

2024



Sugarcreek
OHIO 

SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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Introduction

Every community is dynamic in nature, whether experiencing a decline in population or facing ever-expanding residential neighborhoods and business centers. Sugarcreek Township is no different. Numerous influences are occurring in and around the township that have changed the community over the past and will continue to create forces that must be addressed. In order to plan for the future and to address the impacts of growth as they occur, Sugarcreek Township continues to regularly update the Sugarcreek Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update to ensure that the township has a current plan with relevant land use, transportation, and public facility elements and recommendations.



The 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update process determined that the core elements and goals of the past planning efforts, which were developed through an extensive planning effort, remain fundamentally intact. This includes a continued goal of providing for and encouraging the development of conservation subdivisions, which allow the same densities as a typical subdivision but where 50 percent or more of the site is preserved as open space. In particular, the township wants to strongly encourage conservation subdivisions in northern areas of the township where sufficient water and sewer services are available and where there is significant pressure to develop large-scale housing developments.

In 2001, the township adopted the original comprehensive development plan with several overarching goals based on significant public input. These goals, outlined below, continue today and remain the basis behind the 2024 Sugarcreek Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Sugarcreek Township envisions a future where the goals include:

- Retaining the rural character of the township;
- Managing the pace and quality of future development following all the other goals of this plan;
- Continuing to consider the accommodation of a broader range of housing options in areas of the township near municipal boundaries or currently served by existing infrastructure;
- Protecting key assets within the township;
- Retaining viable agriculture;
- Providing viable strategies for the preservation of open space;
- Managing transportation demands and conflicts;
- Providing criteria and guidance for future infrastructure and public facility development;
- Providing for the protection of important environmental and natural resources;
- Planning for recreational areas; and
- Protecting the geographic boundaries of Sugarcreek Township.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

In the process of updating the plan in 2013 and again in 2024, the following update-specific goals were incorporated:

- Review the fundamental goals of the original 2001 Sugarcreek Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan to verify continued relevance given economic conditions at the time of the update;
- Update the Planning Trends and Land Development Capacity Analysis to ensure their continued applicability and
- Asses the plan’s progress in staving off annexations of township lands to adjacent municipalities and identify any continuing threats.

With this update, the plan will continue to serve as a guide for the public and the decision-making bodies of Sugarcreek Township.

The fundamental concepts embodied in this plan are threefold. First, as development occurs in the coming 20 years, the inherently attractive rural character of the township should be retained and protected. Second, the township’s zoning regulations should ensure that there are options for more diverse housing choices to promote housing diversity and affordability that accommodate the needs of all of the township’s population groups. Third, development should be arranged to minimize the costs associated with the delivery of public services and capital investment in infrastructure, thereby protecting the taxpayer's interest and the township's fiscal health



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

History of Planning in Sugarcreek Township

In 1954, Sugarcreek Township assumed the responsibility for administering its own planning and zoning functions as provided in the ORC. The township trustees appointed a township zoning commission, and the first township zoning resolution was adopted.

In 1974, a Sugarcreek Township Comprehensive Plan was completed by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission. This plan addressed both the township and the City of Bellbrook. In that same year, the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Township Park District was established. Since its establishment, the park district has acquired and developed 17 parks to date. These parks are in addition to those parks developed by Greene County. In 2012, voters approved a bond issue for purchasing up to 260 acres of land in Sugarcreek Township by the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Township Park District to be permanently preserved as passive parkland. In 2013, the park district took ownership of 247.5 acres of property just east of I-675, bounded by Feedwire Road on the south and Swigart Road on the north known as Sweet Arrow Reserve. The park district has continued its expansion of parkland in the community, with the purchase and development of Morris Reserve at the corner of Washington Mill and SR 725 in 2016.

In 1978, the Greene County Regional Planning and Coordinating Commission prepared and adopted Perspectives: Future Land Use Plan for Greene County. Over the years, this plan was amended to incorporate plans by reference that have been prepared and adopted by other jurisdictions in the county, including the most recent update in 2023.

In 2000, the Greene County Regional Planning Coordinating Commission adopted the Greene County Farmland Preservation Plan. The plan evaluates and identifies those areas of the county prime for preservation based on soils, lack of urban infrastructure, and unique natural resources. The plan identifies most of the southern portion of Sugarcreek Township as an area that should be preserved through several implementation strategies, including agricultural districts, conservation easements, and clustered development.

In 2001, Sugarcreek Township prepared and adopted the Sugarcreek Township Comprehensive Development Plan, addressing development throughout the township, and identified 13 distinct planning areas with individual planning policies. In conjunction with this plan, the township also undertook a major update of its zoning resolution to modernize the regulations and bring it in compliance with the new comprehensive land use plan.

In 2002, Greene County adopted an update to its land use plan. The update identifies twelve Planning Partnership Areas (PPA), including the Sugarcreek Township/City of Bellbrook PPA. These PPAs were established to promote cooperative planning between local communities and the county while allowing for a more individualized planning approach. The plan highlighted the critical need to protect the natural resources of Sugarcreek Township. It discouraged the expansion of infrastructure in the southern portion of the township to minimize new development in the rural areas.

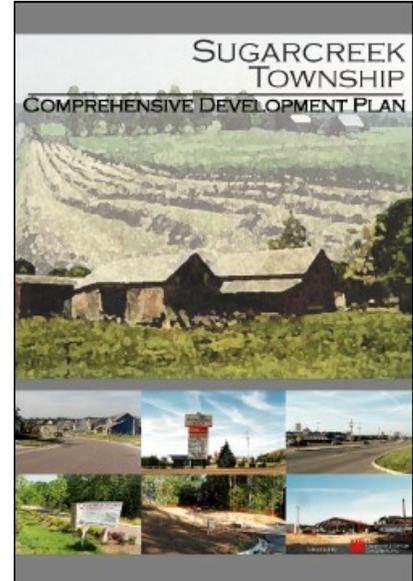
In 2005, a ballot initiative was introduced to prepare a study evaluating the potential merger of Sugarcreek Township and the City of Bellbrook. The ballot initiative was narrowly defeated by 22 votes, so the cost/benefit study for the merger was not undertaken.

In 2007, Sugarcreek Township updated the Sugarcreek Township Comprehensive Development Plan, making minor changes to planning area boundaries and incorporating the township's desire to encourage the development of conservation subdivisions, particularly in the northern areas of the township where development pressure is greatest.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

In 2008, another ballot initiative was introduced to prepare a study evaluating the potential merger of Sugarcreek Township and the City of Bellbrook. This ballot initiative was passed by voters in both Bellbrook (64% in favor) and Sugarcreek Township (61% in favor). A Merger Commission was elected, comprised of five citizens from each jurisdiction. After studying the potential merger of the two communities for almost two years, proposed merger conditions were not agreed upon, and a majority of the members of the Commission from the City of Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township voted against the merger of the two communities.

In 2010, the Board of Trustees approved a new Zoning Resolution, incorporating the 2007 Comprehensive Development Plan Update recommendations. Architectural standards were established, increased standards for landscaping and buffering were incorporated, and conservation subdivision districts were created. In 2012, the Trustees approved an amendment to the 2010 Zoning Resolution to promote more unified, quality development and to provide more flexibility within a Planned Multi-Use District.



In 2013, the Board of Trustees approved an updated Sugarcreek Township Comprehensive Plan that refreshed the planning foundation and determined that the goals and planning direction of the previous planning efforts continued to hold true in the township. The plan update process in 2013 was very much focused on the potential of losing portions of Sugarcreek Township to annexation. The annexation of the land that would become the Cornerstone of Centerville development was not far removed from the update process, with future annexations on the horizon. The focus of the 2013 plan update was to provide a strategy to combat the threat of annexation by allowing development to occur on those parcels that could be annexed. That strategy has served the township well over the years since. While we still have several annexation threats, they have been substantially minimized through the implementation of this strategy.

In 2022, the Board of Trustees initiated the process to, once again, gauge whether the goals and direction of the township's plan continue to serve the community. As with the previous effort, the planning foundation and analyses were updated to reflect the most recent data, but the primary goals and recommendations remain the same. This plan update aims to be respectful of properties currently zoned for development, with many parcels being required to follow the planned development process whereby the township can assure quality, well designed development. This plan update also looks positively at tracts of land that are not zoned for development today but most undoubtedly will be some day. These "key" areas are mentioned herein with the vision for innovative and progressive development. This plan update acknowledges that the township has seen many new residential developments since the last update. This plan update, however, does not envision the volume of development experienced since the last plan update in 2013. This update contemplates, with the exception of land zoned for residential development and key parcels, that future development will diminish considerably. The community is cognizant of the financial implications that development places on our infrastructure (roads, schools, and emergency services) and is respectful of the need for limited growth.

In preparing this plan update, Sugarcreek Township recognizes the Greene County Farmland Preservation Plan and the 2023 Greene County Land Use Plan as being consistent with the overall goals of Sugarcreek Township as established in this plan.

Planning Foundation

A key component of any comprehensive planning strategy should be an understanding of how the community has grown and developed into the community it is, which helps answer the question of how the community wants to grow in the future. The workers of tomorrow are in our classrooms today. In the next two decades our land, water, air, infrastructure, and government services must accommodate our upcoming population, especially in the northern boundary areas. Accomplishing this task means evaluating how the township has grown through an inventory of the existing conditions and data trends. This creates a foundation for the township to base decisions on what policies are adequate and what policies should be refined or changed.

Existing Land Use

Assessing how the land is currently being used is an important piece of information that must be evaluated in any land use planning effort. Property information, publicly available aerial photography, and input from staff helped establish an updated existing land use map (See [Map 2.](#)). This map classified property in Sugarcreek Township within the following land use categories:

- **Agricultural or Undeveloped** properties are areas of the township that are maintained as farmland, either for crops or for raising livestock, or are properties that are not currently used for any use listed below. Large residential properties with over ten acres also fall within this category due to the potential for future development.
- **Single-Family Residential (5 to 10 Acres)** are those properties with a single detached dwelling unit located on a single parcel. Maintaining a separate category for single-family residential uses located on various lot sizes (See below.) is important to illustrate residential development patterns across the township.
- **Single-Family Residential (1 to 4.99 Acres)** are those properties with a single detached dwelling unit located on a single parcel with a lot area of at least one acre but less than five acres.
- **Single-Family Residential (Less than 1 Acre)** are those properties with a single detached dwelling located on a single parcel with a lot area of less than one acre.
- **Multi-Family Residential** uses cover areas of the townships where multiple dwelling units are attached to one another and located on a single parcel. This category may include apartment buildings, townhomes, duplexes, two-family homes, and other attached housing, for rent and for sale.
- **Commercial and Office** uses cover those areas of the township where the primary use is the provision of goods and services to the general public in a commercial setting or where there are establishments that provide executive, management, administrative, medical, dental, or professional services in either small or large-scale office buildings.
- **Industrial** uses include the manufacturing and production of goods and/or services with little to no commercial or office use related to the main industrial use.
- **Public and Institutional** uses are properties and structures that provide services related to the general public or institutions. These uses include religious places of worship, schools, government buildings, and other public uses.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

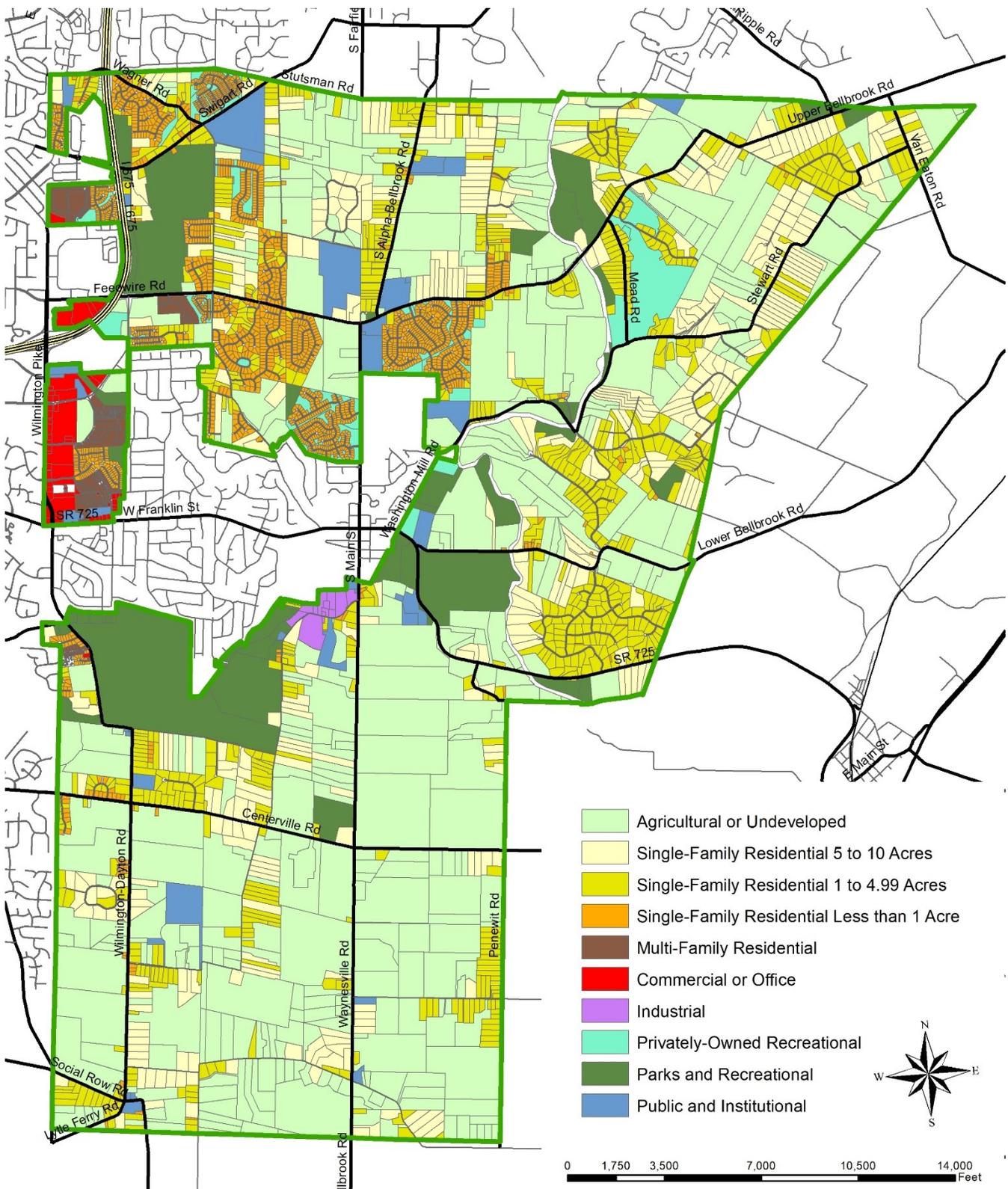
- **Parks and Recreational** uses are properties used for public open space and recreational uses such as playgrounds, ball fields, horse trails, and local or regional park lands. This category also includes land owned by Little Miami Inc. (now known as the Little Miami Conservancy), a non-profit that seeks to acquire properties along the Little Miami River for conservation purposes, as well as the Scenic River Prairie property, owned and managed by the Weller Family Foundation.
- **Privately Owned Recreational** uses are properties used for private recreational uses such as country clubs, golf courses, driving ranges, and sports clubs. This use category also includes dedicated open spaces within residential developments designed for the use of the residents rather than the general public.

[Table A](#) and [Map 2](#) illustrate the 2013 and 2024 land use distribution across the township. A general comparison of existing land use between 2013 and 2024 shows that there has been an increase in residential development, particularly higher-density residential uses (single-family residential on less than an acre and multi-family residential). There has also been an increase in public parks and recreational uses.

Table A: Existing Land Use Distribution by Percentage of Township Area		
Land Use	2013	2024
Agriculture/Undeveloped	54.5%	49.2%
Single-Family Residential (5 - 10 Acres)	16.6%	14.8%
Single-Family Residential (1 - 4.99 Acres)	11.7%	13.8%
Single-Family Residential (Less than 1 Acre)	4.0%	5.4%
Multi-Family Residential	0.2%	0.9%
Commercial and Office	1.0%	1.0%
Industrial	0.4%	0.4%
Public/Institutional	2.8%	2.9%
Parks and Recreational	6.9%	9.5%
Privately Owned Recreational	1.9%	2.1%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan



MAP 2: 2024 SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP EXISTING LAND USE MAP

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Natural Resources

While it appears that a vast majority of the township remains available for future development, there is a considerable amount of the community where natural features such as topography and floodplains constrain future development. These natural resources and the lack of infrastructure have thus far helped minimize the development pressure on the southern and eastern areas of the township. Additionally, the existence of these natural resources is an asset that many residents find desirable. As such, the township's future growth will be greatly influenced by the existence of topography, the Little Miami River, and the river's related floodplains.

Topography

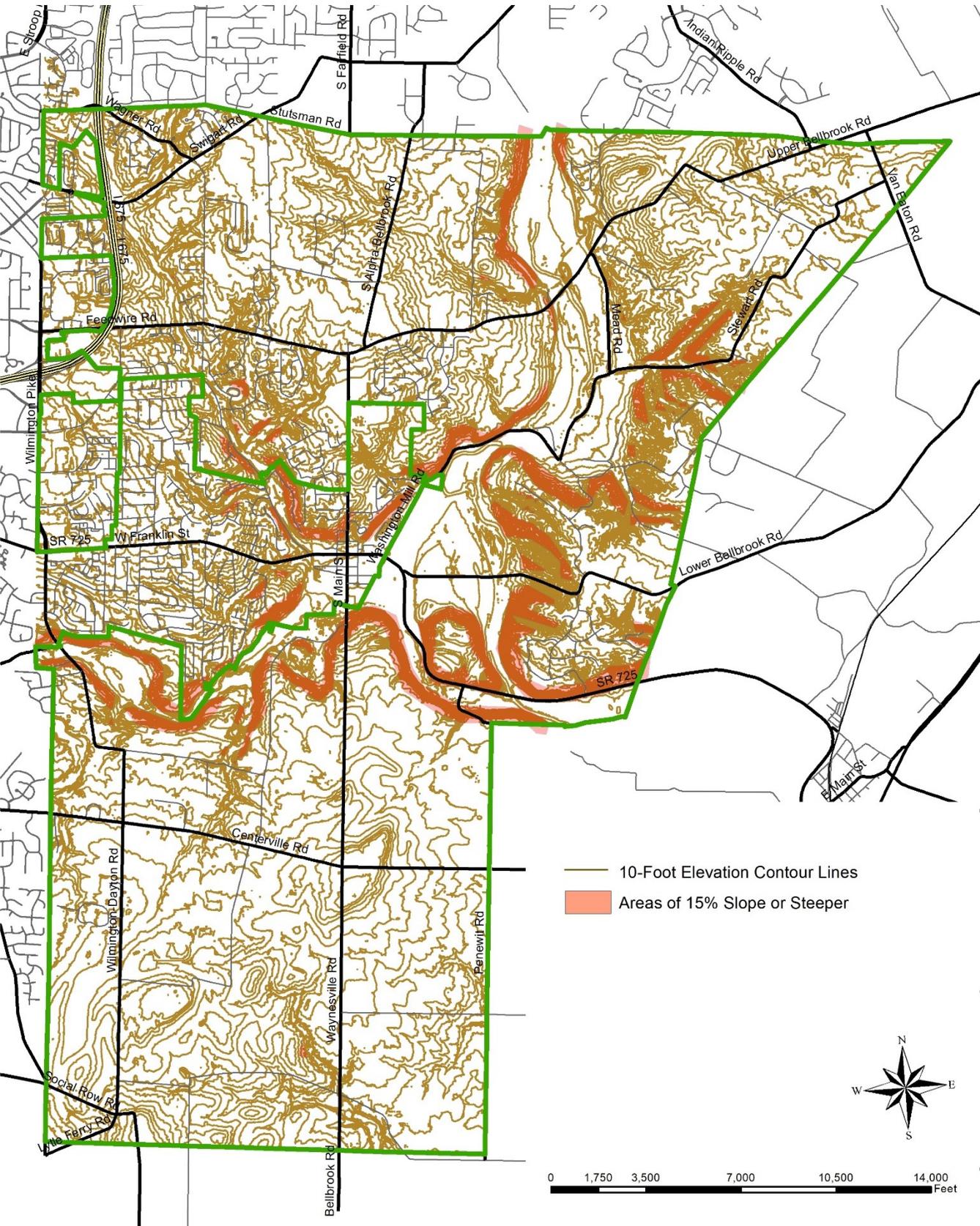
The attractive character of Sugarcreek Township is in large part created by its dramatic and varied landform. [Map 3](#) illustrates the 10-foot contour elevations that create the varied topography within the township. As illustrated in the map, the most prominent topographic features are the valleys of the Little Miami River and its various tributaries, including the township's namesake waterways, the Sugar Creek and Little Sugar Creek. Additionally, in several areas of the township, the topography creates opportunities for long views and vistas over the landscape, which only adds to the unique rural experience of the township. As has been established in past planning efforts, the township has determined that areas with a slope of 15 percent or more should be targeted for preservation given the prevalence of this steep slopes around the Little Miami River, the Sugar Creek, the Little Sugarcreek, and many of the related tributaries. Those areas of 15% slope or more are also illustrated in [Map 3](#).



Soils

Soil types within the Miami Valley and the township have had and will continue to impact the intensity and placement of development significantly. There is a significant presence of prime farmland soils in the township and throughout the county, as well as a presence of hydric (wet) soils. Suitability for on-site wastewater systems is severely limited due to high clay content. Development using septic systems can require significantly larger lots than those that utilize centralized sewer systems. While the Greene County Combined Health District reviews each site and system based on the individual characteristics of the site, a general rule of thumb is that on-site wastewater systems require as much as one and a half to two acres of land. This issue will remain a reality for most of the eastern and southern portions of the township, where the topography makes the extension of sewer systems cost-prohibitive.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan



MAP 3: TEN-FOOT CONTOURS AND STEEP SLOPES

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

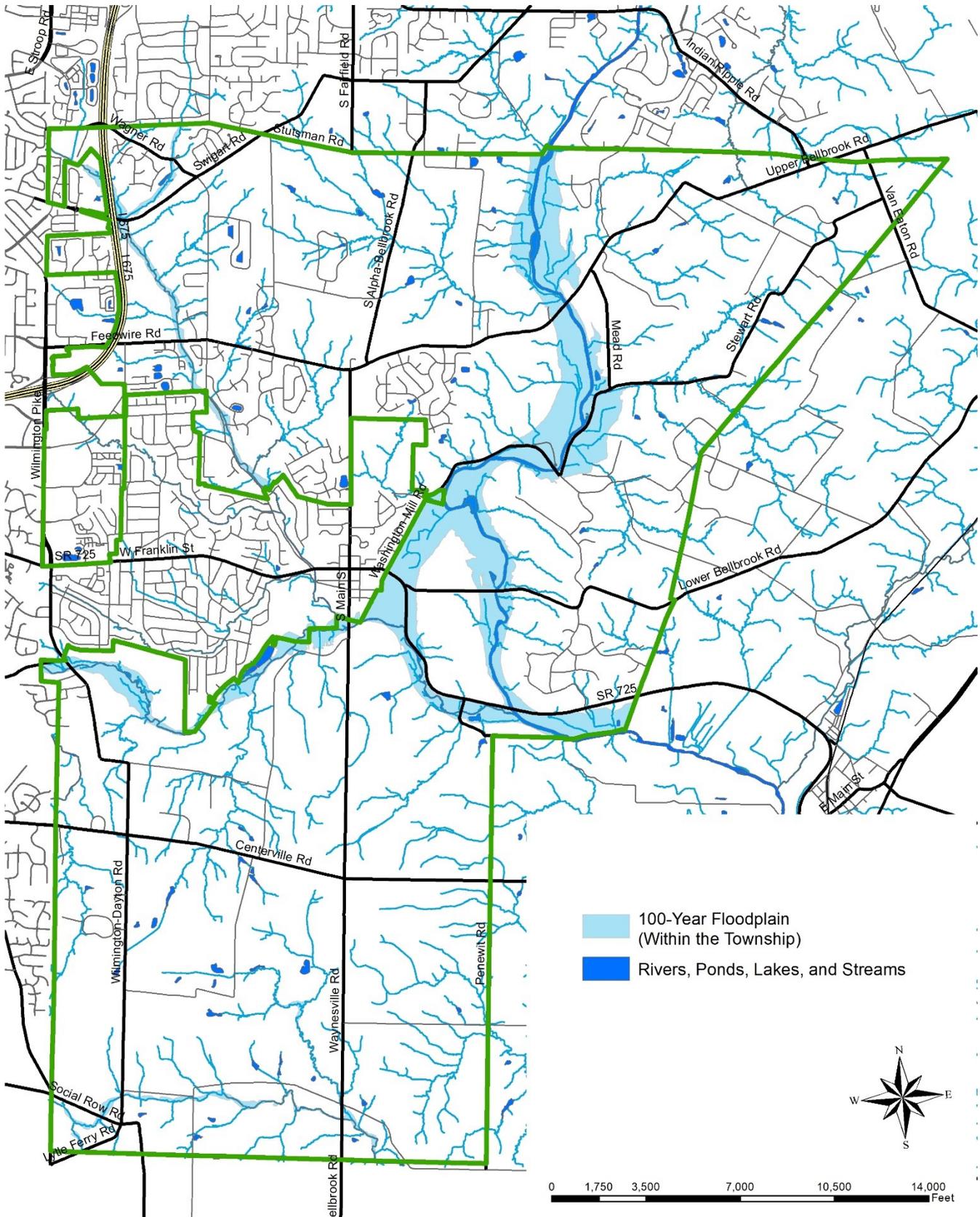
Little Miami National and State Scenic River

The most prominent physical landmark in Sugarcreek Township is the Little Miami River which runs north/south through the township. Designated by the Ohio Scenic River Program as the State's first Scenic River in 1969, it was subsequently recognized as a National Scenic River in 1973. The river corridor is not only special to the state and nation as a scenic river but is a community asset to most Sugarcreek Township residents.

As with most river corridors, the Little Miami River is surrounded on both sides by a significant area of 100-year floodplain. These are areas where there is a one percent chance of flooding on an annual basis. The 100-year floodplain is illustrated in [Map 4](#) along with the Little Miami River, lakes, ponds, and streams. Historically, the Little Miami River has experienced substantial flooding from time to time with major floods occurring in 1959 and again in 1963. For this reason, the county has established building and floodplain regulations that minimize the amount of development that may occur in the floodplain area to protect the safety of residents. When the Sugarcreek Township Zoning Resolution was updated in 2010, the Floodplain and Little Miami River Overlay Districts were removed in response to input from legal counsel. Since their removal, the township redrafted the Little Miami overlay district and initiated an amendment to include the redrafted overlay in the zoning resolution. This amendment was ultimately not adopted. The township continues to work with the Greene County Floodplain Administrator, the authority over floodplain development in the township, to ensure that this sensitive riparian corridor is protected. Given that there is clear value in preserving the natural character of the floodplain area related to the Little Miami River, the township should prioritize the use of low impact development tools.



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan



MAP 4: FLOODPLAINS, RIVERS, PONDS, LAKES, AND STREAMS

Infrastructure

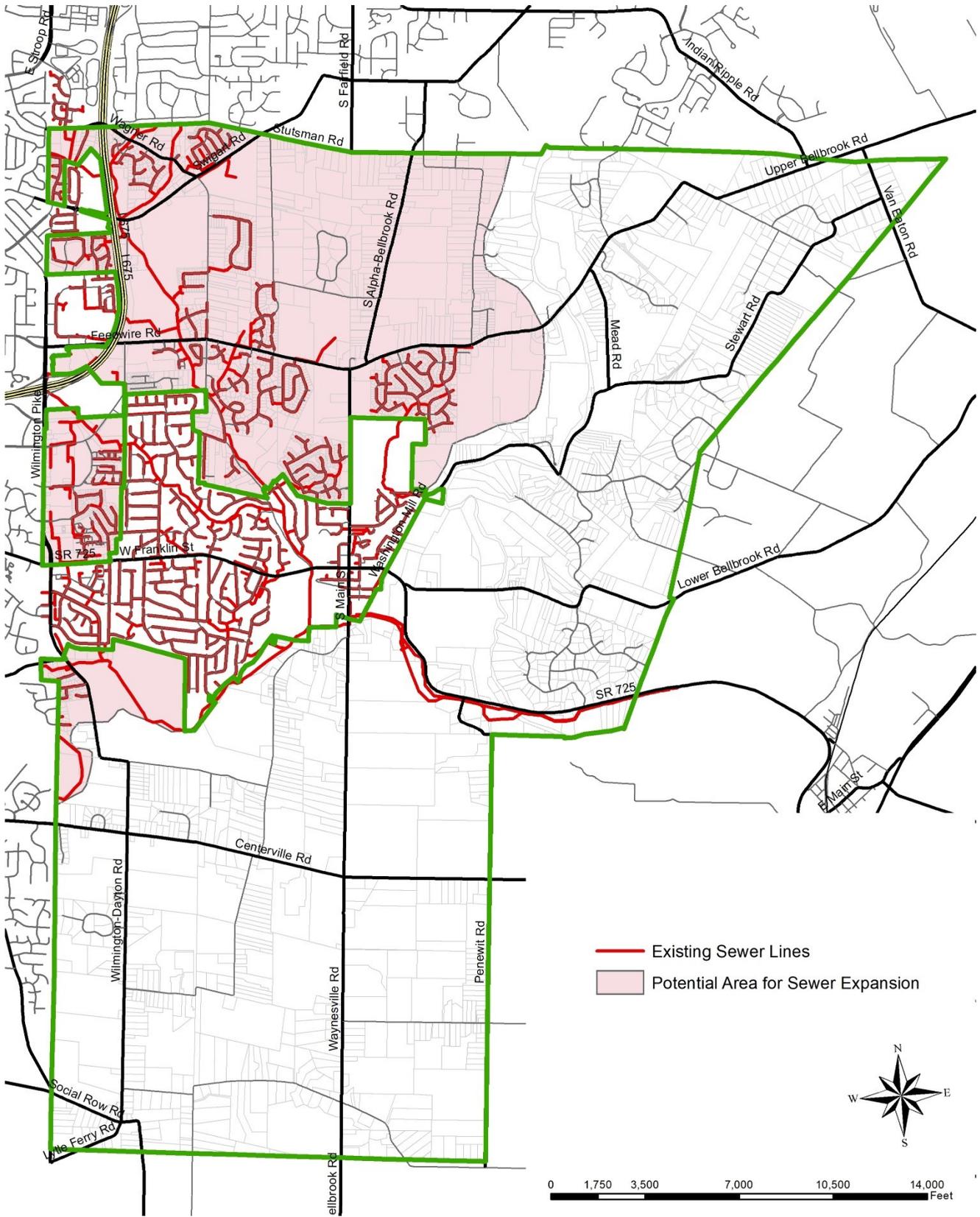
Utilities

While many people believe the interstate highway and roadways are what drive development, the true factor that influences where and how much development may occur are the utilities, and in particular sanitary sewers. It is the extension of the sewer, and to a lesser extent the extension of water lines, that allows increased densities and more intense land uses. Many communities are able to directly influence growth by controlling utilities. For example, many cities will not provide water or sewer service to a property unless it is annexed and falls under the control of the city. For townships, this is an unlikely scenario, as the control of utilities tends to fall under the realm of county or regional agencies. For Sugarcreek Township, the control of the sanitary sewer system, and some of the water system, falls under the jurisdiction of the Greene County Department of Sanitary Engineering. Other agencies, such as the City of Bellbrook and Montgomery County provide water service to the remainder of the township. [Map 5](#) illustrates the locations of existing sewer lines as well as a generalized area that could potentially be served by sewer in the future based on topography. These general areas of potential sewer service is not intended to establish a policy that the township wants to encourage sewer in these areas, it is only an acknowledgement that the township does not have authority over sewer installation or expansion and there is potential that these areas could feed into existing sewer infrastructure through county actions or through development. It also does not account for any limitations of capacity of sewer treatment facilities.



The Greene County Department of Sanitary Engineering completed improvements to the Sugarcreek Wastewater Treatment Plant in Spring Valley Township in 2008. Prior to the improvements, the township had considered a moratorium on development given the lack of treatment capacity for new development and an increased number of overflow events into the local streams. The improvements to the plant have increased the treatment capacity of the plant but did not change the urban service boundary because the improvements did not include the extension of any sewer lines. However, the improvements that were made were completed in expectation of growth in the northern part of Sugarcreek Township and in Montgomery County. For the most part, the expanded treatment capacity will assist in the treatment service already provided to Montgomery County residents whose sanitary waste is treated by Greene County systems. The department does not have any plans to build sewer lines to expand the service area. However, if a private developer wanted to extend sewer lines, the developer could extend the lines provided they meet the standards of the county. The only reason the county would eventually build additional sewer lines in the area would be if they were required to expand the system as a mandate by the state or in conjunction with system improvements, of which none are planned at this time. For this reason, the topography of land, and the ability to easily install gravity fed sewer lines, and sanitary sewer service will largely be restricted to Planning Areas 1 through 3 and the western portion of Planning Area 8 (See page 48.). Additionally, a small area south of Bellbrook in Planning Area 3 is also served by public systems.

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MAP 5: EXISTING SEWER LINES AND POTENTIAL AREA FOR SEWER EXPANSION

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Transportation Network

Traffic patterns in Sugarcreek Township over recent years resemble those found in many growing urban fringe communities. Once rural roads that were not designed for constant traffic flows, are now required to carry a growing amount of traffic as suburban residential and commercial development creates a substantial increase in traffic.

While commercial roads such as Wilmington Pike have been improved with development, there are still traffic choke points near the interstate and major intersections at peak hours of travel. With residential uses, there are often localized improvements to the transportation network to



add turn lanes and deceleration lanes that affect a particular development, but broader improvements to an entire road are often made when the road has very poor levels of service and after development has occurred. As the township grows, so may the need to rely on transit. Increased public transit service is an option to alleviate some of the traffic congestion the township experiences especially in the northern areas of the township. Public transportation provides support for land development patterns, such as higher-density employment, educational, cultural, and retail activity centers.

A complicating matter is the fact that the township has only minimal authority when it comes to transportation. The township is responsible for the maintenance and improvements on local roads that are typically the residential streets inside of developments. Greene County is responsible for maintaining and improving county roads, which include most of the larger “cross-township” connector and arterial roads including, but not limited to, Wilmington Pike, Feedwire Road, Little Sugarcreek Road, Centerville Road, Waynesville Road, Wilmington-Dayton Road, Stewart Road, Lower Bellbrook Road, and others. The State of Ohio is responsible for State Route 725 and assists the federal government in maintaining Interstate 675. Because of the multiple layers of responsibility, the township’s main method of encouraging various improvements is by working with the county, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC), and state to help plan for improvements.

Planned Road Improvements

MVRPC currently maintains a transportation plan for Greene, Miami, Montgomery, and Warren Counties. Planned improvements to the I-675 and Wilmington Pike Interchange to increase the capacity of Wilmington Pike and the existing I-675 ramps are included in the MVRPC’s long-range transportation plan. The township, ODOT, the City of Centerville, the Montgomery County Transportation Improvement District, and the Greene County Engineer’s Office are in the process of determining how best to address capacity issues at the I-675 and Wilmington Pike interchange and what local projects will be necessary to ensure traffic in the area continues to support the growth happening locally and regionally. I-675 has been deemed the gateway to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, and with so many base-affiliated families residing in Sugarcreek Township, ensuring adequate access is imperative. The long-range transportation plan also calls for the widening of Feedwire Road to three lanes from I-675 to Upper Bellbrook Road. The Greene County Engineer’s Office, has performed widening at intersections, culvert replacement and the addition of turn lanes at Little Sugarcreek, Feedwire, and subdivision entrances in the project area. As development along Wilmington Pike, Center Point, Clio and at Cornerstone continues, local roads will need to improved. The funding and timing of these improvements will be a significant issue for the township. A roundabout is planned at the intersection of Wilmington Dayton and Centerville Roads to address safety concerns and the Greene County Engineer’s Office is in the process of completing a safety study at the intersection of Waynesville and Centerville Roads to determine what, if any,

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

improvements are necessary. The Greene County Regional Planning and Coordinating Commission maintains a Thoroughfare Plan, last updated in 1987. This plan is in the process of being updated and meetings have been held with local stakeholders within the township to determine future projects. The Township recognizes the importance of transportation planning on a county level and planning decisions shall take into consideration recommendations of the Greene County Thoroughfare Plan, including any adopted updates. One project identified in the Thoroughfare Plan and retaining its significance in recent Thoroughfare Plan meetings, is addressing an abrupt, compound curve that exists on Wilmington Dayton Road near the intersection with Conference Road. The curve is further aggravated by poor sight-distance due to a church that exists immediately adjacent to the inside edge of the curve. The Thoroughfare Plan calls for the realignment of Wilmington Dayton Road to the southeast, behind the church through land that is currently agriculturally used (but has been subject to an unsuccessful attempt at development in recent years). Another important project identified in the Thoroughfare Plan is the extension of the dead ended portion of Brown Road east of I-675 to Feedwire Road to connect to Clys Road to the south. This extension is intended to supplement the Principal Collector Network in this area by providing an additional connection between Feedwire Road and Swigart Road.

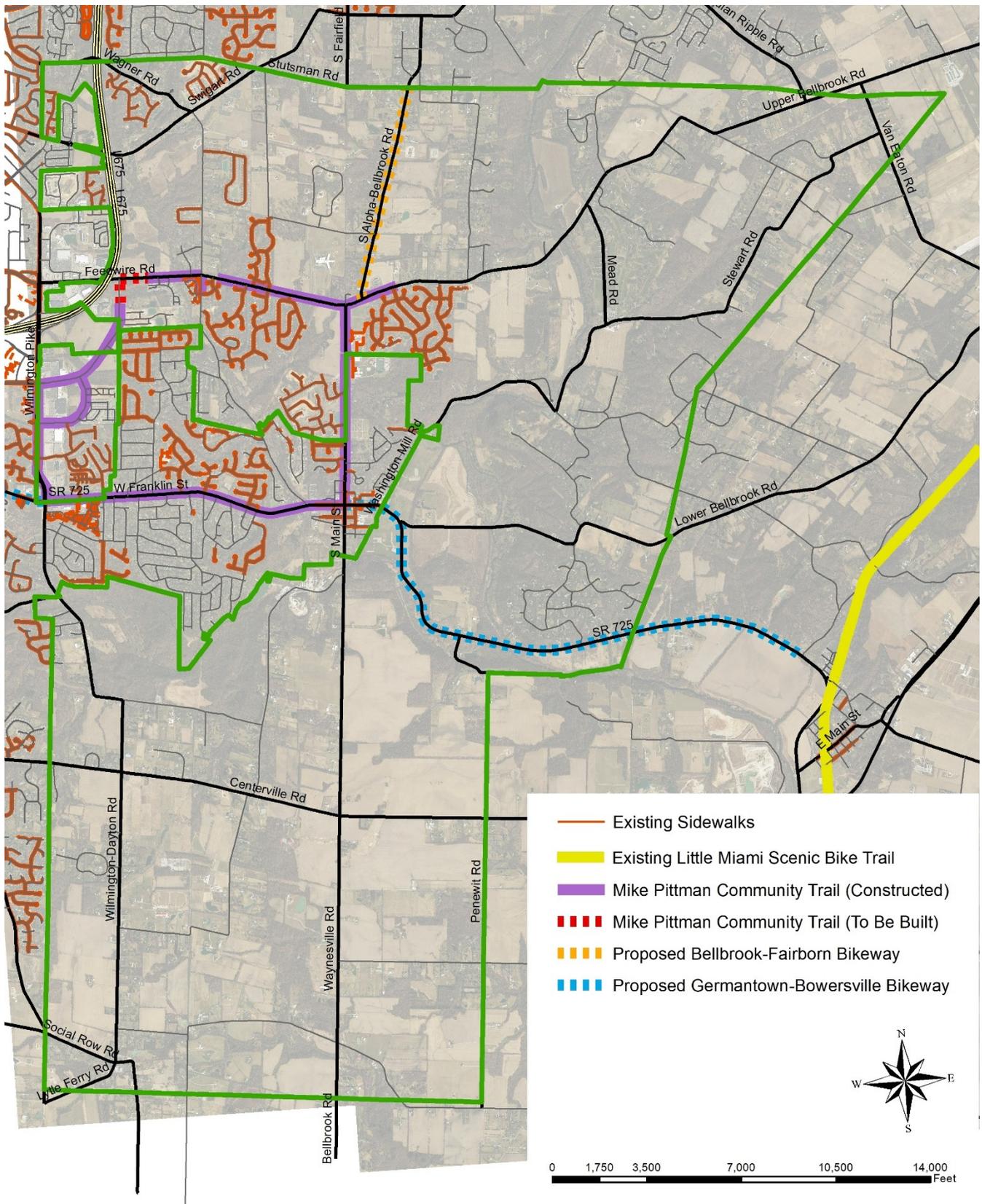
Sidewalks, Bikeways, and Trails

In addition to roads and vehicular traffic, the transportation network also includes pedestrians and bicyclists. Planning and requiring sidewalks, bikeways, and trails has the same difficulties as road improvements due to the multiple agencies involved and the limited authority of the township. While the township can review sidewalks and trails as part of a planned development, they have little involvement in planning for additional sidewalks and trails unless they establish a special fund and plan for expanding trails. Like the road improvements, MVRPC does have a long-term plan for expanding bikeways and trails throughout the four counties it oversees including extending a north/south trail between Bellbrook Park to existing bike paths at Dayton-Xenia Road and creating an east/west trail along State Route 725 from Wilmington Pike east to the Little Miami Scenic River Bikeway in three different phases. Public meetings were held in 2008 on the phase of this path from Sackett-Wright Park to Spring Valley along State Route 725. This project was met with opposition from impacted property owners. It remains a part of the MVRPC's long-range plan and the MVRPC Active Transportation Plan and a priority for the township. The township has submitted for grant funding for this \$20+ million project and will continue to work toward its completion. The township has prioritized connecting neighborhoods to schools, downtown Bellbrook and the Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor. The Mike Pittman Community Connectivity Trail has benefitted from Safe Routes to School funding and the township should continue to prioritize completion of this active transportation loop.

The MVRPC completed a local jurisdictional bikeway plan for Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township as part of the overall regional bikeways plan in 2008. As recommended in that plan, Sugarcreek Township formed a Safe Routes to School Committee and completed a School Travel Plan in 2009. The School Travel Plan identifies walking and biking infrastructure improvements within two miles of the Intermediate and Middle Schools. The township has prioritized these infrastructure improvements, with construction on the first phase of improvements in 2013.

As part of this plan update, an evaluation of the township's overall connectivity goals was completed. Proximity to a network of hike and bike trails can provide a significant boost in property values of residential developments. Loveland and Symmes Township in the Cincinnati area are good examples of areas where homes with easy access to the Little Miami bike trail are more desirable to homeowners. [Map 6](#) represents the township's connectivity goals and should serve as a guide for inclusion in future development plans.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan



MAP 6: CONNECTIVITY PLAN FOR SIDEWALKS AND BIKEWAYS

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Planning Trends

A key component of any comprehensive planning strategy is an understanding of the demographics of a community and a review of the general trends affecting its future. This type of analysis is useful in answering the following questions, which in turn provide the basis for making decisions during the development of the comprehensive land use plan.

- How has the township grown in the past?
- What are some of the changing trends, both in the township and across the nation, which might affect our future?
- How might we grow in the future if these trends continue unchanged?

The following sections provide a summary analysis of the demographic profile of Sugarcreek Township and the general analysis of trends. These trends can be used to evaluate the amount of additional land that may be “needed” over the next 20 years for both residential and nonresidential purposes. This analysis is important to the plan, because current trends may bring more or less growth than what the community wants in its future. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a foundation of knowledge of how much growth the township may anticipate in the future if current trends and development policies continue and is not reflective of any recommendations proposed as part of this plan. This analysis also allows the township to tailor planning tools that will guide any new growth toward the community’s vision of Sugarcreek Township in 2030 and beyond.

Population and Housing

As with most suburban communities, Sugarcreek Township has continued to grow in recent years, albeit at a much slower annual growth rate than in the 1990s. Table B illustrates the growth of Sugarcreek Township and surrounding communities between 1990 and 2020.

Table B: Population Growth 1990-2020

Community	1990	2000	1990-2000 AAGR	2010	2000-2010 AAGR	2020	2010-2020 AAGR
Greene County	137,195	147,886	0.75%	161,573	0.89%	167,966	0.39%
Beavercreek Township	1,910	3,063	4.84%	5,762	6.52%	8,400	3.84%
Sugarcreek Township	3,566	6,629	6.40%	8,039	1.95%	9,534	1.72%
Xenia Township	7,510	6,117	-2.03%	6,537	0.67%	6,742	0.31%
City of Beavercreek	33,544	37,984	1.25%	45,193	1.75%	46,549	0.30%
City of Bellbrook	6,450	7,009	0.83%	6,943	- 0.09%	7,009	0.09%
City of Centerville	21,082	23,024	0.89%	23,999	0.42%	24,240	0.10%
City of Kettering	60,569	57,502	-0.52%	56,163	- 0.24%	57,862	0.30%
City of Xenia	24,867	24,183	-0.28%	25,719	0.62%	25,441	-0.11%

*AAGR = Average Annual Growth Rate

In the 1990s, Sugarcreek Township witnessed fast paced growth with an average annual growth rate of over six percent. That rate slowed substantially in the 2000s when the average annual growth rate was just under two percent. This decline in the growth rate is likely caused by a number of factors including changes in local policy (e.g., increased lot size requirements, higher development standards), the impact of overall decreasing household sizes, annexation (i.e., growth that is occurring in former territory of the township) and a downturn of the housing market. This moderate trend in annual growth has continued well into 2020. Of note is the fact that Sugarcreek Township continues to

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

grow at an annual rate that exceeds the county's overall rate of growth and all of the nearby cities. Part of this can be attributed to the fact that the township still has greenfield sites in areas where sewer service is available, and those areas have attracted much of the higher-density development identified in the existing land use analysis. This includes significant growth in multi-family developments and single-family development on lots smaller than one acre. Many of the single-family subdivisions that have come online since the last plan update contain lots with an area that ranges from 7,000 to 15,000 square feet, depending on the development and depending on the amount of clustering undertaken to preserve open space. All of the residential developments approved since the last plan update have occurred in areas subject to annexation; the township's strategy to allow development in areas that can be annexed in order to stave off development in areas not planned for it, has been largely successful. The township has not seen an annexation to support a new residential subdivision since the annexation of the Madison's Grant and Cornerstone developments in the late 2000s. This plan update acknowledges that success and notes that the number of large, undeveloped parcels subject to annexation to an adjacent municipality has been substantially reduced since the last plan iteration. The township should continue to monitor the threat of annexation.

Given the information above, it is possible to forecast the potential future population of the township if the township continues to grow in a manner similar to historic trends. This assumption is not intended to serve as a stated policy that the township wants to continue at the existing rate of growth, it is only an analysis of the impact of continued growth. Assuming that the township will continue to see an annual average growth rate similar to the last ten years (1.72%), then the township could expect to see a need for housing that will accommodate an addition of 2,780 people by 2035, for a total potential population of 12,300.

At an average of 2.80 people per household, that could mean a need for nearly 1,000 new housing units in the same timeframe. It is important to note that the township currently has several housing developments under construction and in the planning stage, totaling 180 lots, that will likely already accommodate some of that housing demand, but there will certainly be a demand for additional housing in the township, especially where sewer service is available. It is also important to note that the U.S. Census population estimates for the last few years have fluctuated somewhat, most likely due to both population count accuracy and potential supply-chain issues that has limited the speed of housing construction.



One method of prioritizing development within the suburban areas of the township, which was recommended in the 2007 plan and implemented by the township, was the revision of the existing zoning to allow for conservation subdivision design, which would only be permitted in certain areas of the township. While the township has not seen planned developments with over 50% of the project protected as open space, almost all of the recent subdivisions have been developed through the planned residential process with a significant portion of open space preserved as part of the project. Continuing this strategy lowers development costs by reducing the infrastructure costs through clustered lots and provides for diverse housing options that are easier to access with shorter roads, water, and sewer, while at the same time providing density incentives for the development of conservation subdivisions.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Population - Age

In addition to the amount of residential development that has occurred or is projected to occur in the township, the community is also aware that there are changing trends in the overall population and type of housing that the township should be considering in an effort to accommodate a more diverse population. Two aspects of housing that were evaluated as part of this comprehensive land use plan update were the age of the population and the value of housing in both the township and the region.

The age of a population can be an important indicator of the township's future needs. National trends have indicated that there is an increase of residents who wish to 'age in place,' which means that as a population ages, the services that need to be provided to residents must shift as well. [Table C](#) illustrates the changes in a community's median age over the decades. In 2022, the township one of the top median ages of all nearby communities with only the City of Centerville having a higher median age. of all the communities within the comparison, including a higher median age than the county and state. The township's median age has been a slow increase over the last two decades and reflects similar trends of an aging population seen across the United States, the state of Ohio, and all of the communities listed in the table. Looking at the breakdown of age brackets (See [Figure 1](#) on the following page.), you can see major increases in the older age brackets. Some of this can be attributed to people generally living longer, but it could also indicate that younger people and families are not moving to the township. This also may be reflective of the relatively high cost of housing in the township when compared to neighboring communities, which is discussed later. Essentially, the younger population may be priced out of Sugarcreek Township at the moment.

Table C: Median Age				
Community	2000	2010	2016	2022
State of Ohio	36.2	38.8	39.3	39.6
Greene County	35.6	37.0	38.0	38.6
Montgomery County	36.4	39.2	39.4	39.0
Sugarcreek Township	38.2	39.6	44.3	44.4
City of Beavercreek	40.5	40.5	41.1	41.1
City of Bellbrook	37.3	40.8	42.2	43.1
City of Centerville	42.6	46.5	48.2	49.7
City of Kettering	38.9	40.9	40.7	39.3
City of Xenia	34.5	35.3	37.2	38.7

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey

As the age of the population changes, so does the demand for different housing options and services. Trends have shown that young professionals seek urban living options to accommodate their transient lifestyles. Traditionally, they have sought rental housing or apartment living where they can walk to work and access various points of interest such as shops, restaurants, cultural venues, and recreational activities. As stated earlier, an important aspect of evaluating the age of the population is that different age groups demand different services. In response to the change in population demographics, the township may need to consider providing services to support the general aging trend of the township. Moreover, suppose the township would like to change the population trend outlook in the next decade. In that case, the township may want to provide for housing and services that accommodate the needs of the age groups they wish to attract to maintain a balanced population.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

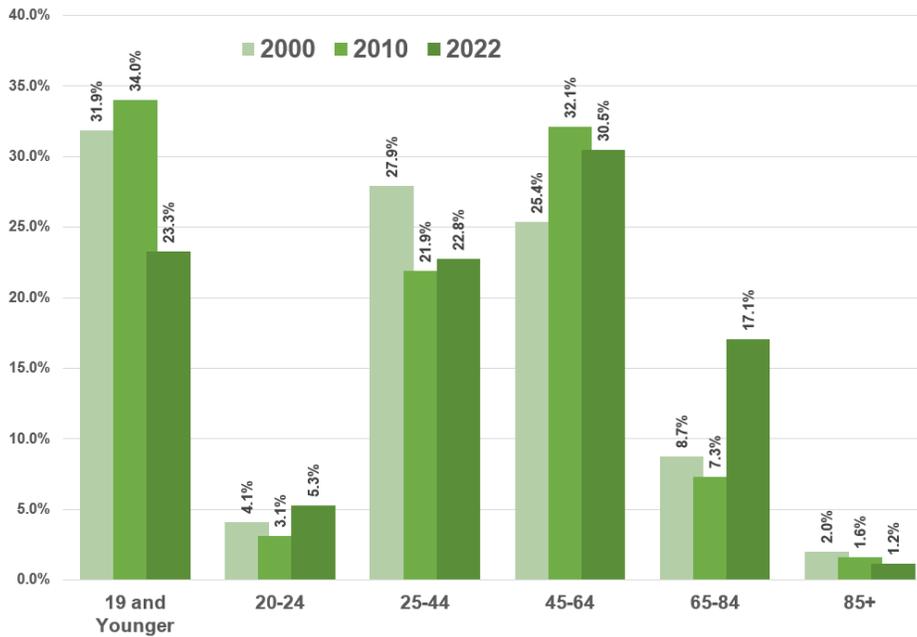


Figure 1: Sugar Creek Township population shifts, by age bracket, between 2000 and 2022. Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey

Housing – Cost/Value of Housing

According to the 2022 American Community Survey, the median value of an owner-occupied home in the Sugarcreek Township is \$436,400 compared to \$228,200 in Greene County and \$197,200 across the State of Ohio. This is not surprising given that Sugarcreek Township has numerous high-value homes and farms located within the township. The township also has one of the highest owner-occupancy rates across the state and region with 83.0% of housing units being owner-occupied. Most of the communities in the region have an owner-occupancy ratio closer to the State’s ratio of 66.8%. Strong housing values can contribute to a stronger community and local economy. However, high housing costs can limit housing options and may prevent people who work in Sugarcreek Township from living in the township or for younger people to move to the township due to high housing costs. Even the median monthly rent of \$1,628 in Sugarcreek Township exceeds the State median rent (\$945) and the Greene County median rent (\$1,027).



The high housing values in Sugarcreek Township are further expressed by a simple real estate search that shows roughly 85 homes for sale in the township in May 2024. Of those homes, only 3 are listed for less than \$250,000 (3.5%) and 12 are listed for less than \$300,000 (14.1%). With current interest rates, it would take an approximately \$80,000 yearly income to afford a mortgage on a \$300,000 home.

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Taxes

As the township continues to grow, there will be a continued need to evaluate the fiscal health of the community, particularly given the fact that much of the new growth is likely to be residential. Sugarcreek Township residents and businesses enjoy a high level of public services (police, roads, fire, etc.). The cost of providing these services continues to rise while revenue streams are being reduced (the elimination of the estate tax, the reduction of local government funds, etc.). The township will need to look for alternative ways to provide and fund these types of services (joint service districts, sharing services, consolidation of services, etc.). As identified in the previous comprehensive land use plan, the 2000 ratio of agricultural and residential base valuation (value of property used for real estate taxation purposes) compared to commercial and industrial base valuation was approximately 75 percent agricultural and residential to 25 percent commercial and industrial. In 2020, the county completed its mandatory six-year reappraisal of properties, and as of 2023, the ratio has decreased with 87 percent of the valuation taxed in the township coming from agricultural and residential uses and only 13 percent coming from commercial and industrial valuation. As more homes are built in the township, and the value of homes continues to increase, there can be expected a continued trend toward more of the tax burden falling onto residential property owners. This is not at all unusual for townships in Ohio given the large size of a typical township, and the fact that a significant portion of commercial and industrial growth tends to occur in cities and villages.

Based on the above information, it will be important for the township to monitor growth and its impact on taxes. With increased population comes the need for increased services, particularly related to schools and township services. In general, most residential uses do not “pay for themselves” because for every one dollar a residential property owner pays in taxes, it costs more than one dollar to provide the various services paid for by those taxes (e.g., schools, roads, government administration, parks, etc.). This is not necessarily true for all homes because, depending on the type of housing, local tax rates, and cost of services, homes of certain values may be providing a sufficient amount of tax base to pay for services. This is why some communities consider creating a cost of services study. These studies outline the cost of services, how those services are financed and maintained, and then compare these costs with the taxes paid by different housing types and housing values. Depending on the community and applicable taxes, the following are some general findings regarding residential uses and taxes:

- Residential uses do not typically pay for themselves.
- Building more residential uses will not necessarily lower tax rates. In fact, without supplementing the tax base with income taxes (not an option in townships), nonresidential development, or similar tools, excessive residential development could possibly require increased residential tax rates.
- Certain types of housing for older persons may not generate students to burden the school system, but it can increase the burden on other services such as emergency medical services.
- In a community such as Sugarcreek Township, which has a high residential land valuation, the tax burden will fall largely on the residents.

Based on the findings on the previous page, the township needs to understand the overall benefit of a development to the township tax base to ensure a long-term balance of housing to minimize the tax burden on the community.

The property taxes paid by property owners in Sugarcreek Township are distributed to many different entities to fund numerous types of public services. [Figure 2](#) illustrates how property taxes are distributed for tax year 2023, payable in 2024. The same information is provided for tax year 2011, payable in 2012 for comparison purposes.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

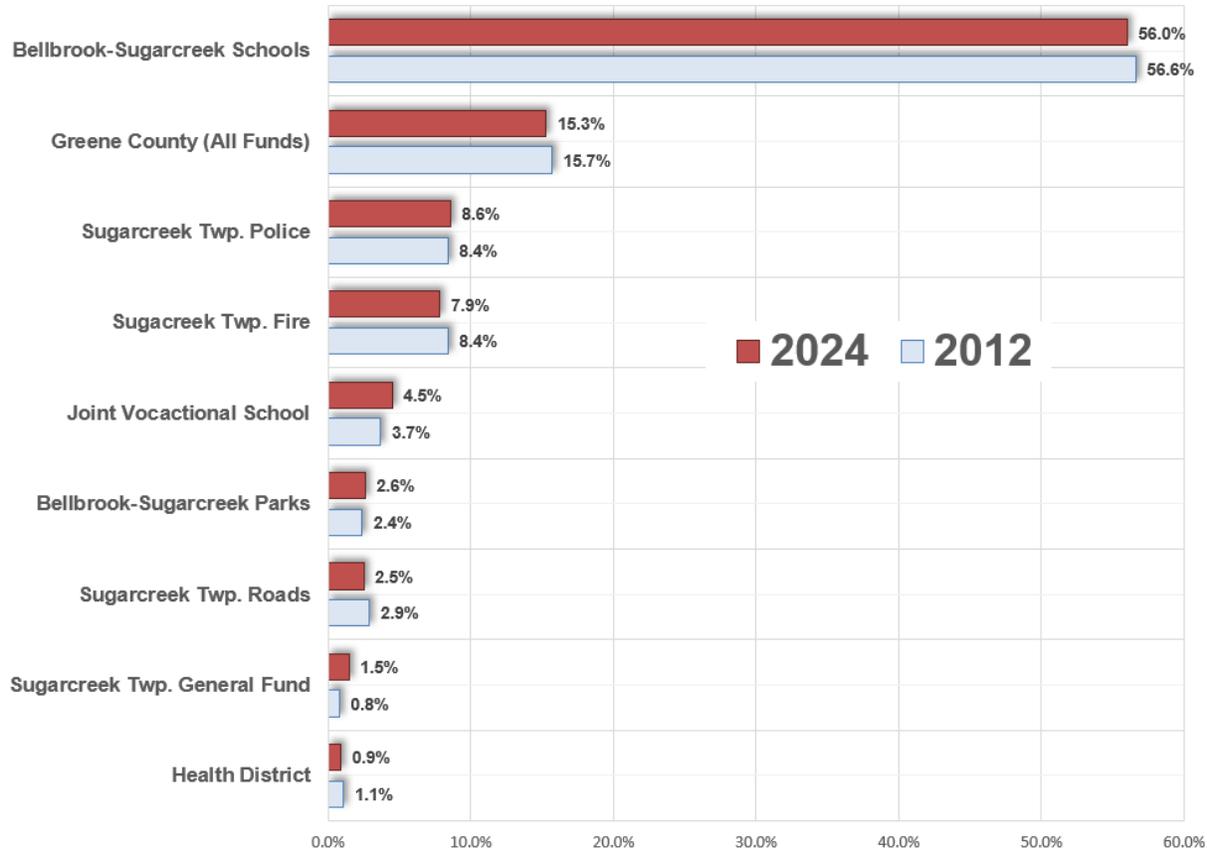


Figure 2: Breakdown of tax revenue distribution in 2012 and 2024

A historical comparison of the breakdown of tax distribution indicates that there have been some shifts between 2012 and 2024 with less money going to the schools and slight increases to the county, but overall, the percentage of tax revenue going to each fund has remained relatively the same.

Figure 3 shows how the overall effective tax rate for residential and agricultural uses have changed over the years with some reduction in the tax rate in recent years but this is due to several factors, including changes in valuation as well as reduction factors and rollbacks that are required by state law.

As the township grows, it will be important to identify methods of providing services other than increased taxes (e.g., joint service districts, etc.) to ensure overall fiscal responsibility. It will also be important for the township to prioritize its economic development and branding programs to help attract quality nonresidential development to help stabilize tax rates.

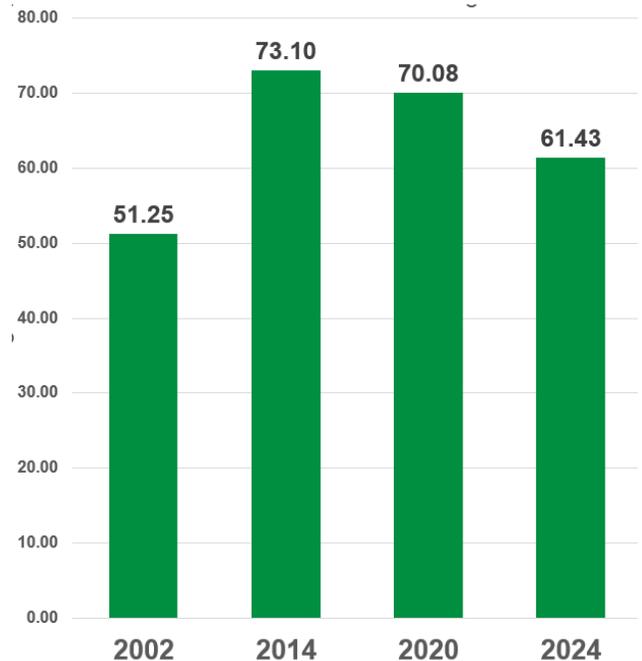
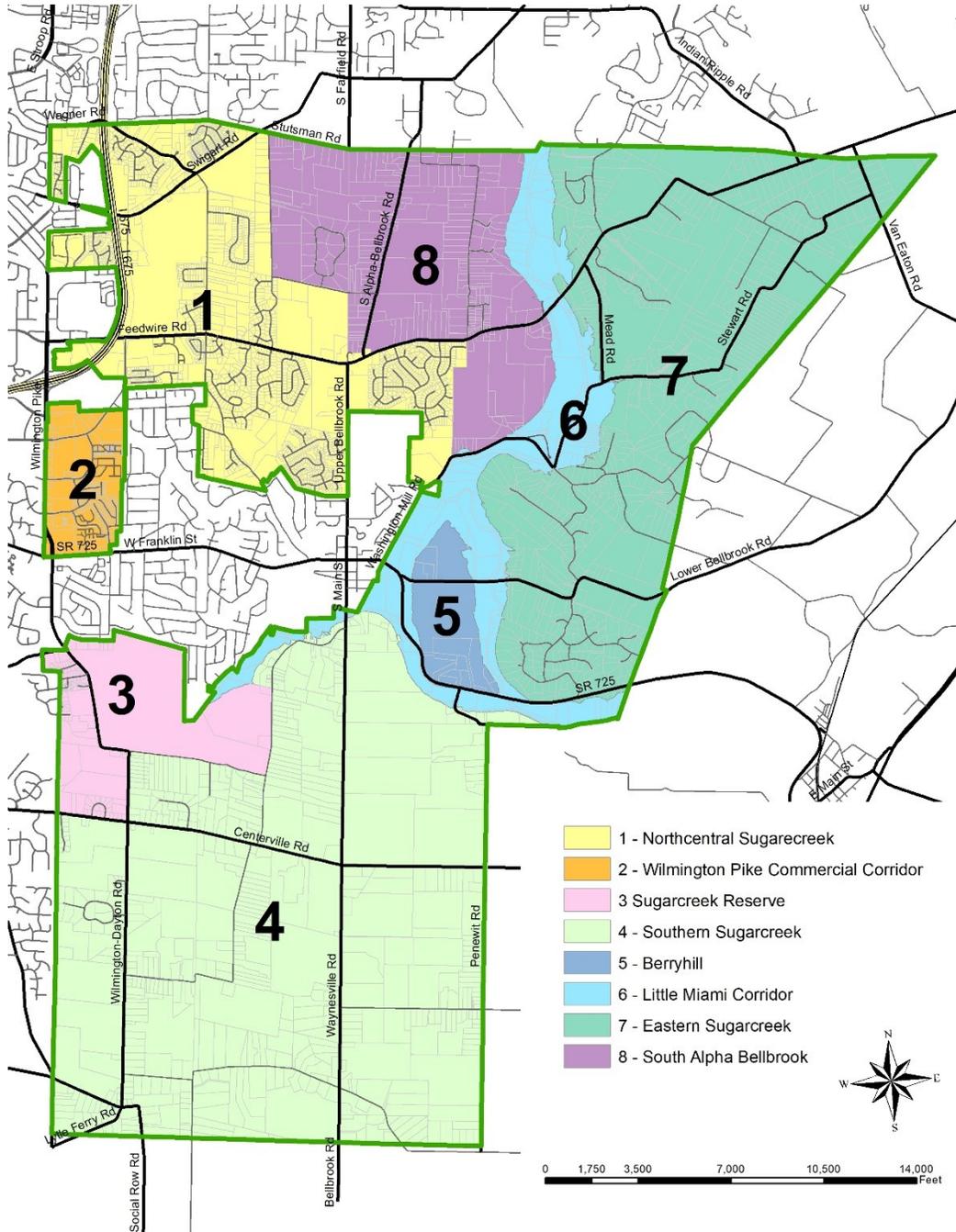


Figure 3: Effective Tax Rates for Residential/Agricultural Uses from 2002 to 2024

Planning Areas

For the purpose of this plan, Sugarcreek Township was divided into 8 planning areas. These areas were created after evaluation of the characteristics of the area including land uses, development pressures, infrastructure, general character, and natural resources described in the previous sections. [Map 7](#) illustrates the boundaries and names of the planning areas. Dividing the township into these areas allows for focused discussions of areas that have individual needs as well as to provide targeted recommendations that may only impact particular areas of the township. Each planning area is further illustrated and discussed in the long-range land use plan recommendations starting on page 31.



MAP 7: SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP PLANNING AREAS

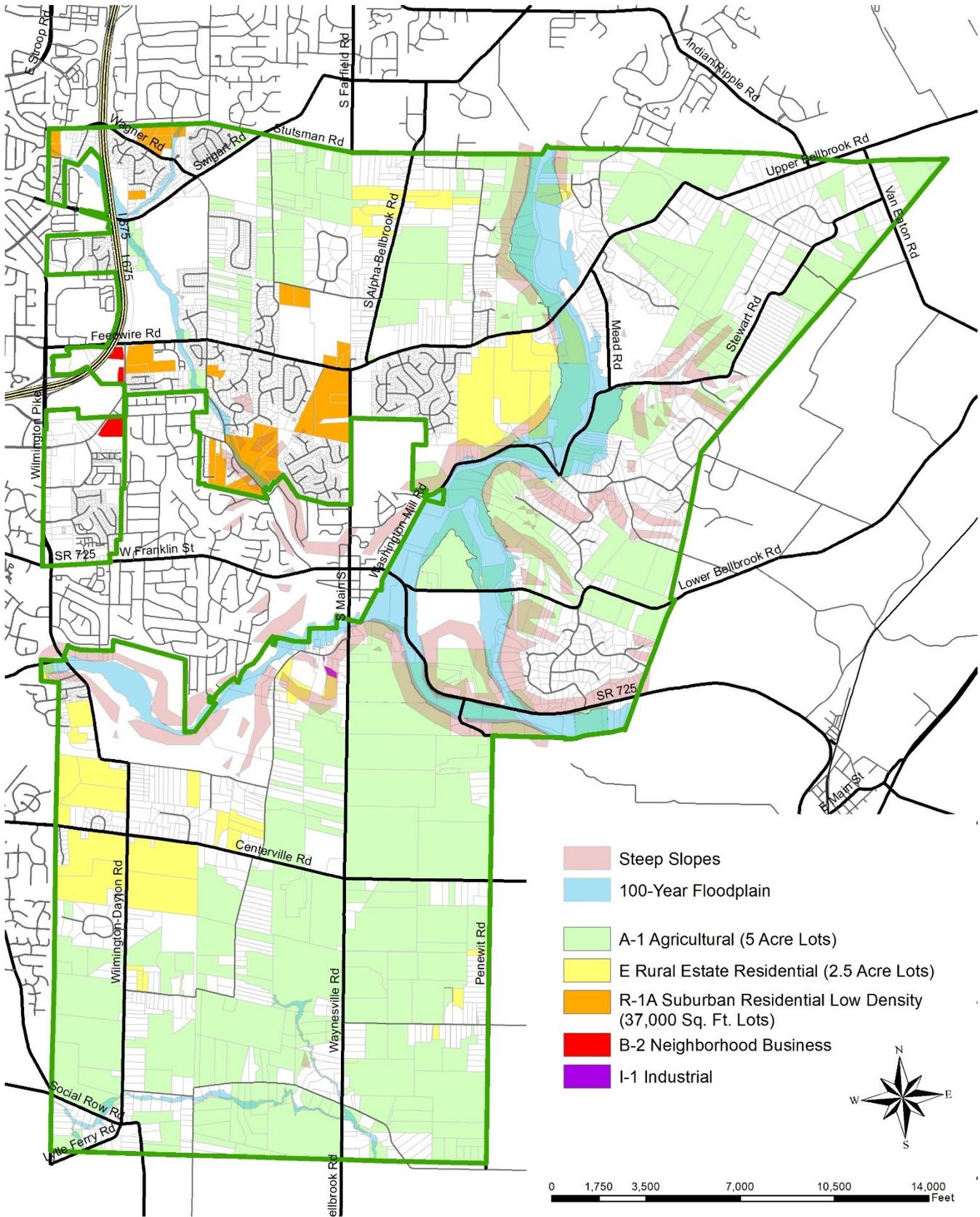
Land Development Capacity

The counterpart of the housing forecasts is the land development capacity or, in other words, how much new development could occur within the township if the currently agricultural or undeveloped lands were built out in accordance with zoning or the land use plan. This plan evaluates land development capacity in two different ways. The zoning land development capacity analysis is based on existing zoning and natural resources while the second land development capacity is based on the land use recommendations of this plan along with natural resources. For this plan, land development capacity is calculated by first evaluating which lands might be developed in the future (not that they will be available or sold for development), which includes all agricultural and undeveloped lands along with residential lots with more than five acres that have sufficient area to be divided based on zoning. Second, 15% of total area of potentially available land is removed from the calculation due to the assumption that approximately 15% of development is needed for streets, rights-of-way, common areas, and other land that will not be divided for housing or economic development. The minimum lot area requirements for zoning or the planned densities for certain lands is then applied to the remaining area resulting in the potential land development capacity. For this plan, the focus on land development capacity is for residential dwelling units because there is little land available for new commercial or industrial development. The land development capacity analysis excludes any land within a Planned Unit Development because those properties have been approved for development prior to this plan, even if they have not fully developed. The two different calculations are further described below:

- **Land Development Capacity under Current Zoning** – This scenario assumes that all land with some potential for development develops to the maximum extent allowed by zoning. This capacity includes an assumption that land within the 100-year floodplain and on steep slopes will not be developed.
- **Land Development Capacity as Planned** – This scenario illustrates the capacity that results when the recommended plan density recommendations, described further in the sections that follow, are applied to the township. One key recommendation of this plan is to avoid development in the 100-year floodplain and on steep slopes so this land development capacity scenario assumes that there is no potential development in those areas. This scenario assumes the maximum permitted residential densities (i.e., two units per acre when developed as a conservation subdivision) as described in the plan. Because the plan supports a non-prescriptive density scheme for land adjacent to a municipality and land adjacent to public land adjacent to a municipality, land development capacity as planned could not be perfectly quantified in Planning Areas 1 and 3. A density of two units per acre was applied to these land areas for the purpose of this analysis, understanding that actual realized densities for these land areas may be higher or lower depending on the individual sites and the type of development approved.

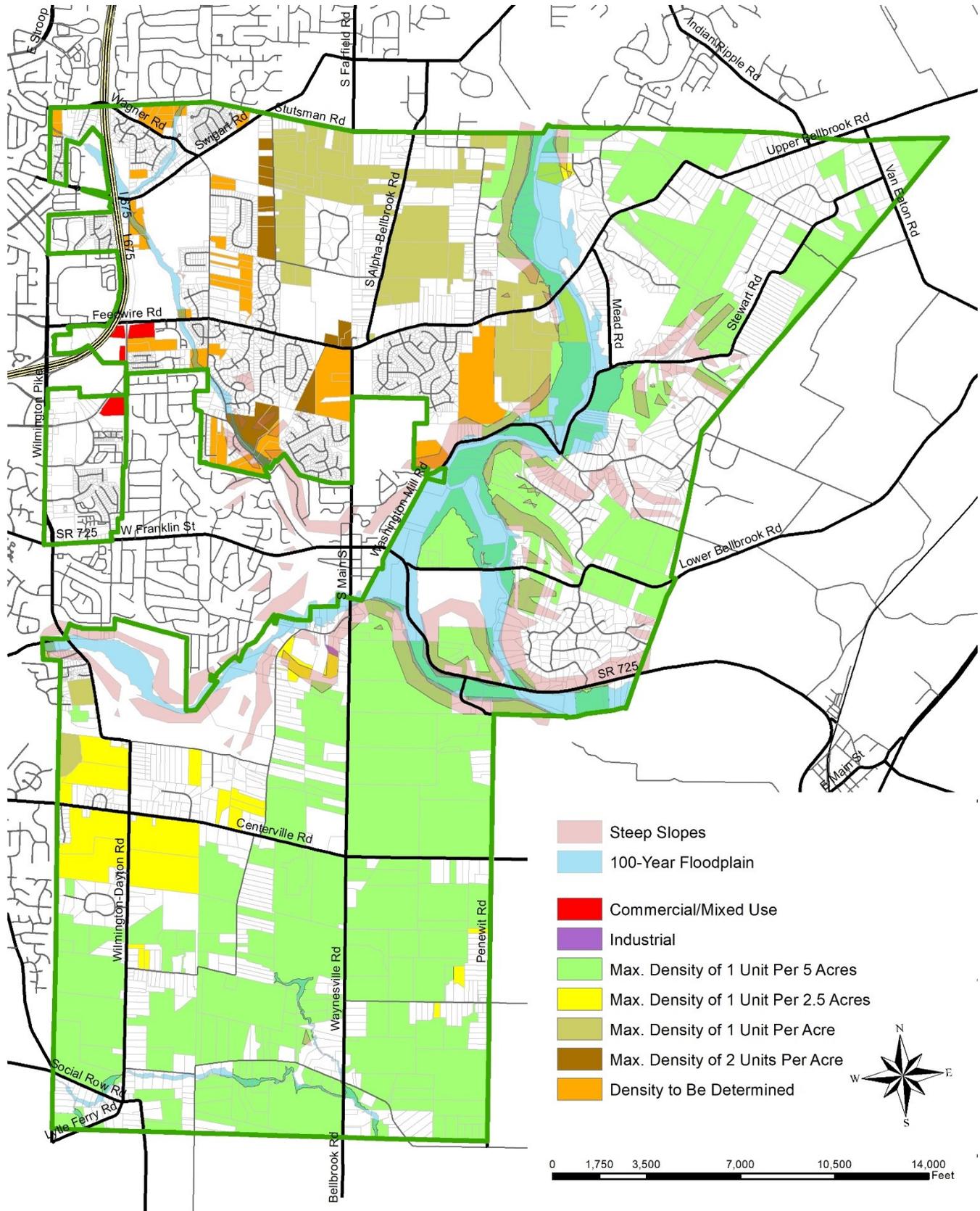
[Map 8](#) and [Map 9](#) on the following pages illustrate the land considered to have some potential for development which was used for the land development capacity analysis. These maps also highlight those properties that are constrained by floodplains or slopes. [Table D](#) on the page following the maps illustrates the above two land development capacity scenarios for each of the 8 planning areas, and for the township as a whole. It is important to note that Planning Area 2, the Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor, contains the only land with some development potential that is currently zoned for commercial and office uses. The area is also the primary area where the comprehensive land use plan recommends the future development of nonresidential uses.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan



MAP 8: LAND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AS ZONED

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan



MAP 9: LAND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AS PLANNED

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Table D: Residential Land Development Capacity Analysis (Housing Units)

Area	Potential Development Area* (Acres)	Land Development Capacity with Current Zoning (Units)	Land Development Capacity as Planned (Units)
Planning Area 1: Northcentral Sugarcreek	467.4	307	654
Planning Area 2: Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor	14.1	All acreage is planned and zoned for nonresidential uses	
Planning Area 3: Sugarcreek Reserve	15	51	74
Planning Area 4: Southern Sugarcreek	4,195.7	756	756
Planning Area 5: Berryhill	157.4	21	21
Planning Area 6: Little Miami Corridor	524.5	0	0
Planning Area 7: Eastern Sugarcreek	1,312.2	198	198
Planning Area 8: South Alpha Bellbrook	1,015.7	213	788
Sugarcreek Township Total	7,840.1	1,546	2,491

* The potential development area is the total area of land used for agricultural uses, undeveloped properties, and residential properties in excess of 10 acres (5 acres if access to sewer) with a reasonable opportunity for subdivision. This analysis is for planning purposes only and does not assume that all properties will develop or will sell for development. The analysis does not take into account private deed restrictions that may limit development.

It is evident that land in the township is currently zoned in such a way as to be able to theoretically accommodate the forecasted 1,000 new homes by 2035. This is the case even if the township assumes that no development will occur in the floodplain or on steep slopes (Land Development Capacity under Current Trends). However, this would require that a large portion of the land in the township would have to be developed rather than encouraging increased densities in the north, which helps protect, to the maximum extent possible, the more rural areas to the east and south, as envisioned by the planning recommendations (Land Development Capacity as Planned).

By increasing the land development capacity for development in the north, where adequate services are available, the pressure to develop the rural properties in the south will be reduced. Whereas if the ability to develop land in the north is limited, there will be more pressure to subdivide rural properties to meet the projected demand for housing.

Long-Range Land Use Plan

Overall Township Goals

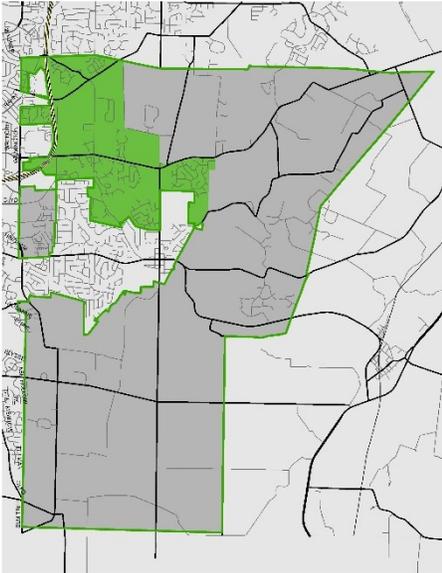
To be meaningful, the Sugarcreek Township Long-Range Land Use Plan must be based on the desires and vision of the township's citizens. Based on discussions with the committee charged with updating the comprehensive land use plan and the public, it was determined that the overall goals for the plan have not changed since the development of the original 2001 plan. For this reason, the following goals continue to guide this plan, and the township, in developing the vision for the future of the community:

- Retain the rural character of the township;
- Manage the pace and quality of future development within the township;
- Continue to consider the accommodation of a broader range of housing options in areas of the township near municipal boundaries or currently served by existing infrastructure;
- Protect key assets within the township;
- Retain viable agriculture within the township;
- Provide viable and continuing strategies for preserving open space;
- Manage transportation demands and conflicts;
- Provide criteria and guidance for the future infrastructure development;
- Provide protection of important environmental resources;
- Plan for recreational areas; and
- Protect the geographic boundaries of the township.



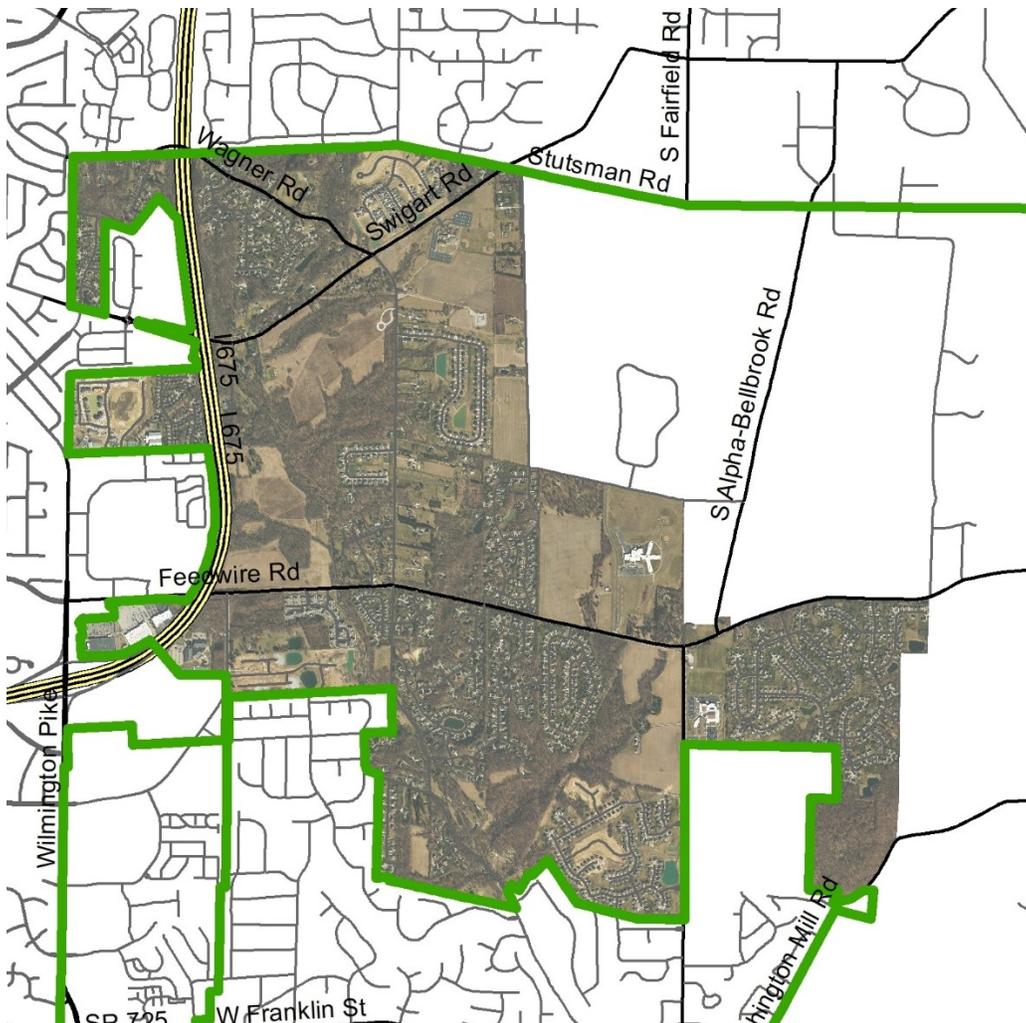
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Planning Area 1: Northcentral Sugarcreek



Northcentral Sugarcreek

Total Land Area: 2,647 Acres
% of Township: 15.9%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Planning Area 1: Northcentral Sugarcreek Existing Conditions

- The Northcentral Sugarcreek Planning Area is located in the northcentral portion of the township, encompassing areas both east and west of I-675 and north of the City of Bellbrook. The northwest portion of this planning area has been significantly affected by annexation since the 2001 plan. Both the cities of Kettering and Centerville have annexed large areas of this planning area, essentially creating three small sub-areas west of the interstate. This planning area also consists of a large sub-area of land east of I-675 west of Carpenter Road and east past the Kable's Mill subdivision. This is an area of the township that has seen the most residential growth over the last decade and which is experiencing the biggest development pressures due to the area's proximity to Beavercreek, Bellbrook and the interstate.
- The township has maintained the existing commercial center southeast of the Wilmington Pike and Feedwire Road intersection while the City of Centerville has annexed almost 270 acres of land to the north and south of this intersection and the City of Kettering has annexed 112 acres along Swigart Road, just west of I-675.
- This portion of this planning area west of I-675 is almost completely built out with only a few small parcels still considered to have some development potential in the far northwestern corner of the planning area.
- The portion of this planning area east of I-675 is characterized by a number of large parcels, the largest of which is the 247 acres acquired by the Park District in 2013.
- A majority of the planning area has sufficient access to both water and sewer service.

Planning Area 1: Northcentral Sugarcreek Recommendations

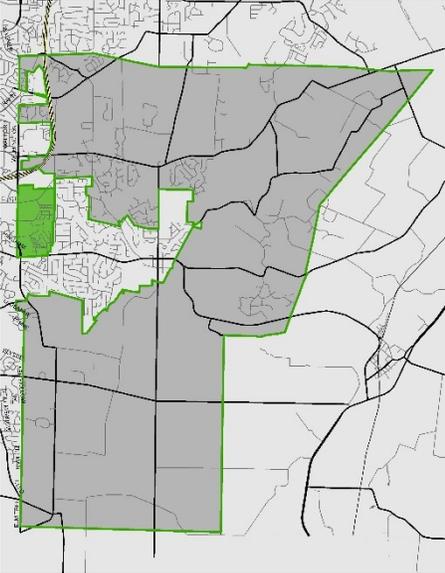
- The existing commercial land use at the intersection of Wilmington Pike and Feedwire Road should be maintained. Development should continue to follow the design guidelines established in the Wilmington Pike Area Corridor Overlay District.
- The township recognizes the benefit of preserving the rural, natural characteristics of Sugarcreek Township as development pressure reaches current farmland in between residential uses in this planning area. Undeveloped acreage in this planning area may be appropriate for Planned Residential Development, with densities to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Zoning Commission and Township Trustees. Developments here should give considerable regard to quality in terms of layout, building materials, landscaping and amenities. Developments should also work to preserve existing natural features. Considerable emphasis should be placed on maintaining the rural, natural character of Sugarcreek Township that currently exists and is critical to residential quality of life in this planning area. Developments should utilize deeper yard setbacks along primary thoroughfares to help maintain that rural character. Landscaping in highly visible areas and along internal roadways should be provided.
- Parks, recreational uses, and large public/institutional uses or structures are all appropriate in this planning area due to the high density of development.
- Should Rollandia and Quail Run along the north side of Brown Road (east of I-675) be redeveloped, planned commercial uses defined by pitched roofs and compatible in scale to that of the adjacent residential uses is also appropriate. Further consideration for the adjacent residential uses to the east will be required by way of increased screening and buffering.
- Should the land along the Clio Road corridor be developed or redeveloped, planned mixed-use development may also be appropriate. Planned commercial development compatible in design and scale with adjacent uses is also encouraged. Multi-family development, with an emphasis on unique development and architectural design characteristics, may be permitted on a limited basis as part of an overall development plan.

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- Should the land at the southeast corner of Swigart and Little Sugarcreek Roads be developed, planned mixed use development incorporating senior housing in a campus-style environment and developed according to an overall unified development plan may be appropriate. The incorporation of unrelated retail uses, unrelated office uses, and similar unrelated commercial uses would not be appropriate.
- Neighborhood retail/service uses may be appropriate at the Feedwire/Upper Bellbrook Road intersection, the South Alpha Bellbrook/Upper Bellbrook Road intersection and the Pine Court/Feedwire/Upper Bellbrook Road intersection. These uses should be local rather than businesses that attract a large amount of vehicular traffic from across the region. 24-hour operations would not be permitted. The primary vision is for a pedestrian scale development with a campus/village/town center character. Focus should be placed on the creation of an identity for development on the intersection including but not limited to lights, signs, landscaping, materials, etc. A proper buffer/transition from the commercial uses to residential as well as a link to and extension of existing hike and bike trails should be incorporated.
- This area is a priority area for conservation subdivisions characterized by the clustering of lots to preserve 50 percent or more of a site.
- The township strongly supports the connectivity plan included in this document and developments in this planning area should incorporate elements of that connectivity plan as applicable.
- Surface mining/mineral extraction is not appropriate in this planning area.

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Planning Area 2: Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor



Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor

Total Land Area:	372 Acres
% of Township:	2.2%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Planning Area 2: Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor Existing Conditions

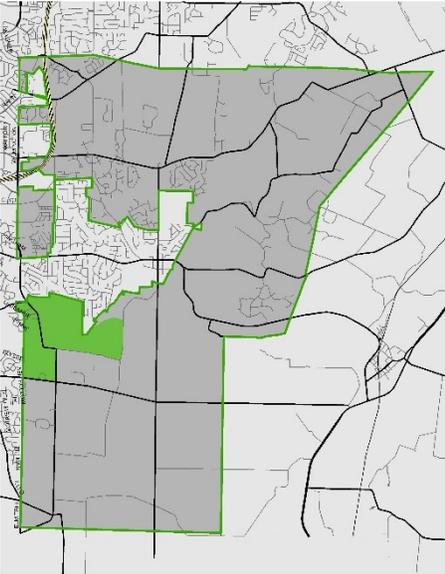
The Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor is the predominant commercial and office area within the township and provides a vast amount of nonresidential land taxes in the entire community. While there is a significant amount of developed land, there are also several large parcels that are currently undeveloped, with the existing zoning providing for planned commercial or office uses, which could almost double the amount of development in this planning area alone.

This planning area has benefited from the extension of Clio Road to Feedwire Road, which improved the township's transportation network and access to land identified for planned commercial development. It has also benefitted from the increased development standards required in the Wilmington Pike Area Corridor Overlay District, an overlay impacting a large portion of this planning area.

Planning Area 2: Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor Recommendations

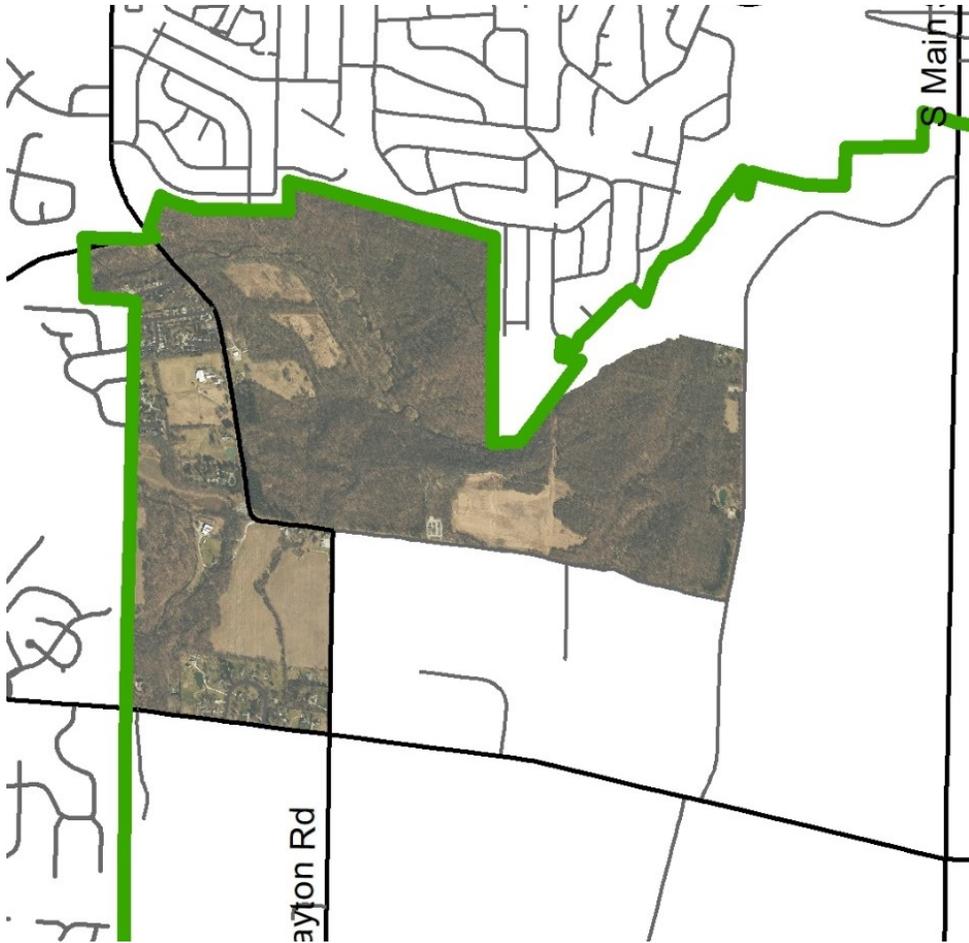
- The principal use of this area should continue to be commercial and office uses with the commercial uses focused along the frontage of Wilmington Pike and the office uses located along the eastern edge of the planning area (as zoned in 2024).
- Parks, recreational uses, and large public/institutional uses or structures are also appropriate in this planning area due to the high density of development.
- Development within this corridor shall be done in a planned way, with uniform building materials, signage, lighting, and landscaping provided in accordance with the guidelines established in the Wilmington Pike Area Corridor Overlay District.
- Mixed-use developments may be appropriate in this planning area provided that they are developed according to an overall development plan that includes an emphasis on creating a more vibrant, walkable, economic development. Community gathering areas/destination points shall be included within the overall development. Development should continue to follow the design guidelines established in the Wilmington Pike Area Corridor Overlay District.
- Buffering shall be provided between new development and existing adjacent less restrictive uses. Appropriate transitions shall be provided between existing residential uses and new nonresidential development.
- Surface mining/mineral extraction is not appropriate in this planning area.

Planning Area 3: Sugarcreek Reserve



Sugarcreek Reserve

Total Land Area:	822 Acres
% of Township:	4.9%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

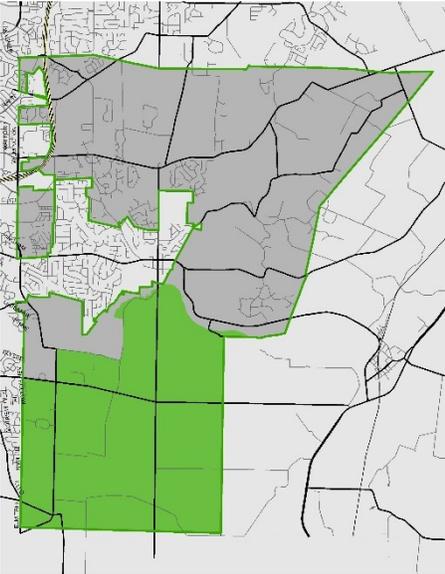
Planning Area 3: Sugarcreek Reserve Existing Conditions

- The Sugarcreek Reserve Planning Area is largely occupied by the Sugarcreek Reserve Metropark, providing natural areas and equestrian trails for the larger Dayton region. This planning area, along with the park, blends well with the equestrian-based agriculture that occurs in the township.
- While there are some small farms located in the area, much of the remainder of the planning area is occupied by a variety of housing types ranging from multi-family residential uses to single-family residential uses on large lots.
- Residential uses in the area are located on large road frontage lots, primarily on Wilmington Dayton Road.
- This planning area has access to water services and some limited access to sewer service.
- This planning area includes the intersection of Wilmington Dayton and Conference Roads, where there are plans for realignment.

Planning Area 3: Sugarcreek Reserve Recommendations

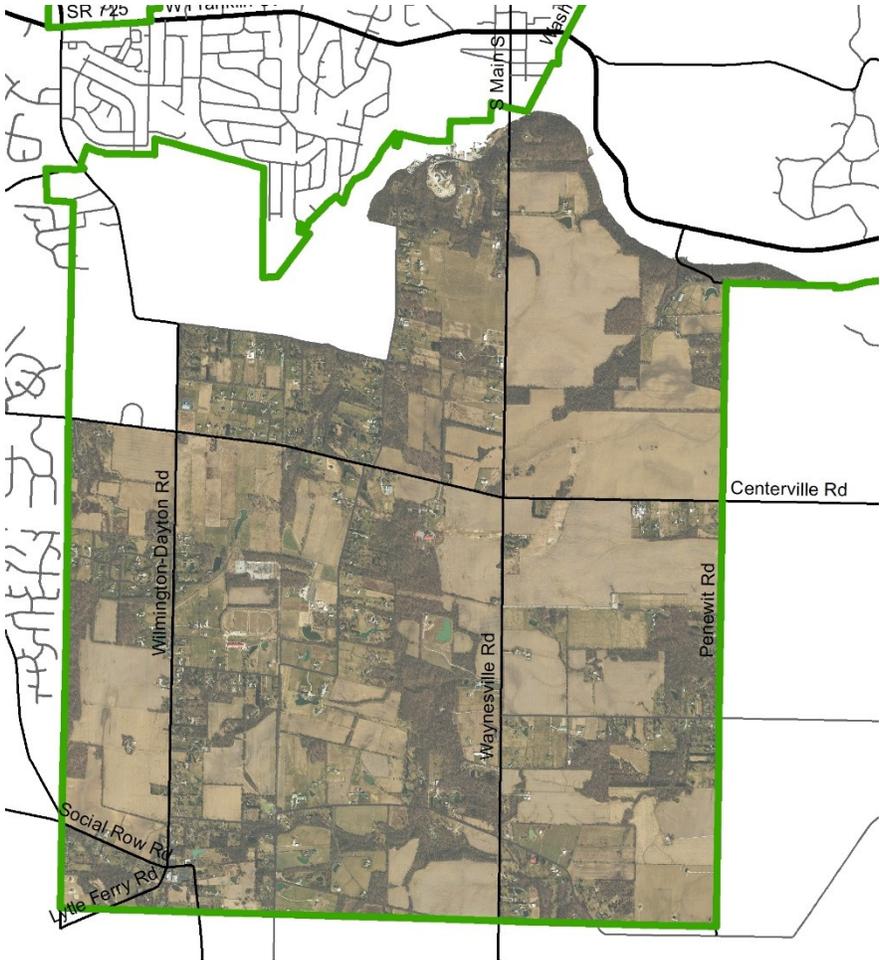
- Portions of this planning area adjacent to a municipality or adjacent to public lands that are adjacent to a municipality are priority areas for Planned Residential Development, with densities to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Zoning Commission and Township Trustees.
- The principal use of the remainder of this planning area should continue to be agricultural uses or single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres, as is currently zoned.
- If sewers are accessible to portions of the planning area, not adjacent to an incorporated area or adjacent to public land adjacent to an incorporated area, then the maximum gross density should not exceed one unit per acre where the homes will have access to sewer.
- This area is a priority area for conservation subdivisions characterized by the clustering of lots to preserve 50 percent or more of a site.
- Large public/institutional uses or structures are not appropriate in this planning area due to the rural, large lot character of development. Parks and recreational uses with minimal structures may be appropriate if the use maintains the rural character of this planning area.
- Major roadways in the area should be maintained in the current two-lane configuration with minimal improvements made only for safety purposes, including the realignment of Wilmington Dayton Road at Conference.
- The township should work with the Five Rivers Metroparks to expand Sugarcreek Reserve.
- The township strongly supports the connectivity plan included in this document and developments in this planning area should incorporate elements of that connectivity plan as applicable.
- Surface mining/mineral extraction is not appropriate in this planning area.

Planning Area 4: Southern Sugarcreek



Southern Sugarcreek

Total Land Area: 5,954 Acres
% of Township: 35.7%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

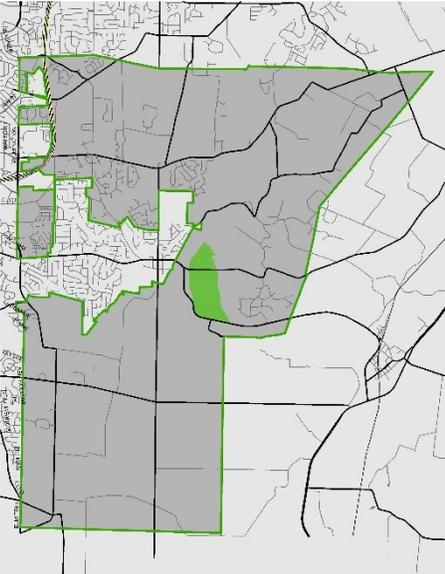
Planning Area 4: Southern Sugarcreek Existing Conditions

- The Southern Sugarcreek Planning Area is the largest agricultural area of the township with the predominant use being active farmland. It is also the location of the township's administrative offices and the portion of the township's industrial corridor lying outside of the floodplain.
- Residential uses in the area are located on large frontage lots, primarily on Ferry Road, Middle Run Road, Sears Road, Wilmington Dayton Road and Social Row Road.
- This planning area has limited access to water and sewer service and the extension of services is not anticipated in the near future.
- This planning area includes the planned roundabout at the Wilmington Dayton/Centerville Road intersection, as well as the Waynesville/Centerville Road intersection currently subject to a safety study to determine necessary safety improvements.

Planning Area 4: Southern Sugarcreek Recommendations

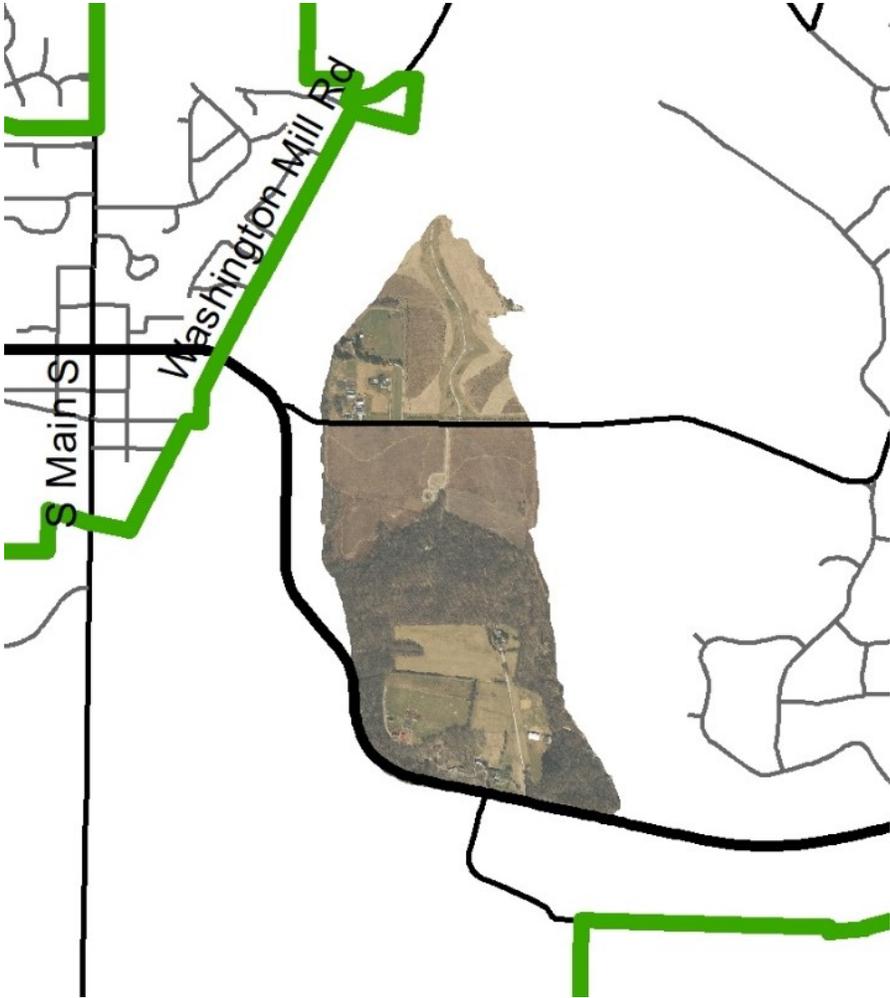
- The principal use of this area should continue to be agricultural uses.
- If development should occur, the principal use should be single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of five acres except in an A-C (Agricultural Conservation) District where a gross density for development should not exceed one unit per five acres.
- Large public/institutional uses or structures are not appropriate in this planning area due to the rural, large lot character of development.
- The township supports the expansion of parkland in this planning area. This area is a priority area for conservation subdivisions characterized by the clustering of lots to preserve 50 percent or more of a site.
- Should properties within the industrial corridor redevelop, such redevelopment should be taken in accordance with all applicable Zoning Resolution requirements with a preference for planned development that elevates the aesthetics of the corridor.
- Major roadways in the area should be maintained in the current two-lane configuration with minimal improvements made only for safety purposes.
- The township strongly supports the connectivity plan included in this document and developments in this planning area should incorporate elements of that connectivity plan as applicable.
- The extension of sewers is unlikely and strongly discouraged in this planning area.
- Surface mining/mineral extraction is not appropriate in this planning area.

Planning Area 5: Berryhill



Berryhill

Total Land Area:	300 Acres
% of Township:	1.8%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

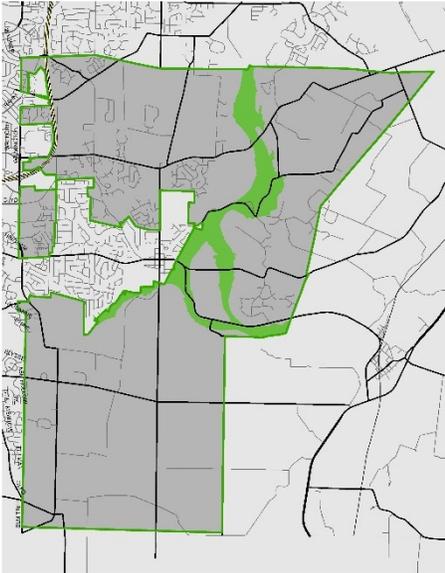
Planning Area 5: Berryhill Existing Conditions

- The Berryhill Planning Area serves as a high point between the Little Miami River and Sugar Creek, providing very impressive views of the river valley below. This area is completely surrounded by floodplains and is essentially an island, accessed by bridges across the river and creek.
- This area is still predominately used for agricultural uses with only a few property owners given the size of the planning area.
- This planning area does not have access to water or sewer service and is unlikely to have sewer access in the future.

Planning Area 5: Berryhill Recommendations

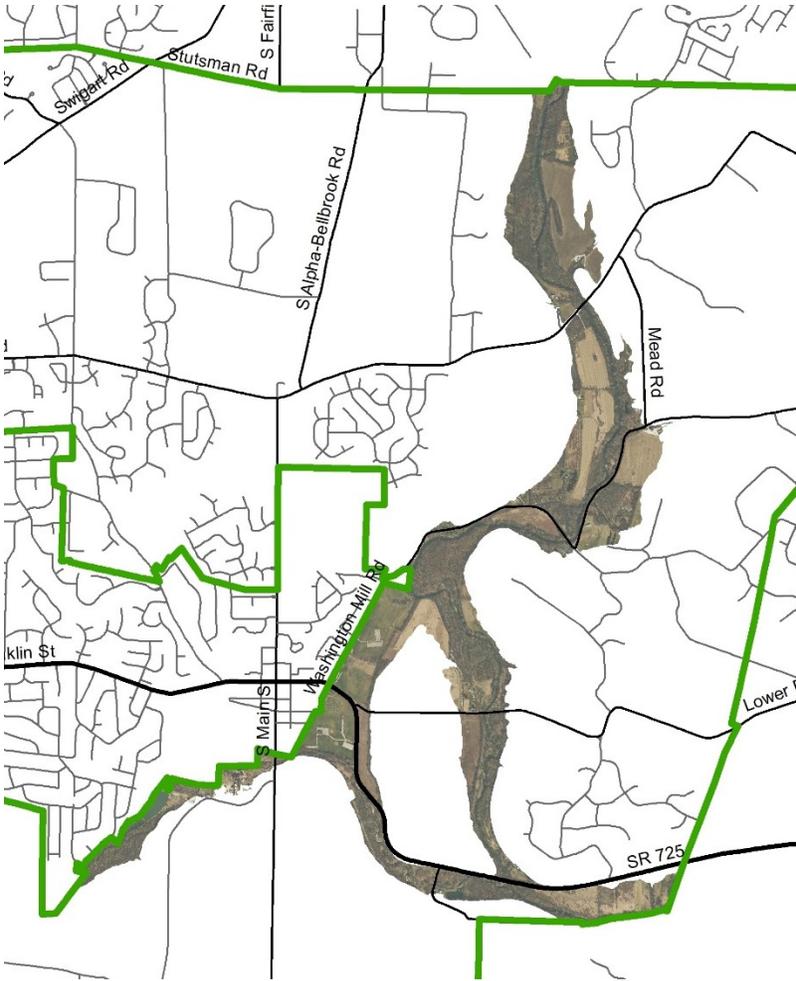
- The township would prefer to see this area continued to be used as farmland or remain undeveloped. For this reason, this is an area where the township should actively seek to purchase properties or development rights.
- If development should occur, the principal use should continue to be recreational uses or for single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of five acres except in an A-C (Agricultural Conservation) District where a gross density not to exceed one unit per five acres would be appropriate.
- Large public/institutional uses or structures are not appropriate in this planning area due to the rural, large lot character of development.
- The township supports the expansion of parkland in this planning area. However, parks and recreational uses should not include major structures or improvements to help maintain the rural character of this planning area.
- If development were to occur, it should be sited or clustered away from the river as much as possible to retain the natural character of the river corridor and to protect the riparian buffer area. At a minimum, there should be an undisturbed area at least 120 feet from the centerline of the river (on both sides) where vegetation should be protected and land disturbance strongly discouraged.
- This area is a priority area for conservation subdivisions characterized by the clustering of lots to preserve 50 percent or more of a site. It is preferable that the clustering of lots in this area be done to protect the vistas or viewsheds of the river valley.
- Major roadways in the area should be maintained in the current two-lane configuration with minimal improvements made only for safety purposes.
- The extension of sewers is strongly discouraged in this planning area.
- Surface mining/mineral extraction is not appropriate in this planning area.

Planning Area 6: Little Miami Corridor



Little Miami Corridor

Total Land Area: 1,176 Acres
% of Township: 7.1%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

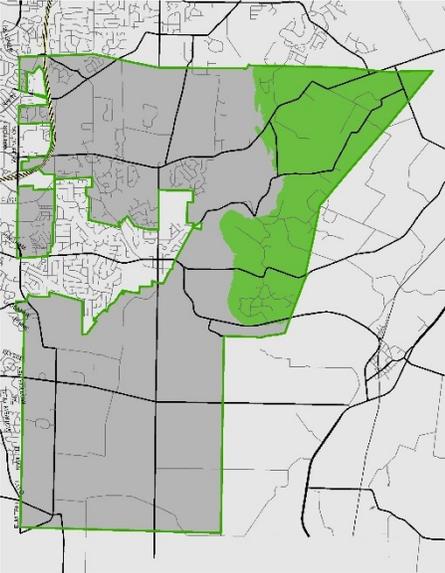
Planning Area 6: Little Miami Corridor Existing Conditions

- The Little Miami Corridor Planning Area encompasses the Little Miami River and its 100-year floodplain boundaries. This is one of the most treasured natural resources in the township due to its importance to the ecosystem, recreational use, and beauty.
- There is minimal development in this area due to the presence of the floodplain. Several lots along the river cross into the area, but the structures are located in the adjacent planning areas.
- This planning area does not have access to water or sewer service.

Planning Area 6: Little Miami Corridor Recommendations

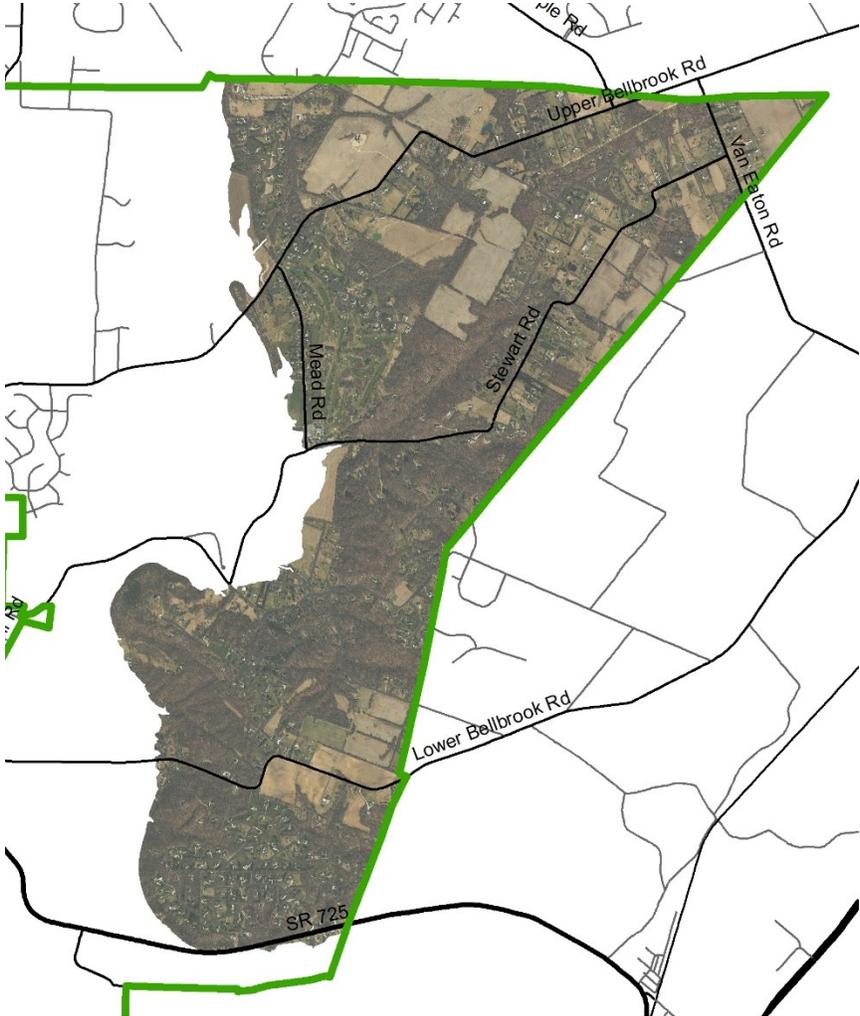
- As previously described, the Little Miami River has been designated as a Scenic River by the State of Ohio and as a National Wild and Scenic River by the Federal Government, one of only 75 rivers in the nation to receive such designation. Thus, Sugarcreek Township bears a special responsibility in regulating what occurs in this area to ensure that this valuable resource is protected for future generations.
- The principal use of this area should continue to be for agricultural or recreational uses. While residential uses are discouraged due to the floodplain, if development were to occur, it should be limited to single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of five acres. All other uses are inappropriate due to the floodplain.
- This area is NOT a priority area for conservation subdivisions.
- If development were to occur, it should be sited away from the river as much as possible to retain the natural character of the river corridor and to protect the riparian buffer area. At a minimum, there should be an undisturbed area at least 120 feet from the centerline of the streambed (on both sides) where vegetation should be protected and land disturbance strongly discouraged.
- This planning area is an ideal area to pursue a policy of public acquisition for open space preservation and/or for recreational uses.
- Major roadways in the area should be maintained in the current two-lane configuration with minimal improvements made only for safety purposes. Bridges constructed across the Little Miami River should be given special design attention to ensure that they blend well into the natural environment.
- The extension of sewers is strongly discouraged in this planning area.
- The township strongly supports the connectivity plan included in this document and developments in this planning area should incorporate elements of that connectivity plan as applicable.
- Surface mining/mineral extraction is not appropriate in this planning area.

Planning Area 7: Eastern Sugarcreek



Eastern Sugarcreek

Total Land Area: 3,620 Acres
% of Township: 21.7%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Planning Area 7: Eastern Sugarcreek Existing Conditions

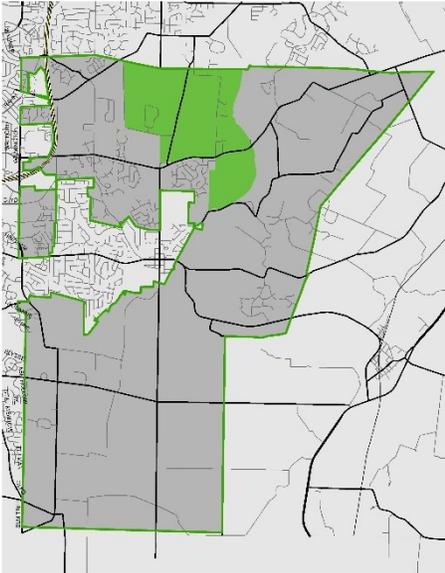
- The Eastern Sugarcreek Area is a mixture of farms, large lot subdivisions, and typical small lot residential subdivisions. It is also one of the more scenic planning areas given the topography and long vistas along the Little Miami River. The southern portion of this planning area is characterized by large lot subdivisions and is almost completely built out. A significant amount of the remainder of the land in the southern portion of this planning area is utilized for farming and constrained by steep slopes that will minimize future development.
- This area is predominately used for single-family residential purposes with some small farming operations.
- This planning area has limited access to water but does not have access to sewer service.

Planning Area 7: Eastern Sugarcreek Recommendations

- The principal use of this area should continue to be for agricultural uses or single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of five acres except in an A-C (Agricultural Conservation) District where a gross density not to exceed one unit per five acres would be appropriate. Increased densities may be permitted, consistent with densities of adjacent developed land.
- Large public/institutional uses or structures are not appropriate in this planning area due to the rural, large lot character of development.
- The township supports the expansion of parkland in this planning area. However, parks and recreational uses should not include major structures or improvements to maintain the rural character of this planning area.
- This area is NOT a priority area for conservation subdivisions.
- Development should be sited away from the roadway as much as possible to retain the rural character of the area.
- Major roadways in the area should be maintained in the current two-lane configuration with minimal improvements made only for safety purposes.
- The extension of sewers is strongly discouraged in this planning area.
- Surface mining/mineral extraction is not appropriate in this planning area.

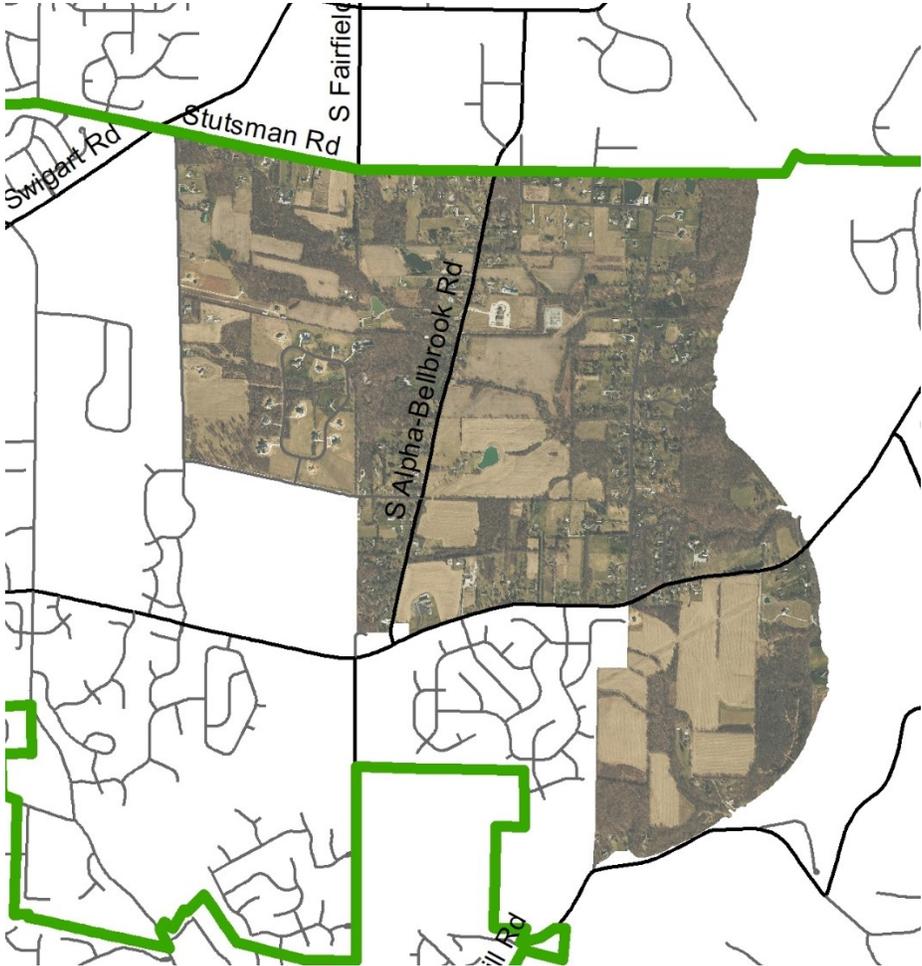


Planning Area 8: South Alpha Bellbrook



South Alpha Bellbrook

Total Land Area: 1,764 Acres
% of Township: 10.6%



Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Planning Area 8: South Alpha Bellbrook Existing Conditions

- The South Alpha Bellbrook planning area serves as the transition area between the portion of the township that is witnessing the most development with the most access to public water and sewer to the more rural areas of the township with minimal access to utility service.
- A significant portion of this area is developed for residential uses on large lots but there are also a large number of farms located east of South Alpha Bellbrook Road and north of Carpenter Road. This planning area has access to water services and some limited access to sewer service.

Planning Area 8: South Alpha Bellbrook Recommendations

- The principal use of this area should continue to be for agricultural uses or single-family residential uses with a minimum lot size of five acres except in an A-C (Agricultural Conservation) District where a gross density not to exceed one unit per five acres would be appropriate or a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres if currently zoned Estate Residential.
- Large public/institutional uses or structures are not appropriate in this planning area due to the rural, large lot character of development. Parks and recreational uses with minimal structures may be appropriate if the use maintains the rural character of this planning area.
- The Township recognizes the benefit of preserving the rural, natural characteristics of Sugarcreek Township as development pressure reaches current farmland in between residential uses in this planning area. Undeveloped acreage tracts with access to public water and sewer in this planning area may be appropriate for Planned Residential Development, with densities to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Zoning Commission and Township Trustees. Developments here should give considerable regard to quality in terms of layout, building materials, landscaping and amenities. Developments should work to preserve existing natural features. Considerable emphasis should be placed on maintaining the rural, natural character of Sugarcreek Township that currently exists and is critical to residential quality of life in this Planning Area. Developments should utilize deeper yard setbacks along primary thoroughfares. Landscaping in highly visible areas and street trees along internal roadways should be provided.
- This area is a priority area for conservation subdivisions characterized by the clustering of lots to preserve 50 percent or more of a site.
- Development should be sited or clustered away from the roadway as much as possible to retain the rural character of the area.
- Major roadways in the area should be maintained in the current two-lane configuration with minimal improvements made only for safety purposes.
- The township strongly supports the connectivity plan included in this document and developments in this planning area should incorporate elements of that connectivity plan as applicable.
- The extension of sewers is strongly discouraged in this planning area.
- Surface mining/mineral extraction is not appropriate in this planning area.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Table E: Planning Area Makeup Quick Reference

Planning Area	Agriculture & Undeveloped	Single-Family (5-10 Acres)	Single-Family (1 to 4.99 Acres)	Single-Family (Less than 1 Acre)	Multi-Family Residential	Commercial & Office	Industrial	Private Recreation	Parks & Recreation	Public & Institutional
Planning Area 1: North Central Sugarcreek	16.6%	7.4%	10.5%	31.2%	2.8%	1.5%	0.0%	6.6%	13.3%	10.1%
Planning Area 2: Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor	9.9%	0.0%	0.0%	10.4%	24.3%	39.6%	0.0%	0.0%	7.6%	8.2%
Planning Area 3: Sugarcreek Reserve	17.5%	3.8%	4.0%	3.8%	0.9%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	69.7%	0.2%
Planning Area 4: Southern Sugarcreek	74.3%	11.5%	10.2%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.9%	1.9%
Planning Area 5: Berryhill	53.3%	5.4%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.7%	0.0%
Planning Area 6: Little Miami Corridor	46.1%	9.3%	3.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	2.0%	3.1%	33.0%	2.9%
Planning Area 7: Eastern Sugarcreek	37.0%	27.1%	28.2%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	2.4%	0.4%
Planning Area 8: South Alpha Bellbrook	54.4%	23.1%	16.5%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	3.1%

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Public Facilities Plan

Transportation

[Map 10](#) on the following page illustrates the transportation improvements that are currently included in MVRPC's long-range transportation plan detailed in the Planning Foundation section of this plan. Beyond these improvements, the township maintains two distinct roles in planning for the future of the transportation network. First, the township must maintain a high level of communication with the county, MVRPC, and state to ensure that the township is represented when decisions and plans are made for transportation improvements. With limited ability and funds to make improvements itself, the township should take on the role of lobbyist when it comes to larger scale transportation

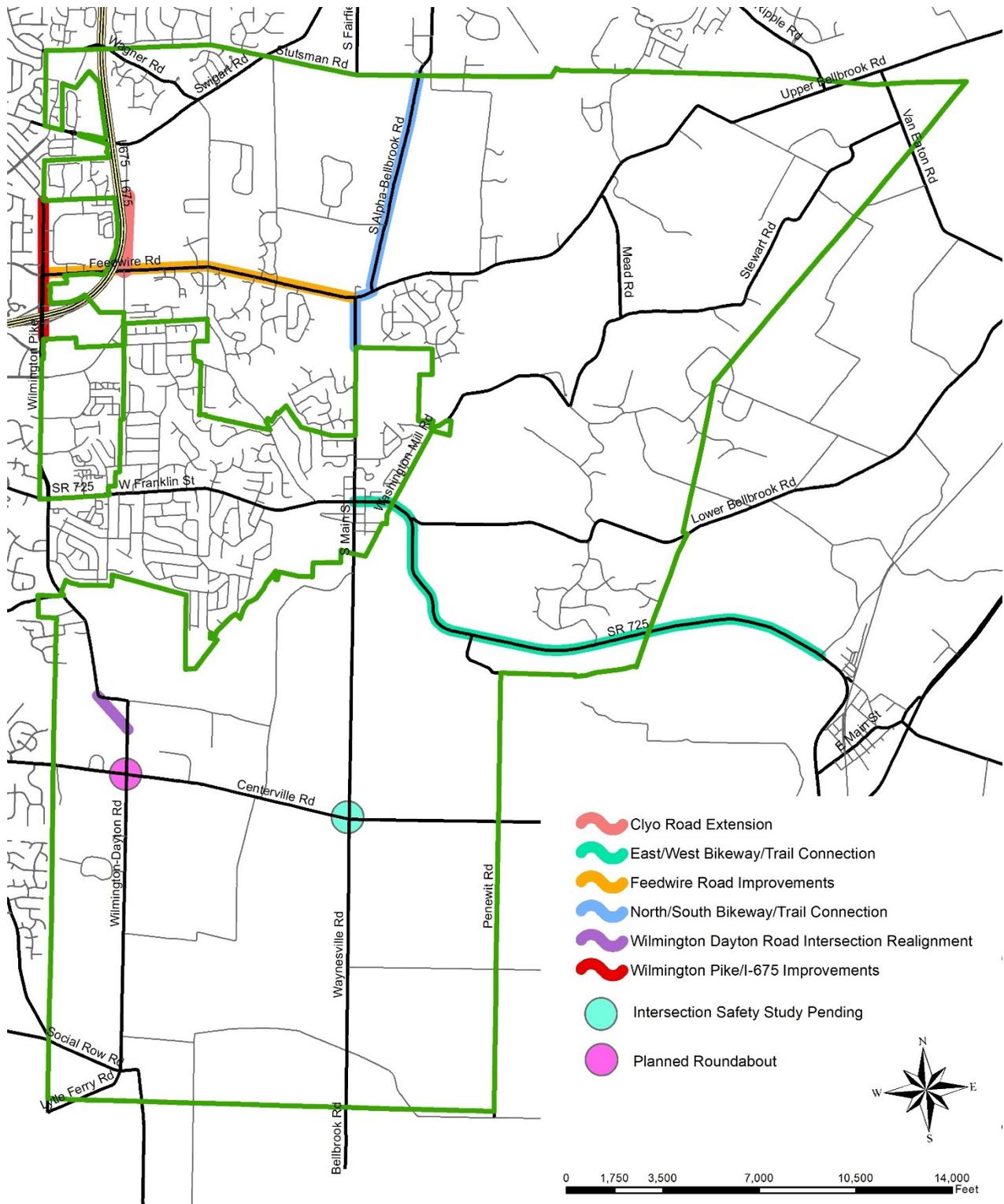
improvements. The second role the township has is reviewing and making recommendations or decisions on the layout of new local roads that will fall under the jurisdiction of the township. While the formal approval of subdivisions happens at the County level, Sugarcreek Board of Zoning Commission and Township Trustees do have authority over the layout of roads in planned developments. In these cases, the township should be proactive at encouraging connectivity both with roads and with sidewalks and trails. The township has the ability, through zoning and the planned development process, to require that large developments share one or more road connections and even require that trails and paths be connected. This ensures that there is a redundancy in the transportation network that is a starting point for minimizing traffic congestion caused by suburban growth.

Other specific actions the township should take as part of this plan, as it relates to public facilities planning, are as follows:

- The township should continue to support efforts to improve the I-675/Wilmington Pike interchange to increase the capacity of Wilmington Pike and the existing I-675 ramps. The township should also support plans to widen Feedwire Road.



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MAP 10: PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

- The township should, along with the county, continue to investigate ways to construct a bicycle facility that can be connected to the Little Miami Scenic Trail, which passes through Spring Valley Township. This state facility will ultimately extend from Cincinnati to Cleveland.
- As part of this plan update, an evaluation of the township's overall connectivity goals was completed. The township strongly supports the connectivity plan included in this document and developments should incorporate elements of that connectivity plan as applicable.
- Through zoning, the township can minimize the number of driveway/curb cuts created by both residential and nonresidential uses. It is a well-established principle of traffic engineering that multiple access points onto a roadway both degrades its traffic-carrying capacity and increases safety hazards. Shared access points should be encouraged or required wherever possible.
- Special attention should be given to the design of any bridges constructed crossing the Little Miami River. Rather than the typical concrete pier construction, arched stone-faced structures should be considered.
- The township should continue its relationship with RTA to support the diversification of transportation options.

Parks

Parks and recreational uses are important to the community. In 1974, the City of Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township established a joint Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Township Park District which owns and/or manages several parks in the township along with assisting in planning for the future of parks in the community. At this time, the park district owns or manages 700 acres, currently divided into seventeen parks in Sugarcreek Township and the City of Bellbrook:



Parks are often one of the key factors in what draws people to an area. A good park district provides a variety of recreational activities for the community and, in the case of Sugarcreek Township, this service is provided by the city, township, county, and the Five Rivers Metroparks (which owns and maintains Sugarcreek Reserve). These agencies are in the best position to plan for the proper location and individual uses of new parks and thus a key recommendation of this plan is to continue to coordinate and participate in these agencies' various park planning efforts. However, in an effort to provide a more quantitative goal for parks and recreation, this plan recommends that the township should strive to meet the national standards of ten acres of neighborhood and community park land for every 1,000 residents. With the current 700 acres of parks operated by the local park district, the township and city currently exceed this standard which many other communities have struggled to achieve. As the township and city continue to grow, it will be important to also continue to develop new park land to support that growth

Township Facilities

The township continues to plan and expand for service as necessary to accommodate growth. The recommendations of this plan will help guide the township in deciding where new facilities should be located in anticipation of the planned growth. Long-term facilities planning should consider moving the township's administrative offices from the current location on Ferry Road to the Upper Bellbrook/Feedwire/South Alpha Bellbrook area which would serve as an anchor for a new neighborhood business/retail area.

Implementation Strategies

As Sugarcreek Township continues to look toward the future, there is a continued need to look at capitalizing on land serviced by infrastructure and protecting the natural resources that are part of the community's identity. Focusing on the strategies where the township has the most authority will increase the ability of the township to plan for and incorporate the recommendations of this plan.



The purpose of this section of the plan is to provide a description of potentially suitable techniques for implementing this long-range land use plan.

Monitoring the Long-Range Land Use Plan

A comprehensive land use plan is a long-term visionary document that looks at a planning horizon of 20 years or more. This does not mean that the township should wait 20 years before reviewing and/or updating the plan. In fact, it is highly recommended that the township reviews the plan, in moderate detail, at least every five years since major changes in infrastructure, the transportation system, development methods, and even changes in elected officials, state law or other regulations can have a significant impact on the recommendations of this plan. It may not be necessary to go through a long and intensive review process, but the township should take steps to involve the public in this review process to ensure that the goals and objectives are still relevant. The review should also identify major changes in infrastructure, transportation and trends that may change the recommendations of this plan.

Involve the Public

Sugarcreek Township should consistently involve the public in every affair of the township whether it is input for this long-range land use plan or guidance on the design of new public buildings. Elected and appointed officials of the township, as well as hired staff, are responsible for a large population and public input helps assure that decisions are made in the best interest of those citizens. As the township continues to grow, public input will be a key ingredient in the process.

Committees

During the creation of the original 2001 plan and the subsequent updates, the township utilized review committees to help work through issues and serve as a sounding board beyond the already established Board of Zoning Commission and Board of Trustees. These committees, which are often short-term to serve a particular purpose, are very useful at involving as many of the residents as possible in township government. For Sugarcreek Township, the best resource is to utilize committees wherever a special need or purpose arises that cannot be addressed by zoning alone.

Coordination and Communication

This plan recognizes that agencies outside of the township regulate many elements of the community including sewers, water, transportation, and stormwater. In fact, the township is restricted in its participation in the subdivision review (not zoning) process, which is under the purview of the Greene County Regional Planning and Coordinating Commission. With so many agencies working in Sugarcreek Township, the township has the ability to serve as a coordinator and identify ways to make improvements in the community that will be more efficient and benefit the entire region. One of the simplest strategies for implementing many of the recommendations is to communicate with the appropriate agencies, inside and outside of the township, and inform them of township policy and the needs of the community.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

General Amendment Process

Modification refers only to the Long-Range Land Use Plan and would include any change to any Long-Range Land Use Plan map or text.

The submission of an application to amend the Zoning Resolution that would result in a conflict with the Long-Range Land Use Plan shall concurrently initiate a modification to the Long-Range Land Use Plan. If an amendment to the Zoning Resolution not in conformity with the Long-Range Land Use Plan is approved, that approval shall be considered a modification to the Long-Range Land Use Plan.

If a modification to the Long-Range Land Use Plan is proposed independent of an amendment to the Zoning Resolution, the requested modification shall be placed on the agenda of the Township Zoning Commission. Notice of the Zoning Commission Meeting shall be posted on the township's website. Within thirty (30) days after the completion of the meeting, the Zoning Commission shall provide its recommendation concerning the proposed modification to the Township Trustees. Within fourteen (14) days after the receipt of the Zoning Commission recommendation, the requested modification shall be placed on the agenda of the Township Trustees. The consideration of the requested modification shall occur within (30) days of the receipt of the Zoning Commission recommendation. Notice of that Trustee Meeting shall be posted on the township's website not less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting. Within twenty (20) days after the completion of the meeting, the Trustees shall vote to accept, reject or modify the recommendation of the Township Zoning Commission.

A copy of the approved Long-Range Land Use Plan, as well as any approved modifications, shall be submitted to the Greene County Regional Planning and Coordinating Commission for incorporation into the Greene County Land Use Plan.

Zoning Amendments

Along with plans themselves, zoning is the most basic of all planning tools used by Sugarcreek Township. Zoning can be used to accomplish the following:

- Promote economic development by concentrating commercial and industrial properties in particular areas of the township. This concentration can help to prevent the overburdening of the market that can then work towards lowering vacancy rates and promoting the commercial or industrial core of the community. By concentrating uses such as commercial businesses together, zoning can help guide these developments into areas of the township best suited for the use because of adequate public facilities and infrastructure.
- Encourage compact development with higher densities in areas served by infrastructure while discouraging development in areas with limited services.
- Create overlay districts to protect special areas or add more standards to an area where there are multiple underlying zoning districts. For example, the township has considered an overlay district to protect the riparian corridor along the Little Miami River that would require special setbacks and vegetation protection within a certain distance of the river, regardless of the underlying zoning district.
- Protect existing residential neighborhoods by controlling densities and restricting the conversion of single-family homes into multi-family units or nonresidential businesses where such conversions are not desired.
- Make sure the relationship between the district's purpose and intent statements reflects the function and uses permitted in the district.

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

- Require appropriate analyses for large public and institutional uses locating within residential neighborhoods to mitigate traffic, light, noise, and other impacts. This may be accomplished by developing a new district specifically for large uses that establishes the minimum requirements including special buffers and a mandatory traffic impact study.
- Separate incompatible uses with transitional zoning. An example of transitional zoning would be zoning land located between large commercial uses and residential homes for small-scale office space or multi-family residential uses.
- Require landscaping, signage, lighting, and adequate parking that will help improve the visual appearance of an area.
- Create various levels of regulations from general to specific based on what the township and public wants for the community. General regulations may include standard requirements for lot area, lot width, or building height requirements. Other requirements for parking, landscaping, lighting and signage may address the impact a use has on the community.

Communities are also using zoning as a method of encouraging appropriate development and redevelopment by moving more toward incentive-based zoning. In cases such as a planned unit development or in parking standards, the township could provide clear standards for increased densities or a waiver of certain standards if an applicant meets certain criteria. For example, the township could provide a certain percentage increase in housing density if a developer dedicates a neighborhood park within a housing development. Another example is if a developer places some of the required parking in the side or rear yards of a commercial development, the landscaping requirements may be reduced because the parking is less visible, and it will force the building closer to the street. These are just a few examples of how incentives can work as a benefit for both the township and future developers and redevelopers of future uses.

In all zoning decisions, the township should be guided by the desire to create a community set apart from others for its emphasis on quality, design and preservation of the natural environment.

Emphasis on Economic Development and Identity

It is the desire of the township to promote quality, progressive, innovative, verdant and environmentally responsible developments that will survive the test of time and set a standard for the region. Economic development refers to the ongoing process of improving and maintaining a strong economic balance in the township. This can be accomplished primarily through the retention and improvement of existing businesses and a focus on providing an attractive community for clean industries, corporate offices, and strong retailers.

The continued revitalization of older retail, office and industrial areas will have a significant impact on the future of the township. Within this plan, the township recognizes the responsibility for, and economic significance of, attracting new commercial users to areas of the township identified for commercial redevelopment. At the same time, the township understands that the redevelopment of older retail and office areas provides a number of opportunities to address issues such as walkability, building design, signage and landscaping that will help to refine the identity of Sugarcreek Township. An emphasis on economic development also calls for increased attention to the economic contribution of the agricultural sector and identifying ways to allow this sector to continue to adapt to maintain the rural character of the township, particularly in southern Sugarcreek where agriculture is still prevalent.

The Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor, serving as the gateway into the township from I-675, is often the only area some people see when visiting Sugarcreek Township. This corridor has become a cornerstone of the township, and this plan identifies that it should remain the primary focus of retail and office activity. When the Zoning Resolution was revised in 2007, architectural standards were

Sugarcreek Township 2024 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

added, as were increased landscaping, screening and buffering and signage standards. Developments standards were again increased in 2023, with an eye for cohesiveness and coordination in the Wilmington Pike Commercial Corridor. As redevelopment occurs, these increased standards will serve to promote Sugarcreek Township as a well-planned area that will ultimately encourage investment in the community and refine our identity.

Meetings with the township by developers early in the development process are encouraged. Sugarcreek Township has the experience and professional expertise to assist the design of new retail, office and mixed-use developments on undeveloped parcels of land planned for such uses. In partnership with property owners, the township will leverage its knowledge of the community and prior development patterns to create attractive investment opportunities.

The township should take the following steps:

- Promote the creation of physical structures and special environments that attract people;
- Encourage well-designed mixed-use developments that meet community needs;
- Support the creation and expansion of efficient pedestrian-friendly connectivity throughout the township;
- Promote the incorporation and preservation of natural features within retail, office and industrial developments as appropriate;
- Work to enhance our community identity through the utilization of increased design standards and active promotion;
- Encourage the revitalization of existing retail, office and industrial areas;
- Promote quality redevelopment projects that are consistent with the goals of Sugarcreek Township; and
- Continue to provide a forum for the marketing of local agricultural products and work to expand the use of the Farmers' Market as a source of community identity and pride.

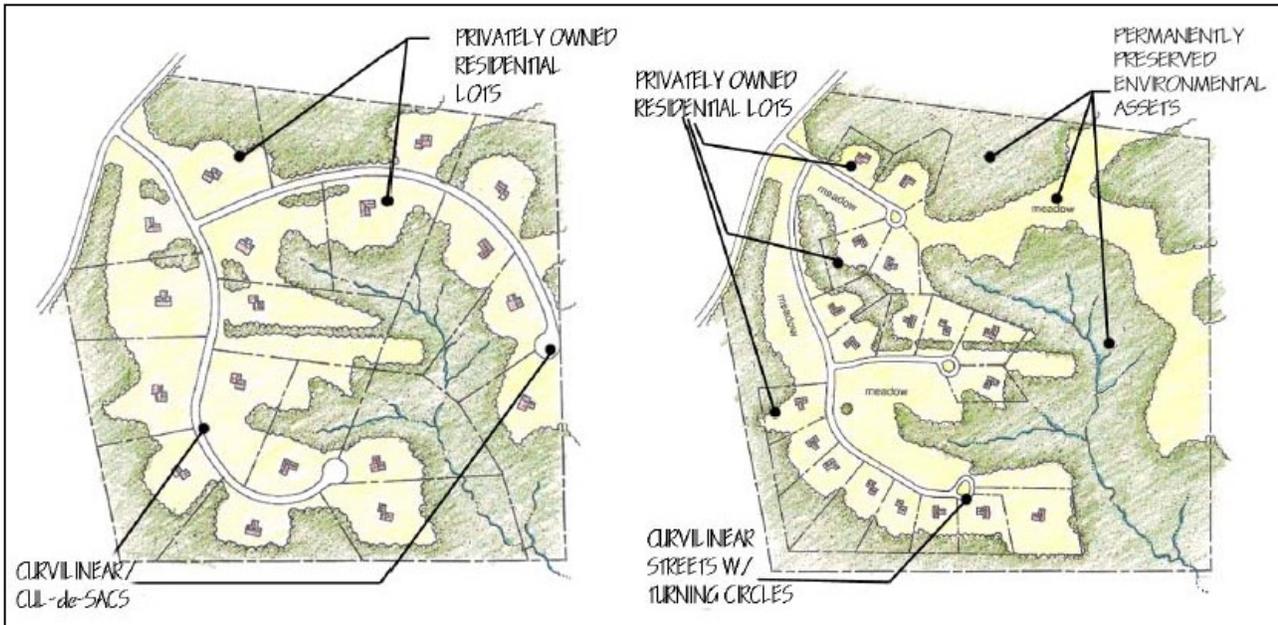
Conservation Subdivisions

Unlike typical residential subdivisions, which will normally consume the entire development parcel, conservation subdivisions rearrange and cluster housing lots, housing units, and roadways to set aside a substantial amount of the otherwise buildable property as permanently protected, quality greenspace. Typically, this approach trades a pattern of large suburban lawns with little or no usable neighborhood open space for more compact yards, supplemented by extensive open space flowing through the development. This open space is retained in perpetuity as greenways, trails, woodlands, pastures, or other uses that maintain scenic character, protect habitat value, and contribute to the quality of life for residents of the entire township. When properly planned, greenspace in conservation developments can become part of an interconnected township or region-wide greenspace network. The image below illustrates the concept of a conservation subdivision. The important thing to note about conservation subdivisions is that while the lots for each individual home may be smaller, there are still the same number of homes on the overall development site, maintaining the density of development whether it is subdivided as allowed by the basic zoning requirements (typical subdivision) or if developed as a conservation subdivision.

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Typical Subdivision

Conservation Subdivision



The township revised its Zoning Resolution in 2007 to incorporate a Conservation Subdivision district. The township should continue to educate developers about the benefits of conservation development and should encourage the use of this innovative development tool, especially in the areas for which conservation development has been established as a priority.

Low Impact Development

Traditionally, stormwater management has involved the rapid conveyance of water to an engineered pond or surface water body. Low Impact Development (LID) is an innovative stormwater management approach that manages rainfall where it lands by modifying developments to try to maintain some natural hydrologic function. The goal is to mimic a site's predevelopment landscape by using site design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source. Low impact development encourages the use of small, cost-effective management practices on each individual lot.

Almost all components of the developed environment have the potential to serve as a management practice. This includes open space, rooftops, streetscapes, parking lots, sidewalks, driveways and medians. LID is a versatile approach that can be applied equally well to new development, redevelopment, and commercial and industrial projects. Some management practices associated with LID include:

- Infiltration of rainwater through vegetated trenches and basins with some filtration devices;
- Landscaping methods that include rain gardens, bio swales, and native vegetation;
- On-site capture and storage of rainwater;
- Minimization of impervious area by using narrower streets, porous pavement, concave medians, and landscaped traffic-calming areas; and
- Protecting and restoring soil quality by minimizing land disturbing activities and avoiding compaction, and by increasing organic matter content using compost application and strategic use of native vegetation.

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Rain Barrels are designed to hold rainwater collected from residential rooftops. Water is retained in the barrel and can be used for yard watering of vegetation. The barrels are designed with overflow options to allow water to infiltrate beneath the barrel or be redirected to such features as a rain garden.

Rain Gardens are shallow depression areas planted with native vegetation that absorb and infiltrate runoff from impervious surfaces, and which may discharge groundwater, a storm drain, or surface outlet. Depending on site conditions, a sub-grade tile system may be recommended to enhance infiltration, especially where a high-water table exists. Rain gardens reduce the volume of stormwater runoff pollutant loads delivered to surface water. Rain gardens can be used on individual lots, no matter what the use is, to mitigate impervious surface runoff.

Bioswales are vegetated swales which are an alternative to standard below ground storm water sewers. They intercept or receive impervious surface runoff and blend infiltration with slow conveyance of storm water. The soil matrix of the swale can be amended to enhance infiltration and percolation. These systems can be engineered to absorb high frequency, low intensity storms but can convey the large storm events while providing vegetative filtering. Bioswales can discharge groundwater, storm sewer intakes, or directly to surface water.

Permeable Paving Alternative surfaces are those surfaces that provide reduced site runoff by increasing infiltration into the soil. There are a number of permeable paving surfaces available from paver blocks to geoweb reinforced glass surfaces. These systems can be designed to infiltrate virtually all design storms including the 100-year storm, or they can be used strategically with impervious surfaces to capture the high frequency, low intensity storms.

Low Impact Grading is among the most harmful development practices to site grading. Grading is the process of clearing the site of vegetation and redefining the land's topography. Grading is harmful because it reduces species habitat by clearing vegetation and reduces water quality by introducing sediment into local bodies of water. It also compacts soil (increasing imperviousness) and damages root systems. Techniques such as minimizing disturbance and the grading footprint can reduce the impacts on a site caused by grading.

Benefits to Using Low Impact Development (LID) Techniques

Low Impact Development is an ecologically friendly approach to site development and storm water management that aims to mitigate development impacts to land, water, and air. LID principals have many benefits and advantages over conventional development, including:

- Enhancing the local environment and protecting public health while saving developers' and local governments' time and money;
- Addressing nonpoint source pollution and stormwater management regulatory challenges in a simple and economical manner;
- Protecting surface water and groundwater from the impacts of runoff and groundwater contamination that can come from neighborhoods;
- Helping to better balance conservation, growth, and economic development objectives by having more effective and flexible technology choices;
- Reducing stormwater conveyance and management infrastructure and the associated construction, maintenance and enforcement costs;
- Reducing water pollution and improving wildlife habitat more effectively than conventional best management practices (BMPs) because LID uses multiple systems;
- Using technologies that universally apply to greenfields, brownfields, and redevelopment;

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- Enjoying increased quality of life, fiscal stability, reduced air pollution, water conservation, better habitat protection, and increased property values.

Sugarcreek Township can take the following steps to pave the way for the utilization of Low Impact Development techniques:

- Evaluate the Zoning Resolution and how it addresses water resources in order to identify areas that should be changed;
- Work with Greene County Regional Planning to evaluate how subdivision regulations can be altered to allow innovative LID site design techniques; and
- Encourage developers to use LID techniques in our community.