easterly edge of Ontario. The sanitary collection system is permitted as a fully separated system consisting of approximately 57.2 miles of sewer mains ranging from 8" to 24", with 1,371 manholes and 2,700 service connections. Based upon feedback provided by city staff, roughly 60% of the collection system is rated poor or worse and is prone to significant amounts of inflow and infiltration (I/I) during rain events and snow melt due to pipe condition, leaking joints and private property connections such as downspouts, footer tiles and sump pumps. The city maintains seven (7) sanitary pumping stations in the collection system, plus an additional wet weather lift station that discharges into a 1.2 MG concrete, above-grade flow equalization basin near the intersection of Rock Road and Park Avenue West.

The current average daily flow from Ontario to Mansfield is 1.16 MGD, with peak dry weather flows reaching 3.0 MGD and peak wet weather flow may exceed 9.0 MGD. The sewer agreement from the City of Mansfield does not currently limit the capacity for discharge, but Ontario pays for the full volume of the recorded flows meaning the clean water captured is charged fully at the same rates as the typical wastewater. In addition, the peak flows seen during wet weather will frequently exceed the capacity of the gravity sewers and pumping stations resulting in significant surcharges within the collection system that cause water-in-basement (WIB) events and discharges to local streams.

A structural sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) exists at the Rock Road Pumping Station and is active three (3) to six (6) times per year.

Other locations within the city can experience surcharging to the surface at individual manholes. The city is actively pursuing efforts to reduce I/I entering the collection system through sewer lining and replacement and manhole rehabilitation/replacement, as well as conducting evaluations of specific areas within the system. Anecdotally, it is anticipated that significant sources of I/I occur within the older uncurbed residential areas along Park Avenue West in the southeasterly portions of the city (e.g. – Contracts "A" & "B" service areas).

Overall, the City of Ontario collection system is generally adequate to serve the currently developed areas within the corporation limits. Further residential in-fill and economic development for lower water consuming/discharging industries and commercial facilities can also be accommodated. Development and implementation of a Sewer System Master Plan, including city-wide investigations to identify direct and indirect sources of I/I entering the system, will be imperative for the city within the next few years.

A computerized sewer model to simulate system capacities and conditions should be developed as part of the Master Plan to enable predictive analyses of wet weather events and focusing of resources to provide cost-effective elimination of I/I sources. This Plan recommends the city define a strategy ahead of potential regulatory intervention due to the SSO activity. The improvements developed within the Sewer System Master Plan will also reduce the wastewater charges from the City of Mansfield and open capacity for future in-fill and development.

See Map: Infrastructure for a better understanding of the sanitary collection system.

Storm Drainage & Pavements

The storm drainage system consists of about 56 miles of pipe, ranging in size from 12" to 42" for mains, and a 144" culvert pipe under St. Rt. 309 that is maintained by the State of Ohio, collecting flows from over 59 centerline miles of roadway and abutting properties. A total of 287 individual pipe outfalls discharge to several miles of receiving streams and drainage ditches within the community. Generally, isolated areas of surface flooding may occur during large rain events in various portions of the system that will be discussed in more detail within the respective Planning Areas.

As a community of fewer than 100,000 residents and having a separated storm and sanitary sewer system, the City of Ontario is regulated as a "Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System

(MS4)" in response to Ohio EPA and Clean Water Act requirements. As part of the Small MS4 Program, the city has developed and adopted a local Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) that defines best-management practices (BMPs) for meeting the six (6) Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) defined within the current General NPDES permit for Small MS4s. Current design practices for the city requires volume and rate of runoff control for all new developments and redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial sites, as well as construction and post-construction BMPs to reduce the transfer of silt, sediment and other potential contaminants to the local receiving streams. There are currently 160 stormwater retention/detention facilities throughout the city. The city is currently in the process of reviewing and inspecting the retention/detention facilities for the MS4 Program and anticipate completion of the inspections by the end of 2025.

Plans for new construction and redevelopment are reviewed by the Zoning Department, and the city's Consulting Engineer and the Engineer also perform regular stormwater inspections for construction sites. These combined efforts have enabled the city to locate and eliminate several illicit discharges. Detection of illicit discharges and connections between the sanitary and storm sewers is a critical function of the Stormwater Programs and can aid in reducing the volume and rate of inflow into the sanitary sewer. A properly designed and well-functioning storm sewer system will also help to minimize infiltration of clean water into the sanitary collection systems. A map representing the locations of storm sewers and drainageways throughout the City of Ontario can be found on the Infrastructure Map.

Based upon discussion with city staff, the current Subdivision Rules and Design Standards should be reviewed and updated to reflect current design and construction practices. An additional consideration may be to separate the Design Standards from the codified ordinances to enable periodic updates as rule and regulations and commonly utilized standards, such as the ODOT Construction Materials Specification, are revised and updated.





04

Planning Areas

PLANNING AREAS MAP

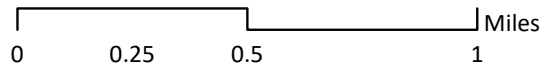
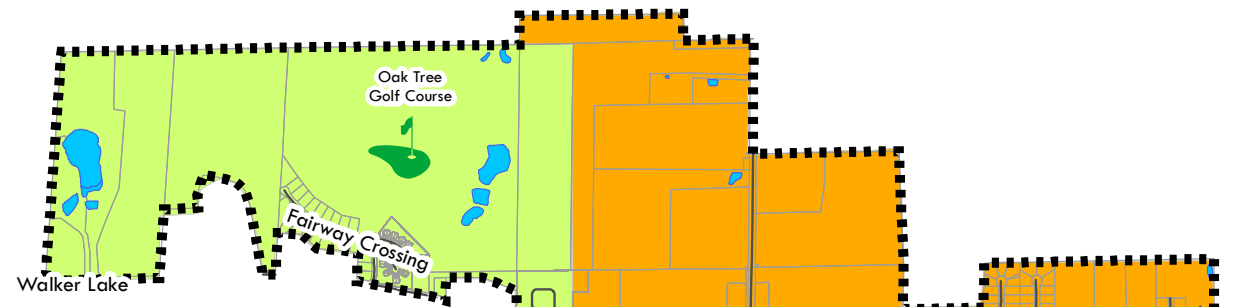
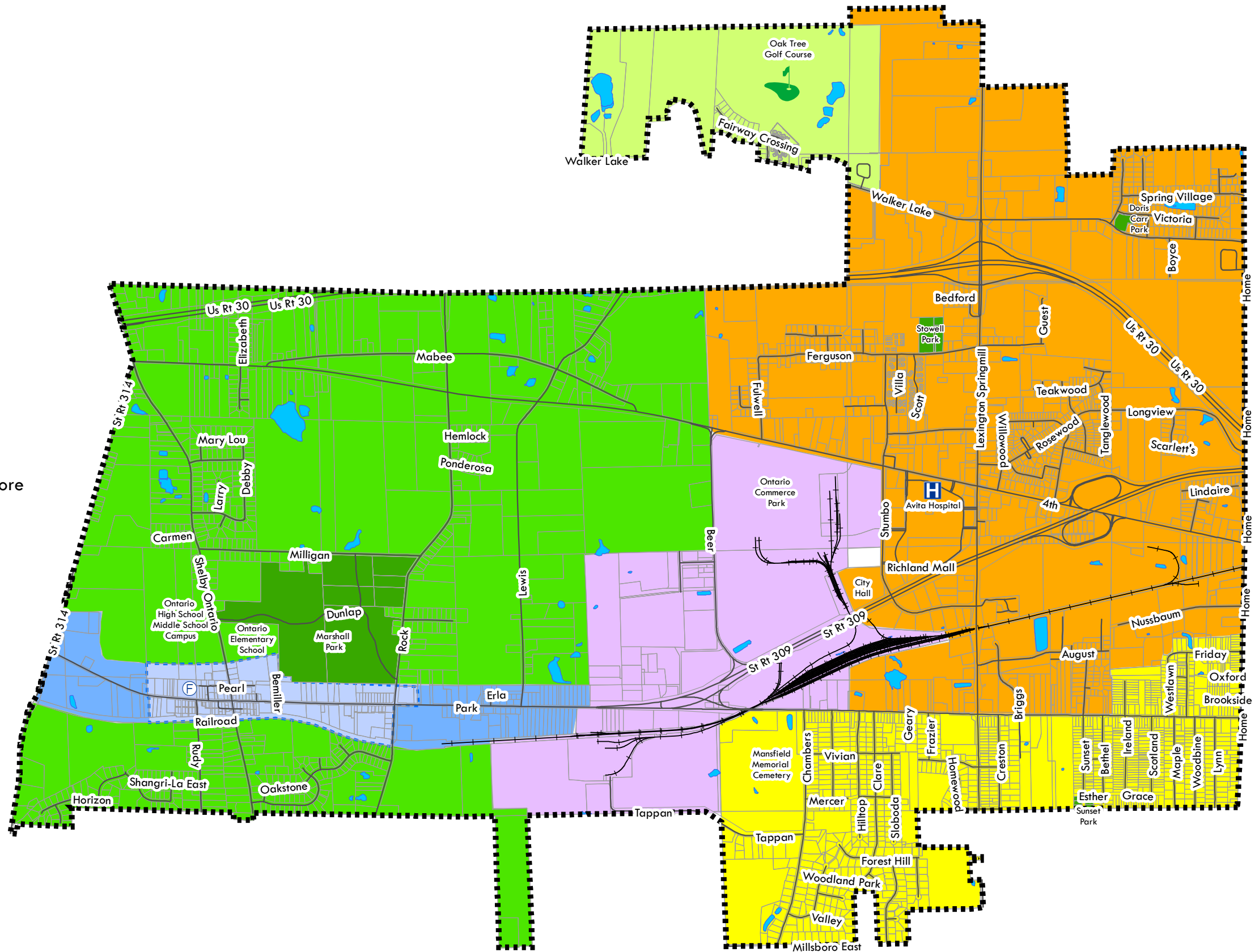


Legend

- Ontario Corporation Limits
- Streets
- Railroad
- Open Water
- Parcels
- Parks

Planning Areas

- Lexington-Springmill Commercial Core
- Park East
- Industrial Core
- Old Ontario Corridor
- Marshall Park
- Walker Lake
- Old Ontario Town Center



Source: Richland County Auditor, Engineer, Ontario, Reville





LEXINGTON-SPRINGMILL COMMERCIAL CORE PLANNING AREA

OVERVIEW

The Lexington-Springmill Commercial Core Planning Area covers 2,351 acres across much of the east and northeast of the city, encompassing the major commercial stretch of Lexington-Springmill Road from the municipal boundary north of US 30 to Park Avenue West in the south. The eastern portion of the planning area is bounded by Home Road and the western portion runs to Stumbo Road and captures parcels north of West Fourth Street to Beer Road.

This Planning Area is heavily trafficked as a major shopping destination for the region and includes the Richland Mall, numerous big box commercial retailers, hotels, commercial strip malls, restaurants, and a movie theater. Several residential neighborhoods are sprinkled throughout the planning area off major roadways. North of the planning area is the Ohio State University-Mansfield and North Central State Community College campuses. The Planning Area is primarily zoned B – Business District, with some I – Industrial parcels and several residential (R-1, R-2, and R-3) zoning districts located throughout the planning area.

The Spring Village subdivision located off Walker Lake Road is zoned high density residential and has a mix of mostly single-family and a few multi-family properties built between the 1960s and 1990s. A small neighborhood park, Doris Carr Park, is located at the corner of Walker Lake Road and Spring Village Drive. A pedestrian/bike path to Molyet Village Apartments and OSU-Mansfield starts at the northeastern bend of Spring Village Lane.

The Buckeye Village apartments are located on Lexington-Springmill Road at the northern limit of the City's boundary. The apartment complex is connected to the rest of the city by a sidewalk and has a pedestrian/bike path leading to the OSU-Mansfield/North Central State College campus.



EXISTING LAND USES AND ZONING

Existing land uses are predominantly commercial, with several residential neighborhoods, industrial, public/institutional, and agricultural land uses.

Approximately 50% of the planning area is zoned B – Business, including most parcels along Lexington-Springmill Road, West Fourth Street, SR 309/Park Avenue West. Several residential subdivisions are zoned R-2 (medium) and R-3 (high). There are some GI (General Industrial) and IP (Industrial Park) parcels along the rail line and at the Ontario Industrial Park on Nussbaum Parkway. Additionally, a pocket of Office-Service District (OS) zoned land is on vacant land adjacent to Menards on Walker Lake Road.



PREFERRED LAND USES

- » Residential at various densities
- » Commercial
- » Industrial (properly buffered from residential uses)
- » Public and Institutional





PLANNING ISSUES

- » This planning area plays the role as the region's primary shopping hub, with prime access off US 30.
- » Access management along Lexington-Springmill Road, Walker Lake Road, West Fourth Street, Park Avenue West, and Home Road, and traffic flow and safety concerns during peak times. Ontario's 2023 study of the West Fourth Street Corridor highlighted various issues and solutions.
- » Road and pedestrian connectivity improvements along Lexington-Springmill Road and from the nearby residential neighborhoods.
- » Accommodating future higher density residential land uses in a manner that does not adversely affect adjacent single-family neighborhoods, existing traffic flows, levels of service (LOS) at key intersections, and pedestrian safety.
- » Opportunities to better utilize the excessive impervious surfaces for infill development, stormwater BMPS, greening solutions, and public spaces.
- » Floodplains (AE Zone) from Rocky Fork Creek are in the northwest corner of the Planning Area along Lexington Springmill Road.
- » Minimal buffering and setbacks between land uses.
- » Bland or non-existent community gateways and gateway signage off US 30 and along key corridors.
- » Property maintenance and nuisance abatement with aging and/or vacant commercial properties and residential properties in some neighborhoods.



FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- » Sewer lining and replacements and manhole rehabilitation in Spring Village and Rosewood Drive areas and others for I/I reduction
- » WTP facility assessment and capital program
- » 16" transmission main realignment



UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- » Residential neighborhoods centered on Spring Village Lane and Rosewood Drive identified as most in need of sewer infrastructure repairs due to excessive I/I entering the system.
- » Sewer improvements required within Spring Village Lane area to provide capacity for future development to the west.
- » WTP condition assessment and long-term capital program should be developed.
- » Critical 16" transmission water main feeding to the north in front of the WTP is deep under the roadway embankment for the grade separation over the railroad. Modified alignment should be considered for future replacement/upgrades.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- » Floodplains (AE Zone) from Rocky Fork Creek are located on vacant agricultural land in the northwest corner of the Planning Area along Lexington Springmill Road.
- » Portions of the planning area are in a Source Water Protection Area and additional regulations are in place to minimize groundwater contamination.
- » Pockets of mature forested areas.
- » General noise, sound and light pollution from highway traffic and big-box retail commercial uses.
- » Substantial footprint of impervious surfaces (parking lots with no islands) lending to stormwater management issues.





TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

This planning area is accessed by the city's most trafficked highways including West Fourth Street, Lexington-Springmill Road, Walker Lake, SR 309, Park Ave. West and Home Road. According to ODOT reports, there are a high number of motor vehicle crashes on Lexington-Springmill Road, West Fourth Street from Stumbo Road to Home Road, and on Park Avenue West from Chambers Road to Home Road.

Connectivity issues in this planning area include a need to improve pedestrian connectivity along key corridors, to residential neighborhoods along and adjacent to these corridors, and even between land uses. Sidewalks are located along most commercial areas on Lexington-Springmill Road and Walker Lake Road, and in residential areas along Ferguson Road, but there are gaps in sidewalk facilities in the Spring Village, Rosewood, and Lindaire neighborhoods.

The following planned transportation and connectivity improvements could be considered:

- » Intersection improvements at West Fourth Street and Stumbo Road (Roundabout).
- » Intersection improvements and/or study at Lexington-Springmill Road and Walker Lake Road.
- » Intersection improvements and/or study at West Fourth Street and Home Road.
- » Intersection improvements and/or study at Walker Lake and Home Road.
- » Stumbo Road "road diet" reducing the four-lane road to three lanes with a dedicated shared use path.
- » Sidewalks along Walker Lake Road from Cobblefield Drive to Old Oak Trail and reduce sidewalk gaps in the Spring Village, Rosewood, and Lindaire neighborhoods.
- » "Bicycles May Use Full Lane" signs and Sharrows markings along Fairway Crossing and Bogey Drive.
- » There would be a long-term benefit to improving the sidewalk network and providing multi-modal solutions along W. Fourth Street, Walker Lake, and Park Ave. W. pedestrian access to the neighborhoods.
- » Pursuing the feasibility to connect August Drive to Nussbaum Parkway to improve connectivity options.



Connecting residents to key community assets is important in the Lexington-Springmill area but current connectivity options for pedestrians and cyclists are limited. This rendering depicts Stumbo Road behind the entrance to the Richland Mall repurposed as a two-lane road with a shared use path running along the western side of the right-of-way.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Interface with owners of The Ontario Center (former Richland Mall) on a long-term revitalization plan.
- » The City could work with property owners along the Lexington Springmill Road corridor in creating a special improvement district (SID). Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 1710 provides that an area of a community may, subject to petition by property owners, assess itself for the costs of planned services (such as planning, maintenance, security, marketing, promotion, business attraction, and management) and physical improvements which directly benefit the district. An important advantage of a SID is the ability of property owners to determine how assessment funds are spent.
- » Collaborate with stakeholders in targeted neighborhoods regarding property maintenance and nuisance abatement.
- » During the planning process, residents expressed concerns over the lack of housing within Ontario to accommodate those current residents that will gradually age out of their homes but want to remain in the City. This planning area provides an excellent opportunity for mixed-use development that can incorporate higher density housing for active adults as well as young professionals.
- » Continue to work with Richland County Regional Planning (RCRP) and key stakeholders to implement solutions contained within the West Fourth Street Corridor Study and improve long term pedestrian connectivity along key corridors and to adjacent community assets like OSU Mansfield, North Central State College, and the Richland County Fairgrounds.
- » Ensure the site planning process for projects address access & transit management, aesthetics & signage, impervious surface & parking reduction, and tree preservation methods. The use of various design guidelines and standards, as implemented through piecemeal redevelopment requirements and community-wide incentive programs, will be an effective means of improving the physical appearance of this planning area.
- » Prepare a sidewalk inventory identifying sidewalk conditions and areas where gaps exist in the network and develop a phased sidewalk development plan utilizing a combination of local, CDBG, and private funds from participating homeowners.
- » Work with Richland County Transit to optimize pick up and drop off locations for Bus Route 9 to assist local businesses with employee attraction and retention efforts.
- » Interfaces with Plan Strategies:
 - **C-5:** Implement Short-Term Non-Motorized Enhancement Project along Lexington-Springmill Road (C-5)
 - **C-8:** Deploy branding elements (wayfinding and gateway signage)
 - **C-9:** West Fourth Street Corridor Safety Study
 - **C-10:** Park Avenue/SR 309 Corridor Safety Study
 - **C-11:** Lexington-Springmill Road Corridor Safety Study
 - **I-2 & 1-3:** Develop Water Distribution Model & Master Plan (I-1) and implement in-system recommendations
 - **I-4:** Complete WTP Inspection & Assessment of Facilities
 - **I-5:** Develop Wastewater Collection General Plan and Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Strategies
 - **I-8:** Improve Storm Water Management, Including Low-Impact Design (LID) Solutions to Reduce Runoff and Improve Water Quality





PARK EAST PLANNING AREA

OVERVIEW

The Park East planning area covers 818 acres across much of the southeastern portion of the city, from Mansfield Memorial Park on Park Avenue West in the west to Home Road in the east. The planning area has a mix of older and newer residential developments located on streets north and south of Park Avenue West, as well as several businesses, churches, and non-profit organizations.



EXISTING LAND USES AND ZONING

- » Existing land uses are primarily residential, with several commercial and public/institutional uses.
- » Parcels along Park Avenue West are zoned OS - Office Service District but most are single-family residential (R-1) Some parcels contain residential properties that have been converted into businesses.



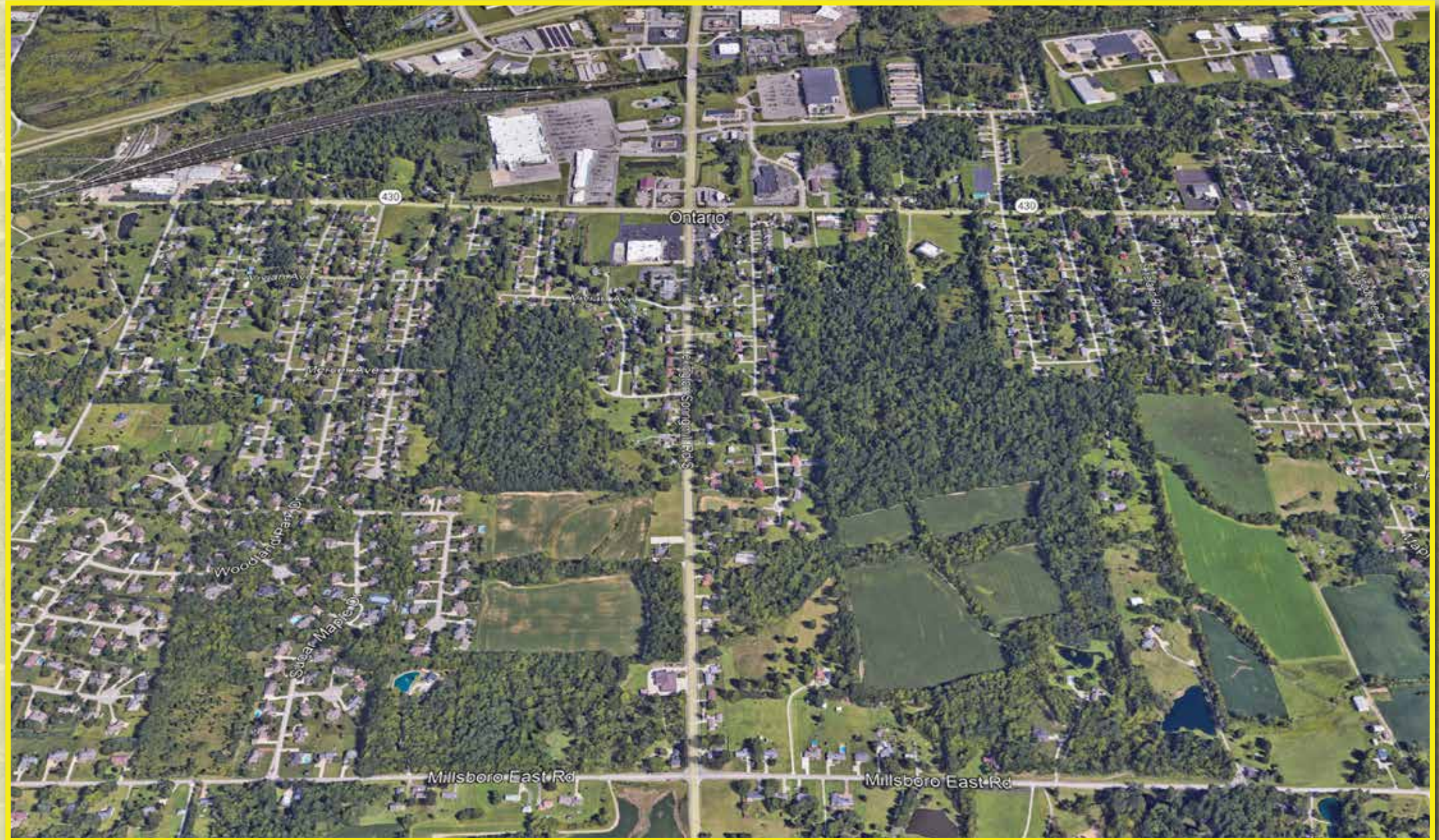
PREFERRED LAND USES

- » Residential
- » Neighborhood Commercial
- » Public and Institutional



UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- » Planned and phased replacement of aging waterlines
- » Aging sewers prone to excessive I/I contributing to water-in-basement events
- » Older dead-end water mains within Contract "A" area just west of Home Road and need to "loop" the water system
- » Limited storm drainage with uncurbed streets and shallow swales



FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- » Water line replacements along Maple Lane and Willowdell Drive
- » Sewer lining and replacements and manhole rehabilitation for I/I reduction
- » Pavement upgrades, including storm drainage enhancement and water main replacement and looping, where feasible



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- » Portions of the planning area are in a Source Water Protection Area and additional regulations are in place to minimize groundwater contamination.
- » Touby Run traverses the planning area west from the Walmart supercenter on Lexington-Springmill Road and travels under Briggs Drive, Sunset Lane North, and Friday Lane before entering the City of Mansfield just north of Park Avenue West on Home Road.
- » Pockets of mature trees and forested areas separate existing residential neighborhoods.





PLANNING ISSUES

- » Lack of pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks along much of Park Avenue West) and transit amenities along Park Avenue West
- » Some residential and commercial properties are showing signs of disinvestment and may require additional property/nuisance abatement enforcement
- » Lack of east-west connections between Chambers Road and Lexington-Springmill Road
- » Developing a phased approach to reduce home occupation uses in residential properties
- » Updating the water lines in the Marlow Heights neighborhood to help in looping the water system



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Develop phased capital plan for waterline improvements in targeted neighborhoods in this Planning Area.
- » Utilize tools that promote housing reinvestment, while reducing property blight and nuisance issues pertaining largely to rentals.
- » Utilize the zoning code (when updated) to reduce home occupation uses along Park Avenue West.
- » Prepare a sidewalk inventory identifying sidewalk conditions and areas where gaps exist in the network and develop a phased sidewalk development plan utilizing a combination of local, CDBG, and private funds from participating homeowners. The goal should be to connect to Mansfield's sidewalks along Park Avenue West so that residents can access the Richland B&O Trail.
- » Work with Richland County Transit to optimize pick up and drop off locations for Bus Route 1 along Park Ave. West to assist local businesses with employee attraction and retention efforts.
- » Interfaces with Plan Strategies:
 - **CGR-3:** Increase Code Enforcement
 - **CGR-13:** Leverage Incentives and Grant Resources
 - **C-10:** Park Avenue/SR 309 Corridor Safety Study (C-10)
 - **I-1, I-2, and I-3:** Develop Water Distribution Model & Master Plan and implement in-system recommendations
 - **I-5:** Develop Wastewater Collection General Plan and Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Strategies
 - **I-8:** Improve Storm Water Management, Including Low-Impact Design (LID) Solutions to Reduce Runoff and Improve Water Quality



TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

Lexington-Springmill Road, Park Avenue West, and Home Road are the primary routes in this planning area and are all vehicle-dominated due to limited pedestrian facilities. According to ODOT, a high number of motor vehicle crashes have occurred along Park Avenue West from Chambers Road to Home Road. To help alleviate this issue, officials aim to commission an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Study at Park Avenue West and Home Road to develop safety solutions. Connectivity issues in this planning area include a need to improve pedestrian connectivity along these key corridors to residential neighborhoods, and even between land uses.

The following transportation and planned connectivity improvements could be considered:

- » Sidewalks along one side of Park Avenue West
- » Eliminating the gaps between Mercer Avenue and Vivian Avenue to provide for through traffic and pedestrian flows
- » "Bicycles May Use Full Lane" signs and Sharrow markings along Maple Lane, Westlawn Drive and Friday Lane





INDUSTRIAL CORE PLANNING AREA

OVERVIEW

The Industrial Core Planning area covers 772 acres in the central and south-central portion of the community. The planning area is home to much of the city's historic and current industrial and manufacturing footprint, including the former General Motors Stamping Plant site, the Beer Road Industrial Park that includes the FedEx facility, and Tappan Industrial Park.

A portion of this planning area includes parcels of the former GM Stamping plant. The property was eventually remediated and received a Covenant Not-To-Sue (CNS) from the Director of the Ohio EPA in April 2016 based on the No Further Action (NFA) letter submitted in December 2015. The NFA Letter is based on investigatory and remediation efforts on the parcels that occurred from 2010 through 2015. The CNS includes two Activity/Use Limitations that include a restriction on the use of the property to commercial/industrial uses and the conditional prohibition on the extraction of underlying groundwater.



EXISTING LAND USES AND ZONING

- » Over half of the planning area's existing land uses are industrial, but a substantial portion of land classified as industrial is currently inactive, vacant, or used for agricultural purposes.
- » The former GM site is zoned General Industrial (GI), and the land in the planning area to the west of Beer Rd and the former Tappan site south of the railroad are zoned Industrial Park (IP). Parcels along Park Avenue West in the planning area are zoned Business (B).



PREFERRED LAND USES

- » Industrial
- » Commercial
- » Public Uses



UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- » Limited electrical capacity at former GM site.
- » Flooding at viaduct under the railroad on Park Avenue West.
- » Significant I/I entering sanitary sewer system.



TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

The intersection of SR 309, Park Avenue West and Beer Road has been studied in the past to mitigate issues caused by the two unconventional intersections (SR 309 and Park Avenue West, and SR 309 and Beer Road). Pedestrian connectivity is non-existent in this planning area but could be improved by utilizing inactive rail line (if abandoned) and underutilized, vacant industrial parcels.

The following transportation and connectivity improvements could be considered:

- » Continue to study SR 309 at SR 430 and Beer Road for further safety refinements
- » Pursue the feasibility of using the RR overpass as a pedestrian bridge if the rail line is abandoned.





FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- » Sewer lining and replacements and manhole rehabilitation for I/I reduction
- » Storm drainage improvements, potentially including additional stormwater detention and/or stormwater pumping station, to alleviate flooding under railroad viaduct
- » Water main improvements to serve former GM site redevelopment

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- » Ground contamination at the former GM site, although remediated, limits use of the site to only commercial and industrial land uses.
- » Substantial portions of the planning area, including most of the former GM site, the Beer Road Industrial Park, and Tappan Industrial Park are in a Source Water Protection Area (See Map: Infrastructure), and additional regulations are in place to minimize groundwater contamination.
- » High voltage electric transmission lines traverse this planning area immediately east of the Tappan Industrial Park going northwest.



PLANNING ISSUES

- » Encouraging the redevelopment of former GM site in a manner provided by the EPA's Covenant Not to Sue. In July 2024, Ontario completed the transaction to sell parcels that wholly comprised the former GM Stamping Plant to Industrial Commercial Properties LLC (ICP). Although the former GM site has been "remediated" to the point of getting a CNS from the Ohio EPA, the land uses on the site have been restricted to only commercial and industrial uses.
- » Ensuring the adequacy of infrastructure supportive of future development efforts at the industrial parks and within the planning area.
- » Working with ICP to frame mutually beneficial solutions to develop the Ontario Commerce Park, as well as working with property owners and economic development officials on a plan for the underutilized Tappan Industrial Park. Once the home of Tappan Industries, much of the site is vacant.
- » Utilizing the appropriate incentives strategies to attract complimentary economic development projects and to retain existing employers.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Partner with Industrial Commercial Properties LLC to frame mutually beneficial solutions to develop the Ontario Commerce Park and fully activate their parcels in their possession. Recent funding for brownfield remediation through the Ohio Department of Development has specifically allowed properties like the former GM Plant to be eligible for remediation funding if a higher land end use is sought. The formerly undeveloped southern portion of this site adjacent to city hall and north of SR 309 could be a location for higher end uses.
- » Work with property owners and economic development officials on a plan for the underutilized Tappan Industrial Park. Once the home of Tappan Industries, much of the site is vacant.
- » Utilizing the appropriate incentives strategies to attract complimentary economic development projects and to retain existing employers.
- » Interfaces with Plan Strategies:
 - **CGR-8:** Update the Community Reinvestment Area Program, specifically the Industrial CRA
 - **I-2 & I-3:** Develop Water Distribution Model & Master Plan (I-1) and implement in-system recommendations
 - **I-5:** Develop Wastewater Collection General Plan and Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Strategies
 - **I-8:** Improve Storm Water Management, Including Low-Impact Design (LID) Solutions to Reduce Runoff and Improve Water Quality
 - **C-12:** SR 309/Park Avenue West/Beer Road Intersections Area and RR Underpass Improvement Study



OLD ONTARIO TOWN CENTER PLANNING AREA

OVERVIEW

The Old Ontario Town Center planning area covers 131 acres centered on the intersection of Shelby-Ontario Road/Lexington-Ontario Road and Park Avenue West. The planning runs from the current location of the Ontario Senior Center along Park Avenue West, east to Rock Road. The planning area is the oldest inhabited area of the city and was the principal village in Springfield Township with a depot along the Atlantic and Great Western Railway. Many residents consider “Old Ontario” to be the preferred core engagement areas of the community. Existing land uses are mixed between commercial, residential, and public and institutional (See Map: Old Ontario Existing Conditions).



EXISTING LAND USES AND ZONING

» Existing land uses are predominately residential, commercial, and public and institutional. Parcels located along both sides of Park Avenue West are zoned Business, with the remaining parcels zoned R-1 and R-3.



PREFERRED LAND USES

- » Single Family Residential
- » Neighborhood Commercial, Lifestyle Center, Mixed Uses
- » Public/Institutional (Parks & Recreation)



UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS

» Significant I/I entering sanitary sewer system contributing the SSO activity at Rock Road Pumping Station



FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- » Sewer lining and replacements and manhole rehabilitation for I/I reduction
- » Pavement upgrades, including storm drainage enhancement and water main replacement and looping, where feasible
- » Supportive pedestrian connectivity infrastructure



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

» Pockets of mature trees and forested areas.





RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Collaborate with key stakeholders to develop a long-range plan to activate this Planning Area in a manner most desired by residents that would include connecting community assets through branding, beautification, and wayfinding techniques. The use of various design guidelines and standards, as implemented through piecemeal redevelopment requirements and community-wide incentive programs, will be an effective means of improving the physical appearance and the Old Ontario identity.
- » City officials should develop a new zoning district for this Planning Area to regulate land uses, aesthetics, connectivity, and tree preservation.
- » Consider developing a tax increment financing district (TIF) to improve public infrastructure that supports economic development projects where the potential for immediate or near term increased property valuation is high.
- » Begin discussions with Norfolk Southern officials on a plan to utilize the abandoned rail line as a trail system.
- » Team with Ontario Local School District and Springfield Township in developing a School Travel Plan and participating in ODOT's Safe Routes to School Program. This program will provide up to \$500,000 in funds for infrastructure improvements (and \$60,000 in non-infrastructure improvements) geared toward making walking and biking to schools safer for K-12 students. Such a plan will help to improve connectivity of this Planning Area to the Marshall Park Planning Area and to neighborhoods in adjacent Springfield Township.
- » Interfaces with Plan Strategies:
 - **CGR-2:** Develop Overlay Zoning Districts
 - **CGR-3:** Increase Code Enforcement
 - **CGR-8:** Update the Community Reinvestment Area Program
 - **CGR-11:** Pursue the Development of a Community Improvement Corporation
 - **CGR-13:** Leverage Incentives and Grant Resources
 - **CGR-10:** Develop a Plan to Activate the Old Ontario Area
 - **C-8:** Deploy Branding Elements
 - **C-10:** Park Avenue West/SR 309 Corridor Safety Study
 - **C-12:** Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Feasibility Study of Park Ave. West & Shelby-Ontario Rd./Lexington-Ontario Rd. Intersection
 - **I-1, I-2, I-3:** Develop Water Distribution Model & Master Plan (I-1) and implement in-system recommendations
 - **I-5:** Develop Wastewater Collection General Plan and Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Strategies
 - **I-8:** Improve Storm Water Management, Including Low-Impact Design (LID) Solutions to Reduce Runoff and Improve Water Quality



Area residents participated in a visioning exercise to explore how the Old Ontario area could be redeveloped (July 2024).



PLANNING ISSUES

- » Underutilized and/or vacant parcels throughout the planning area. Some residential and commercial properties are showing signs of disinvestment and may require additional property/nuisance abatement enforcement.
- » Lack of pedestrian connectivity from neighborhoods located to the north and south of Park Avenue West.
- » Truck traffic along Park Avenue West can be problematic at times. Residents, according to the Plan Survey, are desirous to removing truck traffic from this area.
- » Underutilized alleys and rights of way (RoW). The city vacated some RoWs but still has possession of some RoWs that could be activated for the public's benefit and to better connect residents to key assets and areas in the Planning Area.
- » Lack of branding elements (wayfinding and gateway signage).
- » The entire planning area is owned by fewer than 40 property owners which could help to streamline land acquisition and assembly efforts once a lead party is established.



TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

This Planning Area is situated along Park Avenue West and vehicle traffic can be high at peak times, especially at the intersection of Shelby-Ontario Road/Lexington-Ontario Road. To help alleviate this issue, officials aim to commission an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) study at this key intersection to develop safety solutions. Residents in the area that participated in the Old Ontario Focus Group Session informed city officials about their concerns of traffic, noise, and pedestrian safety at this intersection and along Shelby-Ontario Road. Infrastructure to encourage pedestrian connectivity is extremely limited, but extremely important to both the residents and students that participated in the planning process. In 2023, city officials added a sidewalk on the west side of Shelby Ontario Road to connect to Peal Street N, but more assets are needed.

The following planned transportation and connectivity improvements could be considered:

- » Intersection improvements at Park Avenue West and Shelby-Ontario Road / Lexington Ontario Road.
- » Activate abandoned Norfolk Southern rail line in trails system and develop a Shared Use Path loop that connects destinations within the Old Ontario Area (see Map: Old Ontario Opportunities).
- » Activate some of the remaining public right of ways to better connect to key assets, such as the future trail, schools, and southerly located neighborhoods (see Map: Old Ontario Opportunities).
- » Sidewalks along Park Avenue West and along the east side of Lexington Ontario Road.
- » Shared Use Path along Rock Road connecting Oakstone Drive to Cal Miller Lane and Marshall Park

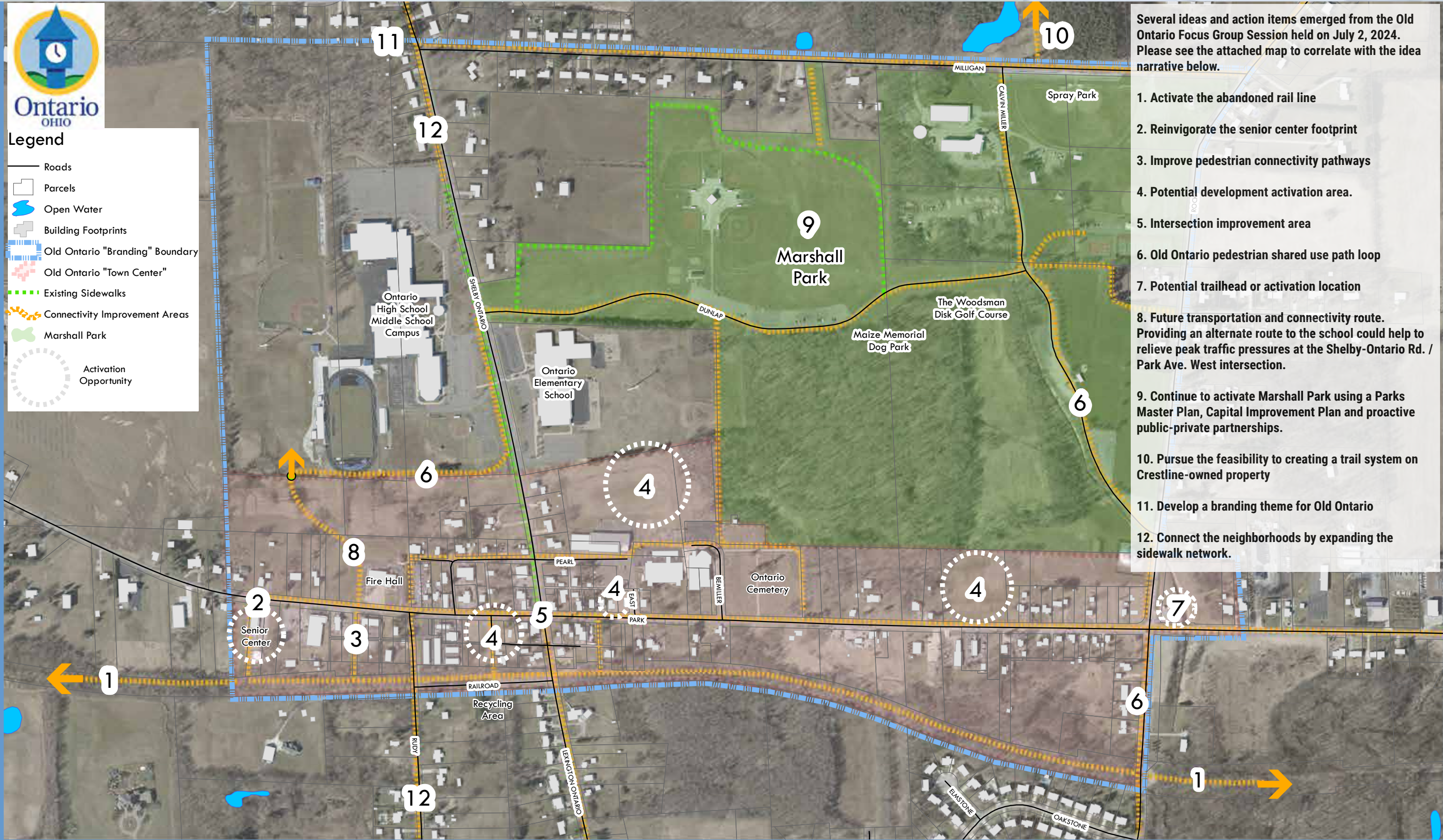


OLD ONTARIO OPPORTUNITIES MAP



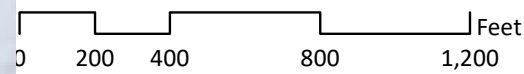
Legend

- Roads
- ▭ Parcels
- 💧 Open Water
- ▭ Building Footprints
- ▭ Old Ontario "Branding" Boundary
- ▭ Old Ontario "Town Center"
- Existing Sidewalks
- Connectivity Improvement Areas
- 🌳 Marshall Park
- ⊙ Activation Opportunity



Several ideas and action items emerged from the Old Ontario Focus Group Session held on July 2, 2024. Please see the attached map to correlate with the idea narrative below.

1. Activate the abandoned rail line
2. Reinvigorate the senior center footprint
3. Improve pedestrian connectivity pathways
4. Potential development activation area.
5. Intersection improvement area
6. Old Ontario pedestrian shared use path loop
7. Potential trailhead or activation location
8. Future transportation and connectivity route. Providing an alternate route to the school could help to relieve peak traffic pressures at the Shelby-Ontario Rd. / Park Ave. West intersection.
9. Continue to activate Marshall Park using a Parks Master Plan, Capital Improvement Plan and proactive public-private partnerships.
10. Pursue the feasibility to creating a trail system on Crestline-owned property
11. Develop a branding theme for Old Ontario
12. Connect the neighborhoods by expanding the sidewalk network.



Source: Richland County Auditor, Engineer, Ontario, School District, Reveille.





BEFORE

“Develop a plan for Old Ontario that makes it a destination for community and local business development vs. all the chains that exist in the mall area. People want to meet. Put in paths and trails that would connect neighborhoods to a ‘new’ Old Ontario with shops, entertainment, and a community center.”



AFTER

OLD ONTARIO FOCUS GROUP VISIONING SUMMARY



Boundaries

Participants identified the general boundaries of Old Ontario as:

- North: Milligan Rd or further north to West Fourth Street
- South: Railroad St and the former rail line or further south to Millsboro Rd
- East: Rock Rd
- West: Ontario Local Schools property line down to include the Springfield Twp. Fire Department and the Senior Center on PAW

Preferred Land Uses & Activities

Participants identified the following types of land uses they would like to see in Old Ontario:

- Single-Family Residential
- Condominiums/Townhomes (with residential amenities such as gyms and pools)
- Commercial (with a focus on local shops similar to existing businesses such as the Warrior and the Cove). Ideas included a book shop, pastry shop, restaurants, pet store, and ice cream shop).
- Public / Institutional (such as a farmer's market)

Participants identified the following types of activities they would like to see in Old Ontario:

- An event center that could be rented for weddings and other events
- A venue for small concerts or other entertainment

Preferred Connectivity/Transportation Improvements

Pedestrian improvements identified:

- Sidewalks along Milligan Rd, Cal Miller Ln, and Shelby-Ontario Rd to connect to residential neighborhoods north of the schools
- Sidewalks along Rock Rd to connect neighborhoods near Marshall Park and schools (Hemlock Pl, Ponderosa Ave, Beverly Ln)
- Sidewalks along Rudy Rd to connect to neighborhoods south of PAW
- Crosswalks at the PAW and Shelby-Ontario Rd intersection

Transportation/roadway improvements identified:

- 3-way stop sign at Oakstone Dr and Rock Rd
- Roundabout or left turn lanes and signals at PAW/Shelby-Ontario Rd and PAW/Rock Rd
- Developing the former rail line as a shared use path (SUP)

Preferred Development Types

Participants identified the following types of developments they would you like to see in Old Ontario:

- Lifestyle Center (walkable commercial area w/o housing options)
- Mixed-Use District (walkable commercial area w/ housing options)
- Design & landscape elements that unify the area (wayfinding and signage and lamp posts)

Additional Comments

Participants identified several landscaping and design elements they thought would help to connect and beautify Old Ontario. These included a "town center" with a clock and grassy gathering spaces, lamp posts and a community pool.

Several communities they saw as models for redeveloping Old Ontario. These were:

- Dublin, OH
- Hilliard, OH
- Charlevoix, MI
- Rosemary Beach, FL





OLD ONTARIO CORRIDOR PLANNING AREA

OVERVIEW

The Old Ontario Corridor encompasses 176 acres along Park Avenue West, from the city's western boundary at SR 314 to the east of Lewis Road, minus the Old Ontario Town Center. The planning area features a mix of businesses and single-family residential land uses. The planning area is primarily zoned B - Business, with small portions zoned R-1 Low-Density Residential and IP- Industrial Park.



EXISTING LAND USES AND ZONING

- » Primary land uses include residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural. Existing zoning classifications: Most parcels are zoned B – Business with some IP – Industrial Park parcels located on and near the intersection of Park Avenue West and SR 314.



PREFERRED LAND USES

- » Residential
- » Neighborhood Commercial and Small-Scale Highway Commercial
- » Public/Institutional



UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- » Significant I/I entering sanitary sewer system contributing the SSO activity at Rock Road Pumping Station



FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- » None



PLANNING ISSUES

- » Lack of branding elements, wayfinding, and gateway signage at key intersections like SR 314, and site aesthetics due to outdoor storage and aging commercial properties.
- » Access management and lack of pedestrian connectivity along the corridor and between land uses.
- » Finalizing the extension of Erla Drive to Lewis Road.
- » Some residential and commercial properties are showing signs of disinvestment and may require additional property/nuisance abatement enforcement.
- » Developing a phased approach to reduce home occupation uses in residential properties.



TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

- » This planning area is situated along Park Avenue West and vehicle traffic can be high at peak times. The following planned transportation and connectivity improvements could be considered:
 - » Improve connections off Park Avenue West to northern areas between Rock Road and Lewis Roads to help provide better east/west movements within the community.
 - » Monitor the Norfolk Southern rail line and activate incorporate it into the trails system connecting to Old Ontario.
 - » Shared Use Path along the northside of Park Avenue West.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Officials should work with property owners along key corridors to improve the overall image and appearance of the community by combining public sector improvements within the public right-of-way, with private sector improvements for properties fronting these corridors. For many commercial and industrial businesses in the community, opportunities exist for additional parking lot landscaping, site landscaping, on-site pedestrian amenities, signage, and dumpster/ loading area screening. In addition to assisting existing businesses, as new developments are presented for review, staff should work with petitioners to ensure that projects include high-quality construction materials and appropriate and attractive landscaping.
- » When developing the Transportation Master Plan, aim to improve connectivity between Park Avenue West to northern areas, especially between Rock and Lewis Roads.
- » Utilize the zoning code (when updated) to reduce home occupation uses along Park Avenue West.
- » Collaborate with Springfield Township to minimize land use conflict and access management issues with parcels in the township located along SR 314 and Park Avenue West
- » Interfaces with Plan Strategies:
 - **CGR-2:** Develop Overlay Zoning Districts
 - **CGR-3:** Increase Code Enforcement
 - **C-10:** Park Avenue/SR 309 Corridor Safety Study
 - **I-1, I-2, and I-3:** Develop Water Distribution Model & Master Plan (I-1) and implement in-system recommendations
 - **I-5:** Develop Wastewater Collection General Plan and Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Strategies
 - **I-8:** Improve Storm Water Management, Including Low-Impact Design (LID) Solutions to Reduce Runoff and Improve Water Quality



MARSHALL PARK PLANNING AREA

OVERVIEW

As the western gateway off US 30 into the community, this planning area covers much of the western part of the city and contains the city's most cherished public amenities including Ontario Local Schools, Marshall Park, and its facilities (Maize Memorial Dog Park, Ontario Soccer Fields, baseball/softball fields, and Ontario Spray Park) along with large forest/vacant parcels, including lands owned by Village of Crestline Water Works that house its aquifers.

It contains some newer suburban development (post-recession) along Zimmerman Lane and East Debby Lane connected to older residential developments (Mary Lou Lane). Most of the newer residential developments are in the southerly locations of the planning area and include Oakstone Drive & Ridgestone Drive, Shangri-La Avenue. While east-west connectivity may be a current impediment in the planning area, its location adjacent to US 30, SR 314, and Park Avenue West offer opportunities to capture future growth if planned properly with Springfield Township.



EXISTING LAND USES AND ZONING

» Primary land uses include residential, public, institutional, and agricultural. Approximately 70% of the planning area is currently zoned R-1 (low density residential) including Marshall Park lands and the Ontario Local Schools facilities. Several parcels along West Fourth Street and Mabee Road are zoned B-1 Business with pockets of land along OH 314 zoned IP - Industrial Park (Cole Tooling & Stamping) or agricultural land zoned R-2 medium density.



PREFERRED LAND USES

- » Single-Family Residential
- » Public/Institutional
- » Limited Neighborhood Commercial (restricted to key corridor intersections).



FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- » Sidewalk improvements along Shelby-Ontario Road from the high school to Mary Lou Lane South.
- » Sanitary sewer extensions to serve existing development and eliminate septic systems.
- » Loop water main along SR 314 to West Fourth Street.
- » Continual Marshall Park improvements



UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- » Need to increase sanitary sewer capacity along Lexington-Ontario Road.
- » Unsewered areas and residential septic systems along SR 314.
- » Dead-end water mains.





ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- » This Planning Area contains several ponds, one of which is a source of the Clear Fork Mohican River. The Village of Crestline Water Works owns land with the pond and has a water intake facility there. The Clear Fork Mohican River travels south under Milligan Road, along Cal Miller Lane in Marshall Park, then crosses Rock Road and Park Avenue West before exiting the municipality.
- » Much of the northern and eastern portions of the planning area are in a Source Water Protection Area (see Map: Infrastructure).
- » High voltage electric transmission lines traverse the Planning Area midway along Lewis Road going northwest.
- » Pockets of mature forested areas.



TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

This Planning Area is connected primarily by east-west minor arterial West Fourth Street and Milligan Road, and north-south by SR 314, Shelby-Ontario Road, Rock, Lewis, and Beer Roads. One major connectivity impediment is the lack of east-west connections between Shelby-Ontario Road and Beer Road. In 2023, Ontario officials worked with Richland County Planning Commission and ODOT on the development of a West Fourth Street Safety Study which outlined potential roadway improvements to promote safety along the corridor.

The following planned transportation and connectivity improvements in this planning area could be considered:

- » Intersection improvements at the “Five Corners” Area which may include various roundabout configurations.
- » Intersection improvements (Roundabout) at West Fourth Street and Rock Road.
- » Activate some of the remaining public right of ways to better connect to key assets, such as the future trail, schools, and southerly located neighborhoods (see Map: Old Ontario Opportunities).
- » Complete the sidewalk network in the Mary Lou neighborhood and along Shelby Ontario Road from Mary Lou to north of the high school property.
- » Potential pedestrian connectivity improvements along Milligan Road could include sidewalks, a Shared Use Path on the south side of the road, and/or “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” signs and Sharrow markings. A signed crosswalk from Marshall Park to the fishing pond across Milligan could also be considered.
- » Long term pedestrian connectivity solutions along Rudy Road from Shangri-La Road East could include sidewalks or a shared use path. No additional right of way may be needed.
- » “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” signs and/or Sharrow markings along Cal Miller Lane and Dunlap Drive, and along Oakstone Drive and Shangri-La East.



PLANNING ISSUES

- » Lack of pedestrian connectivity to Marshall Park and Ontario Local Schools from neighborhoods south of Park Avenue West and neighborhoods north of the schools.
- » Lack of east/west connectivity between SR 314 and Beer Rd.
- » Large areas of agricultural use contributing to excessive storm runoff during large rain events can cause localized flooding.
- » Residential parcels located on the southern portion of Horizon Drive and Scenic Ridge are in Springfield Township but are maintained by the City of Ontario.
- » Working with Springfield Township on future adjacent growth and development areas.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Team with Ontario Local School District in developing a School Travel Plan and participating in ODOT’s Safe Routes to School Program. This program will provide up to \$400,000 in funds for infrastructure countermeasures that assist K-12 students in biking, walking, and rolling to school.
- » Potential for gateway signage and enhancements along West Fourth Street and Shelby-Ontario Road.
- » Continue to implement roadway safety solutions as noted in the West Fourth Street Corridor Safety Study.
- » Collaborate with Springfield Township on annexation and the future expansion of Scenic Ridge and the residential development.
- » Interfaces with Plan Strategies:
 - **C-6:** Prepare a School Travel Plan with Ontario Local Schools
 - **C-7:** Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
 - **I-1, I-2, and I-3:** Develop Water Distribution Model & Master Plan and implement in-system recommendations
 - **I-5:** Develop Wastewater Collection General Plan and Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Strategies
 - **I-8:** Improve Storm Water Management, Including Low-Impact Design (LID) Solutions to Reduce Runoff and Improve Water Quality





WALKER LAKE PLANNING AREA

OVERVIEW

The Planning Area covers 343 acres in the north of the city, east of Lexington-Springmill Road and contains the Oak Tree Golf Course and newer condominiums as well as single-family residential developments. In recent years, the city has annexed multiple parcels in the Planning Area.



EXISTING LAND USES AND ZONING

» Existing land uses are predominantly residential and agricultural land uses. Zoning is R-1 and R-2 Residential.



PREFERRED LAND USES

» Single Family Residential



UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- » Significant I/I contributing to capacity issues within the sanitary collection system.
- » Water quality concern related to long dead-end water main and limited consumption at Fairway Crossings



FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

» Sanitary sewer capacity projects



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- » Portions of two agricultural parcels at the extreme northern boundary of the planning area and city are the source of Rocky Fork (Black Rock Mohican River tributary) and lie in a FEMA Flood Hazard Area.
- » Pockets of mature forested areas



TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

» Walker Lake Road is the primary connector in this planning area. Due to the limited RoW and hilly terrain, encouraging bicycle usage should be commensurate with roadway projects that separates pedestrians from vehicular traffic.





PLANNING ISSUES

- » Due to its location along US 30, this area appears to be a prime residential growth area for the city if planned and coordinated properly with Springfield Township and key stakeholders
- » Limited connectivity with primary accessibility coming from Lewis Road and Walker Lake Road. Narrow roadways, combined with elevation and terrain changes make for challenging pedestrian connectivity conditions.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Implement long term pedestrian connectivity solutions that connect residents to commercial areas along Lexington Springmill Road.
- » Work closely with Springfield Township Trustees to minimize conflicting land uses and a long-range utility and improvement plan for areas that about this Planning Area.
- » Interfaces with Plan Strategies:
 - **I-1, I-2 & I-3:** Develop Water Distribution Model & Master Plan and implement in-system recommendations
 - **I-5:** Develop Wastewater Collection General Plan and Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Strategies
 - **I-8:** Improve Storm Water Management, Including Low-Impact Design (LID) Solutions to Reduce Runoff and Improve Water Quality



An aerial photograph of a commercial street, likely in a suburban or urban area. The street is wide with multiple lanes and a median. On the left side, there are several commercial buildings, including a large one with a sign that says "Walmart". There are parking lots with cars and trucks. On the right side, there are more buildings and a large parking lot. The image has a blue overlay, and the text "05" is written in white on the left side.

05

Plan Themes and Strategies

PLAN THEMES AND STRATEGIES

The Ontario Comprehensive Community Plan was developed around three core themes and strategies:

- » Community Growth and Revitalization
- » Connected Community
- » Utilities and Infrastructure



COMMUNITY GROWTH AND REVITALIZATION



CONNECTED COMMUNITY



UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMUNITY GROWTH AND REVITALIZATION

CGR-1

UPDATE THE ZONING ORDINANCE

One primary goal of any comprehensive plan is to promote balanced and orderly development. To properly implement many areas of the 2024 Ontario Comprehensive Community Plan, it is recommended that the city's zoning code and other regulatory tools be updated. An updated zoning code and other development regulations will be necessary to align with the ideas and desires of residents, as noted in the surveys, and best practices. The focus of these updates should be incentives to encourage quality growth in a pattern consistent with the Planning Areas Map, best practices and land use recommendations highlighted in each of the Planning Areas.

Possible recommendations to improve the zoning ordinance could include:

- » Develop an Old Ontario or Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District to promote small-scale, pedestrian friendly commercial business development. At the present time, Ontario has only one district to guide business development.
- » Develop a mixed-use district zoning classification. Currently, no zoning district exists to provide for a "by-right" deployment of various land uses. This zoning option would allow for residential uses and other complimentary uses to be co-mingled with commercial uses without having to go through a lengthy PUD process. At the present time, Ontario is dominated with single oriented land uses and providing for mixed uses can help to improve property valuations and improve synergy.
- » Create an agricultural zoning district to help minimize land use conflicts and to help with the annexation of undeveloped parcels.
- » Pursue the feasibility of creating a Planned Business Park zoning district that encourages mixed highway commercial / industrial uses and the use of architectural review committees that can make decisions internally on certain issues which is otherwise the jurisdiction of the planning commission.
- » Create an institutional or public zoning classification and rezone all public and institutional land uses. Currently all government-owned parcels or institutional land uses like churches and schools are zoned either residential or commercial because they are allowable uses in these zoning districts.
- » Create a site plan review section that outlines the submission requirements and encourages site planning dialogue between the city and prospective developers. Streamlining the planned unit development (PUD) process may also help to promote innovative designs from the development community.
- » Create a Permissible Use Table and update permitted and conditional uses allowable in all zoning districts and develop a permissible use table highlighting permitted and conditional uses of all zoning districts.
- » Update landscaping and landscape buffer zone standards that establish distances improved buffering and transitions between land uses.
- » Sections of Ontario are blessed with beautiful tree canopies. Local officials could aim to preserve mature trees during the site planning and development process by additional tree protection and removal standards to protect and preserve trees with a DBH (diameter at breast height) of 18" or more.
- » Incorporate green infrastructure practices into parking design standards, landscape standards, and other applicable sections of the zoning resolution. This will help to minimize I/I, minimize runoff, and improve water quality.
- » Adjust the minimum lot size and widths in residential districts and maximum building coverages (currently at 25%).
- » The Subdivision Rules and Design Standards should be reviewed and updated to reflect current design and construction practices and require fees or land for parkland dedication. The subdivision regulations have not been updated since adoption in 1977. When updating the zoning code, officials could remove the subdivision guidelines from the zoning ordinance and adopt through its own ordinance. This would allow the city to update the subdivision regulations without following lengthy timelines.
- » Update Chapter 1113: Definitions to minimize ambiguity.





CGR-2

DEVELOP OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICTS

City officials could look to utilize overlay zoning within their zoning ordinance to improve aesthetics, access management and other development aspects. The city currently utilizes overlay zoning to protect its wellhead areas and recently deployed overlay district for the purposes of redeveloping an area along Park Ave W. In 2022, it repealed a Campus District Overlay along Lexington Springmill Road near OSU's campus to improve the City's northern gateway adjacent to the OSU campus. Other important key areas to deploy the overlay zones could be along key corridors, at "The Ontario Center" - Richland Mall area and in helping to delineate the "Old Ontario" area.

Corridor Development Overlay Districts

City officials could look to develop corridor overlay districts to promote additional curb appeal (building materials, landscaping, outdoor storage, and signage), land assembly, access management, and pedestrian connectivity in key commercial areas along Park Ave. W, Lexington Springmill Road, and W. Fourth Street.

"Old Ontario" Overlay District

Ontario is unlike many communities in that it does not have an identifiable "downtown" area. Residents that participated in planning process were overwhelmingly clear in their desire to see community officials develop a long-term plan to establish one in an area called "Old Ontario."

Although to some residents "Old Ontario" is simply the cluster of commercial businesses at along Park Avenue West and at the intersection of Shelby Ontario Road, many residents that participated in the Old Ontario focus group sessions were clear that they envision this area to be much broader and include the schools and Marshall Park (see Strategy: CGR-10: Develop a Plan to Activate the "Old Ontario" Area). Because this area has more than one base zoning, it is recommended that an overlay zone be deployed that place an emphasis on:

- » A unified branding and architectural theme that promotes a unique and integrated destination;
- » Residential areas intermixed within proximity of Marshall Park, Ontario schools, and neighborhood business location along Park Avenue West interwoven with activity areas and open spaces around a well-designed transportation network where pedestrian activity is strongly supported;
- » Neighborhood commercial shops and lifestyle centers with high pedestrian activity along the ground floors and office space or residential apartments on the upper floors; and
- » A design where open space, public and institutional uses and recreational uses are interwoven into the urban fabric of the overall "downtown-feel" context.

Urban Village Overlay (UVO) District

Like most legacy malls, the Richland Mall (now "The Ontario Center") footprint has been in transition for quite some time. To assist in the rebranding and revival of this area, officials could look to adopt- with the approval of the property owner- an urban village overlay. The base zoning in this area is currently "B" Business District, which has limitations in the types of uses permitted and the minimum development and dimensional requirements of lots and buildings. An overlay district at the site of the Richland Mall would allow for denser mixed-use development to support walkable, vibrant uses like retail, office, and residential that is not currently possible under the existing zoning regulations.

One flexible arrangement of the UVO could be the creation of architectural review committee comprised of city officials and property owners that could provide for innovative and flexible approval of development and redevelopment projects.



CGR-3

INCREASE CODE ENFORCEMENT

City residents completing the various Plan surveys indicated a desire to minimize nuisances and property blight in their respective neighborhoods. While some of their concerns revolve around property maintenance issues that may be best served by the updating city codes, some residents voiced their concern about City officials simply allocating more resources to enforcing existing nuisance regulations. At the present time, exterior property inspections and nuisance abatement activities are managed by Zoning Administrator, and the current caseload and existing resources severely limit a proactive approach.

One major step to protect neighborhoods would be to require more oversight on rentals, with all rental properties receiving planned interior/exterior inspections. Other remedies to reduce these issues could come from:

- » Updating Ontario's Codified Ordinance.
- » Allocating the proper resources to property maintenance and enforcement.
- » Utilizing neighborhood associations to work with landlords to establish a working dialogue to address issues.
- » Pursuing the feasibility of a rental registration ordinance and a vacant property registration ordinance (for commercial properties).
- » Identifying sources of financial and other assistance that can be used by property owners facing code enforcement actions for major renovations. Ontario officials could increase the fees for new residential and commercial development. Raising these fees could pay for additional property maintenance enforcement.

"I would like to see more enforcement of zoning concerning property maintenance. The city should enact yearly inspections on current rentals to address eyesores, particularly on PAW."





CGR-4

ADOPT A RENTAL REGISTRATION ORDINANCE

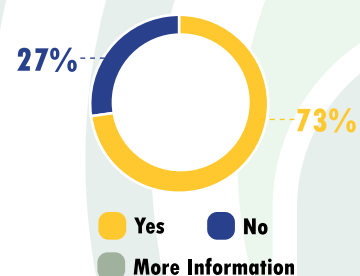
Over the past decade certain neighborhoods have seen a trend of the conversion of owner-occupied single family residential properties becoming rentals.

One major step to protect neighborhoods would be to require more oversight on the rental stock, with problematic rental properties receiving interior/exterior inspections. City officials could make rental owners with documented issues obtain an annual Certificate of Occupancy. Many communities throughout Ohio have adopted rental registration ordinances to minimize neighborhood nuisances (Barberton, Berea, Huron, Maumee, Sandusky, Vermillion, etc.).

This information, along with the adoption of the rental registration ordinance, can provide the basis for generating a comprehensive database of rentals in the community. This database could be used by public safety officials, and neighborhood associations to monitor neighborhoods and identify properties and areas in need of more support.

Neighborhood associations could help local officials in reviewing the housing conditions and occupancy makeup in their neighborhoods. If needed, they could work with housing inspectors on issues and locations that present problems to the adjoining neighbors. These associations can also help renters in the neighborhood to welcome them and provide helpful information to new residents about community services.

Should more tools be developed that protect neighborhoods from nuisances and issues from property maintenance and vacancy?



CGR-6

UPDATE NUISANCE AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Several residents and city officials noted during the planning process a desire to reduce neighborhood nuisances and property blight. Certain neighborhoods in Ontario are showing signs of distress, and rental housing is preeminent in many of these areas.

A variety of residential and commercial properties, some along Lexington-Springmill Road, Park Ave. West, and key areas like "Old Ontario" are suffering from a lack of maintenance and may be vacant. A variety of tools will need to be either developed or properly staffed to help improve the taxable value of the city's greatest assets- its residential properties. It is estimated that millions in dollars of lost revenue that would otherwise be used to fund the school district and fund community infrastructure have evaporated due to declining property standards. Poorer kept properties, in the simplest terms, cost everyone more.

To improve this situation, city officials could pursue the adoption of ordinances that require all vacant and/or rental properties to be registered and inspected. Many communities in Ohio effectively use these tools to protect their neighborhoods and downtowns. Using these tools in unison with Richland County Land Reutilization Corporation, or a new Ontario Community Improvement Corporation, could be useful.

City officials could simply adopt the International Property Maintenance Code as many communities in Ohio have done, or work with the planning commission to adopt a hybrid form of this code. Another tool officials should pursue is the development of a vacant property registration ordinance that could work to minimize neighborhood issues arising from distressed properties.

Another solution could be to modify the responsibilities of code enforcement to include property enforcement. At the present time, the responsibilities include only the enforcement of weeds and junk vehicles. City officials could work with owners of nuisance properties and align them with local and state programs (like the CHIP program) to help bring the affected property up to code.

CGR-5

ADOPTING A VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION RESOLUTION (VPRO)

Beautiful and revitalized neighborhoods are vital to community prosperity. In this vein, certain elements of Ontario's approach to nuisance abatement will need to take into consideration the registering and annual monitoring of vacant properties. The first step towards this action is the adoption of a vacant property maintenance ordinance that establishes the types of properties targeted (e.g., residential and/or commercial properties, or both) and penalties incurred for non-compliance. Many communities throughout Ohio utilize VPROs to minimize property and neighborhood blight (Northwood, Painesville, Sidney, St. Mary's, North Canton, etc.) and Oak Harbor could adopt such an ordinance to help protect its neighborhoods.



The unfinished megachurch on Park Avenue West has sat vacant for 15 years. A vacant property registration solution could help prevent unoccupied residential and commercial structures from falling into disrepair in the future.





CGR-7

PURSUE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (CIC)

The City of Ontario once had such an organization in way of the Ontario Growth Corporation. This organization dissolved in 2023, and the City now utilizes the Richland Growth Corporation.

This newly framed community improvement corporation (CIC) could be more active in undertaking responsibilities allowable under Ohio Revised Code Section 1724, such as land assembly, land reutilization and implementing comprehensive community development initiatives such as helping in long-range planning and development of the Old Ontario area, and revive the Richland Mall area, etc. In addition, Ontario's new CIC could consider becoming a membership organization (501C6 "Business League" as opposed to a 501C4 "Social Organization") that could help in generating additional resources (membership dues, etc.), additional talent and "buy-in" into furthering community development in Ontario. There are currently over 300 active community improvement corporations in Ohio.

CGR-9

FORMALIZE THE JOBS GRANT PROGRAM

Ontario officials could consider formalizing their existing job creation tax credit program to help promote business attraction and retention efforts and incentivize businesses that residents most desire and where they desire them, like in areas such as Old Ontario. To date, the only business in Ontario to receive a jobs tax credit has been Charter Next Generation, which receives a 50% tax credit.

City officials could consider framing in the program in the following ways:

- » Decide the minimum payroll threshold necessary to qualify for the jobs grant (\$500,000 is a good starting point especially for non-retail projects). While retail-type projects should not be eligible, city officials could make new retail establishments that develop in targeted areas like "Old Ontario" eligible.
- » Peg the percentage of the refund paid to be a third of the income tax paid (as verified by the City's income tax department) and top the incentive term at no higher than 50% for no more than 10 years (preferably 5 years). Consider increasing the refund percentage to 50% or more for a shorter incentive period to help promoting business development and expansion in critical areas like "Old Ontario" and the Ontario Commerce Center (former GM Site).
- » Consider identifying preferred or "critical need" businesses, rather than offering the grant to all business types.
- » Ensure a claw-back provision for cases of default.
- » Place the application and program guidelines on the website and market it appropriately.
- » Delete the requirement that an eligible applicant must also receive the State of Ohio's Job Creation Tax Credit.

CGR-8

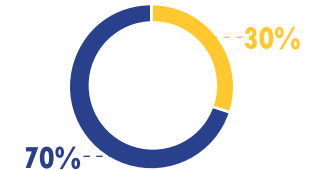
UPDATE THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA (CRA) PROGRAM

The Community Reinvestment Area Program provides property owners with tax incentives for making real property improvements in areas designated (and certified by the Ohio Department of Development) as distressed or in need of investment. Property owners who renovate existing residential, commercial and/or industrial projects, or construct new buildings may be eligible. The exemption percentage and term for all projects should be negotiated on a project specific basis. All CRA agreements must first be approved by City Council and be reviewed and approved by the school district depending on the level of incentives. A school donation agreement is mandatory for the CRA to be utilized except for residential abatements.

Ontario currently has two Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs): the Industrial CRA covering the former General Motors site as well as parcels to the west along Beer Road and the Mixed-Use CRA which covers much of the northern half of the Lexington-Springmill Commercial Corridor. Ontario officials should update their CRA program to account for Ohio Revised Code (3735.65-71) requirements and updates, and to better align with best practices and ideas highlighted in this Plan. Improvements to the CRA program could include:

- » Ensuring that the community is following new CRA guidelines per SB 33, such as eliminating program and monitoring fees.
- » Amend the boundary of the Industrial CRA to prevent industrial projects from sprawling in the Marshall Planning Area.
- » Pursue the feasibility to amend the Mixed Use CRA to refine the residential exemption language. Because residential abatements are set by the ordinance and not defined on a case-by-case basis, city officials will need to develop terms and exemption periods that will promote the right balance of new residential investments in a manner not to overcrowd the schools or impact school finances. Officials could also include language in the ordinance that notes apartments and other multi-family structures are classified as commercial uses and therefore handled on a case-by-case basis. At the present time, single family residential structures are not incentivized at any level.
- » City officials should look to deploy new CRA zones to encourage new residential development, revitalization and redevelopment in key areas of the community. Target areas could include aging neighborhoods or key areas like Old Ontario where residents are desirous of rebranding as Ontario's new town center. Officials should work with Ontario Local School officials in developing the appropriate incentive terms in these new CRA zones to not impact school finances.
- » Better market the CRA program on the City website along with an updated CRA program application and map.

I am familiar with programs and incentives that Ontario has to promote residential, commercial and industrial development and housing renovation.



For a visual understanding of the city's CRA programs, see the Economic Development Incentives Map in the Planning Conditions Chapter.





CGR-10 DEVELOP A PLAN TO ACTIVATE THE “OLD ONTARIO” AREA

Residents who participated in the planning process identified the “Old Ontario” as the number one location to “reimage” through long-range planning efforts.

Many participants in this study communicated the need to improve the identity of the community in this area. The combination of outdated zoning, buildings & commercial development patterns, auto-dominated uses, and lack of placemaking elements build an experience in this area, especially along Park Ave West that lacks character and feels indistinguishable from other areas in Ontario.

Residents that participated in the Old Ontario Visioning Session, were in general agreement that the “branding boundary” of the Old Ontario area should be broad enough to include to Marshall Park to the north and east, the abandoned rail line to the south, and Ontario Schools and Ontario Senior Center to the west.

In developing a Plan for Old Ontario, key items the city officials and key stakeholders will need to address are:

- » The primary and lead facilitator in the planning and development effort (e.g., developer-led, city-led or public-private partnership);
- » Key stakeholders to engage;
- » Land assembly and property owner engagement;
- » Refinement of regulatory tools, like zoning;
- » The deployment of incentives such as tax increment financing (TIF) and the community reinvestment area (CRA); and
- » Identification of grants and other project financing

For more information regarding specific ideas generated for the Old Ontario Focus Area, please see the Planning Areas Chapter, “Old Ontario” Planning Area.

If you had ten dollars to invest in one community area, where would you invest it?



CGR-11 PURSUE THE FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Implementing the 2024 Ontario Comprehensive Community Plan will require close and active collaboration with all the parties identified as stakeholders. But most especially, it will require that one party be tasked with long range planning while operating as the primary coordinator of all things community development related. At the present time, community development-related initiatives are handled by various city officials and the city’s consulting engineer. The zoning inspector works to accomplish many of these activities to include managing the building, permits, and zoning functions, and overseeing the Planning Commission. This person is also the MS4 stormwater coordinator and handles nuisance abatement.

Having a Community Development Department will help to better coordinate, prioritize, and activate the resources necessary to improve Ontario’s built environment and implement this Plan. It will also set the tone with residents that community development is equally as valuable as economic development, as businesses follow residents, and resident’s desire vibrant neighborhoods and housing opportunities.



Mayor Kris Knapp speaking to participants at the planning session for the Old Ontario area, July 2024.





CGR-12

ENCOURAGE BALANCED GROWTH

There is a strong public desire, as noted by residents during the planning process, to ensure future development does not adversely impact the utility system, traffic safety and the existing quality of life. Striking a balance between allocating resources to promote growth, as opposed to servicing existing development and residents is often a delicate situation. To help minimize these situations, this Plan recommends the following policies apply with respect to future development:

1. New development should fit the trend and character of surrounding development and include discussions with the Ontario Local School District.
2. Development should occur in a manner logical of the planned extension of public utilities and be as compact as possible to preserve land resources and minimize utility costs.
3. Residential developments should integrate design elements such as ornamental lighting, walkways, and street trees. The street trees should be adequate to provide shade, lighting should create a sense of safety, and the walkways should be inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists. Neighborhoods should be linked to the surrounding street network in a safe and logical fashion.
4. Access management principles should be deployed on all projects and curb cuts onto arterial and major collector streets should be minimized. Major points of egress and ingress should consider appropriate sight lines, relationship of alignment with other drives and intersections, and incorporate appropriate geometries and traffic control measures to maintain safety, capacity, and operational efficiency.
5. Natural features like significant existing trees and vegetation, topographical character and drainage should be protected where possible and incorporated into the planning and design of the development. Stormwater retention and detention areas should consider water quality, visual, recreational and wildlife values and opportunities, as well as hydrologic criteria.
6. Transitions between similar and dissimilar land uses should be buffered and landscaped properly. Site planning should emphasize the effectiveness and visual quality of buffers between residential uses, major arterial roadways and adjacent non-residential development.
7. An internal pedestrian/bikeway trail system should be incorporated into the design of residential developments to increase accessibility to nearby schools, employment and shopping areas, public parks, and community open space. This goal was stressed in the City's 1998 Land Use Study and should be required for all developments occurring between Beer Road and Shelby Ontario.
8. Useable, accessible open space should be provided as a part of new residential developments and encouraged to be linked via pedestrian connectivity assets to nearby public amenities.
9. Recreation opportunities and facilities should be consistent with the needs of the residents of the development, the City of Ontario and the Ontario Local School District.
10. Economic incentives should be utilized sparingly and only when they provide residents with amenities and activities valuable to the community.

Which statement do you identify with most?

I am okay with paying additional taxes as long as the city has a good plan to use the additional revenue

63%

I am not okay with paying additional taxes, the city should live within its current means

37%

CGR-13

LEVERAGE INCENTIVES AND GRANT RESOURCES

Many residents noted a desire for additional revitalization efforts in their respective neighborhoods, to include infrastructure improvements (sidewalk repairs, roads, etc.) and improved code enforcement and property maintenance, especially with rental properties. While Ontario has received grant funds for brownfield remediation, utility, and transportation related projects in the past, additional programs could be tapped into to encourage neighborhood revival and for park improvements.

Some programs that City officials could seek federal, state and local programs and resources to promote development and neighborhood / brownfield revitalization include:

Brownfield Remediation Program: This Ohio Department of Development program provides grants for the cleanup of brownfield sites, to assist in the remediation of hazardous substances or petroleum on industrial, commercial, or institutional property. Remediation includes acquisition of a brownfield, demolition performed at a brownfield, and the installation or upgrade of the minimum amount of infrastructure necessary to make a brownfield site operational for economic development activity. To tap into this program, Ontario would have to apply through Richland County's Land Reutilization Corporation.

Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) Program: This state program (offered through the Ohio Department of Development) provides funding to Ohio's non-entitlement communities to improve and provide affordable housing for low- and moderate-income citizens. Through the CHIP Program, eligible communities can undertake a variety of housing-related activities. Through a flexible, community-wide approach, communities improve and provide affordable housing for low-to-moderate income persons and strengthen neighborhoods through community collaboration. CHIP funds are distributed in one competitive funding round per year and eligible applicants can only submit one application per round.

Community Development Block Grants (Formula and Competitive Programs): Certain neighborhoods and households may be eligible for CDBG funds to mitigate slum and blight issues and to assist low to moderate income neighborhoods, among other issues. Although no block groups are classified as low-to-moderate income (LMI), City officials could qualify targeted neighborhoods and qualify them using income surveys to help in attaining stabilization grants to promote neighborhood revitalization, repair critical infrastructure, or remove blighted properties.

Community Reinvestment Area Program: Ontario has 2 Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) zones that offer property tax abatement in conjunction with development and revitalization projects (residential, commercial and industrial). All zones provide abatement for residential projects and should be promoted and utilized extensively in targeted neighborhoods to recharge residential development. Officials could create new CRA areas to promote new development and/or redevelopment in key areas like "Old Ontario". Property tax incentives will be vital to revive this key node in the community.

Energy Special Improvement District (ESID): A common denominator with many of the older commercial and residential structures is old, inefficient energy systems. Ontario could consider creating its own Energy Special Improvement District or work with another ESID in the state of Ohio. This will allow eligible homeowners the ability to tap into up to 100%- 15 year full-cycle flexible financing for projects that focus on conserving energy and generate savings through equipment upgrades to existing facilities, with lighting and building controls, HVAC, boilers and chillers, compressor, motors/drives, refrigeration, waste energy recovery, and electrical distribution.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR): The Ohio Department of Natural Resources is the administrative agent responsible for many grant programs that include:





Clean Ohio Trail Fund: The Clean Ohio Trail Fund (COTF) seeks to improve outdoor recreational opportunities for Ohioans by funding trails for outdoor pursuits of all kinds. The State of Ohio will reimburse up to 75 percent of eligible costs under Clean Ohio Trail Fund with a grantee match of 25 percent.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program provides up to 50% reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.

NatureWorks: This grant program provides up to 75% reimbursement assistance for local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) to for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP): Eligible RTP projects include development of urban trail linkages, trail head and trailside facilities; maintenance of existing trails; restoration of trail areas damaged by usage; improving access for people with disabilities; acquisition of easements and property; development and construction of new trails; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; environment and safety education programs related to trails.

Special / Residential Improvement Districts: Some neighborhoods, especially in the Lexington-Springmill Planning Area and Park East Planning Area need critical street and other neighborhood updates, like sidewalks, lighting and other amenities. One key tool to help fund these improvements is through the utilization of a Special Improvement Districts (SID) and/or Residential Improvement District (RID). These tools, if agreed upon by 60% of property owners, would assess a fee to properties located within the improvement district. Funds raised from this self-assessment would be placed in a special account to finance specific area projects. The formula to determine that fee would be decided upon and agreed to by the property owners.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF): Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development mechanism to finance public infrastructure improvements and, in certain circumstances, residential rehabilitation. A TIF works by locking in the taxable worth of real property at the value it holds at the time the authorizing legislation was approved. Payments derived from the increased assessed value of any improvement to real property beyond that amount are directed towards a separate fund to finance project elements as defined within the TIF legislation. The City of Ontario currently has six active TIF districts and should continue to deploy them along with short and long-term capital improvement plans, working in conjunction with school officials.

Transportation Improvement District: The Richland County TID was created through County Commissioners Resolution in July 2015 and can provide project funding up to \$500,000 per fiscal year for economic development-related projects, and in some cases, residential development-related projects. TID funding can be used for preliminary engineering, detailed design, right-of-way, and construction.

Transportation Alternative Program (ODOT): The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) provides funding for projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; and safe routes to school projects. This funding source could be stacked with other grant programs (ODNR, etc.) to help fund the development of a Rails-to-Trails project along the abandoned rail line aligned south of Park Ave. West.



NatureWorks grants are perfect outlets to help fund, renovate and expand neighborhood parks like Sunset Park.



Many older neighborhoods in the community lack curbs, sidewalks, lighting, and other amenities.

City officials deployed a TIF in the Walker Lake-Lexington Springmill Road area to capture new commercial property valuation to pay for public infrastructure, lighting, sidewalks and other road improvements in the area



CONNECTED COMMUNITY

C-1

PREPARE A TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The purpose of a Transportation Master Plan is to inventory the existing transportation facilities and project demands and needs over the next 20 years based on potential land use changes and growth. The plan would look at all modes of transportation of the community and determine citywide improvements. The common modes of transportation evaluated includes vehicular traffic, truck traffic, transit, airports (if applicable), and enhancing the roadway network for improved safety for vulnerable road users (pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, wheelchairs, and electric scooters). The Transportation Master Plan identifies various significant improvements such as potential roadway connectors; railroad grade separations; non-motorized connectivity; and safety enhancements to the roadway network. One significant benefit of having a Transportation Plan is that many Federal and State funding programs rank funding applications higher for those communities that have the project they are applying for funding in a Master Plan document.

Residents noted a desire for improved and safe pedestrian mobility and connectivity choices. How would you like to see this happen? Select the option you prefer best.

- 46%** *Focus on improving pedestrian connectivity impediments to key destinations like the school complex, Marshall Park, and key shopping areas along Lexington-Springmill Road.*
- 39%** *Build new trails, paths and pedestrian connections*
- 10%** *Improve/fix existing sidewalk network*
- 6%** *No improvements are needed*



A Transportation Master Plan would help the city to effectively manage future project demands and needs and aid in applying for federal and state funding programs for improvements.

C-2

ADOPT A COMPLETE STREET POLICY ORDINANCE

A Complete Street Policy in a community demonstrates the desire to implement safety enhancements and facilities for non-motorized users of the transportation network. The City of Ontario should develop a Complete Streets Policy ordinance or resolution that encourages all improvements to roadways in the community to explore the feasibility of incorporating complete street components.

The intended purpose of a Complete Street Policy is to evaluate if pedestrian or bicycle improvements are feasible on projects such as resurfacing or reconstruction projects that are occurring in the community. This would allow for the exploration of incorporating minor types of enhancements to a project such as the possibility of widening shoulders on a repaving or reconstruction project to allow for 5-FT bike lanes and/or is it feasible to add sidewalks along a corridor that is being resurfaced or improved if none currently exist.

Pedestrian enhancements along roadways being improved could include sidewalk coverage gaps; improving existing sidewalks to current standards and good condition; providing ADA curb ramps; and providing marked crosswalks at intersections. If complete street components are deemed feasible for a project, then it would be added to the project, however if the right-of-way is limited or if it would add too much cost to the project, then it would not be feasible and would not be included in the project. The Complete Street Policy can also be utilized to require proposed private developments in the community to include sidewalks or shared use paths.



An inexpensive road diet could be deployed on Stumbo Road to promote much needed pedestrian connectivity.





C-3

APPLY FOR A SAFE STREETS FOR (SS4A) FEDERAL PLANNING GRANT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A SAFETY ACTION PLAN

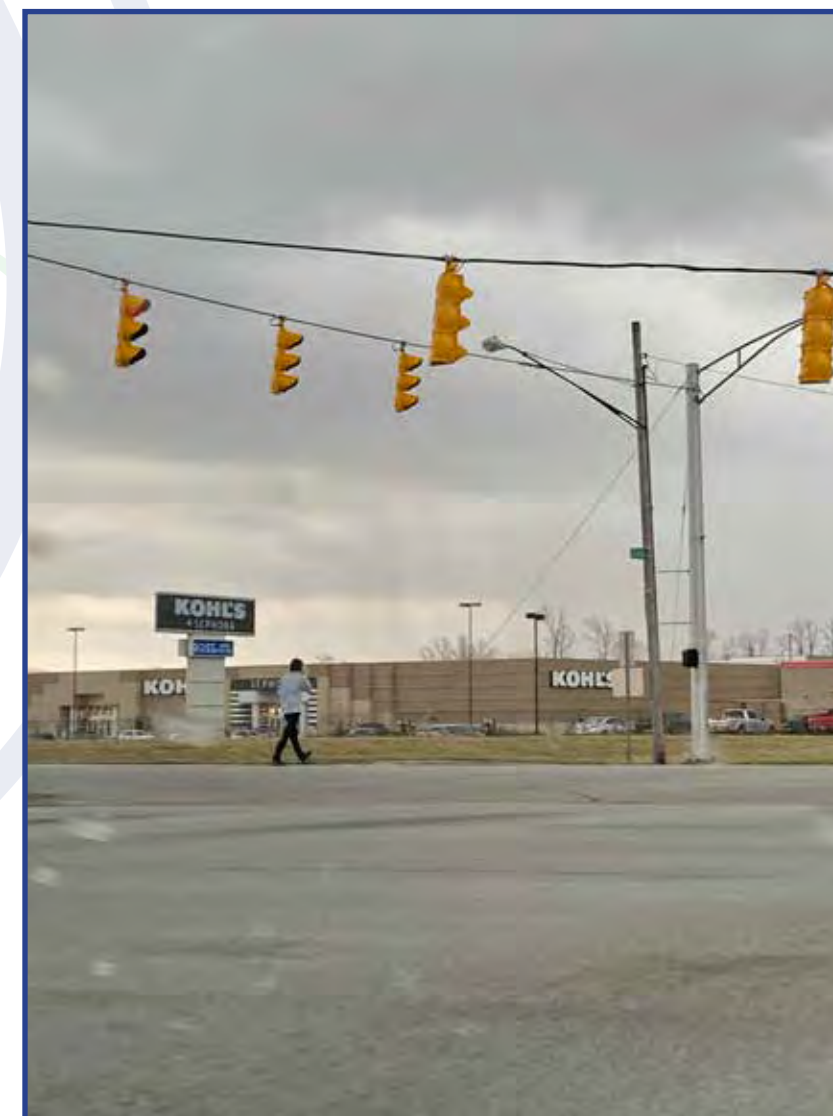
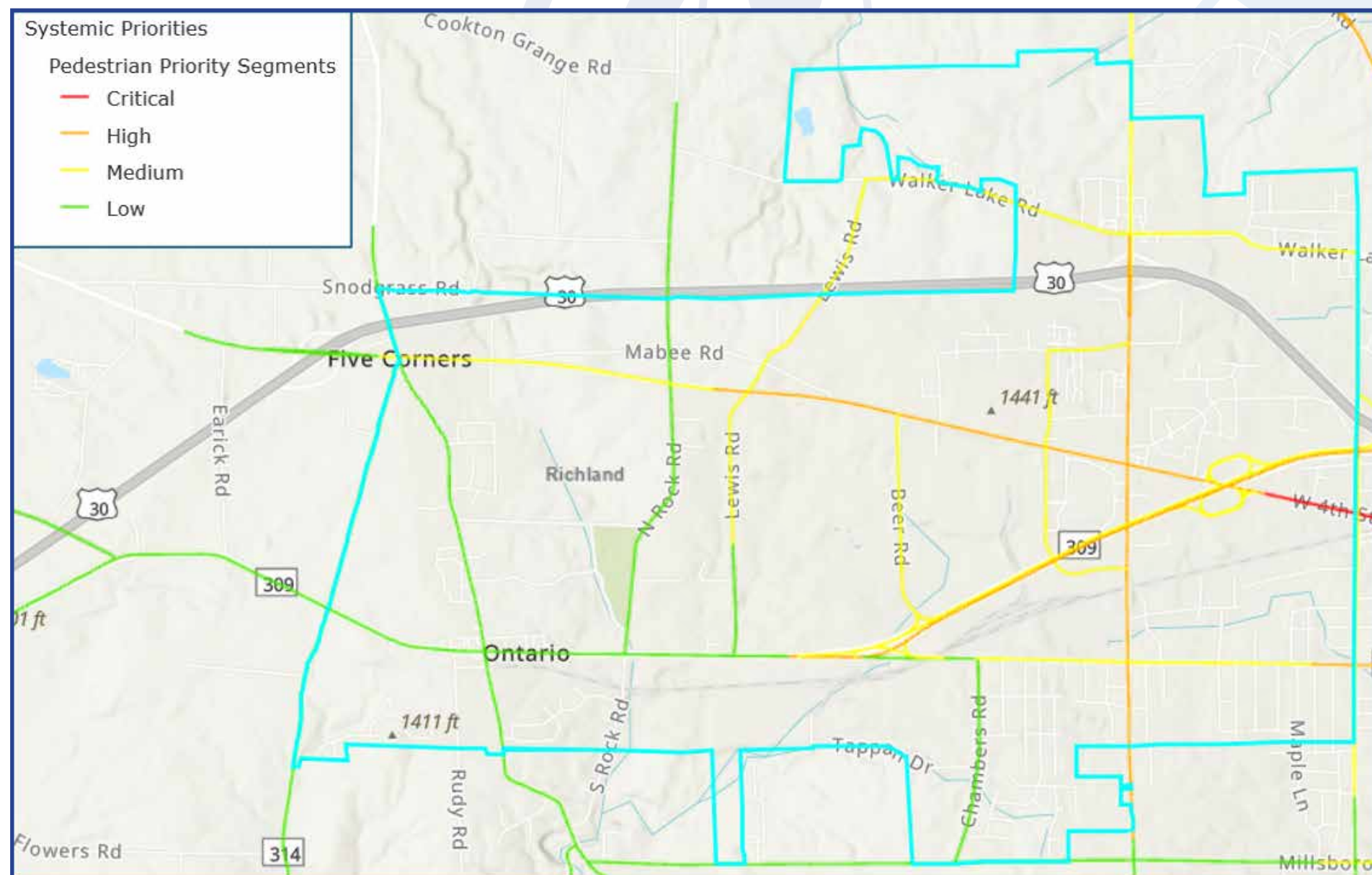
The City of Ontario should consider applying to the SS4A Federal Program for a planning grant to develop a Safety Action Plan. The grant would assist in funding a Safety Action Plan that would inventory and assess the roadway network of the city and develop improvements needed to make the roadways safer for vulnerable roadway users such as pedestrians, bicycles, wheelchairs, etc. Once the Safety Action Plan is created, it can be used to apply to the SS4A Federal Program for an implementation grant, which can provide funding for recommendations outlined in the Safety Action Plan.

C-4

IDENTIFY SYSTEMIC SAFETY PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY CORRIDORS FOR POTENTIAL ODOT GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has developed a map of Pedestrian Priority Segments in communities throughout Ohio. These pedestrian priorities that have been mapped can be utilized as a basis to apply to the ODOT Systemic Safety Program for pedestrian improvements. This funding program can provide up to \$2 Million towards a project that improves pedestrian related infrastructure such as sidewalk projects, ADA curb ramp improvements, shared use paths, enhanced crosswalk markings, improvements to signals for pedestrian safety (push buttons, countdown pedestrian signals, pedestrian signal heads, etc.), and for crossing treatments such as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHBs).

A cursory review of ODOT's Safety Map Viewer assists in identifying these systemic priorities for pedestrian segments (see graphic below). These identified corridors provide the opportunity to apply to ODOT's Systemic Safety program for pedestrian improvements; as well as to other programs such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), ODOT's Abbreviated Safety Program, and the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. Additional pedestrian corridor needs not listed on ODOT's Safety Map Viewer could also be identified in a local plan, such as a Safe Routes to School Travel Plan or an Active Transportation Plan.



A pedestrian crossing Stumbo Road at the intersection with Lexington-Springmill Road. ODOT has identified the stretch of Lexington-Springmill Road from the interchange with US 30 to the southern municipal boundary as a high pedestrian priority segment.





C-5

IMPLEMENT SHORT TERM NON-MOTORIZED ENHANCEMENT PROJECT ALONG LEXINGTON-SPRINGMILL ROAD (WALKER LAKE ROAD TO PARK AVENUE WEST)



A cursory screening of the pedestrian and bicycle crashes in Ontario revealed that the corridor with the highest frequency of crashes involving a pedestrian or bicycle occurred on Lexington-Springmill Road. Most of these crashes were located at intersections. It is recommended that a short term non-motorized enhancement project be considered along this corridor to improve the safety for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the roadways and to fill in any sidewalk gap coverage areas. The project would also look at improving crosswalk markings to enhanced visibility markings, since many of the existing crosswalk markings are difficult to see and have faded pavement markings. The project could also look at adding pedestrian countdown signal heads to locations with signals that may not have these already in place. Potential funding sources for this project could be the ODOT Systemic Safety Program as well as the ODOT Abbreviated Safety Program.

Most vehicle crashes involving a pedestrian or bicyclist occur at intersections along Lexington-Springmill Road where many crosswalks could benefit from enhanced visibility markings.

C-6

PREPARE A SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN WITH ONTARIO LOCAL SCHOOLS

Improving Ontario's pedestrian connectivity infrastructure emerged as a major priority for the more than 1,500 residents and students that were surveyed during the planning process.

The City of Ontario should work with the Ontario Local School District to develop a School Travel Plan (STP). This plan would identify corridors to improve pedestrian facilities that are used by students walking to/from school, and especially to key areas of the community like Old Ontario and nearby neighborhoods. Once the travel plan is finalized, then it can be used to apply for funding through Ohio Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program to build safe travel corridors to school facilities that will encourage walking and biking to and from school.



Recently-installed sidewalks connect Ontario schools to The Cove, a popular post-school hangout spot for youths in the community.

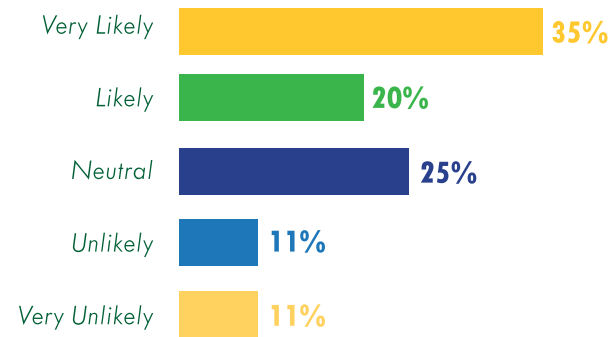




C-7

DEVELOP A PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

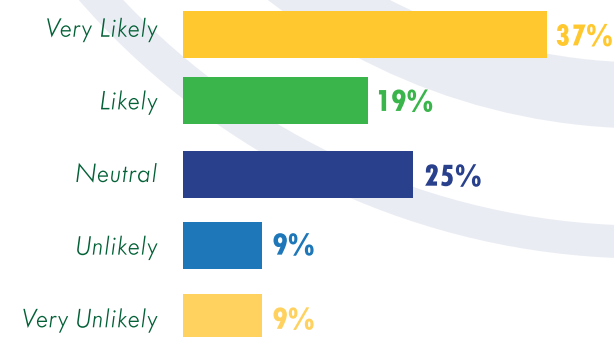
The development of a community pool appears to be something desirous of residents and students. How likely would you be to fund an initiative like this?



- » Pursue the feasibility of a Joint Recreation District. City and park officials could team up with communities that comprise the Ontario Local School District to develop a joint recreation district. Officials could also request the help of the Park District of Richland County with funding park amenities.

Ohio communities are enabled under Ohio Revised Code (Section 755.14) to establish joint recreation districts to raise revenues to equip, operate, and maintain parks, playgrounds, playfields, gymnasiums, public baths, swimming pools, or recreation centers, all with the purpose to promote recreational opportunities and preserve open spaces. This entity could be enabled to issue bonds and retire the debt using levies, sales and other revenues, and help with the improvement of natural watercourses (ORC 755.28), which could aid in the advancement of trail systems throughout Ontario and the defined parks district. These funds could be used to activate the dormant rail line immediate south of Old Ontario.

The development of a community pool appears to be something desirous of residents and students. How likely would you be to fund an initiative like this?



Respondents to the Community Preferences Survey identified improvements to Marshall park as well as neighborhood parks among efforts they would like to see the city pursue.





C-8

DEPLOY BRANDING ELEMENTS (WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY SIGNAGE)

To help bolster the creation of community character in a manner desired by residents, City officials should adopt a set of standards that works to promote a unified Ontario branding theme, deploying these elements in tactical locations around the community, especially on public properties, rights of way, and at community gateways.

The following steps can be taken to improve Ontario's character:

- » Work with stakeholders and residents to develop a branding theme, and areas and assets to activate, along with the phasing approach cognizant of budget and resources.
- » Update the zoning code with supplemental landscaping requirements for certain land uses, and in certain areas like Old Ontario, Marshall Park, and along the key corridors like Lexington Springmill Road, Park Ave West., and Shelby-Ontario Road.
- » City officials should work with interested stakeholders to link and connect community assets through beautification, and interpretive historic signage and wayfinding. A wayfinding signage system would allow for residents and visitors to easily find parks, public parking areas, bike paths, recreational facilities, shopping centers, schools, libraries, public offices, key industries/businesses.
- » Improve gateway signage presence at key intersections and corridors.
- » Fully activate and utilize the City's Shade Tree Commission to help in beautifying public spaces and corridors by accessing outside resources and pursuing grant opportunities.
- » Develop interpretive signage to accentuate key landmarks and areas.
- » Create a process to facilitate and guide public art and murals on participating properties in targeted areas.



Connecting residents and visitors to key assets and destinations in Ontario may require Wayfinding signage.

C-9

IMPLEMENT THE WEST FOURTH STREET CORRIDOR SAFETY STUDY (HOME ROAD TO SR 314)

A safety study of West Fourth Street (PID-113954) from the US 30 Ramps to Home Road was conducted in 2023. This study should be utilized to pursue funding programs such as the ODOT Safety Program, the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC), and several funding programs through the Richland County Regional Planning Commission such as the CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation Air Quality) Program, Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, and various Federal Programs. The Safety Study solicited City of Ontario input on prioritizing recommendations that resulted in the listing below:

City Priorities

1. Safety improvements to 4th Street at Rock Road intersection.
2. Safety improvements to 4th Street at SR 14/Shelby-Ontario Road intersection(s).
3. Safety improvements to 4th Street at Home Road and Lexington-Springmill Road intersection.
4. Safety improvements to 4th Street at Stumbo Road intersection.
5. Implementing access management along 4th Street to improve corridor safety.

City Preferences

- » SR 314/Shelby-Ontario Road – Alternative #1 (Dual Roundabouts)
- » Rock Road - Alternative #2 (Roundabout)
- » Stumbo Road - Alternative #2 (Access Management)
- » Lexington-Springmill Road – Alternative #1 (Right Turn Lanes all approaches)
- » Home Road – Alternative #1 (Westbound Left Turn Lane, Southbound and Eastbound Right Turn Lanes).

C-10

PARK AVENUE/SR 309 CORRIDOR SAFETY STUDY (HOME ROAD TO SR 314)

A review of crash data from ODOT revealed that Park Avenue is experiencing a crash frequency problem. It is recommended that a corridor safety study be conducted to analyze existing conditions, crash history/patterns, and explore potential solutions to improve safety for both motorized and non-motorized users of the corridor. A detailed safety study of the corridor once completed, would be used to apply to applicable funding programs such as the ODOT safety programs (Formal Program, Systemic Program, and Abbreviated Program). Additionally, the Richland County Regional Planning Commission has programs such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, CMAQ, and Transportation Alternatives that could be explored for funding, depending on the types of improvements recommended.





C-11

LEXINGTON-SPRINGMILL ROAD CORRIDOR SAFETY STUDY (PARK AVENUE WEST TO WALKER LAKE ROAD)

The crash data from ODOT revealed the corridor with the highest frequency of crash occurrences is Lexington-Springmill Road from Park Avenue northward to Walker Lake Road. It is recommended that a safety study be conducted to identify potential safety countermeasures to reduce the types and frequencies of crashes occurring on this corridor. Both motorized and non motorized improvements would be explored in the safety study to improve conditions for vulnerable roadway users (pedestrians, bikes, wheelchairs, etc.) as well as for vehicular traffic. A detailed safety study of the corridor once completed, would be used to apply to applicable funding programs such as the ODOT safety programs (Formal Program, Systemic Program, and Abbreviated Program). Additionally, the Richland County Regional Planning Commission has programs such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, CMAQ, and Transportation Alternatives that could be explored for funding, depending on the types of improvements recommended.

C-12

SR 309/PARK AVENUE WEST/BEER ROAD INTERSECTION AREA AND RR UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENT STUDY

In 2015, a Traffic Engineering Study was conducted for the intersection areas involving SR 309, Park Avenue, and Beer Road. This is a complex intersection area that would benefit from consolidating the expansive area and simplifying the intersections, as well as to improve the railroad underpass that experiences flooding during heavy rain events. The railroad underpass on Park Avenue (SR 430) also is showing structural degradation of the concrete supports, as it appears to have been constructed back in 1930 per the year built stamped into the structure. It is recommended that a new Feasibility-Safety Study be conducted to assess potential engineering solutions to this problematic area. There are currently several railroad grade separation Federal funding programs that may be potential funding sources to improve the railroad grade separation facility.



Streetview of an underpass at Park Ave.

C-13

PURSUE THE FEASIBILITY OF ADOPTING A STREET LEVY

Infrastructure is costly to maintain and to improve within a community. At the present time, Ontario allocates varying amounts every year to improve roads. There is a significant benefit for those communities that have established a dedicated capital improvement fund for financing road and non-motorized facilities. These transportation-dedicated funds would be used to begin making systemic improvements to roadways and pedestrian/bicycle facilities within the City of Ontario. Having such a funding source dedicated to transportation improvements provides a local match that is needed for many of the state and federal funding programs that typically require anywhere from 10% to 50% of the costs of a project. Having a dedicated local funding source (e.g., street levy) for transportation improvements is very beneficial to chasing these state and federal funding programs to leverage these funds from outside sources.

C-14

INTERSECTION CONTROL EVALUATION (ICE) FEASIBILITY STUDY OF PARK AVENUE WEST & SHELBY-ONTARIO ROAD/LEXINGTON-ONTARIO ROAD INTERSECTION

This intersection on the west side of the City of Ontario is a critical access point for Ontario High School student traffic and for sporting events at the school. The intersection is currently a signalized intersection with single lanes on all approaches, which causes delays during peak traffic periods when the high school traffic is arriving and dismissing. There are also no pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, ADA curb ramps, or crosswalks) located at this intersection. It is recommended that an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Feasibility Study should be conducted to determine the best intersection traffic control for servicing traffic through the intersection. Located approximately 350-FT south of this intersection on Lexington Ontario Road is an abandoned railroad that runs eastward towards Rock Road and other points eastward. This study could also explore a potential connection to develop a Shared Use Path (SUP) along this old railroad right of way that could provide a nice connection to various parts of the city.



The intersection of Lexington-Ontario Rd and Park Avenue West (SR-309).





C-15

EXPLORE FEASIBILITY OF A RAILS-TO-TRAILS SHARED USE PATH FROM ROCK ROAD IN CITY OF ONTARIO, WESTWARD INTO SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP AND BEYOND.

The City of Ontario should explore the potential to use the abandoned railroad line Rails-to-Trails Shared Use Path (SUP) facility from Rock Road westward into Springfield Township (and even to terminate in the City of Galion). There could be a SUP connection that would run along the east side of Rock Road northward to connect to Cal Miller Lane that provides access to Ontario Marshall Park. A potential trail head could possibly be located on the northeast corner of Park Avenue & Rock Road which is city-owned property, or a trail head could be in Marshall Park.

This Rails-to-Trails SUP would provide a great recreational trail that connects the communities of Ontario and Galion. The SUP could eventually be extended east of Rock Road to connect with the Richland County Humane Society- or even further east if the railroad line becomes abandoned.

Potential partners to consider on this project would be City of Ontario, Springfield Township, Richland County Parks District, Richland County RPC, Crawford Park District, Crawford County, City of Galion, ODOT, ODNR, Pennsylvania Lines, LLC (who still owns the right-of-way per GIS data), and property owners (that may own rights of way). Potential funding programs could be the Transportation Alternatives Program, CMAQ Program, Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (all via Richland County RPC), Various Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) programs such as the Systemic Safety Program for pedestrian improvements and the Abbreviated Safety Program. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has the Recreational Trails Program and Clean Ohio Trail Fund that is available to compete for funding.



The former rail line directly south of SR 309/Park Avenue West is abandoned and could be repurposed as a valuable recreational asset.



A map of active and abandoned railroads from the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC). The abandoned stretch of railroad from Galion to Ontario could be used for pedestrian connectivity by working with adjacent municipalities and private property owners.





UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ontario's local water, sanitary and storm utilities are generally in a serviceable operating condition and able to support existing development within the community. However, limited excess capacity is available for future in-fill of available lands due to limitations primarily within the sanitary sewers due to excessive amounts of I/I entering the system during wet weather. The water system currently has available supply through its existing WTP constructed in 1999 but needs a detailed facility assessment to ensure long-term operations and modeling of the distribution system to enhance system-wide resiliency and water quality.

I-1

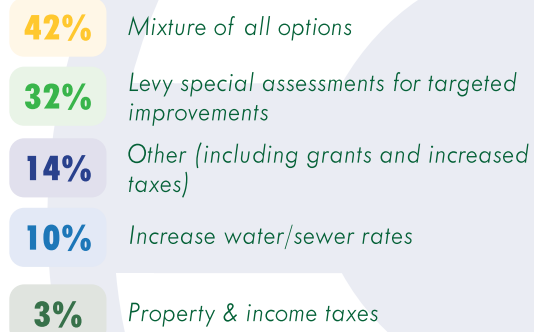
DEVELOP WATER DISTRIBUTION MODEL & MASTER PLAN

Creation of a Water Distribution Model & Master Plan would enable the City administration to further assess planned improvements in the distribution system and identify capital improvements to ensure long-term resiliency, while also confirming areas of excessive water age. The initial model should include all physical attributes of the system (e.g. – mains, services, valves, hydrants, and elevated tanks) and estimates for demands distributed throughout the system.

Regular reviews and updates to the model to reflect capital improvements and modifications, as well as confirmation of assumed sizes and connections, should be undertaken at least annually. System-wide demands should be evaluated every two (2) to three (3) years and any significant increases due to new customers or closure should also be reflected. Flows derived during semi-annual hydrant flushing should be compared to predicted fire flows within the model and significant variations noted for further evaluation.

A significant benefit of having an up-to-date Distribution System Model & Master Plan will be in the ability of the City to react in a timely manner for predicting capacity to take on new developments and/or large-scale customers, as well as creating a timeline for nominating projects for applicable funding.

Residents completing the community survey noted a need to address failing infrastructure, public health, and water quality/capacity. What mechanisms would you support to enable the City to repair local infrastructure?



I-2

PREPARE A HYDRANT AND VALVE REPAIR, REPLACEMENT & TESTING PLAN

The creation of a local Water Distribution Model & Master Plan in Strategy I-1 above will require development of a detailed inventory of the water system assets, including fire hydrants and valves. The hydrants and valves are critical assets of the community and require periodic maintenance and replacement to avoid significant disruption of service due to a main break, construction mishap or other in-system emergency. Additionally, ensuring reliable operation of hydrants during a local fire can help to save lives and property.

Creation of a written plan to include at least annual exercising, inspections and repairs for valves and hydrants will enable Ontario to plan and sequence necessary replacements in a proactive, rather than a reactive, manner. Such proactive approach will save the community money long-term and aid to reduce risk for its citizens. In addition, the asset inventory will aid the City in meeting the Ohio EPA reporting requirements for Asset Management Plans.

I-3

IMPROVE RESILIENCY WITHIN WATER DISTRIBUTION BY DEVELOPING A LONG-TERM WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

Detailed findings within the Water Distribution Model & Master Plan (Strategy I-1) will help City personnel to define a long-term schedule for planned water main replacements and system upgrades that is data-driven and readily coordinated with other planned improvements. Such planning will enable Council and Administration to more accurately predict water rate structures and pursue funding opportunities. The result of such efforts will be a more robust and resilient distribution system to support day-to-day consumption throughout the community and provide a resource for continued in-fill and development.

"In the last 20 years there have been several water and sewer breaks up and down my street. I heard someone say 'Infrastructure is something almost out of sight, out of mind' and they're right. We need to make sure we invest in our infrastructure so we can maintain and grow."

I-4

COMPLETE WTP INSPECTION & ASSESSMENT OF FACILITIES – DEVELOP & MAINTAIN ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AND DATABASE

As noted previously, the City of Ontario WTP was reconstructed in 1999 and is nearing 25 years of continuous use without significant updates or upgrades. The typical useful life of WTP equipment can range from 20 to 40 years and requires regular maintenance and inspections. Coordination of a detailed facility-wide inspection and assessment by a consulting firm, including the creation of an asset management database, will enable the City to plan for and enact strategic equipment updates and replacements, while avoiding potentially catastrophic failures of devices throughout the WTP. The asset management system will also aid City staff in meeting the requirements of the Ohio EPA for their asset management plan and contingency plan.





I-5

DEVELOP WASTEWATER COLLECTION SYSTEM GENERAL PLAN & INFLOW & INFILTRATION (I/I) REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Average daily flow rates within the sanitary sewer system during dry weather are about 1.2 MGD, with peak wet weather flows potentially exceeding 9.0 MGD. The local sanitary sewer system is a separated sewer system that includes at least one (1) known structural sanitary sewer overflow (SSO). The existence of this SSO and the proximity of the City of Ontario within a sensitive watershed, will likely result in the City receiving action for the Ohio EPA to require a detailed assessment of the sanitary collection system to enable elimination of the SSO.

Additionally, the excessive I/I have caused basement backups and takes up capacity that could otherwise be leveraged for additional growth within the City. Sewer investigations can also significantly aid in locating other deficiencies such as deteriorating pipes and manholes, root intrusion and similar defects that warrant improvement to the collection system.

Creation of a Wastewater Collection System General Plan & I/I Reduction Plan should include detailed field investigations, including flow metering, cleaning and CCTV of the mains and manholes, targeted smoke and dyed water testing to identify sources of I/I, updates to the City GIS system and database and creation of a computerized model of the local sewers and pumping stations.

Beginning the process of identifying financial resources and budgeting for a General Plan proactively will aid in engendering support through the Ohio EPA and provide opportunity for the City to create a reasonable workplan and schedule for implementation of recommendations. The defined schedule for improvement will also aid the City in coordinating infrastructure improvements throughout the City to avoid conflicts with other planned projects and related inconvenience to local customers.

I-6

CONTINUE PURSUIT & ELIMINATION OF SOURCES OF INFLOW & INFILTRATION (I/I)

In conjunction with developing the General Plan, the City should continue to conduct system-wide investigations to identify and remove public and private sources of clean water entering the sanitary collection system. Capital improvements for the elimination of I/I may include sewer, manhole and service connection replacements and rehabilitation via trenchless technologies such as lining, pipe bursting and grouting. The City should also work with private property owners to identify sources such as downspouts, footer tiles and sump pumps that may be connected to the system, as well as correcting damaged and failing service leads.



Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) occurs throughout the community, particularly in uncurbed neighborhoods.

I-7

PURSUE STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE PUMPING SYSTEMS TO REPLACE WITH GRAVITY SEWERS

The local topography for the City of Ontario dictates that pumping stations are quite necessary to serve many areas of the City and enable the City to discharge to the City of Mansfield system. Pumping stations can be prone to failure over time and are limited for the range of flows that may be conveyed. As an extension of the General Plan and Sewer Modeling denoted within Strategy I-5 above, the City should consider the possibility of extending gravity sewers in key areas of the City to enable elimination of pumping systems where technically and economically feasible.

I-8

IMPROVE STORM WATER MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING LOW-IMPACT DESIGN (LID) SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE RUNOFF AND IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

The local design standards currently provide requirements for stormwater detention. The Ohio EPA Construction Stormwater General Permit provides additional requirements for control of sediment and nutrients discharging from private and public construction sites greater than 1.0-acre. While the regulations are a significant driver for water quality, the implementation of low impact design (LID) solutions, or “green infrastructure” enhancements, can also provide tangible benefit in reducing the rate of stormwater runoff, I/I entering the sanitary collection system and local surface flooding. Utilizing LID alternatives within City capital programs will also set a good example for future development within the community.

The City should consider amending the Zoning Code and modifying local design standards to encourage the use of LID solutions to eliminate localized flooding, reduce I/I entering the collection system and improve water quality for the local receiving streams.

I-9

PURSUE CREATION OF PAVEMENT RATING SYSTEM & DATABASE TO PRIORITIZE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Ontario has previously considered creating a local pavement rating system and database for its local streets. Development of such a system, linked to the City’s GIS system, will enable City administration and staff to proactively plan and define budgets for pavement improvements as a data-driven, objective process. The City should pursue proposals from outside consultants to provide a detailed pavement management and rating system linked to the local GIS system.





I-10

PURSUE ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF PROVIDING STREET TREE MAINTENANCE

It is our understanding that the City provided tree debris and lawn waste removals and cleanup services to residents in response to damages caused by local storms several years ago. This service was intended to be temporary but was popular and heavily utilized and has become an on-going service provided through the Public Works Department.

As a smaller community with limited resources and broad responsibility, continuing such local services pulls staff and equipment away from other day-to-day duties that must also be completed. If the City administration desires to maintain such a service to the residents and businesses, the City should pursue the feasibility of either engaging an outside firm to provide the street tree maintenance and yard waste disposal services or consider utilizing an outside firm to conduct services typically performed by Public Works.

I-11

UPDATE/MODERNIZE ENGINEERING RULES & LOCAL DESIGN STANDARDS, INCLUDING UPDATES TO SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

While the prior rules and regulations established for the City of Ontario were effective for their time, they will need to be overhauled and updated to meet current best practices and regulations. These new rules will also become a resource for developers and designers interested in completing local projects. The new subdivision regulations and engineering standards will be created and amended periodically to also reflect the findings of the water and sewer modeling efforts and stormwater management, as well as other local policies developed for the benefit of the community.

Subdivision regulations could also require the completion of road networks in the existing neighborhoods by connecting stubbed roads to adjacent future residential growth areas to provide access for residents, since some residential areas have little to no connectivity. Planned transportation improvements in these areas will become more important as residential development increases. Other items to be included in modern subdivision design and development is connectivity to adjacent developments and public destinations.

I-12

DEVELOP SUCCESSION PLANS TO AID IN THE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF DEPARTMENT STAFF

Like many communities throughout the region, the City of Ontario is seeing rapid changeover in staffing due to retirements and other impacts to the current local workforce. Unfunded mandates from the Ohio EPA for licensure and monitoring to operate local systems, as well as market pressures for wages, have contributed to the challenge of effectively recruiting and retaining talent for long-term employment and succession planning.

Engagement with statewide resources and professional organizations can help the City remain apprised of continuing trends within the industry and provide opportunity to reach a wider group of potential candidates for employment. The City administration should also engage with local trade schools and community colleges to provide information on career opportunities for new and recent graduates.

I-13

CONDUCT CROSS-TRAINING OF ALL CITY STAFF FOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION

As a smaller community with limited resources and responsibility for a large footprint of infrastructure, it will be valuable for cooperative engagement between multiple departments to support and assist in local efforts for sharing information and conducting maintenance and repairs.

The safety services provided by the Police and Fire Departments can greatly enhance the awareness of the utility and public works divisions by simply notifying counterparts of issues such as standing water, pavement failures, wet or heavily saturated areas and non-working or poorly performing fire hydrants. All of these can be indicators of broken or leaking water mains and fittings, plugged sewers and outlets and other local infrastructure issues. Proactive communications throughout City departments and divisions will help to reduce costs and reduce risks to local customers and residents.

I-14

PURSUE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

As a sprawling community, Ontario has a big footprint to manage and maintain. It is challenged by having limited funding resources due to many different regular obligations that include planned upgrades to improve I/I, stormwater management, road maintenance and improvements to the transportation systems. Efforts should be ongoing to locate and develop strategies for leveraging funding sources to enable the City to complete on-going and long-term capital programs.



An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood. In the foreground, there is a road with a white center line. To the left of the road is a large green area, likely a golf course, with several trees. In the background, there are many houses with dark roofs, interspersed with trees. The entire image has a dark blue overlay.

06

Plan Implementation



COMMUNITY GROWTH AND REVITALIZATION IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Element No.	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization							Time Frame	Percent Complete
		City Council	Planning Commission	City Departments	Ontario Local Schools	County Organizations	Local / Other Organizations			
CGR-1	Update the Zoning Ordinance	✓	✓	Zoning			Business and Property Owners	S		
CGR-2	Develop Overlay Zoning Districts	✓	✓	Zoning		Richland Plan Commission, Soil/Water Conservation District	Property Owners, Avita Health	S-M		
CGR-3	Increase Code Enforcement	✓	✓	Mayor, Law, Fire Dept, Zoning		Richland County Plan Commission, Health Department	Business and Property Owners, Private Sector Contractors	O		
CGR-4	Adopt a Rental Registration Ordinance	✓		Mayor, Law, Fire Dept, Zoning			Neighborhood Organizations, property owners	S		
CGR-5	Adopting a Vacant Property Registration Resolution (VPRO)	✓		Mayor, Law, Zoning		County Auditor	Neighborhood Organizations, property owners	S		
CGR-6	Update Nuisance and Property Maintenance Standards	✓	✓	Mayor, Law, Zoning			Neighborhood Organizations, property owners	S		
CGR-7	Pursue the Development of Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)	✓		Mayor, Law, Zoning	✓	County Land Bank, Richland Area Chamber, Richland County Growth Corporation	Neighborhood Organizations	M		
CGR-8	Update the Community Reinvestment Area Program		✓	Mayor, Law, Zoning	✓	County Auditor	ODOD	S		
CGR-9	Formalize the Jobs Grant Program	✓		Mayor		Richland Area Chamber		S		
CGR-10	Develop a Plan to Activate the "Old Ontario" Area	✓	✓	Administration	✓		Property Owners, Developers, Stakeholders	S-M		
CGR-11	Pursue the Feasibility of Creating a Community Development Department	✓		Mayor, Zoning				M		
CGR-12	Encourage Balanced Growth	✓	✓	Administration	✓	Richland County Regional Planning Commission; Richland Area Chamber	Property Owners, Neighborhood Groups	O		
CGR-13	Leverage Incentives and Grant Resources	✓		Mayor, Zoning	✓	County Land Bank; Richland County Regional Planning Commission; Richland Area Commerce	ODOD, ODNR, EDA, Property Owners, Neighborhood Groups	O		

S = Short (less than 2 years), M = Medium (3-5 years), L = Long (6-10 years), O = Ongoing



CONNECTED COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Element No.	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization							Time Frame	Percent Complete
		City Council	Planning Commission	City Departments	Ontario Local Schools	County Organizations	Local / Other Organizations			
C-1	Prepare a Transportation Master Plan	✓		Mayor, Streets Dept., Police/Fire, Engineer	✓	Richland Co. RPC County Engineer, Richland County Transit	Consultant, ODOT, Springfield Township, City of Mansfield, Regional Airport	S-<		
C-2	Adopt a Complete Street Policy Ordinance	✓	✓	Mayor, Streets Dept.		Richland Co. RPC, County Engineer		S		
C-3	Apply for a Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Federal Planning Grant for Development of a Safety Action Plan	✓		Mayor, Streets Dept.	✓	Richland Co. RPC, County Engineer	Interested Stakeholders	S		
C-4	Identify Systemic Safety Pedestrian Priority Corridors for Potential ODOT Grant Applications	✓	✓	Mayor, Streets Dept.	✓	Richland Co. RPC, Richland County Parks District	City of Mansfield, Springfield Township, Business Owners, Nonprofits	S		
C-5	Implement Short Term Non-Motorized Enhancement Project Along Lexington-Springmill Rd. (Walker Lake Rd. to Park Ave.)	✓		Mayor, Streets Dept.		Richland Co. RPC, County Engineer	ODOT	S		
C-6	Prepare a School Travel Plan with Ontario Local Schools	✓		Mayor, Streets Dept.	✓	Richland County Parks District, Richland Co. RPC, Richland Co. Health Dept., Richland County Transit	ODOT	S		
C-7	Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan	✓		Parks Dept, Safety-Service, Maintenance	✓	Richland County Park District	Springfield Township, Troy Township, Neighborhood Groups, Property Owners	M		
C-8	Deploy Branding Elements (Wayfinding and Gateway Signage)	✓	✓	Maintenance, Streets Dept.	✓	County Engineer, Richland County Park District	Springfield Township, Troy Township, Businesses, Nonprofits	M		
C-9	Implement W. 4th St. Corridor Safety Study (Home Rd. to SR314)	✓	✓	Mayor, Safety-Service, Streets Dept.		Richland Co. RPC	ODOT	S		
C-10	Park Ave./SR309 Corridor Safety Study (Home Rd. to SR314)	✓	✓	Mayor, Safety-Service, Streets Dept.		Richland Co. RPC	ODOT	S		
C-11	Lexington-Springmill Rd. Corridor Safety Study (Park Ave. to Walker Lake Rd.)	✓	✓	Mayor, Safety-Service, Streets Dept.		Richland Co. RPC	ODOT	S		
C-12	SR309/Park Ave./Beer Rd. Intersections Area and RR Underpass Improvement Study	✓	✓	Mayor, Safety-Service, Streets Dept.		Richland Co. RPC	ODOT	M-L		
C-13	Pursue the Feasibility of Adopting a Street Levy	✓	✓	Mayor, Safety-Service, Streets Dept.	✓	Richland Co. RPC	ODOT	M-L		
C-14	Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Feasibility Study of Park Ave. West & Shelby-Ontario Rd./Lexington-Ontario Rd. Intersection	✓	✓	Mayor, Safety-Service, Streets Dept.	✓	Richland Co. RPC	ODOT	S		
C-15	Explore the Feasibility of a Rails-to-Trails Shared Use Path from Rock Rd westward into Springfield Twp. and Beyond	✓		Mayor, Safety-Service, Streets Dept.	✓	Richland County Park District, Richland Co. RPC	ODOT, ODNR, Crawford County, City of Galion, Pennsylvania Lines LLC	S-0		





UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Element No.	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization						Time Frame	Percent Complete
		City Council	Planning Commission	City Departments	Ontario Local Schools	County Organizations	Local / Other Organizations		
I-1	Develop Water Distribution Model & Master Plan	✓		Water Dept., Public Works, Mayor, Fire Dept.			Village of Crestline	M-0	
I-2	Prepare a Hydrant and Valve Repair, Replacement & Testing Plan	✓		Water Dept., Public Works, Mayor				M	
I-3	Improve Resiliency within Water Distribution by Developing a Long-Term Water Main Replacement Program	✓		Water Dept., Public Works, Mayor				0	
I-4	Complete WTP Inspection & Assessment of Facilities ~ Develop & Maintain Asset Management Program and Database	✓		Water Dept., Public Works, Mayor				S-0	
I-5	Develop Wastewater Collection System General Plan & Inflow & Infiltration (I/I) Reduction Strategies	✓		Public Works, Mayor			City of Mansfield, Ohio EPA	S	
I-6	Continue Pursuit & Elimination of Sources of Inflow & Infiltration (I/I)	✓		Public Works, Mayor			Ohio EPA	0	
I-7	Pursue Strategies to Eliminate Pumping Systems to Replace with Gravity Sewers	✓		Public Works, Mayor			Ohio EPA	0	
I-8	Improve Storm Water Management, Including Low-Impact Design (LID) Solutions to Reduce Runoff and Improve Water Quality	✓	✓	Public Works, Mayor, MS4 Coordinator		County Engineer	City of Mansfield, Property Owners, Developers	M	
I-9	Continue Updates of Pavement Rating System to Prioritize Capital Improvements	✓		Public Works, Mayor				0	
I-10	Pursue Alternative Means of Providing Street Tree Maintenance	✓		Public Works, Mayor				L	
I-11	Update/Modernize Engineering Rules & Local Design Standards, Including Updates to Subdivision Regulations	✓	✓	Sewer Dept., Water Dept., Public Works, Mayor		County Engineer, Health Dept.		S	
I-12	Recruit & Retain Additional Staff for all Departments ~ Develop Succession Plans	✓		Sewer Dept., Water Dept., Public Works, Mayor				M-0	
I-13	Conduct Cross-Training of All City Staff for Interdepartmental Cooperation	✓		Public Works, Sewer Dept., Water Dept., Fire Dept.				S-0	
I-14	Pursue Alternative Funding for Capital Projects	✓		Mayor, Engineer			Ohio EPA, OWDA, USDA, CDBG, OPWC, ODOT, AMP Ohio	0	

