

**RICHLAND TOWNSHIP  
2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**MAY 2019**

Prepared by:

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## FOREWORD

This Plan has been developed to provide the foresight and guidance necessary to provide the community with a wide variety of housing and employment opportunities, while preserving the community's rural character and its existing quality of life with targeted infrastructure upgrades and community services as identified in this Plan. The Plan strives to balance shared rural conservative community values based on agricultural pursuits with the need for, and implications stemming from, population growth and rural residential development.

This Plan recognizes the consequences of unplanned growth and carefully considered the environmental implications of such growth on water quality, wildlife, and available farmland. The Plan calls for increased coordination between proponents of rural residential development, transportation officials, farmers, and advocates of the environment. The Plan examines the costs of residential development and potential impacts associated with such development. The Plan recognizes the need to address and revise various regulatory controls including zoning, site design, exterior maintenance, and permitting processes. The Plan also calls for increased coordination between the Township and the various other local and state agencies charged with regulatory oversight in the areas of transportation, public utilities, parks, and education. The Plan should be considered pro-agriculture. It is offered as a vision for the future based on existing opportunities and current challenges within the community. It is hoped that the Plan provides the insight and direction necessary to fulfill the collective dreams of those daring to do so.

That being stated this Plan is a planning document; a document that looks 20+ years into the future. Technologies, issues and priorities will all change over time. The declarative nature of the previous paragraph reflects current issues that should be explored and implemented as possible – based on available resources (human/fiscal). Most of the issues, recommendation and strategies identified in this Plan are place-based within the Township. As such they will have a direct impact on the people who work/reside within the Township. Under the current limits of Township government much of the work identified herein will be done by others – after the Township initiates a request for help. The Plan attempts to provide a path of opportunities based on policies, programming and objectives.

The Plan Advisory Committee charged with the responsibility of developing this Plan has diligently supported the task of preparing for the future development of Richland Township. The Advisory Committee has devoted hours discussing, reviewing, and arguing differing points of view on difficult subjects necessary to the Plan's development and adoption. The Advisory Committee made it possible for the Regional Planning Commission and others to bring this project to closure. The Advisory Committee was comprised of various individuals familiar with the Township and its residents. Those persons involved in the Plan review reflect a larger group and include elected and appointed officials as well as long-time Township residents.

### **Township Administration:**

Gary Lugibihl, Trustee  
Donald K. Brauen, Trustee  
Rod Goldsberry, Trustee  
Neil Reichenbach, Fiscal Officer  
Mike Zimmerly, Zoning Inspector

### **Zoning Commission:**

Alan Begg  
Richard Bixel  
Mike Gleason  
Jeff Laing  
Doug Rosenbauer

### **Board of Zoning Appeals:**

Dave Jones  
Chuck Niswander  
Walter Rysz  
Ken Yoakam  
Phil Zimmerly

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This Plan is the result of a continuing and comprehensive planning process that has examined population, demographics, employment, land use, housing, and transportation in order to address issues related to the future development of Richland Township. The Comprehensive Plan contains: the history of the site and situation of Richland Township, a discussion of community development problems and opportunities, a discussion setting forth goals and objectives, a plan of action, and performance measures that will be used to evaluate to what extent goals and objectives have been achieved.
- Priorities identified within the Plan target: the preservation of the existing rural way of life; protecting working farms; supporting and strengthening the agricultural foundation and economic base of the community; and balancing the development of infrastructure necessary to support residential and commercial growth. The Plan is pro-growth, but it looks to protect the natural environment and limit needless sprawl. The Plan expects local officials to increase the coordination and communication between development interests and local and state officials when addressing development's impact on utility services, transportation infrastructure, the natural environment, and open space.
- Based on recent decennial Census tabulations, future population projections for Richland Township suggests a steady increase through 2040; gaining an estimated 422 residents. The projected increase will impact the demand on community facilities, land use, and associated public services. Richland Township's population is projected to continually grow older by 2040; empty nesters are expected to comprise 86.4 percent of the population by 2040, and seniors are expected to comprise 26.6 percent of the total population. Age of residents will also impact the need for service, including education, police, fire, and emergency medical services. Household size is expected to continue its decline to 2.46 people per household, increasing the demand for new housing while at the same time increasing the stress upon transportation and other social services. Local policies will need to be reviewed to increase opportunities for housing, choice, and affordability based on both physical and financial considerations.
- Over 45.1 percent of Richland Township's housing units were built before 1960. Single-family dwellings comprised 97.2 percent of Richland Township housing units in 2014. Home ownership accounts for 87.8 percent of all housing units. The median home value in Richland Township (\$142,589) was significantly higher than Allen County (\$111,000) and Ohio (\$138,600).
- The existing highway system supplies a solid network for the movement of goods and people within and through Richland Township. The total roadway system in Richland Township consists of 108.4 miles of roadway, of which 20.3 miles are classified as under state jurisdiction. Almost two-thirds (64.5%) of the system is classified as local, and the Township is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of 44.7 miles. In 2015, vehicle miles of travel (VMT) per day approached 347,400 per day. The identification of alternative funding streams to maintain the integrity and safety of local roadways will become an issue as new development occurs. Currently, I-75, US 30, SR 696, and Dixie Highway serve as the primary routes into and through Richland Township. These routes are gateways into the community and are valuable assets that need to reflect the pride and capabilities of the community. Undertaking corridor studies, streetscape projects, and integrating access management regulations will help improve the safety of area roadways and further long term community interests.

- Examining potable water, Richland Township relies primarily on individual wells located on residential properties and farms. The existing water distribution system in Richland Township is constrained to incorporated areas, with the exception of Lincoln Hwy out to the ODOT outpost at the intersection at Swaney Rd. When examining wastewater treatment service, Richland Township is served by Allen County and the Village of Beaverdam. To date Beaverdam has not been very non-aggressive with extending their sewer service outside of the confines of the incorporated area. Extensions of Bluffton's sewer services have historically required annexation. Concerns arise over the coordination of future extensions of both sanitary sewer and municipal water services.
- Without significant policy changes, future residential demand reflects 211 additional residential units consuming an additional 519.7 acres. In order to protect the rural character of Richland Township, design elements and development standards need to be considered. Encroachment by residential units into highly productive agricultural land must be limited to the maximum extent possible. The continued permitting of strip development on Township and County roads only exacerbates the need for extending expensive and unnecessary municipal services. The Plan argues for the development of Protected Agricultural Districts and zoning amendments to protect working farms.
- Key issues of concern to future development revolve around the availability, adequacy, and costs of providing sufficient infrastructure and services. The community must begin to recognize the capital assets already invested in, and devoted to, its various wastewater and transportation systems and establish programs and policies to control development and those costs required to support such development.
- The Plan promotes the protection and integration of environmentally sensitive areas within quality, high value developments and/or through public acquisition to protect access for future generations. More specifically, the Plan identifies the inclusion of: (a) mandated riverine buffers to be established to improve water quality; (b) landscaped buffers around commercial and industrial sites to ensure aesthetically pleasing rural sight lines, containment of site generated litter and minimal night glaze; (c) mixed-use developments and integrated land uses served by public transportation services that minimize vehicular travel, maximize active modes of travel, and thereby support a reduction in automobile emitted pollutants to the air; and, (d) an open space plan that incorporates floodplains and riverine buffer zones, as well as wooded and wetland areas with private and quasi-public spaces to support the natural and human elements present within the community, all while carefully supporting passive recreational pursuits, environmental stewardship, and educational opportunities for students and residents of all ages.
- The Plan includes an action plan that provides a blueprint of activities aimed at supporting the goals and objectives developed during the public planning process. The action plan recognizes short, mid-term, and long range elements to keep the Plan viable and to be able to support the specific goals with those resource agencies most likely able to assist the Township in its pursuit. The objectives identified in the action plan should be used as performance measures necessary to measure the Plan's ongoing political/popular support.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><u>SECTION</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
FOREWORD .....	i
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES, MAPS & FIGURES.....	vii
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 History of Community Development & Planning.....	1 - 1
1.2 Planning Philosophy .....	1 - 1
1.3 Comprehensive Planning Process .....	1 - 2
1.4 Plan Organization & Management .....	1 - 2
1.5 Chronology of Events.....	1 - 3
1.6 Major Community Development Issues.....	1 - 3
1.7 Vision Statement.....	1 - 4
<b>2 SITE &amp; SITUATION</b>	
2.1 Location Attributes & Composition .....	2 - 1
2.2 Climate & Natural Features .....	2 - 1
2.2.1 Climate .....	2 - 3
2.2.2 Physiography, Relief & Drainage .....	2 - 3
2.2.3 Floodplains & Wetlands .....	2 - 3
2.3 Mineral Resources .....	2 - 6
2.4 Soils.....	2 - 6
2.4.1 Blount-Pewamo .....	2 - 9
2.4.2 Pewamo-Blount .....	2 - 9
2.4.3 Glynwood .....	2 - 9
2.4.4 Rensselaer .....	2 - 9
2.4.5 Cygnet.....	2 - 9
2.4.6 Hydric Soils .....	2 - 11
2.4.7 Prime Farmland.....	2 - 11
2.5 Land Use Patterns .....	2 - 11
2.5.1 Parks & Recreation.....	2 - 15
2.5.2 Agricultural Land Use .....	2 - 15
2.5.3 Residential Land Use .....	2 - 16
2.6 Summary .....	2 - 16
<b>3 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS</b>	
3.1 Population & Population Change .....	3 - 1
3.2 Age & Gender .....	3 - 3
3.3 Households & Household Size.....	3 - 6
3.4 Families .....	3 - 8
3.5 Income: Household, Family & Per Capita.....	3 - 9
3.6 Poverty Status: Persons & Families Below Poverty Level .....	3 - 11
3.7 Educational Attainment .....	3 - 13
3.8 Labor Force Profile .....	3 - 13
3.9 Summary .....	3 - 15

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

<b><u>SECTION</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
<b>4</b>	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; SERVICES</b>
4.1	Housing ..... 4 - 1
4.1.1	Age of Housing Stock ..... 4 - 1
4.1.2	Type of Housing Units ..... 4 - 2
4.1.3	Owner vs. Renter-Occupied Housing..... 4 - 3
4.1.4	Rental Costs..... 4 - 3
4.1.5	Home Values..... 4 - 4
4.1.6	Housing Vacancy..... 4 - 5
4.2	Water & Wastewater Infrastructure ..... 4 - 6
4.3	Transportation & Transportation Services ..... 4 - 8
4.3.1	Highway System..... 4 - 8
4.3.2	Rail System ..... 4 - 16
4.3.3	Electric, Oil & Gas Transmission Line Locations..... 4 - 16
4.4	Summary ..... 4 - 18
<b>5</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS</b>
5.1	Farmland Preservation..... 5 - 1
5.2	Current & Threatened Natural Resources ..... 5 - 2
5.2.1	The Blanchard River & Tributaries..... 5 - 2
5.2.2	Riparian & Flood Zones..... 5 - 3
5.2.3	Wetlands ..... 5 - 5
5.2.4	Endangered Species ..... 5 - 5
5.2.5	Wood Lots ..... 5 - 5
5.2.6	Parks & Recreation ..... 5 - 6
5.3	Solid Waste Disposal ..... 5 - 8
5.4	Air Quality Issues ..... 5 - 9
5.5	Water Quality Issues..... 5 - 10
5.6	Historical, Archaeological & Cultural Sites ..... 5 - 13
5.7	Distribution of Environmental Impacts..... 5 - 13
5.8	Planning for Future Growth & Development ..... 5 - 16
<b>6</b>	<b>ECONOMIC OVERVIEW &amp; ANALYSIS</b>
6.1	Non-Agricultural Employment..... 6 - 1
6.1.1	Manufacturing ..... 6 - 3
6.1.2	Construction Trade..... 6 - 3
6.1.3	Retail Trade..... 6 - 3
6.1.4	Health Care & Social Services..... 6 - 4
6.1.5	Administrative & Waste Management Services ..... 6 - 4
6.2	Agricultural Employment ..... 6 - 5
6.3	Tax Base ..... 6 - 5
6.4	Summary ..... 6 - 8
<b>7</b>	<b>PROJECTIONS &amp; ACTION PLAN</b>
7.1	Population Projections ..... 7 - 1
7.1.1	Gender & Age Cohorts ..... 7 - 1
7.1.2	Household Size ..... 7 - 2
7.1.3	Employment ..... 7 - 2
7.2	Land Use Projections..... 7 - 3
7.2.1	Commercial Land Use ..... 7 - 4

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

<b><u>SECTION</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
7 PROJECTIONS & ACTION PLAN (Continued)	
7.2.2 Quasi-Public Land Use .....	7 - 4
7.2.3 Industrial Land Use .....	7 - 6
7.2.4 Parks & Recreational Land Use.....	7 - 6
7.2.5 Residential Land Use .....	7 - 6
7.2.6 Agricultural Land Use .....	7 - 7
7.3 Infrastructure Projections .....	7 - 7
7.3.1 Housing .....	7 - 7
7.3.2 Water & Wastewater .....	7 - 7
7.3.3 Transportation .....	7 - 8
7.4 Action Plan .....	7 - 10
7.4.1 Preserving Agricultural Practices & the Rural Character of the Community .....	7 - 10
7.4.2 Improving Transportation Corridors & Gateway Aesthetics.....	7 - 14
7.4.3 Furthering Development & Diversification of the Tax Base .....	7 - 19
7.4.4 Housing Demand, Accessibility & Stabilization .....	7 - 23
7.4.5 Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability .....	7 - 27
7.4.6 Quality of Life .....	7 - 29
8 PLANNING PROCESS, SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS	
8.1 The Planning Process .....	8 - 1
8.2 Plan Summary & Recommendations.....	8 - 2
8.2.1 Population .....	8 - 2
8.2.2 Housing .....	8 - 2
8.2.3 Land Use.....	8 - 3
8.2.4 Transportation .....	8 - 3
8.2.5 Water & Wastewater Distribution Systems .....	8 - 4
8.2.6 Environmental Conservation.....	8 - 4
APPENDICES	
I Plan Reference Materials .....	I - 1
II Resolutions .....	II - 1

## LIST OF TABLES, MAPS & FIGURES

<b><u>TABLES</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
Table 2-1 Land Use by Type, Acres & Parcels.....	2 - 15
Table 2-2 Richland Township Land Use Change 2006-2017 .....	2 - 15
Table 3-1 Population 1960-2010.....	3 - 2
Table 3-2 Richland Township Population by Age Cohorts & Gender .....	3 - 6
Table 3-3 Total Households & Average Household Size by Political Subdivision 2000-2010 .....	3 - 7
Table 3-4 Comparative Income Measures by Year .....	3 - 9
Table 3-5 Income in 2015 by Household Type for Richland Township .....	3 - 11
Table 3-6 Poverty Status by Family Status in Richland Township.....	3 - 12
Table 3-7 Ratio of Income to Poverty Level Among Individuals.....	3 - 12
Table 3-8 Occupants per Room as Poverty Indicator.....	3 - 12
Table 3-9 Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years & Over .....	3 - 13
Table 3-10 Resident Occupation by Type & Percentage of Labor Force.....	3 - 14
Table 3-11 Richland Township: Residential Employment 2000-2015.....	3 - 15
Table 4-1 Housing Units by Age in Selected Areas.....	4 - 2
Table 4-2 Median Rent Statistics by Political Subdivision .....	4 - 4
Table 4-3 Occupied, Newly Constructed Units 2000-2015 .....	4 - 5
Table 4-4 Vacancy Status by Political Subdivision 2000-2015 .....	4 - 6
Table 4-5 Roadway Mileage by Functional Class & Jurisdiction.....	4 - 8
Table 4-6 Miles of Deficient Pavement Width in Richland Township .....	4 - 11
Table 4-7 Bridges of Richland Township.....	4 - 14
Table 4-8 Crash Statistics in Richland Township 2014-2016 .....	4 - 16
Table 4-9 Intersections with Multiple Crashes Richland Township 2014-2016 .....	4 - 16
Table 5-1 TMDL Studies for Sub Watersheds in Richland Township .....	5 - 12
Table 6-1 2000 & 2015 Employment by Sector of Richland Township Residents .....	6 - 2
Table 6-2 Work Being Performed in Richland Township & Allen County by NAICS (2016).....	6 - 2
Table 6-3 Richland Township Changes in Manufacturing (2010-2016) .....	6 - 3
Table 6-4 Richland Township Changes in Construction (2010-2016).....	6 - 3
Table 6-5 Richland Township Changes in Retail (2010-2016) .....	6 - 4
Table 6-6 Richland Township Changes in Health Services (2010-2016).....	6 - 4
Table 6-7 Richland Township Changes in Administration/Waste Management (2010-2016) .....	6 - 4
Table 6-8 Tax Base & Receipts by Land Use 2016.....	6 - 5
Table 6-9 Tax Valuation by Type & Year .....	6 - 6
Table 6-10 Tax Valuation by Type, Percentage & Change by Year .....	6 - 6
Table 6-11 Percentage of Tax Contributed by Type & Year .....	6 - 7
Table 7-1 Richland Township: Future Commercial Land Use .....	7 - 4
Table 7-2 Richland Township: Future Quasi-Public Land Use .....	7 - 4
Table 7-3 Richland Township: Future Industrial Land Use .....	7 - 6
Table 7-4 Richland Township: Future Residential Land Use.....	7 - 6
Table 7-5 Targeted Roadways & Bicycle Facilities in Richland Township .....	7 - 8
Table 7-6 Goal: Preserve & Enhance Agricultural Practices .....	7 - 15
Table 7-7 Goal: Create a Safe, Efficient & Well Maintained Roadway System for Local Residents & Employers .....	7 - 18
Table 7-8 Goal: Coordinate Infrastructure Improvements & Land Use in Order to Promote Desirable Development Patterns, Minimize Adverse Environmental Impacts & Costly Utility Extensions/Investments .....	7 - 21
Table 7-9 Goal: Support Mixed Use Developments, Varied Economic Activities & Lifestyle Choices.....	7 - 25

## LIST OF TABLES, MAPS & FIGURES (Continued)

<b><u>TABLES</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
Table 7-10 Goal: Promote & Further Integrate the (Re)Development of Industrial/Commercial Economic Activities within the Community .....	7 - 28
Table 7-11 Goal: Richland Township will Supply Safe, Sustainable & Accessible Housing.....	7 - 30

<b><u>MAPS</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
Map 1-1 Allen County Base Map .....	1 - 5
Map 2-1 Richland Township Aerial .....	2 - 2
Map 2-2 Richland Township Topography.....	2 - 4
Map 2-3 Richland Township Sub-Watersheds .....	2 - 5
Map 2-4 Richland Township Floodplains & Wetlands .....	2 - 7
Map 2-5 Richland Township Mines & Quarries .....	2 - 8
Map 2-6 Richland Township Soil Type.....	2 - 10
Map 2-7 Richland Township Hydric Soil.....	2 - 12
Map 2-8 Richland Township Prime Soil .....	2 - 13
Map 2-9 Richland Township Generalized Land Use .....	2 - 14
Map 2-10 Richland Township CAUV Land.....	2 - 17
Map 4-1 Richland Township Current Water & Sewer Service .....	4 - 7
Map 4-2 Richland Township Roadway Functional Classification.....	4 - 9
Map 4-3 Richland Township Roadway Jurisdiction .....	4 - 10
Map 4-4 Richland Township Roadway Deficiencies by Pavement Width .....	4 - 12
Map 4-5 Richland Township Bridges by Sufficiency Rating.....	4 - 13
Map 4-6 Richland Township Roadway Crashes 2014-2016.....	4 - 15
Map 4-7 Richland Township Railroads.....	4 - 17
Map 4-8 Richland Township Pipeline & Electric Infrastructure .....	4 - 19
Map 5-1 Richland Township Natural Resources .....	5 - 4
Map 5-2 Richland Township Parks & Recreation .....	5 - 7
Map 5-3 Richland Township Impaired Waterways .....	5 - 11
Map 5-4 Richland Township Historic Sites.....	5 - 14
Map 5-5 Allen County Life Expectancy by Zip Code .....	5 - 15
Map 7-1 Richland Township Vacancy by Land Use .....	7 - 5
Map 7-2 Richland Township Proposed Water & Sewer Service .....	7 - 9
Map 7-3 Richland Township Land Evaluation & Site Assessment.....	7 - 13
Map 7-4 Richland Township Transportation Improvement Plans .....	7 - 17
Map 7-5 Richland Township 2040 Generalized Land Use.....	7 - 26

<b><u>FIGURES</u></b>	
Figure 3-1 Population Change 1980-2010 .....	3 - 2
Figure 3-2 Demographic Dynamics in Allen County 2004-2014 .....	3 - 3
Figure 3-3 2010 Population Pyramid.....	3 - 4
Figure 3-4 Population Age Cohorts 2010 .....	3 - 5
Figure 3-5 Change in Median Age 1990-2010.....	3 - 6
Figure 3-6 Change in Household Size 1990-2010.....	3 - 8
Figure 3-7 Change in Families as a Percent of Households.....	3 - 9
Figure 3-8 Change in Household Income 1990-2015.....	3 - 10
Figure 4-1 Comparative Housing Age .....	4 - 2
Figure 4-2 Comparative Housing Types 2015.....	4 - 3
Figure 4-3 Percent Owner & Rental Units 2015 .....	4 - 3
Figure 4-4 Change in Median Home Value 2000-2015 .....	4 - 4
Figure 4-5 Lima Metropolitan Area Housing Values 2015 .....	4 - 5
Figure 5-1 Riparian Zone Land Use 2011 .....	5 - 3

**LIST OF TABLES, MAPS & FIGURES**  
**(Continued)**

<b><u>FIGURES</u></b>		<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
Figure 5-2	Flood Zone Land Use 2011.....	5 - 5
Figure 7-1	Richland Township Population Projections .....	7 - 1
Figure 7-2	Age Cohort Projections 2040 .....	7 - 2
Figure 7-3	Richland Township Occupation Trends 2000-2040.....	7 - 3
Figure 7-4	Housing Units .....	7 - 7

## SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

The Richland Township 2040 Comprehensive Plan is the result of an ongoing planning exercise that examines the population, demographics, employment, land use, and housing characteristics necessary to address issues related to the future development of Richland Township. This Plan, comprehensive in nature, is very much related to the economic and social development of the Township. The Plan is intended to be used as a tool to support and guide the future growth of Richland Township. Most importantly, it can be used as a tool to address change and the growth of Richland Township. This Plan was purposely prepared to address compatibility issues between: various land uses, the management and preservation of natural resources, the identification and preservation of historically significant lands and structures, and the provision of adequate infrastructure to support future development.

### 1.1 History of Community Development & Planning

The history of community development and planning in Richland Township is divided in terms of its nature and scope. The Allen County Engineer's Office (ACEO) has provided the professional engineering guidance to manage safety on the Township's roadway system and to manage drainage across the community. Richland Township has come to rely upon the Allen Economic Development Group (AEDG) to market and guide local economic development initiatives. The Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC) has historically had a supportive role with respect to demographic, transportation, and land use analyses. The LACRPC has also provided technical assistance to the Township with respect to developing regulatory language governing zoning and platting processes. The Allen County Sanitary Engineer's Office (ACSEO) and the Villages of Beaverdam and Bluffton have provided the necessary oversight, construction, and maintenance of public wastewater system services. The Allen County Health Department (ACHD) regulates the permitting process related to the construction of private water wells and wastewater systems. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) is responsible for the permitting of commercial and industrial wastewater systems. With the exception of the OEPA, the Board of Allen County Commissioners has supported each of the aforementioned agencies financially and politically.

Richland Township had shown concern over disjointed, haphazard development, and expressed a desire for a more holistic and unified approach to future development within the Township. In 1995, the Township worked with the Villages of Bluffton and Beaverdam to develop its first Comprehensive Plan for the larger community. In 2007, the LACRPC provided technical support in updating and revising this Plan, and now 10 years later the LACRPC is again revising the Township's Comprehensive Plan to reflect current demographic, economic, and infrastructural characteristics, as well as the goals and objectives of current residents.

*Richland Township has shown concern over disjointed, haphazard development, and expressed a desire for a more holistic and unified approach to future development within the Township.*

### 1.2 Planning Philosophy

The preparation of this document was predicated upon the long-standing relationships that the LACRPC has forged with Richland Township and the various entities providing technical expertise and infrastructure for community development. The strength of the LACRPC lies in the insights gained over 50 years of serving Richland Township and the other 20 member political subdivisions within Allen County during the planning and implementation of specific programs, projects, and activities.

The document's planning philosophy is both inclusive and cumulative. Inclusive, with respect to the number of agencies and interests represented and considered during the planning process; cumulative, in that it represents the past planning efforts of various entities and agencies. That planning philosophy respects the diversity of the community. The planning document recognizes the Township's diversity in terms of population characteristics, its economic base, and its infrastructure. The Township accepts this diversity and embraces it as a strength of the community. The document also recognizes that the political subdivision possesses inherent strengths and weaknesses and aspires to new opportunities. The Richland community wants to capitalize upon shared concerns and ambitions.

The task was to support and engage existing community leaders in the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan to further cooperative efforts that would address local needs. The LACRPC was charged with the responsibility of providing technical resources/assistance to assure Richland Township that their respective concerns were identified and addressed. Thus, the ultimate objective of the planning process, as stated in the Development Strategy, is to "assess the current conditions of the Township as it relates to developing a plan that best utilizes local resources for the positive development of the Richland Township community."

### 1.3 Comprehensive Planning Process

The comprehensive planning process is the result of a continuing participatory planning effort completed by participants representing the diverse interests of the community. The Comprehensive Plan contains the following:

*The planning process is a continuing and participatory process representing the diverse interests of the Township.*

- Background and history of the site and situation of the area covered with a discussion of the economy, including as appropriate: population, demographics, labor force, crime, emergency fire and medical service resources, infrastructure, and the environment.
- A discussion of community development problems and opportunities; including incorporation of any relevant materials and suggestions from other government sponsored or supported plans.
- A discussion setting forth goals and objectives for taking advantage of the opportunities and solving the problems of the area.
- A plan of action, including suggested projects to implement established objectives and goals.
- Performance measures that will be used to evaluate whether, and to what extent, goals and objectives have been or will be met.

### 1.4 Plan Organization & Management

The Comprehensive Plan was prepared by staff of the LACRPC based on input from Richland Township residents and the Richland Township Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee approved the draft Comprehensive Plan document and presented it to the Richland Township Zoning Commission, who then presented it to the Richland Township Trustees for review and subsequent approval. The draft document was circulated to local stakeholders prior to the final draft being approved. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee reflected members of the Richland Township Zoning Commission, Richland Township Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Richland



Township Trustees, with technical assistance provided by the Township Road Superintendent, Fire Chief, and Zoning Inspector.

## 1.5 Chronology of Events

The following is a summary of events leading to the final approval of this Comprehensive Plan:

### **Preparation Process:**

- Obtain input
- Identify issues
- Set Goals and Objectives
- Prepare Action Plan
- Obtain Approvals

- **Issues of Concern.** Based on prior input and data analysis completed by the LACRPC, a roster of key issues was prepared and reviewed for discussion. Such discussion sessions were ongoing and finalized in Spring 2017.
- **Goals and Objectives.** Based on discussions and subsequent recommendations, goals and actions were developed for review and finalization during the Spring of 2017.
- **Action Plan.** Plan recommendations were formulated into specific actions that were considered and incorporated into the final document in the Summer of 2017.
- **Final Richland Township Adoption.** Township Trustees considered formal action after the July 2017 public hearings.

## 1.6 Major Community Development Issues

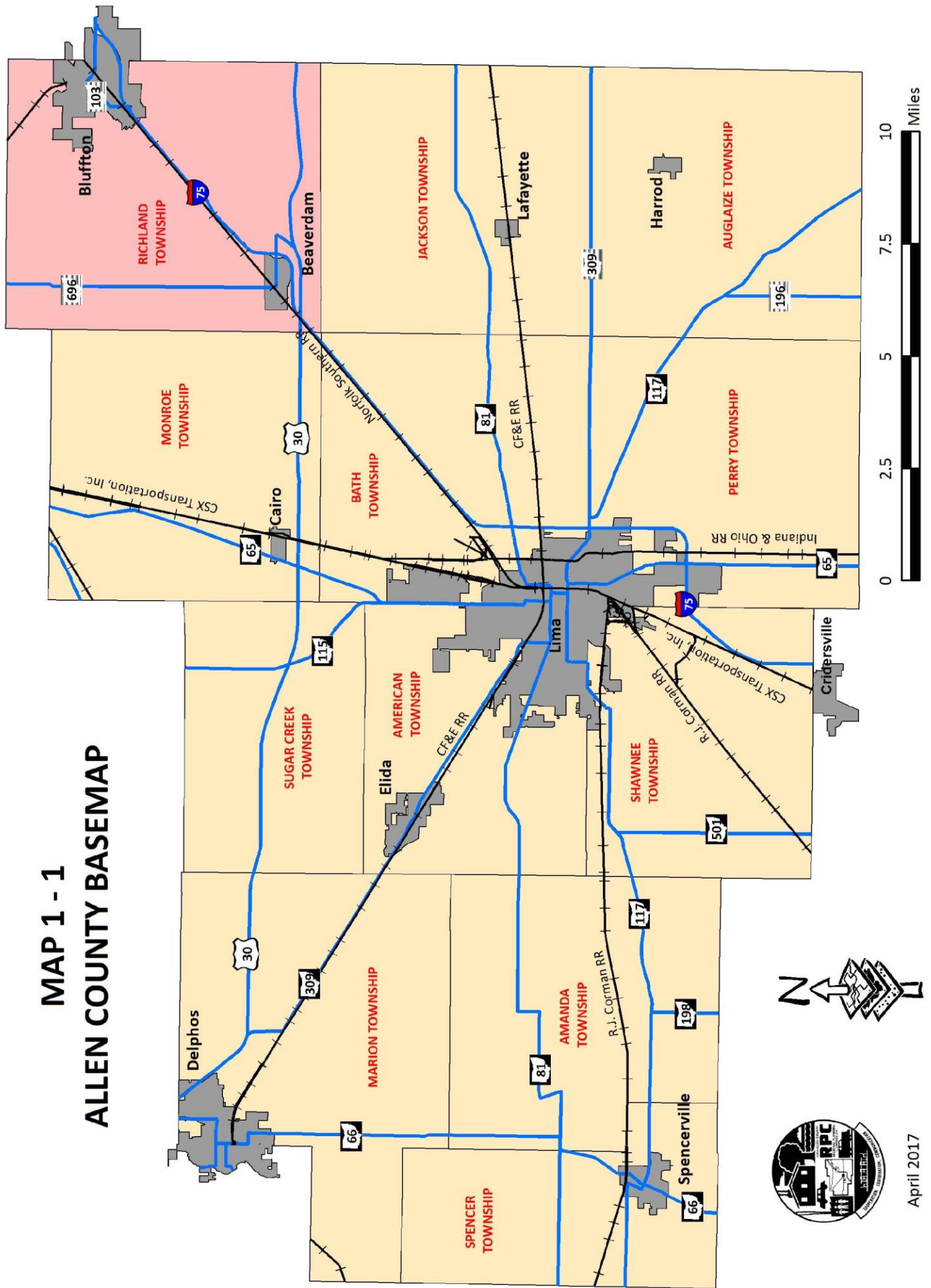
Based on the comments, members of the Advisory Committee were forced to address specific issues over the course of the Plan preparation. These issues, identified by residents, farmers, and business owners, and forwarded from representatives of neighborhood associations, service clubs, and fraternal organizations, include:

- The Township needs to better define agriculture as an economic activity to support the agricultural industry and preserve the rural character and heritage of the community.
- Specific roadway corridors should be targeted and infrastructure developed to encourage commercial growth, diversify the economic base and keep taxes low. These corridors are gateways to the Township and need to be improved.
- An aging population and the retention and attraction of college-educated youth pose a unique challenge to the community in terms of housing, transportation, government services and an available labor force.
- No open space requirements have been established. Natural resources, such as the Riley, Little Riley, and Cranberry Creeks need to be preserved. Wetlands and floodplains need to be more clearly defined for protection, and a mechanism for preserving natural resources needs to be put in place. Storm drainage is not managed properly, and existing tiles are not maintained to the extent necessary.
- Public infrastructure, including municipal water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater facilities, are not yet fully coordinated and are working against a planned community.
- There is a need to capitalize on area schools, including Ohio State University, Rhodes State College, University of Northwestern Ohio, and Bluffton University.

## **1.7 Vision Statement**

Richland Township is a rural, largely agricultural community that strives to attain the highest quality of life for its residents. The Township recognizes as a fundamental principle the charge of protecting the community's family values and long term financial interests. The Township is committed to providing reliable, effective public services in as cost effective manner as possible to encourage growth while ensuring that residential and commercial development is well planned, developed, and maintained in a manner consistent with the rural agriculture character and expectations of the community.

# MAP 1 - 1 ALLEN COUNTY BASEMAP



## **SECTION 2 SITE & SITUATION**

In order for a community to understand its future potential, an assessment of its current site and situation is required. A comprehensive plan defines the characteristics of, and areas for, future land use. Its objective is to assure that future growth is managed in a manner consistent with the public interest. A plan should provide clear guidance to landowners, developers, legislative and administrative bodies as they make significant land use decisions. The comprehensive plan should have, at its base, a clear understanding of the nature of the physical attributes found within the Township as well as the nature of existing land use and recent trends.

This section attempts to provide a succinct overview of Richland Township's physical properties and the economic activities etched across its landscape. This section provides valuable information and insightful maps relative to the natural landscape before reviewing land use patterns and culminating with the discussion of several community development issues stemming from urban pressures.

### **2.1 Location Attributes & Composition**

Richland Township is approximately 38.6 square miles in total area, equaling roughly 24,722 acres, located in West Central Ohio in the eastern half of Allen County. The Township is immediately adjacent to the Village of Bluffton, and includes the Village of Beaverdam. The Township is approximately 6.9 miles from the City of Lima, the largest city in Allen County, Ohio. The Richland community is bisected by I-75, and contains the I-75/US 30 interchange and the Bluffton I-75/SR 103 interchange. The Township is subdivided into 36 sections. There have been 12 separate annexations of Township land by the Village of Bluffton, totaling 471.7 acres, with the last annexation taking place in 2012. The Village of Beaverdam has annexed 41.8 acres since 1878, and annexation activity hasn't taken place since 1995. The Township form of government consists of 3 Trustees publicly elected to 4-year terms and one fiscal officer also elected to a 4-year term. Map 2-1 provides an aerial view of Richland Township.

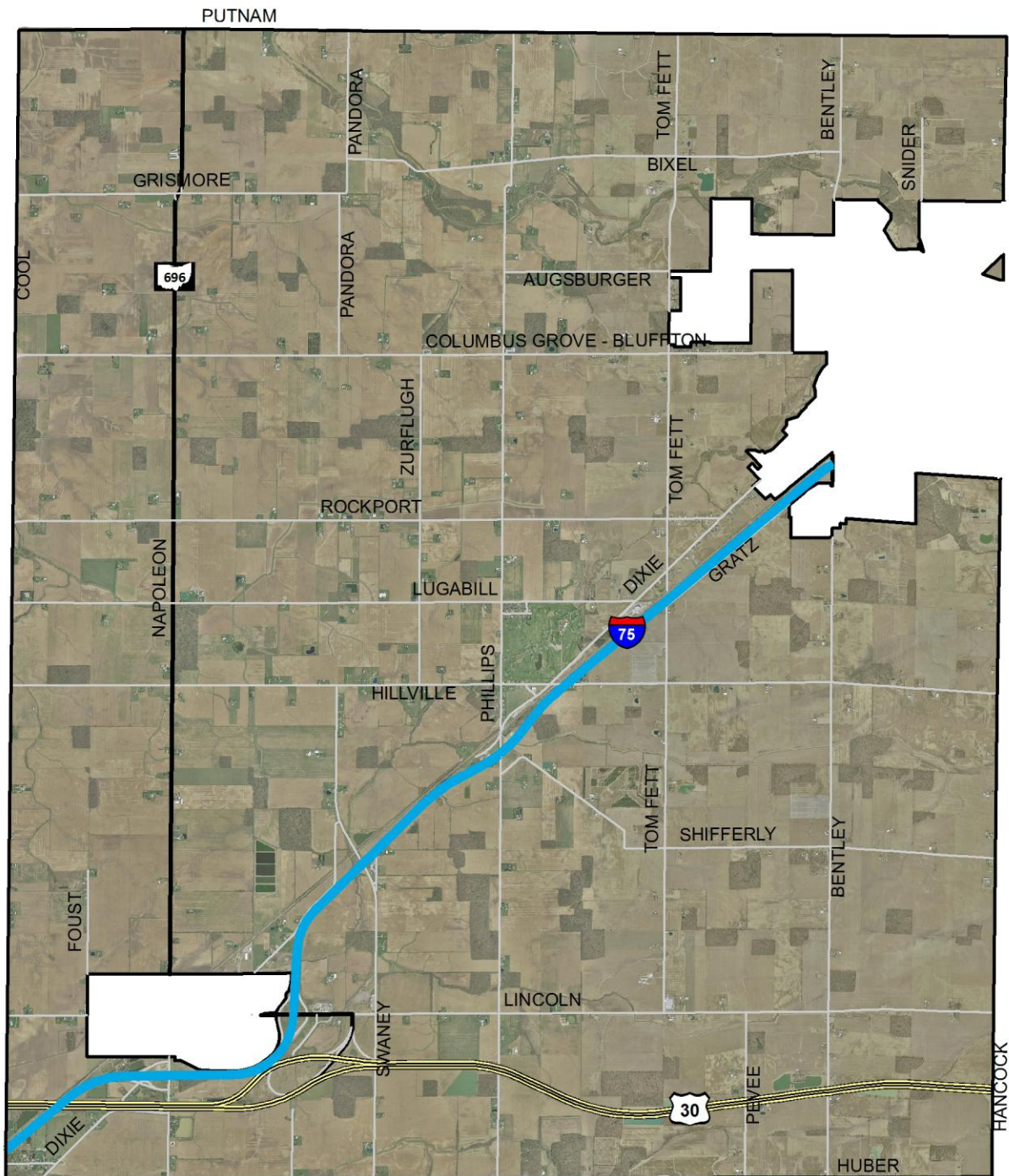
### **2.2 Climate & Natural Features**

The Township is mostly level or gently sloping and is excellent for agriculture. Historically, the most significant geographical feature of Allen County is its rich soils due in part to its location within the Great Black Swamp. The Great Black Swamp encompassed almost 7,000 square miles of prime timber and flooded prairies. Once a glacial lake that covered much of northwest Ohio, this land harbored immense tracts of maple, hickory, birch, oak, and ash trees. But until the swamp was drained, little could be done to timber the stands of trees or utilize the incredibly rich soils.

Richland Township's global location results in a moist, mid latitude climate with relatively cold winters and exhibits the characteristics of Dfa climates. Richland Township experiences this climate of warm summers and cold winters largely because of its general location on the North American land mass. The climate is somewhat moderated because of its proximity to the Great Lakes. The community generally experiences distinct warm summers that contribute to a growing season that ranges from 5 to 6 months long. Summers are complete with humid evenings and thunderstorms. Winters are relatively cold with blustery winds and snowfall, sometimes with severe blizzards.



# MAP 2-1 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP AERIAL



- Local Roadways
- State Route
- == US Highway
- Interstate

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017

### **2.2.1 Climate**

Richland Township is relatively cold in winter and hot in summer. In winter, the average temperature is 27.9 degrees Fahrenheit and the average daily minimum temperature is 19.9 degrees. The lowest temperature on record, which occurred on January 19, 1994, is -21.0 degrees. In summer, the average temperature is 72.0 degrees and the average daily maximum temperature is 83.0 degrees. The highest recorded temperature, which occurred on July 15, 1936, is 109.0 degrees.

The average total annual precipitation is about 35.98 inches. Of this, 19.94 inches or 55.4 percent usually falls May through October. The growing season for most crops falls within this period. The heaviest 1-day rainfall during the period of record was 4.38 inches on June 14, 1981. Thunderstorms occur, on average, 39 days each year, and most occur between April and September.

The average seasonal snowfall is 19.2 inches. The greatest snow depth at any one time during the period of record was 19 inches. On average, 40 days of the year have at least 1 inch of snow on the ground. The number of such days varies greatly from year to year. The heaviest 1-day snowfall on record was more than 18.0 inches on January 13, 1964.

The average relative humidity in mid afternoon is about 60 percent. Humidity is higher at night, and the average at dawn is about 82 percent. The sun shines 74 percent of the time possible in summer and 45 percent in winter. The prevailing wind is from the west/southwest. Average wind speed is highest, 12 miles per hour, from January through April.

### **2.2.2 Physiography, Relief & Drainage**

Richland Township lies in the Indiana and Ohio till plain part of the Central Lowland Physiographic Province. As shown in Map 2-2, Richland Township is characterized by relatively flat topography, generally sloping south to north from a high of 905 feet above sea level to a low of 775 feet above sea level. The Township gently slopes in an almost uniform grade from south of U.S. 30 to its northwestern corner.

Richland Township was once beneath a large ice sheet. As the glacier melted and retreated, a large lake formed and covered much of northwest Ohio. Over time the geological processes resulted in a gently sloping terrain and productive soils but with relatively poor drainage.

Richland Township is drained by the tributaries of the Blanchard River of Hancock County. The Blanchard River flows northward and is part of the Maumee River basin. As depicted on Map 2-3, Richland Township is located within 9 separate sub-watersheds including the Cranberry Creek, Cranberry Run, Dukes Run, Dutch Run, Sugar Creek, Little Riley Creek (Marsh Run), Little Riley Creek (Binkley Ditch), Lower Riley Creek, and Middle Riley Creek sub-watersheds. Serving Richland Township are 38 bridges.

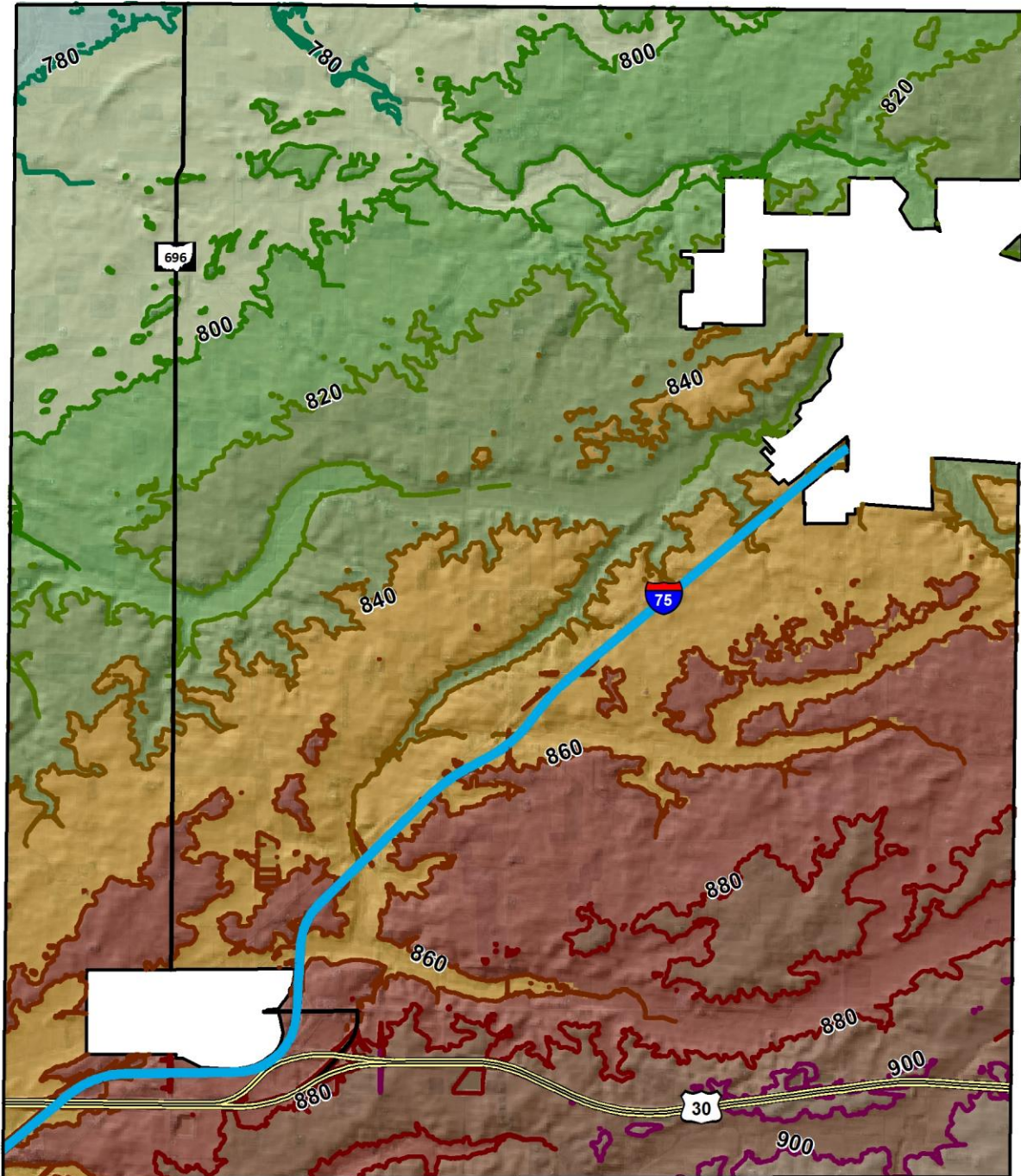
### **2.2.3 Floodplains & Wetlands**

The relatively flat topography and riverine system of Richland Township coupled with the local climate and moderate precipitation result in localized flooding and seasonal ponding. Given the community's relative position with respect to other

*Richland Township hosts 1,315 acres of high hazard flood areas.*



# MAP 2-2 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP TOPOGRAPHY



**Elevation (ft.)**

775 - 780	841 - 860
781 - 800	861 - 880
801 - 820	881 - 900
821 - 840	901 - 905

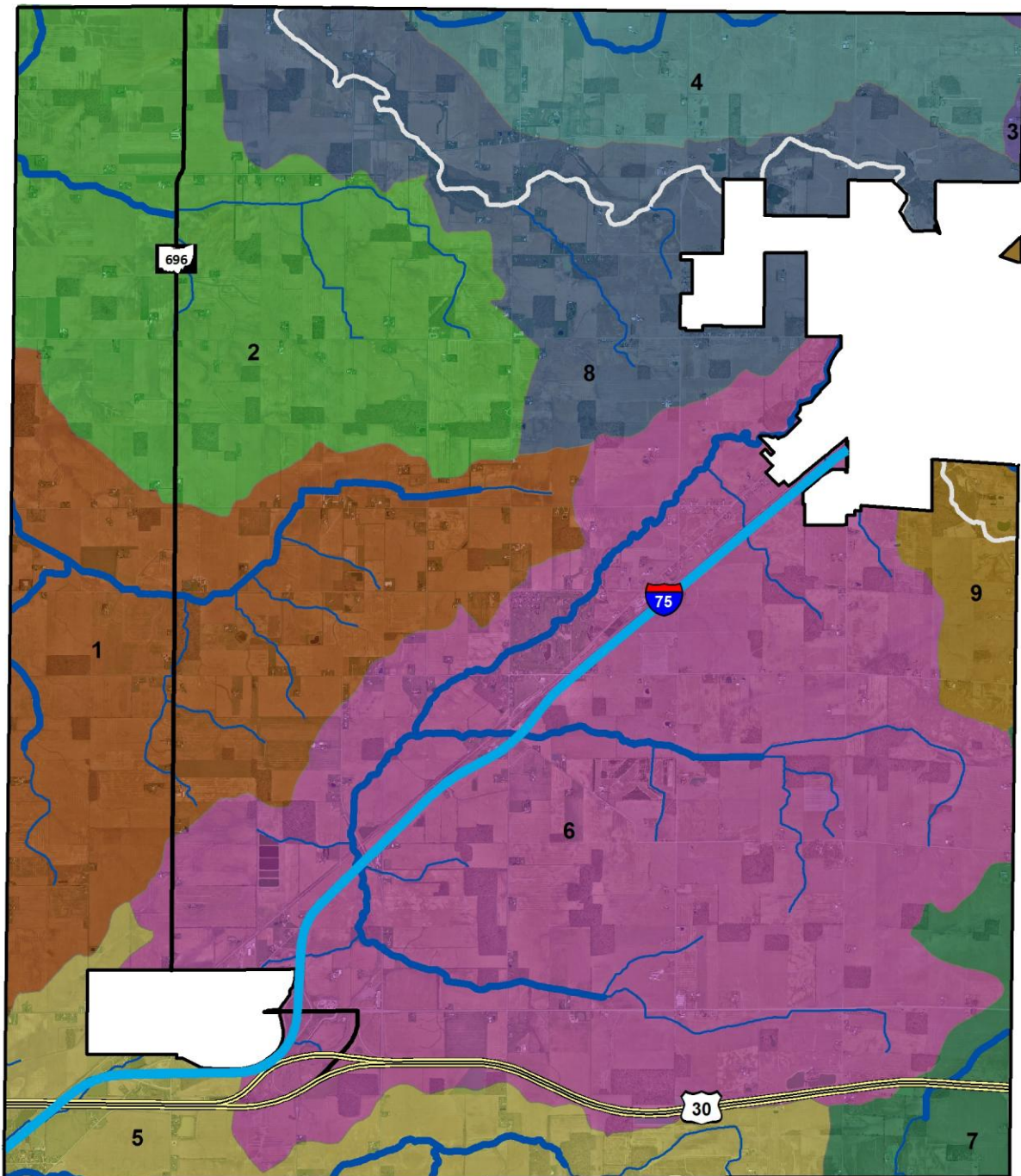
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Miles



April 2017



# MAP 2-3 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP SUB-WATERSHEDS



- |                   |                                      |                       |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Cranberry Creek | 6 Little Riley Creek (Marsh Run)     | — Perennial Branch    |
| 2 Cranberry Run   | 7 Little Riley Creek (Binkley Ditch) | — Intermittent Branch |
| 3 Dukes Run       | 8 Lower Riley Creek                  | — Artificial Path     |
| 4 Dutch Run       | 9 Middle Riley Creek                 |                       |
| 5 Sugar Creek     |                                      |                       |

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017



West Central Ohio counties in the Maumee River watershed the community occasionally experiences severe flooding.

Floodplains are those high hazard areas identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as areas with a 1.0 percent chance per annum of flooding. FEMA has identified 15,548 acres of high hazard flood areas in Allen County, of which 1,315 acres or 8.4 percent are in Richland Township. Primary locations of floodplains in Richland Township are found along the Riley and Little Riley Creeks. The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (2013) are predicated on detailed reports compiled by the United States Army Corps of Engineer (1967) and the United States Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service (1979). Map 2-4 identifies floodplains in Richland Township.



Wetlands are lands that are flooded or saturated at or near the ground surface for varying periods of time during the year. Wetland delineations are predicated upon the United States Department of the Interior (USDI) and the National Wetlands Inventory. The mapped results of the USDI Wetlands Inventory (1994) are based upon survey work conducted by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) using remote sensing and information obtained from United States Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps. The FWS consider wetlands as lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where either (a) hydrophytes exist, (b) hydric soils are located, and/or (c) non-soil substrate is saturated or covered with water at some time during the growing season. Data made available by USDI reveals some 300 potential wetland locations in Richland Township. Map 2-4 identifies wetlands documented by the USDI with FEMA identified floodplains.

### 2.3 Mineral Resources

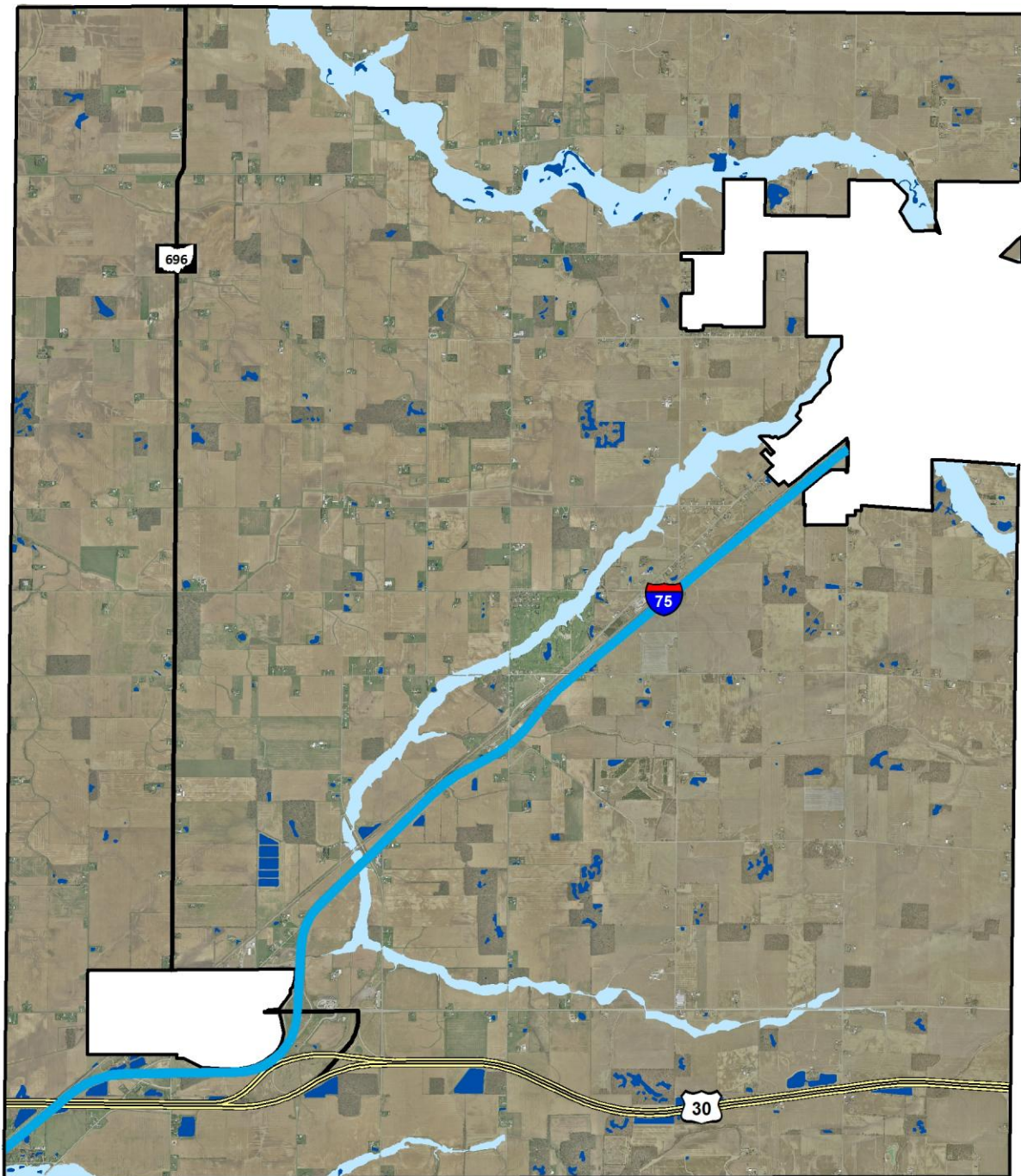
The mineral resources of Richland Township are limited to bedrock, sand and gravel. Most of these resources are of minor importance because of the relatively thin deposits of any high-quality, commercial grade materials. Dolostone is the major component of bedrock in Allen County, although limestone is also present. Dolomite and limestone have historically been mined from several locations in Richland Township, specifically Bluffton Stone located on both sides of I-75 at Bentley Road, now within the incorporated boundary of Bluffton. There is one inactive quarry currently identified in Richland Township by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Most of the quarried stone is used for agricultural or industrial uses or for use in the transportation industry. Map 2-5 identifies the location of the principle active and inactive quarries in Richland Township.

*Dolomite and limestone have been mined from several locations in Richland Township, specifically Bluffton Stone, located off Bentley Road.*


### 2.4 Soils

The ability or inability of soil to support a foundation, handle on-site sewage disposal, or nurture vegetation are a few of the reasons that soils are a significant factor to consider in land use planning. The purpose of considering soil type is to encourage development

# MAP 2-4 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP FLOODPLAINS & WETLANDS



 Floodplains  
 Wetlands

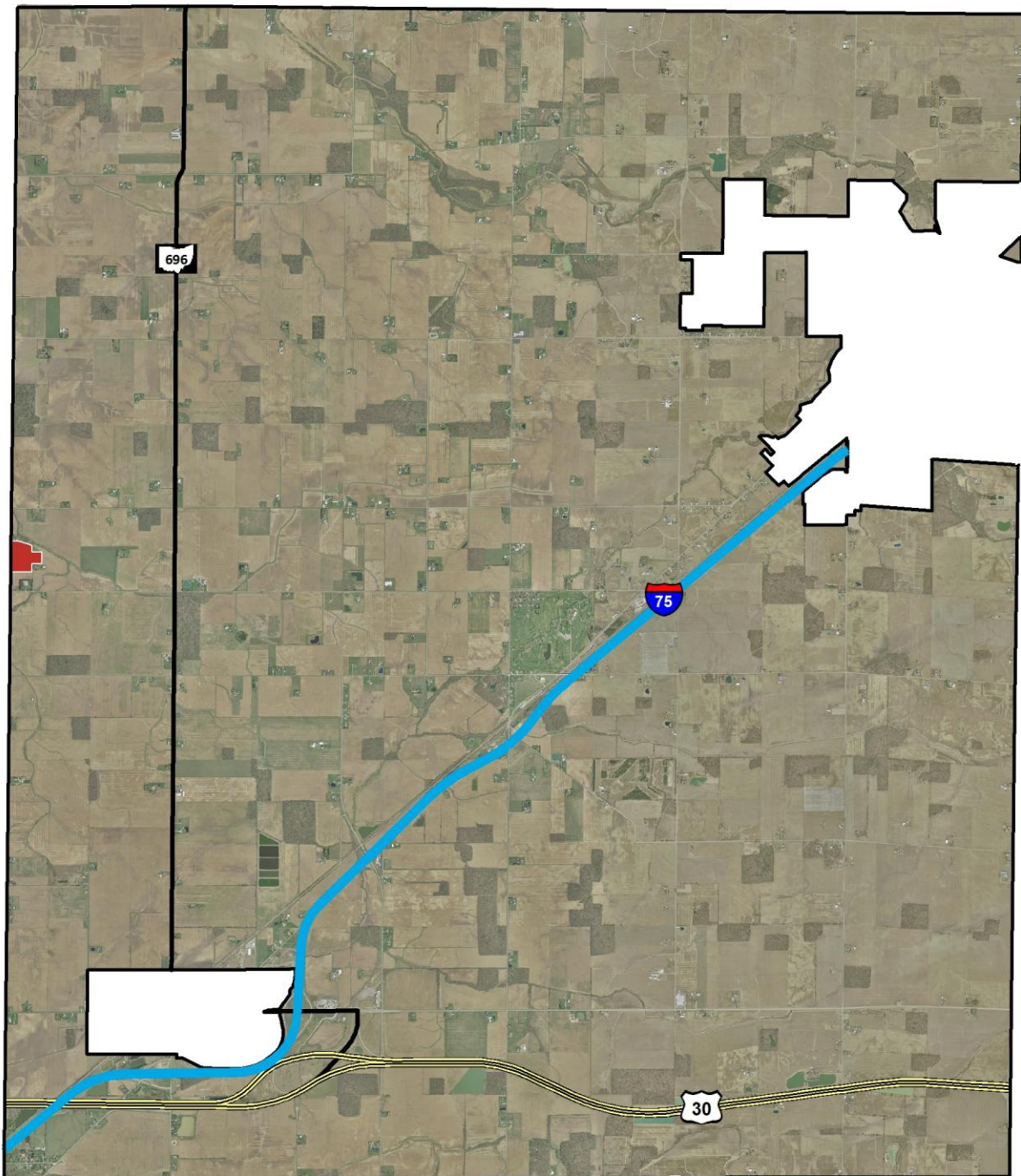
0 0.25 0.5 1  
 Miles



April 2017



# MAP 2-5 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP MINES & QUARRIES



Active  
In-Active

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017

in areas containing soil types that are well suited for development, while discouraging development in areas recognized for their high agricultural productivity. Map 2-6 identifies the various soils by type.

#### **2.4.1 Blount-Pewamo**

The existing soils of Richland Township reflect major soil groups. The predominant group found in Richland Township (as well as Allen County) is the Blount-Pewamo Association, which makes up 47.7 percent of all soils found in Richland Township. This classification, consisting of 4 minor subdivisions, ranges from somewhat moderately well drained to very poorly drained, and its major uses are found in cropland, pasture, woodlands and urban development. Its depth class runs very deep, and topography can be seen as depressions and drainage-ways. Slope runs 0 to 2 degrees. Management concerns with this soil stem from its poor drainage, and can result in erosion, compaction and ponding.

#### **2.4.2 Pewamo-Blount**

The second most common classification found is the Pewamo-Blount Association, which makes up 21.4 percent of the soil in Richland Township. This classification, consisting of 2 minor subdivisions, ranges from somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained, and its major uses are found in cropland, pasture, and woodlands. Its depth class runs very deep, and topography can be seen as level to gently rolling, along with depressions and drainage-ways. Slope runs 0 to 1 degree. Management concerns with this soil stem from its poor drainage, and can result in erosion, compaction and ponding.

#### **2.4.3 Glynwood**

The third most common classification found in Richland Township is Glynwood, which makes up 9.0 percent of the soils in Richland Township. All Glynwood soils are considered prime farmland, and are considered moderately well drained. Its major uses are found in cropland and pastureland. It is not considered a good site for building due to low soil strength and moderate shrink-swell potential. Its depth class runs very deep, and its topography varies with slopes ranging from 0 to 12 percent. Management concerns associated with strength, permeability and soil movement interfere with potential timber management, site development and septic tank absorption fields.

#### **2.4.4 Rensselaer**

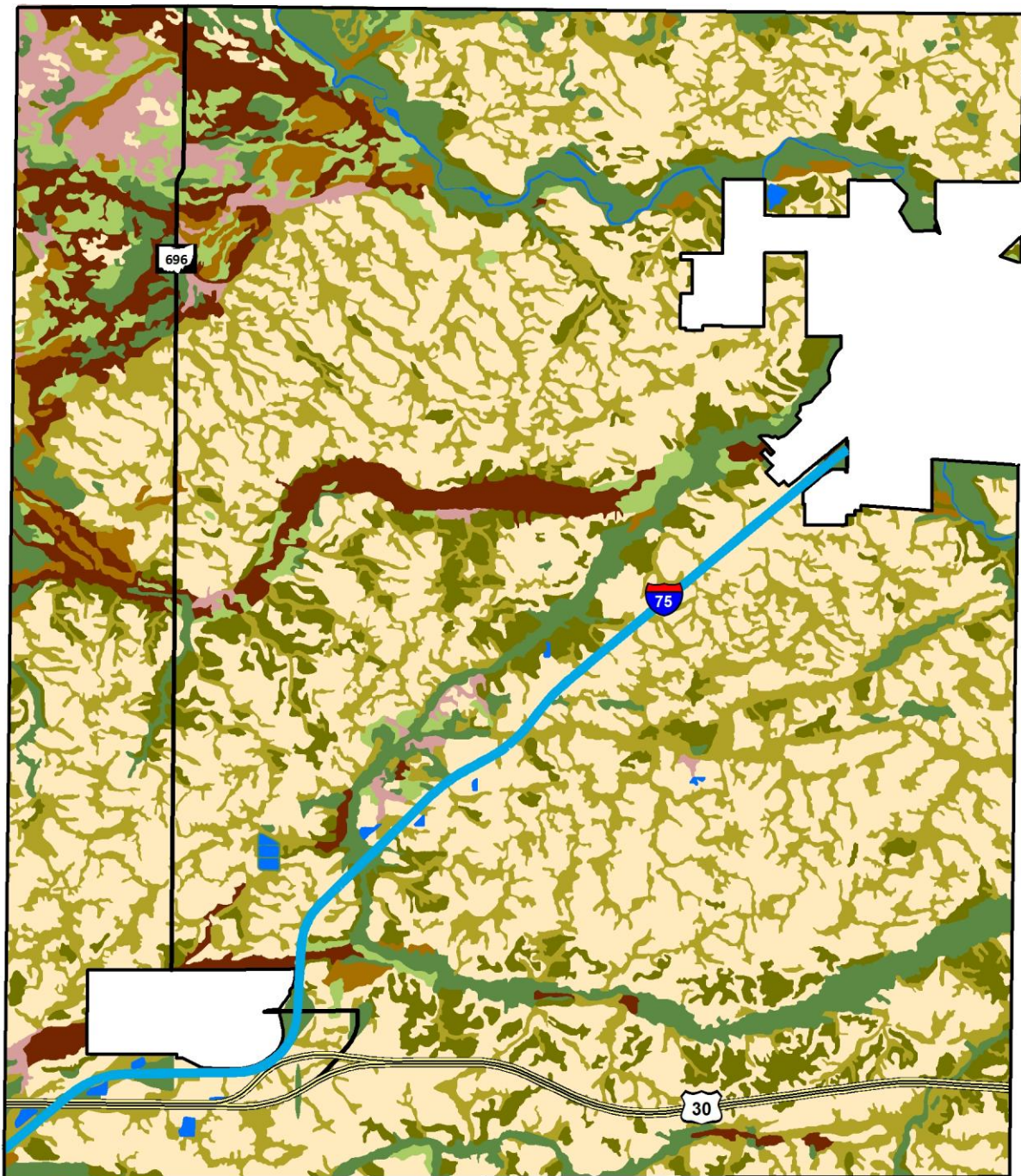
The fourth most common classification is Rensselaer, which makes up 5.3 percent of the soils in Richland Township. This classification is very poorly drained, and is considered prime farmland if drained. Its primary uses are for cropland, pastureland and wetlands. It is not considered good for forestry or construction. Its depth is considered very deep, and the topography is seen as level to gently rolling. Slope runs 0 to 1 percent. Management concerns are with the strength of the soil and ponding due to poor drainage.

#### **2.4.5 Cygnet**

The fifth most common classification is Cygnet, which makes up 3.1 percent of the soils in Richland Township. This classification is considered moderately well drained and is considered prime farmland. Its primary uses are cropland and pastureland. Because of its low soil strength, it is not considered ideal for construction. Its depth class is very deep. Slope runs 0 to 1 percent. Management concerns are centered on the low soil strength.



# MAP 2-6 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP SOIL TYPE



- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| Alvada   | Rensselaer |
| Blount   | Shawtown   |
| Cygnnet  | Other      |
| Glynwood | Water      |
| Pewamo   |            |

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017

#### 2.4.6 Hydric Soils

Based on a soils analysis completed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service, 4 soil types were classified as hydric soils. Hydric soils are soils that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding. Such soils tend to support the growth and regeneration of vegetation that depends on continued high water saturation. Some hydric soil types encounter periods when they are not saturated and depend on the existing water table, flooding, and ponding for survival. The presence of hydric soils is an indicator of wetlands and floodplain areas. However, hydric soil criteria must also meet Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) criteria in order for it to be classified as a wetland.

Hydric soils have a number of agricultural and nonagricultural limitations. Such limitations can be minimized with sound policy decisions predicated upon local land-use planning, conservation planning, and assessment of potential wildlife habitats. Hydric Soils are presented in Map 2-7.

*Limitations of hydric soils can be minimized with sound policy decisions.*

#### 2.4.7 Prime Farmland

The USDA has defined prime agricultural land as the land best suited for the production of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Prime farmland is defined as areas of land that possess the ideal combination of physical and chemical properties necessary for crop production. Prime farmland is predicated upon soils that have permeability of both air and water but retain adequate moisture-holding capacity. Prime soils are those that are not prone to flooding or are protected from flooding. Such soils have natural fertility and an acceptable level of alkalinity or acidity. Prime soils have limited relief, typically slopes of 0.0 to 6.0 percent. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with the minimal inputs of energy and economic resources; and, farming prime farmland results in the least damage to the environment.

Classifying the soil by crop productivity capabilities and site limitations, when looking at all 24,722 acres, Richland Township has 1,129 acres of non-prime soil, 2,421 acres of Prime Soil with No Conditions, and the remaining 21,172 acres of land in Richland Township is classified Prime with Conditions. Map 2-8 depicts those soils identified as Prime and Prime with Conditions.

*Only 4.6 percent of Richland Township's soils are not considered Prime Soils.*

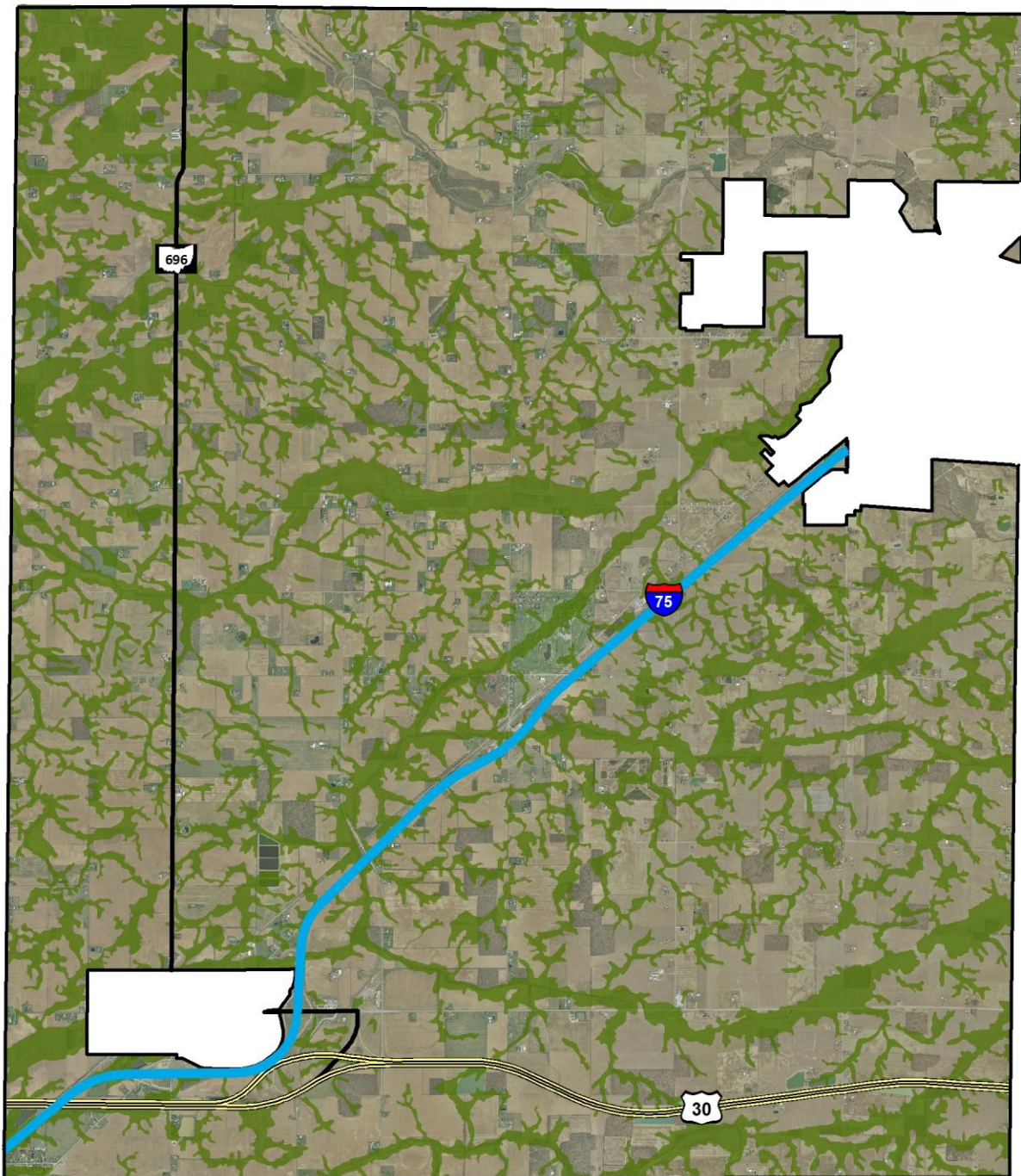
### 2.5 Land Use Patterns


The use of land is dependent upon, or the result of, particular attributes including its size, shape, and relative location. The use of land is affected by a parcel's access or proximity to utilities, roadways, waterways, services, and markets. Environmental attributes and constraints, such as the presence of minerals, topography, scenic attributes, flooding, poor soils, etc., can also influence the use of land. An analysis of the manner and extent to which land is used or employed over a period of time results in distinct patterns of use. General classifications of economic uses typically reflect agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, recreational, utility/transportation, and public/quasi-public land use patterns. Table 2-1 identifies the extent of general land use activities in 2017 by type and acreage. Map 2-9 identifies general patterns of land use in Richland Township.


Over the last 40 years, land use conversion in Richland Township has largely been confined to low-density residential/commercial developments occurring along existing rural roadways. Some residential subdivision development has occurred adjacent to the Sugar Creek golf course.



# MAP 2-7 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP HYDRIC SOIL



 Hydric Soil

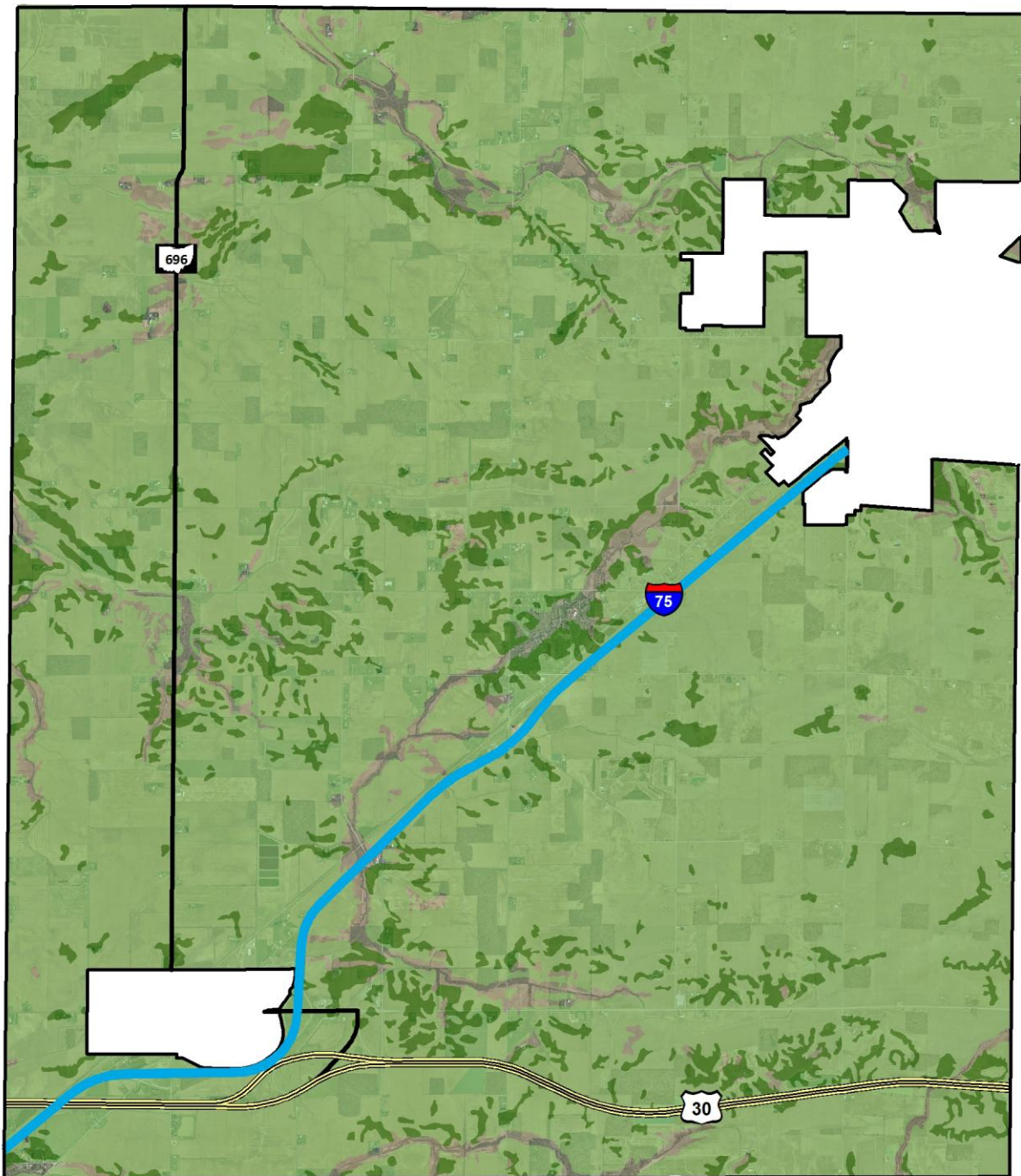
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 Miles



April 2017



# MAP 2-8 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP PRIME SOIL



Prime  
Prime w/ Conditions

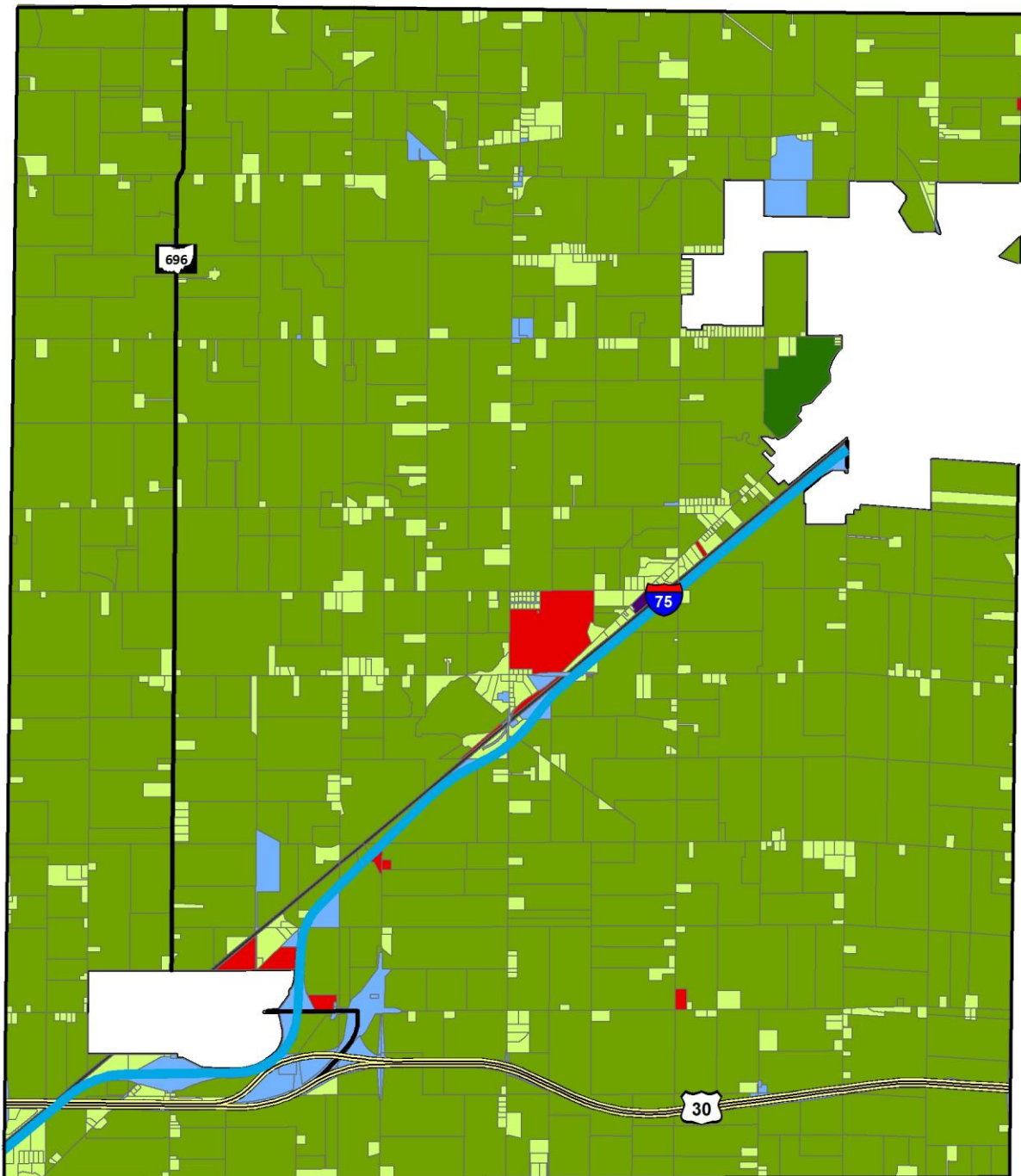
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Miles



April 2017



# MAP 2-9 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP GENERALIZED LAND USE



- |             |                     |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Agriculture | Public/Quasi-Public |
| Industrial  | Recreation          |
| Commercial  | Utilities           |
| Residential |                     |

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017

Table 2-1 indicates that the majority of land in Richland Township reflects agricultural (88.6%) and residential (6.9%) land uses. Agricultural activity was the prime consumer of property in Richland Township in 2017. Industrial land use activity is concentrated near I-75. Clustered retail activities have migrated almost exclusively to the I-75 corridor and the Township's shared boundary with the Village of Beaverdam.

TABLE 2-1 LAND USE BY TYPE, ACRES & PARCELS					
Land Use Type	Total Acres	Percent of Total Area	Total Parcels	Percent Total Parcels	Mean Parcel Size
Richland Township	24,722.0	100.0	1,160	100.0	21.3
Agricultural Uses	21,903.9	88.6	446	38.4	49.1
Commercial Uses	61.5	0.2	14	1.2	4.4
Industrial Uses	14.6	0.1	1	0.1	14.6
Residential Uses	1,703.4	6.9	620	53.4	2.7
Recreation	238.7	1.0	2	0.2	119.4
Public/Quasi-Public Uses	140.7	0.6	27	2.3	5.2
Transportation Uses	659.2	2.7	50	4.3	13.2
Note: Land use, acreage and parcel data is reflective of 2017 Allen County Auditor data. Such data incorporates acreage consumed by land supporting transportation activities, some overlap also exists between agricultural and residential due to residential and farming uses occurring on the same parcels. Statistical accuracy assumed at 98 <sup>th</sup> percentile.					

A recent analysis of land use change in Richland Township was conducted over the 2006 through 2017 period. Table 2-2 reveals that over the 11-year period, residential, commercial, and industrial land decreased by 16.9 percent, 15.1 percent, and 11.8 percent respectively. Agricultural land held fairly steady with a gain of 24 acres accounting for less than a 1.0 percent change. At this time agricultural, residential, and transportation uses still consume the most land within Richland Township.

TABLE 2-2 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP LAND USE CHANGE 2006-2017				
Year	Land Use by Type and Acreage			
	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Agricultural
2006	2,050	73	17	21,880
2017	1,703	62	15	21,904
PCT Change	-16.9%	-15.1%	-11.8%	+0.1%

### 2.5.1 Parks & Recreation

At the present time, recreation within Richland Township is restricted to the Bluffton Golf Course, Hidden Creek Golf Course, Motter Metro Park, and the recreational and bike facilities owned by Bluffton University and the Village of Bluffton.

### 2.5.2 Agricultural Land Use

In 2017, 21,904 acres of Richland Township was identified as in agricultural use by the Allen County Auditor's Office, totaling 88.6 percent of all land use. When compared to data from 2006, a minimal gain of 24 acres or 0.1 percent in 10 years. Map 2-10 illustrates changes in CAUV land designation from 2006 to 2017. What is of concern is the conflict in land use between large lot residential sprawl and the existing farm industry, and the long term impact this conversion has on the efficiency of agricultural operations.

### **2.5.3 Residential Land Use**

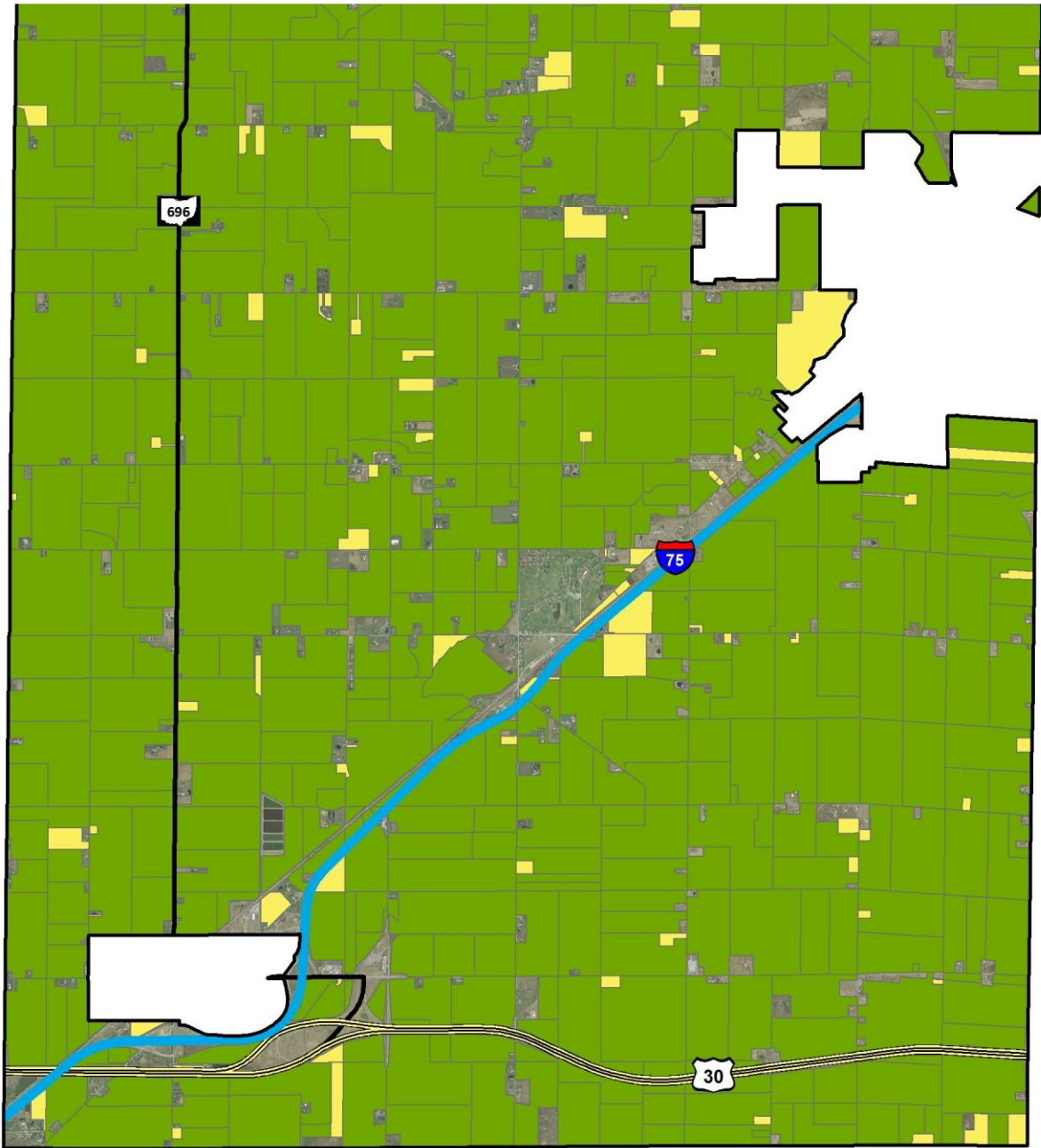
Currently, 1,703 acres of land in Richland Township are consumed in residential use. This equates to 6.9 percent of all available land. The primary form of residential growth in Richland Township has been through haphazard roadside development. Currently, there is a single large residential subdivision development, straddling Section 31 of Richland Township and Section 6 of Jackson Township. The golf course focused Village at Sugar Creek development identifies 160 new housing units at build-out, of which 125 will be in Richland Township. While development on this project had stalled in recent years, new interest has formed. It will be the responsibility of the Township to address and amend zoning and subdivision regulations to accommodate the public's interests. This community provides an alternative to the haphazard strip development which has been occurring on rural township and county roads but requires more governmental oversight.

## **2.6 Summary**

Traditional manufacturing and supporting warehousing operations are concentrated along I-75 and the rail lines. The retail and service sectors are clustered along the I-75 corridor as well as in or near the Villages. Richland Township has some of the richest soil in Allen County, and future plans must recognize the implications of unplanned residential growth and the subsequent infrastructure demands, along with the inevitable conflict with the farming industry.

The unique natural features of the community contribute to a wide variety of economic activities including agriculture, services, and manufacturing. The rural beauty of the Township contributes to a rich quality of life, and needs to be protected.

# MAP 2-10 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP CAUV LAND



- CAUV 2017
- CAUV 2006 (No Longer CAUV in 2017)

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017

## SECTION 3 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

A thorough analysis of the Richland Township population requires the use of demographic constructs. Demographic characteristics include gender, household size, age, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, income, and employment. Assessing a community's population and its respective demographic measures is important to understanding the demand for, and consumption of products and services including education, police, fire, and emergency response services. Such an understanding is also necessary to broaden the community's economic base and support the local labor force. Moreover, population data and demographic characteristics provide good indicators of future population growth/decline and allow communities to better assess policy decisions/development and the wise expenditures of public funds. This section attempts to highlight specific characteristics of the community's population and provide broad generalizations that will further strengthen the strategic planning process.

### 3.1 Population & Population Change

Historically, populations changed rather slowly over time when left to their own accord. Today however, based on various competing and intervening factors, populations can now change with relative speed and catch a community off guard and unprepared. In today's economic climate and social conditions, populations are much more fluid. In order to address the community's economic wellbeing, a better understanding of the local population was undertaken. In the context of this report, the term "population" refers to the number of inhabitants in a given place at the time of the decennial Census tabulation or the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. Herein, population data reflects the residents of Richland Township with comparisons to national, state, and local populations provided.

*From a historical perspective, Richland Township has experienced a 27.8 percent increase in population over the 1960-2010 period.<sup>1</sup>*

Population change, whether growth or decline, is neither static nor uniform. In fact, many political subdivisions within Allen County have experienced an extended period of continued growth while others have experienced overall growth in cyclical spurts. This can be seen in Table 3-1, which identifies each of the various political subdivisions by population over the last several decades.<sup>1</sup> It reveals that Richland Township has experienced an overall increase in population of 27.8 percent when examining the period between 1960 and 2010. However, the Villages of Bluffton and Beaverdam in the same time period experienced both a drastic increase in population of 59.2 percent and a decrease in population of 25.7 percent, respectively. When only examining the period between 1980 and 2010, Richland Township experienced a population growth of 20.1 percent, while Bluffton saw an increase of 24.6 percent, and Beaverdam saw a decline of 22.4 percent. Figure 3-1 further illustrates this change in the 1980 to 2010 populations by comparing the percent change amongst these locations.

The components of population change, including births, deaths, and migration of Allen County are revealed in Figure 3-2 for 2000 to 2014. Births have declined slightly, with 2014 having 255 less births than in 2000, while deaths have remained fairly stable. The in-migration population has consistently been lower than out-migration throughout this time period. This negative net migration has contributed to the population decline of Allen County.<sup>2</sup>

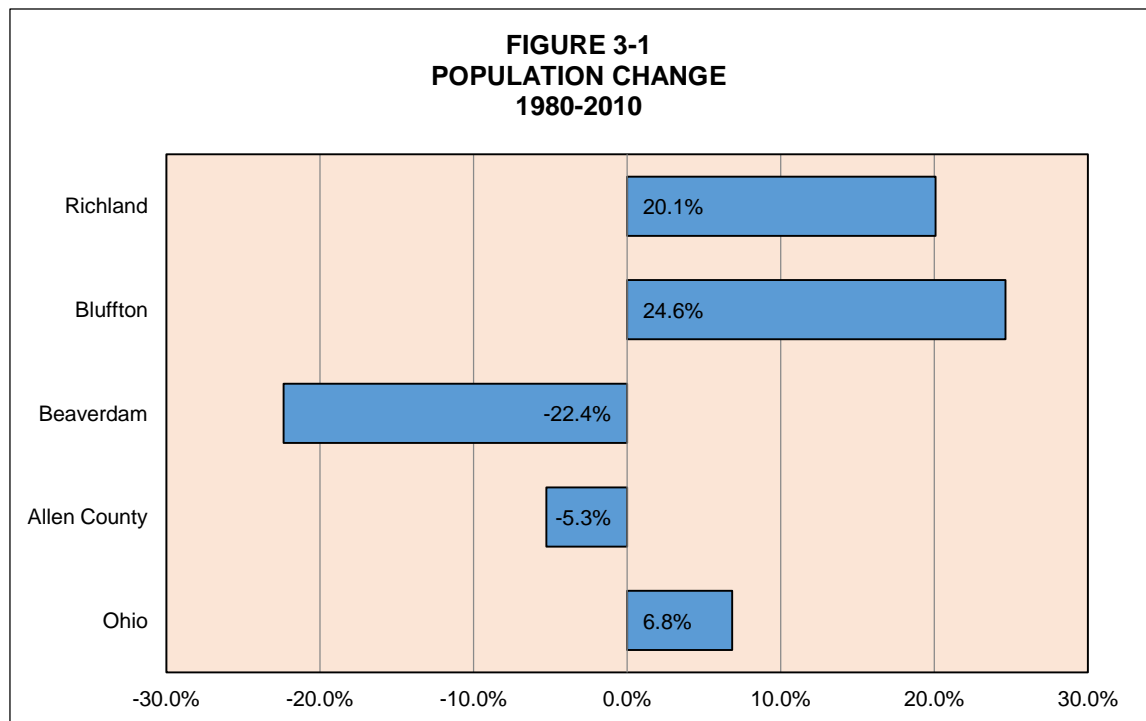
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2010 Censuses, DP-1

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.irs.gov/uac/soi-tax-stats-migration-data>

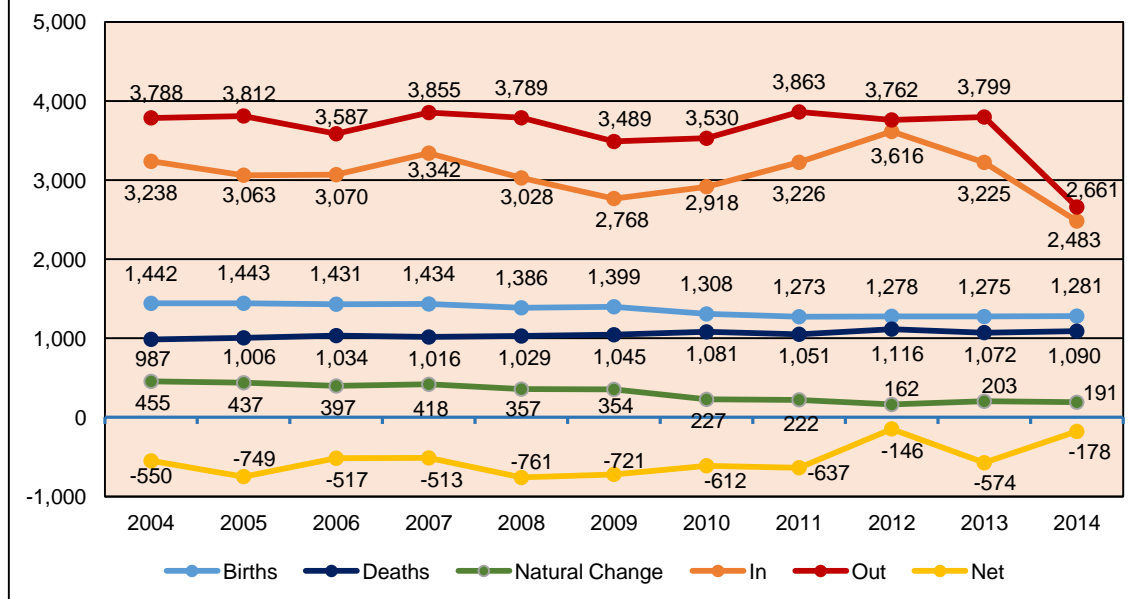


TABLE 3-1 POPULATION 1960-2010							
Political Subdivision	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change
Allen County	103,691	111,144	112,241	109,755	108,473	106,331	2.5
Beaverdam	514	525	492	467	356	382	-25.7
Bluffton	2,591	2,935	3,310	3,367	3,896	4,125	59.2
Cairo	566	587	596	473	499	524	-7.4
Delphos	6,961	7,608	7,314	7,093	6,944	7,101	2.0
Elida	1,215	1,211	1,349	1,486	1,917	1,905	56.8
Harrod Village	563	533	506	537	491	417	-25.9
Lafayette Village	476	486	488	449	304	445	-6.5
Lima City	51,037	53,734	47,817	45,549	41,578	38,771	-24.0
Spencerville Village	2,061	2,241	2,184	2,288	2,235	2,223	7.9
Amanda Township	1,217	1,498	1,769	1,773	1,913	2,071	70.2
American Township	9,184	8,766	11,476	10,921	13,599	12,476	35.8
Auglaize Township	1,740	2,245	2,042	1,936	2,359	2,366	36.0
Bath Township	8,307	9,323	9,997	10,105	9,819	9,725	17.1
Jackson Township	1,523	1,761	2,214	2,288	2,632	2,611	71.4
Marion Township	2,222	2,644	2,734	2,775	2,872	2,777	25.0
Monroe Township	1,386	1,490	1,621	1,622	1,720	1,702	22.8
Perry Township	5,045	3,751	3,586	3,577	3,620	3,531	-30.0
Richland Township	1,530	1,515	1,628	1,821	2,015	1,955	27.8
Shawnee Township	9,658	9,734	12,344	12,133	12,220	12,433	28.7
Spencer Township	863	960	925	832	871	844	-2.2
Sugar Creek Township	1,166	1,209	1,242	1,311	1,330	1,283	10.0

\*As of November 2012 Fort Shawnee ceased to exist



**FIGURE 3-2  
DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS IN ALLEN COUNTY  
2004-2014**



### 3.2 Age & Gender

Both age and gender are critical characteristics of a community's population. Age reflects certain attitudes and beliefs. Age also reflects demands for education, employment, housing, and services. Age cohorts identify specific population groupings and are important to identify specific needs or the degree to which specific services will be required by that particular population segment. The construction of a population pyramid, as seen in Figure 3-3, furthers an analysis of age by age cohorts and gender differences. Such a construct not only provides valuable insights as to fertility and morbidity issues but also provides data on workforce availability by age and gender.

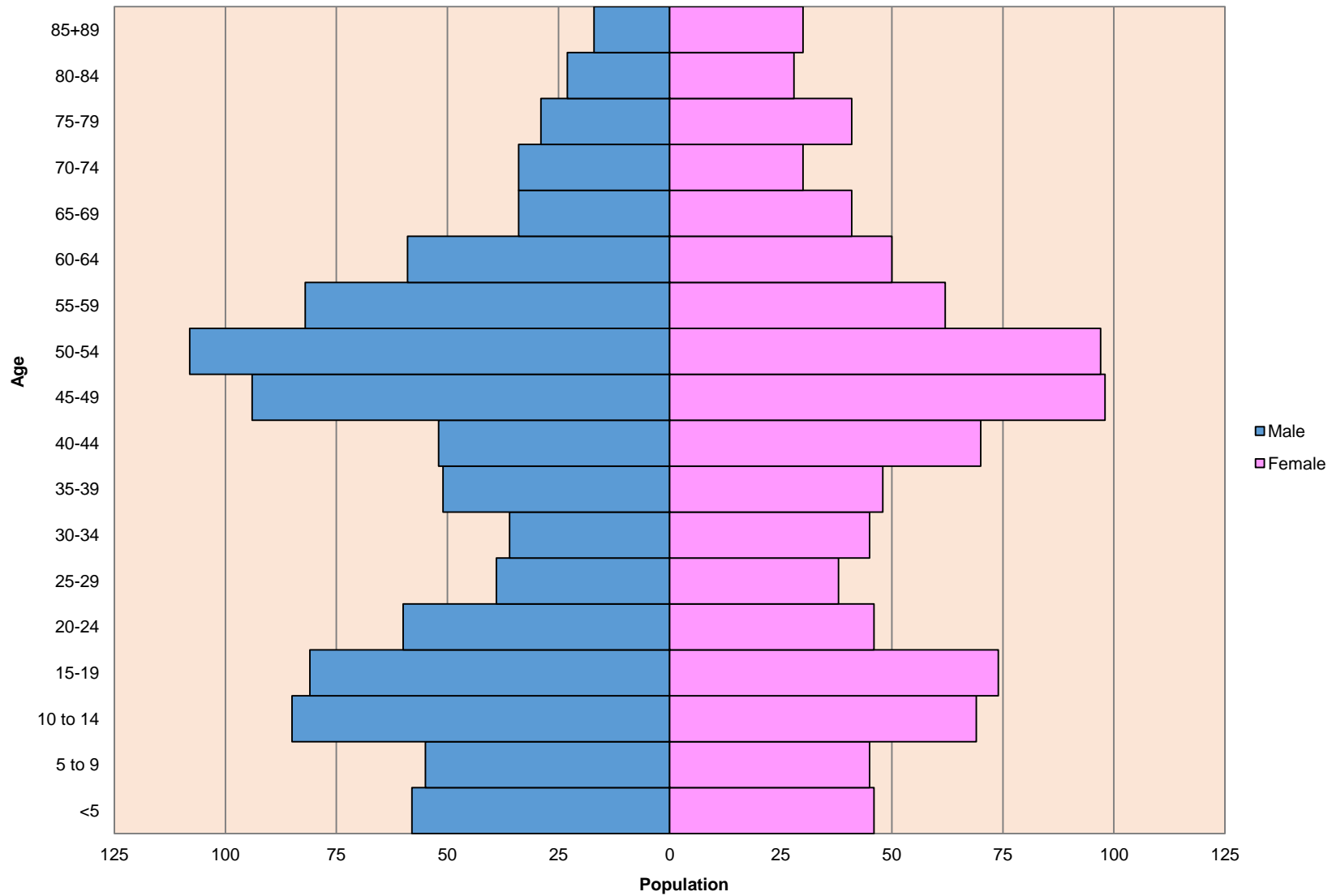
The Township's overall demographics generally reflect state, county, and Village statistics. However, there is a large discrepancy between the percentage of persons in the 25-34 age group living in Richland Township and the 45-54 age group (8.1% vs. 20.3%). This could be indicative of a high out migration of college bound and/or college-educated adults. The 2010 age distribution for Richland Township, the Villages of Bluffton and Beaverdam, Allen County, and State of Ohio are presented in Figure 3-4.

Consistent with national trends, the Township's population is aging. The median age of the population is 46.5 years. That compares with a median of 38.8 and 38.3 years with Allen County and the State of Ohio respectively, and 34.8 for Beaverdam and 34.0 for Bluffton. Current age data reveals that one-fifth (20.1%) of the Township's population is below the age of 16 and another 16 percent (16.7%) are past the age of retirement. Data suggests that simply due to age of the population, more than a third (36.8%) of the population is not able to fully contribute to the economic growth and earning power of the community. Data shows that an additional 12.9 percent of the population is categorized in the pre-retirement age group of 55-64 and may be readying for retirement.<sup>3</sup>

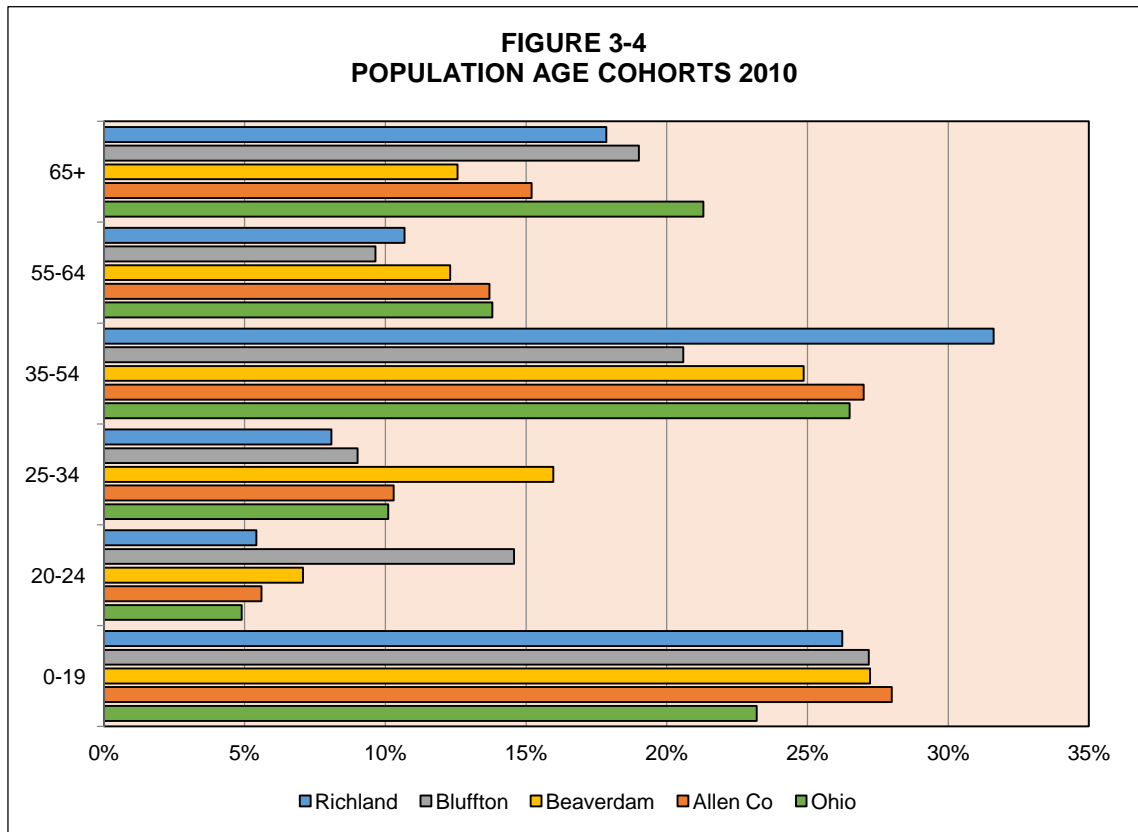
*More than a third of the population is not able to fully contribute to the economic growth and earning power of the community.*

<sup>3</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10\\_SF1/P12/0600000US3900366614/1550000US3](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10_SF1/P12/0600000US3900366614/1550000US3)

**FIGURE 3-3**  
**2010 POPULATION PYRAMID**







*The Township's 20-39 age cohorts are significantly lower, pointing to a significant out-migration of young adults after high school. A number of factors could explain this emigration including: lack of employment opportunity, college brain drain, or the cost of housing.*

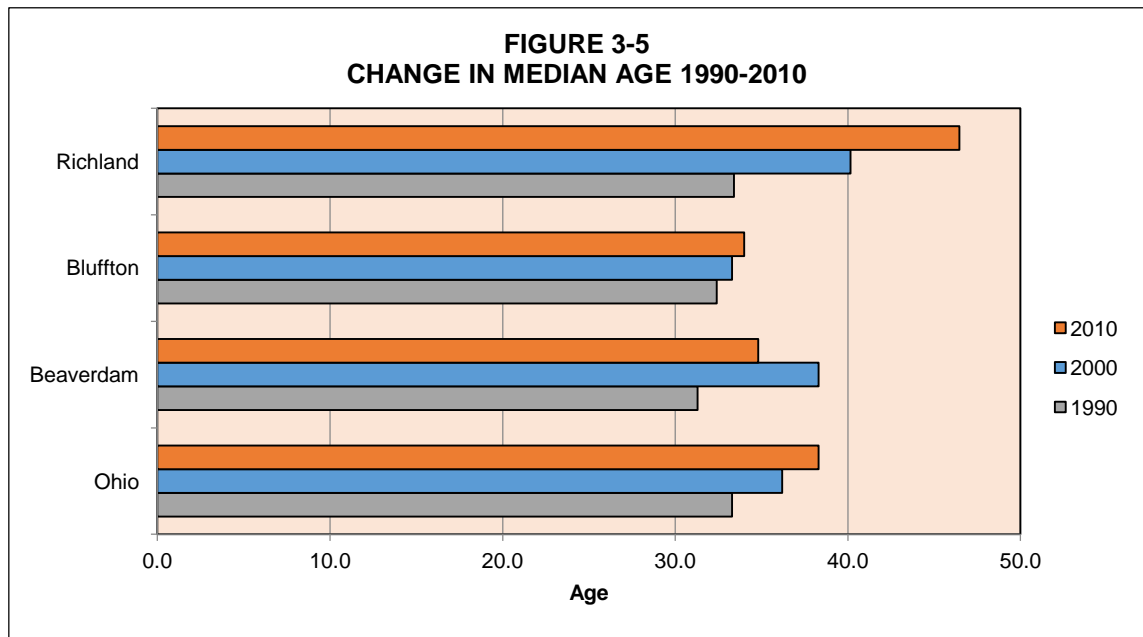
Another dataset indicating an aging population in Richland Township is shown in Table 3-2, which indicates that nearly half (49.0%) of the population is over the age of 45. This fact helps explain household income levels and the notion that Richland residents are a stationary population. The shrinking cohorts from 0 to 14 and the relative

collapse of the cohorts for those 20 to 39 years of age suggests a long term population problem. These 20 to 39 population cohorts are also slightly lower than those of the Village of Bluffton and Allen County. A number of factors could explain this emigration, including lack of employment opportunities, college brain drain, and/or the availability or cost of housing.

In addition, the median age of residents has increased between 2000 and 2010 at a higher rate in Richland Township than the Village of Beaverdam, the Village of Bluffton, and the State of Ohio. The median age of residents in Richland Township in 2010 was 46.5 (up from 40.2 in 2000, and 33.4 in 1990) as illustrated in Figure 3-5. An examination of the community's population reveals an increasing senior population. Concerns center on the availability of a younger work force and the need for appropriate senior housing and services to accommodate pre-retirement and post-retirement households.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10\\_SF1/P13/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10_SF1/P13/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752)

TABLE 3-2 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP POPULATION BY AGE COHORTS & GENDER						
Cohort	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	% Total
<5	58	5.8%	46	4.8%	104	5.3%
5 to 9	55	5.5%	45	4.7%	100	5.1%
10 to 14	85	8.5%	69	7.2%	154	7.9%
15-19	81	8.1%	74	7.7%	155	7.9%
20-24	60	6.0%	46	4.8%	106	5.4%
25-29	39	3.9%	38	4.0%	77	3.9%
30-34	36	3.6%	45	4.7%	81	4.1%
35-39	51	5.1%	48	5.0%	99	5.1%
40-44	52	5.2%	70	7.3%	122	6.2%
45-49	94	9.4%	98	10.2%	192	9.8%
50-54	108	10.8%	97	10.1%	205	10.5%
55-59	82	8.2%	62	6.5%	144	7.4%
60-64	59	5.9%	50	5.2%	109	5.6%
65-69	34	3.4%	41	4.3%	75	3.8%
70-74	34	3.4%	30	3.1%	64	3.3%
75-79	29	2.9%	41	4.3%	70	3.6%
80-84	23	2.3%	28	2.9%	51	2.6%
>85	17	1.7%	30	3.1%	47	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,782</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
*U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, P13						



### 3.3 Households & Household Size

According to the United States Census Bureau, the term “household” refers to any housing unit that is occupied, and the total population divided by households establishes “household size”.<sup>5</sup> Change in the total number of and the

*Between 2000 and 2010, the number of households in Richland Township increased nearly 5 percent.*

<sup>5</sup>[http://www2.census.gov/programssurveys/acs/tech\\_docs/subject\\_definitions/2014\\_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/programssurveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2014_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf)

respective size of households is an important demographic measure. This measure is important since each household requires a dwelling unit, and in most cases the size of the household will determine specific housing components, such as number of bedrooms, bathrooms, square footage, play area, etc. Therefore, as households change in terms of number and/or character, housing consumption changes. If the number of households increases, then the housing supply must reflect the growth. As the characteristics of the household change, new residency patterns are established and these changing demands are placed on local service providers.

Census data reveals the total number of households and the rate of change in the total households between 2000 and 2010. Table 3-3 indicates that the total number of Richland Township households exclusive of the Villages in 2010 was 688, an increase of 4.6 percent over the 2000 figure of 658 households. This growth is positive compared to the County as a whole, which saw a 0.1 percent increase in households during the same time period.<sup>6</sup>

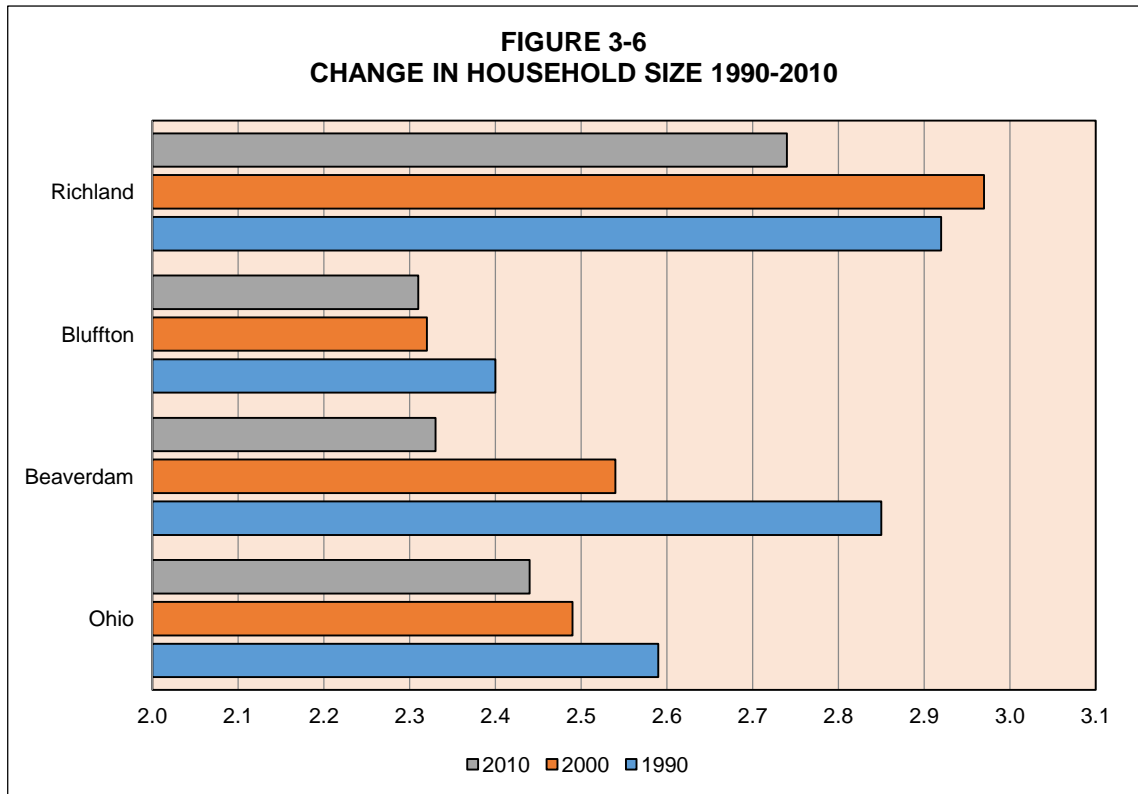
<b>TABLE 3-3</b> <b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS &amp; AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE BY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION</b> <b>2000-2010</b>						
Political Subdivision	2010 Total Households	2010 Average Household Size	2000 Total Households	2000 Average Household Size	Total Households % Change	% Change Household Size
Allen County	40,691	2.47	40,646	2.52	0.1%	-2.0%
City of Lima	14,221	2.39	15,410	2.42	-7.7%	-1.2%
American Township	5,344	2.46	4,933	2.38	8.3%	3.4%
Shawnee Township	4,833	2.50	4,621	2.60	4.6%	-2.3%
Bath Township	3,827	2.52	3,815	2.54	0.3%	-0.8%
City of Delphos	1,612	2.38	1,517	2.52	6.3%	-5.6%
Marion Township	1,016	2.60	1,012	2.84	0.4%	-8.5%
Perry Township	1,453	2.49	1,417	2.50	2.5%	-0.4%
Village of Bluffton	1,428	2.57	1,238	2.35	15.3%	10.8%
Jackson Township	1,003	2.61	956	2.75	4.9%	-5.1%
Village of Spencerville	817	2.62	845	2.54	-3.3%	3.1%
Auglaize Township	893	2.69	843	2.80	5.9%	-3.9%
Village of Elida	708	2.67	698	2.75	1.4%	-2.9%
Amanda Township	759	2.72	684	2.76	11.0%	-1.4%
Monroe Township	634	2.70	607	2.83	4.4%	-4.6%
Richland Township	688	2.74	658	2.97	4.6%	-7.7%
Sugar Creek Township	495	2.54	476	2.79	4.0%	-9.0%
Spencer Township	326	2.61	304	2.87	7.2%	-9.1%
Village of Cairo	198	2.70	181	2.76	9.4%	-2.2%
Village of Harrod	143	2.87	173	2.84	-17.3%	1.1%
Village of Beaverdam	144	2.60	140	2.54	2.9%	2.4%
Village of Lafayette*	161	2.72	161	2.63	0.0%	3.4%
U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2000 Censuses, DP-1, H12, and H16						
*Adjusted housing data for the year 2000						

Household size is also an important factor. Table 3-3 also presents information relative to the changing status of household size, as does Figure 3-6. In 2000, the average household size in Richland

*The implications of smaller size households should be monitored by local policy experts and reflected in local housing policies, building codes and zoning regulations.*

<sup>6</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10\\_SF1/H16/0600000US3900366614/1550000US3907426003/1600000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10_SF1/H16/0600000US3900366614/1550000US3907426003/1600000US3904752)

Township was 2.97 persons per household. In 2010, the average household size in the Township was 2.74 persons, higher than the State mean size of 2.44 persons per household and a slight decrease of 7.7 percent in size from 2000. Notice that household size varies by political subdivision across Allen County. This data may very well indicate that a historical trend of families with children is changing to more two-person households, single-parent households with children under the age of 18 years, and households comprised of retirees. The implications of smaller size households should be monitored by local policy experts and reflected in local housing policies, building codes, and zoning regulations.<sup>7</sup>



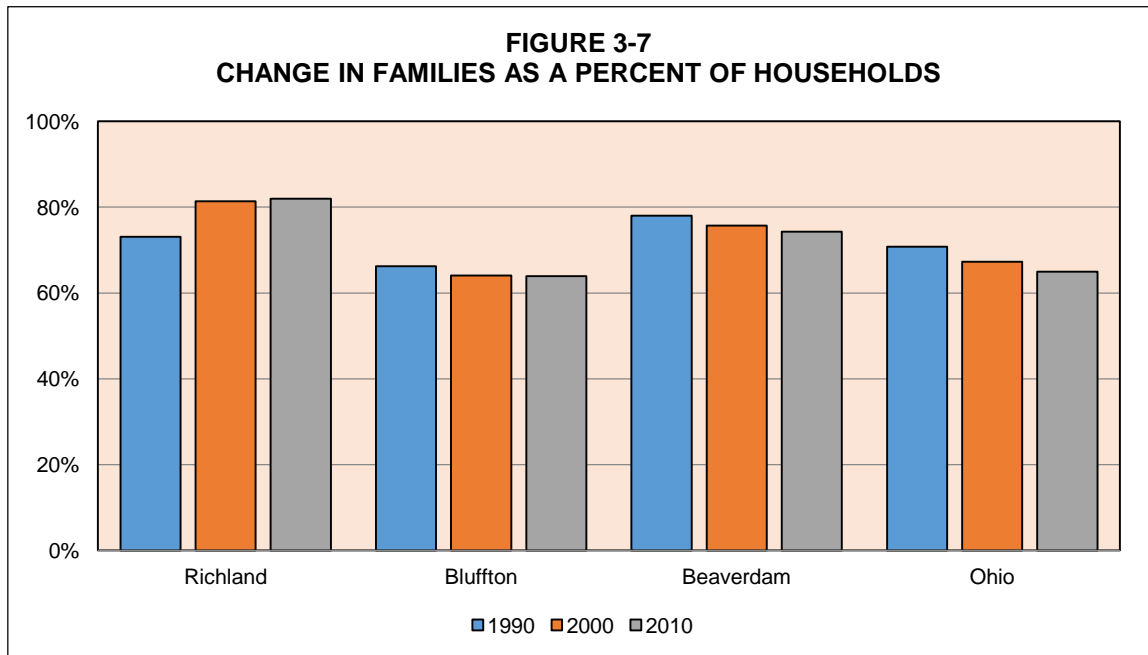
### 3.4 Families

The United States Census Bureau defines a “family” as a group of two or more people who reside together and are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Census data suggests 688 families resided in Richland Township in 2010. Changes to the overall number of families in Richland, Bluffton, Beaverdam, and the State of Ohio are indicated in Figure 3-7. Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of families in Richland Township increased by 4.6 percent, while both Beaverdam and Bluffton experienced an increase of 2.9 percent and 7.4 percent, respectively.<sup>8,9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10\\_SF1/H12/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10_SF1/H12/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752)

<sup>8</sup>[http://www2.census.gov/programssurveys/acs/tech\\_docs/subject\\_definitions/2014\\_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/programssurveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2014_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2010 Censuses, DP-1



### 3.5 Income: Household, Family & Per Capita

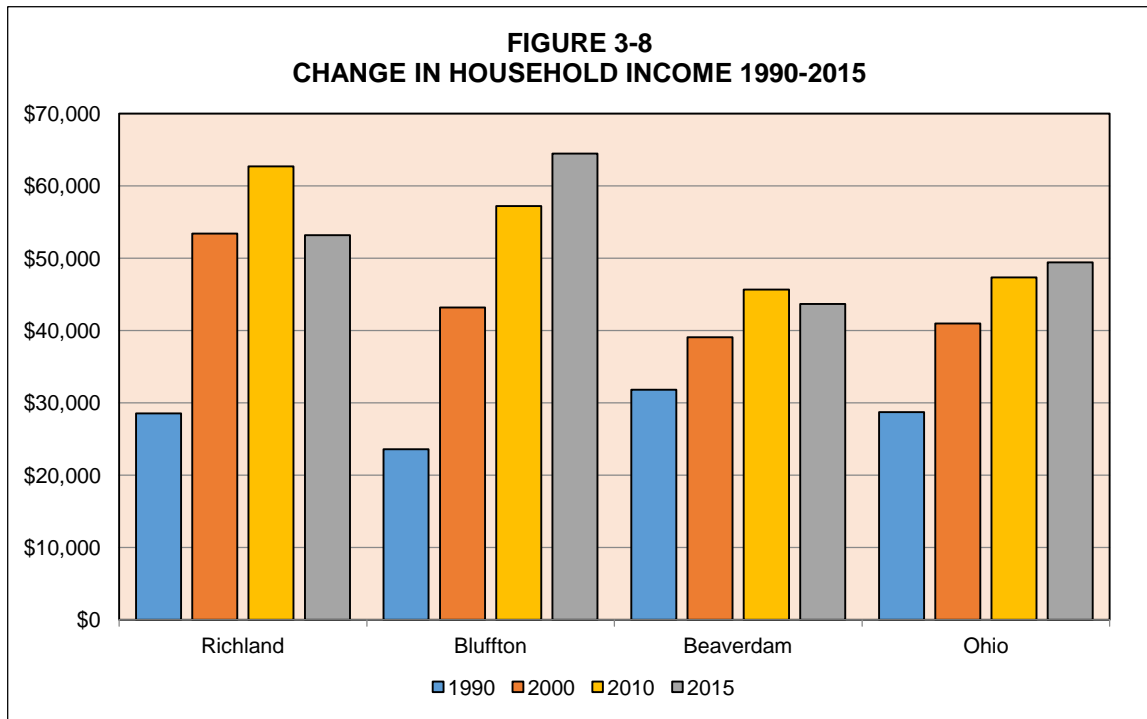
Data for the three most widely used indices of income, including per capita income, household income, and family income are displayed in Table 3-4 by political subdivision and by Census period. As seen in Figure 3-8, the data suggests Richland Township household median income (\$53,184) is higher than Allen County and the State of Ohio (\$44,103 and \$49,429).

*Richland Township has surpassed State & Local income levels with respect to median household income.*

TABLE 3-4 COMPARATIVE INCOME MEASURES BY YEAR					
Income: By Type & Year	Richland Township	Allen County	Ohio	Richland Township as % of Allen County	Richland Township as % of Ohio
<b>2011-2015</b>					
Median Household	\$53,184	\$44,103	\$49,429	120.6	107.6
Median Family	\$59,294	\$56,195	\$62,817	105.5	94.4
Per capita	\$26,924	\$22,922	\$26,953	117.5	99.9
<b>1999</b>					
Median Household	\$53,366	\$37,048	\$40,956	144.2	130.4
Median Family	\$57,500	\$44,723	\$50,037	128.6	114.9
Per capita	\$20,469	\$17,511	\$21,003	116.9	97.5
* ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates					

The median household income within Allen County has lagged behind that of Ohio, while in Richland Township, median household income has remained consistently higher than both the County and the State. Richland's was 120.6 percent of the County's and 107.6 percent of Ohio's in 2015, slightly lower than the percentages in 1999 (144.2% and 130.4%, respectively).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B19013/0600000US3900366614/1550000US3907426003/1600000US3904752/1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B19013/0600000US3900366614/1550000US3907426003/1600000US3904752/1600000US3907426)



*Family income in Richland Township was 105.5 percent of Allen County's median family income in 2015 and 94.4 percent of the State's median family income.*

In contrast to median household income, median family income is very similar to the County and State values. Allen County median family incomes remains to be lower than the State's, while Richland Township median family income remains higher than the County's, but is now

lower than the State's. In 2015, the proportion of Richland's median family income to the County and State was 105.5 and 94.4 percent respectively.<sup>11</sup>

Per capita income for Richland Township in 2015 was \$26,924, a jump of 31.5 percent from 1999 figures. Richland Township exhibited a greater growth rate when compared with the County and State per capita increases from 1999 of 30.9 and 28.3 percent, respectively. Richland's growth makes its per capita income remain higher than the County's and closes the gap with the State's to make them nearly equal.<sup>12</sup>

*Per capita income rose more in comparison to County and State figures over the 15 year period. In 2015 Richland Township per capita income was 117.5 percent of the County and 99.9 percent of the State.*

Table 3-5 provides a detailed breakdown of household income by type and income levels for 2015. Households with incomes less than \$15,000 in 2015 totaled 3.9 percent of all households in Richland Township. An examination of family and non-family households provides greater detail; data suggests that 1.4 percent of all families and 15.7 percent of all non-family households earned less than \$15,000 in 2015. Examination of income by household type reveals that the largest concentration of households and family incomes were found in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income bracket

<sup>11</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B19113/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B19113/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

<sup>12</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B19301/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B19301/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

with 28.0 and 38.9 percent respectively; the incomes of 5 in 10 (52.7%) non-family household were concentrated below \$35,000.<sup>13</sup>

TABLE 3-5 INCOME IN 2015 BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE FOR RICHLAND TOWNSHIP						
Income Range	Household		Families		Non-Family Household	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	16	2.6	7	1.4	9	8.3
\$10,000 - \$14,999	8	1.3	0	0.0	8	7.4
\$15,000 - \$24,999	43	7.0	11	2.2	32	29.6
\$25,000 - \$34,999	41	6.7	33	6.5	8	7.4
\$35,000 - \$49,999	111	18.0	91	17.9	20	18.5
\$50,000 - \$74,999	172	28.0	197	38.9	0	0.0
\$75,000 - \$99,999	91	14.8	81	16.0	10	9.3
\$100,000 - \$149,999	108	17.6	62	12.2	21	19.4
\$150,000 - \$199,999	25	4.0	25	4.9	0	0.0
\$200,000 or more	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>
*ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates						

### 3.6 Poverty Status: Persons & Families Below Poverty Level

The 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates provides information regarding the number of individuals and families whose incomes fell below established poverty levels. 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates revealed that 95 individuals (5.9% of all individuals), and 18 families (3.6% of all families) in Richland Township were below the established poverty level based on income and household size.<sup>14,15</sup>

*In 2015, 5.9 percent of all individuals, and 3.6 percent of all families in Richland Township were below poverty level.*

A comparison of income data between the 2000 Census and the 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates reveal an increase in the proportion of individuals and families in poverty. In fact, 15 individuals and 4 families fell into poverty in the Township during that time. Households in the Township receiving public assistance increased from 0 to 7 from 2000 to 2015, or 1.1% of households. For comparison purposes, households with public assistance at the County level remained steady at 3.1% from 2000 to 2015. According to the ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates, the percentage of households receiving public assistance in the State of Ohio was 3.2 percent.<sup>16</sup>

Relevant information on family households and poverty status is presented in Table 3-6. Table 3-7 provides an overview of poverty as a percentage of income for all individuals 18 years of age or older. Table 3-8 examines household size and unit size to expose overcrowding, a classic proxy poverty indicator.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B19001/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B19001/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

<sup>14</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B17001/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B17001/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

<sup>15</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B17010/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B17010/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

<sup>16</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B19057/0400000US39|0500000US39003|0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B19057/0400000US39|0500000US39003|0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

<sup>17</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B25014/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B25014/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

TABLE 3-6 POVERTY STATUS BY FAMILY STATUS IN RICHLAND TOWNSHIP						
Family Type by Presence of Related Children						
	2000*		2010**		2015**	
Total Families	606	100.0%	574	100.0%	507	100.0%
Married - Related Children	273	45.0%	195	34.0%	176	34.7%
Male Alone - Related Children	10	1.7%	19	3.3%	36	7.1%
Female Alone - Related Children	6	1.0%	9	1.6%	16	3.2%
Family - No Children	293	48.3%	351	61.1%	279	55.0%
Poverty Status of Families with Related Children						
	2000*		2010**		2015**	
Total Families	14	100.0%	11	100.0%	18	100.0%
Married - Related Children	4	28.5%	0	0.0%	11	61.1%
Male Alone - Related Children	0	0.0%	11	100.0%	0	0.0%
Female Alone - Related Children	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	38.9%
Family - No Children	10	71.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
*U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census						
**ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates						

TABLE 3-7 RATIO OF INCOME TO POVERTY LEVEL AMONG INDIVIDUALS		
Below 50% of Poverty Level	27	1.7%
50% to 99% of Poverty Level	68	4.2%
100% to 124% of Poverty Level	73	4.5%
125% to 149% of Poverty Level	16	1.0%
150% to 184% of Poverty Level	138	8.5%
185% to 199% of Poverty Level	18	1.1%
200% of Poverty Level or more	1,282	79.0%
*ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates		

TABLE 3-8 OCCUPANTS PER ROOM AS POVERTY INDICATOR						
Tenure	Richland Township	Percent	City of Lima	Percent	Allen County	Percent
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>26,883</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
0.5 or less	426	78.9%	5,059	79.5%	21,792	81.1%
0.51 to 1.00	114	21.1%	1,217	19.1%	4,818	17.9%
1.01 to 1.50	0	0.0%	69	1.1%	184	0.7%
1.51 to 2.00	0	0.0%	20	0.3%	77	0.3%
2.00 or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	0.0%
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,664</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13,103</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
0.5 or less	57	76.0%	5,011	65.4%	8,821	67.2%
0.51 to 1.00	18	24.0%	2,443	31.9%	3,926	30.0%
1.10 to 1.50	0	0.0%	161	2.1%	254	2.0%
1.51 to 2.00	0	0.0%	49	0.6%	92	0.7%
2.00 or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	0.1%
*ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates						



### 3.7 Educational Attainment

Table 3-9 presents data summarizing the educational attainment levels of the Richland Township population aged 25 years or more by racial characteristics in 2015. Data shows that there are 120 individuals or 9.7 percent of all individuals 25 years of age or older that have not completed a high school education. This statistic compares favorably against State and National attainment levels where high school diplomas fail to be earned by 10.9 and 13.3 percent of the respective populations. Given that Bluffton University provides easy access and that there are several other reputable post-secondary schools located in Allen County and several others readily accessible in adjacent counties, it is surprising that less than 30 percent (29.1%) of the Township's adult residents have completed a 4-year college and/or graduate degree program when considering the ease of access to quality education in the area.<sup>18,19</sup>

*Locally accessible post-secondary schools include:*

- The Ohio State University
- Ohio Northern University
- Rhodes State College
- Bluffton University
- University of Northwestern Ohio
- Findlay University

TABLE 3-9 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR THE POPULATION 25 YEARS & OVER						
Educational Attainment	White Population		Minority Population		Total Population	
	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent
Less than High School Diploma	111	9.3%	9	20.9%	120	9.7%
High School Graduate, GED	513	42.8%	2	4.7%	515	41.5%
Some College or Associate's Degree	244	20.4%	0	0.0%	244	19.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	329	27.5%	32	74.4%	361	29.1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
*ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates						

Many factors affect employment and income rates among adults. None, however, may be as important as educational attainment levels. Higher levels of educational attainment have repeatedly demonstrated higher income earnings regardless of gender. In addition, positions that require higher educational attainment levels tend to offer more job satisfaction. Moreover, individuals with lower educational attainment levels, especially those with no high school diploma, experience higher rates of unemployment (nearly 3 times the rate for those that have completed a bachelor's degree) when they are employed. Therefore, it is extremely important to support local school initiatives, post-secondary advancement, and continuing educational programs to strengthen the skill sets of the local population and labor force.

*Examining Richland residents over 25 years of age, nearly 5 in 10 (48.8%) of high school graduates went on to post secondary schools.*

### 3.8 Labor Force Profile

The civilian labor force consists of all non-institutionalized people 16 years of age or older who are identified as either employed or unemployed, and excludes those individuals who are currently members of the armed forces. The total available 16+ population force in Allen County numbered 83,408 persons according to the 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates; those not in the civilian labor force reflected 30,963 or 37.1 percent of the total available population. The civilian labor force residing in Allen County, as documented by the 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates was 52,445, of which 47,604 or 90.8

<sup>18</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B15003/0100000US|0400000US39|0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B15003/0100000US|0400000US39|0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

<sup>19</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/C15002A/0100000US|0400000US39|0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/C15002A/0100000US|0400000US39|0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

percent were employed. The 2015 civilian labor force in Richland Township totaled 834 persons, or 1.6 percent of the County's total civilian labor force. Estimates suggest that 788 or 94.5 percent of the 834 were employed.<sup>20</sup>

A perspective on the Richland labor force can be gained by examining the number of employed persons by type of occupation. Table 3-10 uses 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates to identify the dominant occupation sectors of Richland Township residents. Education, Health and Social Services; Manufacturing; and Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing were the predominant occupations. Almost a third (29.6%) of Richland Township residents are employed in the Education, Health and Social Services, while nearly 1 in 5 (18.0%) are employed in Manufacturing.<sup>21</sup>

*Richland Township reflects an employment-population ratio of 63.6 percent. This proportion has stayed slightly above the rate for Ohio (66.5% and 64.8%) and that of the United States overall (66.5% and 64.0%).*

In Allen County, the employment-population ratio, or the proportion of the population 16 years of age and over in the workforce, has increased over the past 15 years from 60.9 percent in 2000 to 62.9 percent in 2015. 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates reflect that 62.3 percent of Richland Township's available population is engaged in the work force, a decrease since 2000 (66.5%). This proportion has stayed slightly above the rate for Ohio (64.8% in 2000 and 63.3% in 2015) and that of the United States (63.4% in 2000 and 63.3% in 2015) over the last 10 years.<sup>22</sup>

TABLE 3-10 RESIDENT OCCUPATION BY TYPE & PERCENTAGE OF LABOR FORCE		
Occupation	Number	Percent
Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting and Mining	39	4.9%
Construction	53	6.7%
Manufacturing	142	18.0%
Wholesale Trade	17	2.2%
Retail Trade	48	6.1%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	46	5.8%
Information	0	0.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	69	8.8%
Professional, Scientific, Mgmt., Administrative, Waste Mgmt.	34	4.3%
Educational, Health and Social Services	233	29.6%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Service	28	3.6%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	49	6.2%
Public Administration	30	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
*ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates		

The unemployment rates over the past 15 years for Allen County reflect the impact of major employers relocating or instituting major cutbacks in response to market events or economic trends. Richland Township's 2015 unemployment rate was below the County rate of 9.2 percent, with an unemployment rate of 5.5 percent. Table 3-11 documents unemployment over time and the relationship the manufacturing industry has with the labor force of Richland Township and the County as a whole.

<sup>20</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B23025/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B23025/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

<sup>21</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/C24050/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/C24050/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

<sup>22</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B23025/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B23025/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752|1600000US3907426)

**TABLE 3-11  
RICHLAND TOWNSHIP: RESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT  
2000-2015**

	2000				2015			
	Township	%	County	%	Township	%	County	%
16+ Population	1,621	79.6	83,540	77.0	1,338	78.5	83,408	79.3
Civilian Workforce	1,078	66.5	50,866	60.9	834	62.3	52,445	62.9
Employed	1,051	97.5	47,951	94.3	788	94.5	47,604	90.8
Health & Education	284	27.0	9,927	20.7	233	29.6	12,034	25.3
Manufacturing	270	25.7	11,510	24.0	142	18.0	9,626	20.2
Finance	30	2.9	1,678	3.5	69	8.8	2,133	4.5
Unemployment	27	2.5	2,615	6.1	46	5.5	4,841	9.2
*ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates								

### 3.9 Summary

The population of Richland Township has experienced a significant increase of 27.8 percent since 1960. A slight decrease from 2000 to 2010 was noticed of -3.0 percent.

Census data reveals that the composition, size and number of households is changing. The total number of Richland Township households in 2010 was 688, an increase of 4.6 percent over the 2000 figure. In 2010, the average household size in the Richland Township was only 2.74 persons, a decrease of 7.7 percent in size. The implications of projected smaller size households are important and should be monitored by local policy experts and reflected in the local housing policies, building codes, and zoning regulations.

Consistent with national trends, the Township's population is aging. The median age of the population is 46.5 years, 8.4 years older than the County as a whole. Data suggests that simply due to age of the population, more than a third of the population is not able to fully contribute to the economic growth and earning power of the community. Age of residents will also impact the need for service, including education, police, fire and emergency medical service. In addition, age will necessarily be a factor in housing consumption and design. Local policies should be developed to increased opportunity, choice and costs in housing based on both physical and financial considerations.

Many factors affect employment rates among adults. None, however, may be as important as educational attainment levels. Data shows that there are 120 individuals or 9.7 percent of all individuals 25 years of age or older that have not completed a high school education residing in Richland Township. The rate of Richland Township adults who have not graduated from high school is well below the state and national averages of 10.9 percent and 13.3 percent respectfully. Also, it is surprising that less than 30 percent of the Township's adult residents have completed a 4-year college and/or graduate degree program when considering the ease of access to quality higher education institutions in the area.

Three income measures were analyzed for Richland Township – median household income, median family income, and per capita income. Median household income declined slightly from 2000 to 2015 by 0.3 percent, but still remains above the State median. Median family income, on the other hand, increased 3.1 percent. Despite this growth, current values now lag behind Ohio. Changes to per capita income were similar to median family income, as per capita income also increased, by a significant margin of 31.5 percent, but remains to be lower than the State.

The 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates revealed that 95 individuals (5.9%), and 18 families (3.6%) resided below the established poverty level based on income and household size. For purposes of comparison, data indicates that 17.5 percent of all individuals and 22.9 percent of all families within Allen County were below the established poverty level. Locally, all of the 18 families in poverty had children.

When examining the type of employment of Richland residents, Educational, Health, and Social Services is the predominant employment type with 29.6 percent of the workforce employed in this sector. However, manufacturing, which reflects 18.0 percent of all employment of Township residents, experienced a drop of nearly half (-47.4%) from 2000 to 2015.

## SECTION 4 INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

Infrastructure refers to facilities, structures, and services necessary to support a community's homes, employers, institutions, recreational needs, educational needs, and community services. It also notably provides the essential building blocks of a community. Infrastructure is often used to reference the transportation network, the water distribution and wastewater collection systems, and the community's stormwater and drainage systems. Infrastructure is necessarily a concern for the public, and rightfully so, since taxpayers are responsible for the maintenance of such infrastructure. Privately supplied utilities such as natural gas, electricity, and telecommunications are also part of a community's infrastructure. High quality infrastructure is necessary in a community to maintain and support the health and safety of its residents.

In economic development, infrastructure most often refers to the ability to move goods, products, and services as efficiently and safely as possible between supplies and markets. In community development, infrastructure includes not only hard, physical infrastructure, but the facilities and services necessary to support and sustain the local community. This softer side of infrastructure includes a community's housing stock, parks, schools, fire, emergency medical, and law enforcement components.

*The success of the planning process and the future development of Richland Township is dependent upon examining and subsequently establishing a balance between the infrastructure now serving the community and the infrastructure needed to serve residents and business alike in the future.*

This section is provided in an attempt to present baseline information on the community's existing infrastructure. Housing, public utilities, roadways, and rail crossings are all addressed in this section; park amenities are addressed in Section 5; and the remaining infrastructure and services will be addressed by others under separate cover. The success of the planning process and the future development of Richland Township is dependent upon examining, and subsequently establishing, a balance between the infrastructure now serving the community, and the infrastructure needed to serve residents and business alike in the future.

### 4.1 Housing

Local housing characteristics reflect the number and type of units available and their overall physical condition - both interior and exterior. Examining the distribution of housing units by the year in which the structure was built provides insight into the history of residential development in the area, and can indicate potential problem areas in housing condition due to the age of structures. The following subsections attempt to identify the nature of Richland Township housing using the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates and the Allen County Auditor's Database with comparisons to other political subdivisions to provide relative measures.

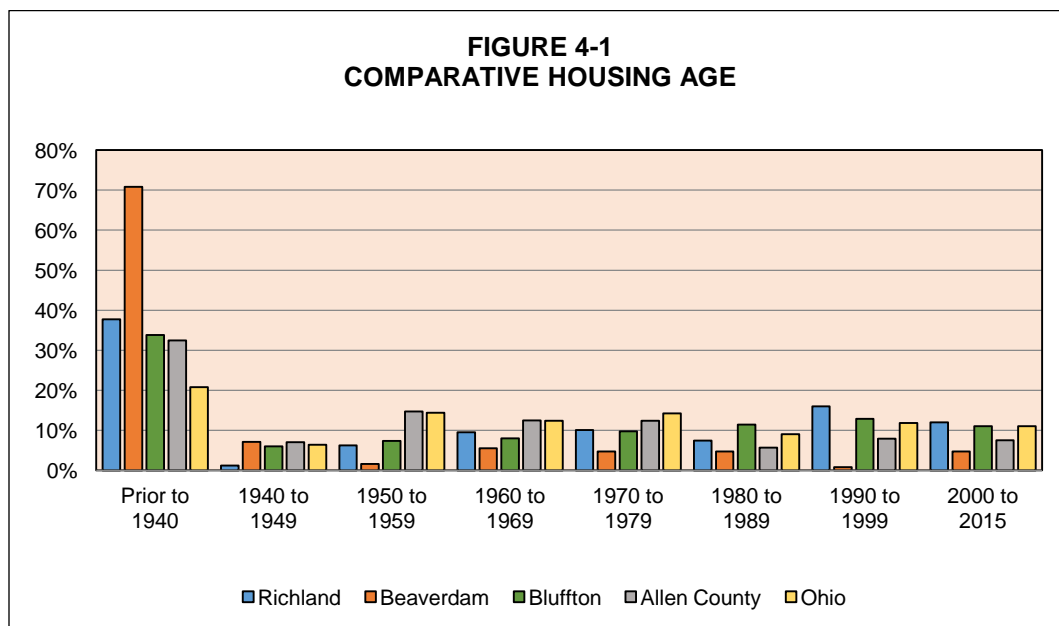
#### 4.1.1 Age of Housing Stock

Table 4-1 reveals that 45.1 percent of Richland Township's housing was built before 1960. Figure 4-1 shows a comparison of housing stock based on age between Richland Township, the Village of Beaverdam, the Village of Bluffton, Allen County, and the State of Ohio. Housing in Richland Township is significantly younger than the housing in the Village Beaverdam and somewhat newer than housing in the Village of Bluffton and Allen County. Comparatively, less than 54.1 percent of the housing in Allen County, and 41.6 percent of the housing in Ohio has been built since 1960.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Allen County Auditor's Database 2017

TABLE 4-1 HOUSING UNITS BY AGE IN SELECTED AREAS					
Year	Richland	Beaverdam	Bluffton	Allen County	Ohio
Total	676	127	1,356	36,726	5,140,902
Prior to 1939	37.7%	70.9%	33.8%	32.5%	20.8%
1940 to 1959	7.4%	8.7%	13.3%	21.7%	20.8%
1960 to 1969	9.5%	5.5%	8.0%	12.4%	12.4%
1970 to 1979	10.1%	4.7%	9.7%	12.4%	14.2%
1980 to 1989	7.4%	4.7%	11.4%	5.6%	9.0%
1990 to 1999	16.0%	0.8%	12.8%	7.9%	11.8%
2000 or later	12.0%	4.7%	11.0%	7.4%	11.0%



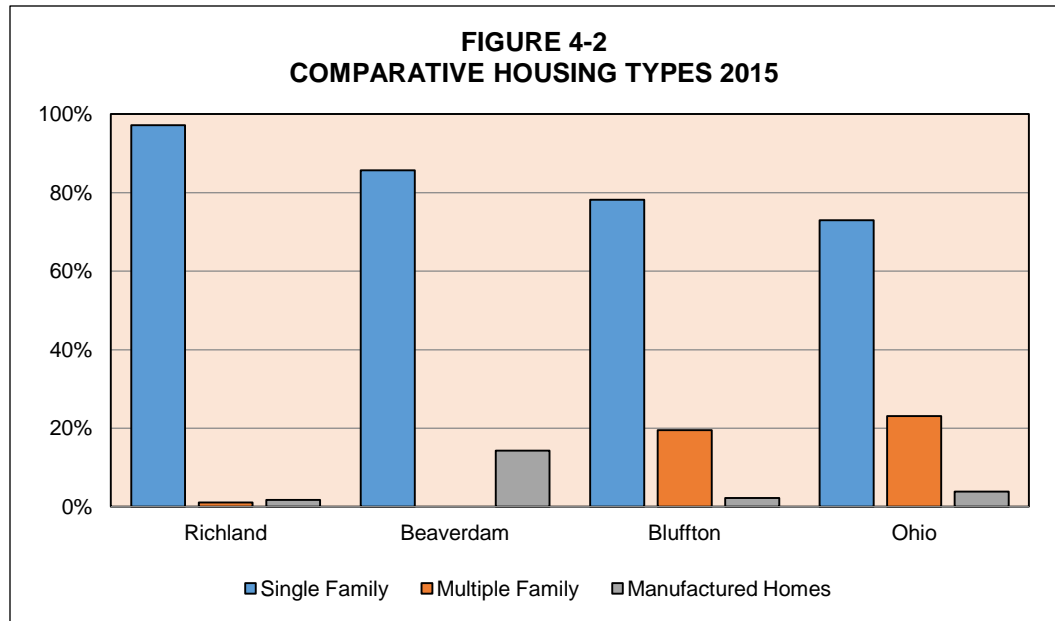
#### 4.1.2 Type of Housing Units

The identification of housing units by type helps determine the housing choices available to local residents and allows issues of housing accessibility and affordability to be determined. The majority of homes in Richland Township are single-family units (97.2%), which exceeds The Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, and the State of Ohio as illustrated in Figure 4-2. Richland's 97.2 percent compares to 85.7 percent for Beaverdam, 78.2 percent for Bluffton, and 73.0 percent for the State of Ohio.<sup>2</sup>

Examining the presence of multi-family units, only 1.1 percent of the Township's total housing stock is comprised of multi-family units. The proportion of multi-family units is in drastic difference to that of Bluffton (19.5%) and the State of Ohio (23.1%). The percentage of manufactured homes in the Township is 1.7 percent of the total available housing units and is significantly below the proportion found in the Village of Beaverdam (14.3%), and is also below the Village of Bluffton (2.2%) and the State of Ohio (3.9%).

<sup>2</sup>[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B25024/06000000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|16000000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B25024/06000000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|16000000US3904752)

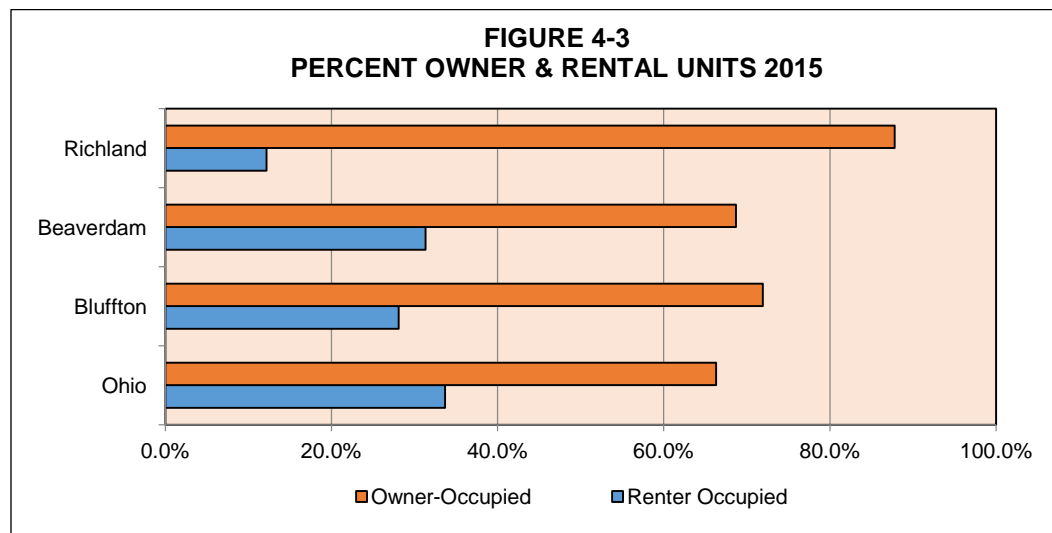




#### 4.1.3 Owner vs. Renter-Occupied Housing

Richland Township has a greater level of home ownership with fewer rental units when assessed against the larger community. As shown in Figure 4-3, the number of owner-occupied units in Richland Township (87.8%) is significantly higher than that in Bluffton (71.9%), Beaverdam (68.7%), and Ohio (66.3%).<sup>3</sup>

*The percentage of owner-occupied housing units in Richland Township (87.8%) is significantly higher than that in Bluffton (71.9%), Beaverdam (68.7%), and Ohio (66.3%).*



#### 4.1.4 Rental Costs

According to the 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates, about 1 in 10 occupied residential units were rented. Table 4-2 reveals the cost of rental housing within Richland Township and other jurisdictions. Notice that Richland Township with regards to median rent significantly higher than Beaverdam, Bluffton, and Allen County.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B25003/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B25003/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752)

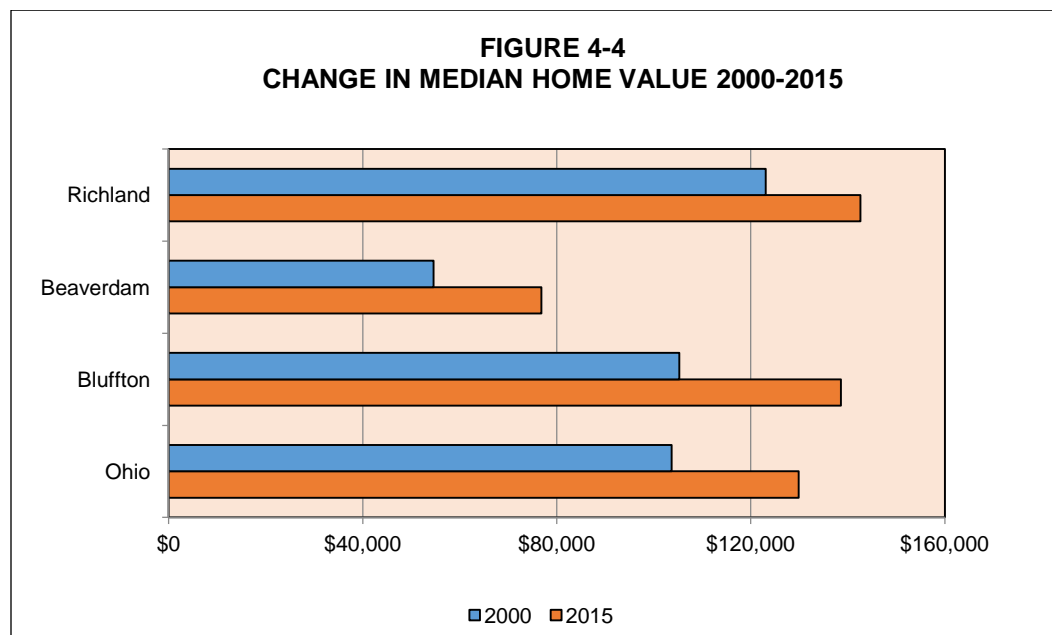
<sup>4</sup>[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B25063/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B25063/0600000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|1600000US3904752)

TABLE 4-2 MEDIAN RENT STATISTICS BY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION				
Rent	Richland	Beaverdam	Bluffton	Allen County
Median	\$957	\$708	\$584	\$588
Less than \$299	0	0	7	740
\$300 to \$399	0	2	37	462
\$400 to \$499	9	5	47	1,527
\$500 to \$599	0	15	150	2,419
\$600 to \$699	7	5	23	2,235
\$700 to \$799	28	17	61	1,533
\$800 to \$899	10	4	9	1,365
\$900 to \$999	0	8	43	833
\$1,000 to \$1,499	0	0	41	1,041
Greater than \$1,500	11	0	8	279

#### 4.1.5 Home Values

The median home value for Richland Township in 2015 (\$142,589) is significantly higher than Beaverdam (\$76,800) and the State of Ohio (\$129,900), while being slightly higher than Bluffton (\$138,600). The median home value in the Township as compared to the Villages and the State reflects the relatively young age of the housing stock, the median income of the population, and current market conditions, which are dictating the continued trend of upscale single-family housing construction in Richland Township. Figure 4-4 reveals that the magnitude of change in the median value of owner-occupied units in Richland Township between 2000 and 2015 (\$19,477/15.8%) was actually lower than Beaverdam (\$22,200/40.7%), Bluffton (\$33,300/31.6%), and the State of Ohio (\$26,200/25.3%).<sup>5</sup>

*Median value of owner-occupied houses surpassed both Ohio and Bluffton between 2000 and 2015.*



As shown in Figure 4-5, Richland Township compares favorably with the other townships in the Lima Metropolitan Area with regards to home value. Richland

<sup>5</sup>[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B25077/06000000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|16000000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B25077/06000000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|16000000US3904752)

Township actually had the highest home value out of the other Lima Area Townships. Table 4-3 identifies homes which were newly constructed between 2000 and 2015, and are currently occupied within Richland Township, along with their home values.

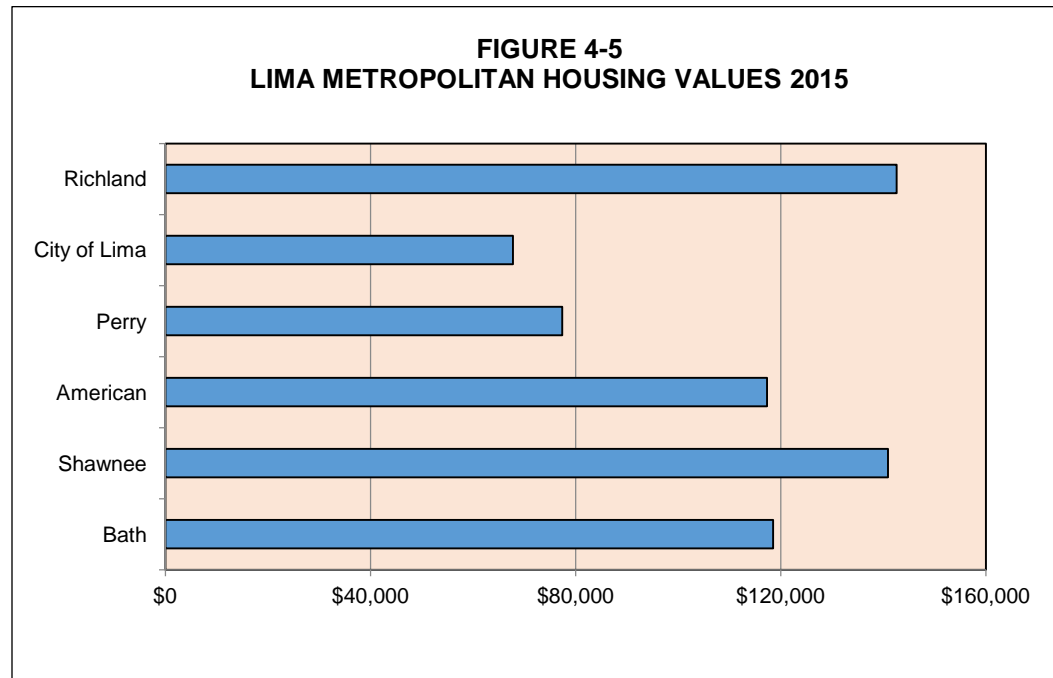


TABLE 4-3 OCCUPIED, NEWLY CONSTRUCTED UNITS 2000-2015			
Address	Home Value	Address	Home Value
8777 Bentley Rd	\$148,300	7576 N Napoleon Rd	\$202,300
10112 Bixel Rd	\$235,100	7514 N Napoleon Rd	\$134,100
5850 N Dixie Hwy	\$113,700	11872 N Phillips Rd	\$134,000
6018 N Dixie Hwy	\$81,300	11520 N Phillips Rd	\$128,400
7343 Foust Rd	\$101,600	10090 Putnam Rd	\$157,800
7957 Hillville Rd	\$286,300	9222 Rockport Rd	\$259,900
8310 Hillville Rd	\$169,700	8175 Rockport Rd	\$59,100
8037 Hillville Rd	\$138,900	10880 Shifferly Rd	\$217,000
11300 E Lincoln Hwy	\$112,000	10840 Shifferly Rd	\$264,300
11630 E Lincoln Hwy	\$111,400	10860 Shifferly Rd	\$252,600
10100 E Lincoln Hwy	\$132,400	11899 Snider Rd	\$140,500
Lugabill Rd	\$295,800	11766 Tom Fett Rd	\$269,500
9605 Lugabill Rd	\$245,000	11864 Tom Fett Rd	\$163,300
7836 Lugabill Rd	\$145,000	11950 Tom Fett Rd	\$214,600
9545 Lugabill Rd	\$185,500	<b>Average</b>	<b>\$175,841</b>
Allen County Auditor's Database			

#### 4.1.6 Housing Vacancy

Vacancy rates indicate the relative demand for housing in a community. They are based on housing units, which can be a 1-room efficiency apartment or a 5-bedroom home that are unoccupied for one reason or another. The State of Ohio has one of the lowest vacancy rates in the nation (10.8%) according to the 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates. In 2015, Richland Township had an even lower housing unit vacancy rate (3.3%). As a percentage of total housing units available, in

2010 vacancy represented 4.3 percent of all housing units while in 2015 it represented 3.3 percent. Table 4-4 suggests vacancies within the Township are relatively stable.<sup>6,7</sup>

TABLE 4-4 VACANCY STATUS BY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION 2000-2015						
Political Subdivision	2010 Census	2010 %	2015 ACS	2015 %	Change	
					Amount	Percent
Allen County	4,380	6.0	4,873	10.9	493	11.3%
Amanda Township	30	3.8	58	7.4	28	93.3%
American Township	383	6.7	295	6.0	-88	-23.0%
Auglaize Township	55	5.8	58	4.0	3	5.5%
Bath Township	284	6.9	442	7.7	158	55.6%
Jackson Township	66	6.2	46	7.8	-20	-30.3%
Marion Township	33	3.1	0	0.0	-33	-100.0%
Monroe Township	35	5.2	21	3.1	-14	-40.0%
Perry Township	108	6.9	191	11.3	83	76.9%
Richland Township	27	4.3	21	3.3	-6	-22.2%
Shawnee Township	361	7.0	422	7.5	61	16.9%
Spencer Township	18	5.2	45	10.4	27	150.0%
Sugar Creek Township	40	7.5	30	3.3	-10	-25.0%

#### 4.2 Water & Wastewater Infrastructure

Public utilities and system capacities facilitate community development. This Plan recognizes utility services as necessary to sustain existing economic activities as well as future development. The Plan acknowledges the detailed studies completed by those entities charged with the delivery of such services and accepts the land use limitations developed out of a respect for coordinating such services and limiting suburban sprawl.

Public water and sanitary sewer services support minimal existing development in Richland Township and are mostly confined to the Villages. In Richland Township, development has been supported by various public water and wastewater services. The extent and quality of each system varies by geographic location. Map 4-1 depicts the existing public water and wastewater infrastructure.

Examining potable water, Richland Township relies primarily on individual wells located on residential properties and farms. The existing public water distribution system in Richland Township is constrained to those incorporated areas with the exception of Lincoln Hwy out to the ODOT outpost at the intersection at Swaney Road. Map 4-1 depicts the current Village of Bluffton and Village of Beaverdam service area with near term consumer demands driving the extension of water services further into the unincorporated area.

When examining wastewater treatment service, Richland Township is served by Allen County and the Village of Beaverdam. To date, Beaverdam has been very non-aggressive with extending their sewer service outside of the confines of the incorporated area. Three service extensions have been customer driven, with specific services

<sup>6</sup>[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/B25004/06000000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|16000000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/B25004/06000000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|16000000US3904752)

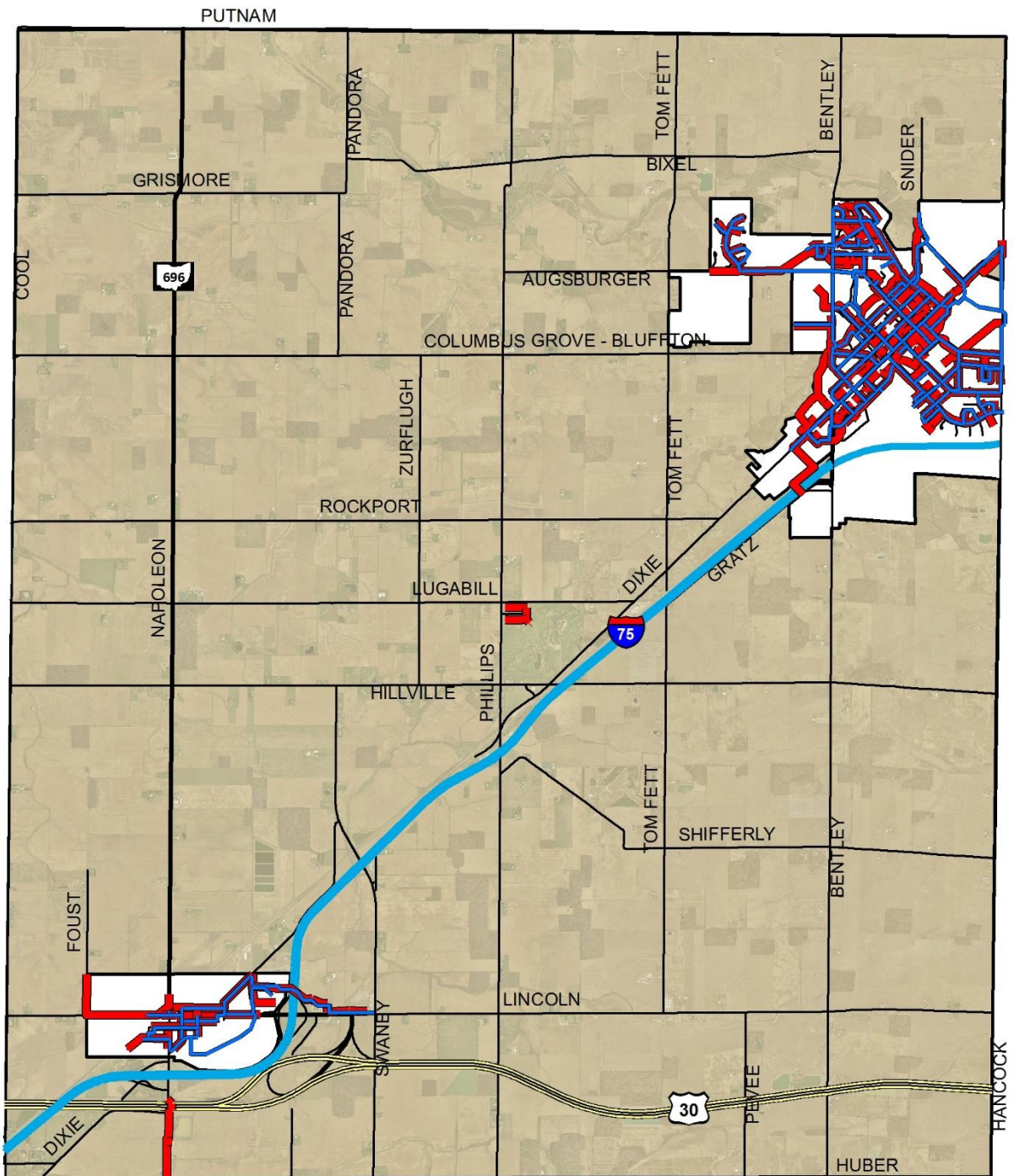
<sup>7</sup>[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10\\_SF1/H5/06000000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|16000000US3904752](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10_SF1/H5/06000000US3900366614|1550000US3907426003|16000000US3904752)



# MAP 4-1

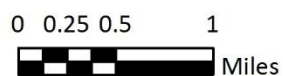
## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### CURRENT WATER & SEWER SERVICE



#### Water & Sewer Lines

- Water
- Sewer



April, 2017

provided to the new Village at Sugar Creek subdivision development, the Speedway Truck Stop on the east side of I-75 via Napoleon Road, and the Richland Manor Nursing Home. Allen County provides service to the Mast Estates Subdivision at Lugabill and Phillips Roads with a Package Plant. Extension of Bluffton's sewer services have historically required annexation. Concerns arise over the coordination of future extensions of both sanitary sewer and municipal water services.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4.3 Transportation & Transportation Services

Transportation infrastructure is an important tool in community building and economic development activities. Transportation infrastructure includes roads, bridges, rail, and airports. It also includes area cartage and freight service as well as inter and intra city public transportation services.

##### 4.3.1 Highway System

The highway system that services Richland Township is considered rural, consisting of interstate, arterials, collectors, and local roads. Map 4-2 depicts the federal functional classification of roadways by type. The administration of these roads is delegated to State and Local governmental units (Map 4-3).

The functional classification of the respective roadways identifies which roadways are eligible for federal funding regardless of the roadway's jurisdictional responsibility. Table 4-5 reveals the urban/rural classification of the community's roadway system. The major north-south interstate, I-75, passes through Richland Township from its northeast to southwest corner. To the north, I-75 links the Richland community to cities such as Toledo and Detroit while to the south, the cities of Dayton, Lexington, Atlanta, and Miami are directly accessible. Another major roadway located in Richland Township is U.S. Route 30. This east-west route links the Richland Township with Chicago to the west, and Pittsburgh and Philadelphia to the east. In addition to I-75 and U.S. Route 30, Richland Township is serviced by SR 696 (Napoleon Road), and the historic Lincoln Highway. The aforementioned highway system supplies a solid network for the movement of goods and people within and through the Township.

TABLE 4-5 ROADWAY MILEAGE BY FUNCTIONAL CLASS & JURISDICTION				
Functional Class	State Routes	County	Township	Total Miles
Rural Interstate	6.9	0.0	0.0	6.9
Rural Principal Arterial	6.1	0.0	0.0	6.1
Rural Major Collector	7.3	6.1	0.0	13.4
Rural Minor Collector	0.0	7.9	0.0	7.9
Rural Local	0.0	19.8	44.7	64.5
Total Miles	20.3	33.8	44.7	98.8

According to figures obtained from Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) total 2016 roadway system mileage within Richland Township entailed 98.8 miles, of which approximately 6.9 miles are classified as interstate mileage. Arterial roadways total 6.1 miles and account for 6.2 percent of total system mileage, while collectors account for 21.3 miles. Approximately two thirds of the roadway system (64.5 miles) is classified as local in nature for which the Township itself is responsible for 44.7 miles, while the County maintains 19.8 miles of local roads. According to 2015 estimates of daily vehicular miles of travel (VMT), total VMT approaches 347,400 miles per day in Richland Township.

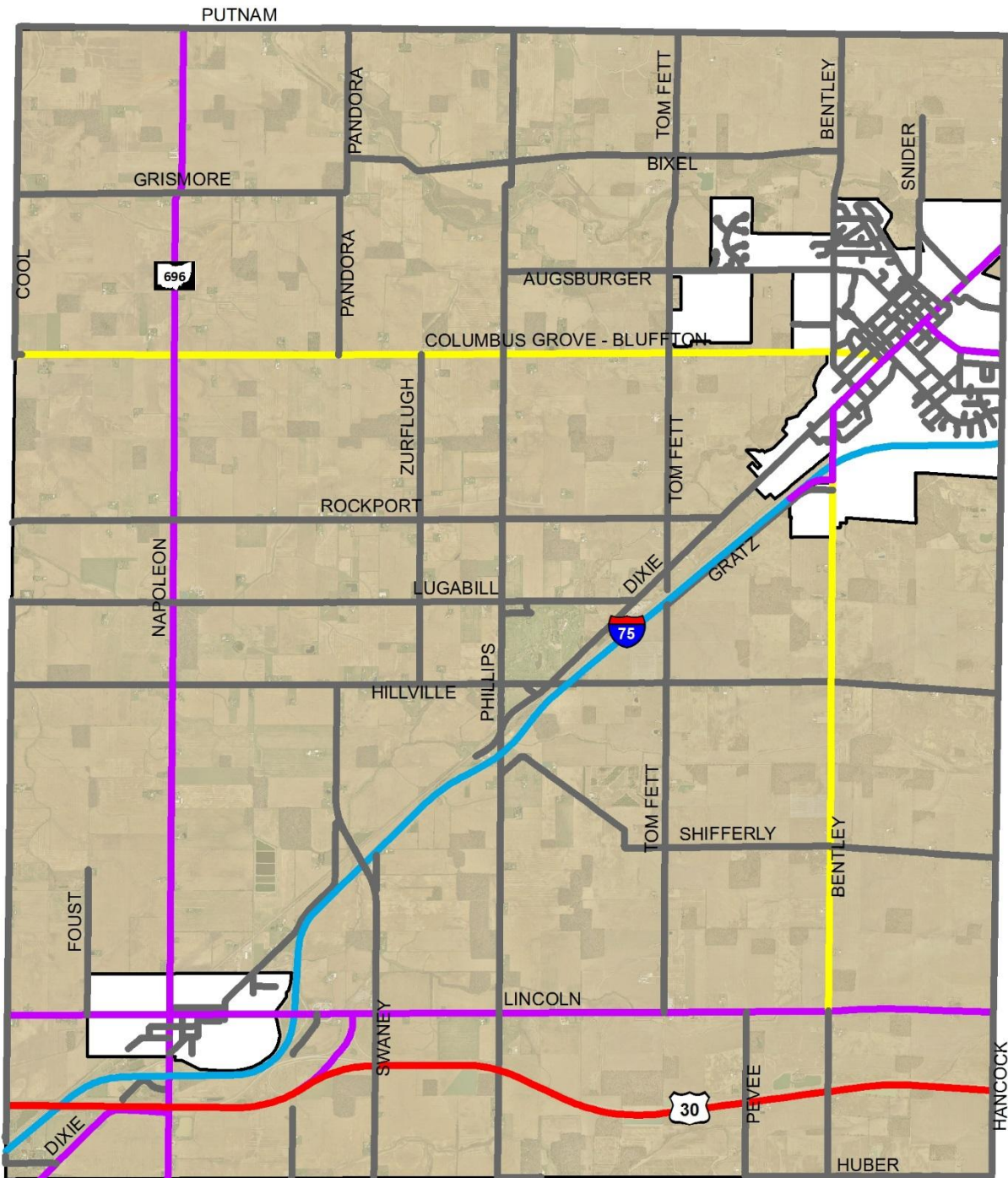
<sup>8</sup> Allen County Sanitary Engineering Department



# MAP 4-2

## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION



#### Functional Class

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial Road
- Major Collector Road
- Minor Collector Road
- Local Road

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles

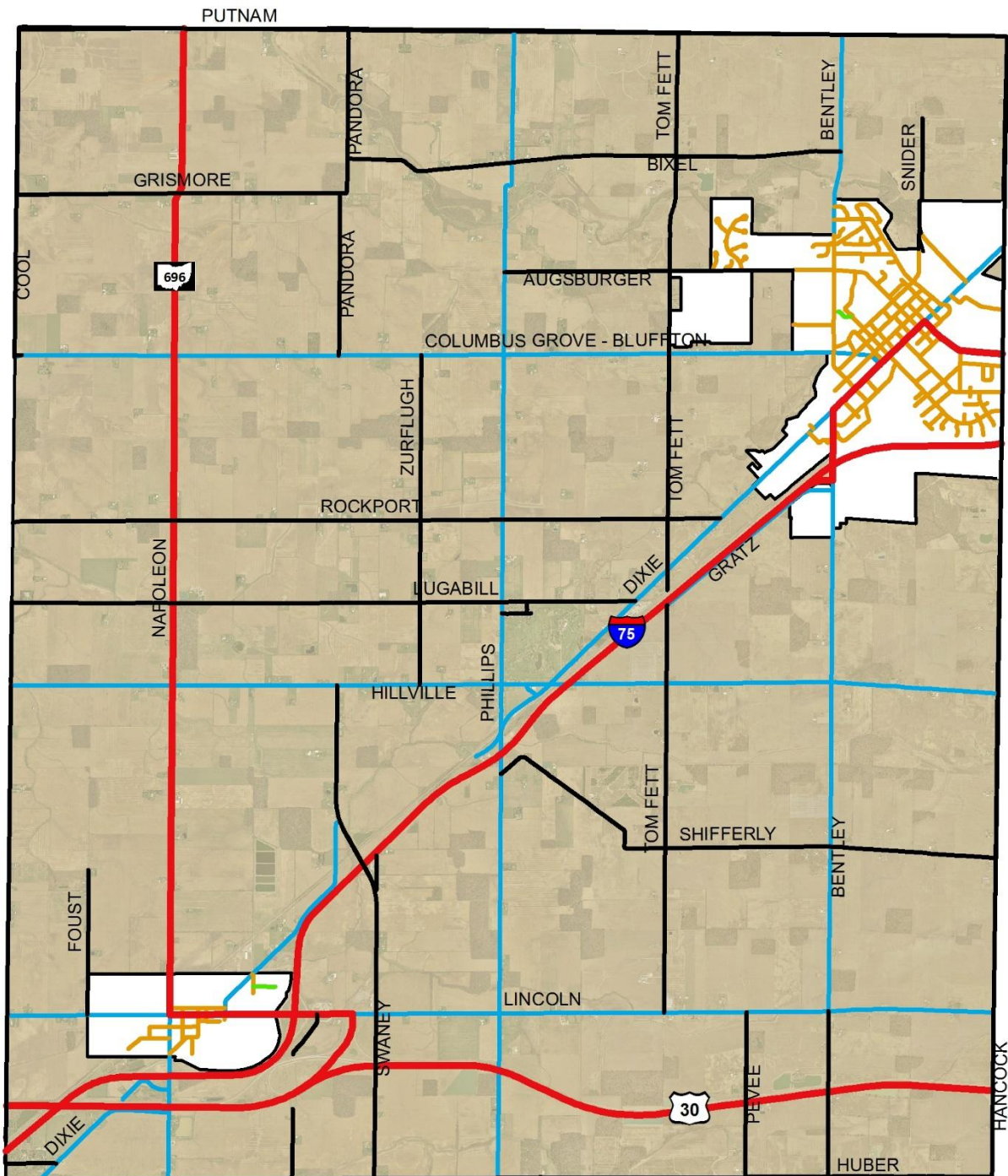


April, 2017

# MAP 4-3

## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### ROADWAY JURISDICTION



#### Jurisdiction

- State
- County
- Township
- Municipality
- Private

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April, 2017



Various roadway pavement widths have been identified in Map 4-4 as to their compliance with Federal design standards. Table 4-6 identifies 70.0 miles of deficient roadways by extent of deficiency, jurisdiction, and classification. Estimates to improve such roadways varies due to existing conditions including shoulder width, drainage, and base. Assuming an adequate base, shoulder width, and no drainage problems, necessary roadway improvements are estimated at \$1.1 million.<sup>9</sup>

TABLE 4-6 MILES OF DEFICIENT PAVEMENT WIDTH IN RICHLAND TOWNSHIP					
Deficient Pavement Width	State Major Collector	County Minor Collector	County Local	Township Local	Total Miles
6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.8
5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
4	0.0	0.0	6.5	5.3	11.8
3	0.0	3.4	2.0	10.7	16.1
2	0.0	3.3	3.8	18.0	25.1
1	5.8	1.0	2.0	6.4	15.2
<b>Total Miles</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>70.0</b>

As depicted in Map 4-5, there are 68 bridges in Richland Township, of which one is identified as deficient. Minor and major suggested bridge repair on several bridges was estimated at \$2.2 million in current dollars and identified in the County's 2040 Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program FY 2018-2021. Table 4-7 identifies the bridges by road, sufficiency rating, and status.<sup>10,11</sup>



The number of crashes which occur in Richland Township are mainly contained to I-75, US-30, and SR 696 corridors. Nearly half (48.8%) of all accidents which occurred in Richland Township from 2014 to 2016 occurred on I-75. Table 4-8 shows the number of crashes per year by roadway jurisdiction, along with crash severity.<sup>12</sup>

Although the majority of crashes in Richland Township are concentrated on roads with State Jurisdiction, there are several County and Township intersections which have repeated crashes. These are depicted in Table 4-9, along with the severity of the crashes. The intersection with the most crashes was Lincoln Highway and Phillips Road, with 4 crashes, 1 with a reported injury. None were fatal.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/TechServ/Pages/tims.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> Allen County Engineer's Office

<sup>11</sup> <http://gis.dot.state.oh.us/tims>

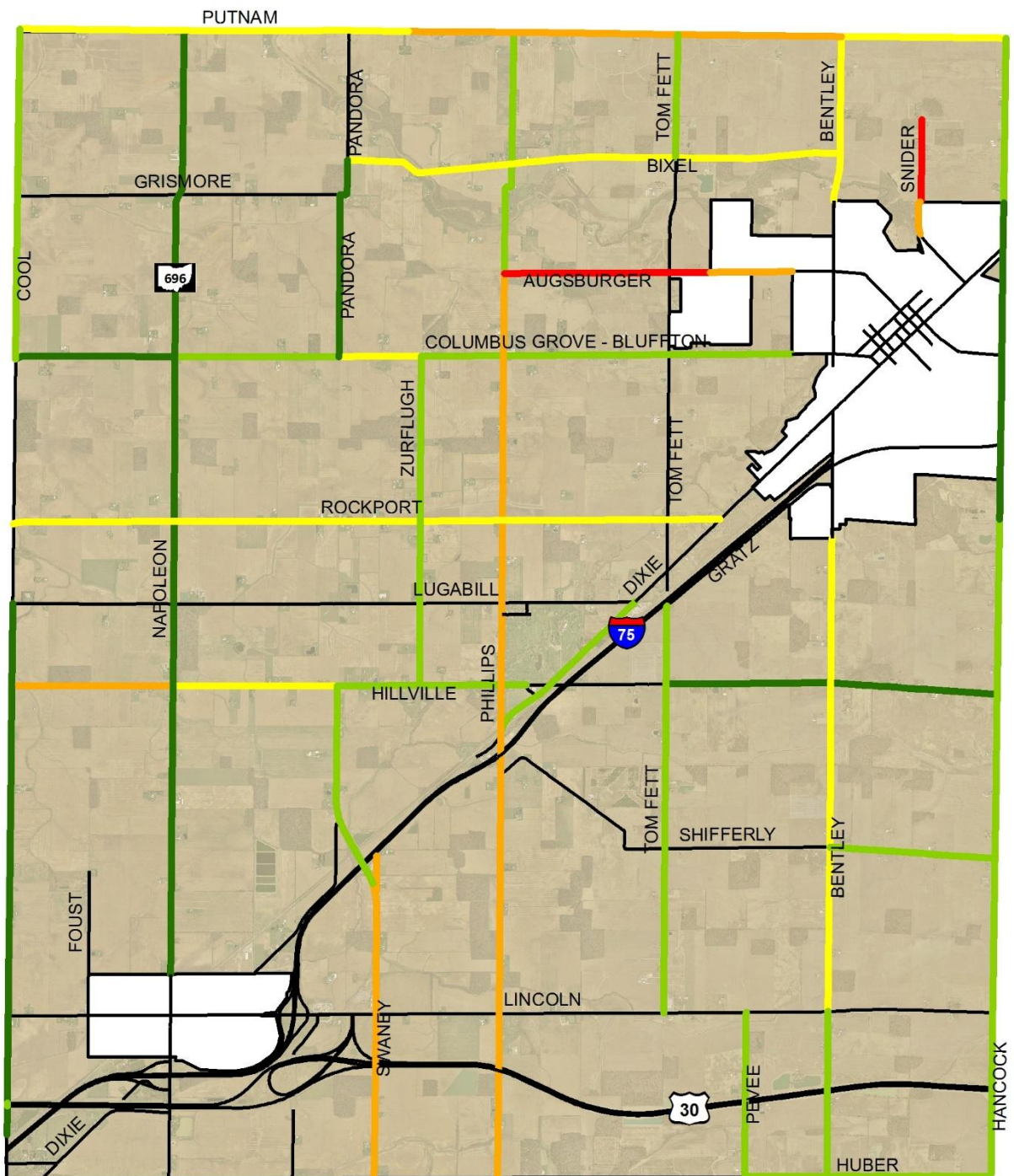
<sup>12</sup> Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission – Crash Summary Report 2015



# MAP 4-4

## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### ROADWAY DEFICIENCIES BY PAVEMENT WIDTH



#### Deficiency Width

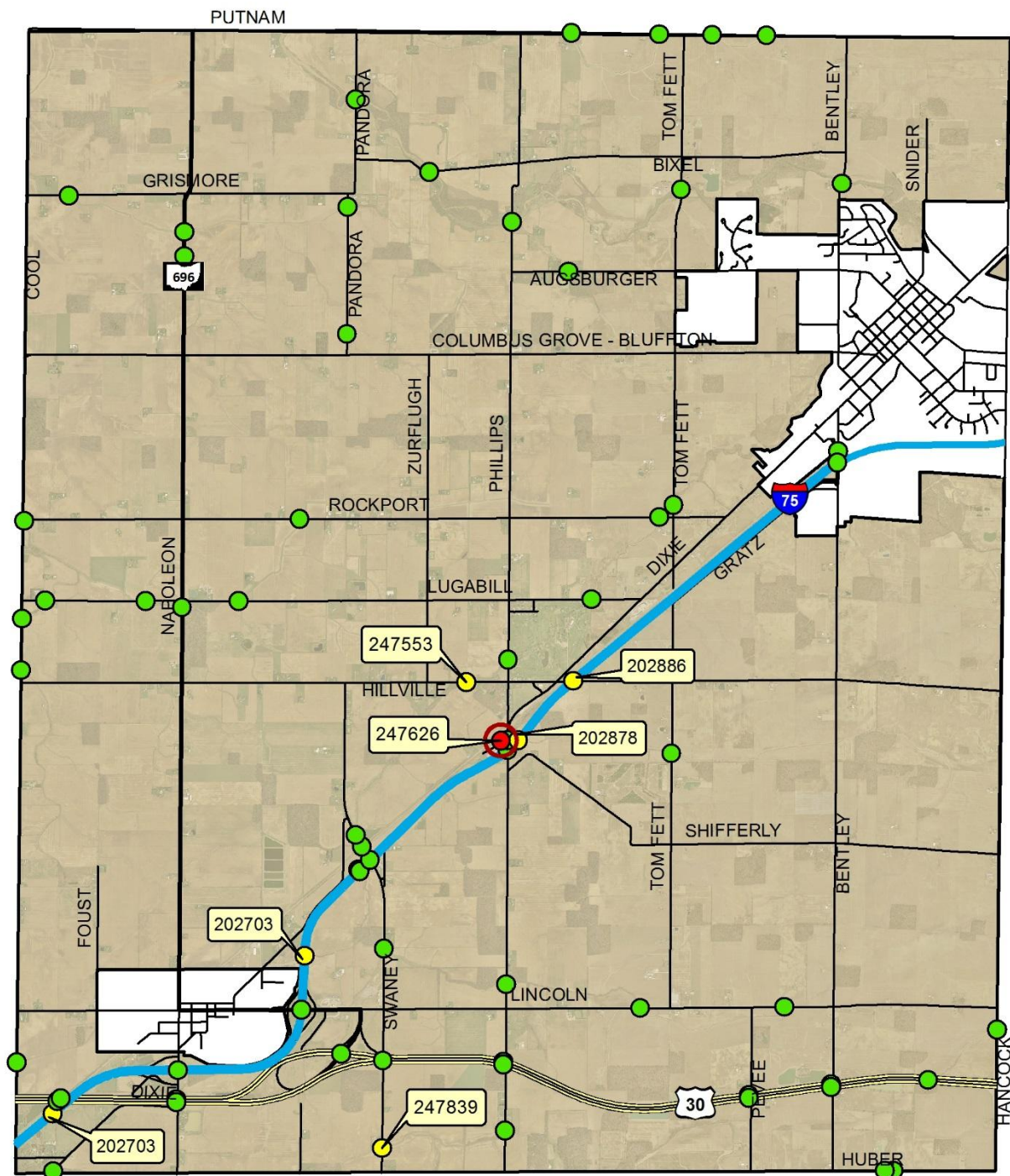
- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1 | 4             |
| 2 | 6             |
| 3 | Not Deficient |

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April, 2017

# MAP 4-5 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP BRIDGES BY SUFFICIENCY RATING



## Bridge Sufficiency Rating

- 100 to 76
- 75 to 50
- Less than 50
- 0 Bridge Number

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



May, 2017



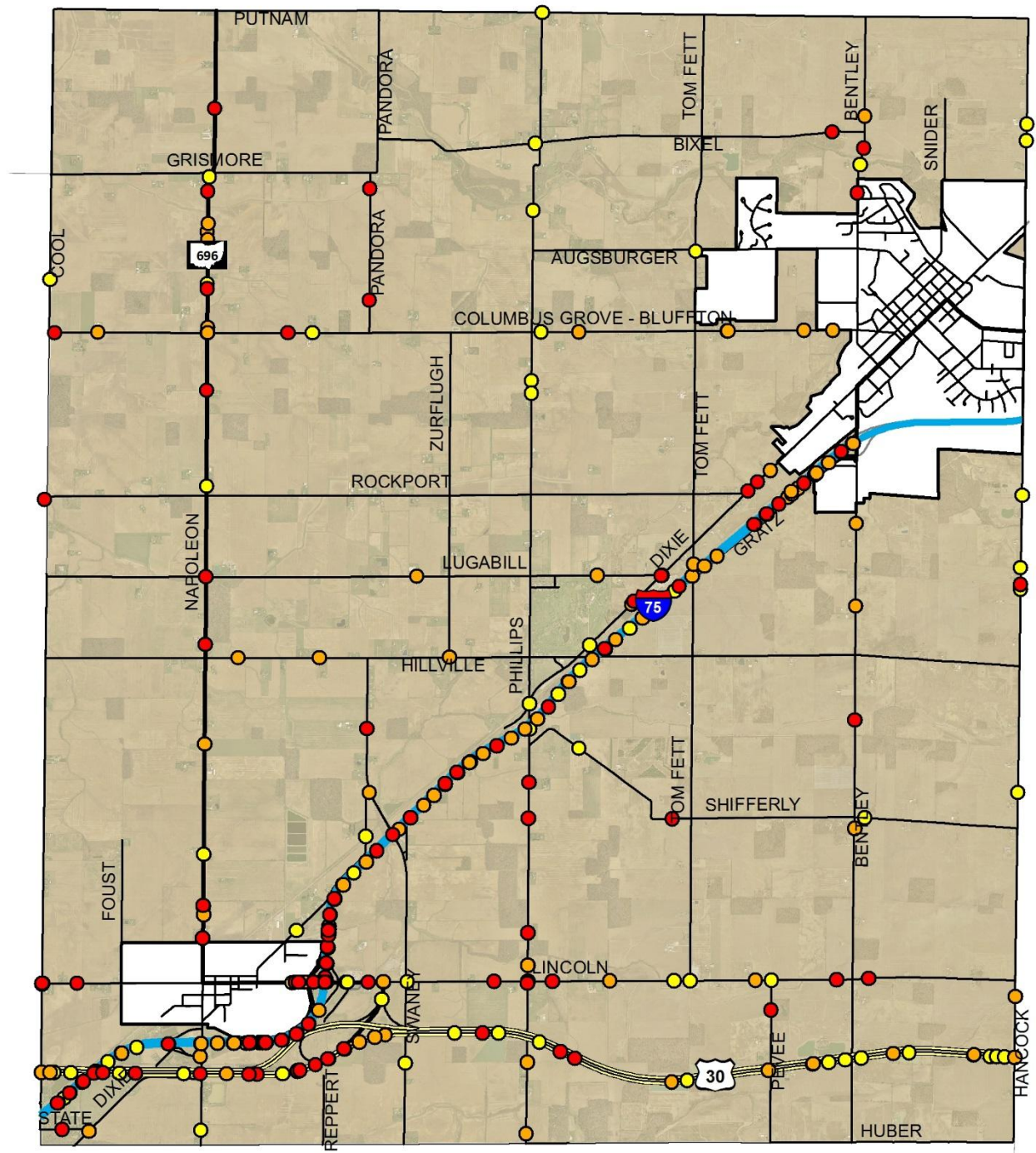
**TABLE 4-7  
BRIDGES OF RICHLAND TOWNSHIP**

Bridge ID	Bridge Location	Sufficiency Rating	Bridge ID	Bridge Location	Sufficiency Rating
<b>State Jurisdiction</b>			<b>Richland Jurisdiction</b>		
202703	Little Riley & I-75	51.0	247839	Sugar Creek & Swaney Rd	57
202630	Sugar Creek & I-75	55.0	247731	Little Riley & Rockport Rd	79
202878	Marsh Run & I-75	70.0	247693	Sream & Grismore Rd	84
202886	I-75 & Hillville Rd	74.6	202819	Little Riley & Swaney Rd	85
202827	I-75 & Phillips Rd	75.5	247634	Stream & Hardin Rd	86
202797	I-75 & Swaney Rd	78.5	247685	Stream & Cool Rd	87
200654	Little Riley & US 30	85.0	247995	Riley Creek & Bixel Rd	88
203548	I-75 & Bentley Rd	89.5	202800	NS Railroad & Swaney Rd	90
204447	I-75 & Napoleon Rd	91.3	247642	Little Riley & Tom Fett Rd	92
202681	I-75 & Lincoln Hwy	92.6	247901	Marsh Run & Tom Fett Rd	92
202843	Marsh Run & Phillips Rd	93.5	247669	Stream & Putnam Rd	92
202738	Little Riley & I-75 SB	93.6	248061	Stream & Putnam Rd	92
202762	Little Riley & I-75 NB	93.8	247847	Little Riley & Swaney Rd	92
200662	US 30 EB & Napoleon Rd	94.0	248088	Cranberry & Lugabill Rd	93
200522	US 30 & Swaney Rd	97.9	247936	Riley Creek & Tom Fett Rd	95
200506	US 30 & SR 696	98.0	247820	Riley Creek & Pandora Rd	96
200530	US 30 WB & Phillips Rd	98.0	247650	Stream & Putnam Rd	97
200557	US 30 EB & Phillips Rd	98.0	247707	Stream & Rockport Rd	97
200565	US 30 WB & Pevee Rd	98.0	247766	Cranberry Creek & Lugabill Rd	97
200581	US 30 EB & Pevee Rd	98.0	247774	Little Riley & Lugabill Rd	97
200611	US 30 WB & Bentley Rd	98.0	248150	Cranberry Creek & Lugabill Rd	97
200646	US 30 EB & Bentley Rd	98.0	247758	Stream & Cool Rd	97
200638	US 30 WB & Napoleon Rd	98.0	248126	Stream & Augsburg Rd	97
204528	SR 696 & Cranberry Run	98.7	247677	Stream & Putnam Rd	98
204544	SR 696 & Cranberry Run	98.7	247812	Stream & Pandora Rd	100
204471	SR 696 & Cranberry Creek	99.8	248185	Stream & Pandora Rd	100
200603	I-75 & US 30 EB	100.0	247715	Stream & Cool Rd	100
200573	I-75 & US 30 WB	100.0	248134	Stream & Huber Rd	100
			248142	Stream & Huber Rd	100
<b>County Jurisdiction</b>					
<b>Bridge ID</b>	<b>Bridge Location</b>	<b>Sufficiency Rating</b>			
0247626	Marsh Run & Dixie Hwy	43			
0247553	Little Riley & Hillville Rd	62			
0247863	Little Riley & Phillips Rd	87			
0248002	Sugar Creek & Dixie Hwy	93			
0248118	Little Riley & Phillips Rd	96			
0247545	Sugar Creek & Phillips Rd	97			
0247952	Riley Creek & Phillips Rd	97			
0247871	Riley Creek & Bentley Rd	97			
0247782	Locher Ditch & Lincoln Hwy	97			
0247804	Locher Ditch & Lincoln Hwy	97			
0247928	Cranberry Creek & Rockport Rd	100			

# MAP 4-6

## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### ROADWAY CRASHES 2014 - 2016



#### Crash Year

- 2016
- 2015
- 2014

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



May, 2017

TABLE 4-8 CRASH STATISTICS IN RICHLAND TOWNSHIP 2014-2016							
Location	Total Crashes	Crashes per Year			Crash Severity (2014-2016)		
		2014	2015	2016	Fatal	Injury	PDO
I-75	191	61	78	52	0	48	143
US-30	66	27	23	16	1	14	51
SR 696	43	12	14	17	0	10	33
County	64	18	25	21	0	16	48
Township	27	13	4	10	0	3	24

TABLE 4-9 INTERSECTIONS WITH MULTIPLE CRASHES RICHLAND TOWNSHIP 2014-2016							
Intersection	Total Crashes	Crashes per Year			Crash Severity (2014-2016)		
		2014	2015	2016	Fatal	Injury	PDO
Lincoln & Phillips	4	0	3	1	0	1	3
Lincoln & Cool	3	1	0	2	0	2	1
SR 696 & Columbus Grove-Bluffton	3	1	2	0	0	1	2
Dixie & Lugabill	2	1	0	1	0	0	2

#### 4.3.2 Rail System

In 2015, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) documented 151.0 miles of rail in Allen County. Approximately 7.5 percent, (11.4 miles), of rail system miles are located within Richland Township which as seen in Map 4-7. Allen County is currently serviced by two major Class I rail carriers: CSX (67.9 miles) and NS (21.4 miles). The County is also serviced by Indiana and Ohio Railroad (18.9 miles) and the R.J. Corman Railroad (42.7 miles). Although not all located within Richland Township, each of the rail lines increase the ability of the overall rail system to service industrial and commercial interests. Collectively, these railroads are able to provide access to regional, national, and international markets. The availability of rail sidings in Richland Township at existing sites is somewhat limited and additional investment is necessary to increase capacity, especially for break-of-bulk and intermodal functions. Future development plans would be negligent if they failed to consider opportunities for such a facility.<sup>13</sup>

*The availability of rail sidings at existing sites is somewhat limited and additional investment is necessary to increase capacity especially for break-of-bulk and intermodal functions.*

#### 4.3.3 Electric, Oil & Gas Transmission Line Locations

Richland Township is serviced by a full complement of utility providers. Residential and commercial services are readily available for electricity and gas. Service providers include American Electric Power (AEP), Midwest Electric as well as Columbia Gas of Ohio. Specialized industrial cylinder and bulk gas is also available through BOC Gases and AGA Gas.

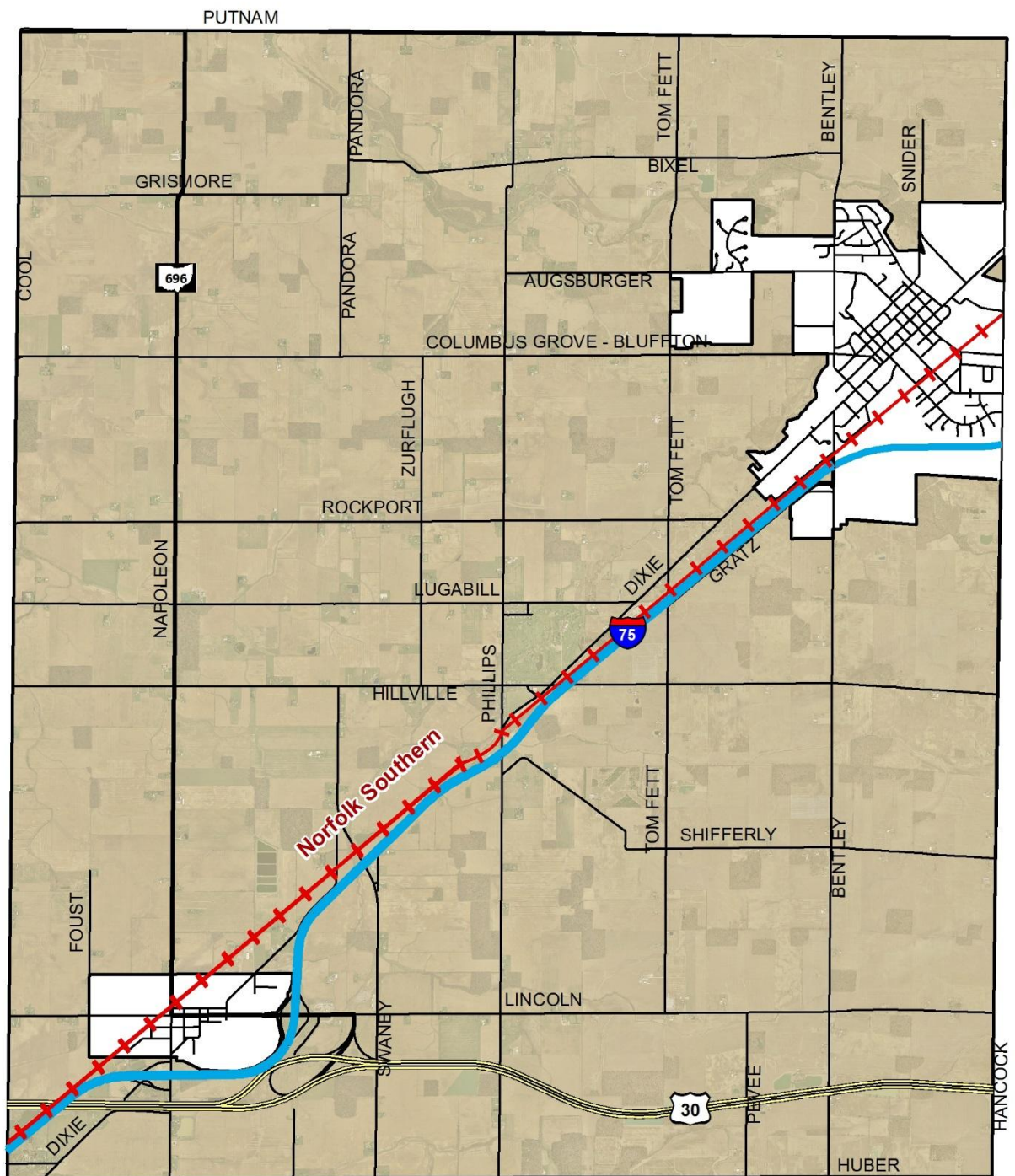
*The availability and costs of utility services are considered very reasonable when compared to State and National costs.*

When examining larger industrial applications it is important to recognize that Allen County is crossed by the pipelines of Columbia Gas as well as petrochemical companies that have established terminals and/or pipelines for

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.puco.ohio.gov/>



**MAP 4-7**  
**RICHLAND TOWNSHIP**  
**RAILROADS**



+ Railroads

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April, 2017

transmission purposes including Marathon, Shell, BP, Buckeye, Ashland, Inland, and Mid Valley. It is also important to recognize that the American Electrical Power has large voltage transmission lines traversing the region. Map 4-8 identifies the approximate location of the various utility lines.

#### 4.4 Summary

The Allen County Auditor's Database reported 676 housing units present in Richland Township. Between 2000 and 2015, 29 new housing units were built in Richland Township. Data also reflects Richland Township's population slow down, and its pattern of young adults migrating out of Richland Township.

*Unnecessary or unplanned mandated improvements to public utilities are expensive for residents and businesses alike.*

Concerns regarding residential development include: the aging population and the appropriateness of the existing housing supply to meet future demands; the age and condition of the existing housing stock and the status of available codes/programs to support the redevelopment of some of the older housing stock; and, conflicting land use between strip residential development and the continued viability of the agricultural industry.

The key issues of concern to future development revolve around the availability, adequacy and costs of the Township's infrastructure/services. The community's transportation network, its water distribution system, wastewater capabilities and drainage system are typical infrastructure concerns for the public. Privately supplied utilities such as natural gas, electricity, and telecommunications are also a part of infrastructure. In community development, infrastructure is necessary to maintain and support the health and safety of residents. In economic development, infrastructure is concerned with the ability to move goods, services, and products between community's suppliers and markets and the sustenance of labor force. Unfortunately, unnecessary or unplanned mandated improvements to public utilities are expensive for residents and businesses alike.

The link between community development and transportation cannot be minimized. The community's access to the Federal and State roadway system is very good and increases the community's attractiveness. The ability to capitalize upon the region's rail infrastructure is more challenging. Currently, the limited number of through tracks on critical corridors hamper vehicular traffic on area roadways near at-grade crossings. Moreover, the availability of rail sidings at potential industrial sites is somewhat limited and additional investment is necessary to increase capacity, especially for break of bulk and inter-modal functions.

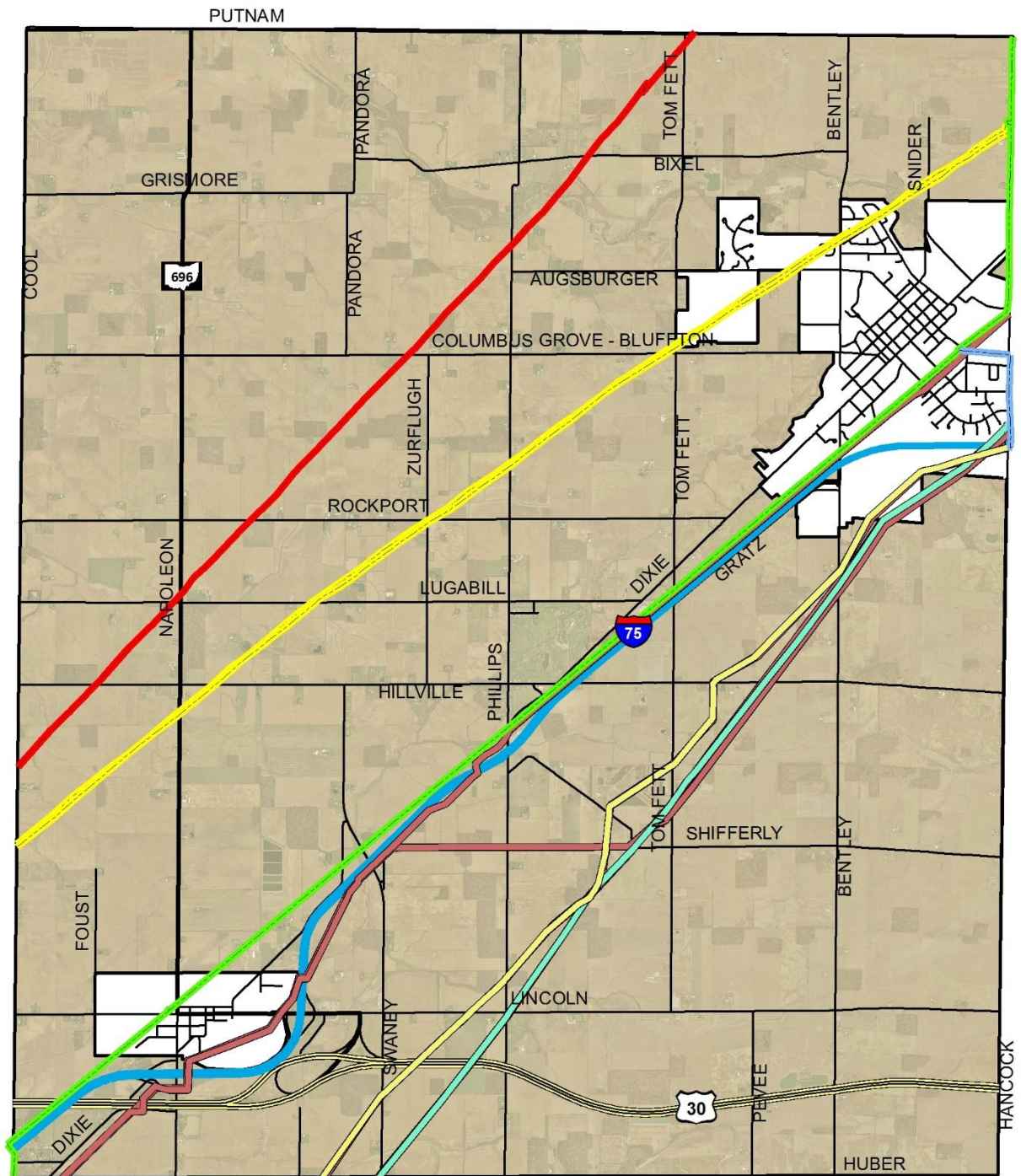
Concerns regarding water and sanitary sewer systems include: the capacity and limited utility service area expansions; the current regulatory environment; and, lack of current future plans to insure and protect the viability of the agricultural industry in Richland Township. The adequate funding of the community's transportation infrastructure is also important. Once rural roadways and bridges are now experiencing higher traffic volumes and heavier loads due to agricultural loads and unplanned residential developments on the Village/rural fringe. Such roadways do not meet minimum design standards and need to be improved to facilitate daily traffic flow safely. Adequate maintenance of roadways has become a critical issue for the Township. Future improvements will be identified in Section 7.



# MAP 4-8

## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### PIPELINE & ELECTRIC INFRASTRUCTURE



#### Transmission (kV)

- 12 kV
- 69 kV
- 138 kV
- 345 kV

#### Pipelines

- BP OIL PIPELINE CO
- BUCKEYE PARTNERS, LP
- MID - VALLEY PIPELINE CO

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April, 2017

## SECTION 5 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Richland Township is considered a rural township, with a considerable amount of land in the community maintaining a relatively rural landscape with large tracts of land engaged in agricultural pursuits. Such agricultural activities have continued relatively unimpeded in areas away from I-75. But the community is changing. As residential development moves further out into the Township, it increases the burden on local resources and works to destroy the very same rural landscape identified as so important to the residents of Richland Township. The haphazard development is resulting in environmental damage and government/citizen mandates to provide municipal water/sewer in areas where agriculture is being threatened by ever increasing land values. This continued strip residential development occurring along the once rural roads is forcing local governments to address haphazard growth and development.

There have been a number of statewide studies that have concluded the greatest threat to the State of Ohio and its population centers is the loss of farmland and an absence of land use planning that considers the resources and the integrity of its ecosystems. Recognizing that a sizable portion of Richland Township's economy relies upon its agricultural base, the community may be subject to a higher level of risk than other geographic areas of Ohio.

*Richland Township's natural resources may be at greater risk than other geographic areas of Ohio. The future pattern of development must protect natural resources and sustain the economy for a 25-year period.*

Managing future growth in a comprehensive and cooperative manner among cities, villages, and townships is highly desirable. Land areas designated for future development should be identified and reserved allowing for the protection of the natural landscape and the community's resources. Achieving a future pattern of development that protects natural resources and aesthetic qualities, while allowing a sustainable economy supported by infrastructure investments sufficient for a 25-year planning period, is the goal of the Township's future land use planning process.

### 5.1 Farmland Preservation

Farmland, within the United States, is currently being developed at a rate of more than 40 acres per hour across the country. Townships in Allen County have not been exempt from this trend as many previously agricultural parcels have been developed for other uses within the County in the last ten years. Richland Township has fared better than most in preserving their farmland as a net gain of 24 acres was experienced between 2006 and 2017.

Preservation of farmland is of the utmost importance as the loss of agricultural land has negative impacts on both the health of local populations and the natural environment. At the most basic level the continued loss of active farmland will be detrimental to the availability and accessibility of fresh produce and staple crops that feed families all over the world. Malnutrition, especially in impoverished neighborhoods, is already challenging both urban and rural America, due to low access to healthy foods. The development of agricultural land, most often includes the conversion of once vegetated and porous land into non-porous building or parking lot footprints. This has an effect on both the human and wildlife populations, as habitat is lost and pollutants are carried into waterways over hard surfaces and released into the air. More than half of wildlife species currently protected in the United States use private lands (cropland, ranch, etc.) for almost 80 percent of their habitat, including food and shelter. The continued loss of these lands has huge ramifications for the preservation of biodiversity in ecosystems across the country as open lands under agricultural practice, once thought of as safe from future development, are forfeited to economic pressure and haphazard development.

In order to preserve the rural/agricultural character beloved in Richland Township, policies need to be implemented to ensure both the conservation of the land itself as well as the ability for that land to provide a livelihood for farming families. The goal of local farmland preservation relies on numerous governing bodies and the implementation of supportive zoning codes, land use policies, infrastructure regulations and tax structures. Options to this aim include utilizing a Land Trust to preserve Township farmland and open space into the future, the creation of Agricultural Protection Districts within the Township's zoning code and the revision of current regulations governing the extension of utilities.

## 5.2 Current & Threatened Natural Resources

The natural environment within the community is shaped by its site and situation. The local geographic and geologic conditions provide the basis of the subtle topography, the waterways and the vegetative cover. The natural environment has been impacted and modified to a great extent by residents of the community. The natural environment has and continues to provide the resources for various economic activities including farming and quarrying for many in the community. It has provided for residential development and both industrial and commercial ventures. But for its troubles, the natural environment has been scarred and forced to carry the burden of such human activities as illicit dumping, landfills, septic systems leaching into local waterways, roadway salts and chemicals contaminating soils and waterways, and the storage of litter and solid waste. That being said, the natural environment continues to be the foundation of much of our memories and our vision for the future. Map 5-1 provides a visual cue of the existing natural resources within Richland Township. The rest of this section outlines the

*The extent to which the modification of the natural landscape continues will be the basis upon which this planning document will be judged.*

physical natural resources found within Richland Township as well as the human activities that threaten and those aimed at the preservation of these vital resources. The extent to which the modification of the natural landscape continues unabated will be the basis upon which this planning exercise/document will be judged in the future.

### 5.2.1 The Blanchard River & Tributaries

The physical and functional attributes of the Blanchard River and its drainage areas by watersheds was introduced in Section 2.2.3 of this report. However, that section failed to provide the broad understanding necessary to appreciate the relationship between the Blanchard River and its Richland tributaries (Riley Creek and Little Riley Creek) with the larger natural environment.

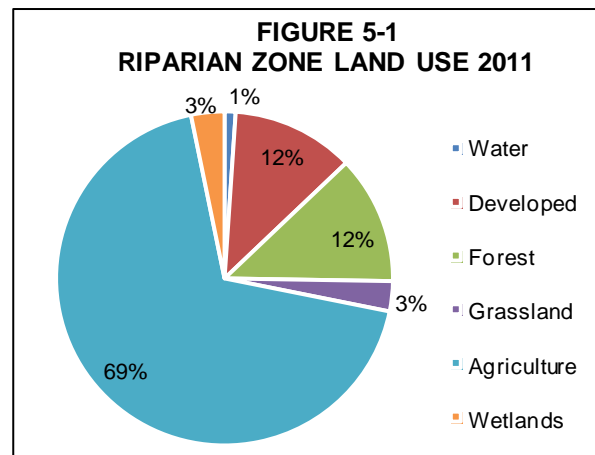
The Blanchard River and its tributaries play an important role in the natural environment. The Blanchard River in many ways is the backbone of the community's ecosystem. Collectively the River and its various tributaries provide: the necessary drainage; the stream valleys that provide the riparian habitat for a variety of flora and fauna; natural migration routes for birds and other wildlife; and, open spaces which provide visual relief and recreation amenities for the community. This resource must be protected. In fact, the 54.1 linear miles of Richland Township waterways and their riparian corridors should be inventoried, monitored as to their health, and protected to ensure access and their natural beauty for future generations. Map 2-3 depicts these sub-watersheds.

*The 54.1 linear miles of Richland Township waterways and their respective riparian corridors should be inventoried, monitored as to their health, and protected to ensure access and their natural beauty for future generations.*

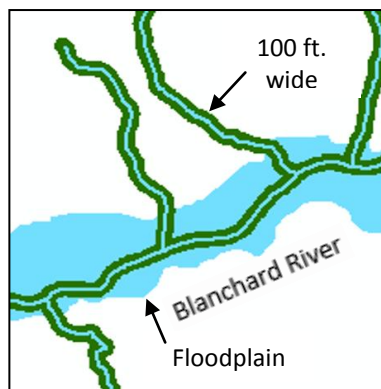


### 5.2.2 Riparian & Flood Zones

Riparian and flood zones are land directly adjacent to waterways that play critical roles in both the maintenance of water quality and the storage of storm water, meaning these ecosystems are critical to sustaining wildlife habitat and avoiding costly flooding damage. Riparian zones are the land directly adjacent to waterways, found within the larger floodplain, and if well maintained, can provide erosion control, temperature regulation, water filtration, flood control, and habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. In order to provide these benefits to waterways these areas must be densely vegetated and protected. The riparian zones in Richland Township, measured at 100ft widths, are not in a condition that will provide many of these benefits. Less than a quarter of the total identified riparian zones (1,012 acres) were forested in 2011 with over 70 percent being developed or under agricultural practices (Figure 5-1). Both of these land uses so close to a waterway, with no vegetated buffer, present threats to the health of the stream, including to the aquatic life it supports and to its use for human recreation.



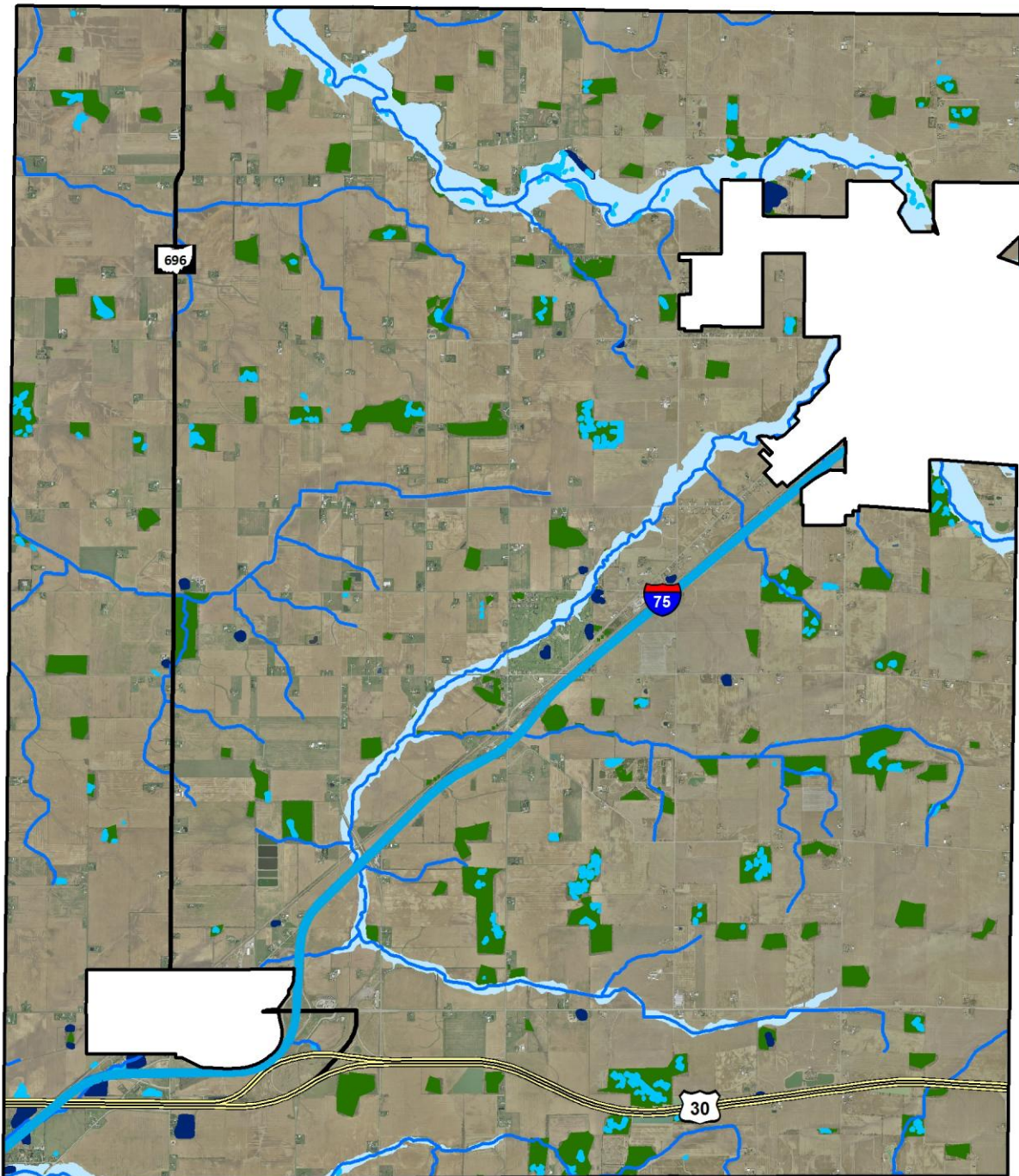
Source: National Land Cover Database (2011) - Multi Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium



As of 2013, FEMA has identified 15,985 acres of Special Flood Hazard Areas within Allen County. These results are intended to serve in the development of actuarial flood insurance rates and assist the community in its efforts to promote sound floodplain management. The preservation of floodplain areas as restricted development zones is essential for communities trying to minimize flood hazards and costly damage. Richland Township includes 1,322 acres of identified floodplains, and of those more than 150 acres (11.8%) currently support a developed land

use meaning that the land is unable to provide its natural function as a water retention area (Figure 5-2, Map 5-1). While historical encroachment into floodplains was often out of necessity, for drawing water or transportation and commerce, today's recent pursuit of floodplain development is based solely on site aesthetics and/or economic gain. Whether it is the beauty of these areas or the farmer's price for bottom ground, it has influenced recent development decisions and subdued all common sense possessed by our forefathers. Floodplains need to be preserved and protected to prevent further damage to water quality and the local ecosystem. Natural floodplains further ecological diversity and slow the peak stormwater runoff from further eroding stream banks, ditches, and ultimately raising the level of flooding along downstream waterways. Floodplain soils and vegetation act as the kidneys of our local tributaries; capable of siphoning out various pollutants from the stormwaters and cleansing stormwater as it is stored in the low lying areas before it either re-enters the local tributaries or percolates back into the soil, replenishing local aquifers.

# MAP 5-1 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP NATURAL RESOURCES



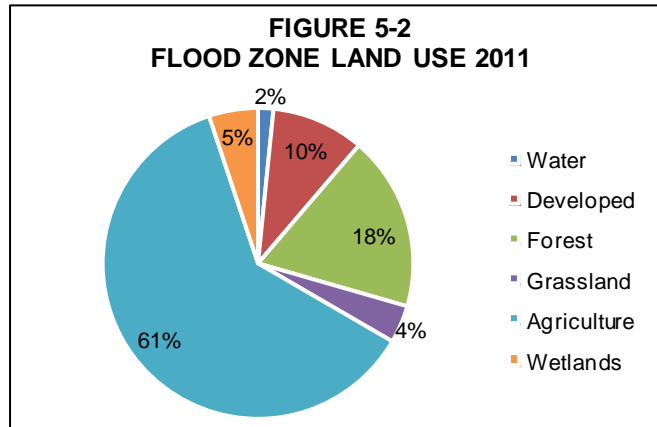
- Streams
- Wetlands
- Waterbodies
- Floodplain
- Wood Lots

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017

Development in, or the filling and subsequent loss of, floodplains will result in a net loss to the community in terms of scenic vistas, roosting/yarding areas for birds/deer, and disrupted drainage and stormwater retention patterns for both agricultural and urban development. Every cubic yard of impervious material placed within a floodplain displaces critical storm water storage and creates an added burden to downstream landowners and communities.



Source: National Land Cover Database (2011) - Multi Resolution Land Characteristics

### 5.2.3 Wetlands

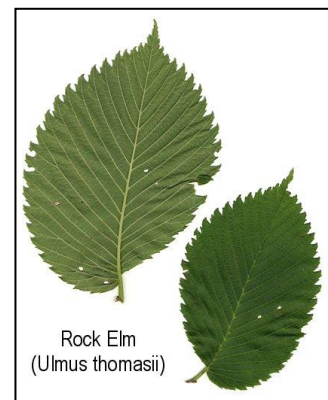
The current state of wetlands in Richland Township was described in Section 2.2.3 of this report. What was not made clear was wetlands' significance to local wildlife and water quality. Wetlands have two major ecological functions: (1) being the breeding ground and nursery of hundreds of wildlife species whose populations decline in tandem with wetland acreage, and (2) being the most efficient water filtration system found in the natural landscape. As mentioned in Section 2, there are some 300 potential wetlands identified in Richland Township (Map 5-1). In order to better understand the state of this resource in Richland

*The preservation of floodplain areas as restricted development zones is essential for communities trying to minimize flood hazards and costly damage.*

Township, potential wetlands need to be verified on-site and monitored into the future. By cataloging this resource within the Township, future development can avoid costly set-backs as wetland ecosystems are highly protected by the federal government.

### 5.2.4 Endangered Species

Allen County is home to at least 10 species identified by ODNR (Ohio Department of Natural Resources) as of Special Concern, Threatened or Endangered. These range from types of Plants (Rock Elm) to Invertebrate Animals (Fresh Water Mussels) to Birds (Peregrine Falcons). The Rock Elm tree is native to the Midwest, and like many Elm trees, has lost population due to high susceptibility to the Dutch elm disease. Peregrine Falcons have long been identified as endangered in Ohio and around the country. However, in 2008 they were downgraded to threatened and have recently been removed from the list completely in Ohio thanks to a strong reintroduction program. One of the 10 species was found in Richland Township. The Rock Elm is a deciduous tree native to the Midwest and like most North American elms is extremely susceptible to Dutch Elm disease which has decimated the population over the last century.



### 5.2.5 Wood Lots

Like the majority of Northwest Ohio, the surface area of Richland Township was once covered by broadleaf deciduous forests. After generations of being farmed and developed, only 1,518 acres, or 6.1 percent, of Richland Township is wooded today. Most of the wood lots are concentrated in small stands of



deciduous trees, along fence lines between properties and along stream and river corridors. Luckily several of the large wood lots have been secured by the in the Bluffton University Nature Preserve. It should be noted that tree preservation is a high priority in many communities across the country, because once cleared, replacing mature trees takes decades. In addition, ornamental trees used in landscaping cannot replace the variation and character of an original stand of trees. Therefore, the loss of an original stand of trees is a loss to the natural landscape of the community and one that should not be condoned or allowed by local development policies. Map 5-1 identifies the relative location of wood lots in Richland Township.



The benefits of maintaining high-quality tree cover include erosion control, wildlife habitat protection, and cleaner air. Aesthetic and economic benefits include a visually pleasing and “softer” environment, higher home values from tree lots and reduced energy bills from the natural cooling and insulating during summer and winter months. This sentiment was recognized during the visioning phase of the public planning process as Township residents expressed a desire to protect and increase the number and density of wood lots within the Township, including the reforestation of lands previously cleared.

#### **5.2.6 Parks & Recreation**

Richland Township enjoys access to a wide variety of recreation area managed by the Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District, Bluffton University, and local golf courses.

The Motter Metro Park is located at 10740 Columbus Grove-Bluffton Rd. The park encompasses 105 acres and includes mowed walking trails. The open meadow park land has been planted in prairie grasses and will restore grassland habitat that is in short supply in Allen and surrounding counties. The Little Riley Creek runs through the park, providing critical habitat for wetland and water species of plants and animals

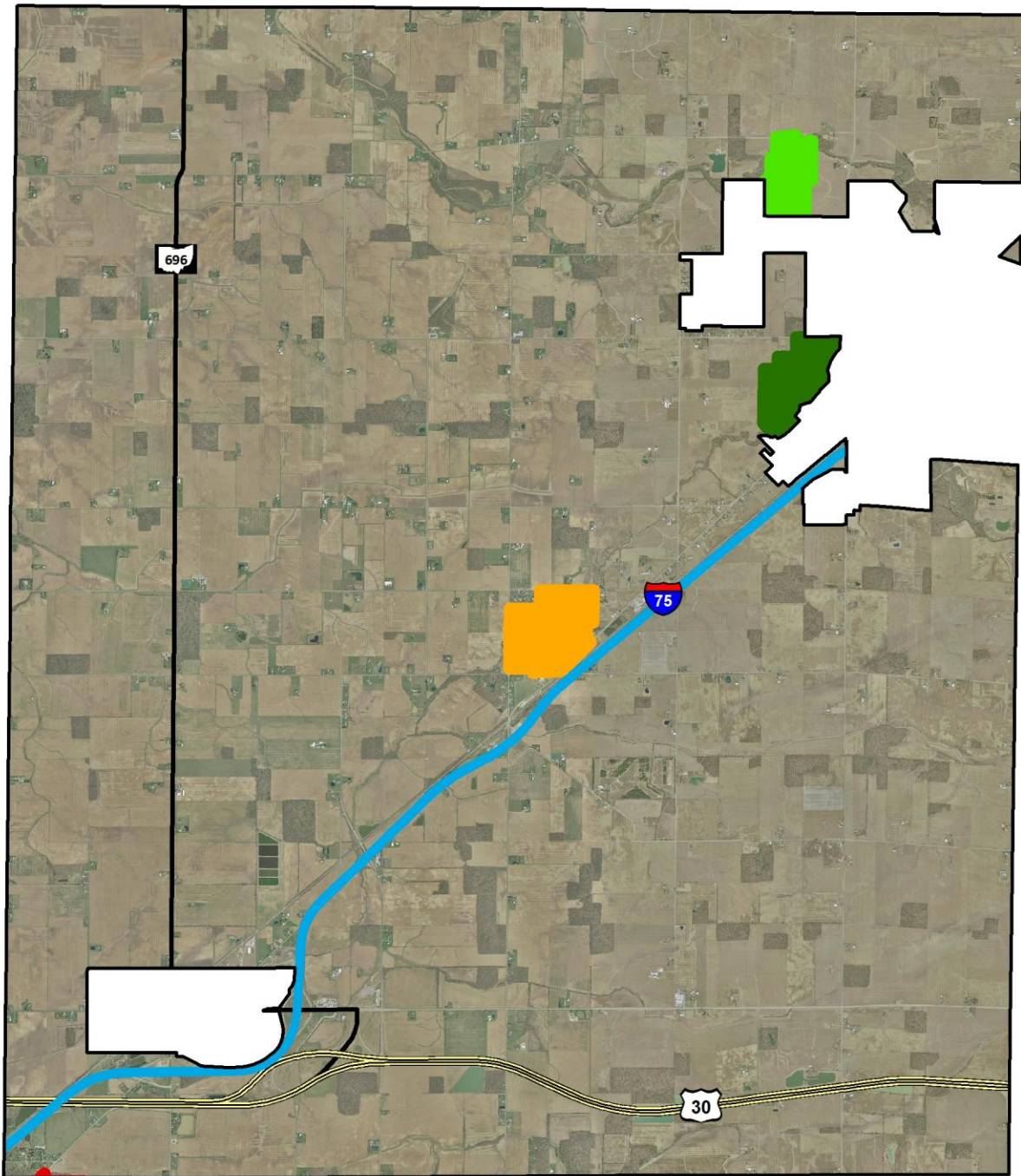


The Bluffton University Nature Preserve sits on 73 acres of wooded land located at the northwest edge of the campus off of Augsburg Road. The Preserve features a large pond and walking trails, including a swinging bridge built in 1969.

Richland Township also has access to two public golf courses both owned by the Floyd Young Family. Located on 133.7 acres the Bluffton Golf Club has an 18 hole - par 72 course. The second course, which extends into Jackson Township is the Hidden Creek Golf Club located on 150 acres. The club has a 18 hole - par 72 golf course.

Richland Township benefits greatly from the recreational opportunities provided by the Johnny Appleseed Metro Park District, the University of Bluffton and the Bluffton Village School District, however the Township does not provide any recreational facilities themselves. The location of the recreation areas can be seen in Map 5-2.

# MAP 5-2 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION



- Bluffton University Nature Preserve
- Motter Metro Park
- Hidden Creek Golf Club
- Bluffton Golf Club

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017



### 5.3 Solid Waste Disposal

According to the OEPA, on average, local residents generate 4.4 pounds of waste per person per day. The total population for Richland Township would produce roughly 8,202 pounds of waste a day, or 3.0 million pounds/1,497 tons per year. There are currently 18 different waste haulers based in Allen County. While there are numerous smaller independent haulers, the community is served by several of the larger corporate management services including Allied Waste Systems, Republic, Allen County Recyclers, and Waste Management, Inc.

The closest sanitary landfill to Richland Township is the Cherokee Run facility, operated by Allied Waste Systems Inc., in Bellefontaine, Ohio. The largest single recipient of the community's waste stream is the Evergreen Landfill Facility operated by Waste Management and is located outside of the City of Toledo. The facility accepts 82,657 tons or 58.7% of Allen County waste. Outside Allen County, there are 10 other landfills that accept a portion of local waste including facilities in Mercer, Logan, Wyandot, and Hancock counties. The EOLM landfill is a private facility designed and approved to dispose of construction and demolition waste. Utilizing landfills geographically removed from Allen County adds to the economic and environmental burden of waste disposal as each load of waste delivered to a landfill, incurs up to 156 miles (round trip to Evergreen Landfill) of transportation emissions and fuel costs.

There are two sanitary landfills in Allen County of which both are now closed. The State of Ohio requires each county to maintain a current County Solid Waste Plan. Allen County belongs to a 6-county consortium known as the North Central Ohio Solid Waste District (NCOSWD) that was formed to develop a comprehensive, cooperative, regional approach to solid waste disposal problems. Richland Township does not bid/let a municipal waste contract nor does it provide drop-off recycling opportunities for its residents, outside of an annual drop-off opportunity at the Township Garage. The absence of curb side pick-up recycling restricts the recycling rate in Richland Township, currently at 24%, when over 50% of local waste represents recyclable material: paper, glass, metals or plastics.<sup>1</sup> The lack of recycling options increases the burden on local landfills.

*The absence of recycling options increases the burden on local landfills, as over 50% of local waste is from recyclable paper, glass, metals or plastics.<sup>1</sup>*

Of highest concern in terms of disposal of solid waste is the safe and lawful disposal of waste deemed hazardous by the EPA. Hazardous waste is defined as waste that poses substantial or potential threats to public health or the environment, often exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics: ignitability, reactivity, corrosivity, and toxicity. Within Richland Township there are four commercial or industrial sites with RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act) permits to either generate or transport hazardous waste (Hauenstein Trucking, Bluffton MFG, Bluffton Aeration and Speedway).<sup>2</sup>

Hazardous waste can also be found in residential homes, prompting the NCOSWD to accept household hazardous waste drop-off appointments, from April through October, that helps eliminate the extent of illegal toxic waste dumping. The LACRPC, with the support of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the NCOSWD, also provide anti-litter programming to reinforce educational outreach efforts, public awareness activities and media releases. For the past decade this effort has been

<sup>1</sup> Ohio DNR - <http://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/41/recycling/OhioWasteCharacterizationStudy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2013

supported by the local affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Keep Allen County Beautiful, which has run litter pick-up and education campaigns and assisted local communities in developing a cleaner, safer community environment. Waste disposal issues of specific concern are the continued provision of adequate disposal capacity for the long-term future, the lack of recycling service and facilities; and, the inability to promote renewable resource use and reduction of disposal volumes.



Local leaders must acknowledge that solid waste, which can be seen as litter, reaches into every aspect of the planning/regulatory process, to include: storm water management, building codes, zoning regulations, exterior maintenance codes, etc. Developing/implementing such standards within the planning/regulatory process to address litter, proper waste disposal and material resource conservation will open the door to long-term remediation of all forms of solid waste disposal.

The effects of litter are pervasive and far-reaching not just in the urbanized areas of Richland Township, but along the rural corridors as well. Developing environmentally sound methods for disposal of non-hazardous solid waste is challenging for townships with constrained budgets. However, acknowledging such challenges is the beginning of the solution. Residents must realize that litter cleanup is not long-term litter prevention. Although there are local programs that address litter cleanup, including, Adopt-a-Highway, Adopt-a-Roadway, and Adopt-a-Waterway as well as neighborhood cleanup, such activities do not contribute in a significant way to litter prevention. Litter prevention must be addressed at its source with jurisdictional controls and enforcement balanced with public education.

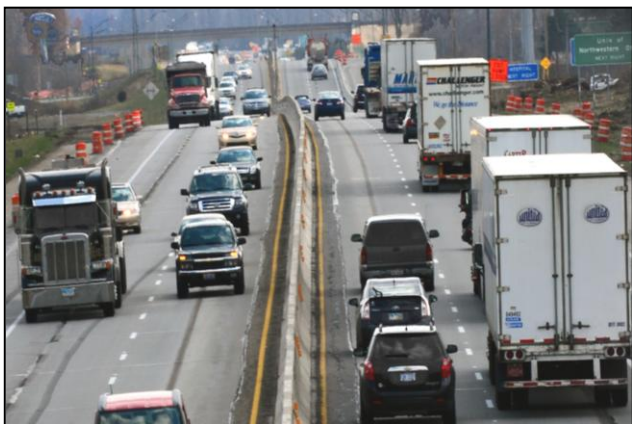
#### 5.4 Air Quality Issues

One of the most important issues of today is Air Quality. Richland Township rests within Allen County, which is located between several major urban areas, including Fort Wayne, Toledo, and Dayton, while also being adjacent to I-75 and US 30. The proximity to such large urban manufacturing-based communities placed Allen County in a precarious position with ever tightening environmental regulations. From a historical regulatory perspective, the EPA determined Richland Township, as a part of Allen County to be in ozone nonattainment in 2001. Later in 2007 based on new data, the County was reclassified in an 8-Hour Ozone Maintenance status. It was not until July 2013 that the EPA re-designated Allen County as being in full compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

*EPA issuance of "full compliance" status has eliminated additional environmental compliance regulations and any negative impact on local development recruiting efforts.*

According to the EPA, the number of unhealthy days due to PM<sup>2.5</sup> was documented at 11 in 2010, 3 in 2011, and 3 in 2012. Over the same period, days exceeding ozone standards for sensitive populations amounted to 3 in 2010, 3 in 2011, and 3 in 2012. Both of these pollutants cause respiratory and cardiovascular stress to vulnerable populations, including children and the elderly. The County has not had any days in exceedance of NAAQS in 2013, 2014, 2015 or 2016. However, while local air quality has improved, given the presence of the Husky Refinery, INEOS, Potash, BP Chemical, PCS Nitrogen, FT. Amanda Specialty Products, General Dynamics, WHEMCO, etc., located to the west of Richland Township air quality remains a constant threat to the

community's health and safety. New, more restrictive air quality standards came into effect in October 2016, making the future of Allen County's air attainment status tenuous.



Non-point sources of air pollution can be just as degrading to local air quality as industrial point sources. Richland Township and Allen County as a whole experience large volumes of both diesel truck and train traffic in addition to passenger vehicle traffic, reaching 347,400 miles driven in Richland Township per day. All three of these forms of transportation release toxic pollutants into the air, including VOC, THC, CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sup>10</sup>, PM<sup>2.5</sup> and CO<sub>2</sub>. Reducing the amount

of these pollutants released into the local environment will both decrease the negative health impacts on the local population and ensure Allen County and Richland Township's ability to maintain their status of full-attainment.

Allen County industry remains a vibrant source of employment as well as a source of both point and non-point pollutants. As a result, one of the most important functions of the Allen County Public Health (ACPH) and LACRPC is to monitor, document, and educate the community on air quality standards associated with the Clean Air Act requirements and balance job growth with environmental and health concerns. Both agencies work with the OEPA to address mobile and stationary sources of air pollution to improve the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

## 5.5 Water Quality Issues

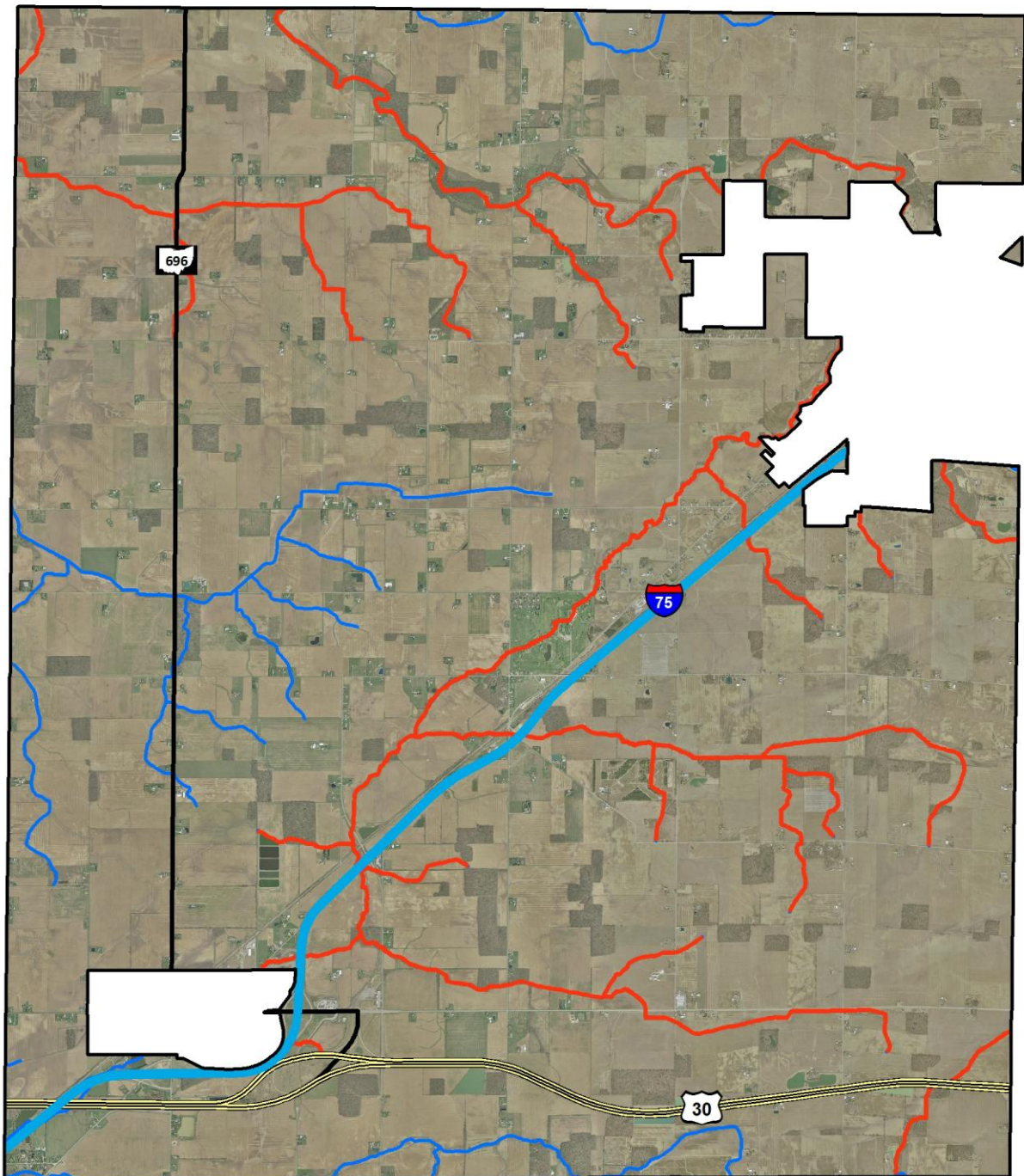
Water pollution prevention is one of the top concerns of local officials. The most important issues are the elimination of combined sewer overflows and illicit discharges and managing both urban and agricultural runoff. Currently, four of the five sub-watersheds within Richland Township (Sugar Creek, Dukes Run, Dutch Run and Cranberry Creek) are identified as in Full-Attainment as of the last OEPA study date. The other five sub-watersheds found in Richland Township all support tributaries to Riley Creek and include impaired waterways (Map 5-3). This places those waterways in partial or non-compliance with the Clean Water Act which regulates water pollution with the aim of making all US waterways "Swimmable and Fishable." In the last decade Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies have been conducted for each watershed in Allen County by the OEPA. These tested for contaminants related to public drinking water safety, recreational use, aquatic life composition, and human health. In Table 5-1, the results of the most recent TMDL studies from the three largest watersheds in Richland Township, are shown. The reasons for impairment vary from nutrient overload to sedimentation to physical habitat alterations. The most common sources of impairments were agricultural run-off, Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and channelization.<sup>3</sup>

*Sugar Creek, Dukes Run, Dutch Run and Cranberry Creek are identified as in Full-Attainment as of the last OEPA study date. The other five sub-watersheds found in Richland Township all support tributaries to Riley Creek and include impaired waterways.*

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wapp.epa.ohio.gov/gis/mapportal/IR2014.html>



# MAP 5-3 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP IMPAIRED WATERWAYS



— Impaired Waterways  
— Full-Attainment Waterways

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017



TABLE 5-1 TMDL STUDIES FOR SUB WATERSHEDS IN RICHLAND TOWNSHIP							
Sub-Watershed	Year Pub.	Percent Agriculture	Area (sq mi)	Drinking Water Supply	Recreational Use	Aquatic Life Assessment*	Human Health
Lower Riley Creek	2009	85.3%	25.1	N/A	Impaired	Impaired	N/A
Marsh Run - Little Riley Creek	2009	76.7%	16.3	N/A	Impaired	Impaired	N/A
Cranberry Creek	2009	90.4%	45.3	N/A	Impaired	<b>Full-Attainment</b>	N/A
Clean Water Act Attainment based on Aquatic Life Assessment Ohio EPA: <a href="http://wwwapp.epa.ohio.gov/gis/mapportal/IR2016.html">http://wwwapp.epa.ohio.gov/gis/mapportal/IR2016.html</a>							

There is currently one NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit holder in Richland Township (Mast Estate STP). This legal point source of pollution gets added on top of other point and non-point sources of pollution. Other significant point sources of pollution in Richland Township include illegal pollution/dumping and combined sewer overflows, which release sewage and bacteria into the waterways during large storm events making them unfit for human recreation. Non-point sources of pollution are, most notably, agricultural, and urban runoff. These sources overload the waterways with nutrients and chemicals that impair aquatic life and human health, as it relates to public drinking water, fishing for consumption and recreation in or on the water.



In an attempt to achieve compliance with federal legislation and both federal EPA and OEPA mandates, local officials have developed a Stormwater Management Plan for Richland Township. Richland Township has taken deliberate measures to address specific point and non-point sources of pollution but successful implementation will require the coordination of a number of efforts that must cross jurisdictional boundaries. The local community must address the following points to meet the limits of the TMDL established by the EPA/OEPA:

- Managing storm water runoff before it enters a waterway to reduce sediment, nutrients, and downstream flooding.
- Prevention of erosion from agricultural operations and removal of vegetation from areas in proximity to water surfaces.
- Identification and elimination of pollutant discharges from wastewater treatment plants, combined sewer overflows, package plant discharges, and industrial discharges.
- Identification of the location of hazardous materials and management of these materials so that they do not enter the environment.
- In cooperation with FEMA, the continued support and training of hazard response teams to quickly provide adequate protection measures in the event of a hazardous chemical spill, especially along the Interstate and State highways where hazardous materials are routinely transported.

## **5.6 Historical, Archaeological & Cultural Sites**

For the purposes of both cultural preservation and avoiding costly development setbacks, identifying and preserving historical structures, archaeological sites, and cultural features is essential for sound land use planning. There is one property currently identified by the Ohio Historical Society as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places within the Township (Map 5-3). Historic structures are an important part of any community and should be preserved to their original state for posterity. The Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit program is a federal program available for substantial rehabilitation of qualified depreciable buildings. Ohio also offers a similar program for rehabilitation administered by the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. Map 5-3 also identifies 75 historic and prehistoric archaeology sites that were at one time excavated within Richland Township. Cultural features often include sites where a community's history and culture are preserved and maintained. Included in the map are 3 local churches and 5 cemeteries located within Richland Township.

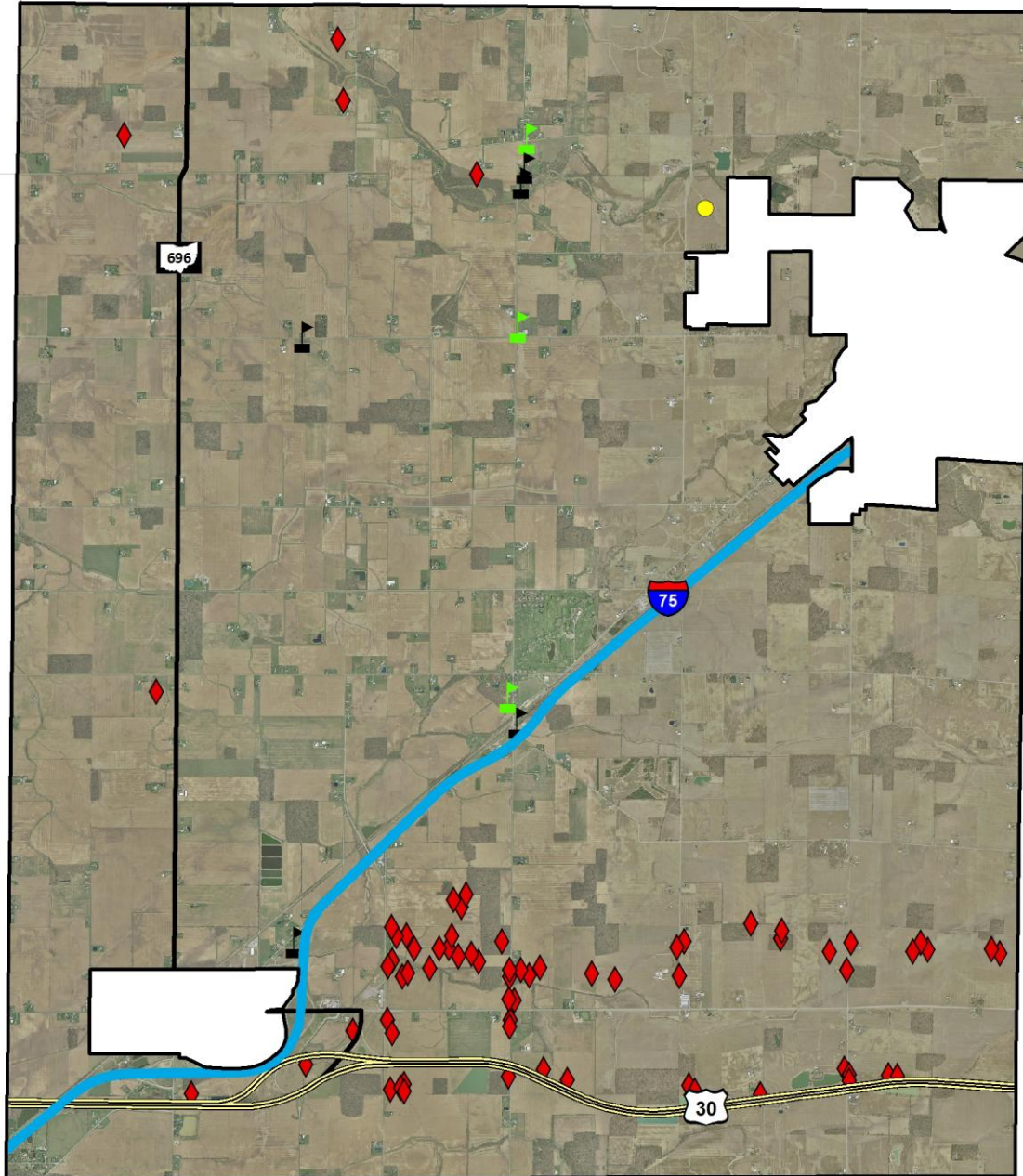
## **5.7 Distribution of Environmental Impacts**

When evaluating both the positive and negative impacts of a natural resource or human activity it is important to assess the impact on the population at the smallest unit available to identify overburdened or underserved populations. This distribution assessment was done at the Census block level and determined the distribution of negative impacts and access to resources for all of Richland Township's residents, but most specifically looked at vulnerable populations (seniors, children, minorities, those with a disability, and those in poverty). Types of impacts or access that can be evaluated include unsafe housing, access to parks and well-maintained sidewalks or trails, proximity to highways or other high traffic volume areas, access to primary care doctors, grocery stores with fresh produce, and reliable and affordable public transit.

A lifetime of what seems like a small burden per day can have drastic impacts on a human being's quality of life. These differences and their final outcomes can be measured across any geographic boundary (townships, counties, countries, etc.). Here in Allen County, these impacts on quality of life can be easily witnessed as the measured average life expectancy by zip code ranges almost 20 years (73 to 92) within just a few miles (Map 5-4). The map clearly shows that the population within and surrounding the City of Lima faces the lowest life expectancy in the County. This is not surprising as urban populations often face low access to natural resources for recreation and carry the burden of concentrated air and water pollution. Most of Richland Township falls within the 45817 zip code, giving an average life expectancy for the Township population of 86 years, which is older than the State average of 77.7 and the US average of 78.9.

Access to park/open space is essential for communities aiming for a higher quality of life for its residents, especially for children. Based on the population of Richland Township and the current amount of land dedicated to recreation there is .25 acres of recreation space for each resident of the Township. This is above the World Health Organization's (WHO) minimum recommendation, which is common for rural areas. This ratio is just a baseline figure as quality and type of recreation is not specified by WHO. Poor air quality can also quickly degrade quality of life as time outdoors becomes unenjoyable and even unsafe over time. Variances in type and volume of traffic flow can have serious impacts on local air quality across the County and the Township. Residential areas directly adjacent to I-75 and US-30 most likely experience much higher concentrations of transportation related air pollutants. These sustained higher levels of pollutant emissions in certain sections of Richland Township can have long-term health impacts on subsets of the population, especially the young, old, and Township's valuable natural resources is essential for maximizing quality of life within the Township.

# MAP 5-4 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORIC SITES

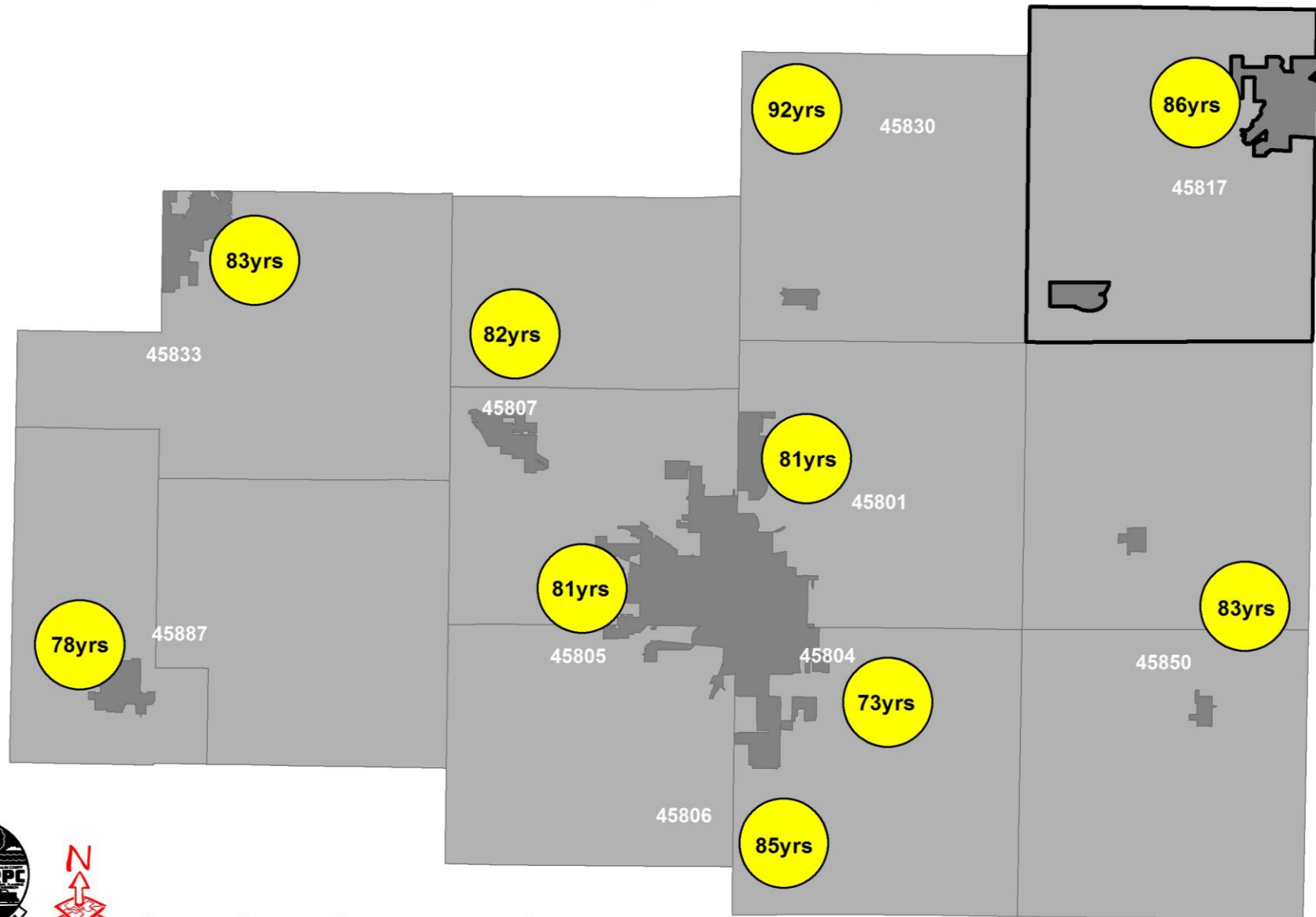


- ◆ Archaeology Sites
  - National Register Historic Structures
  - Eligible for National Register of Historic Structures
  - ▬ Churches/Public Worship
  - ▲ Cemeteries
- 0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April 2017

# MAP 5-5 ALLEN COUNTY LIFE EXPECTANCY BY ZIP CODE



April 2017





## 5.8 Planning for Future Growth & Development

Local governments within Allen County do not have a long history of local and county land use planning. Richland Township was the first (in 1995) township government to have taken formal planning action to support locally adopted zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, floodplain management regulations, and health code regulations. Since then, most of the Allen County Townships have adopted a Comprehensive Plan. Bath, Auglaize, and now Richland are the first to revisit and update their original plan in order to address community concerns with an outlook on 2040.

*Citizens and developers alike suggest integrated cluster developments will preserve natural resources and lead to better strategies encouraging sustainable development supported by appropriate infrastructure.*

As a result of local planning exercises, local developers, residents, the Ottawa River Coalition, the ACEO, the ACSEO, and the LACRPC have collaboratively identified the need to develop and implement development patterns to conserve and enhance natural resources. Of specific interest is open space preservation, farmland preservation, and the minimization of pre- and post-development impacts/costs. Local officials and community activists are interested in furthering integrated developments with a mix of various uses/design issues to create locally unique development. Rural residential sites should be developed with respect to minimizing its visual and environmental impact on the landscape employing principles of cluster development. This Plan supports the concept of integrated developments focusing on highway nodes, business centers, and low density neighborhood developments. Local officials are interested in examining regulatory controls that promote growth of local businesses without compromising the environment or the potential for commercial success.

Redevelopment of older concentrations of industrial/commercial facilities and older housing stock within the Township is also a focus. Redevelopment maximizes the current infrastructure, as opposed to the installation of new water, sewer, and road infrastructure, to accommodate new growth and development. Redevelopment offers the added incentives of preserving the local natural environment for future generations and mitigating the blighting influence of old abandoned or underutilized sites and structures.

Alternative types of development can provide the community with sustainable development patterns that encourage the protection and responsible use of the region's natural resources. Such strategies will also provide an opportunity to address other smart growth strategies, especially those that encourage sustainable development based on future year horizons and predicated upon the necessary infrastructure investments in: roads, bridges, water, wastewater, stormwater, and communication systems.

## SECTION 6 ECONOMIC OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

The economic well-being of Richland Township has long been founded on its agricultural sector and its relationship with the land. Today, as once rural roads and agricultural lands are occupied in residential uses, conflict between residents and industry (and its necessary support services) is increasing. As a result, residents are more likely to experience and discuss concerns about commercial growth, industry-related pollution, unplanned residential growth, and potential annexations by Bluffton.

Local elected officials are cognizant however of the need to support both the existing farm industry and the potential for significant diversification along the I-75 corridor as they work to expand and further diversify the economic base of the community in order to provide increased employment opportunities for residents, and minimize tax increases. The identification and recruitment of employment opportunities is of the utmost importance to community development. The need to balance and coordinate economic activities with community values is complicated at best and will be ongoing. Reality requires us to understand that the economy is shifting toward a more service sector based dependency and as agricultural jobs decline county-wide, the need to further diversify the economic base will increase.

*Local elected officials are cognizant however of the need to support both the existing farm industry and the potential for significant diversification along the I-75 corridor.*

The remainder of this section attempts to provide baseline information on the community's economic underpinnings and begins with an overview of current Township business patterns. Subsequently, data from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the 2012 U.S. Agricultural Census report attempts to analyze farm operations, production, the market value of agriculture commodities and the acres in agricultural production. Prior to summary statements, an overview of Richland Township's existing tax base is provided.

### 6.1 Non-Agricultural Employment

The U.S. Census Bureau provides employment data across 20 employment categories. This data can be used to conduct trend analyses or to compare changes in the number of total employed residents reported by category. In Richland Township a half dozen general occupation categories were identified in the 2015 ACS that comprised the bulk of occupations pursued by Richland residents including:

- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Retail Trade
- Health, Education & Social Service
- Finance, Insurance & Real Estate
- Transportation & Warehousing

Collectively, these 6 categories represent 75 percent of all employed Richland residents. Table 6-1 displays a comparative data analysis of occupations pursued by Richland residents for the years 2000 and 2015. Of note, the overall workforce population within Richland Township fell by approximately 25.0 percent over the 15-year study period. This trend can be expected to continue as the population continues to age.

When examining the current occupation of workers residing in Richland Township against 2000 data, a number of developing trends appear that will be important to the community's future. First of all, the manufacturing sector continued to decline, and a precipitous decline occurred in the number of residents employed in the retail, construction, and health and education services trades. Secondly, the number of residents working in the fields of finance (130.0%) and transportation and warehousing (43.8%) increased significantly.

TABLE 6-1 2000 & 2015 EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR OF RICHLAND TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS					
Sector	2000 Census	Percent	2015 ACS	Percent	Percent Change
Employed 16 and over	1,051	100.0	788	100.0	-25.0
Agriculture, Forestry & Mining	36	3.4	39	4.9	8.3
Construction	63	6.0	53	6.7	-15.9
Manufacturing	270	25.7	142	18.0	-47.4
Transportation & Warehousing	32	3.0	46	5.8	43.8
Wholesale Trade	17	1.6	17	2.2	0.0
Retail Trade	125	11.9	48	6.1	-61.6
Information	14	1.3	0	0.0	-100.0
Professional Management, etc.	60	5.7	34	4.3	-43.3
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	30	2.9	69	8.8	130.0
Health, Education & Social Service	284	27.0	233	29.6	-18.0
Entertainment, Recreation, Food & Accommodations	50	4.8	28	3.6	-44.0
Other Services	33	3.1	49	6.2	48.5
Public Administration	37	3.5	30	3.8	-18.9

Employment data identified 26 employers located in Richland Township in 2016 doing business in the general categories of: agricultural services, construction, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, management and administrative support, health care, recreation and government (Table 6-2). Collectively they employed 190 persons in 2016; however, total employment in Richland Township decreased by 46 persons between 2010 and 2016, a decrease of 19.5 percent. This compares to a Countywide loss of 686 employees (-1.4%).

TABLE 6-2 WORK BEING PERFORMED IN RICHLAND TOWNSHIP & ALLEN COUNTY BY NAICS (2016)				
Sector	NAICS	Richland Emp.	Richland Percent	Allen County Percent
Agricultural & Forestry Services	11	16	8.0	0.2
Mining	21	0	0.0	0.0
Utilities	22	0	0.0	0.5
Construction	23	17	8.5	4.0
Manufacturing	31-33	27	14.0	21.7
Wholesale Trade	42	3	1.5	4.7
Retail Trade	44-45	36	18.0	13.3
Transportation & Warehousing	48-49	1	0.5	3.0
Information	51	0	0.0	1.4
Finance & Insurance	52	0	0.0	2.3
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	53	0	0.0	0.7
Professional Services	54	0	0.0	2.6
Management of Companies	55	0	0.0	0.7
Admin./Waste Mgmt. Services	56	13	6.5	7.3
Education Services	61	0	0.0	8.9
Health Care/Social Assistance	62	79	39.5	8.4
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	71	1	0.5	0.8
Accommodation & Food	72	0	0.0	10.7
Non-public Other Services	81	1	0.5	4.1
Public Administration	92	5	2.5	4.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>190</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Overall the number of businesses reporting employment in the community decreased by 1 employer between 2010 and 2016, a 3.7 percent decrease compared to a Countywide increase of 191 (7.2%) over the same period. Table 6-2 reflects the types of occupations and the number employed within Richland Township in 2016. The remainder of this subsection examines five most important non-agricultural economic sectors that account for 8.5 out of every 10 individuals employed within Richland Township in an attempt to provide additional insights.

### 6.1.1 Manufacturing

Primary manufacturing employment in Richland Township is provided by Bluffton Precast. Located along the I-75 corridor, the employment in the company has remained steady losing only one employee since 2010. The significance of the regional manufacturing sector of Richland Township is magnified when coupled with ACS data that suggests that 270 or 25.7 percent of Richland Township residents were employed within this sector in 2015. Table 6-3 indicates changes in the labor pool in this important sector over the 2010 through 2016 period.

*Employment at local manufacturing firms has remained steady since 2010.*

TABLE 6-3 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP CHANGES IN MANUFACTURING (2010-2016)			
Company	2010	2016	PCT Change
BLUFFTON PRECAST CONCRETE CO	28	27	-3.6%
<b>Sector Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>

### 6.1.2 Construction Trade

The Construction Trade sector comprises five establishments engaged in engaged in the construction of buildings or engineering projects. There are at the present time 17 employees currently working in this sector within Richland Township. Compared to 2010 when there were five firms employing 13 individuals there was a 30.8 percent growth in the sector. Total employment in the Construction sector in the County increased 23.0 percent.

TABLE 6-4 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP CHANGES IN CONSTRUCTION (2010-2016)			
Company	2010	2016	PCT Change
HOHENBRINK BUILDER	1	1	0.0%
QUALITY CONSTRUCTION	1	1	0.0%
GLOBAL ELECTRIC, INC.	5	4	-20.0%
GARY L. LUGIBIHL	1	1	0.0%
BEAVERDAM CONTRACTING, INC.	5	10	100.0%
<b>Sector Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30.8%</b>

### 6.1.3 Retail Trade

Within Richland Township in 2016, 36 individuals were employed in one of two companies engaged in some form of retail trade. In 2010, four retail outlets reported 27 employees. This results in a decrease in retail establishments of 50.0 percent, but an increase in retail employees of 33.3 percent mainly due to increases in employment at Speedway LLC. Within Allen County, those working in some form of retail trade (13.3%) make up the second largest segment of the



employment base, following behind manufacturing (21.7%). Table 6-5 shows the change in retail employment for retail firms over the 2010-2016 period.

TABLE 6-5 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP CHANGES IN RETAIL (2010-2016)			
Company	2010	2016	PCT Change
SPEEDWAY LLC	17	32	88.2%
SUTER PRODUCE INC.	3	4	33.3%
KIENE RECREATION	4	0	-100.0%
OBERLY DISTRIBUTING	3	0	-100.0%
<b>Sector Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33.3%</b>

#### 6.1.4 Health Care & Social Services

Health Care is the primary employment sector in Richland Township, employing 70 individuals, accounting for almost 40 percent of the entire workforce in the Township. In Richland Township, between 2010 and 2016, jobs in the health and social assistance sector decreased from 132 to 79, a decrease of 40.2 percent over the 6-year period. Employment in this sector decreased by 774 jobs in Allen County between 2010 and 2016, a loss of 7.4 percent. This compares to a statewide increase of 30.8 percent. Table 6-6 identifies change over time in Richland's Healthcare and Social Service sector.

*Health Care employment in Richland Township is primarily located at Richland Manor.*

TABLE 6-6 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP CHANGES IN HEALTH SERVICES (2010-2016)			
Company	2010	2016	PCT Change
RICHLAND MANOR	125	70	-44.0%
TRILOGY REHAB SERVICES	7	9	28.6%
<b>Sector Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>-40.2%</b>

#### 6.1.5 Administrative & Waste Management Services

In 2016, there were three businesses providing Administrative or Waste Management Services employing 13 individuals in Richland Township. This is a 13.3 percent decrease from 2010 when five firms employed 15 individuals. This sector, county wide, experienced a 26.6 percent increase in employees over the same time period. Table 6-7 identifies change over time in Richland's Healthcare and Social Service sector.

TABLE 6-7 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATION/WASTE MANAGEMENT (2010-2016)			
Company	2010	2016	PCT Change
BLUFFTON AERATION, INC.	5	5	0.0%
KOOGLERS REFUSE SERVICE, INC.	7	5	-28.6%
QUALITY PRODUCTS	2	3	50.0%
ENGLEHARDT LANDSCAPE, INC.	1	0	-100.0%
<b>Sector Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-13.3%</b>

## 6.2 Agricultural Employment

Census data examining agricultural employment at the Township level is extremely limited. The 2015 Census identified 39 residents of Richland Township employed in the primary sector which includes agricultural services. When compared to the 2010 Census (see Table 6-1), employment within this sector dropped off by 3 employees. However, many family farms are owner occupied and as such occupants (workers) are considered self-employed not actual employees. In addition, many farms are now mechanized and operated on a part-time basis by other self-employed service providers, therefore, the number of agricultural employees is considered to be underestimated.

The largest source of employment in Richland Township was found to be in the agricultural industry, with approximately 410 farms being operated according to the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Crops reported to the FSA in 2015 included 6,933 acres dedicated to corn (\$4,229,753.90), 9,129 acres dedicated to soybeans (\$4,166,932.00) and 995 acres dedicated to wheat (\$325,991.85). The FSA estimates that the gross value of all farm production in Richland Township for 2015 was \$8,722,677.75.

## 6.3 Tax Base

An analysis of the community's economic base has already been discussed in terms of its population and demographic indicators, its housing and infrastructure, and its employer/employment characteristics. The Plan also identifies land use by type and vacancy, and examines underutilized land by sector. The Plan identifies previous investments with respect to infrastructure in Section 7, and develops a defined utility service area to support future growth. However, the community's local tax base needs to be discussed further in order to provide an overview of the community's current assets and liabilities with respect to taxes and government services. Table 6-8 shows the current breakdown of land by land use in Richland Township and identifies market value and gross tax value. The table clearly identifies that Agricultural and Residential land act as the backbone of the Richland Township tax structure, contributing over 2 million dollars, placing a heavy burden on Richland Township residents.

TABLE 6-8 TAX BASE & RECEIPTS BY LAND USE 2016					
Land Use	Acres	MKT Value	Value/Acre	Gross Tax	Gross Tax/Acre
Residential	1,703	\$82,849,400	\$48,649	\$1,138,159	\$668
Agriculture	21,903	\$117,749,000	\$5,375	\$1,088,125	\$50
Commercial	183	\$4,543,000	\$24,825	\$77,164	\$421
Industrial	14.6	\$1,450,800	\$99,369	\$24,268	\$1,662
Public/Exempt/Utilities	917	\$3,914,900	\$4,269	\$1,928	\$2

An analysis of data made available by the Allen County Auditor's Database revealed that recent total property tax valuations in Richland Township have actually been increasing since 2011, due to increases in agricultural and utility tax valuations. Across the 2011-2015 time period, total tax valuation based on real property and personal property, as shown in Table 6-9, has increased from a low of \$47.1 million in 2011 to a high of \$59.1 million in 2015, a 25.6 percent increase.

The current tax structure continues to relieve industrial and commercial enterprises from much of the tax burden it historically carried, and transfers that now burden Township residents and farmers. This burden is set to continue to rise as Township expenses continue to increase. Table 6-9 displays the percent change in tax valuation over the 2011 to 2015 time period by tax sector. These results indicated that while many sectors

saw their proportion of the total tax valuation decrease over the 2011-2015 time period, the proportion of the tax structure supported by agricultural land increased by 102.7 percent in just four years.

TABLE 6-9 TAX VALUATION BY TYPE & YEAR					
Type	Year				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Real Property</b>					
Agricultural	12,841,500	16,949,920	16,891,560	16,815,460	26,027,550
Residential	29,049,080	27,547,720	27,608,210	27,962,210	28,453,340
Commercial	2,605,860	2,477,080	2,395,460	2,387,270	1,606,420
Industrial	482,000	481,510	482,000	346,090	338,420
Utilities	54,650	62,320	66,800	70,220	66,610
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>45,033,090</b>	<b>47,518,550</b>	<b>47,444,030</b>	<b>47,581,250</b>	<b>56,492,340</b>
<b>Personal Property</b>					
Utility Personal	2,026,760	2,101,720	1,871,850	1,870,440	2,610,170
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,059,850</b>	<b>49,620,270</b>	<b>49,315,880</b>	<b>49,451,690</b>	<b>59,102,510</b>

TABLE 6-10 TAX VALUATION BY TYPE, PERCENTAGE & CHANGE BY YEAR					
Type	Year				
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2011-2015
<b>Real Property</b>					
Agricultural	32.0%	-0.3%	-0.5%	54.8%	102.7%
Residential	-5.2%	0.2%	1.3%	1.8%	-2.1%
Commercial	-4.9%	-3.3%	-0.3%	-32.7%	-38.4%
Industrial	-0.1%	0.1%	-28.2%	-2.2%	-29.8%
Utilities	14.0%	7.2%	5.1%	-5.1%	21.9%
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>
<b>Personal Property</b>					
Utility Personal	3.7%	-10.9%	-0.1%	39.6%	28.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>

Of concern is the proportion of total valuation that agricultural and residential real property will play in the tax base (currently accounting for over 80%) and the small or declining role which industrial real property and commercial real property now play. Table 6-11 displays the proportion of the tax base each sector contributed during the years from 2011 to 2015, illustrating the ever increasing valuation of agricultural land. Given the increasing burden on Township residents and farmers, the Township must consider its role and responsibilities to the public with respect to services and the costs of providing those services.

In essence, the community's tax base is a collective value of assets against which a tax is levied to support services provided or procured by the local government. In Richland Township, there are several taxes or levies that are assessed against these valuations based on a specific rate or millage. The maximum amount of taxes that may be levied on any property without a vote is 10 mills on each dollar of valuation. This is known as the 10 mill limitation, and the taxes levied within this limitation are known as inside millage (see Ohio Revised Code 5705.02). Outside levies are those taxes generated for services provided by entities other than the Township (e.g. Bluffton School District, Senior Citizens, Board of Developmental Disabilities, Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District, etc.). For purposes of simplicity, these assessments are grouped. Those taxes

levied for purposes provided by, or procured by, the Township including fire and emergency medical services are identified separately by millage and property type and revenue stream.

TABLE 6-11 PERCENTAGE OF TAX CONTRIBUTED BY TYPE & YEAR					
Type	Year				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Real Property</b>					
Agricultural	27.3%	34.2%	34.3%	34.0%	44.0%
Residential	61.7%	55.5%	56.0%	56.5%	48.1%
Commercial	5.5%	5.0%	4.9%	4.8%	2.7%
Industrial	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%
Utilities	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>95.7%</b>	<b>95.8%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>95.6%</b>
<b>Personal Property</b>					
Utility Personal	4.3%	4.2%	3.8%	3.8%	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Given the changing relationships between the various real and personal property classifications and the resultant increase in tax valuation and tax receipts supported by residents and farmers, the Township must consider its role with respect to the adequate provision of public services, especially the costs of providing such services. Responsibilities of the Township are outlined in various sections of the Ohio Revised Code, which identifies the Township as being responsible for the maintenance and repair of Township roadways and keeping them reasonably safe for public travel (Section 5571), the related and incidental requirement that the Township maintain roadway tile and ditches to ensure adequate roadway maintenance/safety (Section 5571), and the maintenance and care of cemeteries (Section 517). Such costs are bore by the Township general fund.

Costs associated with fire and emergency medical services, although extremely important to a community's quality of life, are not required services within an Ohio Township. Although such services are directly related to the health, safety, and welfare clause of any government's general responsibilities, they are not required. Nor are services related to picking up leaves/tree limbs, mowing right of ways, providing parks and recreational facilities, facilitating litter collection and recycling activities, or adopting/enforcing zoning regulations. The Township has assumed some of these additional responsibilities over time as public demand for such services has increased. It should also be noted that such services are expected in communities who expect to maintain even minimal public standards.

Just as the existing community is dependent upon infrastructure and services supported by previous investments, so will future growth be dependent upon increased costs for infrastructure investments and necessary public services. Costs should be the responsibility of all property owners and levies assessed to adequately cover the escalating costs associated with increasing public demands. Increased residential and commercial growth will only place additional burdens on the Township's social and physical infrastructure. Given the existing traffic on local roadways and deteriorating physical condition, the Township should be cognizant of the direct costs associated with ever increasing traffic, and the increased plowing/salting and maintenance costs. Increased development pressures will fuel further public demands for adequate emergency services, housing and drainage, and place additional burden on code



enforcement and other general “police” functions of the Township. Of particular concern is the incremental creep of service related costs associated with uncontrolled development in the more sparsely populated areas of the Township.

Currently, the Township must address the adequacy of funding currently identified for emergency services, especially EMS and Fire. Funding for Township roadways and drainage is extremely inadequate especially given the Township’s declining industrial and commercial tax base and existing debt load for past/pending roadway improvements. The Township must realistically evaluate each of the existing services and identify the appropriate level of service and funding for each - both now and into the future.

#### **6.4 Summary**

Data suggests that the economy of Richland Township has and will continue to be dominated by the farming industry. Examining data at the Township, County, State and National levels, it becomes apparent that patterns of employment outside of the farming industry are changing, with an emphasis on the service industries as opposed to the manufacturing industry.

Health care is the single largest employment sector, providing 39.5 percent of all jobs in Richland Township. In Richland Township, 142 of the residents (18.0%) depend on the manufacturing sector for their employment.

Data for the period between 2010 and 2016 shows that the number of employers located in Richland Township declined by one firm, while those employed in Township firms fell by 45 employees to a total of 191, a decline of 19.1 percent.

*The health care industry is the largest employer in Richland Township.*

Retail trade between 2010 and 2016 showed an increase of 33.3 percent in retail employment while the purveyors of retail services decreased by 2 firms. The largest source of employment was found to be in the agricultural-related industry, with 410 farms in operation within the Township.

When addressing the tax base, serious concerns were raised with regard to the burden being carried by the residential and agricultural sectors of the Township. Efforts to better balance a changing tax revenue stream with existing/future demands for service will be difficult without further analysis.

## SECTION 7 PROJECTIONS & ACTION PLAN

The development of an area is directly related to the dynamics of population and place over a period of time. Population is directly attributable to employment opportunities, commercial/industrial activities, levels of technology, and available infrastructure. Also, population growth trends, age of population, and household size create the basis for the changing demands in housing infrastructure and services, both public and private.

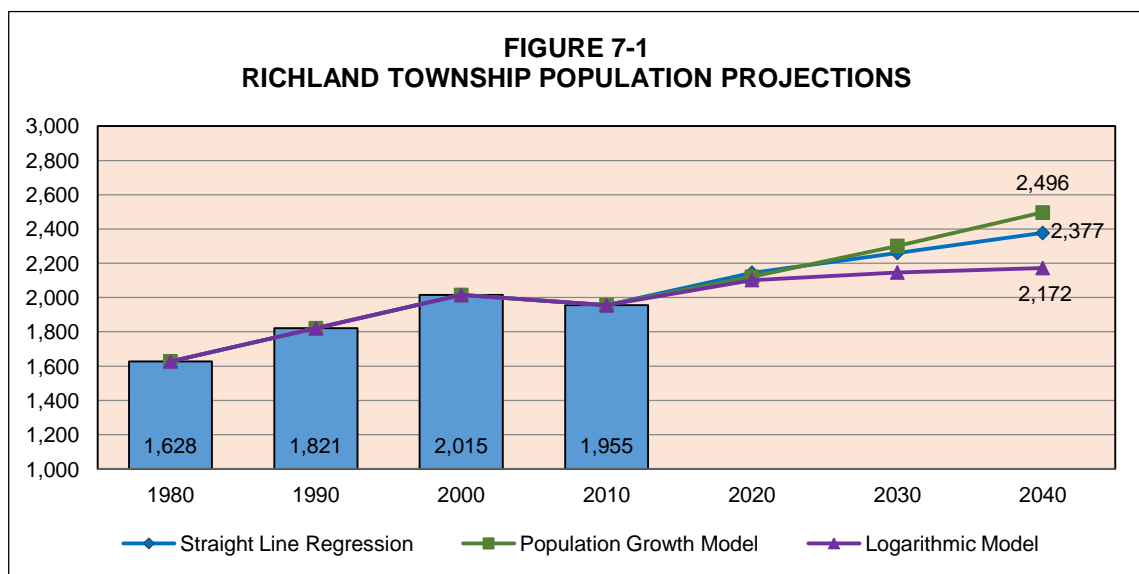
Based on current trend lines, policies, and practices, Richland Township is projected to increase steadily in population through the year 2040. There are several factors that suggest this increase: past trends; a stationary, aging population; and smaller household size. This section attempts to identify the implications of an increasing population and an action plan to accommodate it over the 2040 planning horizon.

### 7.1 Population Projections

Section 3.1 examined population change and composition by various demographic and socio-economic characteristics. LACRPC tested several models to determine population growth in Richland Township, as seen in Figure 7-1. These models were a Straight Line Regression, Population Growth Model, and Logarithmic Model, and indicated a range of population increase within 200 to 550 residents by 2040.

Projections were supported with  $R^2$  values of 0.974, 0.970, and 0.943, respectively. Out of these models, the logarithmic model had the least drastic population change with Richland Township gaining approximately 217 residents between 2010 and 2040. Straight Line Regression had a population increase of 422 individuals. The Population Growth Model had the highest prediction, with a population increase of 541 individuals.

*Richland Township will add approximately 200 to 550 more residents between 2010 and 2040. The growth will impact the demand on community facilities, housing supply, infrastructure, and associated public services.*

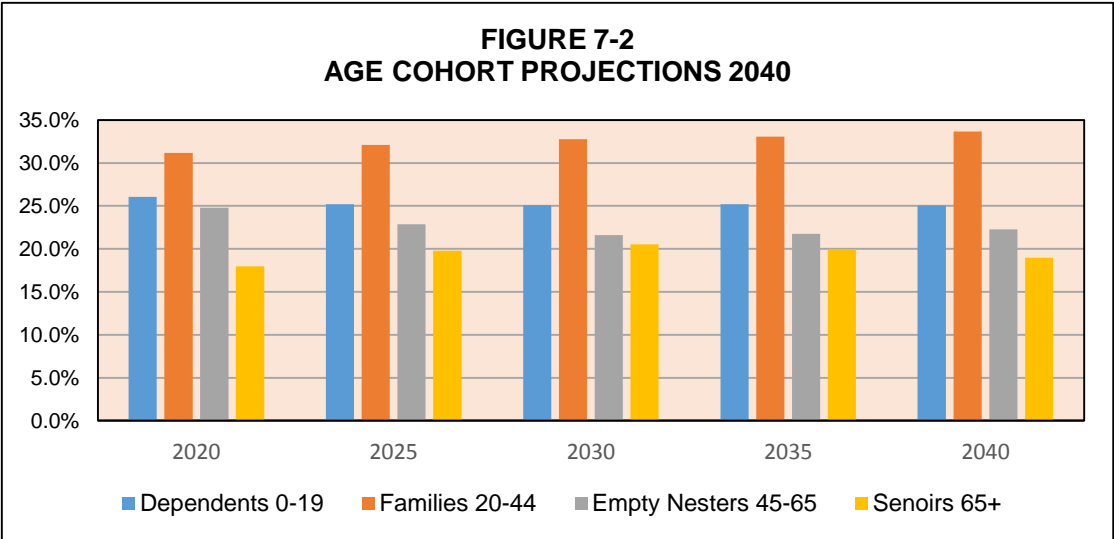


#### 7.1.1 Gender & Age Cohorts

Section 3.2 identified existing demographic characteristics of Richland Township and the larger community. Based on existing data and future trends, Richland Township's population is expected to continue to gradually grow older and more male in orientation. Figure 7-2 shows a slight increase in the "seniors," classified

as those 65+. Seniors comprise over 20 percent of the population by as early as 2030. The significance of the “seniors” group is that their presence suggests slower future growth while increasing the demand on emergency medical services, accessible housing units, and paratransit services. The only other are cohort expected to see growth out through 2040 are the “Families”, with the proportion of those aged 20 – 40 slightly increasing over time. Both the “Empty Nesters” and the “Dependents” are expected to see a decline in their population proportion by 2040.

*Based on existing data and future trends, Richland Township’s population is expected to continue to gradually grow older and more male in orientation.*



### 7.1.2 Household Size

Like most communities across the United States, households in Richland Township are declining in size. There are several reasons for the decline in household size. More people are choosing to remain single rather than getting married. Further, married couples are tending to have less children and only after they are well settled in their careers or are preferring not to have children at all. Divorce and increased longevity also contribute to a decreased household size.

The result of decreased household size is that more dwellings must be constructed to house the same number of people. As stated earlier, household size has decreased over the past twenty years. The Township’s household size has decreased from 3.11 persons per household in 1980 to 2.74 in 2010. Richland Township’s household size is projected to fall to 2.46 people per household by 2040. Recognizing the structural elements, personal demands of an aging population need to be considered by the Township in terms of services to be provided by both the public and private sectors.

*Like most communities across the United States, households in Richland Township are declining in size. Richland Township’s household size is projected to fall to 2.46 people.*

### 7.1.3 Employment

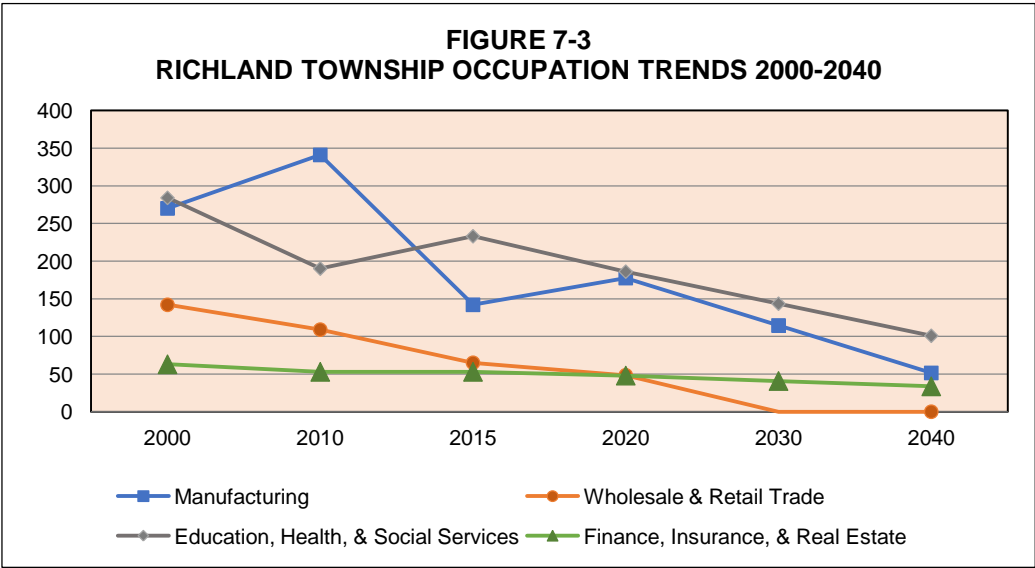
Employment in Richland Township is presented from two different perspectives in Section 6; employment available in the Township, and the type of jobs performed by residents of the Township. Section 6 indicated that the percentage

of residents employed in Richland Township declined 19.7 percent from 2010 to 2015. The number of firms reporting employment within Richland Township also declined by 3.7 percent. The Plan recognizes the community's existing economic base is undergoing a transition from traditional manufacturing to a more service-oriented economy. It is also recognized that any movement in employment by the region's larger employers, including P&G, Ford, DTR Industries, Tower Automotive, Whirlpool, Bluffton University and/or St. Rita's Hospital, will have a dramatic impact on the local economy.

Determining future employment is more complicated as more retirees will be expected to re-enter the labor pool, at least to some degree, as life expectancy increases. The economy is expected to provide jobs for workers at all educational attainment levels, but individuals with more education and/or specialized training will enjoy both higher pay and better job opportunities. This fact is supported by the 2024 Ohio Job Outlook report released by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) in 2014 that suggests occupational growth rates through 2024 will range from 2.2 percent for occupations requiring a high school diploma to 12.2 percent for occupations requiring a Master's degree. Further, occupations for employees who attended college but did not graduate with a degree are expected to decline 0.7 percent. Employment projections from ODJFS were calculated through 2024.<sup>1</sup>

As the community population ages we can also expect some "retirees" to re-enter the labor pool at least to some degree.

Based on State trends, the fastest growing occupational group in the economy is Healthcare Support. According to ODJFS, healthcare service industries will account for the majority of job growth, with only construction expected to add jobs out of the goods-producing sectors. Manufacturing is expected to decline 3.2 percent. Figure 7-3 identifies the occupational trend of Richland Township residents projected to 2040.



**7.2 Land Use Projections**

Data made available by the Allen County Auditor's Office (ACAO) was analyzed by the Regional Planning Commission to assess existing land use activities and predict future

<sup>1</sup> [http://ohiolmi.com/proj/Projections/Ohio\\_Job\\_Outlook\\_2014-2024.pdf](http://ohiolmi.com/proj/Projections/Ohio_Job_Outlook_2014-2024.pdf)



land use consumption in Richland Township over a 2040 planning horizon. Residential land use was compiled by number of units, type of residential unit, as well as acreage consumed. Available Census data was augmented with the ACAO data with discrepancies defaulting to the ACAO database. Projections for residential demands were based on anticipated population growth, the existing types of residential structures, and projected household size. Agricultural land and vacant land was considered as a resource for future uses and continued development.

For commercial, quasi-public, and industrial uses, the Regional Planning Commission tracked development by square footage and year by type of land use over the last several decades (1970 through 2015) to establish baseline information. Projections of demand for specific types of land use were then prepared using various regression analyses. The demands for projected development were balanced with vacant land identified/assigned to the respective land use category by either the ACAO database and/or the Richland Township Zoning Map. Map 7-1 depicts available underutilized/vacant land by type. Future acreage was then determined based on various factors including ancillary supporting services for each of the respective categories such as: rail spurs, loading and dock areas, employee parking, customer parking, drainage areas, service roads, landscaping/open space requirements etc.

### 7.2.1 Commercial Land Use

Current data suggests an existing 49,407 square feet of commercial space and 61.5 acres of commercial land in Richland Township. The Allen County Auditor identified 13.3 acres located on 2 parcels as vacant commercial. Examining historical data, spurts of commercial development followed by periods of relative inactivity will result in a need for some 13,939 square feet of commercial floor space in Richland Township by the 2040 planning horizon. As shown in Table 7-1, this will result in an increase of 28.2 percent. Unless such growth is directed toward existing vacant commercial land, an additional 42.0 acres of commercial land will be needed.

TABLE 7-1 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP: FUTURE COMMERCIAL LAND USE		
Year	Square Footage	Acres Required
2015	49,407	61.5
2020	55,706	79.2
2025	57,616	85.3
2030	59,526	91.4
2035	61,436	97.5
2040	63,346	103.6
Change	13,939	42.0
% Change	+28.2%	+68.5%

### 7.2.2 Quasi-Public Land Use

Quasi-public land use includes a mix of private and public facilities including churches, educational facilities, emergency service buildings and government facilities. Land use consumption would reflect worship/fellowship facilities, parking areas, stormwater retention/detention areas, school buildings, day care centers, playgrounds, Fire/EMS, administration buildings, maintenance facilities, and staging areas. These quasi-public uses totaled more than 34,800 square feet under roof in 2015 and occupied more than 140 acres. Quasi-public use is expected to demand an additional 3,087 square feet of floor area and 19.8 acres of land.

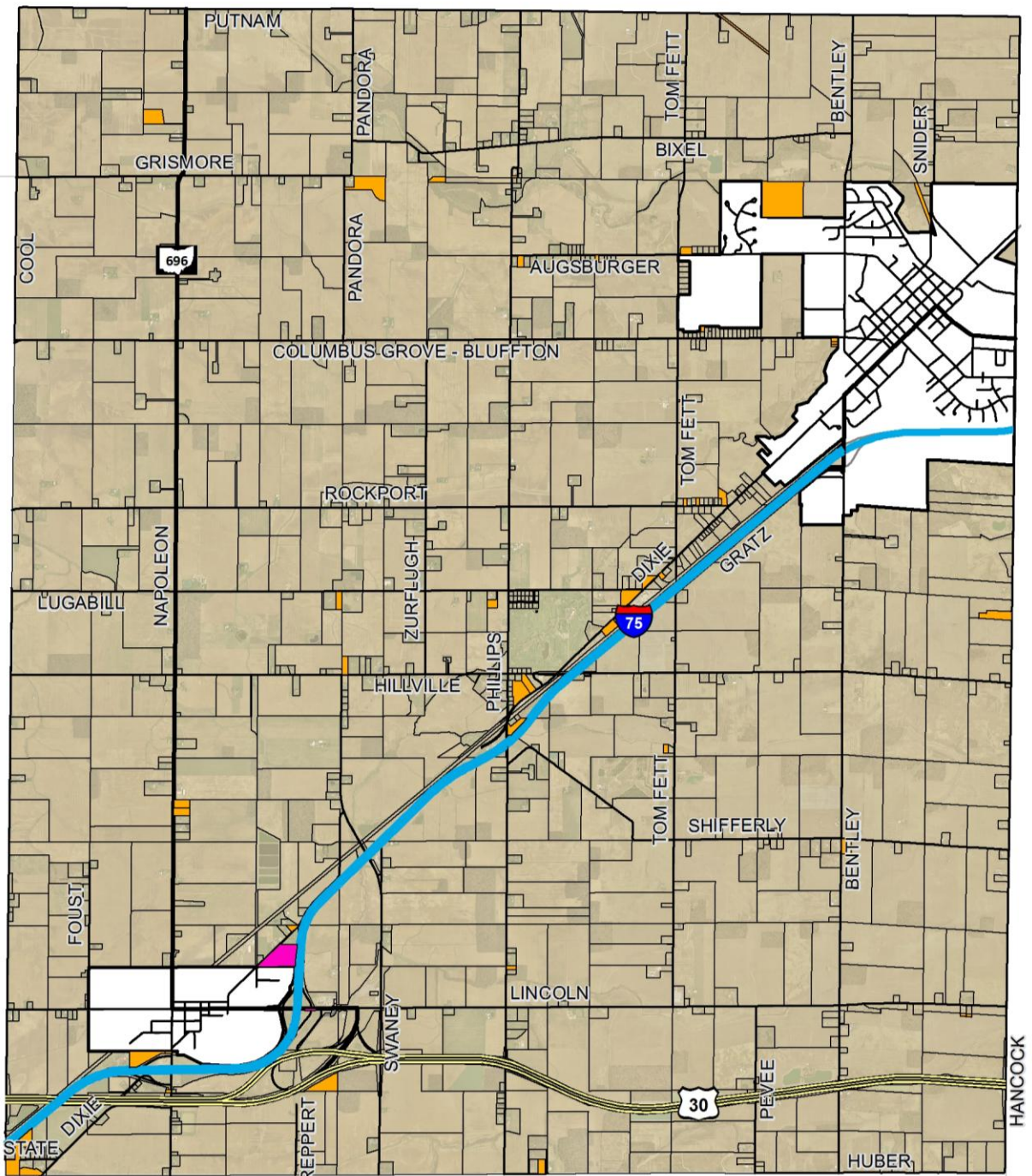
TABLE 7-2 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP: FUTURE QUASI-PUBLIC LAND USE		
Year	Square Footage	Acres Required
2015	34,835	140.7
2020	35,452	144.6
2025	36,070	148.6
2030	36,687	152.5
2035	37,305	156.5
2040	37,922	160.5
Change	3,087	19.8
% Change	+8.9%	+14.1%

*Quasi-public use is expected to demand an additional 3,087 square feet of floor area and consume 19.8 additional acres of land.*

# MAP 7-1


## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### VACANCY BY LAND USE



#### Vacant Land

- Commercial
- Residential

0 0.25 0.5 1  
 Miles



April, 2017

### 7.2.3 Industrial Land Use

Because of past economic practices encouraging vertical integration within industries and the compatibility between manufacturing and warehousing activities such land uses were lumped together for purposes of analysis. Collectively, the floor space in industrial and warehouse operations within Richland Township are currently 41,600 square feet resting on a total of 14.6 acres. Auditor's data suggests there are currently no industrial acres identified as vacant. Based on past precedent, an additional 22,648 square feet of floor space will be needed. Accepting current acreage consumption patterns industrial land uses will require an additional 10.1 acres. Table 7-3 references the

*Based on projected demand an additional 22,648 square feet of floor space will be needed. Accepting current acreage consumption patterns these land uses will require 15 acres.*

TABLE 7-3 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP: FUTURE INDUSTRIAL LAND USE		
Year	Square Footage	Acres Required
2015	41,637	14.6
2020	46,167	16.6
2025	50,696	18.6
2030	55,226	20.6
2035	59,755	22.7
2040	64,285	24.7
Change	22,648	10.1
% Change	+54.4%	+69.1%

demand for industrial space by year, square footage, and acres. However, given the potential for available utilities, the area in the vicinity of I-75 and US 30 can be expected to come under increased pressure by industrial and/or warehousing activities.

### 7.2.4 Parks & Recreational Land Use

As presented earlier in Section 2.5.1, Richland Township has 240 acres of parks and recreational area. This includes the Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District owned Motter Metro Park near Bluffton, which includes 105 acres of recreational space. Other more active forms of recreation are available in the Township and include private commercial golf courses. Based on the limited projected population growth expected through 2040 and the more rural character of the community, the recent expansion of the Motter Metro Park should satisfy the demands in the Township to 2040.

### 7.2.5 Residential Land Use

The Regional Planning Commission identified 136.4 acres of vacant land on 47 parcels for residential purposes. Only 22 parcels consisting of 116.2 acres are capable of supporting such development. The remaining 25 parcels do not meet the 2.5 acre minimum standard established by the Health Department for private sewage systems. Current Township zoning precludes smaller lots due to the absence of municipal water and wastewater services. Based on existing data obtained from the ACAO, current policies, and future projections an additional 407,092 square feet or a 31.2

*Future population projections suggest a 2040 population of 2,377 residents and a resulting demand for an additional 211 residential units.*

TABLE 7-4 RICHLAND TOWNSHIP: FUTURE RESIDENTIAL LAND USE		
Year	Square Footage	Acres Required
2015	1,306,295	1,703.4
2020	1,417,380	1,807.3
2025	1,491,382	1,911.3
2030	1,565,384	2,015.2
2035	1,639,385	2,119.2
2040	1,713,387	2,223.1
Change	407,092	519.7
% Change	+31.2%	+30.5%

percent increase in floor space will be added to the existing residential inventory by 2040. Without significant policy changes, future development would reflect: (a) 211 new residential units and (b) an additional 520 acres of residential land. If all suitable, vacant, residential land is used for new development, an additional 403.5 acres of agricultural land would be consumed.



### 7.2.6 Agricultural Land Use

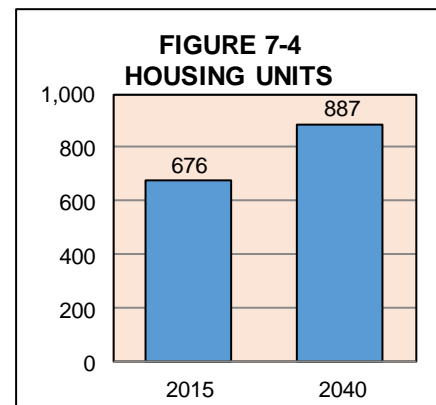
Agricultural land has been the resource upon which Richland Township has relied upon for economic and urban development. Richland Township's agricultural land has historically been prized for its beauty and its productivity. Today, Richland Township's agricultural land reflects just over 21,900 acres. Examining future development, reveals the impending loss of 462 acres of a precious resource. At issue is a growing conflict between farming activities and residential land use.

## 7.3 Infrastructure Projections

In order to support the community's future residential, commercial, and industrial activities, infrastructure improvements will be required. Specific improvements will be necessary to support development activities located in areas previously not serviced by public infrastructure, while physical improvements will also be required to support increased demands in areas with existing public infrastructure (roads, water, wastewater, etc.). In order to better serve the community, increased capacity can be expected in terms of additional roadway lanes/miles, the elimination of closed lines with looped lines, and further integration of utility services.

### 7.3.1 Housing

As identified in Sections 3.3, 4.1, and 7.2.5, housing is a necessary component of the community's infrastructure, one that is indicative of the quality of life one can expect. Data from the ACAO and 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates identified 676 housing units and a vacancy rate of 3.3 percent. Data also suggested that Richland Township's housing costs were relatively high when compared to the Villages and State. As shown in Figure 7-4, based on declining household size and anticipated population growth, projections estimating the demand for future housing suggest an additional 211 units will be required by 2040; a 33.8 percent increase over the total number of units in 2015. Policies examining the type, size, condition, amenities, and construction, of the community's housing stock must be debated, clarified, and once codified made available to the general public.



### 7.3.2 Water & Wastewater

Historically, only private individual wells were available to meet Richland Township's demand for water. However, recent contractual relations undertaken by the Villages of Bluffton and Ottawa may be able to increase access to municipal water services to beyond Bluffton's corporate limits. Municipal water services made available by the Village of Beaverdam may also provide opportunities in the southwest quadrant of the Township. Another developer-driven contract, provides municipal water from the City of Lima to the Village at Sugar Creek a planned golf course community. Issues to be discussed include the conditions under which water will be extended, whether the County will play any role and the price of the water.

At the present time, sanitary sewer services in Richland Township are restricted almost exclusively to the corporate limits defining the Villages of Beaverdam and Bluffton. The Village of Bluffton has historically only expanded its utility services



by annexation. The Village of Beaverdam has not annexed Township land since 1995.

In recent history, any extension of the Village of Beaverdam's sewer service has been project specific, such as the Speedway development at Exit 135 and the Village at Sugar Creek golf course development. Map 7-2 illustrates the existing utility service areas of the Villages of Bluffton and Beaverdam defined as per contractual relationships. While water service is pressure driven, sanitary sewer services are expensive and almost always development driven. What the Township has to be concerned with is the increasing density of residential development west of Bluffton, which could result in the mandated extension of utility service by the OEPA.

### 7.3.3 Transportation

As discussed in Section 4.3, Richland Township is currently serviced by slightly more than 108 miles of roadways that provide for approximately 347,400 VMT per day. Although other governmental units share maintenance and repair of these roadways, Richland Township is solely responsible for 44.7 miles of rural roadways that are currently in various states of disrepair. Estimates from the Allen County Engineer's Office indicate Richland Township roadways, including bridges, need approximately \$3.3 million to meet its responsibility to widen miles of roadway failing to meet the federal minimum standard lane widths espoused by the Federal Highway Administration, and to repair deficient bridges.

Examining future growth by residential and the various other commercial classifications, Richland Township roadways are expected to carry more than 458,100 VMT per day by 2040, an increase of 31.9 percent. Such an increase brings additional maintenance and repair costs as well as concerns for highway safety as more and more vehicles traverse local highways.

*Examining future growth, Richland Township roadways are expected to carry more than 458,100 vehicle miles of travel per day by 2040, an increase of more than 31.9 percent.*

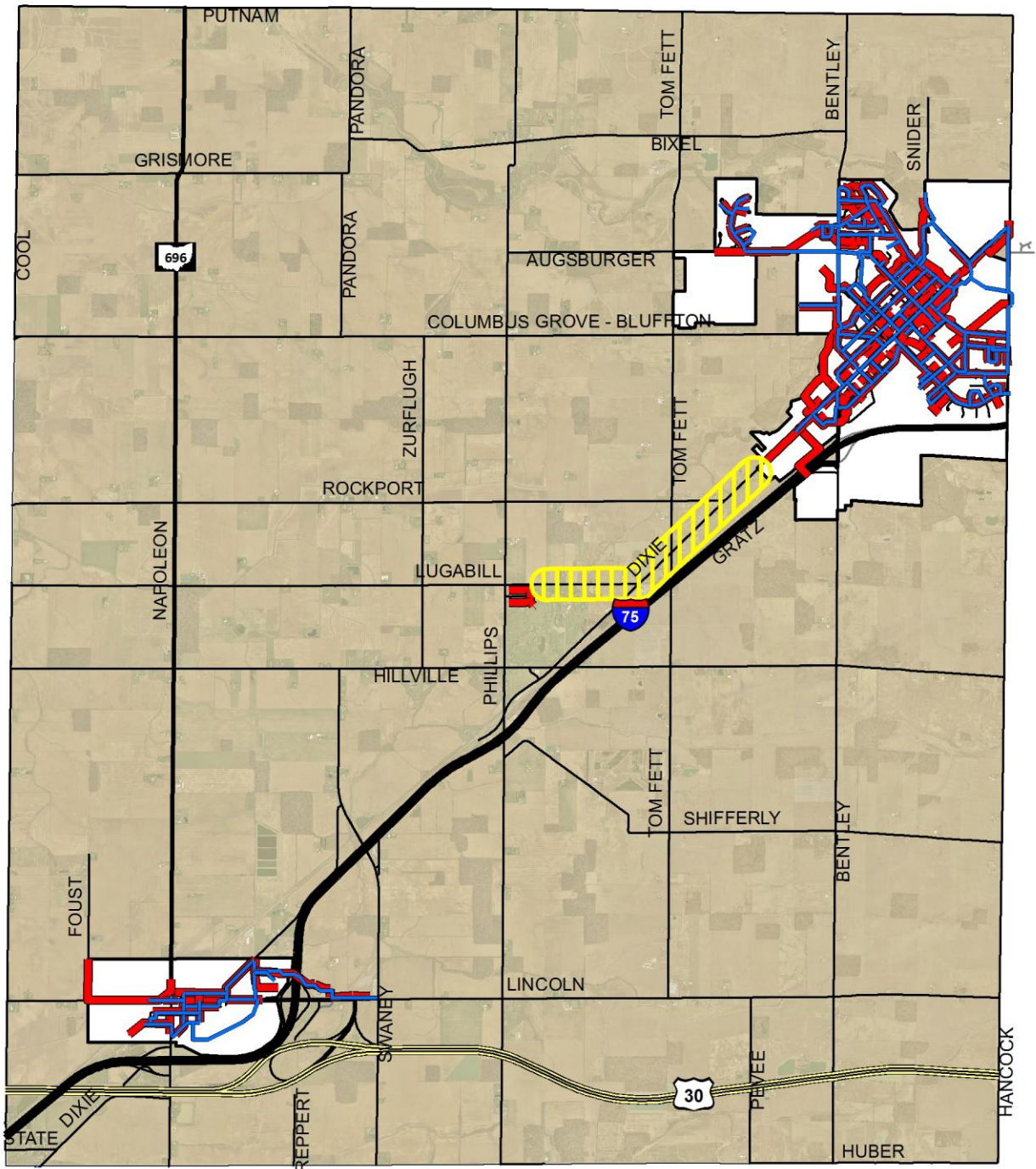
The Regional Planning Commission also identified recommended projects based on current system deficiencies, alternative analyses, and results of travel demand modeling. These projects will cost \$13.1 million which will come from both local and federal sources. The recommended projects were determined to be of considerable importance to the community and the system overall. Table 7-5 identifies the projects with their location and cost.

TABLE 7-5 TARGETED ROADWAYS & BICYCLE FACILITIES IN RICHLAND TOWNSHIP			
Intersection	Project Year	Warranted Improvements	
		Action	Cost
I-75	2020	Resurface I-75 from the Stewart Rd overpass to just north of the SR 696 interchange.	\$6,268,775
ALL/HAN 75	2021	Resurface I-75 from just north of the SR 696 interchange to just south of the SR 235 interchange.	\$6,149,369
Bluffton Hike/Bike Phase 3 – JAMPD Connector	2024	Construction of 10' paved hike/bike trail connecting the Community's existing green space residential and employment centers.	\$137,050
Bluffton Hike/Bike Phase 4 – Buckeye Park Connector	2029	Construction of 10' paved hike/bike trail connecting the Community's existing green space residential and employment centers.	\$511,875




# MAP 7-2


## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### PROPOSED WATER & SEWER SERVICE



#### Water & Sewer Lines

-  Proposed Sewer
-  Water
-  Sewer

0 0.25 0.5 1  
 Miles



April, 2017

## 7.4 Action Plan

The Plan is driven by various interrelated factors associated with population growth (including: the demand for housing, goods and services, and employment opportunities), existing infrastructure and the quality of life. Goals of the Plan have been bundled to address multiple concerns raised during the planning process and include:

- Farmland Preservation and the Community's Rural Character (7.4.1)
- Transportation Corridors & Gateway Aesthetics (7.4.2)
- Housing: Developments & Design Criteria (7.4.3)
- Furthering Local Development & Diversification of the Tax Base (7.4.4)
- Protection of Natural Resources & Environmental Conservation (7.4.5)
- Quality of Life Issues (7.4.6)

Those issues initially identified in Section 1.6 are being discussed further to address various aspects of such concerns including regulatory issues and pending actions. Specific policies, strategies and objectives are identified to achieve the desired outcomes of the Plan outlined earlier in the text. As the planning process continues, progress on each of the goals should be assessed and if necessary said goals/objectives modified. Evaluation criteria should be identified and used in order to further the planning process. Such criteria should then be utilized to evaluate the success or appropriateness of specific goals and objectives. The remainder of this section is designed to expand upon issues and concerns related to the goals mentioned above and to provide the implementation phase with specific tangible/quantifiable objectives furthering the planning process.

### 7.4.1 Preserving Agricultural Practices & the Rural Character of the Community

Over the course of the planning process it became readily apparent that agriculture is misunderstood as a land form, an economic pursuit and a zoning district. Moreover, the appreciation or understanding of agriculture tended to depend on one's own up-bringing and their impression of agriculture. Therefore, an overview of agriculture is provided to indicate the Advisory Committee's perspective and purpose developed over the planning process.

*Defining Agriculture:* Webster defines agriculture as "the science and art of farming, cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock, and to varying degree the preparation and marketing of the resulting products". The established zoning definition of agriculture in the State of Ohio is somewhat more precise. The State's recommended language suggests agriculture as the use of land for agricultural purposes, including farming, dairying, pasturage, aquaculture, horticulture, hydroponics, floriculture, viticulture, animal and poultry husbandry, and the necessary accessory uses for housing, treating, or storing the produce, provided that the operation of any such accessory uses shall be secondary to that of normal agricultural activities. Given this definition it seems easy to understand how land use conflicts in some rural communities have developed and been able to generate some debate about what agriculture is and how it can best coexist with its neighbors.

*Given the State of Ohio's definition of agriculture, it seems easy to understand how land use conflicts in some rural communities have developed.*

Examining today's farm economy, utilization of the term "agribusiness" may be more appropriate. Webster defines agribusiness as farming and the business associated with farming, including the processing of farm products, the manufacturing of farm equipment and/or supplies, and the processing, storage, and distribution of farm commodities. Others reference the term "factory farm"



where the business involves the production, processing, and distribution of products, equipment, and/or supplies. But at what point does the family farm or the hobby farm become a factory farm? The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency uses an animal threshold level method to define the size and regulatory environment of farm operations. This has proved to be controversial and is an issue that the Township must be able to address and quantify if it expects to retain its rural agricultural heritage and retain agriculture as an economic activity and healthy industry into the future.

*Agriculture as practiced today is essentially an industrial process incompatible with many residential uses. Effective controls need to be established.*

*Agriculture as an Industry:* As identified herein, the loss of agricultural land to suburban and exurban uses, primarily subdivisions, strip residential development and highway-oriented commercial is increasing at rate much faster than historically. The suburbanization of the rural land sometimes generates land use based conflicts between the established farmers and new homebuyers or new agricultural operations developed near strip residential development. Complaints from “suburbanites” over manure odors, noise of livestock or agricultural machinery, and environmental hazards posed by the regular application of herbicides, pesticides and other chemicals are common.

Local officials must recognize that agriculture as practiced today is essentially an industrial process incompatible with many residential uses. Effective controls need to be established to protect and separate residential and agricultural uses. The use of buffers around residential subdivisions is a tool that provides some modicum of relief to both farmers and suburbanites. The size and nature of the buffers vary, however, to be an effective buffer from agricultural nuisances and offer some wildlife habitat a minimum of 125 feet is recommended.

*Supporting Agricultural Practices:* The Planning Commission sought to identify the means to protect the remaining agricultural land and thereby support not only the agricultural industry but also a major component of the rural lifestyle. In an attempt to support justification of new land use policies, the Regional Planning Commission reviewed/compiled various datasets and undertook an extensive process that is referred to as a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) analysis. Using GIS applications, the Commission was able to score each parcel within Richland Township based on predetermined criteria that identified characteristics determined to be important to the future operations and economic success of agricultural pursuits. Factors impacting the score of individual parcels were:

*The Township should consider adopting the LESA methodology as the basis for all future land use decisions. The Township should also consider developing Protected Agricultural District (PAD's) standards in its zoning regulations to protect future encroachment into agricultural areas.*

- Soil quality and slope
- Size and shape of parcel
- Location relative to other farms or protected areas
- Proximity to development pressures, including water, sewer

The analysis quantitatively assessed all agricultural properties to determine the heart of the community's agricultural base. The analysis also identified the agricultural properties under stress and experiencing land use conflicts under continued urban encroachment. The methodology inversely identifies measures and policies to be taken to improve the economic and regulatory environment of



the agricultural sector. The assessment also provides the best insights as to those properties eligible for funding from the Ohio Office of Farmland Preservation under the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Program. Map 7-3 graphically displays the farmland determined to be under stress pursuant to the LESA analysis as of 2009. It should be recognized that as land use changes or utility improvements are made on any of the parcels, analytical results change as well.

The Township should consider adopting the LESA methodology as the basis for all future land use decisions. The Township should also consider developing Protected Agricultural District (PAD) standards in its zoning regulations to protect future encroachment into agricultural areas.

*Perspectives On Agriculture:* Of note, this Plan has identified specific data and offered commentary that the agricultural economy in Richland Township is undergoing increased stress. Also, the unplanned residential development process is not compatible with long term viability of agriculture or the ambiance of rural character.

Agriculture can be expected to adapt to changing economics and regulatory controls. Adaptive farming practices may transition from traditional animal and grain farming to fruits and vegetables. The ready market for fresh high value produce in suburban homes, grocery stores, and restaurants, including a higher demand for more naturally produced meat, fruit, and vegetables offer an optimistic future for agriculture in urban townships. Opportunities for u-pick fruit and berry operations, increased demand for nursery stock, and horse stabling also offer opportunities. Farmers may also resort to providing specialty services to other farmers or to urban dwellers residing in rural areas wishing to have a farmer attend to their land. Farmers may also revert to boarding or breeding animals, especially dogs and/or horses, on rural farmsteads. Attempts to retain or reintroduce the rural character must be attentive to rural roadway aesthetics, agricultural structures and opportunities to integrate open space into all rural residential clusters.

*Preserving the rural character:* Preserving the rural character of the community was an important goal established during the community planning process. The goal was one of the primary driving forces in developing the land use component of the Plan and its overriding importance dictated many of the recommendations herein. To define and address “rural character” within the Plan it was necessary to recognize and differentiate between the terms “rural environment” and the “rural landscape.” The rural environment was defined as a sparsely developed area where land is predominantly undeveloped or primarily used for agricultural purposes. Whereas the rural landscape was defined as physical attributes connoting a rural sightline, including woodlands, riparian corridors, farm fields, agricultural buildings, and fencerows.

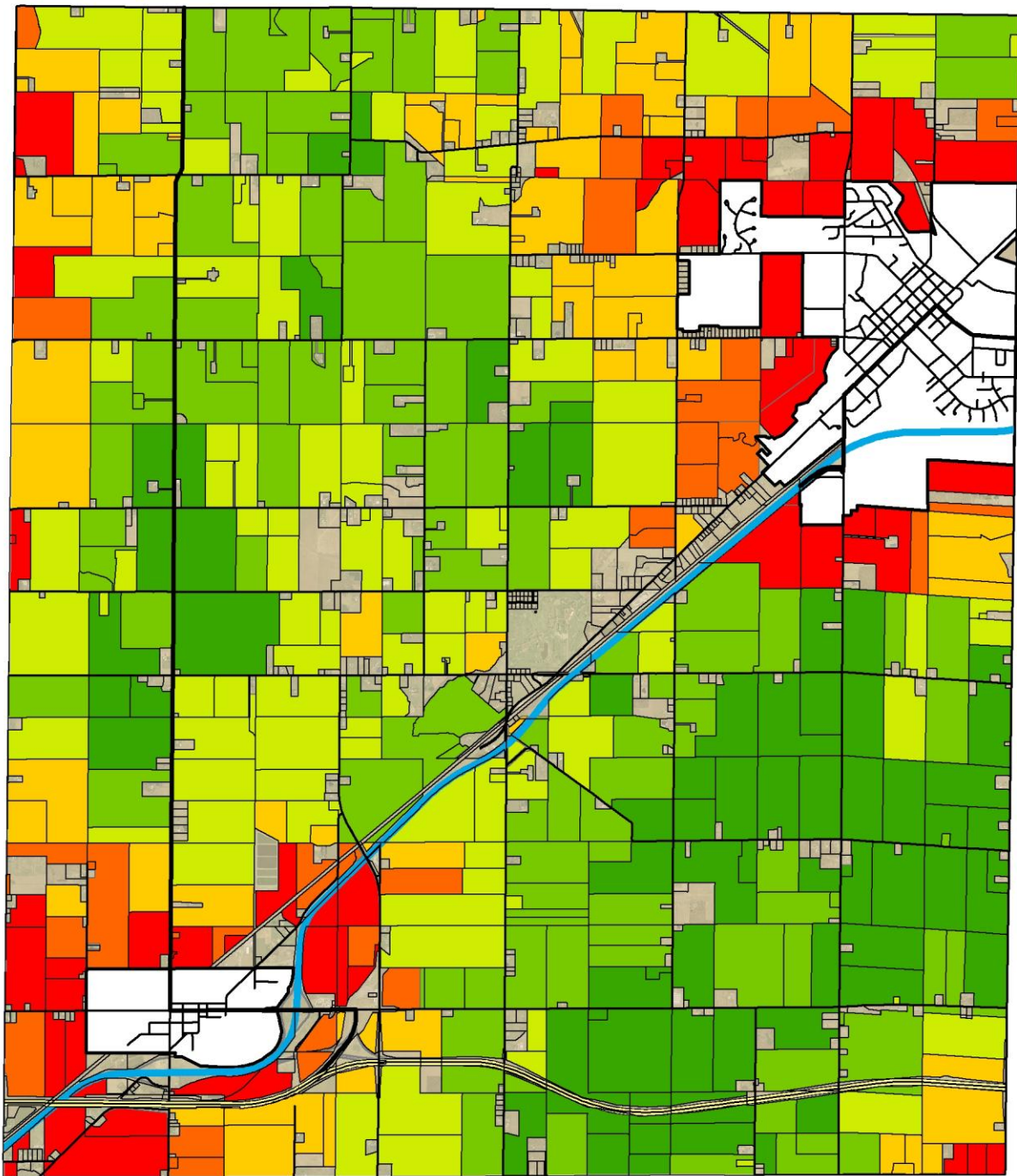
*Preserving the rural character of the community was one of the primary driving forces in developing the land use component of the Plan and its overriding importance dictated many of the recommendations herein.*

In order to protect the rural character, several design elements and development standards need to be considered. To preserve the rural environment, non-agricultural uses should be avoided and urban encroachment, including utilities and dwelling units, should be limited to the maximum extent possible. At the very least, non-agricultural uses should be shielded from view. To preserve the rural

# MAP 7-3

## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### LAND EVALUATION & SITE ASSESSMENT



#### LESA Score

22.1 to 30.0	34.1 to 36.0
30.1 to 32.0	36.1 to 38.0
32.1 to 34.0	38.1 to 40.8

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



May, 2017

landscape, local regulatory controls must address building setbacks and landscaping or buffering requirements. Increasing setbacks from road centerlines for all non-agricultural structures and requiring landscaping or appropriate screening at effective depths for the length of property would be an extremely effective measure to control sightlines. Such measures could be developed and incorporated into corridor overlay district standards.

*To preserve the rural environment non-agricultural uses should be shielded from view. Local regulatory controls must address building set backs and landscaping or buffering requirements.*

The design of sightlines should reflect agricultural activities and fields, and rural architectural vestiges of a more peaceful period in the community's history. Sightlines, including the woodlots and the riparian corridors could be supported with appropriate screening including windbreaks. Indigenous trees and shrubs should be integrated within the landscape; trees and bushes suitable for windbreaks and/or fruit bearing will also support bird and animal habitats that are part of the rural landscape. Overhead utilities including lights should be eliminated or minimized with landscaping/screening. Driveways serving agricultural parcels or rural homesteads should be coordinated/collapsed whenever possible to minimize breaks in sightlines as well as to increase rural roadway safety.

Preserving the rural environment is much more difficult to address when municipal water and sewer lines increase property values at the expense of the existing agricultural industry. The continued permitting of strip residential development on Township and County roads only exacerbates the need for extending expensive and unnecessary municipal services, and drives agricultural pursuits out due to economic factors. Increased lot sizes and clustering has provided some relief to the existing rural landscape but it cannot protect the remaining agricultural lands without additional regulatory assistance. In order to preserve the rural environment, the Township should develop PADs. The PAD should be established at a minimum of 40 acres in size in order to sustain the core agricultural ground necessary to continue agricultural activities into the future. Agriculturally supportive services such as farmers markets, feed/seed dealers, market transports, grain elevators, processing facilities, etc., should be recognized as permitted and/or conditional uses in the PAD in order to sustain agriculture as an economically viable industry within the community, and to maintain the community's rural character. Agriculture should be treated as an industry, an industry predicated on agricultural lands - a finite natural resource.

*The Township should develop Protected Agricultural Districts (PADs) in order to sustain agricultural activities.*

Standards for PAD zoning should reflect the same shared community design criteria as other zoning districts. Districts should be expected to provide the same landscaped entryways, screened sight lines, and sight design standards. The Township should only consider changes when supported by a LESA analysis. The Township would be better served if the PADs were surrounded by rural residential zoning districts, where increased lots sizes, the presence of working farms, and the lack of utilities is seen as desirable for the property owners.

#### **7.4.2 Improving Transportation Corridors & Gateway Aesthetics**

Richland Township is serviced by more than 108 miles of roadways that facilitate more than 347,400 VMT on a daily basis. This traffic is estimated to increase

<b>TABLE 7-6</b> <b>GOAL: PRESERVE &amp; ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES</b>									
POLICY	STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE BY YEAR					COORDINATING AGENCY(IES)	
			1	2	3	4	5		
Preserve agriculture as a viable and competitive industry.	Encourage proper utilization and preservation of agricultural farmland.	Identify and support specific high value agricultural practices.						Allen County Commissioners, State Farmland Preservation Office, State Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Administration, and Richland Township Zoning Commission.	
	Establish / support a Land Trust.	Preserve farmland, open space for future generations.						Allen County Commissioners, Allen County Prosecutor's Office, State Farmland Preservation Office, State Department of Agriculture, and Farm Service Administration.	
		Promote the preservation of remaining viable farmland.						Allen County Auditor, OSU Extension Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil & Water Conservation Service, Regional Planning Commission, Farm Bureau, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
		Develop public appreciation and fiscal support for farmland preservation.						Allen County Auditor, OSU Extension Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil & Water Conservation Service, Regional Planning Commission, Farm Bureau, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
Encourage and direct development in areas contiguous to existing public utilities in order to minimize encroachment upon remaining agricultural areas.	Support development of Comprehensive Plans for Water and Sewer for specified service areas.	Determine capacity and support full use of existing utility system investments.						Allen Water District, Village of Beaverdam, and Village of Bluffton.	
		Determine where and at what density development can occur in areas adjacent to existing systems.						Allen Water District, Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, Allen County Health Department, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
		Develop a capital improvement program to facilitate pro-active orderly extension of services.						Allen Water District, Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, and Regional Planning Commission.	
		Guide controlled residential development into areas served by municipal utilities.						Allen Water District, Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, and Regional Planning Commission.	
Support further urban development and the extension of public utilities based on site-specific locational considerations including proximity to existing infrastructure, environmental sensitivity, soil productivity factors and existing agricultural operations and costs.	Support the creation of Protected Agricultural Districts (PADs) in Township Zoning.	Implement large lot PAD requirements to minimize urban encroachment on agricultural ground, conflicting land use activities, and nuisance lawsuits.						Allen Water District, Allen County Auditor, OSU Extension Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil & Water Conservation Service, Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, Regional Planning Commission, Farm Bureau, Township Zoning Commission, Township Trustees, and the general public.	
	Review/revise existing regulations governing required utilities and improvements based on density and land use.	Review/revise existing Zoning Regulations for the ability to regulate land use conversion.						Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
		Determine population density along certain rural roadways and costs associated with providing required infrastructure improvements and local services to establish basis for impact fees.						Allen Water District, Allen County Health Department, Allen County Engineer, Allen County Drainage Engineer, Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton , Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
	Review and implement Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) System as basis for land use change.	Develop an inventory and classification system which will facilitate conversion of agricultural ground based on need as well as propinquity to existing development, existing infrastructure and soil characteristics.						Allen County Auditor, OSU Extension Office, Natural Resource Conservation, Soil & Water Conservation Service, Farm Service Administration, Regional Planning Commission, Farm Bureau, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
		Identify prime agricultural land to be preserved.						Allen County Auditor, OSU Extension Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil & Water Conservation Service, Regional Planning Commission, Farm Bureau, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
	Support development proposals based on compatibility with comprehensive plans developed by the Villages at Beaverdam and Bluffton (water and wastewater) and Allen County (sanitary sewers).	Facilitate an orderly conversion of agricultural land.						Allen Water District, Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, Allen County Sanitary Engineers, Regional Planning Commission, and Soil & Water Conservation Service.	



31.9 percent through the 2040 planning horizon. Sections 4.3.1 and 7.3.3 identified the existing characteristics of the highway system, public transportation services, and other transport modes including pipelines, rail, and cartage services. This section of the Plan attempts to highlight specific issues, especially regulatory controls and policies, identified during the planning process. Of specific interest was:

- Roadway Safety
- Improved Aesthetics

*Roadway Safety:* Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, the Township Trustees are charged with the maintenance and repair of local roadways. Current corrective measures targeting existing deficiencies exceed \$3.3 million. Maintenance costs are not available. However, maintaining a safe and efficient roadway system will require a dedicated funding source that the Township must identify/develop. The Township must undertake measures to document existing conditions and implement warranted improvements. The Township must identify alternative funding streams to maintain the integrity and safety of local roadways. Roadway maintenance is critical to supporting the community's future growth. Map 7-4 depicts potential areas for redevelopment.

*The Township must identify alternative funding streams to maintain the integrity and safety of local roadways.*

In addition to vehicular safety, bicycle safety should also be considered. In efforts to reduce bicycle crashes and provide safe routes for bicyclists, Allen County is pushing efforts to make the community bicycle friendly. Also, the United States Bicycle Route System (USBRS) developed a National Corridor Plan, and Richland Township is expected to include two routes, USBR 40 and USBR 25.<sup>2</sup> The Regional Planning Commission is also proposing bicycle facilities along Napoleon Road to connect Beaverdam to the Villages of Lafayette and Harrod.

Adoption and support of access management regulations and the implementation of a pavement management system would further local safety initiatives and allow the Township to better maintain existing traffic conditions. Increasing the frequency and extent of selective enforcement events coordinated between the Township, the Planning Commission, the Board of Education, and the Allen County Sheriff's Office could prove effective at addressing localized traffic problems and resolving the at risk behaviors.

*Improved Aesthetics:* The primary transportation corridors serving the community and providing initial images of Richland Township need to be improved. Currently, Napoleon Road, Lincoln Highway, Phillips Road, Hillville Road, Bentley Road, Tom Fett Road, and Dixie Highway serve as the primary routes to and through the community and should receive the attention necessary to bolster the community's image and appeal. These routes act as gateways to the community and are valuable assets that need to reflect the pride and capabilities of the community.

Each of the aforementioned corridors differs in their function, access to infrastructure, and land uses served. Some of the corridors are serving through traffic, some are serving commercial or industrial uses, while others are serving local traffic simply providing access to residential and agricultural uses. All have one thing in common, delivering a first impression of Richland Township.

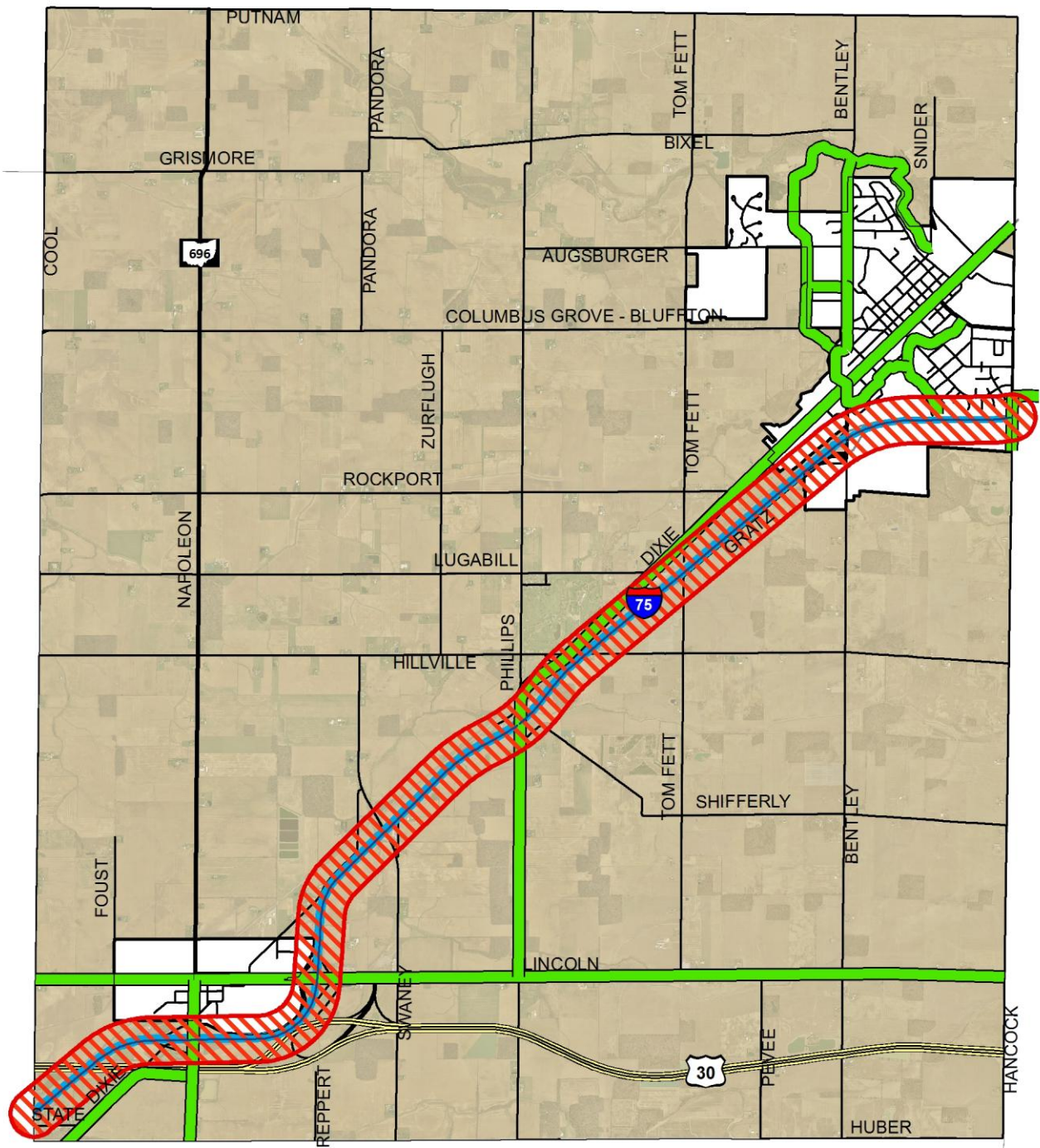
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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.adventurecycling.org/routes-and-maps/us-bicycle-route-system/national-corridor-plan/>


# MAP 7-4

## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLANS



-  Roadway Improvements
-  Proposed Bicycle Paths

0 0.25 0.5 1  
 Miles



April, 2017

**TABLE 7-7**  
**GOAL: CREATE A SAFE, EFFICIENT & WELL MAINTAINED ROADWAY SYSTEM FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS & EMPLOYERS**

POLICY	STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE BY YEAR					COORDINATING AGENCY(IES)
			1	2	3	4	5	
Minimize traffic delays and congestion on the roadway network.	Improve levels of service on the local roadway network.	Identify and document unsatisfactory levels of service (LOS) on area roadways based on established volume to capacity ratios						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Develop warranted improvements and seek necessary funding to correct LOS deficiencies including geometric deficiencies.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Identify and document unsatisfactory LOS at roadway intersections based on established measures of delay.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Develop warranted improvements and seek necessary funding to improve LOS including capacity and deficient roadway geometrics.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Support the development/implementation of Access Management Regulations on area roadways.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Better coordinate transportation, land use policies and urban development.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
Maximize the safety of Richland residents/motorists on the local highway network.	Reduce the number and severity of crashes on area roadways.	Systematically identify crash locations based on frequency, severity and rates.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, and Regional Planning Commission.
		Complete detailed analysis of locations, develop warranted improvements and seek necessary funding to correct safety deficiencies.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT Regional Planning Commission, and Township Trustees.
		Enforce traffic laws to curb at-risk behaviors.						Allen County Sheriff's Office, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Regional Planning Commission, and Township Trustees.
		Promote safe driving behavior through public education/awareness.						Allen County Sheriff's Office, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Regional Planning Commission, Bluffton / Bath Schools, and Township Trustees.
Maintain sound quality pavement conditions on area roadways.	Implement a Pavement Management System.	Inventory existing roadway pavement conditions and prioritize necessary maintenance and rehabilitative actions based on established threshold levels.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
	Develop the necessary funding to sustain roadway maintenance issues.	Identify total funding needs for warranted roadway improvements, transportation enhancements, maintenance/replacement of equipment and personnel costs.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Commissioner's, Township Road Superintendent, Township Trustees, and the general public.
		Identify all potential funding streams to adequately address roadway maintenance issues.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Commissioner's, Township Road Superintendent, Township Trustees, and the general public.
		Implement those actions necessary to finance warranted transportation improvements.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Trustees, and the general public.
	Identify/monitor deficient roadway conditions and correct same as Township staffing and equipment will allow.	Maintain a prioritized list of transportation improvement projects.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, and Township Trustees.
		Develop and maintain necessary roadway maintenance equipment.						Township Trustees.

Receiving the appropriate mix of improvements, development guidelines, and regulatory controls, these roadways could better serve the local community. Softer, cleaner, and greener, these corridors will provide the incentive for further investments. In order to further such ends, corridor studies should be developed for each entryway integrating aspects of streetscape, aesthetics, and roadway efficiency. These studies should respect the function of the roadways and provide the framework for further community development. To increase their effectiveness, corridor studies should document existing and future development, proposed corridor district development standards including signage, and landscaping requirements. Access management plans need to be included to improve the roadways' function, efficiency, vehicular access, and safety.

Corridor improvements should also be supported with site enhancements at key locations across the community. Appropriate landscaping will not only improve the overall appeal of such sites, it will establish a certain community standard that private property owners can be expected to meet. New subdivisions should be required to address adequate signage and incorporate landscape elements in their preliminary site design reviews, especially their stormwater detention, not only to improve the overall appeal, but also to improve salability and property values.

#### **7.4.3 Furthering Development & Diversification of the Tax Base**

The community is founded on the people and infrastructure that support local economic, social, and cultural institutions and activities. It is this same infrastructure and institutions that residents will collectively rely upon to stimulate further opportunities for future community growth, including those for employment and the necessary procurement of goods and services. The community is positioned to grow, and growth is seen as a positive indicator for most communities. However, growth can sometimes be painful and therefore it must be guided, supported, and regulated to ensure that the community maximizes its investments in infrastructure and services, and protects its remaining natural resources. This section recognizes the following specific issues and concerns important to the Plan:

- Infrastructure Coordination to Support and Sustain Development
- Minimize Traffic Impacts & Support Mixed Use Developments
- Diversification of the Tax Base
- Costs of Community Services & Reinvestment in the Community

*Infrastructure Coordination:* The coordination of municipal water and wastewater services to sites is critical to the future of Richland Township. Richland Township must work with representatives of the Villages of Beaverdam, Bluffton, and the OEPA to support and maintain the establishment of coordinated utility service areas.

Coordination will also prove to be cost effective as developers and properties in rural residential areas will not fear unnecessary and unplanned costly utility extensions. This has the added effect of reserving areas for agricultural operations without artificially inflating the costs of land and making agriculture pursuits economically unfeasible.

The maintenance and success of the Plan depends in large measure upon the careful and deliberate actions taken by those agencies vested with guarding the public's health, safety, and welfare. The future coordination of utilities should be



guided by this Plan, especially its land use and water & wastewater elements. This Plan should be consulted and supported by the various entities that provided supporting documentation for its release, as well as those who will be expected to take future actions on behalf of the public.

*Minimize Traffic Impacts of New/Mixed Use Developments:* New development generates traffic and accommodating traffic, especially traffic related to large commercial or mixed-use developments, can be difficult without adequate information and design criteria. Undertaking corridor studies and integrating access management regulations will improve the safety of area roadways. And market studies, inclusive of traffic impact elements, will further the community's understanding of any proposed development's impact and help identify the necessary measures and infrastructure improvements to ameliorate deteriorated levels of service on the roadway network. However, the Township must develop specific design criteria, transportation policies and regulatory language to support new mixed-use patterns of development.

*Integrating mixed-use developments will have various positive impacts across the community including increased employment opportunities and diversification of the local tax base.*

Developers and landowners have increasingly been able to identify and successfully integrate various retail activities, restaurants and professional services within mixed-use retail districts and business parks. Adding quasi-public or government facilities with a mix of retail, office and residential activities on individual tracts has effectively fostered the development of new activity centers, sometimes referred to as lifestyle centers, village centers, or new town concepts. Such development sites provide valuable employment opportunities and unique living environments, especially when adequate open space and accessibility is provided. Integrating such mixed-use developments will have various positive impacts across the community, including:

- Expanded Employment Opportunities
- Shorter Commute Times
- Reduced Roadway Congestion
- Increased Community Accessibility
- Improved Air Quality
- Diversification of the Local Tax Base

However, these new developments should be required to incorporate complimentary building facades with parking and landscaping requirements that integrate traffic calming techniques and pedestrian safety with adequate linkage across such sites to existing/future adjacent development, including open space as necessary. Sites must also address the environmental effects of development including aspects of excessive light, storm water runoff, litter and wind blown debris within landscaping schemes that provide for a unique sense of place and are cognizant of the community's rural orientation.

As such developments are highly dependent upon creating an active location populated with a certain density of people and uses, accessibility for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic is critical. The community must identify the infrastructure necessary to provide long-term stability for such unique and enjoyable places, places that attract investment and support diversified economic pursuits therein. Developing policy that requires developments to integrate an appropriate mix of

*New developments are highly dependent upon creating an active location populated with a certain density of people and uses.*

TABLE 7-8 GOAL: COORDINATE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS & LAND USE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE DESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS, MINIMIZE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS & COSTLY UTILITY EXTENSIONS/INVESTMENTS									
POLICY	STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE BY YEAR					COORDINATING AGENCY(IES)	
			1	2	3	4	5		
Use the Comprehensive Plan text and maps to guide development decisions and the extension of utilities as well as promotion of the public's health, safety, and welfare.	Use the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations, including future land use map and the associated densities, as a guide to decision making when reviewing/approving development proposals and variance requests.	Create and educate public and Township officials on the findings and recommendations of the Plan.						Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Amend the Plan as conditions change.						Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees	
		Review Zoning Resolution to reflect shared community standards.						Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Develop and adopt summary impact studies proposed developments.						Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
	Use the findings and recommendations of the various corridor plans as guide for the development and coordination of future transportation, land use and urban design issues with respect to (re)development proposals.	Promote stability and an improved quality of life.						Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Create safe and aesthetically pleasing corridors to support viable commercial/industrial (re)development.						Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Engineer's Office, Allen County Sanitary Engineer's Office, ODOT, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
Promote transportation related infrastructure improvements which will minimize adverse land use affects on adjacent properties.	Implement warranted transportation infrastructure improvements and services within new development areas.	Require Traffic Impact Studies for new development to ensure compatibility and sustainability.						Allen County Engineer, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
	Assess and execute all transportation-related improvements with regional and local infrastructure improvement plans.	Identify, monitor and maintain appropriate levels of service.						ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Support existing residential/industrial/commercial development.						Regional Planning Commission, ODOT, Allen County Historical Society, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Minimize the loss of agricultural ground.						Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Engineer's Office, and Township Trustees	
		Maximize use of limited available financial resources.						Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
Support the co-location of municipal water and sanitary sewer services.	Coordinate land use change with available municipal services.	Establish existing capacity of all municipal water and sanitary sewer services.						Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, and Township Trustees	
		Eliminate unplanned and/or unnecessary costs of infrastructure extensions/upgrades.						Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Maximize cost-effectiveness of delivering utility services.						Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Develop local recognition of feasible limits for municipal services and develop utility service district.						Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Minimize potential for urban sprawl, loss of farmland and leap-frog development.						Village of Beaverdam, Village of Bluffton, Allen Economic Development Group, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	

infrastructure, especially transportation improvements, to include and support vehicular and pedestrian movement will improve the community's overall appeal and quality of life. The development of such policies should be pursued as a priority and target specific transportation corridors/nodes as well as sites close to existing activity centers.

*Tax Base Diversification:* Tax base refers to the total wealth in terms of land, property, and income that is subject to taxation. Richland Township receives tax revenues for real and personal property to support local services; it receives no income tax monies. The concept of a diversified economic base reflects risk management practices. Practices that suggest a community's dependency upon any one sector or any one company for employment or revenue threatens the economic vitality of the community, especially as an economic downturn, an environmental disaster, or horrific incident might negatively impact that sector or facility and ultimately the community. From a risk management perspective a broad base of employment opportunities across a number of divergent sectors better serves the community.

*The concept of a diversified economic base reflects risk management practices that suggest a community's dependency upon any one sector or company.*

*Cost of Community Services:* The community should underwrite a community services assessment to identify the cost of providing specific services and those costs associated with supporting specific types of land use activities. The Township needs to undertake an assessment of its financial situation to benchmark the value and appropriateness of certain land use decisions as changes in land use will affect the respective demand for services and ultimately costs incurred. Indexing the financial resources of the community against future costs can better prepare the community to address long-term development and sustainability. An analysis to assess future solvency was beyond the scope of this Plan, but specific indicators to underwrite preliminary assessments should be considered. Such an assessment would necessarily target:

- Infrastructure investments and cost of service versus valuation
- The percentage of tax valuation attributable to specific land uses
- The percentage of tax revenue available for discretionary and/or extraordinary capital improvements
- The ratio of the general fund costs to revenue source increases
- The availability of non-dedicated funding sources for ongoing administrative costs

Recovery policies would address services that are similar to those provided by the private sector to either reflect market costs or be discontinued. For those services provided by the Township, recoupment of costs such as those associated with calls for service including false alarms and ambulance runs should also be assessed. General administrative costs need to be assessed against the available general fund and, regulatory fees, such as zoning/driveway permits, should be evaluated to reflect total costs. Policies should reflect the cost of providing such services including all direct and indirect costs program wide.

If not addressed, roadway pavement conditions and drainage facilities will continue to deteriorate. Roadway maintenance costs will increase as pavement conditions continue to deteriorate further. Also of note is the existing condition of critical equipment for roadway and ditch maintenance purposes. Currently, no dedicated funding source exists to address reinvestment in the community's

infrastructure; this is arguably short sighted and such austerity is ill conceived. The Township must develop a dedicated stream that addresses existing and future infrastructure upgrades. The lack of such a dedicated funding source will result in deteriorated highway safety, increased localized flooding, and a declining quality of life for its residents.

Furthermore, the Township should recognize the shift in state taxation programs/policies and the cumulative impact of tax abatements on local government services. The Township should assess the long-term implications of these on the existing tax base against the Plan's stated goals and objectives and develop fiscal alternatives. In order to better prepare for declining state support the Township should undertake an assessment of all available revenue streams including the provision of new or special services, developing improvement districts, the ability to assess franchise fees and/or the support of specific public taxes/levies. The Township should consider the implications of revenue generated from such sources based on a cost benefit analysis and with respect to the Plan's stated goals and objectives.

#### **7.4.4 Housing Demand, Accessibility & Stabilization**

The Plan identified aspects of the Township's housing stock and population in earlier sections of the report. However, attempts to explore some of the more interrelated aspects of housing, housing consumption and population demographics have led to some interesting proposals and calls for action. Supporting specific Plan proposals are issues related to the number and type of currently existing housing units based upon a preliminary assessment of their collective ability to meet the specific needs of future population groups, especially the elderly (65+ years) and empty nesters (45-65 years).

In an attempt to address the community's diverse housing needs of the future, the Plan calls for the Township to consider developing and implementing procedures regarding:

- Market Segmentation & Feasibility Assessments
- Accessibility Standards for New Development
- Standardized Exterior Maintenance Codes
- Standardized Residential Building Codes
- Landlord Training & Occupancy Permits

*Market Segmentation & Analyses:* Data suggests that the community is growing older. By 2040, 8 out of 10 residents will be comprised of those identified as empty nesters and senior citizens. The Plan also reports that approximately 6 in 10 residential units of the Richland Township housing stock were built between 1960 and 2000. This housing stock primarily reflects the family demands of the post-World War II era and the baby-boomer generation. Nearly all of Richland's housing units are single-family homes. More than 60.0 percent of those exist on parcels more than 2 acres in size. With 87.8 percent of Richland's housing stock owner-occupied, it becomes evident that the type of home, the number of floors, the amount of land as well as the arrangements for the care of that land will necessarily change with an aging population. The Plan suggests that the existing homes by and large will not satisfy or support an aging population.

*It becomes evident that the type of home, the number of floors, the amount of land as well as the arrangements for the care of that land will necessarily change with an aging population.*



By 2040, the empty nesters and 65+ populations will comprise 88.6 percent of the total population in Richland Township. Collectively, the projected population will add approximately 211 housing units; their household size will be less than 2.5 persons per household. To a large extent, the homes these populations will live in do not at this time exist in Richland Township. Given the changing demographics and declining household size it is clear that measures need to be taken now to ensure adequately designed residences and neighborhoods with specific accessibility designs identified for this aging population.

Consideration should be given to those development proposals that include single floor designs or ranch type homes with smaller square footage requirements.

Integrated throughout should be contractual condominium-style landscaping care and wheelchair accessibility. These design criteria could easily be supported in developments of 2 to 4 units per acre when public utilities are provided. The Township should adopt accessibility design criteria and consider support for mixed use, higher density developments. Proposed developments targeting housing serving intergenerational interests should be supported by the Township. Such community proposals integrate standard single family with condominium and assisted living components. These designs allow households the ability to select the most appropriate residential setting within the community without being forced to move from family, friends and familiar neighborhoods. These developments should be supported as they promote a continuity of Township residency and neighborhood cohesion.

*These designs allow households the ability to select the most appropriate residential setting within the community without being forced to move from family, friends and familiar neighborhoods.*

Developments should be expected to integrate some specified design criteria supporting the 65 and older population, as they will account for 26.6 percent of the entire population. Current demographics note that over a third of all households currently contain at least one individual 65 years of age or older, and of these households 34.3 percent live alone. With an increasing elderly population by 2040, the Township should recognize that the vast majority of seniors:

- Own their own home (89%)
- Prefer to age at home in same neighborhood (60%)
- Will need some community-based assistance (36%)
- Would move to smaller home (27%)
- Would move to Retirement Community (27%)
- Will suffer from vision problems (66%)

Because most seniors will prefer to age in place, there will most likely be an increasing demand for community-based services as well as the resources and expertise to modify existing homes to accommodate physical changes resulting from the aging process. Housing options such as senior apartments, assisted living complexes, and continuing care facilities that provide supportive services will also increase in demand.

New housing developments should be able to serve the community's aging population and such proposals should be reflective of property maintenance from a structural and aesthetic perspective. This includes landscaping, accessibility,

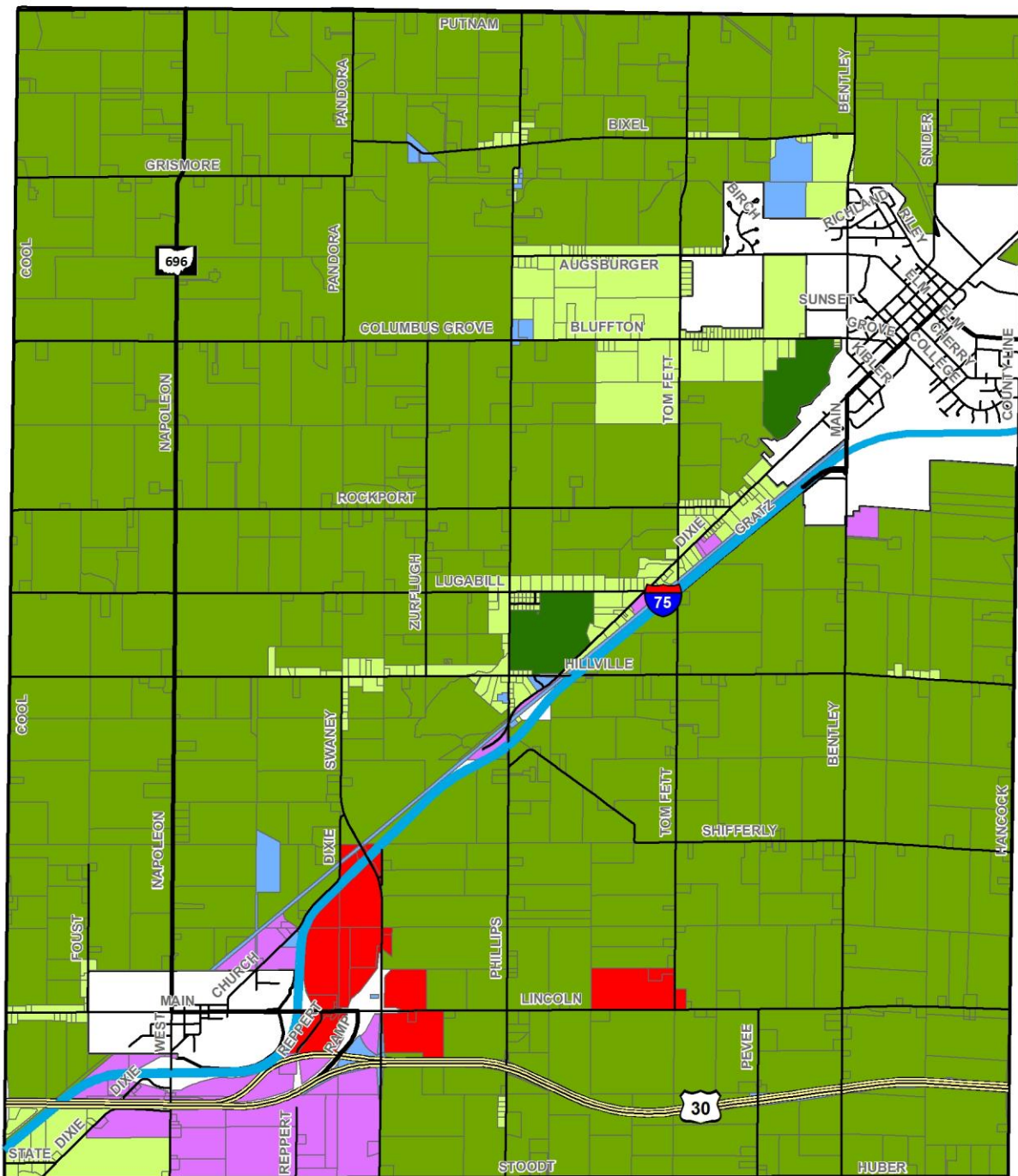
**TABLE 7-9**  
**GOAL: SUPPORT MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS, VARIED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES & LIFESTYLE CHOICES**

POLICY	STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE BY YEAR					COORDINATING AGENCY(IES)
			1	2	3	4	5	
Integrate mixed land use developments to promote diversity of the community's economic base and choice of lifestyle.	Recruit and promote the co-location of residential, retail, finance, entertainment, government services and/or restaurants to create a vibrant activity center.	Develop an exciting vibrant central focal point in the community.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.
		Attract and retain the young skilled, educated, entrepreneurial people necessary to support local community growth.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.
	Locate and integrate infrastructure both physical and social within proposed activity centers to support varied activities.	Coordinate land use decisions with available service area.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.
		Cluster service activities that support the arts, sports and entertainment.						Allen Water District, Beavertown, Bluffton Water and Sewer Dept, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.
		Develop design criteria to enable the integration of public transportation services and open space into all activity centers.						Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.
	Plan for and support the integration of varied land use activities with the infrastructure necessary to accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular traffic in those transitional areas between residential and commercial districts.	Identify potential obstacles to mixed-use developments including land development codes including environmental and safety issues.						Allen County Engineer's Office, Regional Planning Commission, ODOT, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.
		Develop corridor plans specifying necessary traffic improvements, land use controls, signage, streetscape and parking standards supported with curbs/gutters, sidewalks and lighting.						Allen County Engineer's Office, Regional Planning Commission, ODOT, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.
Ensure new developments have access to the necessary infrastructure including adequate roads, transit and other needed facilities to support planned development.	Maintain satisfactory levels of service on the local roadway network.	Require Traffic Impact Analyses to assess new/proposed development projects.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Develop warranted improvements and seek necessary funding and developer guarantees to correct identified LOS deficiencies including geometric deficiencies.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
	Minimize traffic congestion and delay stemming from new development activities.	Identify and document unsatisfactory LOS at roadway intersections based on established measures of delay.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Develop warranted improvements and seek necessary funding to improve LOS including capacity and deficient roadway geometrics.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Support the development/implementation of Access Management Regulations on area roadways.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
		Better coordinate transportation, land use policies and urban development.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission, Township Road Superintendent, and Township Trustees.
	Integrate alternative means of travel with new development sites.	Require an integration of pedestrian amenities to support site development in Township Zoning.						Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.
		Require connectivity to existing pedestrian amenities.						Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.
	Integrate appropriate criteria and develop design guidelines to ensure attractive high value developments.	Create a valuable, attractive and sustainable resource for the community.						Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.

# MAP 7-5

## RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

### 2040 GENERALIZED LAND USE



#### Land Use

<span style="color: green;">■</span> Agriculture	<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Industrial
<span style="color: darkgreen;">■</span> Recreation	<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> Residential
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Commercial	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Public

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



April, 2017

and supporting community services. Such issues should be addressed by developers at the preliminary planning stage and be supported with a market analysis to assist the Township Zoning Commission and Trustees in their decision-making processes. At the Township level, regulatory language and policy guidelines for the design criteria of units should be reviewed/ revised/adopted. Issues to be addressed include types of units, sizes of units, parking, pedestrian lighting, and accessibility standards.

*Maintenance & Building Codes:* The topic of residential property maintenance and building codes repeatedly came up in discussions across the Township with Advisory Committee members. It should not be surprising given that housing typically represents a family's largest single investment, residents want to protect such an investment. Housing is also important to the Township as it represents one of the largest components of its tax base in terms of valuation. As a result, the Township should take steps to ensure that such properties are kept in good repair and remain a valuable asset within and for the community.

The Township should evaluate the feasibility of adopting an exterior maintenance code to ensure that the outward appearance of properties is maintained and somewhat uniform to acceptable neighborhood standards. When individual properties are allowed to slip into disrepair they not only negatively impact the salability and valuation of the individual property but the adjacent properties as well. Left unattended such sites tend to result in a pattern of disinvestment culminating in depressed areas that demand public attention with little valuation to support public investments.

The Township should also consider the implications of adopting a standardized residential building code. A standardized code could protect the consumers of new residential housing by guaranteed inspections of the unit's major structural components. A standardized code would assist consumers in comparison-shopping between similar units constructed by different builders ensuring that all structural elements are uniform to code and thereby helping to ensure the safety of its occupants.

#### **7.4.5 Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability**

Preserving the natural environment was a component of the Plan that, at least in part, actually evolved from other goals. Advisory Committee members realized that the preservation of the community's rural character and farmland preservation involved large agricultural tracts of the natural environment including wood lots and riparian corridors as opposed to the built environment with storefronts and signage, houses and manicured lawns. The Committee also noted poor air and water quality issues that were negatively impacting the community's overall health.

The Plan recognizes that environmentally sensitive areas of the community have hidden assets that are many times overlooked by developers and property owners who thoughtlessly destroy such resources. Such areas to be protected include the Township's floodplains, wetlands, wood lots, and perennial waterways, as well as their associated riparian zones, with a width of at least 50 feet. The Plan acknowledges that these resources must be protected legislatively with policy changes to the Township Zoning Resolutions and Stormwater Management Plans. The Township argues for reciprocal support from State and County level agencies addressing such resources, including the Allen County



TABLE 7-10 GOAL: PROMOTE & FURTHER INTEGRATE THE (RE)DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY									
POLICY	STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE BY YEAR					COORDINATING AGENCY(IES)	
			1	2	3	4	5		
Encourage the reuse and rehabilitation of existing industrial/commercial structures.	Supporting infill development and the development of existing brownfield sites.	Identify underutilized, vacant, and/or abandoned sites and structures.						Allen Economic Development Group, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
		Assess and maximize existing facilities and infrastructure.						Allen Economic Development Group, Allen County Engineer, Allen County Sanitary Engineer, Allen Water District, City of Lima Utilities Department, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
		Revitalize and improve the existing industrial sites within the community.						Allen Economic Development Group, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
	Develop economic incentives that furthers the rehabilitation of older facilities.	Identify available and/or develop new financial resources to support rehabilitation strategies.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Allen County Auditor, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees.	
Encourage the development and expansion of existing industries as the primary means of stabilizing the community's economic base.	Support the efforts of the Allen Economic Development Group and the Lima Chamber of Commerce in their retention and expansion efforts.	Support and stabilize the industrial base to protect the community's employment opportunities and tax base.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.	
		Develop an industrial council for major employers within the community to express their needs and interests.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.	
Promote additional capacity for industrial development in the community.	Identify and attract specific industries to compliment existing mix with available sites and infrastructure.	Work with industrial leadership to identify market niches for potential industries.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Allen County Auditor, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.	
		Identify and strengthen synergies between compatible industries to further employment opportunities and the diversification of the community's tax base.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Allen County Auditor, Ohio State University Extension Office, Allen County Commissioners, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.	
Protect areas best suited for industrial/commercial (re)development from housing developments.	Review Land Use Plan and Zoning Regulations for compatibility and to deter construction and encroachment of housing near industrial sites.	Establish and maintain an inventory of all available industrial properties in order to protect industrial development/redevelopment opportunities.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Auditor and Township Zoning Commission.	
Develop conditions that will support and strengthen development initiatives.	Advance transportation system improvements that will support industrial development initiatives.	Identify and advance corridor level improvements for freight.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, ODOT and Regional Planning Commission.	
		Identify existing and future capacity constraints to existing industrial by site.						Allen Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, ODOT, Allen County Engineer's Office, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.	
		Maximize safety and minimize congestion on truck routes.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission and Township Trustees.	
		Eliminate roadway congestion and minimize operational costs.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission and Township Trustees.	
		Ensure employers access to public transportation services.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT, Regional Planning Commission and Township Trustees.	
	Advance utility improvement projects that will support industrial developments.	Identify existing utility service and capacity by site.						Allen Water District, Beaverdam, Bluffton Water and Sewer Dept, , Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.	
		Coordinate development of both water and sewer services to available sites.						Allen Water District, Beaverdam, Bluffton Water and Sewer Dept, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.	
	Support the development of intermodal facilities through the integration of highway and rail infrastructure.	Identify a systems level analysis of freight and rail modes.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT and Regional Planning Commission.	
		Identify and advance corridor level improvements for freight.						Allen County Engineer's Office, ODOT and Regional Planning Commission.	

Floodplain Management Regulations, the Allen County Stormwater Management & Sediment Control Regulations, and the Allen County Subdivision Regulations.

Trees and grasses have the ability to purify our air and water. Trees provide valuable shade and cleanse the air. Grasses slow stormwater runoff and allow rainwater to percolate into the soils, replenishing our groundwater resources. Floodplains and wetlands mitigate flood damage by acting to temporarily store the floodwaters and associated runoff. Moreover, such wetlands and riverine environments can effectively remove the damaging effects of urban pollutants including total suspended particles (45%-99%), phosphorous (23%-96%), nitrogen (up to 90%), and hydrocarbons (40%-60%); while supporting the linkage necessary to provide shelter and refuge for bird and animals migrating across the community.

The Township argues that these resources are too important to the overall ecology of the Township to allow development to destroy or minimize their effectiveness. The Township argues for specific actions, including:

- (1) An inventory of all waterways, ditches, and riparian zones be established and monitored for flow, maintenance, water quality, and vegetation cover density and health;
- (2) An inventory of all environmental, social, cultural, and historic sites to assist with preliminary planning activities;
- (3) An inventory of existing wood lots by type of trees to help develop tree planting standards and sightline requirements for designated overlay districts;
- (4) An inventory of animal/bird nesting/feeding areas to sustain and protect the migration of same across the community; and,
- (5) The development of an open space preservation plan.

The Plan recognizes the importance of these resources to the natural environment and suggests that the documentation and incorporation of these resources in greenway or corridor planning activities. Such planning activities could provide the necessary personal human interaction to support the future diversity of the community's plant/wildlife communities. It is with the same logic that the Township supports developing such corridors in order to provide both recreational and transportation opportunities that will positively influence economic and community development. The Plan suggests that such a component will support and augment landscaping, buffering, and sightline corridor requirements identified earlier.

#### **7.4.6 Quality of Life**

Many communities claim their residents enjoy a high quality of life (QOL), while failing to really understand the term or the appropriate measures of the concept. It's not surprising given that the term means different things to different people under different circumstances. Some argue that QOL is a construct that connotes an "overall sense of well-being" when applied to an individual, while the same term refers to a "supportive environment" when applied to a community. Most however agree that in the realm of community development QOL refers to those aspects of the economic, social and physical environment that make a community a desirable place in which to live or do business.

*The Plan recognizes the concept of QOL rankings from the perspective of providing baseline measures for monitoring and quantifying aspects and progress achieving the Plan's goals and objectives.*

TABLE 7-11 GOAL: RICHLAND TOWNSHIP WILL SUPPLY SAFE, SUSTAINABLE & ACCESSIBLE HOUSING									
POLICY	STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE BY YEAR					COORDINATING AGENCY(IES)	
			1	2	3	4	5		
Support the quality of life (QOL) in existing residential neighborhoods by developing an understanding of QOL issues by neighborhood.	Identify where housing conditions/ values are declining or unstable and develop an appropriate response to improve environment.	Identify and inventory existing code violations.						Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees	
		Identify and inventory existing safety concerns including traffic, drainage, utilities, lighting, etc.						Allen County Engineer's Office, Allen Water District, Beaverdam, Bluffton Water and Sewer Department, Allen County Health Department, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
	Support and develop the necessary resources to stabilize the community's older housing stock.	Identify existing market forces.						Local Banks, Board of Realtors, Fair Housing Advisory Board, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Identify available resources to support revitalization efforts.						Local Banks, Board of Realtors, Fair Housing Advisory Board, Board of Allen County Commissioners, Allen County Building Department, Allen Metropolitan Housing Authority, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
	Adapt an Exterior Maintenance Code & Inspection Program applicable to all properties.	Adopt the Building Officials and Code Administrators (BOCA) Property Maintenance Code.						Board of Allen County Commissioners, Allen County Building Department, Allen Metropolitan Housing Authority, Allen County Trustees & Clerks Association, Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees	
Enhance the appeal and vibrancy of existing housing space.	Encourage/support neighborhood programs, events and service projects that foster neighborhood pride.	Publicly recognize individuals and organizations who make a difference.						Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees	
		Publicly recognize individuals for voluntarism within the community.						Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees	
		Support clean-up days, spring flower planting, festivals/parties and holiday lighting programs.						Township Zoning Commission and Township Trustees	
Encourage a wide variety of housing types and/or styles within any proposed housing development.	Review zoning and subdivision regulations for impediments to affordable housing.	Remove impediments which artificially inflate housing costs without furthering the public's general health, safety and welfare.						Regional Planning Commission, Fair Housing Advisory Board, Allen County Engineer, Allen Metropolitan Housing Authority, and Township Zoning Commission	
Provide sound housing (re)construction of all residential housing stock.	Institute an accepted code for all housing (re)construction.	Adopt the Ohio Building Officials Association (OBOA) 1, 2 & 3 Family Dwelling Code for all residential construction.						Board of Allen County Commissioners, Allen County Building Department, Allen Metropolitan Housing Authority, Township Zoning Commission, Allen County Trustees & Clerks Association and Township Trustees	
Encourage a mix of residential and compatible services within proposed developments.	Support a Land Use Plan which reflects medium to high-density residential development opportunities only within areas able to be supported within utility service areas.	Promote residential development of medium to high density in proximity to major centers of employment/recreational activities.						Allen Water District, Beaverdam, Bluffton Water and Sewer Department, Regional Planning Commission, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
	Promote mixed use Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) as supported by market studies.	Review zoning regulations in order to better meet the variety of uses, architectural designs and special needs of the entire community.						Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Prosecutor, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Review subdivision and zoning regulations for impediments to PUD's.						Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Prosecutor, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
	Encourage clustered residential development.	Protect environmentally, culturally or topographically sensitive areas.						Regional Planning Commission, Allen County Engineer, Allen County Health Department, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
Encourage the provision of housing to meet the needs of elderly residents and those with disabilities.	Establish an advisory board of special needs advocates to address and quantify the housing needs of special populations.	Identify, support and/or develop the appropriate services/programming necessary to sustain residents in their own homes.						Allen County Council on Aging, Easter Seals, Fair Housing Advisory Board, County CDBG Manager, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
		Remove impediments to housing choice.						Fair Housing Advisory Board, County CDBG Manager, Township Zoning Commission, and Township Trustees	
	Support Fair Housing legislation.	Identify and target fair housing violations.						Fair Housing Office and Township Trustees	

Today, within the realm of economic development and the energies exerted over the recruitment of employers/employees, new residents and economic growth, QOL is used as a marketing tool emphasizing the advantages of a particular location over another in terms of specific rankings or measures of community attributes. While cognizant of the community's assets and incorporating the shared values and vision for the community, the Plan recognizes and embraces the concept of QOL rankings from the perspective of providing baseline measures for monitoring and quantifying aspects and progress in terms of achieving the Plan's goals and objectives.

The Plan recognizes that assessing QOL in a community can be subjective based on the methods and measures used. Research however has indicated that certain dimensions of QOL can be measured using indicators related to determinants of health and community well-being. Especially important in the community development process are those dimensions of QOL that include the perceptions of residents about aspects of their neighborhoods and community that either enhance or diminish their QOL. From this perspective, the Plan could use annual QOL indicators to track community growth and community concerns within Richland Township based on the criteria that Richland Township identifies as important.

Indicators of QOL should focus on aspects of: public safety and welfare, jobs and economic vitality, and health and education. For example, to assess economic vitality, the Township could use employment by industry, weekly wage by industry, and unemployment rates to assess change over time. Specific objectives identified elsewhere in the Action Plan could then be coordinated with these measures to provide an annualized quantitative assessment from which future actions could be taken.

When examining public safety and welfare, efforts should focus on crime by type and location, as well as vehicle crashes by location, age, and contributing factors. The community's perception of crime, including the location, nature of calls for service requiring the response of Fire and/or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel, and response times should also be assessed to gauge coverage disparities across the community.

Health and education issues are critical to supporting family values in the community. Efforts to improve communications between the Allen County Health Department and the Allen County Safe Community Coalition, should be explored and expanded to include Township representatives. Health issues should examine and identify teen pregnancy issues, pre-natal health care, communicable diseases, accessibility to health care, and leading causes of death to measure community health concerns. Educational measures might rely upon high school drop out rates, standardized test scores, funding levels per student, teacher to student ratios, class availability, the availability of extracurricular activities, student participation rates and safety in schools to assess progress or needed improvements.



## **SECTION 8**

### **PLANNING PROCESS, SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS**

This Plan has been developed to help provide the foresight and guidance necessary to preserve and enhance the community's existing quality of life. The Plan strives to balance shared community values with the need for, and implications stemming from, population growth and rural development. This Plan recognizes the consequences of unplanned growth and carefully considered the environmental implications of such growth on water quality, wildlife, and available farmland. The Plan calls for increased coordination between development and utility service areas, transportation infrastructure, and open space. The Plan examines the costs of development and mandates that any negative consequences associated with such development be addressed prior to any further development. The Plan also calls for increased coordination between the Township and the various other local, State, and County agencies charged with regulatory oversight in the areas of transportation, utilities, parks, and education. The Plan should be considered pro-growth. It is offered as a vision for the future based on existing opportunities and current challenges within the community. The Plan's intent is to provide the insight and direction required to fulfill the collective dreams of those daring to do so.

#### **8.1 The Planning Process**

The need for the initial Plan grew in part out of frustration felt by local Township officials who realized that too much of the development that was occurring within the community was done without much foresight. Development was occurring haphazardly without supervision and often times resulted in mounting tensions between neighbors. Moreover, Township officials recognized that development was occurring with the assistance of County, state, and regional governments, but without the insight or support of the Township. Township officials recognized that local input and local control required a comprehensive examination of the various factors impacting development within the community.

Over the spring of 2017, the Township Trustees, its administrative staff, along with representatives of the Township Zoning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals, met as an Advisory Committee to discuss an update of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. The original Plan, completed in May of 2007, took months to complete and was thought to be an exhaustive exercise. The original document established the goals and concerns of the community through several meetings and surveys completed by the Advisory Committee. The adoption process was supported by several meetings over the course of 6 months.

In 2017, after 10 years in which the Township experienced the great recession and a housing crisis, local officials decided to revisit, update, and reassess the 2007 Plan. A Planning Advisory Committee reconvened on a monthly bases during the initial states of the planning process to identity and assess specific areas of concern including population growth, the housing stock, transportation issues, infrastructure needs and employment opportunities. The Committee undertook an inventory of businesses and identified blighting influences across the community. After revisiting the Plan vision and mission statement, the Plan Advisory Committee established goals and objectives based on preference. This 2017 Plan follows the same structure as the 2007 Plan, but with updated information.

The Plan is relatively succinct, comprised of separate and distinct sections that address specific issues, areas or functions important to the future of the community. Although mutually supportive of the entire Plan, each section of the report is independent. Goals were identified by the advisory committee and refined during the visioning process. The

policies, strategies, and objectives were identified over the course of the planning process. Policies are the fundamental assertions targeting fulfillment of the goal. Strategies were developed as a systematic approach to be taken to support a particular policy and/or stated goal. Objectives were specific tasks to realize strategic points or policy items.

## 8.2 Plan Summary & Recommendations

This section attempts to address the issues raised in earlier sections with summary recommendations. Section 7 of this report includes a matrix that identifies goal driven specifics on policies, strategies, and objectives particularly important to the identified goals in a timeline format that provides strategic benchmarks for measuring future success. The policies, strategies, and objectives included in the matrix were identified over the course of the planning process. The respective highlights of the planning process and summary recommendations for the various components are presented below.

### 8.2.1 Population

The Plan recognizes that Richland Township will continue moderate population growth over the next 25 years. Consistent with the national trend, the Township's population is aging; the median age is 46.5 years, 8.2 years older than the State as a whole. Data suggests that simply due to age of the population, more than a third of the population is not able to fully contribute to the economic growth and earning power of the community. Age of residents will also impact the need for service, including education, fire, and emergency medical service. In addition, age will necessarily be a factor in housing consumption and design. Local policies should be developed to increase opportunity, choice, and costs in housing based on both physical and financial considerations. Local policies must also acknowledge that growth is largely reflective of and dependent upon those

*Local policies must acknowledge that growth is largely reflective of and dependent upon those in the 25-34 age cohort. This cohort will make residential decisions based upon quality schools, ready access to parks and other recreational activities.*

in the 25-34 age cohort. This cohort is very mobile and will often make residential decisions based upon available amenities. Quality schools, ready access to parks and other recreational activities, and entertainment facilities are critical to attracting this population. Local decision makers must recognize and prioritize land use decisions and capital expenditures based on such information.

Many factors affect employment rates among adults. None, however, may be as important as educational attainment levels. Data shows that there are 111 individuals or 9.3 percent of all individuals 25 years of age or older that have not completed a high school education residing in Richland Township. Of note, 329 adult residents (27.5%) have completed a 4-year college degree and/or masters program. This is an important factor in community development. Local officials must continue their support for local schools and tout its accomplishments. Local officials should also recognize the educational attainment levels of its residents in business attraction/retention activities.

### 8.2.2 Housing

This Plan acknowledges the historical consequences of land consumption, household size, and suburbanization. The Plan identifies the population dynamics impacting the community and attempts to satisfy the appetite for housing consumption based on a realization of changing household size and an aging population. The Township commits to more

*The Plan supports legislative changes to existing land use controls and building codes to support housing as structurally sound and housing as a financially secure investment.*

integrated, sustainable housing development; housing that will meet the needs of a diverse community, a community of all ages and incomes. The Plan supports legislative changes to existing land use controls and building codes to support housing as structurally sound and housing as a financially secure investment. The Plan supports legislative changes to existing zoning codes and recommends adoption of exterior maintenance code. The Plan also advances the integration of themed architecture styles in new medium density developments that provide direct access to open space and recreational facilities in order to minimize encroachment into prime farmland when utilities can support such density. The Plan recognizes mixed-use developments as desirable and suggests regulatory changes may be necessary to support same. The Plan suggests market studies be prepared and submitted to support new residential development. Based on current population estimates, the Township will need an additional 211 residential units that will need to reflect smaller footprints with less maintenance and energy requirements. The Township commits to more integrated, sustainable housing that will meet the needs of a diverse community, a community of all ages and physical capabilities.

### **8.2.3 Land Use**

The Plan recognizes the relationship between residential housing and employment locations on commuting patterns and supports the integration of mixed-use developments to minimize commuting time and congestion. Housing, as a basic need of the community, is estimated to consume an additional 520 acres of the community's agricultural base if the historical pattern of residential development is continued. The Plan supports the adoption of more sustainable development patterns in terms of increased density and integrated land use in order to preserve working farms and Richland Township's agricultural heritage.

In an attempt to satisfy the economic growth of the community, the Plan identifies specific areas for light industrial, commercial/services, and warehousing activities. The Plan recognizes existing land use patterns and identifies specific corridors. The combination of housing, commercial, industrial, recreational, and quasi-public uses would consume 12.9 percent of all land in Richland Township.

Such estimates are predicated upon the community's stated interest of protecting its remaining rural character and increasing the residential density allotments per acre. The Plan acknowledges farmland preservation as a primary tenant and adopted a LESA methodology to (a) quantitatively evaluate and regulate land use change over time; and, (b) establish PADs outside of the defined utility service areas. The Plan is intended to preserve the agricultural industry base and rural characteristics of the community while providing the area and infrastructure necessary for further community development.

### **8.2.4 Transportation**

Increased development will result in increased traffic. The Plan identifies specific corridors as important to the community's future development and calls for increased capacity and aesthetic upgrades. The community advances specific projects to improve north/south traffic flow and improve safety in order to adequately address ever-increasing traffic, especially the growing presence of truck traffic. The Plan mandates a transportation system that operates at a satisfactory LOS and a transportation system that is efficient, predicated upon safety and access.

*The Plan identifies specific corridors as important to the community's future development and calls for increased capacity and aesthetic upgrades.*

More specifically, the Plan calls for the standardization of roadway widths and the integration of sidewalks/trails in all commercial and residential projects. The Plan specifically recognizes the Napoleon Road, Lincoln Highway, Phillips Road, and Hillville Road as major entryways into the community and calls for not only improved signal coordination and access management, but increased attention paid to enhancements, including appropriate overhead lighting, landscaping, signage, and maintenance of primary gateways into Richland Township as aesthetically pleasing.

Noting various roadway pavement widths as deficient to their compliance with Federal Highway design standards, necessary improvements are estimated \$1.1 million for necessary improvements. The plan recognizes 38 bridges in Richland Township with only 1 currently identified as deficient. Bridge repair was estimated at \$1.7 million. The Plan recommends that a pavement management system be integrated within normal roadway maintenance operations to improve capital improvement program planning and budgetary requirements. The Plan identified no high crash intersection locations along county or township roadways, nor were any intersections projected to become deficient due to volume. Costs of proposed bicycle paths in Richland Township are estimated at \$2.3 million.

The Plan recognizes increased pressures spurred by existing and future demands for improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The report recommends Richland Township identify and implement additional funding for roadway improvements and maintenance.

#### **8.2.5 Water & Wastewater Distribution Systems**

Examining potable water, Richland Township relies primarily on private wells. Utility extension from the Village of Bluffton has historically resulted in annexation. The Plan challenges utility services to avoid unnecessary extensions into agricultural areas.

Wastewater system facilities are provided by the Village of Beaverdam at targeted locations. Improvements to the sanitary sewer systems have been made incrementally. Most often, such improvements have been prompted by an expansion, or proposed expansion of the service area for new development. Topography, both natural and man-made have imposed limits to the expansion of sewer services in Richland Township. Human activities not serviced by the municipal sewer need to utilize private septic systems as approved by the Allen County Health Department.

The Plan recognizes further developments and mandates of the OEPA. The Plan also recognizes the development of agricultural districts and the existing minimum lot size of 2.5 acres in rural residential districts.

#### **8.2.6 Environmental Conservation**

The OEPA has designated the Allen County and Richland community in attainment with respect to both air quality and water quality. These designations were considered during the development of this Plan in order to sustain the status of full attainment. The Plan identifies existing and future areas of low and medium density residential development coupled with commercial and industrial uses. The Plan also identifies such uses and their proximity to endangered riverine environments and natural areas. These may include rivers, wetlands, floodplains, mature tree stands, and parks.



The Plan promotes the protection and integration of environmentally sensitive areas within quality, high value added developments and/or public control through acquisition to protect access for future generations. More specifically, the Plan identifies the inclusion of: (a) mandated riverine buffers to be established to improve water quality; (b) landscaped buffers around commercial and industrial sites to ensure pleasant sight lines, containment of site generated litter and minimal night glaze; and, (c) mixed-use developments and integrated land uses.

*The Plan promotes the protection and integration of environmentally sensitive areas within quality, high value added developments and/or public control through acquisition to protect access for future generations.*

# **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX I  
PLAN REFERENCE MATERIALS**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Plan Section</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Author/Publisher</b>	<b>Description</b>
2010 United States Census	Population Characteristics	Census Tabulation	2010	U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census	Statistical summations of local populations.
2011-2015 American Community Survey	Population Characteristics	Census Tabulation	2015	U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census	Statistical summations of local populations.
2012 Census of Agriculture	Economic Overview: Employment	Agricultural Census	2012	U.S. Department of Agriculture	Statistical summations of agricultural/rural activity for farms, products and operations.
2015 American Community Survey	Population Characteristics	Census Tabulation	2015	U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census	Statistical summations of local populations.
2022 Ohio Job Outlook Employment Projections	Economic Overview: Employment	Economic Profile	2012	Ohio Department of Job & Family Services	Employment projections and analysis for labor sectors in Ohio through year 2022.
2040 Long Range Fiscally Constrained Transportation Plan	Infrastructure & Services: Transportation	Transportation Plan	2013	Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission	Includes land use, population, socioeconomic trends, existing transportation characteristics, alternatives to alleviate deficiencies and financial plan to address future demands in Allen County.
Access Ohio 2040: Statewide Transportation Plan	Infrastructure & Services: Transportation	Transportation Plan	2014	ODOT Division of Planning, Office of Statewide Planning & Research	Includes goals and objectives, demographics, economics, travel patterns, transportation network, rail system, air system, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, water ports and inter-modal connectors, transportation system security, and financial plan.
Air Quality Statistics Report - Allen County	Environmental Factors: Air Quality	Air Quality	2016	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency	An assessment of Allen County Air Quality in 2007. The report provides detailed Air Toxic Testing Results pursuant to new 8-hour NAAQS.
Allen County Access Management Plan	Infrastructure & Services: Transportation	Access Management Plan	2005	HDR Engineering, Inc.	Prepared for Allen County Engineer. Includes purpose for access management, examples, administration issues, design standards, and traffic impact study requirements.
Allen County Community Housing Improvement Strategy	Infrastructure & Services: Housing	Housing Study	2010	Rural Community Assistance Action Program	Includes demographics, housing needs, and housing issues.
Allen County Comprehensive Water Master Plan	Infrastructure & Services: Water Systems	Water System Report	2000	URS Greiner Woodward Clyde	Includes county current and projected populations, water demands and quality, water supply, alternative systems, recommendations, and financing.
Allen County Crash Summary Report 2015	Infrastructure & Services: Transportation	Traffic and Safety	2015	Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission	Statistical compilation designed to be used for crash trend analyses.
Allen County Stormwater Management Plan	Environmental Factors: Water Quality Issues	Water Quality Action Plan	2011	Allen Soil and Water District	Prepared for Allen County. Identifies USEPA findings on water quality. Non-attainment status of Ottawa River and tributaries. Includes 5-year action plan to mediate degrading practices.

**APPENDIX I  
PLAN REFERENCE MATERIALS  
(Continued)**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Plan Section</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Author/Publisher</b>	<b>Description</b>
Biological and Water Quality Study of the Ottawa River and Principal Tributaries	Environmental Factors: Water Quality Issues	Environmental	2010	State of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency	Water quality attainment status.
County Business Patterns 2016	Economic Overview: Employment	Economic Profile	2016	U.S. Department of Commerce	Publication that provides substantial economic data by industry by NAICS code. Provides total full and part time employment as well as non-employer wages and County trends.
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Allen County, Ohio	Infrastructure & Services: Transportation	Community Development	2015	Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission	Comprehensive social and economic assessment of Allen County.
ES 202 Employment by SIC	Economic Overview: Employment	Economic Profile	2015	Ohio Department of Job & Family Services	Identifies employees, firms by first month, second month, third month, and year average from 2010 and 2015.
Land Evaluation & Site Assessment	Land Use Action Plan	Land Use	2008	U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service	Methodological tool to assess agricultural productivity and land use classifications.
Ohio 2016 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report	Environmental Factors: Water Quality Issues	Environmental	2016	State of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Division of Surface Water	Water quality attainment status.
Ohio Department of Development County Population Projections 2010-2040	Population Characteristics	Population Study	2013	Ohio Development Services Agency	Statistical summation of projected populations by political subdivision.
Ohio County Profile	Economic Overview: Employment	Economic Strategy	2013	Ohio Development Services Agency	Bi-annual publication that provides County level economic social and vital statistic data.
Soil Survey of Allen County Ohio - Interim Report	Site & Situation	Soils	2002	United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services	Data relative to the physiographic relief, drainage, mineral content and glacial morphology of area soils.
Solid Waste Management Plan Update, 2017-2031 Revised draft Plan	Environmental Factors: Solid Waste	Solid Waste Study	2016	G.T. Environmental, Inc.	Prepared for North Central Ohio Solid Waste District. Includes inventories, generation and reduction, projections and strategies, and methods of solid waste management.
State Highway Access Management Manual	Infrastructure & Services: Transportation	Access Management Plan	2001	Ohio Department of Transportation Access Management Committee	State procedures and design standards to protect the utility, function, capacity, and safety of the state highway system.



**APPENDIX I  
PLAN REFERENCE MATERIALS  
(Continued)**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Plan Section</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Author/Publisher</b>	<b>Description</b>
Strategies for Defining Ohio' Economic Development Agenda	Economic Overview: Tax Base	Economic Strategy	2002	The Center for Public Management	Prepared for The Ohio and Metro Chambers of Commerce. Includes development strategy, tax structure, education, workforce, implementation, infrastructure investments, policy options, and case study analysis.
Subdivision Regulations for Allen County, Ohio	Action Plan: Land Use	Regulatory Controls	2013	Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission	Subdivision Regulations adopted pursuant to Section 711 of the Ohio Revised Code.
The Future of Manufacturing: Building the Future through Agility and Innovation	Economic Action Plan	Economic Strategy	2015	Future IQ	Analysis of key technological trends that are impacting the global manufacturing sector.
Transportation Improvement Program FY 2016-2019	Infrastructure & Services: Transportation	Transportation Plan	2015	Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission	Comprehensive transportation project compilation for Allen County.
Total Max Daily Loads for the Upper Auglaize River Watershed	Environmental Factors: Water Quality Issues	Environmental	2004	State of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency	Water quality attainment status.
Vital Statistics: County In, Out, Net, and Gross Migration Totals: 1980-1981 to 2008-2009	Population Migration Characteristics	Population Summary Report	2010	Ohio Department of Development	Components of population change. Migration overview.
Zoning Resolution: Richland Township Allen County, Ohio	Action Plan: Land Use	Regulatory Controls	2015	Richland Township	Township Zoning adopted pursuant to Section 511 of the Ohio Revised Code.

**RESOLUTION:**  
**RICHLAND TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION**  
**ADOPTION OF THE RICHLAND TOWNSHIP 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Richland Township Zoning Commission has the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to Section 519.02 of the Ohio Revised Code; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Zoning Commission undertook the preparation of a comprehensive plan to accurately inventory the community's current land use and economic conditions, and assess such conditions against a shared community vision as well as specific initiatives to help achieve such a vision; and,

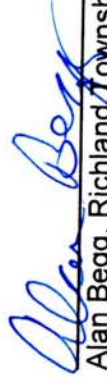
WHEREAS, the Township desired to be proactive in dealing with regional issues and protecting its resources, and planning for community and/or service needs; and,

WHEREAS, the Township undertook a comprehensive assessment of historic and existing conditions within the Township, developed potential options to address such conditions and identified goals, objectives and implementation strategies and presented such materials for public discourse; and,

WHEREAS, the Richland Township 2040 Comprehensive Plan will provide guidance to decision makers, residents, property owners and organizations relevant to the subject matters of: Community Appearance; Environmental Resources; Residential, Parks and Recreation; Community Services and Facilities; Transportation; and, Future Development/Redevelopment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township's Zoning Commission hereby adopts the Richland Township 2040 Comprehensive Plan as an important planning tool which identifies a wide range of issues, initiatives, projects and programs which can be undertaken by various entities over both short and long-term of the Plan.

ADOPTED THIS 10 DAY OF APRIL 2019

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Alan Begg, Richland Township Zoning Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Bixel, Richland Township Zoning Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Gleason, Richland Township Zoning Commission

   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Laing, Richland Township Zoning Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Doug Rosenbauer, Richland Township Zoning Commission

**RESOLUTION:**  
**RICHLAND TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES**  
**ADOPTION OF THE RICHLAND TOWNSHIP 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Richland Township has the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to Section 519.02 of the Ohio Revised Code; and,

WHEREAS, the Township undertook the preparation of a comprehensive plan to accurately inventory the community's current land use and economic conditions, and assess such conditions against a shared community vision as well as specific initiatives to help achieve such a vision; and,

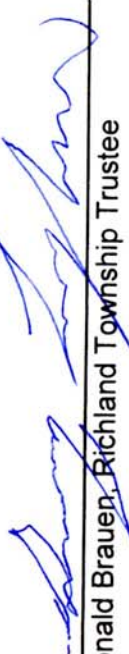
WHEREAS, the Township desired to be proactive in dealing with regional issues and protecting its resources, and planning for community and/or service needs; and,

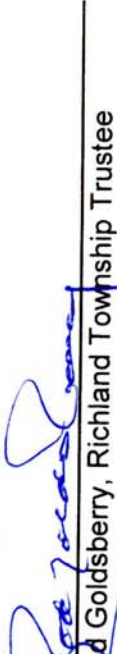
WHEREAS, the Township undertook a comprehensive assessment of historic and existing conditions within the Township, developed potential options to address such conditions and identified goals, objectives and implementation strategies and presented such materials for public discourse; and,

WHEREAS, the Richland Township 2040 Comprehensive Plan will provide guidance to decision makers, residents, property owners and organizations relevant to the subject matters of: Community Appearance; Environmental Resources; Residential, Parks and Recreation; Community Services and Facilities; Transportation; and, Future Development/Redevelopment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township's Board of Trustees hereby adopts the Richland Township 2040 Comprehensive Plan as an important planning tool which identifies a wide range of issues, initiatives, projects and programs which can be undertaken by various entities over both short and long-term of the Plan.

ADOPTED THIS 14<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MAY 2019

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Donald Brauen, Richland Township Trustee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rod Goldsberry, Richland Township Trustee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Lugibihl, Richland Township Trustee