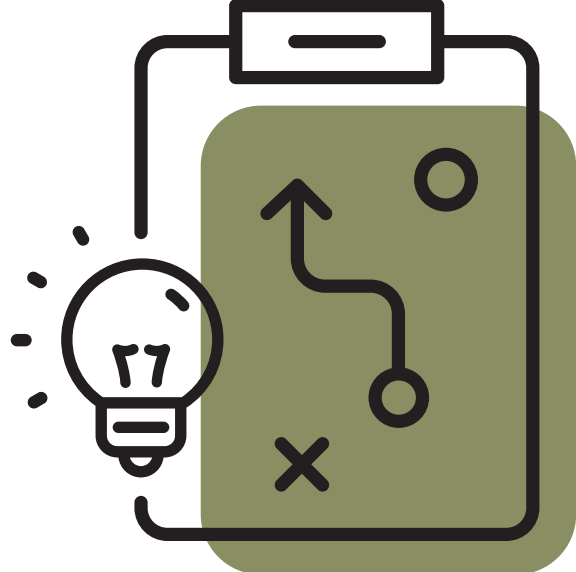


WELCOME
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
OPEN HOUSE

4:00 to 7:00 PM

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?



ACTION PLAN
FOR A COMMUNITY'S VISION
OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS
.....
PEOPLE • ECONOMY • PLACE

WHY DO WE NEED A PLAN?

At its core, a Comprehensive Plan outlines everything the community wants to accomplish in the future. Collecting all of the community's projects and goals in one place allows local departments and groups to cooperate much more efficiently.

A ROADMAP FOR
THE FUTURE



A LIST OF PRIORITIES



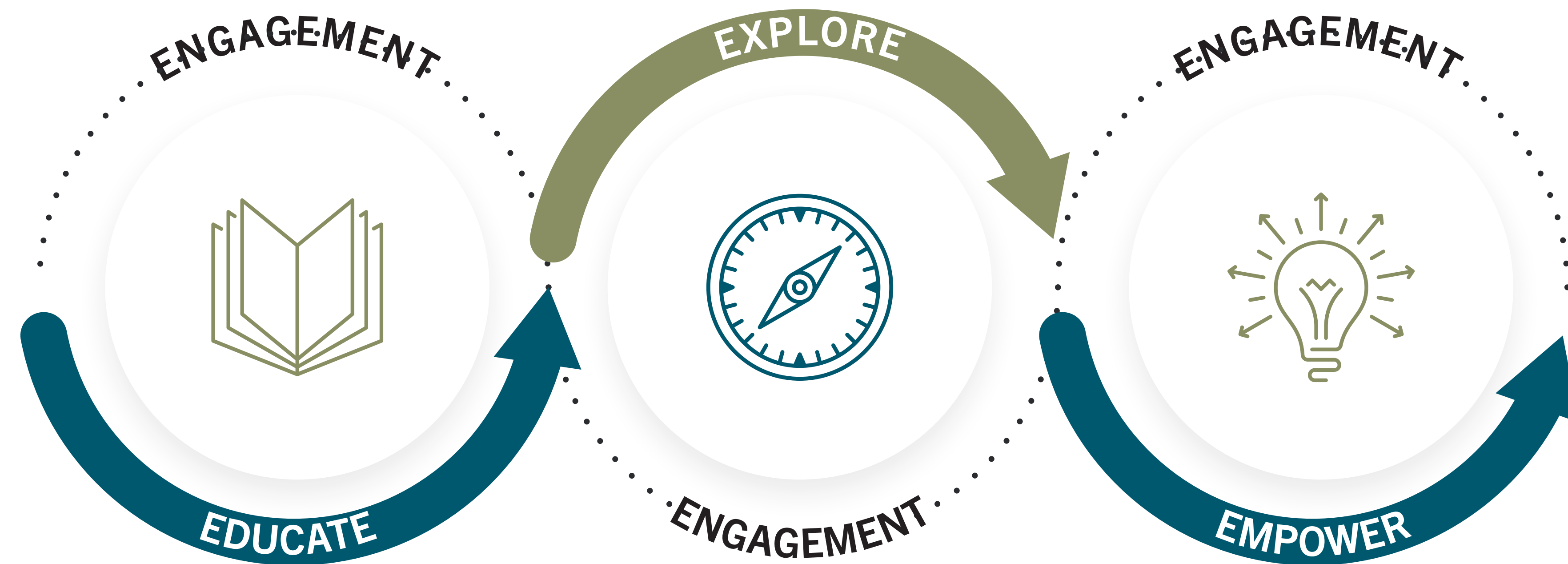
A PLAN OF ACTION



QUALIFYING FOR FUNDING



PROCESS



OCTOBER 2024 TO MAY 2025

- Data gathering and analysis
- Stakeholder interviews
- Steering Committee and Economic Development Committee meetings #1 and #2
- Community open houses
- Public engagement at community events
- Public survey
- Virtual open house
- Existing Conditions Report

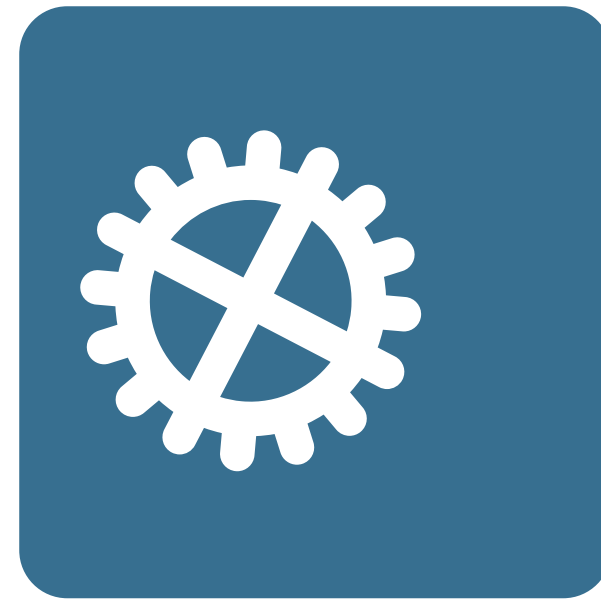
JUNE TO NOVEMBER 2025

- Steering Committee and Economic Development Committee meetings #3
- Community open house
- Public engagement at community events, including the Ross County Fair
- Initial plan elements drafting

DECEMBER 2025 TO JULY 2026

- Steering Committee and Economic Development Committee meetings #4 and #5
- Development focus area meetings
- Public engagement at community events
- County Commissioners and other local leadership public meetings
- Comprehensive Plan finalization and adoption

ENGAGEMENT



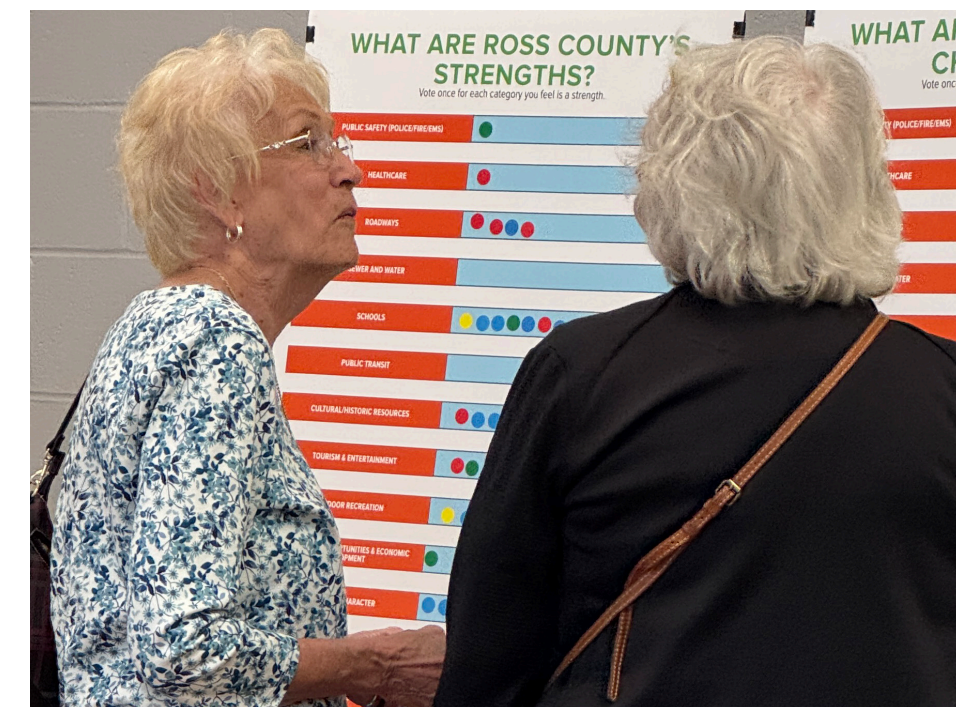
5 Steering Committee Meetings



733 Survey Responses



60+ Total Stakeholder Interview Attendees



**1 Virtual Open House
14 In-Person Open Houses
1 Ross County Fair**

KEY THEMES

Active Transportation and Walkability

Housing

Economic Development

Healthcare

Parks and Recreation

Roadways and Traffic Controls

Utilities

Agriculture

VISION & GOALS

VISION STATEMENT

Ross County envisions a thriving and healthy community where families flourish, businesses grow, and visitors feel welcome. Growth will be balanced to honor our rural character and agricultural roots while prioritizing expansion of housing, workforce opportunities, and an advanced economy.

GOALS

Economic Growth

- Promote site readiness for advanced manufacturing, research and development, agribusiness, and employment expansion, and cultivate a strong business community that supports existing businesses while attracting new and emerging industries.

Balanced Growth

- Promote and prioritize development and public improvements in areas best suited for development, while preserving our rural and agricultural core.

Increase Housing Stock

- A mix of unit types and price points is necessary to address current and future demand.

Transportation Improvements

- Improve roadway and active transportation infrastructure to better serve our residents, workforce, visitors, and businesses, resulting in better connectivity and safer, more efficient, and accessible transportation options.

Utility Expansion and Capacity Building

- Update and expand utilities and infrastructure, including broadband,

water, sewer, natural gas, and electricity, to facilitate additional housing and business, manufacturing retention and development, as well as site readiness.

Connect People to Quality-of-Life Assets

- Connect people to parks, trails, and local and regional outdoor recreational amenities to improve the quality of life and health for residents and visitors.

Enhance Law Enforcement, Health, and Safety Services

- Enhance community experience and quality of life by prioritizing access to fire and emergency medical services, as well as safety and security.

Strengthen Agricultural Core

- Support programs that are designed to encourage the continuation and growth of our agricultural economy and heritage.

Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Encourage collaboration between local governments, including school districts, townships, and municipalities, which is vital to implementing key economic and development initiatives.

LAND USE

WHAT WE HEARD & LEARNED

- The largest existing land use category is Agricultural/Rural Living, accounting for nearly 85 percent of the County's area.
- Most building permits issued in the last five years have been for projects other than new construction, both commercial and residential, indicating slow growth in the County.
- There is an approximate net demand of 500 rental units and 8,500 owner-occupied units.
- Location quotient analysis indicates that Ross County has relative strength in the Manufacturing, Transportation, and Warehousing sectors. Retail gap analysis reveals leakages, or opportunities in Ross County, supporting the need for more retail, such as full-service restaurants.
- 95 percent of survey respondents think the conservation of natural resources is “important” or “very important.”

STRATEGIES

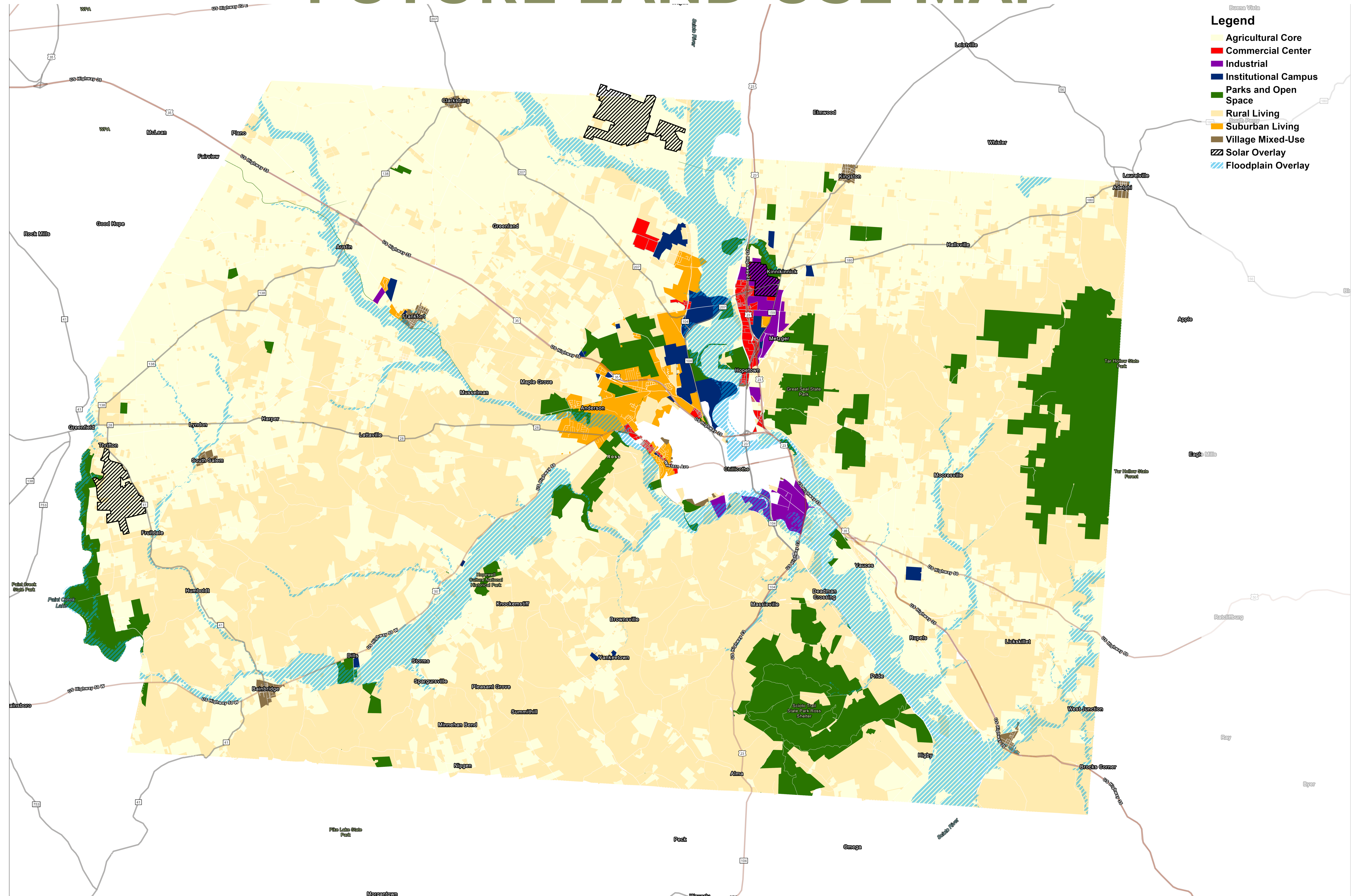
- Utility and Transportation Infrastructure to Support Focus Areas
- EPA Grants for Environmental Remediation

LAND USE

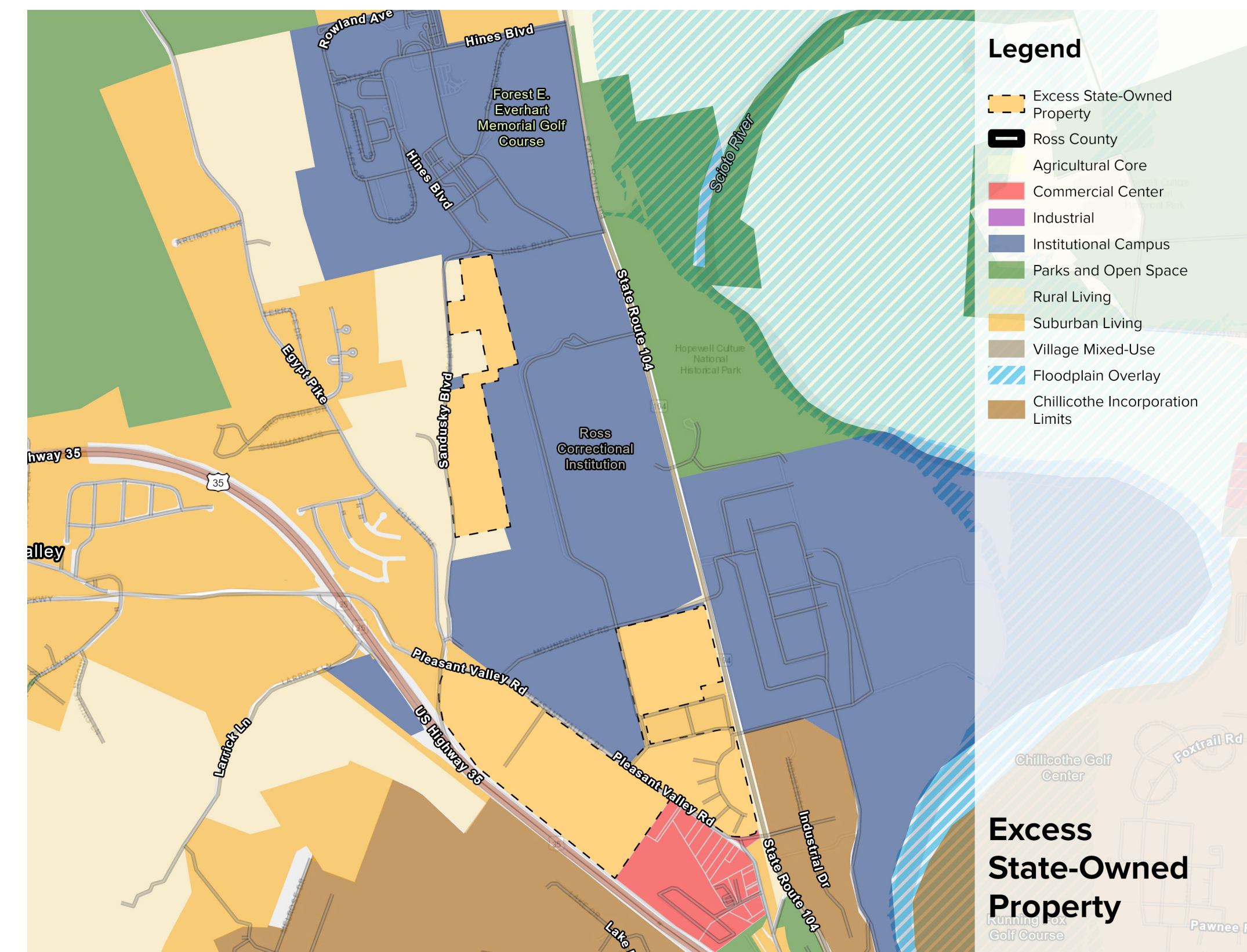
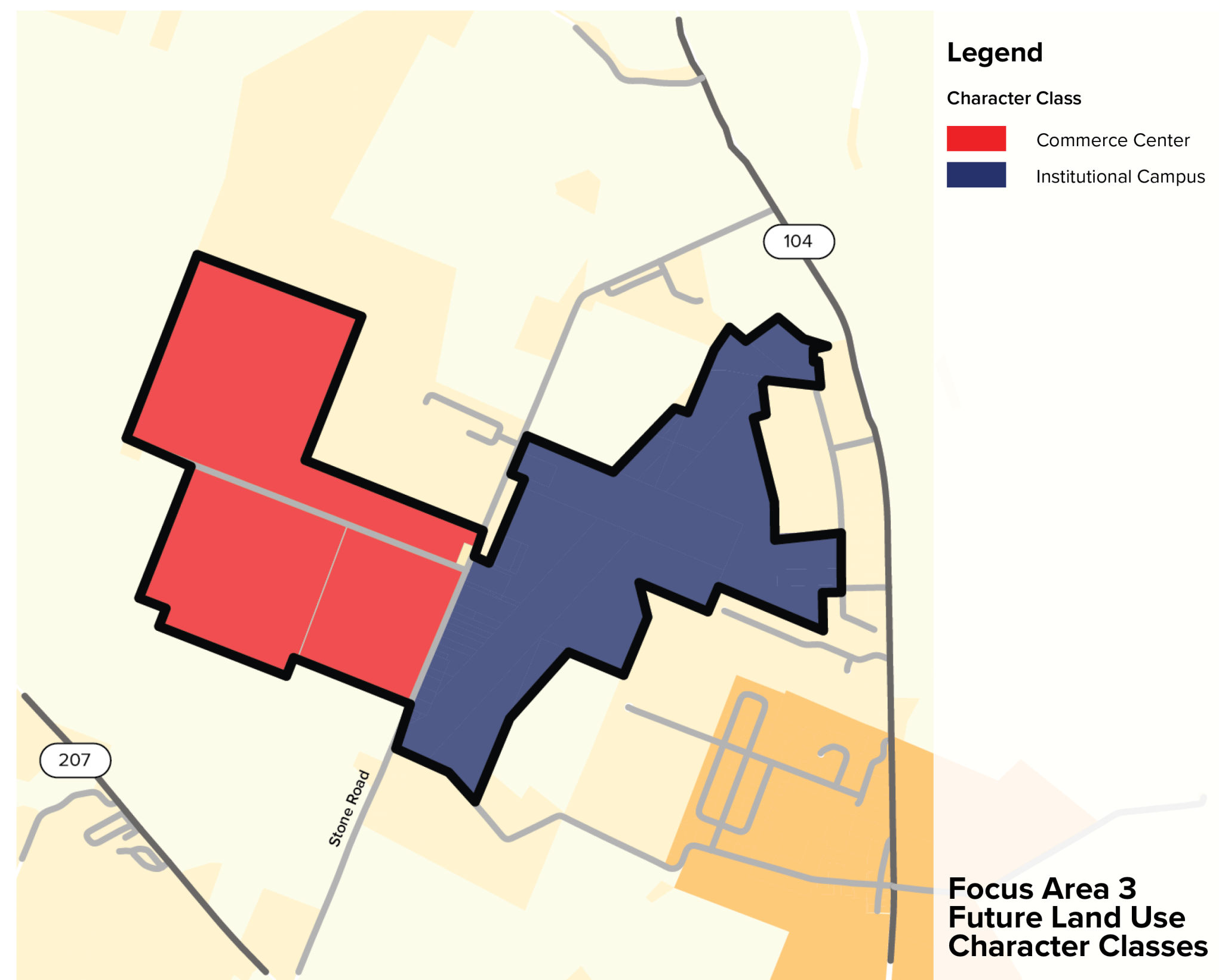
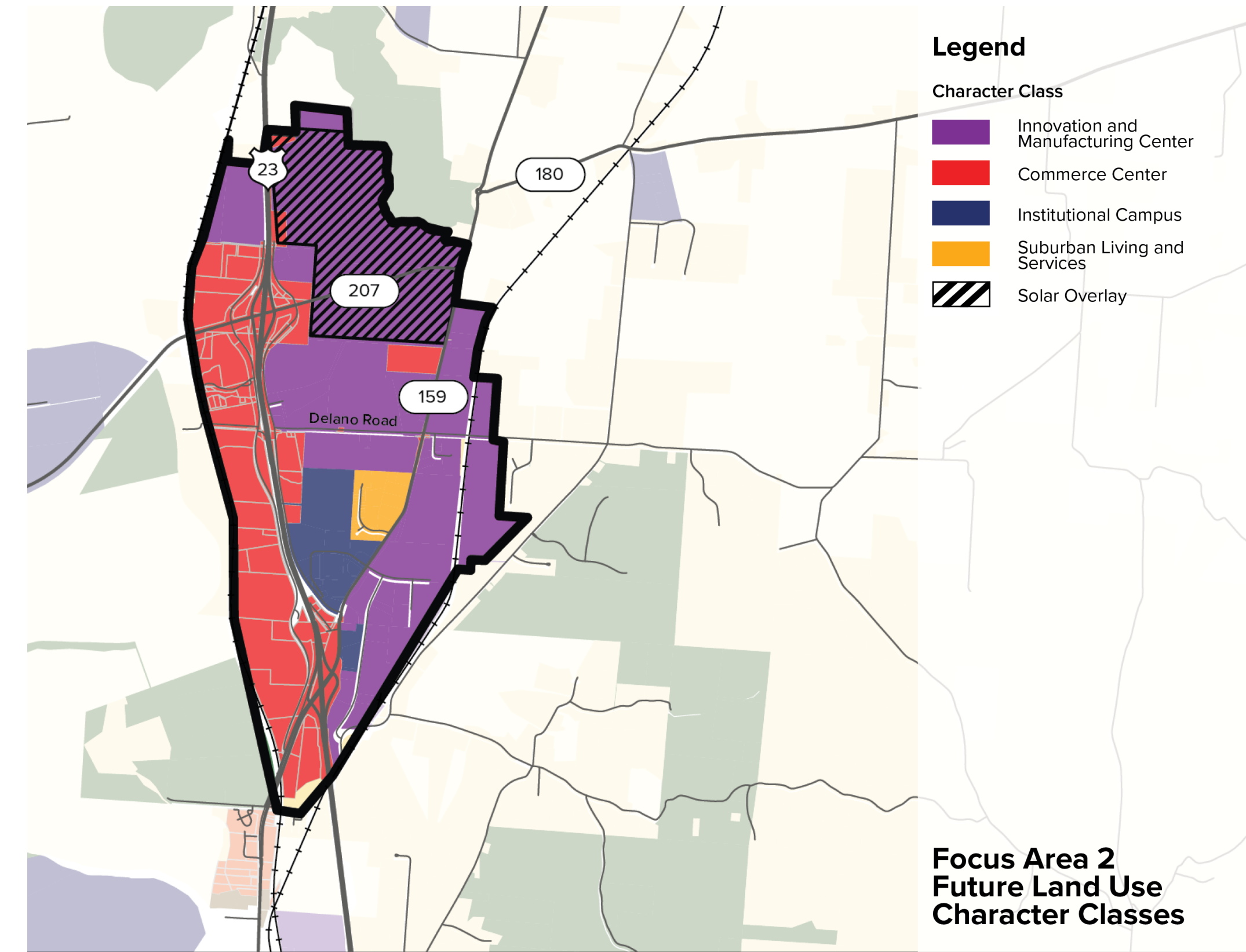
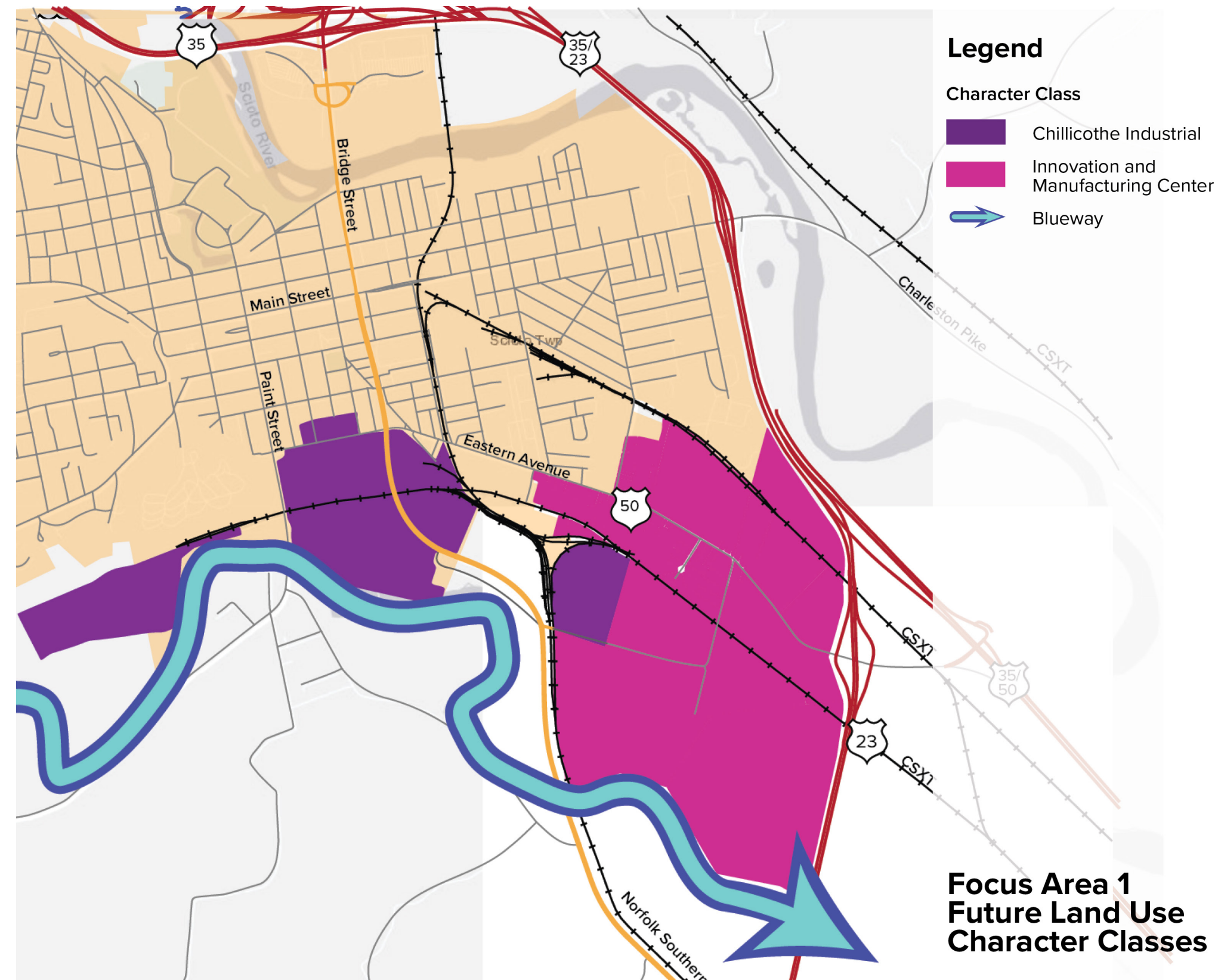
SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

- Economic Development. The Future Land Use Map is important for business and investment attraction as it signals the County's intent. Without a plan, development will occur haphazardly, without consideration of community impacts, such as transportation facilities and utility infrastructure. Having a plan breeds confidence through transparency and protects the community's interests, such as quality of life.
- Healthy Communities and Quality of Life. Land use directly shapes quality of life by determining how people interact with their environment on a daily basis. The spatial arrangement of housing, employment, services, community amenities, and open space influences accessibility, commute times, and transportation choices, which in turn affect stress levels, health outcomes, and economic opportunity.
- Villages and Census-Designated Places. Villages and Census-designated places have downtowns, main streets, or other traditional development patterns worth perpetuating. The Land Use chapter acknowledges the inherent value of villages and Census-designated places by creating a land use character class that will support quality of life for residents by supporting walkability and the aforementioned traditional development patterns.
- Agriculture. Ross County's strong agricultural tradition will only continue if farmland is guarded jealously. The Future Land Use Map does this by identifying areas the County has deemed most suitable for various forms of development, thereby conserving agricultural land.
- Housing. Land use is fundamental to housing because it determines where, how, and what types of housing can be built. Density allowances, subdivision regulations, and development patterns directly influence housing supply, attainability, and diversity. Communities that permit a mix of housing types, such as single-family homes, townhomes, and multifamily units, are better positioned to meet the needs of different income levels and life stages. In contrast, restrictive land use policies can limit supply, drive up costs, and contribute to Ross County's housing shortage. Additionally, land use decisions affect proximity to jobs, schools, transportation, and services, all of which play a critical role in housing desirability and long-term community stability.
- Transportation. Development activities must be supported by the appropriate infrastructure improvements. The Focus Areas detailed within this Comprehensive Plan inform where future improvements to meet the Plan's goals.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



FOCUS AREAS



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TRANSFORM ROSS COUNTY INTO A GROWING REGIONAL ECONOMIC LEADER

Plan Objectives

- Grow Ross County's population by 5% by 2031
- Create 500 net new jobs by 2031
- Prepare 750 acres for industrial and mixed use sites within Focus Areas for development by 2031
- Create 500 new residential units within Focus Areas by 2031
- Prepare 200 acres for residential sites for development within Focus Areas by 2031
- Grow median income by 10% by 2031

Strategies

- Connect to Southern Ohio and Central Ohio
- Utilize an economic development incentive policy
- Prepare sites for industrial, residential and mixed-use investment

System Connections

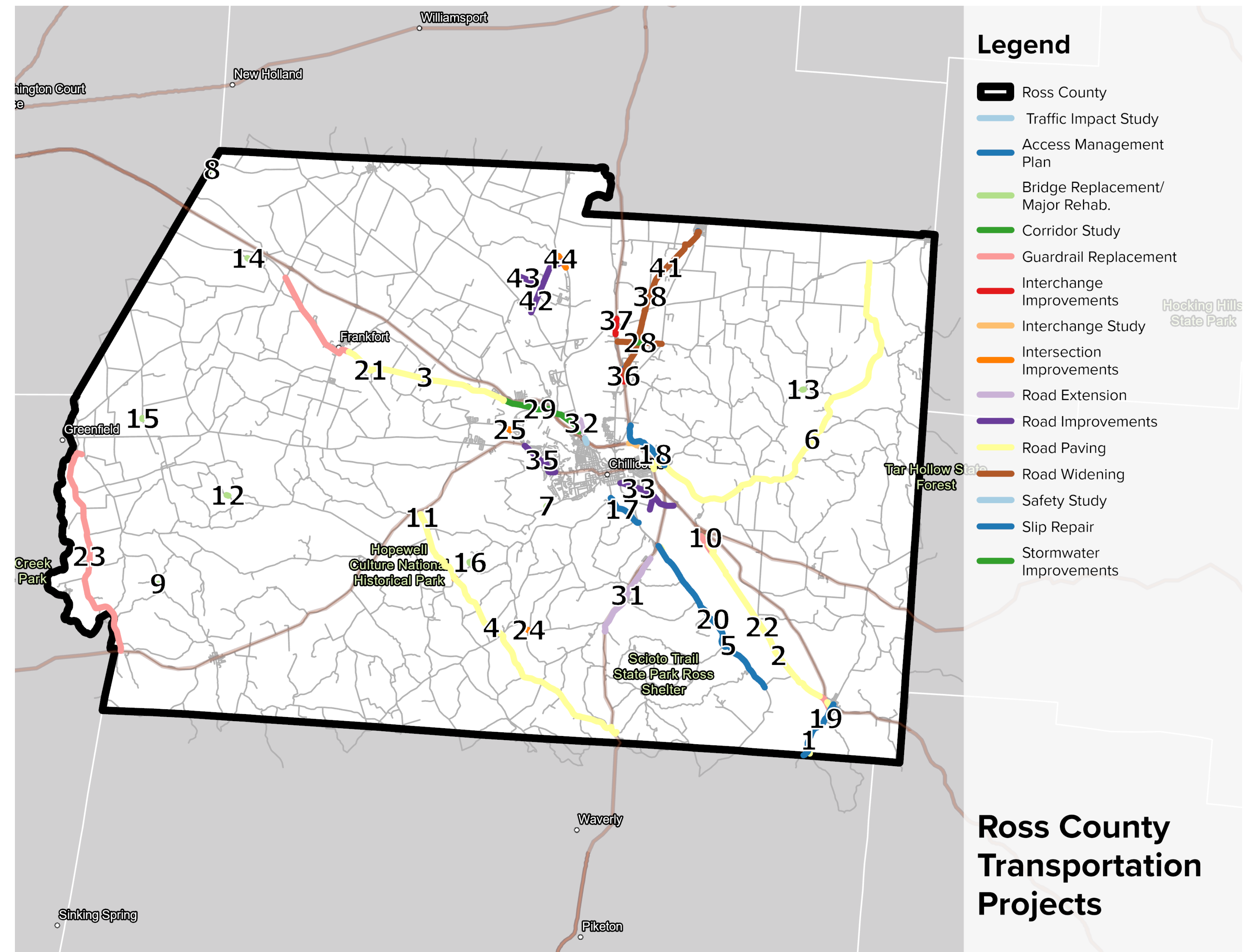
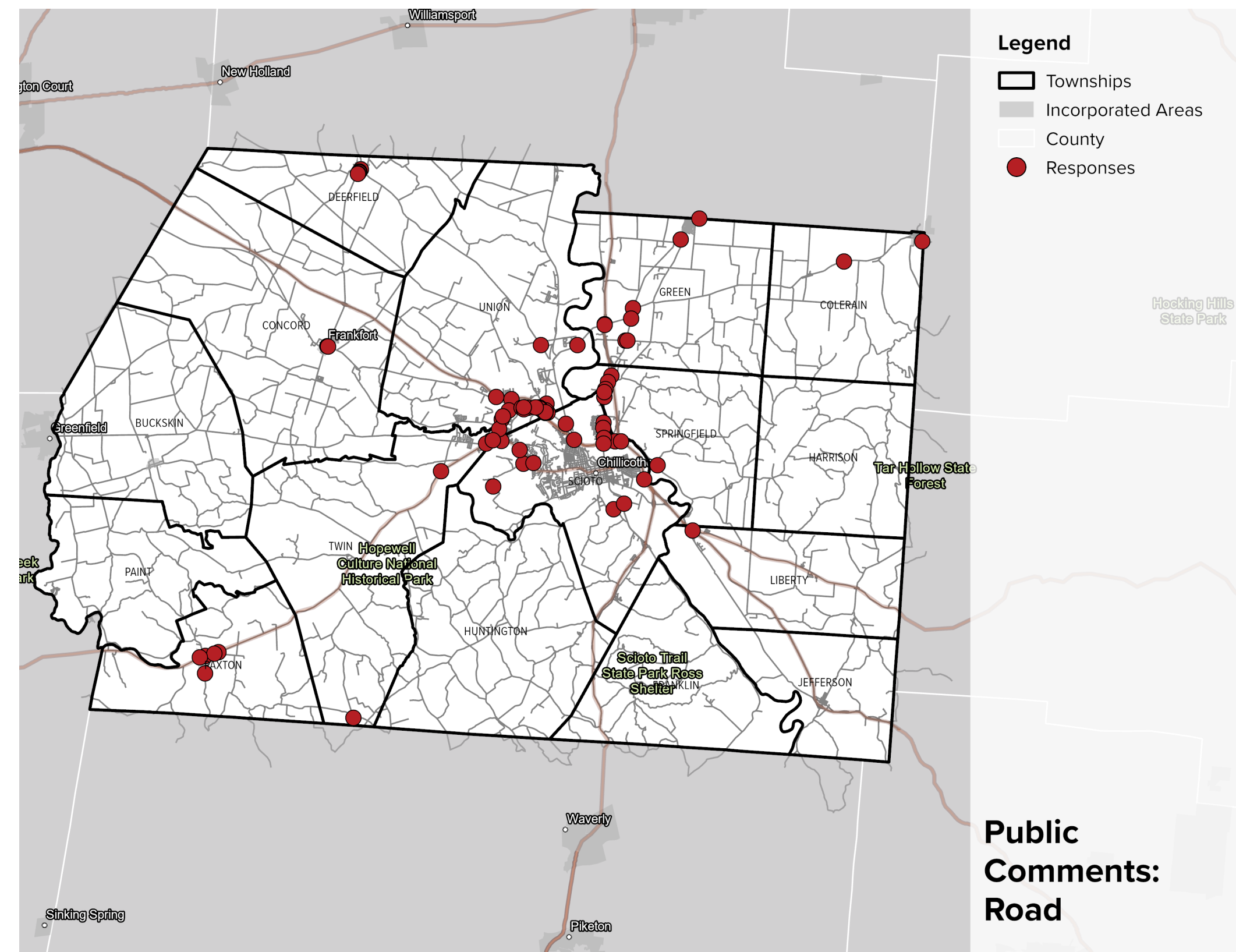
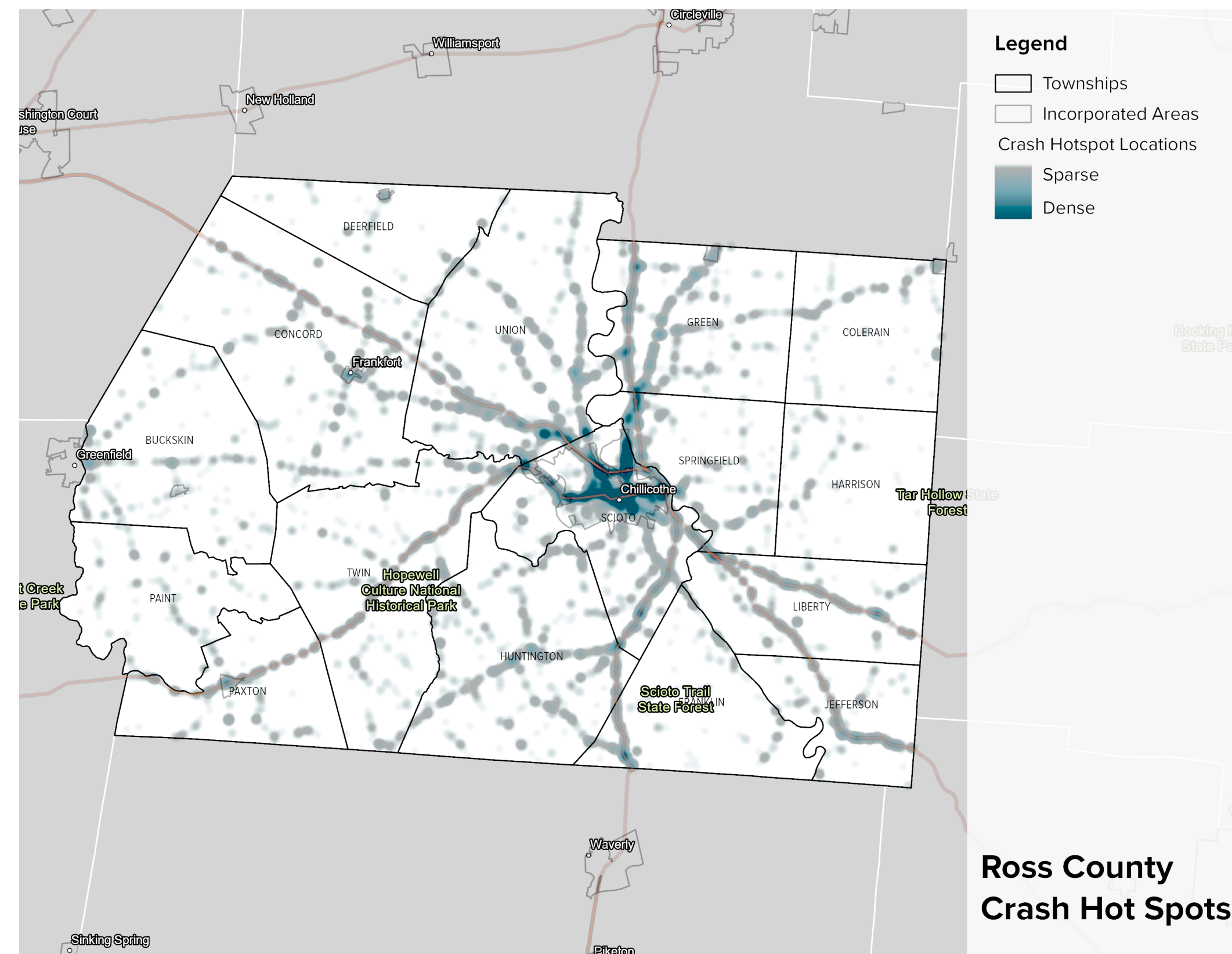
- Land Use. Land use is a key component of economic development. It needs to be in the right place near utilities and the road network. This economic development Plan ties directly to the future land use and focus areas described in the Comprehensive Plan. The Focus Areas specifically combine land use and economic policies to implement this systems approach.
- Quality of life. A strong economy creates prosperity, enabling residents to enjoy the numerous recreational and cultural benefits available or planned in Ross County, which include amenities that help people be happy and healthy. Healthcare provides jobs and the comfort of knowing that access to healthcare is close.
- Housing. The job provides residents with the means to purchase or lease homes. Having available housing stock also helps support a local workforce that is vital from economic success.
- Agriculture. Agriculture is big business in Ross County for many families. Continuing to foster land use and economic development policies that support this industry through food co-ops or better access to markets.
- Villages. Villages are an important part of providing a variety of housing options and a small-business platform for local entrepreneurs.
- Transportation. Transportation is a vital system for economic development to get workers to their places of employment. Most industry relies heavily on the network of highways to ship both raw and finished goods to their destinations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tactics

- Build stronger economic links to Southern and Central Ohio
- Adopt a county-wide economic development policy that builds a Public-Private Partnership model to promote industrial, residential and mixed-use development through the use of Community Reinvestment Area property tax abatements to make projects more competitive, Tax Increment Financing, Joint Economic Development Districts and JobsOhio Ohio Site Inventory Program to fund public infrastructure, New Community Authorities, and Ohio Transformational Mixed Used Development tax credits to spur residential development
- Prepare future large scale sites for new industrial, residential and mixed use investment through the control of 700 acres for industrial and residential development and 50 acres for targeted mixed-use development and apply the Ross County model PPP to these sites and recruit developers or companies to those sites
- Create the Ross County WORKS program to build a employer-education partnership to develop tomorrow's workforce
- Prepare Ross County Brownfield site(s) for future power production to provide electricity for industrial, residential and mixed use development
- Build a global tourism initiative to promote the Ross County UNESCO site through the state of Ohio and JobsOhio.

TRANSPORTATION / THOROUGHFARE PLAN



TRANSPORTATION / THOROUGHFARE PLAN

WHAT WE HEARD & LEARNED

- Some bridges are deteriorating and/or are no longer suitable for the conveyance of farm equipment as farmers move equipment between fields.
- The northern half of the County has historically been perceived as having access management and traffic concerns. However, with new regional development, such as Anduril, new challenges are anticipated in the northern portion of the County based on ODOT data.

STRATEGIES

- County Capital Improvement Plan
- US 50/Western Avenue Improvements
- Pleasant Valley Road Corridor
- Support Focus Areas
- Advance Supporting Corridor, Access Management, and Connectivity Improvements
- Transportation Improvement District (TID)

SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

- Land Use. Land use and transportation are tightly interconnected: the way land is developed shapes how people travel, and transportation networks, in turn, influence patterns of development.
- Economic Development. A safe, reliable, and efficient roadway network is needed to support the movement of goods and people and foster an economically thriving Ross County.
- Healthy Communities and Quality of Life. Transportation supports Ross County's quality of life by providing reliable access to jobs, schools, healthcare, and essential services. When managed safely and efficiently, vehicular transportation enhances mobility, economic opportunity, and social connection—key elements of a healthy, vibrant community.
- Villages and Census Designated Places. Having the right-sized functional classification of roadways impacts the vitality of villages and named places.
- Agriculture. Roadways and bridges need to support all appropriate users, including farmers moving farm equipment within the agricultural core of Ross County.
- Housing. In the past, interest in housing development along the Pleasant Valley Road corridor has not come to fruition due to traffic concerns, underscoring the need for roads to support housing.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES



Healthcare Access



Active Lifestyle



Public Safety

WHAT WE HEARD & LEARNED

- Ross County has an aging population, leading to higher healthcare transportation demand. Current transit is limited.
- Lack of physical activity and poor nutrition identified in 2024 Community Needs Assessment as most significant detrimental health behaviors. Access to produce is a challenge for many in the County.
- Ross County has a wealth of trails within existing parks. There is an opportunity to enhance this network by connecting communities and parks with trails as well as improving walkability in villages.
- Public safety was one of the top priorities noted by open house respondents.

- Cooperative Grocery Stores in Villages
- Link Major Parks with Shared-Use Paths Using ODNR Funding
- Create Parks and Recreation Enhancements with Long-Term Ownership, Maintenance, and Funding plans
- Create Scioto River and Paint Creek River Trails
- Safe Routes to School Funding
- Limited Complete Streets Policy
- Village Walkability Audits
- Enhance Community-Based Physical Activity
- Fresh Produce in Small Retailers, Local Convenience Stores, and Gas Stations
- Healthy Food and Living Education Series
- Develop Village Farmers Market(s)
- Create A Brownfield Site Mitigation Plan
- Healthcare Access as Transportation and Aging-in-Place Issue
- Strengthen and Coordinate EMS and Fire Services
- Enhance Public Safety Coordination and Emergency Preparedness

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

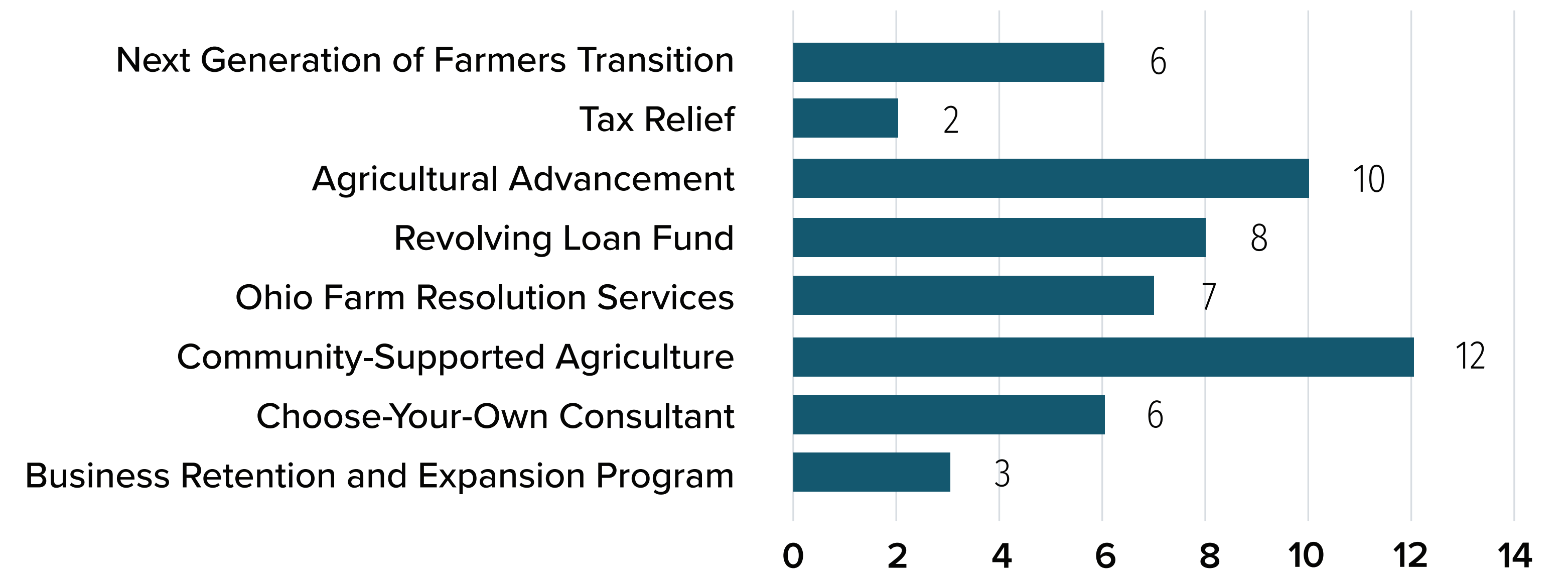
- Economic Development. Workforce attraction and retention depend heavily on quality-of-life assets, including parks, schools, healthcare access, and housing options. Investments in trails, fresh food access, and transportation improvements directly support employer recruitment and business expansion by making Ross County a desirable place to live. Healthier populations are also more productive and can reduce long-term public costs.
- Housing. The location and condition of housing influence access to schools, parks, employment, healthcare, and transportation. Initiatives such as Safe Routes to Schools, trail connectivity, and aging-in-place strategies can strengthen housing stability and increase the attractiveness of both Suburban Living and Commerce Center character areas. Stable and safe housing improves both physical and mental health.
- Transportation. Transportation is a foundational system connecting residents to employment, medical appointments, groceries, education, and recreation. Sidewalks, trails, and transit options can promote physical activity, while well-designed and maintained roads, adequate lighting, and proper drainage improve safety and reduce accident rates. Reliable road infrastructure also improves response times for law enforcement, fire, and EMS services.
- Agriculture and Food Systems. Strengthening local food networks and exploring options, such as cooperative grocery stores, can support public health while reinforcing Ross County's agricultural economy.
- Villages and Community Hubs. Village centers function as access points for services, markets, schools, and civic engagement. Supporting walkability, rural transit connections, and small-scale food access can strengthen village vitality while reducing social isolation.
- Environmental Quality. Addressing contamination sites, such as the toxic groundwater plume near Focus Area #1, protects public health while also enhancing economic development potential.
- Recreation. Parks, trails, and open spaces provide opportunities for physical activity and social interaction while helping reduce chronic disease and stress.
- Utilities. Reliable utility infrastructure is essential to maintaining healthy communities. Power outages or water system failures can quickly create emergency conditions and affect the safety and well-being of residents.
- Public Safety. Communities that support healthy lifestyles and strong social connections often experience fewer emergency service calls. Investments in quality-of-life infrastructure can therefore complement and support public safety efforts.

AGRICULTURE

WHAT WE HEARD & LEARNED

- Agriculture was consistently identified as one of Ross County's most valued assets.
- Residents and farmers called for balancing new development with farmland preservation to maintain scenic landscapes and rural character.
- Farmers highlighted gaps in business assistance, financing tools, and workforce development tailored to agriculture.
- Farmers shared that the County's public infrastructure and roadways are not conducive to the blend of agricultural and residential traffic.
- Farmers expressed a need for additional markets to supplement their existing methods of generating income.
- The average age of residents employed in agriculture continues to rise, underscoring the need for education and outreach to attract younger people into the sector.

What Types of Farm Programs Should Ross County Invest in?



AGRICULTURE

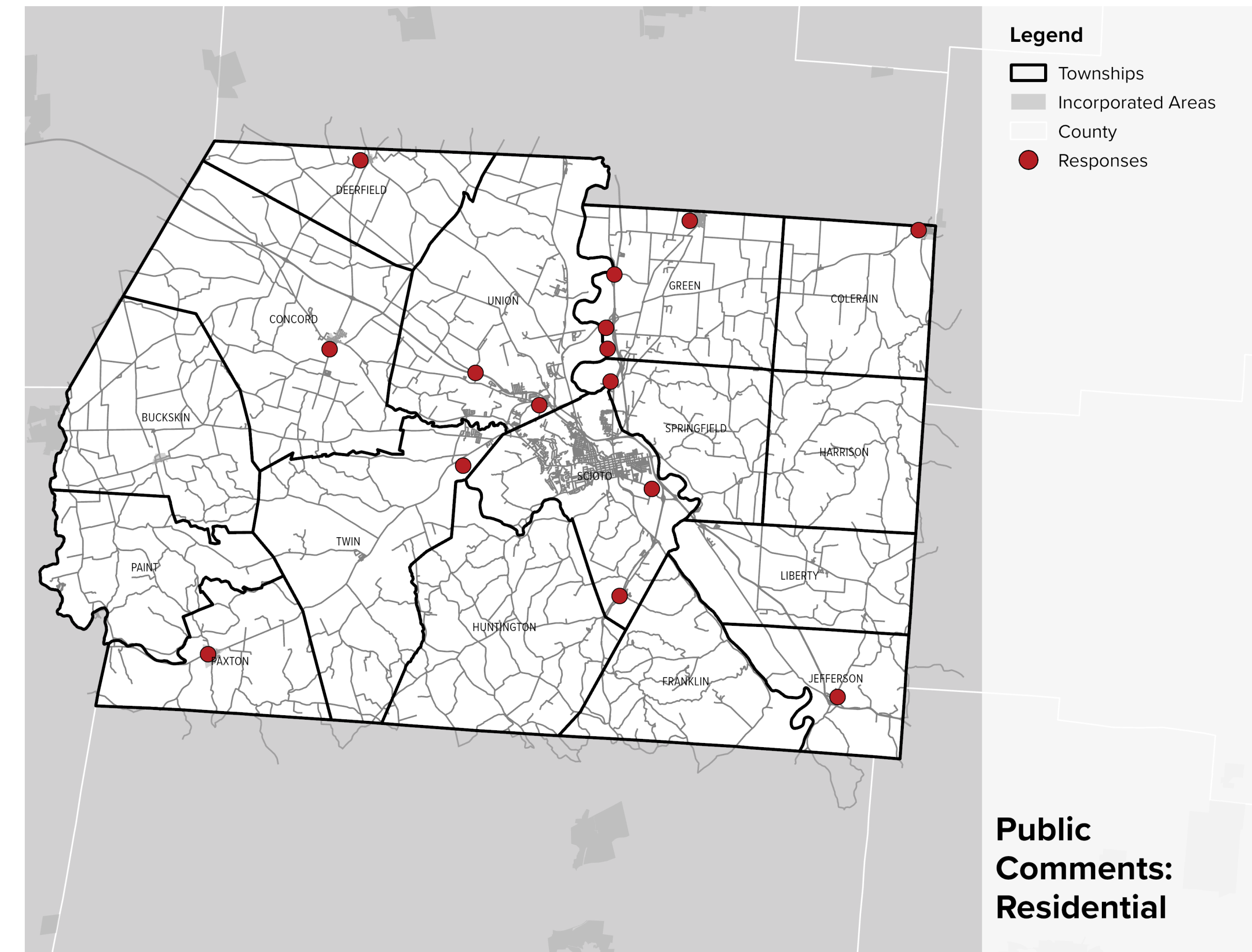
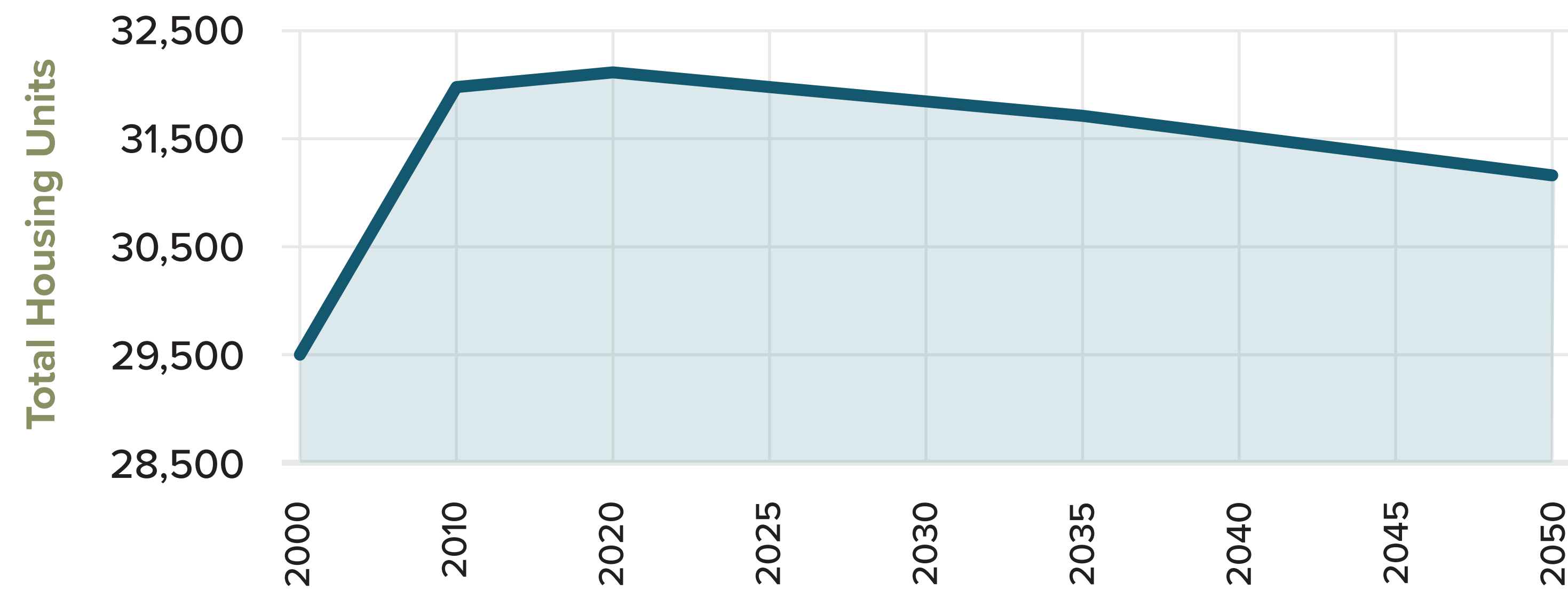
SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

- Land Use. Promote and prioritize development in areas best suited for growth, while preserving the County's rural and agricultural core.
- Economic Development. Support and develop programs that encourage the continuation and growth of Ross County's agricultural economy and heritage. Agribusiness is a major part of the local economy.
- Healthy Communities and Quality of Life. Maintain scenic viewsheds, protect the rural character, and safeguard the cultural heritage that defines Ross County. Agricultural supports add to community well-being by strengthening local food systems, promoting agritourism, and expanding and supporting agribusiness ownership in rural areas.
- Villages and Census-Designated Places. Villages and census-designated places are primary links for commerce and community to the agricultural production industries.

STRATEGIES

- Formalize and Expand Farm Business Support Services
- Integrate Agriculture into Economic Development Efforts
- Expand Access to Capital and Support Value-Added Agricultural Investment
- Develop And Implement a Food System Strategy Focused on Market Expansion
- Align Farmland Preservation with Growth and Infrastructure Strategy
- Align and Strengthen Agricultural Workforce and Career Pathways
- Support The Next Generation of Agricultural Leaders While Strengthening Farm Transition

HOUSING



WHAT WE HEARD & LEARNED

- Housing was the second most mentioned theme. 70% of survey respondents thought Ross County needs more housing. Current housing demand and income analysis supports this idea.
- Approximately 5% of Ross County's housing stock was built after 2010, indicating that growth has been minimal over the past 15 years. Ross County's housing stock is aging and potentially in need of repair.
- Woods and Poole projects that between 2020 and 2060 Ross County will have a net gain of 5,000 residents.
- The 2022 Ross County Affordable Housing Assessment called for the need for specialized housing, such as employer-assisted, and higher-end housing.
- Open house participants mapped ideal locations for future housing within or immediately adjacent to incorporated areas, such as Bainbridge, Kingston, and Adelphi.

HOUSING

SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

- Economic Development. Workforce attraction and retention depend on the availability of housing stock across all price ranges, from regular workers to executives.
- Transportation. Transportation is a foundational system connecting residents to where they need to go. Therefore, the transportation system needs to support future housing development.
- Agriculture and Food Systems. Housing development needs to be carried out thoughtfully, preserving as much precious agricultural land as possible.
- Villages and Community Hubs. Villages have opportunities for infill development, including housing. This infill development, in turn, adds to the vitality of the villages.
- Land Use. Other types of development often follow rooftops. Adding housing may directly influence retail and other complementary developments.
- Healthy Communities and Quality of Life. Residents are the greatest consumers of community amenities. Without adequate community amenities, residents are likely to move to another community to have their quality-of-life needs met.

STRATEGIES

- State-Owned Land in the Pleasant Valley and SR-104 Corridor for Mixed Residential Housing Development
- Employer Housing Incentive Program
- Continue Support of Programs or Create New Programs To Rehabilitate or Repair Older Housing Stock
- State and Federal Rehabilitation Programs That Provide Financial Assistance for Housing Repairs
- Focus Area Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Partner with Potential Homeowners to Utilize Down Payment, Repair, and Home Rehabilitation Assistance Programs Available from the USDA and HUD (CDBG/HOME)
- Conservation Subdivision Design
- Linked Deposit Program

VILLAGES

WHAT WE HEARD & LEARNED

- Since 2000, the population of each village has fluctuated and remains unstable.
- Many have rich traditions of Main Street-oriented businesses. However, those Main Streets have seen more vacant storefronts in recent years.
- Public transportation for many seniors or residents without cars is limited in these parts of the County.
- Most of these villages and areas have vacant lots or buildings in disrepair, ripe for infill development.
- Several villages rely on aging water and wastewater systems, which limit their development potential until upgrades occur.
- Villages face financial and other challenges associated with low population, such as limited revenue to fund infrastructure improvements.

STRATEGIES

- Master Plans Or Neighborhood Revitalization Plans
- Vacant Lot Inventory and Building Assessments for Infill Development
- Pre-Approved Construction Plans
- Double Down on Main Street Investment And Quality of Life Amenities



Example: Bainbridge Main Street Streetscape



VILLAGES

SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

- Economic Development. Since the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of remote work, the merits of small-town living have become increasingly attractive to many in the workforce. Investing in villages in Ross County is investing in both workforce and employer attraction.
- Housing. Many villages in Ross County have dilapidated structures or contain vacant lots ripe for infill development, especially housing to address the current supply shortage.
- Agriculture and Food Systems. Focusing investment in Ross County's villages and Census-designated places minimize impacts to arable land by concentrating development.
- Environmental Quality. Responsible development patterns should be supported as part of environmental stewardship. Focusing development within a village or a Census-designated place limits the responsible use of land. It preserves the natural vistas that make Ross County beautiful for residents and tourists alike.
- Land Use. Many villages have small downtowns or main streets that have developed organically over the years. These traditional development patterns should be preserved and encouraged to sustain each village's unique character.
- Quality of Life. Focusing development in villages helps garner rooftops that encourage and attract more amenities to them, such as small medical facilities and retail. The constraints of incorporation limits help maintain the highly desired "small town charm" while doing so.

CRITICAL PATH STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 1	Create the Ross County WORKS program to build an employer-education partnership to develop tomorrow's workforce.	YEAR 1
STRATEGY 2	Advance the Pleasant Valley Road corridor as a priority growth-supporting investment.	YEAR 1
STRATEGY 3	Work with local industry leaders and businesses to assist private companies in developing and facilitating an employer housing incentive program.	YEAR 2 TO 5
STRATEGY 4	Continue supporting programs or create new ones to rehabilitate or repair older housing stock.	YEAR 3
STRATEGY 5	Incentivize conservation subdivision-designed development to create housing while preserving the community's rural character.	YEAR 2
STRATEGY 6	Support villages and places in developing focused master plans or neighborhood revitalization plans, including streetscaping.	YEAR 1 TO 2
STRATEGY 7	Develop pre-approved construction plans for housing or other desired improvements.	YEAR 1

CRITICAL PATH STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 8	Adopt a limited Ross County Complete Streets Policy.	YEAR 1
STRATEGY 9	Create a brownfield site mitigation plan.	YEAR 1
STRATEGY 10	Integrate Agriculture into Economic Development efforts.	YEAR 2 TO 5
STRATEGY 11	Align and strengthen the agricultural workforce and career pathways.	YEAR 3
STRATEGY 12	Develop and use a County Capital Improvement Plan to prioritize transportation and infrastructure investments.	YEAR 2
STRATEGY 13	Establish a Ross County Transportation Improvement District (TID) to fund and implement priority transportation projects.	YEAR 1 TO 2
STRATEGY 14	Create State of Ohio certified mega sites in Focus Areas 1 and 2 that can accommodate a mix of industrial, residential, and employment uses and investments.	YEAR 1