

# Thorn Township Land Use Plan

Perry County, Ohio  
January, 2017





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# Acknowledgements

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## Strategic Land Use Plan

### Thorn Township Elected Officials

Robert Coleman	Chair
David Lyle	Trustee
Rick Wilson	Trustee
Billie Dearlove	Fiscal Officer

### Thorn Township Zoning Commission

Joe Blaine	Chair
Wayne Gniewkowski	Member
Mark Huggins	Member
Diane White	Member
Bradley Blaine	Member

### Thorn Township Staff

W. Ed Corns	Zoning Inspector
Deb Morgan	Zoning Secretary

### Consultant:



# Executive Summary

Thorn Township  
Land Use Plan

# Executive Summary

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## PLAN BACKGROUND AND MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2017 Thorn Township Strategic Land Use plan was commissioned by township leaders to engage the community in a positive effort to envision the future of the township. To date, decisions on land use and growth have mostly been independent decisions revolving around individual projects within the township. Many of these projects have revolved around the popularity of Buckeye Lake, as individual landowners and developers have sought to capitalize on the value inherent on people's desire to live near or on the lake. As more land is consumed however, this growth can become haphazard and eventually costly to the township. These costs show up eventually in the cost of maintenance and infrastructure, and in the loss of the charm and character of the community. To mitigate these impacts the township leaders have chosen to take a more forward thinking approach. In addition, township leaders sought to create opportunities for increased business growth that would help provide employment and services within the township. This plan takes a look at the conditions and trends that will have an impact on how, and how much, the township will grow, and is intended to provide township leaders with a more strategic approach to making zoning and growth related decisions. This plan is a statement on the communities' preference for land use, connectivity, preservation of character, and the guidance of future growth. It can be used by township leaders to justify zoning and land use decisions, and by landowners and developers who wish to better understand the townships desires for the types of growth that the township expects to see. It contains useful research into the community and it outlines the vision developed by township leaders and community residents through the public planning process.

This vision can best be summed up by the following vision statement developed by township residents and leaders:

### ***Thorn Township Vision Statement***

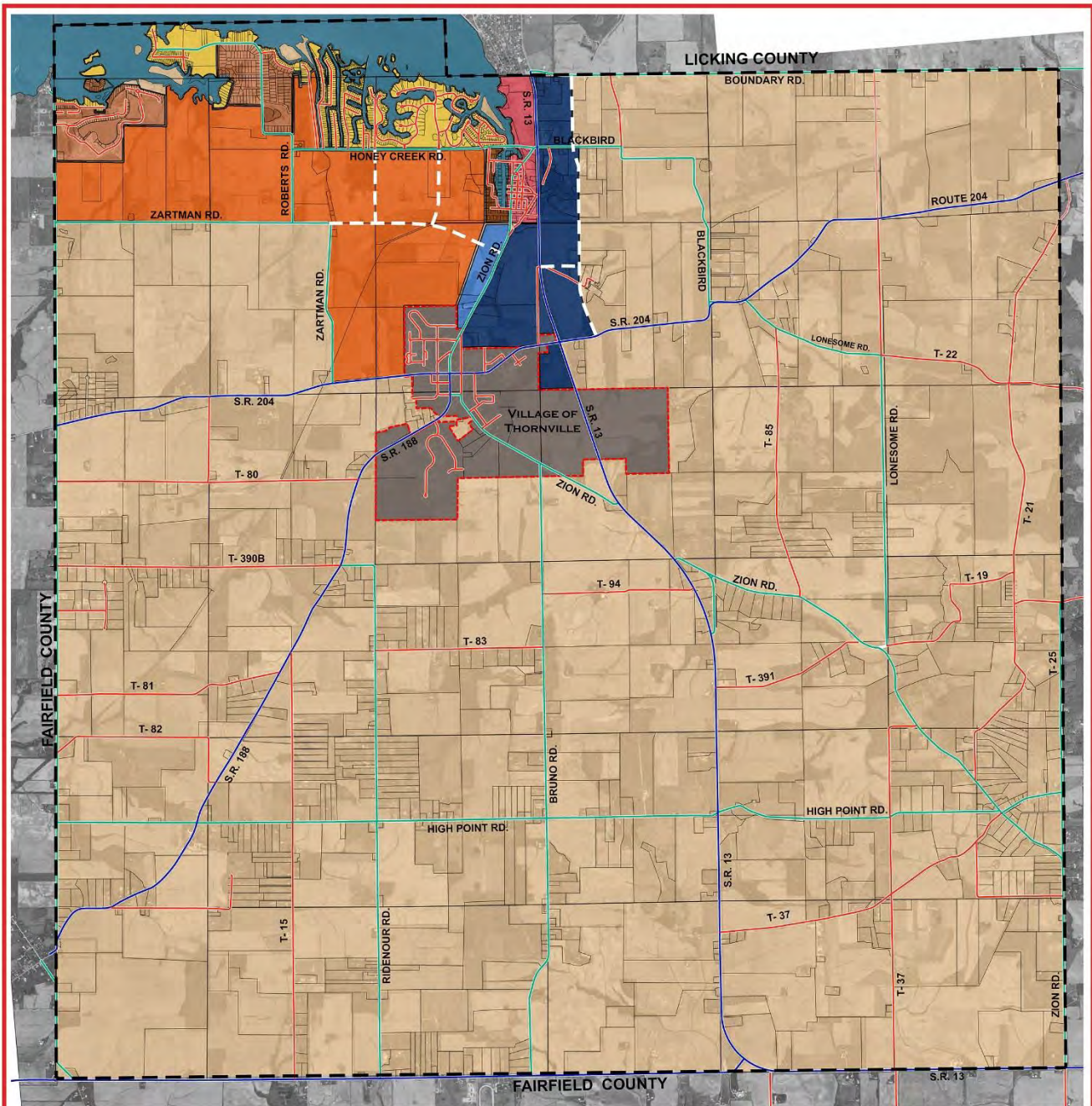
*“Our township cherishes is small town charm, agricultural heritage, and the lifestyle, tourism, and recreational opportunities provided by Buckeye Lake, one of our greatest resources. We will continue to promote and protect this way of life through collaboration, cooperation, coordination of local government resources, and the inclusion of smart growth strategies to provide balanced growth, coordinated transportation and pedestrian connectivity, economic development opportunity, and improved recreation and tourism opportunities that enhances the quality of life of our families and visitors.”*

## COMMUNITY POLICY / GOALS

The following 12 goals and policy statements were developed by the residents and township leaders during the public participation process and community visioning sessions:

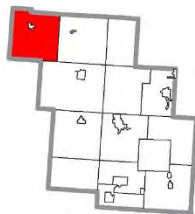
1. Recognizing that commercial and retail services are necessary to provide goods, services, and employment opportunities to the residents of the township, the township will look for ways to encourage the establishment of these types of business in locations that are suitable to support such uses.
2. The township, through good planning and decision making, will protect sensitive areas of the township from over-development while guiding development to locations that are less sensitive and can be supported by existing infrastructure.
3. Protect the rural character, small town charm, and agricultural heritage of the southern areas of the township when considering future growth and development decisions.
4. Effectively manage growth opportunities to protect the ecology of the lake and to promote the lifestyle and tourism opportunities that the lake provides to the residents and businesses of the township.
5. Promote economic development and the growth of jobs and industry, in areas that are suitable for such growth, to help reduce the need for local residents to commute outside the township, and to provide additional tax revenue to support the essential services that the township provides.
6. To accommodate the need for growth in the township, strategically target areas that can build upon existing infrastructure and minimize the need for the community to invest in new infrastructure development.
7. Promote and preserve farmland as a viable industry where appropriate in the township.
8. To promote the health and vitality of the township, reduce auto related congestion, promote tourism and economic growth, and increase connectivity and access to the lake, the township shall work to encourage or provide walking and biking opportunities between existing and new development, the lake, and the villages of Thornville and Thornport.
9. Promote cooperation and collaboration with the Village of Thornville and Perry County on the issues of economic development, future growth, the securing of grants, and the provision of infrastructure and utilities to share resources, plan wisely, and secure a better future for the entire community.
10. Ensure that the townships zoning regulations can effectively guide and manage growth and development while protecting the character of the community that is held so valuable by its residents.
11. Promote development and re-development opportunities in the Village of Thornport to take advantage of the proximity to the lake and develop a future tourism hub for the community.
12. Look for opportunities to increase the branding / visibility of the township, the villages, and the tourism opportunities of the lake through the creation of gateways on prominent roads or the inclusion of signage at strategic locations in the township.

# Executive Summary

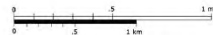


## FUTURE LAND USE LEGEND

-  AGRICULTURAL / RURAL RESIDENTIAL
-  EXISTING LAKE RESIDENTIAL
-  EXISTING PLANNED RESIDENTIAL
-  FUTURE PLANNED RESIDENTIAL
-  VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL
-  VILLAGE MIXED USE
-  LIGHT COMMERCIAL
-  HIGHWAY ORIENTED BUSINESS
-  PROPOSED ROAD CONNECTIONS



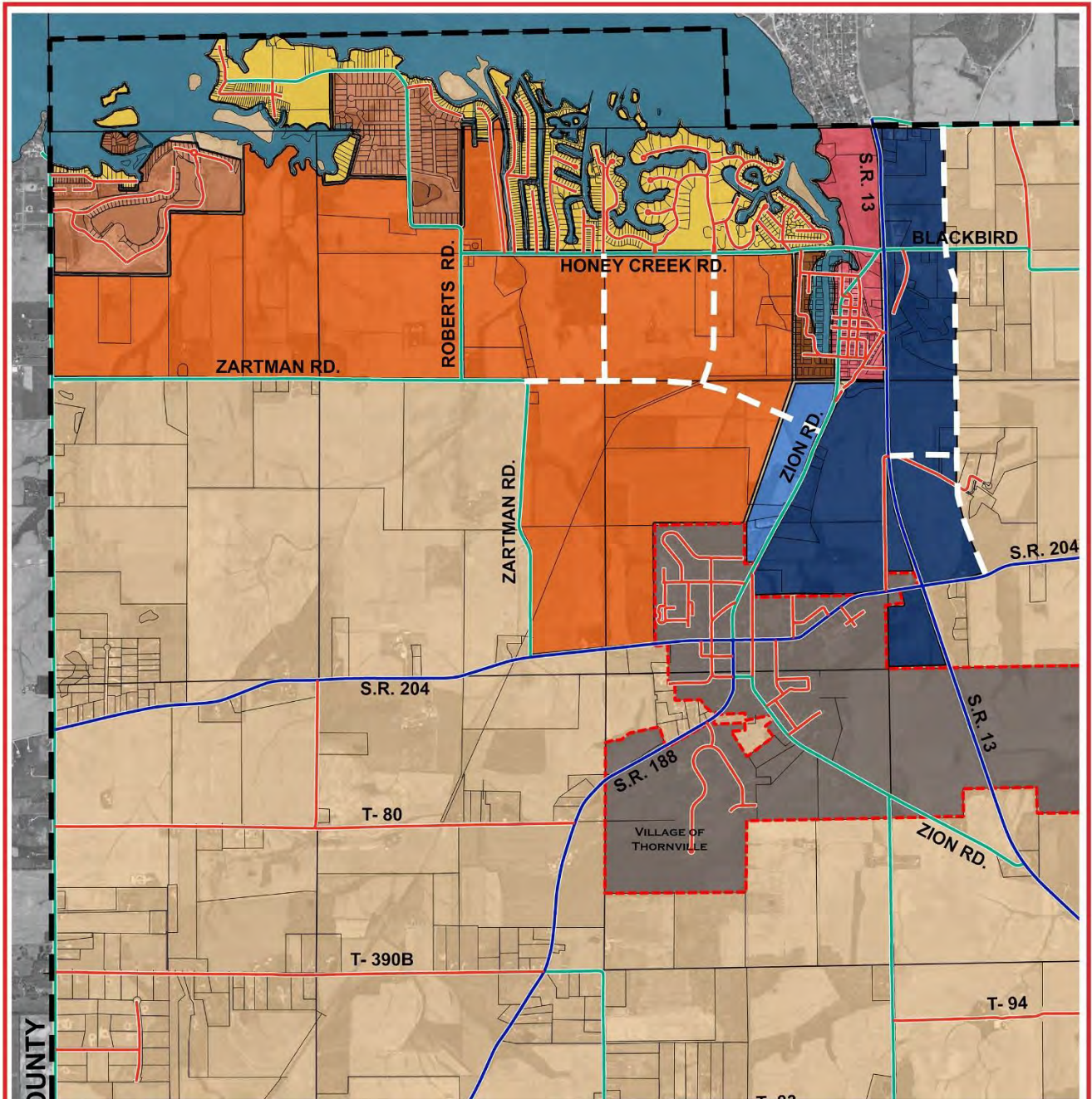
LOCATION MAP  
THORN TOWNSHIP,  
PERRY COUNTY, OHIO



FUTURE LAND USE MAP  
JANUARY 1, 2017

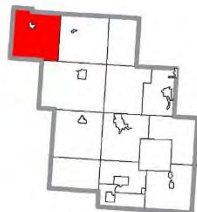
# THORN TOWNSHIP

ESTABLISHED 1804

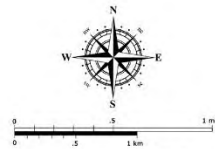


**FUTURE LAND USE LEGEND**

-  AGRICULTURAL / RURAL RESIDENTIAL
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LOCATION MAP  
THORN TOWNSHIP,  
PERRY COUNTY, OHIO

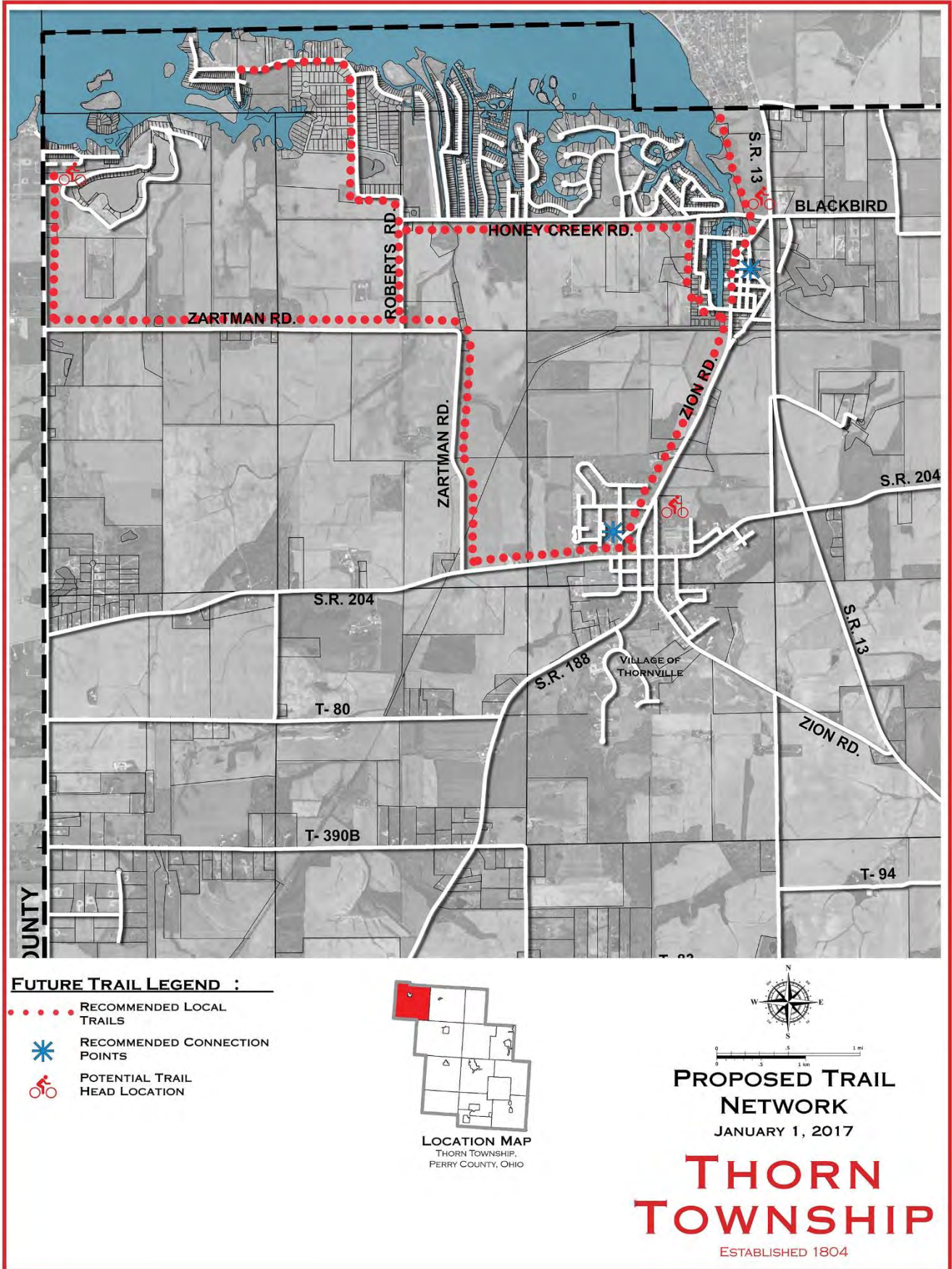


FUTURE LAND USE MAP  
JANUARY 1, 2017

# THORN TOWNSHIP

ESTABLISHED 1804







# Introduction

Thorn Township  
Land Use Plan

# Introduction

## PURPOSE

A Strategic Land Use Plan is a forward-thinking, long range document that looks years ahead to anticipate the future challenges and needs of the township, and describe the long-term vision that the township wants to achieve. It provides the framework and policy direction for future development decisions and helps to promote and preserve the community character. A Land Use Plan is a broad look at the entire township in terms of where it is now and where it would like to be in the coming years. This vision of the future is depicted with maps showing future land uses and conditions, and with goals and policies that describe how the township wants to grow. Once adopted, the Land Use Plan becomes a flexible guide for the township to follow in order to achieve their desired vision for the community. The Land Use Plan also becomes the basis for many other planning activities, such as the creation or refinement of development regulations (Zoning Resolution), transportation planning, park and open space planning, and economic development strategies. Given the ever-changing nature of communities, demographics, housing and development needs, and other trends, the Land Use Plan is intended to be a living document which is continually revisited and revised to make sure that it meets the needs and desires of the township.

Along with the knowledge of what a Land Use Plan is and does, it is also important to describe what a Land Use Plan does not do. Because a Land Use Plan is big picture oriented and strategic in scope it does not typically focus on detailed elements. The Land Use Plan is also not a regulatory document, such as a zoning code, but is a policy plan. A common misconception among property owners is that a Land Use Plan represents a change in their existing land use or zoning. A Land Use Plan does not automatically re-zone land as a result of its adoption, but instead makes recommendations as to what future land uses would be desirable if land is to be developed. In short, this plan becomes a guide for how future requests for re-zoning and development would be evaluated.

### The Plan is:

- A guide for township leaders to look to when making future development and policy decisions.
- A reflection of the townships long term vision, goals and priorities.
- A supporting document to townships zoning code when making critical decisions.
- A way for the residents, landowners, and developers to be aware of the townships vision and to meet those expectations.
- A flexible document that can be updated as changes in the township and changes in trends take place.

### The Plan is not:

- A change to existing zoning
- Overly specific in its recommendations
- A legally binding document
- A permanent document
- An exact outline of every future project

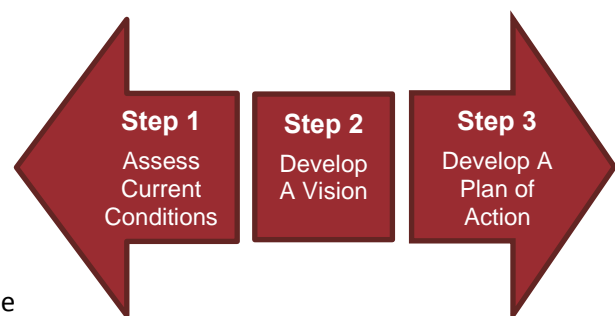
## CREATING A PLAN

Creating a plan begins with 3 simple steps that can best be summarized as questions:

**Where are we now?** - What makes up our community, what factors affect our future, and what are our needs?

**Where do we want to be?** - What is our vision for the future and the goals that will guide our future decisions.

**How do we get there?** - What steps must we take to create the community we envision?



## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This plan has been written so that it can be read either cover to cover or consulted as a reference when needed. The Executive Summary provides instant access to the major findings of the plan, the results of the public visioning, and some of the more important maps. Chapter 1 outlines the existing conditions and trends that affect the planning area and the vision and goals developed by the community that determine the desired future are described in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides recommendations on future land use and some concepts to help the township achieve those goals, and chapter 4 describes the recommendations for new roadways, connections, and pedestrian / bicycle mobility. These recommendations, along with the interaction between them, must be considered for their relation to the overall growth and vision of the community. Creating a healthy and sustainable community depends on the successful interaction between these various goals, resulting in a community that is environmentally friendly, fiscally sound, and maintains its desired “small-town” charm and appeal. Finally, chapter 5 identifies the appropriate “action items” and suggested timelines for their completion. These action items provide the township with the next steps necessary to move the community towards its desired vision.

The Township Trustees and township planning and zoning staff should turn to this plan when considering policy matters. They should consult this document to review the basic direction it sets forth for the township and the more specific recommendations outlined for the various areas. This plan, in conjunction with the Zoning Resolution, will provide a guide for the township in evaluating, and approving or denying, land use and development proposals. To establish the appropriate expectations, this plan should also be reviewed by developers and landowners seeking rezoning in the Township for guidance on land use and development issues. In general, this plan should be used as a reference for providing guidance on a wide variety of issues, problems and challenges facing the township and how to effectively overcome them.

**This Plan is a policy document that should be used regularly to:**

### **Guide zoning and subdivision approvals...**

The plan should be used during all zoning and subdivision processes. While the plan is not a legally binding zoning document, it sets forth the land use vision for the township as well as policies to help achieve that vision. Proposed plans that are presented to the township should be evaluated based on their compatibility with the future land use map and the supporting goals and vision.

### **Inform capital improvements planning...**

Capital improvements should be planned in accordance with the recommendations in the plan. This mainly includes recommendations from the Future Land Use and Infrastructure sections. If there are major additions to the list of capital improvements that will affect future land use planning (a newly proposed road as example), the land use plan should be updated accordingly.

### **Guide the creation of economic incentives...**

The township, village and county should work together and use the plan when deciding the composition of economic incentive packages and who they will be targeted toward. The plan outlines several recommendations regarding locations and types of businesses desired.

### **Direct community initiatives...**

Community organizations should use the recommendations in the plan to direct new programs and initiatives. Organizations should work with the township and village to make sure they are following the goals and vision of the plan while helping create a better community through outreach and activities.

# Introduction

## STUDY AREA

Thorn Township is a mostly rural township located in the Northwest corner of Perry County, Ohio. Thorn township contains the incorporated village of Thornville, the unincorporated village of Thornport, and is situated on the southeastern shore of Buckeye Lake. The Thorn Township planning area is defined by the Township’s original political boundaries (Richland Township and Reading township to the south, Hopewell Township to the east, Licking County and Buckeye Lake to the north, and Walnut Township to the west). The planning area represents about 24,265 acres, or 37.91 square miles.

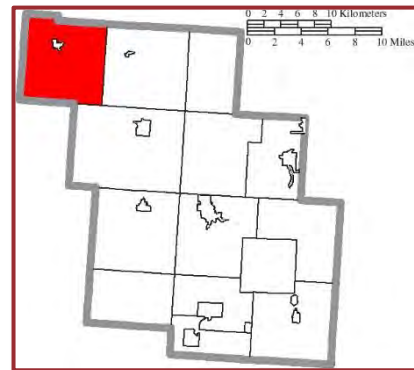


Figure x: Perry County, Ohio



Figure x: Thorn Township Boundaries

## PROCESS

The Strategic Land Use Plan is the culmination of a broad range of information collection techniques. The plan has two basic components: data collection and data utilization. Planning is an adventure in communication as well as in design and policy development. It is a process of compromise and collaboration in support of valued goals. This allows township leaders to make both short-term and long range decisions regarding land use based on researched facts which eliminate or greatly reduce the impact of personal bias and/or special interests. The planning process has included the following steps:

### **Work Step 1 - Existing Conditions Analysis**

This planning step officially began with a kick off meeting for the township trustees and township community, and included meetings with several local officials. Throughout this phase information was gathered, and major issues were identified, that might have an impact on future policy and land use decisions made through the planning process. Information was collected through various sources, and detailed GIS maps showing various site and environmental conditions were provided by the Perry County Engineers department. Meetings were held with various township and village officials, and state and local agencies (Including the County Engineer, County Health Department, County Soil and Water Conservation Service, Village of Thornville Administrator, Village of Thornville Sewer Department, Thorn Township Fire Department, and several local landowners and developers).

While the existing conditions were being analyzed, a separate effort was also conducted to analyze regional growth trends and demographic changes within the township planning area. This study was provided to inform the plan as to the projections for growth in the community as well as determine future needs for various development types.

### **Work Step 2 - Public Involvement and Visioning**

This step involved a process of collecting information from the community, and engaging residents and community leaders in determining the townships strengths and weaknesses, establishing a vision for the future of the township, and developing individual goals to help drive the planning decisions. This step included several public meetings, meetings with the Trustees, and a public review of the draft land use plan.

### **Work Step 3 - Draft Land Use Plan**

The draft of the Land Use Plan was conducted through meetings with the township trustees and local residents interested in the future of the township. These meetings were focused on developing a vision and goals for the township, as well as forming land use patterns, addressing transportation and mobility concerns, and determining the desired community character. The draft concepts were centered on establishing sustainable growth patterns surrounding the lake where the appropriate infrastructure is available, protecting the more rural areas of the township, and finding appropriate locations for future business growth. These concepts were presented for consideration during an open house meeting.

### **Work Step 4 - Final Plan Development**

This final work step included revisions and refinements to the plan and the combination of all of the research, visioning, community goals, and recommendations on land use, infrastructure, community character, and economic development into one final document. This document was presented to the trustees on **Date xx, xxxx** for review and final comment. The Documents were revised and the final Thorn Township Strategic Land Use Plan was presented to the township on **Date xx, xxxx** for formal adoption.



# Existing Conditions

Thorn Township  
Land Use Plan

# Existing Conditions and Trends

## INTRODUCTION

The Thorn Township Strategic Land Use Plan is a tool used to guide future development for the entire community. The purpose of the Existing Conditions section of this document is to form a data baseline that will support the discussion for the subsequent Vision and the Land Use Plan document. An important part of the process in creating the Land Use Plan is to examine all existing conditions that may have an impact on future decision making. It is difficult to make good decisions on the future of the township without first understanding the unique elements that make the township what it is. In order to create sound land use policy, it is necessary to understand all of the elements that may provide opportunities for the township, or create roadblocks that stand in the way. These elements may include: demographics, housing, economic development, transportation, land use, open space, natural resources, recreation, site conditions, political climates, growth trends, utilities and facilities. All of these elements play an important role in the development of a community and should be considered when planning for the future. This chapter examines those elements to establish a framework for future planning and discussions

## LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS

One of the foundations of good planning requires an analysis of historical demographic trends and the projection of those trends into the future to anticipate and plan for potential growth. Projecting future growth will allow the Township to anticipate demand for housing, retail services, infrastructure, and basic public services. This section will utilize information available from the American Community Survey to provide a look into the demographic characteristics of Thorn Township’s past as well as a projection of what the demographics may look like in the future.

### Current Snapshot

A look at the 2014 US Census estimates (fig. 1-1) indicates a total population (including the Village of Thornville) of 4,316 full time residents. Being census based, this survey would not include partial year residents, or vacation homes, if those residents have established permanent residency elsewhere. Most of this population occurs either in the Village, or in the more dense residential areas surrounding the lake.

A higher percentage of male residents (54%) vs. female residents (46%) reside in the township. Approximately 950 of the residents are children, of which, roughly 740 are of school age while the largest majority of residents are within the peak earning years between 35 and 60 years of age.

SEX AND AGE	
Total population	4,316
Male	2,346
Female	1,970
Under 5 years	212
5 to 9 years	269
10 to 14 years	294
15 to 19 years	178
20 to 24 years	300
25 to 34 years	373
35 to 44 years	715
45 to 54 years	618
55 to 59 years	479
60 to 64 years	242
65 to 74 years	326
75 to 84 years	224
85 years and over	86

Figure 1-1: Source – American Community Survey (ACS)

## Population Growth

As evidenced in the charts below, Thorn Township has grown from a population of 3,765 in the year 2000 to its total of 4,316 in 2014. This is an increase of 551 people (roughly 15%) over the 14 year period, which is approximately a 1% annual growth rate. This growth rate is a little slow when compared to the Central Ohio region, however, is generally positive when compared to some other regions of Ohio. As the chart indicates, the fastest period of growth was during the real estate boom of the early 2000's which is consistent with the larger region. Compared to historical photo's (Fig. 1-7 seen later in this chapter) one can see that the majority of this growth has occurred around the lake as more people sought to take advantage of the property value and recreation offered by this amenity. In addition, the charts below indicate a general aging of the population which is consistent with more national trends.

If this trend were to be used as an estimator for future population growth and projected outward, the township could be expected to grow to 5060 people by the year 2030. While this method for projecting growth is fairly common, there are many things that can affect the future of population growth. Some of these include availability of infrastructure, access to employment, schools, national and local economies, zoning policies, and availability of suitable land for development.

	Pop 2000	Pop 2010	Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010	2014	Change 2010-2014	% Change 2010-2014
Total population	3,765	4,176	411	10.92%	4,316	140	3.35%
Male	1,901	2,149	248	13.05%	2,346	197	9.17%
Female	1,864	2,027	163	8.74%	1,970	-57	-2.81%

**Figure 1-2: Source – American Community Survey (ACS)**

	Pop 2000	Pop 2010	Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010	2014	Change 2010-2014	% Change 2010-2014	% Change 2000-2014
Total population	3,765	4,176	411	10.92%	4,316	140	3.35%	14.63%
Under 5 years	207	175	-32	-15.46%	212	37	21.14%	2.42%
5 to 9 years	249	202	-47	-18.88%	269	67	33.17%	8.03%
10 to 14 years	317	220	-97	-30.60%	294	74	33.64%	-7.26%
15 to 19 years	261	183	-78	-29.89%	178	-5	-2.73%	-31.80%
20 to 24 years	118	291	173	146.61%	300	9	3.09%	154.24%
25 to 34 years	458	381	-77	-16.81%	373	-8	-2.10%	-18.56%
35 to 44 years	682	473	-209	-30.65%	715	242	51.16%	4.84%
45 to 54 years	546	845	299	54.76%	618	-227	-26.86%	13.19%
55 to 59 years	239	398	159	66.53%	479	81	20.35%	100.42%
60 to 64 years	195	239	44	22.56%	242	3	1.26%	24.10%
65 to 74 years	302	465	163	53.97%	326	-139	-29.89%	7.95%
75 to 84 years	159	274	115	72.33%	224	-50	-18.25%	40.88%
85 years and over	32	30	-2	-6.25%	86	56	186.67%	168.75%

# Existing Conditions and Trends

## Income and Employment

With a labor force participation rate of 63.6% and an unemployment rate of 5% at the time of the survey, Thorn Township is consistent with the rest of the state of Ohio, and slightly better off than the United States average. Of those employed, approximately 80% are employed in private industry, while roughly 16% work for federal, state, or local government, and 4% are self-employed. Median household income in 2014 was reported at \$50, 573 making the township slightly ahead of the State of Ohio (\$49,308) for median incomes. This in itself might be encouraging, however, the decrease in growth of households in the middle-income tiers indicates that the median income is being supported by growth in both the lower income brackets and the upper income brackets. Growth in the upper income tiers could be partially explained by the influx of more expensive lake homes adjacent to buckeye lake while the growth in the lower income brackets could be signaling a more worrisome trend of people in the township falling behind. A recent report by Pew Research indicates that a household in Ohio needs to have an income between \$32,000 and \$96,000 to be considered middle class. This would change significantly based on household size as a family of 4 or 5 would struggle much more on an income of \$32,000 than a family of two.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Estimate	Percent
Population 16 years and over	3,504	3,504
In labor force	2,230	63.60%
Civilian labor force	2,230	63.60%
Employed	2,055	58.60%
Unemployed	175	5.00%
Armed Forces	0	0.00%
Not in labor force	1,274	36.40%
Civilian labor force	2,230	2,230
Percent Unemployed	(X)	7.80%
CLASS OF WORKER		
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	2,055	2,055
Private wage and salary	1,635	79.60%
Government workers	333	16.20%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	87	4.20%
Unpaid family workers	0	0.00%

Figure 1-3: Source – American Community Survey (ACS)

	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010	2014	Change 2010-2014	% Change 2010-2014	% Change 2000-2014
Households	1,378	1,808	430	31.20%	1,862	54	2.99%	35.12%
Less than \$10,000	66	182	116	175.76%	102	-80	-43.96%	54.55%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	99	51	-48	-48.48%	54	3	5.88%	-45.45%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	140	146	6	4.29%	263	117	80.14%	87.86%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	160	239	79	49.38%	187	-52	-21.76%	16.88%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	231	214	-17	-7.36%	300	86	40.19%	29.87%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	379	349	-30	-7.92%	347	-2	-0.57%	-8.44%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	234	295	61	26.07%	137	-158	-53.56%	-41.45%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	60	239	179	298.33%	355	116	48.54%	491.67%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	9	15	6	66.67%	55	40	266.67%	511.11%
\$200,000 or more	1	78	77	7700.00%	62	-16	-20.51%	6100.00%
Median household income	49,397	53,143	3,746	7.58%	50,573	-2,570	-4.84%	2.38%
Mean household income	52,623	65,815	13,192	25.07%	66,300	485	0.74%	25.99%

## Proximity to Employment

According to the latest census information, of those working, nearly 60% reported driving more than 30 minutes to get to work. Nearly 15% reported driving 60 minutes or more. Of those driving, approximately 86% drive alone in their personal vehicle, and less than 4% reported working from home. This indicates that the township has become more of a bedroom community, and has less to offer in terms of local employment to the residents. This in itself is not unusual for rural townships, as many residents see the increased travel time as an acceptable trade-off for the opportunity to live in a quieter, more rural community.

Given the townships proximity to more regional employment centers, the choice to live near the lake or in more rural areas of the township is unsurprising. This may change however as gas prices increase, and more people start to see increasing time spent in a vehicle as a drain on quality of life. The township should look to increase employment opportunities in the township wherever possible. This will not only improve the quality of life of the township residents, but the fiscal health of the township as well.

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK	Total	Male	Female
Less than 10 minutes	7.90%	6.80%	9.30%
10 to 14 minutes	5.70%	6.00%	5.30%
15 to 19 minutes	6.30%	6.60%	5.90%
20 to 24 minutes	12.50%	6.10%	20.50%
25 to 29 minutes	7.00%	10.10%	3.20%
30 to 34 minutes	12.80%	11.60%	14.30%
35 to 44 minutes	15.00%	16.30%	13.50%
45 to 59 minutes	18.00%	22.90%	11.80%
60 or more minutes	14.70%	13.60%	16.20%
Mean travel time (minutes)	35.7	36.2	35.1

Figure 1-4: Source – American Community Survey (ACS)

	Total
Workers 16 years and over	1,974
<b>MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK</b>	
Car, truck, or van	94.50%
Drove alone	86.60%
Carpooled	7.90%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	1.00%
Walked	0.60%
Bicycle	0.00%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	0.60%
Worked at home	3.30%
<b>PLACE OF WORK</b>	
Worked in state of residence	100.00%
Worked in county of residence	19.80%
Worked outside county of residence	80.20%
Worked outside state of residence	0.0%

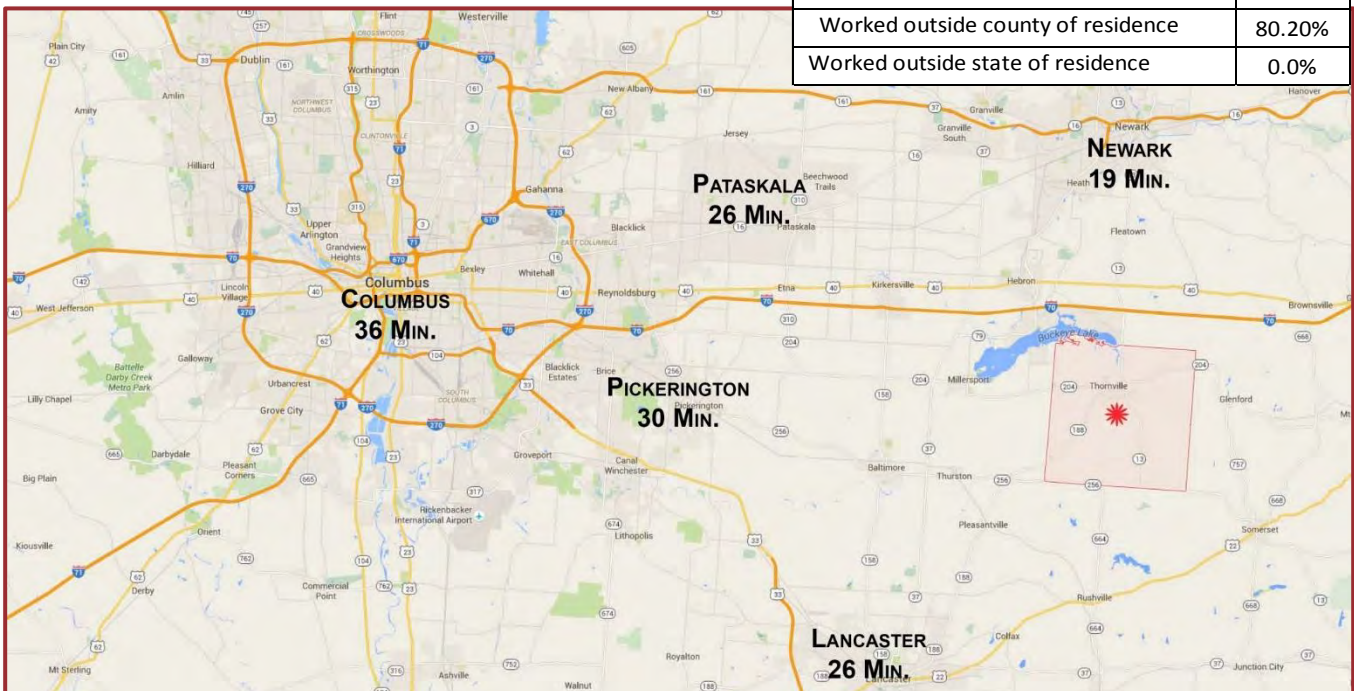


Figure 1-5: Non-Peak Travel Times (Source Google Maps)

# Existing Conditions and Trends

## REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

### Insight 2050

The insight 2050 plan recently prepared by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) looks at regional trends for the future of Central Ohio and projects potential growth scenarios out to the year 2050. The study predicts that, by the year 2050, Central Ohio will grow by an additional 500,000 people. Along with that population growth will be a need for an additional 300,000 new jobs, and 300,000 new housing units. This represents an approximate increase of 25% while the rest of Ohio is still projected to shrink.

Given the shift in demographics the insight 2050 report suggests that nearly 45% of this growth will occur in the 65 and older population, 31% in the 35-64-year-old population, and 25% in the under 25-year-old population. This will represent a dramatic reduction in growth of the middle-aged brackets where single-family home buyers are most common. Households with children are forecasted to make up less than 20% of that projected growth signaling a significant shift in the housing needs for Central Ohio. The study suggests that the shift indicates a need for more rental vs. ownership opportunities. In addition, the study is projecting that people will increasingly prefer complete, walkable communities where they can live closer to jobs, goods, and recreation.

While Thorn Township is just outside of the MORPC study area it is possible that the township can still attract growth from the populations looking to live outside of the hustle and bustle of the city. The demographic shifts forecasted however do indicate that the township should start thinking about the changing needs of the community for different types of housing. This would suggest that a more inclusive mix of housing would be preferable in order to create a more diverse and thriving community. This would include senior living opportunities, apartments, and condominiums in addition to the traditional single-family homes. Projects that can deliver a mix of these products more inclusively will have a tendency to be more successful.

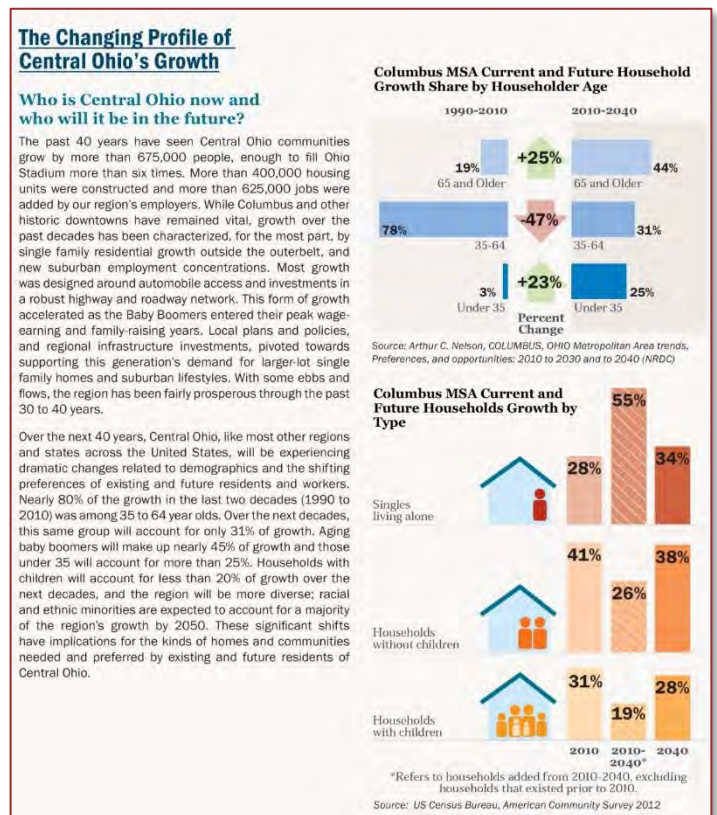
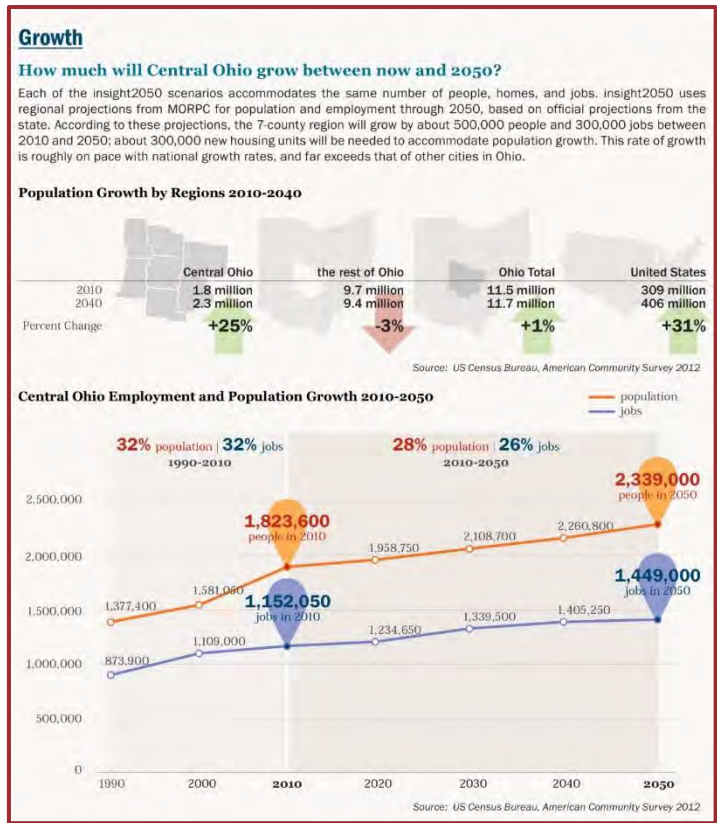


Figure 1-6: Source: Insight 2050 Results Report (MORPC)

## BUCKEYE LAKE

### Buckeye Lake Growth

It is impossible to deny the influence that being situated next to the lake has had on Thorn Township. In the past 30 years most of the growth in the township has come from the areas surrounding the lake.



Figure 1-7: Source: Google Earth Pro

# Existing Conditions and Trends

## Buckeye Lake Growth Cont'd

As evidenced by the changes apparent in the mosaic of aerial images (fig 1-7), much of the residential growth in the township has been concentrated around the lake. It can also be argued that a great deal of the increase in higher household income brackets comes from the migration of people moving from outside of the township to more expensive lakefront homes being built around Buckeye Lake. Heron Bay, seen just starting in the 1994 photograph on the eastern side of the lake, is a good example of how the value of Buckeye Lake has been leveraged to develop expensive homes. In this subdivision, creative developers have cut additional channels into the land creating thousands of feet of additional shoreline on which to align new homes. A look at the zoning map (fig 1-11), contained elsewhere in this document, provides evidence of similar developments that have been platted adjacent to the lake but have not yet materialized for various reasons. This has been made possible in part by the extension of sewer and water from the Village of Thornville as outlined later in this chapter.



Figure 1-8: Source: Zillow



Figure 1-9: Source: Relocate Columbus

## Buckeye Lake Land Use and Transportation Focus Plan

Recently, the Licking County Planning Commission and the Licking County Area Transportation Study developed and published a focus plan for the Buckeye Lake Area. The purpose of this Focus plan is to study ways to create more vibrant and livable communities surrounding the lake with 6 stated goals:

1. Prepare communities to capitalize on post-dam construction
2. Build collaborative relationships between public and private entities to coordinate all forms of current and future development.
3. Promote, build, and strengthen cooperation within each community and between the communities that form the Buckeye Lake Region.
4. Create a sense of place and identity for the region through continuity in community design.
5. Analyze existing transportation and natural systems to better assess their capacities for the future.
6. Improve the quality of life for the residents of the Buckeye Lake Region.

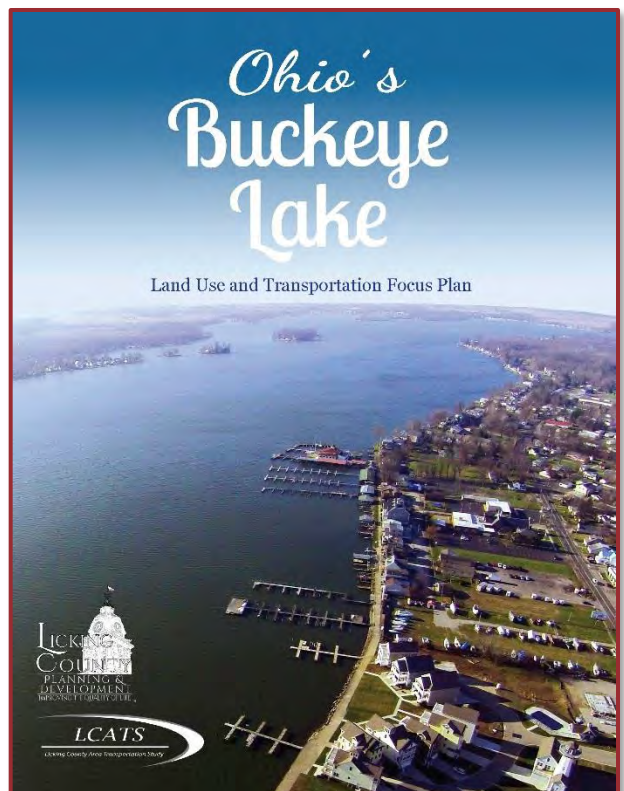


Figure 1-10: Source: Licking County Planning Commission

## Buckeye Lake Land Use and Transportation Focus Plan Cont'd

The plan is well researched and provides some excellent background on the history of the lake as well as strategies and recommendations on development of key focus areas around the lake, on character and standards for new development, on tourism, wayfinding, and infrastructure, and includes an extensive guide on potential funding / grant sources for potential studies and improvements.

This study contains a significant amount of research and recommendations for all of the areas surrounding the lake and could be used by the township as an excellent resource / tool in addition to this Strategic Land Use Plan. It is not the intent of this Strategic Land Use plan to duplicate or override the efforts of this study but to provide additional recommendations on land use throughout the township and to help establish a vision for the future of the community through collaboration with township leaders and residents.

## LOCAL CONDITIONS

### Existing Land Use and Zoning

The existing development patterns and the development suitability of the land are two important factors to consider in the creation of a Strategic Land Use Plan. Thorn township is approximately 37 square miles including the areas of the lake within the township boundary. The land uses within the township are primarily agricultural and residential. Small amounts of commercial uses exist along SR 13 and within the Village of Thornport.

The existing zoning map (fig x) reinforces the observation that most of the development in the township has occurred surrounding the lake. With the added influence of sewer and water being extended to support this development, most of the areas surrounding the lake have been able to develop in smaller, more suburban lot types. The remainder of residential growth in the township has been restricted to the larger rural lots typically between 1.5 and 5 acres in size as required to accommodate on-site septic treatment systems. These land use patterns have evolved over time based upon market conditions, and the desirability of the lake rather than as a result of any coordinated planning. Given that much of the infrastructure needed to support new growth has already been extended to support these areas, future planning will likely be heavily driven by these market factors as well.

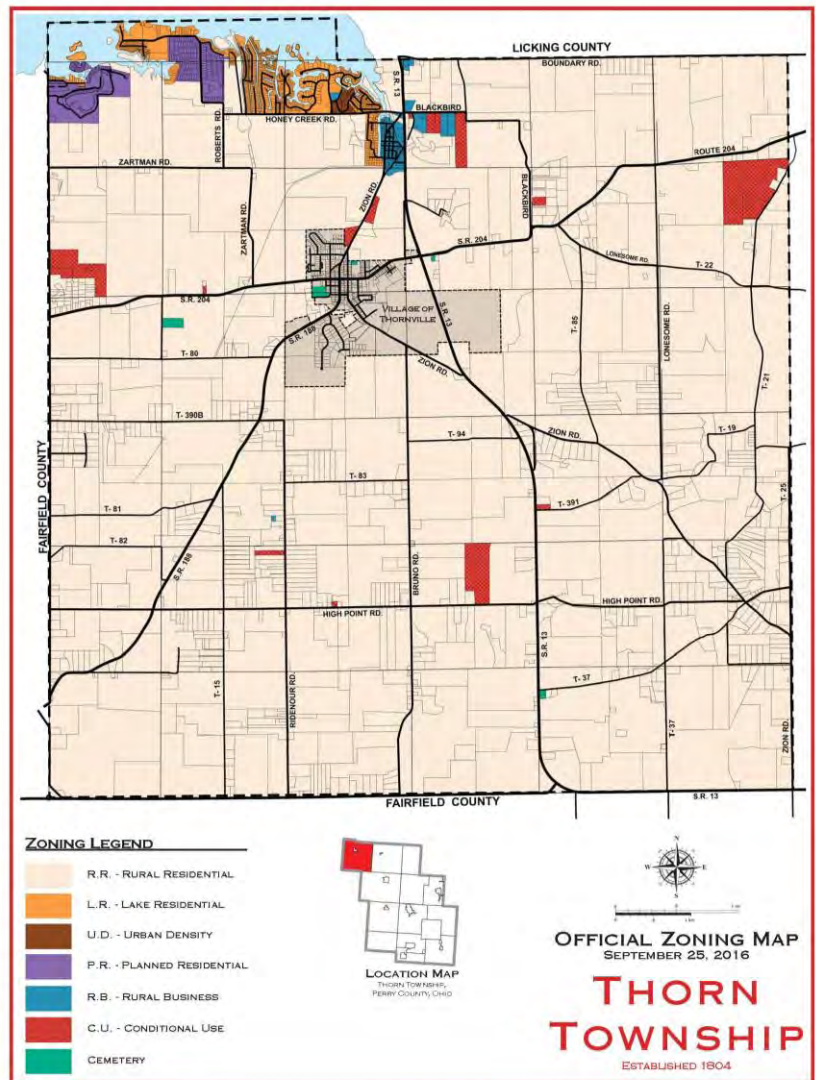


Figure 1-11: Source: G2 Planning

# Existing Conditions and Trends

## Sewer and Water

Utilities are one of the most critical elements that help support growth and development. In most cases, and for most communities, this typically relates to the availability of public sewer and water services, as energy and communications related utilities are generally readily available in various forms. The lack of sanitary sewers and water distribution systems severely limits the scale and density of development. This is especially true in cases where poor soils, periodic flooding, floodplains and high water tables limit the capacity of on-site sewerage treatment systems. In addition, lack of access to sewer and water can dramatically cripple a townships ability to attract any significant business investment.

Thorn township, unlike many other rural townships, has access to sewer and water services in a small portion of the township. What makes this such a benefit to the township is that annexation to a major municipality is not required to access those services. In many other areas throughout the state, township property owners must annex to a neighboring city to be able to develop land in any significant capacity.

Sewer and water in Thorn township come from two different sources. A small portion of the township, adjacent to Buckeye Lake, receives sewer and water from the Buckeye Lake Sewer District in Southern Licking County. Most of the sewer and water capacity however, comes from the Village of Thornville and the Northern Perry County Water and Wastewater district. In the current arrangement, the Village of Thornville owns the sewer plant and the water plant and sells capacity to Northern Perry County (NPCWW). Northern Perry County owns and maintains the sewer lines (see fig. 1-12), and extends those lines to serve different areas of the township and county. Because the county purchases the capacity and extends the lines annexation is not required to obtain service. For new growth, the policy of NPCWW has been to require the developer to pay for the extension of the sewer line with the NPCWW taking ownership of the line after a 1 year period. Alternately, the NPCWW would have to have a guarantee of a substantial number of taps before paying to extend the lines.

### Sewer Services

According to Village officials, the sewer plant has a total capacity of approximately 400,000 gal/day. At the time this plan was being prepared, the sewer plant was processing an average of 170,000 gal/day, or slightly less than half of its capacity. Of this 170,000 gal/day Northern Perry County Sewer and Water estimates it is using approximately 70-

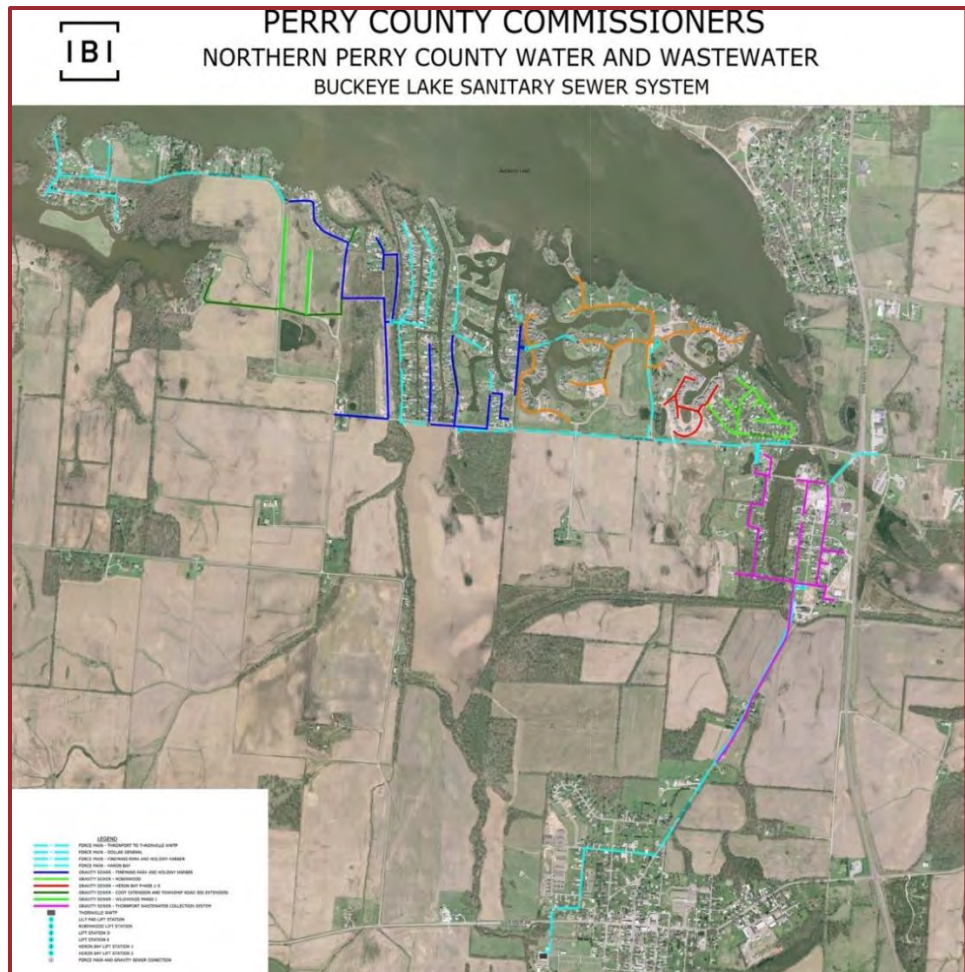


Figure 1-12: Source: IBI Engineering / Northern Perry County

## Existing Conditions and Trends

80,000 gal/day. This would seem to indicate that there is enough capacity to support significant new development in the township. A more significant challenge to the delivery of sewer to the desired growth areas of the township is not capacity but the cost of distribution and maintenance. In most systems wastewater is delivered to the processing plant by gravity. For that reason, sewer plants are most often located in areas of lower elevations so that sewer pipes can use the natural topography to slope from the end user down to the plant. For the township, unfortunately, most of the growth has been concentrated in the most marketable areas surrounding the lake which is significantly lower than the Villages sewer plant by up to 100 feet in some areas. To overcome this difference in elevation, NPCWS is forced to operate more expensive pump systems (force mains) to pump the wastewater uphill to the plant. The added cost of electricity to operate the pumps, and maintenance to ensure that the system does not fail, is then typically passed on to the individual residents and businesses in the form of increased costs for capacity.

### Water Services

For water, NPCWW currently has a capacity allowance of 125,000 gal/day and is currently using approximately 80-100,000 gal/day. If 100 gal/day is taken as the average water used per person, and the average household in Perry County is 2.4 persons, it would suggest that Thorn Township could add approximately an additional 125 new households until an expansion of the water plant, or a change in the contract with the Village of Thornville, would be required. Fig. x. below shows the routing and current availability of public water distribution throughout the township.



Figure 1-13: Source: IBI Engineering / Northern Perry County

### Future Service Expansion

Given the cost and expense of upgrading capacity, and extending maintaining utility infrastructure, future land use patterns should take into account the service needs of each land use and the proximity to existing infrastructure. The practice of “leapfrogging” development, or jumping over vacant tracts of ground to provide utilities to other areas, can become extremely expensive and unsustainable for smaller communities. For this reason, it is anticipated that future growth of the kind requiring access to sewer and water should likely occur in areas where infrastructure is already available or adjacent.

# Existing Conditions and Trends

## Well and Septic

For areas of the township without access to public water and wastewater systems, future development will be limited to such that can be accomplished with on-site sanitary systems and private wells. Typically, this is limited to more rural residential growth because of the lot sizes required for on-site sanitary treatment systems such as septic leach fields however, according to the Perry County Board of Health, smaller public uses such as churches and some small businesses can be developed with on-site systems as well. The Board of health can review and approve systems designed to handle up to 1000 gal/day, while anything above that number would require EPA approval. Based on information provided from the Board of Health approximately 75% of the on-site systems approved in the County are traditional septic tank and leach field systems, and 25% are aeration and leach field systems where the leach field would typically be 25-30% smaller. For a typical single-family home the septic system is designed around the number of proposed bedrooms in the house. The county requires systems to be designed to accommodate 120 gal/day per bedroom. Soil testing and slope would further determine



Figure 1-14: Source: thenaturalhome.com

the suitability of the land to accommodate the proposed system and the size of the leach field required to support the proposed use. The state of Ohio also requires that room is reserved on the site for replacement systems if the initial system fails. For that reason, single-family homes requiring such systems are typically built on lots of 1.5 acres or more. According to the Perry County Health Department it is possible to develop a small house on lots as small as one acre but only under the most perfect of conditions.

This type of development is most typical of rural townships without access to public sewer and water. However, homes developed in this fashion typically consume more raw land, take more land away from productive agriculture, and develop on less improved roads than typical subdivisions. Rural lots also typically require maintenance intensive roadside ditch and culvert systems to manage storm water flows along roadways.

## Parcel Size

The division of land into parcels, and the general size and location of those parcels, can have a large influence on the suitability of land for different types of use and development. As the adjacent figure indicates, a majority of parcels in the Thorn township study area are larger parcels which have not yet been subdivided. In general, the existence of larger parcels provides opportunity for a wider variety of uses.

### *Agriculture*

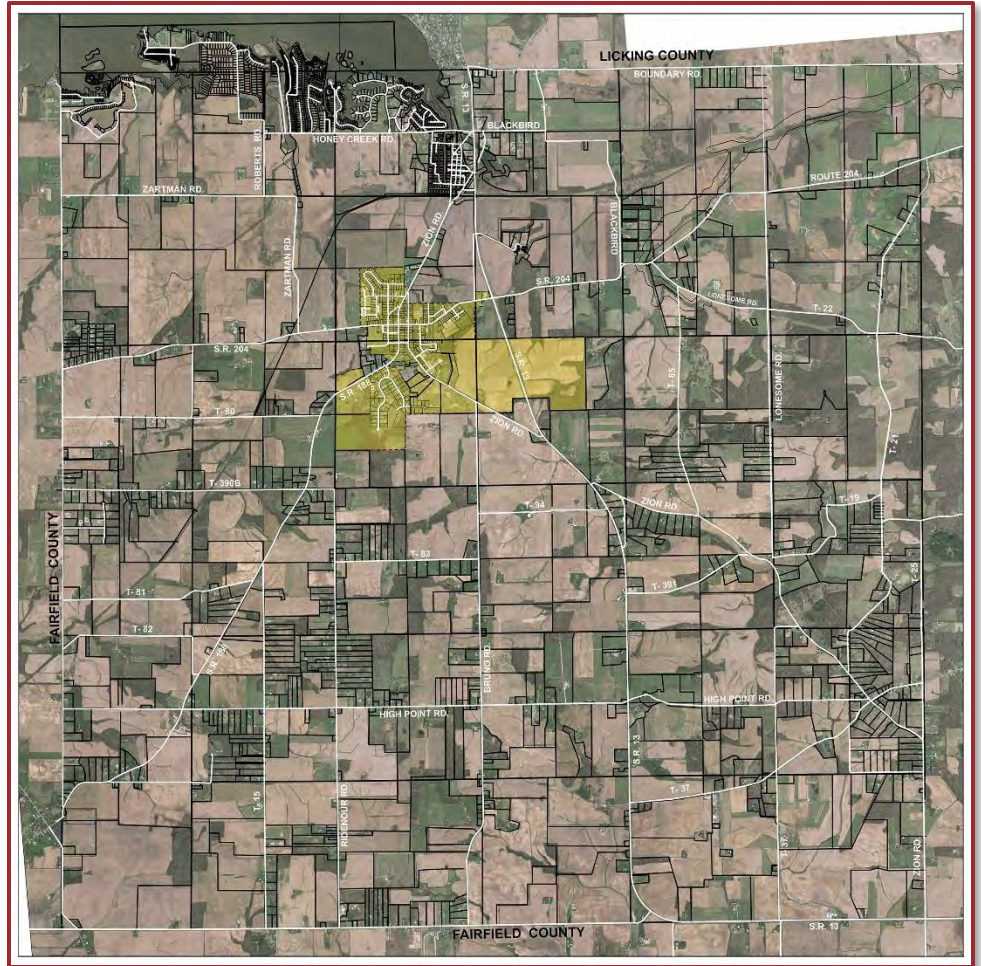
The existence of larger parcels is critical to promoting and maintaining agricultural uses. Large areas of land are easier and more efficient to farm, and the number of crops produced by any one farm is directly proportional to the amount of tillable land. In addition, larger parcels are, generally speaking, less costly per acre to acquire for agricultural uses. Many townships have adopted Agricultural Zoning Districts which require larger lot sizes (10 acres or more) which can be used to assist in agricultural preservation efforts. These types of districts are most often voluntary where the individual property owner requests to be re-zoned as Agricultural rather than the township amending the Zoning Map without request of the individual owners.

### *Residential*

Many residential developers prefer to buy raw land in larger parcels because it is often cheaper to buy on a per acre basis than buying up 3-5 acre homesteads. When all other factors are equal this amounts to lower development costs. In turn, developers can sell lots more competitively or earn higher profits. Over the years this practice has resulted in a lot of land speculation and increased sprawl as new greenfield homes can often be sold for the same price or less than homes in existing neighborhoods.

### *Economic Development*

Many types of commercial and industrial uses require larger tracts of land to develop. For this reason, larger parcels having access to major roadways become even more attractive for these types of uses.



**Figure 1-15: Parcel Boundaries**



## Existing Woodlands

A long history of agricultural uses in the township has resulted in the loss of many of the existing trees within the planning area. However, the township does still have some major tree stands left available, particularly in the eastern portions of the township where agriculture is less common. In areas where farming is more common, farmers typically pursue every available acre to increase yields. In these areas even small tree stands remain. These small tree stands, when not part of a stream corridor or a property boundary, can indicate areas that may have presented other difficulties for farmers such as low lying, or wet areas.

Much of the township is characterized by tree rows that grow along fenced partitions between farms or along drainage areas. In many cases these tree rows break up large expanses of agriculture and help to define the character of the township

These remaining tree stands should be viewed by the township as a resource to be protected. More than just a visual or character amenity, trees help to buffer high winds and wind erosion and create habitat for deer and other small animals. As the community grows, and new development occurs, the township will need to develop policies and consistent ordinances to protect these remaining resources from being lost.

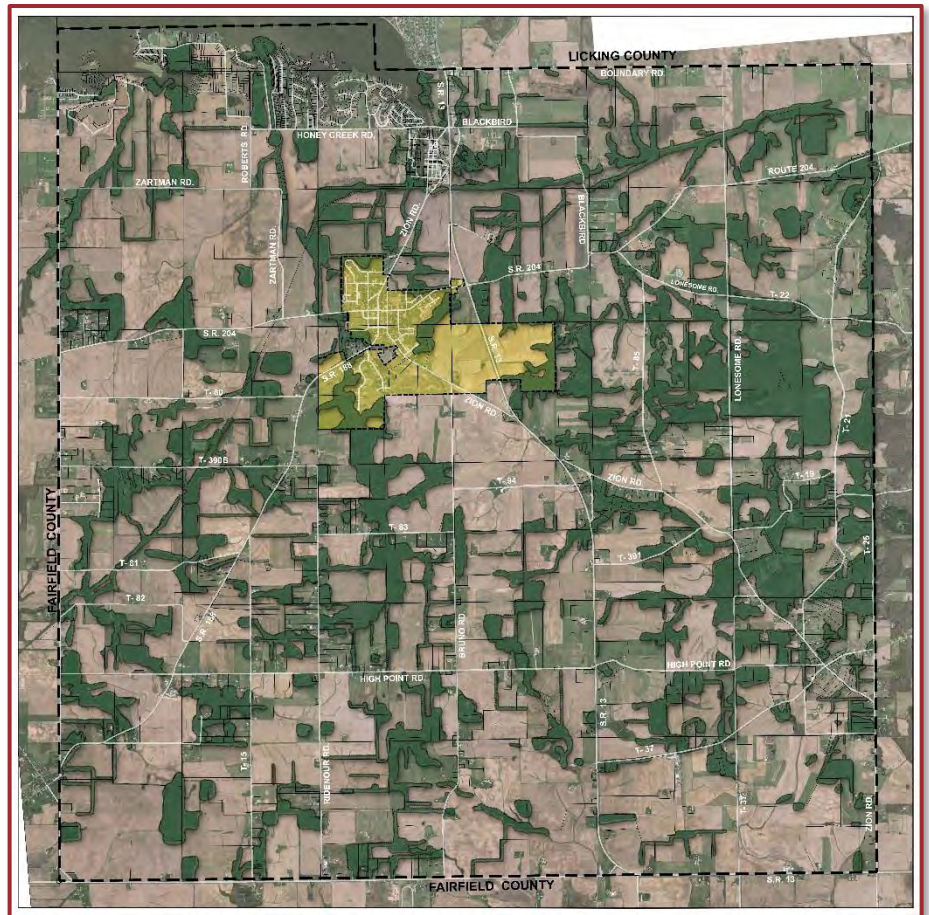


Figure 1-17: Existing Woodlands



# Community Visioning

Thorn Township  
Land Use Plan

# Community Involvement & Visioning

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## INTRODUCTION

Public involvement in the master planning process is critical in order to build an informed constituency and to make educated decisions that account for the goals and desires of the entire community. Many residents differ in their opinions regarding various issues such as growth, community character, taxes, etc. Public involvement allows individual members of the community to express their concerns regarding the future of the Township and to help develop a consensus regarding the best solutions for moving forward. Recognizing this, the Township leaders expressed a desire to make sure that the community had an opportunity to participate in this Strategic Land Use Plan.

The process for this update included an initial kick off meeting with the Township Trustees and local residents who wished to attend. The kick off meeting was followed by individual meetings with Township service providers, County Officials, County Service Providers, and Village Officials. The purpose of these meetings was to gather input on various growth, fiscal, and service concerns. Once these meetings were completed, several visioning sessions were held with Township officials and residents. These visioning sessions were designed to inform the public on the issues facing the Township and to solicit public opinion regarding the future of the Township. These meetings helped to develop the vision statement, goals and objectives, and land use policies contained herein. When these sessions were complete the goals and objectives, and a conceptual future land use plan, were presented to the Township Trustees for review and comment and became the basis for this final Strategic Land Use Plan.

The Strategic Land Use Plan is a statement of objectives and policies that helps to steer growth management, servicing, transportation, environmental protection, the promotion of agriculture, and a variety of other issues in the township.

### **Initial Township Meeting**

During the initial kick off meeting many of the issues that inspired the need for this plan were discussed. Some of the major issues driving the need to develop a plan were the changes in the marketplace, the lack of any cohesive strategy or policy, and the lack of commercial development in the Township.

The main goal, as communicated by the Township leaders, was to create a plan that would help leaders focus on preferred areas for new development, help protect and maximize the value of Buckeye Lake, and help attract commercial investment, all while maintaining some of the rural/lake character of the township. These concerns were based not only on the desires of the individual members of the trustees but also feedback that had been received from various members of the community.

### **Public Open House Meetings**

The main focus of these meetings was to inform the community on many of the issues discovered during the information gathering, research, and analysis phase of the study, and to solicit input of community members on various topics to help establish a vision and goals for the future of the township. In these meetings a variety of questions were brainstormed by the group to help determine the wants and needs of the community, and to discuss what residents love about the community and what they wanted to change. During the meetings participants took part in a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), identified their most favorite and least favorite areas of the township, and were asked to identify key words that described the township today and key words they would like to use to identify the township in the future. The results of those sessions are listed below:

## SWOT Analysis

A standard exercise for planning discussion is to elicit ideas from leaders and residents on what makes the township great, what troubles does it have, what opportunities can be capitalized on in the future, and what kinds of things might stand in the way of the township meeting its goals. Answers to these types of questions can help township leaders to root out different issues and to develop goals and policies that inform the master planning process. For this exercise residents brainstormed the questions and were then asked to vote on the responses that they felt were most appropriate.

### Strengths

When asked what the townships greatest strengths were the answers were almost overwhelmingly revolved around the lake and the rural environment. Interestingly, many of the attendants felt that having any abundance of land for new development was also a strength of the township. This reflects the desire of many of the residents to have new investment in the township including more commercial and service oriented businesses. All participants seemed want new investment but were also conscious of the need to protect the most sensitive resources from degradation or loss. From the study it was clear that people cherished the small town feel and rural character of the township and wished to preserve it in most areas of the township.

### Weaknesses

When asked about weaknesses almost all of the answers revolved around the lack of opportunity in the township. This is not unusual for more rural townships as many people love the rural lifestyle but wish for a few more conveniences close to home. Most of the answers revolved around the need for more jobs, stores, restaurants, and services in the township. Given how far people are driving to find employment, as reported in the census (fig. x), these answers are not surprising, and reflect a need for the township to be open to new commercial development. Other issues expressed by the township included the lack of a cohesive strategy to plan for new growth and ensure a consistent character with new development and a lack of recreational / biking opportunities.

### Thorn Township Strengths:

- 10 The lake (provides recreation and a different lifestyle)
- 6 Plenty of land available for development
- 6 Safe / Low Crime
- 5 Township can still exert control over its future (protect sensitive areas)
- 5 Wildlife areas
- 3 Township still has rural character
- 1 Proximity to Amenities & Employment
- 1 Access to major roads and thoroughfares
- Local doctors / dentists (community has basic medical needs met)
- Infrastructure available (sewer and water) without annexation
- Variety of churches available to the community
- People of the township are its strength
- Open space
- Farms & Livestock

### Thorn Township Weaknesses:

- 5 Lack of economic engine
- 5 Need for tax revenue
- 5 Lack of recreation / biking
- 5 Lack of a Plan / Lack of conformity
- 4 Lack of Businesses
- 4 Design coordination lacking
- 2 Lack of stores / restaurants
- 1 No building inspections
- Deterioration

# Community Involvement & Visioning

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## Opportunities

The discussion over things that the township could focus on in the future to help create a better quality of life for township residents was very hopeful and diverse. Many people envisioned a township that leveraged the desirability of the lake, and the proximity of State Route 13, to create opportunities for re-investment in the township. Most people expressed an interest in the renewal / re-development of Thornport as a mixed-use destination capitalizing on the lake, as well as opportunities for boardwalks along the lake lined with restaurants and shops. Additionally, people recognized that, since the township was starting early, there was a great opportunity to plan land uses creatively and effectively. Most participants felt that being able to bike or walk to different areas of the township would help promote tourism and a healthy community and that bike paths or multi-use trails should be accommodated with all new developments.

## Threats

Almost overwhelmingly residents and leaders viewed inertia, or the resistance to change as one of the biggest threats. Most were concerned that many in the township were happy with being cynical about the township, and complaining about wanting change, but not really embracing of change when it comes or being willing to participate in changing things for the better. Some of the members participating in the visioning session compared this to Eeyore, the fictional character in the Winnie-the-pooh series of books.

### Thorn Township Opportunities:

- 6 State Route 13 (18,000 cars / day) (need service roads)
- 5 To provide good or creative use of space / land
- 4 Create a boardwalk w/ restaurants
- 4 Opportunities to develop more recreation / biking connectivity
- 3 Government & community pulls together to pursue grants
- 2 Thornport
- 2 Tourism / Opportunity to bring people in
- 2 Capitalize on natural resources / camping
- 1 Leveraging the ecology  
Pay as you grow

### Thorn Township Threats:

- 8 Resistance to change (Eeyore effect)
- 7 Lack of vision
- 4 Current zoning regulations do not promote / enforce quality
- 3 State of Ohio (ODNR has total control over the lake / at states mercy)
- 3 Destruction of lake ecology

# Community Involvement & Visioning

## Word Association Exercise

Participants in the visioning session were asked to envision the Thorn Township community as it exists today and write out individual words they would use to describe the township. Participants were then asked to envision the township as they would prefer it to be in the future and write individual words to describe that vision. The answers were tabulated and repeat answers were ranked at the top. The responses to these questions, along with the brainstorming and SWOT analysis became the basis for the Vision Statement and Community Goals established by the participants.

### Our Community Today:

Rural	5
Friendly / Kind	5
Quiet / relaxing	4
Safe	2
No big box stores	
Within 20 minutes of shopping	
Lake Community	
Small	
Cheery	
Slow	
Mayberry	
Poor	
Nice area	
Good roads	
Good people	
No jobs	
Ecologically diverse	
Productive	
Aggressive	
Recreation friendly	

### Our Future Community:

More local businesses	4
Greater tax revenue / prosperous	4
Rural	3
Cheery / fun / friendly	3
Recreation	3
Better roads	2
More internet options	
Safe bicycling	
Lake community	
Tourism	
Small	
Housing	
More cultural	
Better property management	
Ecologically diverse	
Stable	
Aggressive	
More amenities	

## ***Thorn Township Vision Statement***

*“Our township cherishes its small town charm, agricultural heritage, and the lifestyle, tourism, and recreational opportunities provided by Buckeye Lake, one of our greatest resources. We will continue to promote and protect this way of life through collaboration, cooperation, coordination of local government resources, and the inclusion of smart growth strategies to provide balanced growth, coordinated transportation and pedestrian connectivity, economic development opportunity, and improved recreation and tourism opportunities that enhances the quality of life of our families and visitors.”*

# Community Involvement & Visioning

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## SMART GROWTH PLANNING POLICIES

There are 10 generally accepted principles for Smart Growth which apply to the township as follows:

### **Mix Land Uses**

Mixing land uses is critical to creating walkable neighborhoods where residents wish to be within walking distance to services and shopping. Because the goal is to promote walkable neighborhoods and the small-town character, re-investment should be considered and encouraged in the Village of Thornport and a mix of uses should be carefully located in surrounding locations that are already non-rural in character and well served by supportive infrastructure.

### **Take Advantage of Compact Building Design**

To ensure the continued success and sustainability of the entire community the township should support a range of densities to provide more compact and walkable neighborhoods. These types of neighborhoods often foster healthier residents, an increased sense of community, and more desirable places to live and work. In addition, denser communities require less costs in the extension of infrastructure and services and consume less land. Densities could vary from condominium type densities of 4-6 units to the acre in areas near the village and gradually decreasing toward the more rural areas of the township.

### **Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices**

The township should strive to offer a range of housing options: single-family houses of various sizes, duplexes, garden cottages, affordable homes for low or fixed-income families, “granny flats” (a separate unit on the same parcel as a primary residence) for empty nesters, accommodations for dependent elders, and even potentially apartments should be considered in some instances. All of these development types should be bolstered by development standards that complement the quality and design of the community and ensure high quality development projects

### **Create Walkable and Bikeable Neighborhoods**

The township should ensure that all neighborhoods and new development have formalized pedestrian-protected sidewalks and bikeways / multi-use paths. Even rural areas should provide walking and biking opportunities for pleasure and exercise. Connecting these facilities will foster a more livable and desirable community for all and may provide opportunities to bike from the villages and surrounding neighborhoods to areas where lake access is possible. These types of facilities may include sidewalks and bikeways, or shared use paths that are roadside or off-road trails. Connections throughout the township should be pursued where possible.

### **Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place**

The township and villages have a variety of building types and uses. The area already has a strong sense of community and new development should celebrate this character and reflect the values of the people who live and work there. Development that promotes a sense of community such as welcoming public spaces, preservation of agricultural vistas, and complementary architectural styles and scales are highly encouraged. These techniques can be supported with specific and targeted changes to the existing Zoning Resolution.

### **Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Resources and Critical Environmental Areas**

Protecting the environment safeguards public health and environmental sustainability and can shield citizens from severe weather and natural disasters. In addition, the preservation of these elements can contribute to the desired rural character and small town atmosphere.

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## Community Involvement & Visioning

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Agriculture has a long-standing legacy in the history of the township. Almost the entire area of the township has been in agricultural use at one point in time. In addition, there is a growing initiative supporting locally grown foods and produce which provides a community with foods that are fresher and reduces the transportation costs associated with shipping produce. Agriculture should continue to be supported in the township not only as a land use, but as a viable economic business. Providing preservation tools for the agriculture community will enhance the coexistence of agriculture and non-agriculture land uses.

### **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities**

For a township and small village, the investment in providing sewer and water services, and maintaining roads represents a huge burden on the budget. This is simply a reflection of the economies of scale in that the costs associated with such infrastructure cannot be spread out among as many residents. The tremendous investments in public infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) can be maximized, and tax money saved, when development is strengthened and directed towards established infrastructure. In addition to locating new development closer to the existing villages, existing neighborhoods are strengthened and revitalized when infill development (within Thornport), the rehabilitation of neglected sites, and the adaptive reuse of older structures is encouraged and facilitated. All of these practices can reduce infrastructure costs and support healthy attractive communities.

### **Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices**

Providing a variety of transportation options (like sidewalks, bike paths and walking trails) promotes and improves health, conserves energy and safeguards the environment. Throughout the planning process the residents voiced desire for more pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the community. The township should collaborate on ways to incorporate those desires into the future of the community and should ensure that all future proposals for the development of land incorporate some form of connectivity between parcels and along existing roadways.

### **Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective**

In many cases development follows the path of least resistance, so the development that is the most desirable should be the easiest to do. There should be fewer barriers to restoring existing buildings and re-investing in the village than building on green fields. Projects that fit with the community's vision could also be fast-tracked for approval. Expectations through review and approval processes should be clear for all types of projects and consistent standards for development should be adopted by the township to encourage development in all areas that fits within the townships vision.

**Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration** This Strategic Land Use Plan was established through a process whereby residents, community leaders, and institutions came together to identify the shared values and a common vision of what they wanted the community to be. Community spirit, built on the pride of association and the sense of civic responsibility, creates strong, cohesive communities. In addition community collaboration can foster increased trust in community leaders, more transparent government operations, and increased support for community and planning initiatives.

# Community Involvement & Visioning

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## COMMUNITY POLICY / GOALS

The following 12 goals and policy statements were developed by the residents and township leaders during the public participation process and community visioning sessions:

1. Recognizing that commercial and retail services are necessary to provide goods, services, and employment opportunities to the residents of the township, the township will look for ways to encourage the establishment of these types of business in locations that are suitable to support such uses.
2. The township, through good planning and decision making, will protect sensitive areas of the township from over-development while guiding development to locations that are less sensitive and can be supported by existing infrastructure.
3. Protect the rural character, small town charm, and agricultural heritage of the southern areas of the township when considering future growth and development decisions.
4. Effectively manage growth opportunities to protect the ecology of the lake and to promote the lifestyle and tourism opportunities that the lake provides to the residents and businesses of the township.
5. Promote economic development and the growth of jobs and industry, in areas that are suitable for such growth, to help reduce the need for local residents to commute outside the township and to provide additional tax revenue to support the essential services that the township provides.
6. To accommodate the need for growth in the township, strategically target areas that can build upon existing infrastructure and minimize the need for the community to invest in new infrastructure development.
7. Promote and preserve farmland as a viable industry where appropriate in the township.
8. To promote the health and vitality of the township, reduce auto related congestion, promote tourism and economic growth, and increase connectivity and access to the lake, the township shall work to encourage or provide walking and biking opportunities between existing and new development, the lake, and the villages of Thornville and Thornport.
9. Promote cooperation and collaboration with the Village of Thornville and Perry County on the issues of economic development, future growth, the securing of grants, and the provision of infrastructure and utilities to share resources, plan wisely, and secure a better future for the entire community.
10. Ensure that the townships zoning regulations can effectively guide and manage growth and development while protecting the character of the community that is held so valuable by its residents.
11. Promote development and re-development opportunities in the Village of Thornport to take advantage of the proximity to the lake and develop a future tourism hub for the community.
12. Look for opportunities to increase the branding / visibility of the township, the villages, and the tourism opportunities of the lake through the creation of gateways on prominent roads or the inclusion of signage at strategic locations in the township.

# Future Land Use

Thorn Township  
Land Use Plan





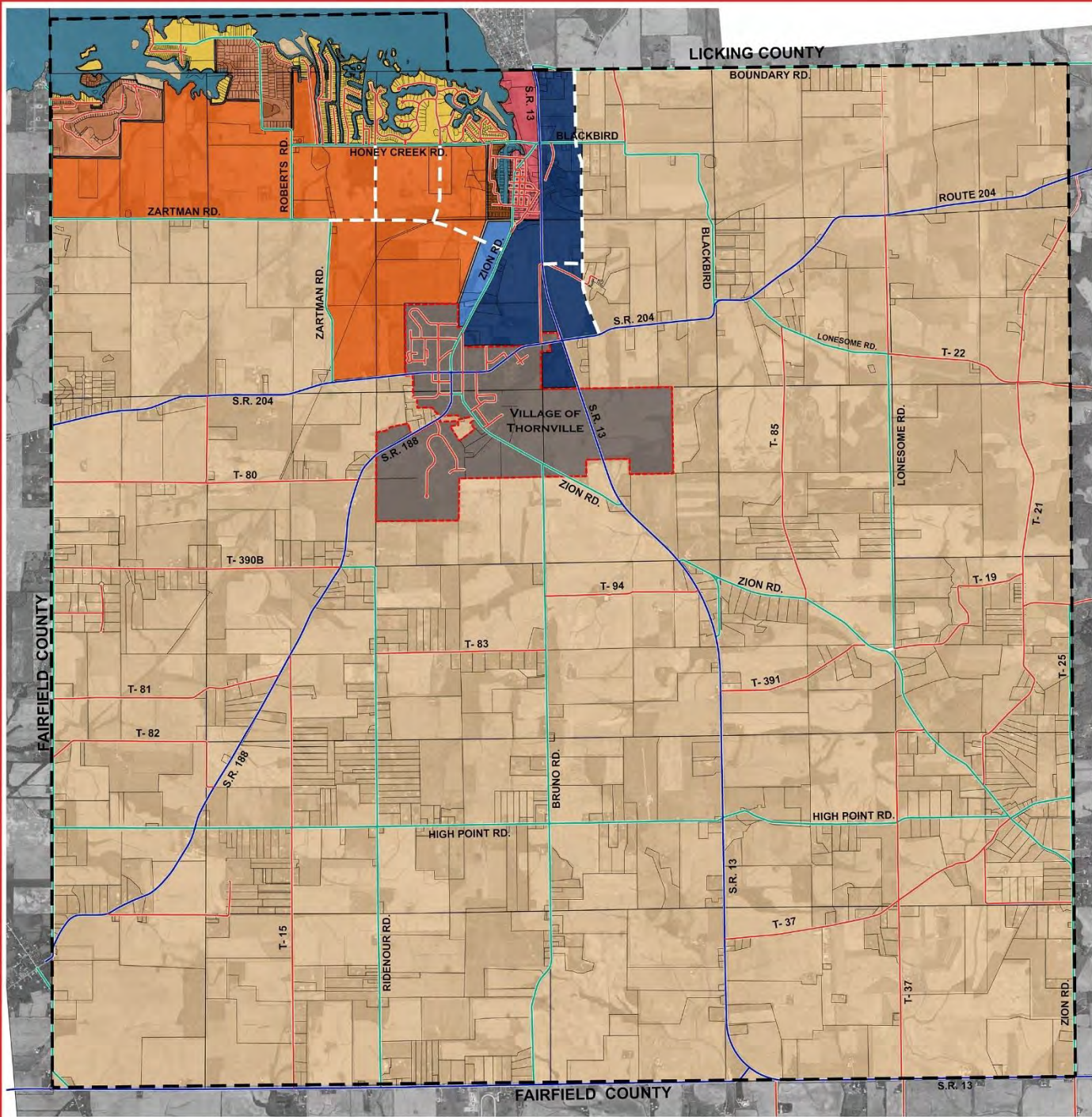
Figure 3-1: Covered Bridge Route 13 (Credit: lostbridges.org)

### INTRODUCTION

Future land use decisions made by the Township will play a large part in the quality of life of the community. Many of the areas most appropriate for development within the Township are located in high visibility areas and as such need to be treated with extra care and forethought. The purpose of this plan is to aid the Township in making those critical decisions. Development within the Township must continue to balance the desires of the residents, the needs of the Township, and the environmental impacts as well as help to create a sustainable and desirable future for the community.

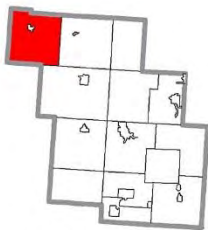
The availability of suitable utility services is one of the largest advantages the township has to both control and direct growth. Fortunately for the township, infrastructure is already in place near potential growth areas. The advantage to this is that the township can accommodate most of the demand for residential growth through the Planned Development / Subdivision process rather than through large lot splits on existing road frontage. The lack of utility services in other areas of the township will also make it easier to control growth and maintain a rural atmosphere in the rest of the township. It is possible however that, in the future, suitable on site or “packaged” sewer treatment options may become available. This would increase the feasibility for a higher level of development to occur within the Township.

The map, and its enlargement, shown on the following pages is intended to serve as a guide for Township leaders. Future rezoning applications should be compared against this map to determine if the proposed land uses are consistent with the recommendations made herein. Since this map depicts very broad areas of land use, the lines between land use designations do not always follow individual property lines. These district lines should not be interpreted literally and can be adjusted to avoid splitting property or creating complex re-zoning issues. It is more critical that the Township weigh the goals and guiding principles against future applications to determine the suitability for approval.

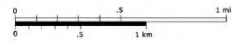


**FUTURE LAND USE LEGEND**

-  AGRICULTURAL / RURAL RESIDENTIAL
-  EXISTING LAKE RESIDENTIAL
-  EXISTING PLANNED RESIDENTIAL
-  FUTURE PLANNED RESIDENTIAL
-  VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL
-  VILLAGE MIXED USE
-  LIGHT COMMERCIAL
-  HIGHWAY ORIENTED BUSINESS
-  PROPOSED ROAD CONNECTIONS



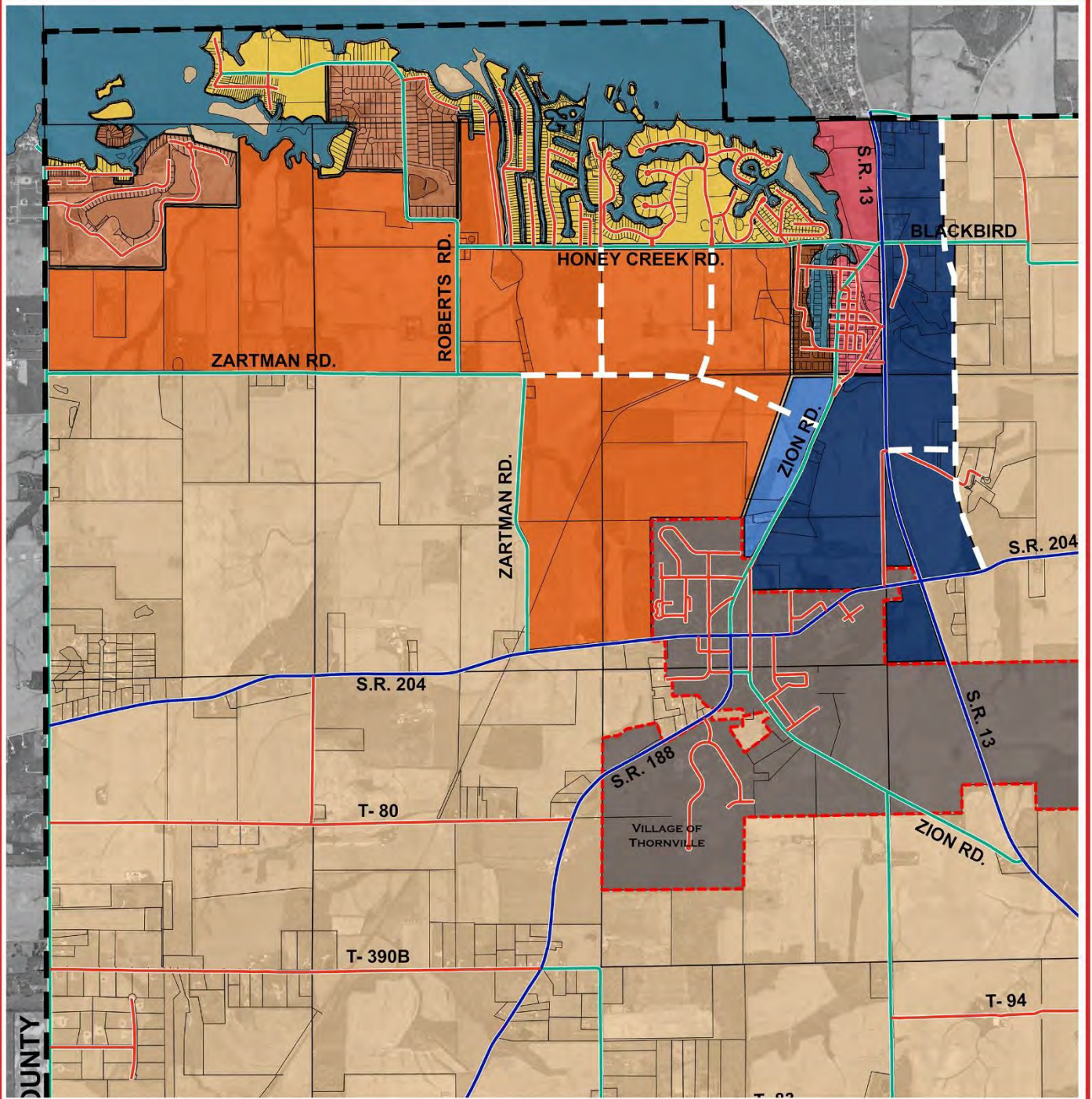
LOCATION MAP  
THORN TOWNSHIP,  
PERRY COUNTY, OHIO



**FUTURE LAND USE MAP**  
JANUARY 1, 2017

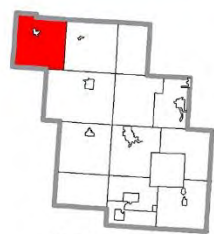
# THORN TOWNSHIP

ESTABLISHED 1804

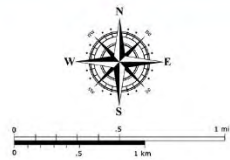


**FUTURE LAND USE LEGEND**

-  AGRICULTURAL / RURAL RESIDENTIAL
-  EXISTING LAKE RESIDENTIAL
-  EXISTING PLANNED RESIDENTIAL
-  FUTURE PLANNED RESIDENTIAL
-  VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL
-  VILLAGE MIXED USE
-  LIGHT COMMERCIAL
-  HIGHWAY ORIENTED BUSINESS
-  PROPOSED ROAD CONNECTIONS



LOCATION MAP  
THORN TOWNSHIP,  
PERRY COUNTY, OHIO



**FUTURE LAND USE MAP**  
JANUARY 1, 2017

**THORN TOWNSHIP**

ESTABLISHED 1804

# Future Land Use

## FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The decisions on how to allocate areas appropriate for various future land uses are based upon a number of factors. When making land use decisions the township must consider its overall goals, the availability of infrastructure and how easily infrastructure can be extended, and the location of land as it relates to the connectivity, visibility, accessibility, and marketability of various land uses. Based on the historical growth rate of the township, the amount of land allocated in this plan for new development may well exceed the demand for new growth within the next 10 years. However, the goal of this plan is to outline suitable areas for new development based on land use patterns, and the various factors outlined previously, and not to try and predict which parcels will become available for sale / development in the near future. Because of the inability of the township to control when land comes available for development, the township must look at more general areas suitable to various types of growth, and allow for market forces to help bring parcels into the development cycle. In addition, the plan must take a long-term approach and establish some boundaries where growth is either not desired, infeasible because of lack of infrastructure, unmarketable, or where protection of more rural character is preferable.

The Future Land Use Map (as shown on the previous pages) provides the basic locations and boundaries for various types of land use and development. This map establishes the framework which is supported by the recommendations for each area which are to be outlined on the following pages. While the map provides the visual cues for the location of various types of development, it is the following recommendations that will establish the land use expectations. The intent behind these recommendations is to provide flexibility, and promote creative development, while establishing a framework and expectations that will guide future growth decisions. For this reason, the map should always be used in conjunction with the text of this chapter.

### Agriculture / Rural Residential

The locations designated on the plan for Agriculture and Rural Residential comprises one of the largest portions of the planning area. The largest factor driving this land use is that utilities have not yet been extended to these areas, and in the short term the cost associated with extending the utilities may outweigh the benefit. With no current access to utility services this area serves as an appropriate location for agricultural uses, natural preservation, and more rural residential lifestyle choices. These areas are comprised of very low density residential and farming operations that often conflict with more suburban land uses because of the noise of all night farming operations, potential odors and traffic conflicts with slower moving farm equipment. Nearly all of this area is good farmland and most of the area will support septic systems and wells. Based upon these factors and the desire to maintain an agricultural heritage in the community these areas have been designated by the planning team as being suitable for:

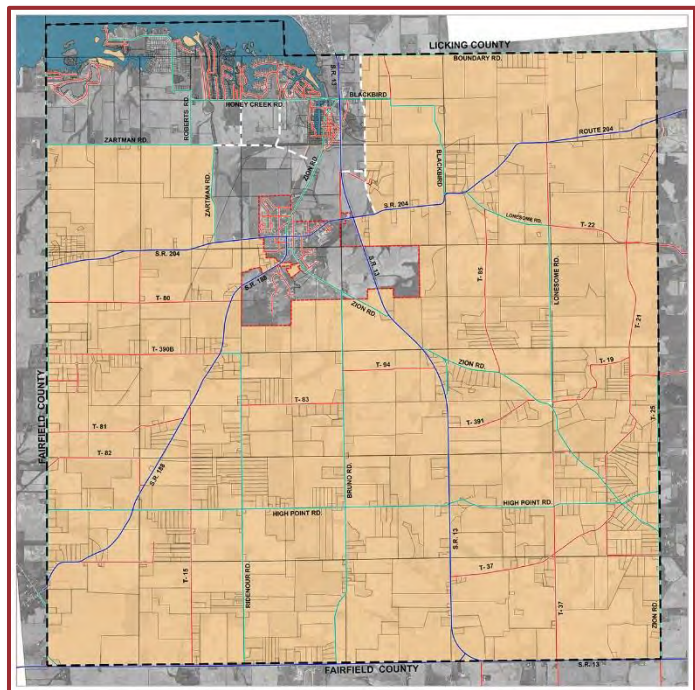


Figure 3-2: Agriculture / Rural Residential

- Agriculture and related operations
- Rural Residential Development

## **Agriculture / Rural Residential Cont'd**

### Agriculture

Agriculture is the dominant land use in these areas and should continue to be supported as a viable economic alternative to the development of the land for other uses. There is currently enough land in the proposed growth areas to support the amount of growth projected for the near term. As the SR 13 corridor, and the areas south and west of Zartman Road, become more attractive for growth as other areas become more built out, these areas may be used to support additional growth. However, the forecasted growth for the next 10 years+ does not yet indicate a need to move this land into the development cycle. This is especially true given the higher costs of extending utility services to these areas. In addition, lot splits along existing frontage should be discouraged in favor of a more conservation minded approach to rural residential development.

### Rural Conservation Residential

Within rural areas there always seems to be a demand for large lot rural residential homes. This demand is usually fueled by individuals or families who want to have a larger lot (1 acre or more) and live in a more rural atmosphere. This demand is typically met when the owners of large parcels of land subdivide smaller parcels along existing road frontage, leaving larger parcels of land to the rear. While this is not projected to be a large demand, even the development of 10 lots per year can consume up to three to four thousand feet of road frontage. The effect of this eventually will be a new driveway and culvert every 300' and a permanent change in the view and character of the existing roadway network. In addition to the maintenance of these roads, oftentimes the township is tasked with the maintenance of the roadside ditches as well. This type of development is often the costliest for townships because even a few new residents on a street can put pressure on a township to maintain the road to a higher standard, while the relatively few homes provide little in tax revenue to the township to be able to afford such maintenance. In addition, the other cost to the township is a loss in agricultural area / character, to a more "large lot" suburban character.

To provide for this demand while maintaining the agricultural open space and agricultural feel along existing roads the township should promote more creative development options for larger lot homes. This could include enacting controls that limits the ability to develop lots along the existing frontage while promoting the development of small "pods" or clusters of rural homes on new interior roads while preserving more farmland and open space. One way to accomplish this would be to allow a landowner to develop a certain number of smaller lots provided that all lots front on a new road or a common access drive similar to the Rural Conservation Development described later in this chapter. These lots could be developed at the minimum size necessary to accommodate septic and well systems thereby conserving more agricultural land. In addition, the use of new interior courts or common access drives would help eliminate the installation of multiple driveways and culverts on existing roads and the loss of the agricultural road frontage that helps define the character of the community. These options would also depend on a willing landowner / residential buyer.

# Future Land Use

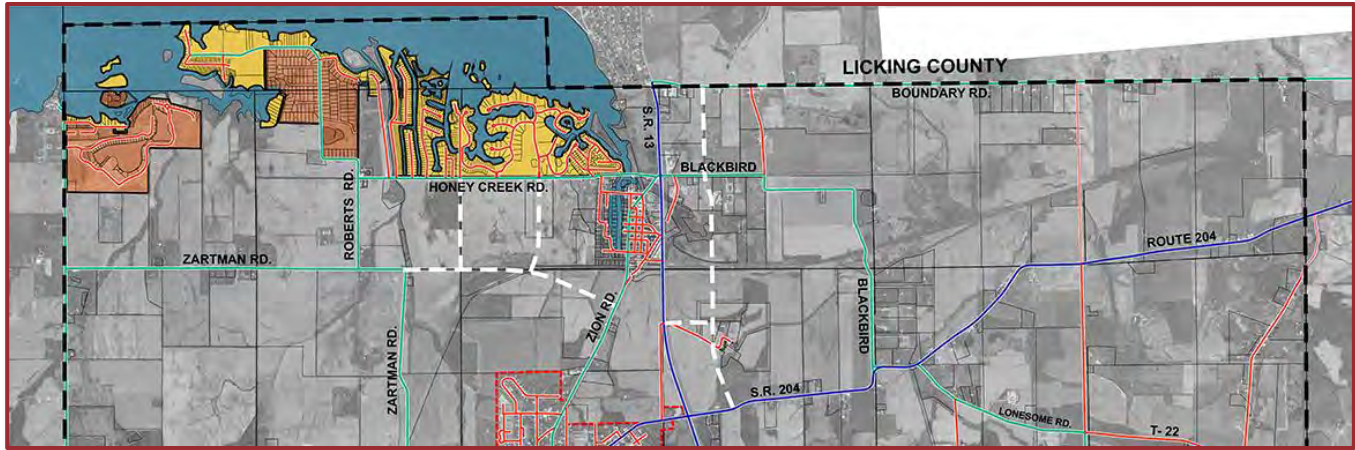


Figure 3-3: Existing Lake Residential / Existing Planned Residential

## Existing Lake Residential / Existing Planned Residential

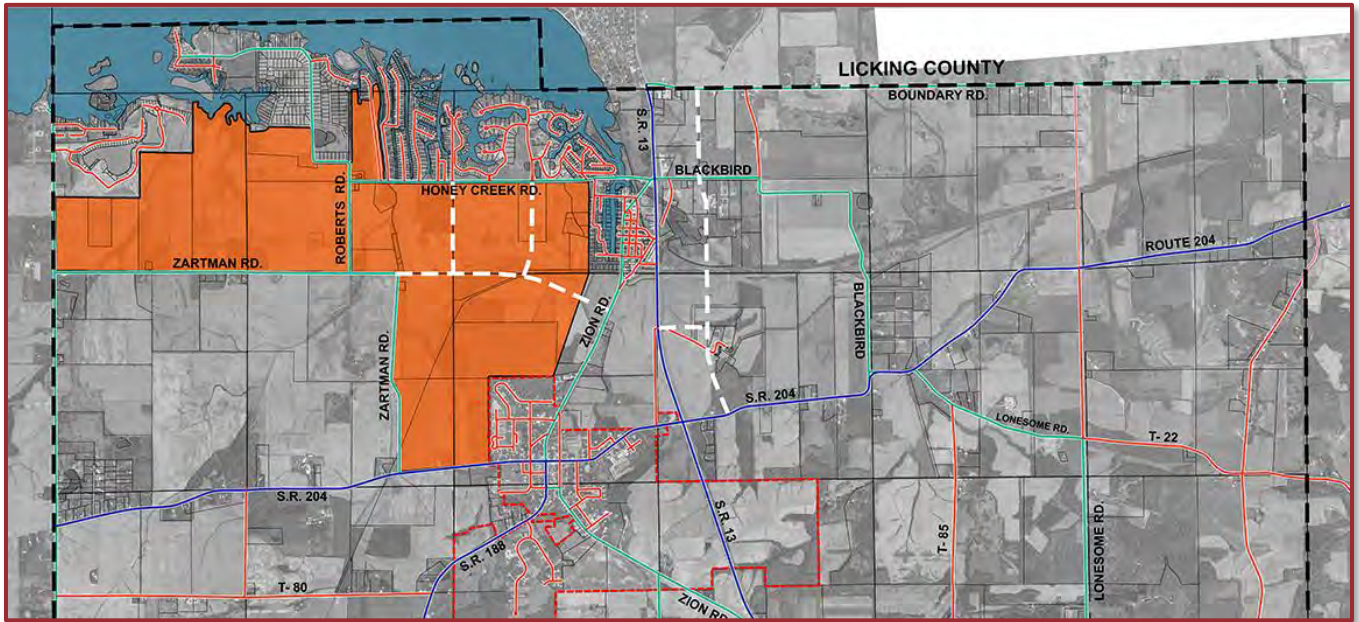
The Existing Lake Residential and Existing Planned Residential are limited to communities that have already developed, or are already designed and platted but not yet developed, around around the lake. These areas were developed to serve the demand for housing that capitalizes on the value that the lake creates, and have created several distinct communities most with direct lake access. Some of these residential areas have developed organically over time. In these communities, you can see the eclectic range of house styles, sizes, and architecture. Other more recent neighborhoods have taken a more planned approach to development. Communities like Heron bay have focused more on quality than quantity, and have included much more control over things like architecture, setbacks, and accessory structures. Over time, communities like Heron Bay have proven to hold their value in the marketplace much better than homes in communities developed with fewer standards. Projects in this area, that are planned but not yet developed, should be held to the standards that were committed to during the zoning. If the development plans for these projects have expired, and no new construction has commenced, the township may prefer to require these owners to update their plans. If these plans are to be updated the township should work with the owners to make sure that development standards match the character desired for the community, and that pedestrian connectivity is provided for as discussed elsewhere in this plan.



Figure 3-4: Heron Bay (Source: Relocate Columbus)



Figure 3-5: Heron Bay (Source: Relocate Columbus)



**Figure 3-6: Existing Lake Residential / Existing Planned Residential**

## Future Planned Residential

The future Planned Residential Land Use area is defined to allow for future residential growth in a more suburban setting close to the amenities of the lake. These are mostly large tracts of land suitable for development, and more importantly, close to existing infrastructure and an already growing suburban character. This district is large enough to serve the demand for residential growth for the foreseeable future, provided that the existing landowners are interested in selling or developing their property. Any new development in this district should be done through the Planned Development Process to provide the township with some flexibility to adopt creative standards for development that work with the site and fit the intended character of the area. Zoning into a straight zoning district should not be contemplated for new projects in this area. To help facilitate a mix of projects and higher quality standards the township should consider amending its Planned Residential District to a more comprehensive, two-step, Planned District. This would allow the township to utilize the planned district for more than just residential development in the township.

The township should consider projects with a mix of uses and residential types to serve a variety of lifestyles. Heron Bay is a good example because of the various lot sizes and residential options available within the development. In addition, more neighborhood oriented commercial uses could be considered as well provided that they fit within the scale and character of the neighborhood, can be supported by the market, and service the neighborhood or tourism aspect of the lake. These uses could include restaurants or service oriented commercial uses. Smaller lot sizes and higher density should be considered for new development if other quality standards such as open space, landscaping, and design are increased by the developer as a trade-off. A minimum of 20% open space should be required as a starting point for new developments. When possible, the township should ensure that new developments include road connections (stub streets) to adjacent properties if those properties are suitable for future development. Vehicular connectivity between developments will help alleviate the pressure on existing township roads and will help with emergency access as well. New developments should also include opportunities for pedestrian and bike connectivity. This is especially true for development along Zartman, Roberts, and Honey Creek Roads. Pedestrian and Bike connectivity between these developments, the lake, and the villages would make all of the residential areas more desirable, would further support commercial activity and re-development in the villages, and would create an additional type of tourism attraction for the township.

# Future Land Use

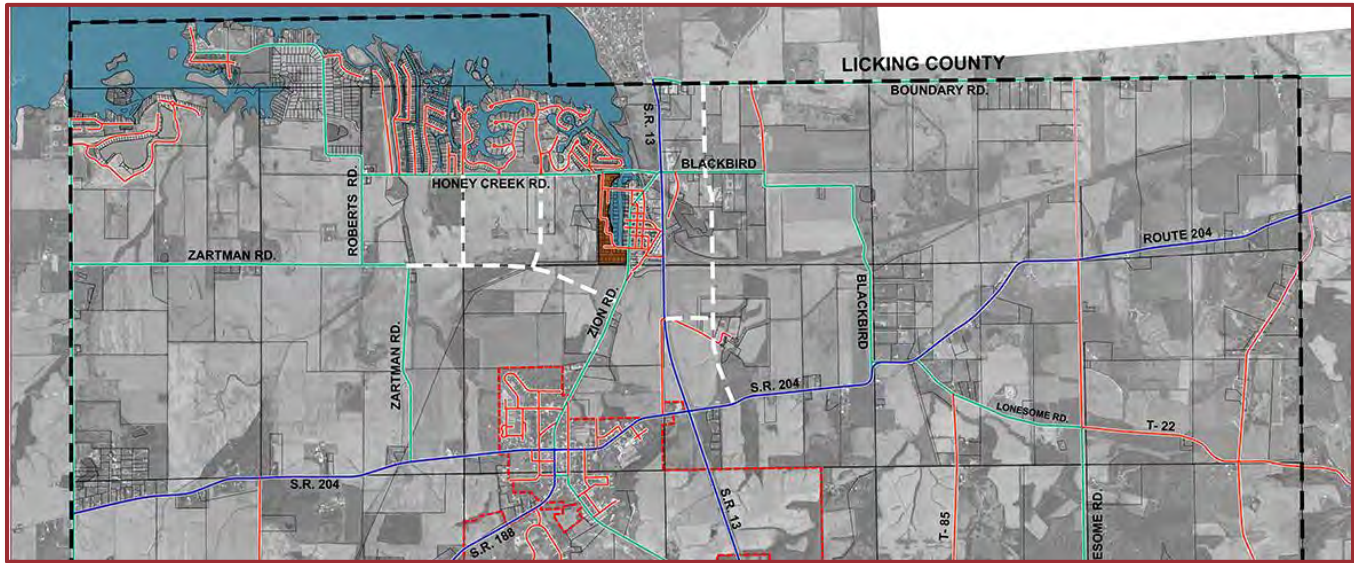


Figure 3-7: Village Residential

## Village Residential

The Village Residential District is comprised of residential homes and lots already existing in the Village of Thornport. Many of these existing homes are situated on the channels that are connected to the main lake, although the very low bridges across Honey Creek Road and Township Road 79 make connection into the main lake very difficult. These homes are a part of the fabric of Thornport, and new investment in this area should be supported by the township. It is possible that revitalization and renewed interest in the village will likely promote more interest in residential opportunities surrounding the village as well. If land becomes available, this district could be expanded to the west to provide opportunities for additional village style housing opportunities. There is renewed interest across the country in quaint homes on smaller lots in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. That type of setting, near the village, and with access to the lake could provide another opportunity for people who wish to have a slightly different lifestyle than a typical suburban style home. If the Village Residential is to be extended the township should permit the development of smaller lots in exchange for more traditional neighborhood features such as front porches, sidewalks, and small pocket parks for use by the residents.



Figure 3-8: Village Residential Example (Pocket Neighborhoods)

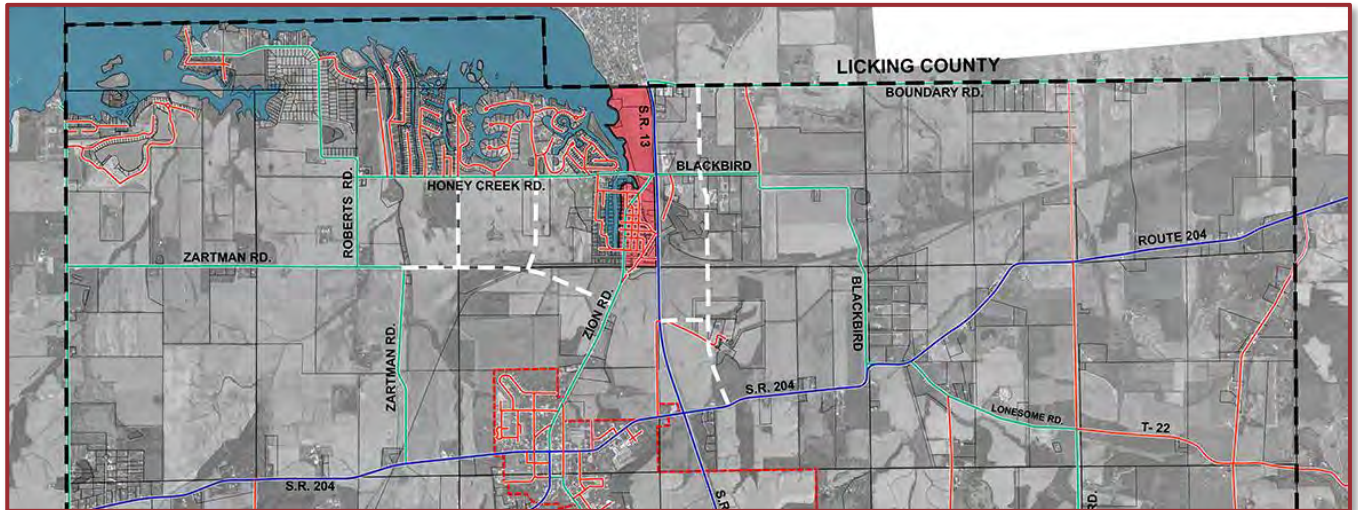


Figure 3-9: Village Mixed-Use

### Village Mixed Use

The Village Mixed-Use District is comprised of a mix of existing businesses and residences in the existing Village of Thornport, as well as some additional property adjacent to the lake north of Honey Creek Road and West of S.R. 13. There is tremendous opportunity in this district to develop a vibrant and walkable mix of uses that capitalizes on the proximity to the lake and truly creates a work / live / play type of destination for the township. This area is a little unique to Buckeye Lake because of its ease of access and visibility to S.R. 13. The parcel adjacent to the lake also presents an opportunity for the township as it is one of the few remaining large parcels with direct access to the shoreline of the lake.

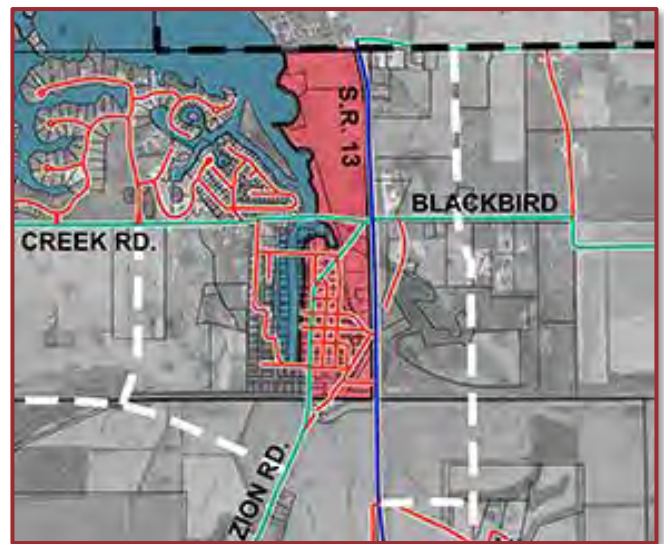


Figure 3-10: Village Mixed-Use Enlarged

For the areas within the existing Village of Thornport the township should be focused on supporting any re-development / re-investment opportunities that arise. This support could come in a variety of forms including supporting owners when securing approvals for improvements or new construction to participating in grant applications if public money is available for various improvements. In addition, the township may want to consider developing some overlay standards that could help govern the re-development of the Village. The focus for such standards should be on quality architecture, front entries that address the street, creating opportunities for sidewalks, and developing an atmosphere that is vibrant and pedestrian friendly.

# Future Land Use

## Village Mixed Use Cont'd

There have already been discussions in the township regarding the potential of the land north of Honey Creek and East of S.R. 13. The township is actively working to secure a 5 acre park and boat launch on the lake, and the property owner has been working on creating concepts for a mixed use development on the balance of the land. Future development on this property has the opportunity to provide public lake access in the form of a boardwalk or Promenade along the shoreline, and significant opportunities to create more tourism opportunities for the lake within Perry County. If this property is developed well it could also stimulate revitalization and re-investment in the older areas of the Village. Opportunities here include lodging and hospitality, restaurants, and specialty retail. This property should be planned and developed in a comprehensive fashion and should absolutely be developed under the Planned District Regulations. The township should carefully weigh any proposals put forward for this property to ensure that it provides maximum value for not only the owner but for the public aspect and tourism of the lake. Any development proposal should include some public access to the shoreline and walking / bicycle connectivity between the development and the existing Village.

It is anticipated that any significant development of this property would likely trigger some needed improvements to the K-intersection of Honey Creek Rd., Zion Rd., and State Route 13. If Honey Creek Road is to be improved, it would be worth taking a close look at replacing the current bridge over the channel with a taller structure that would allow easier boat access to the Village. Improved boat access could have a large impact on the Village's ability to attract re-investment. There may also be some opportunities for the township to work creatively with developers to help fund some of these needed improvements. For example, proceeds from a TIF placed on new development could help generate additional tax dollars to pay for road improvements or other projects with public benefit.



Figure 3-10: Boat Ramp (Ohio State Parks)



Figure 3-11: Waterfront Promenade Example

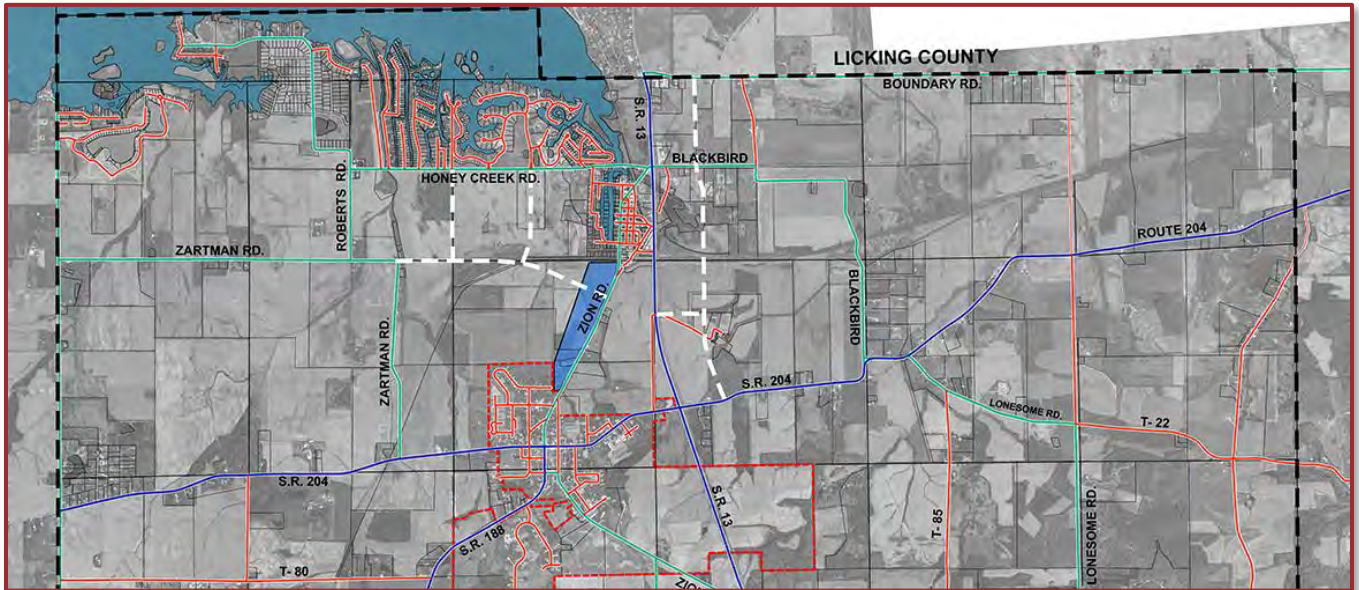


Figure 3-12: Light Commercial

### Light Commercial

The area designated on the plan as “Light Commercial” is land that has access to utilities, and is situated on the main road between The Village of Thornville and the Village of Thornport, but does not have the visibility or traffic counts offered by State Route 13. As such, this land will not likely develop in uses that demand higher visibility or traffic like a retail store or major restaurant. The land could be used however, to support more local business uses such as offices and medical buildings serving local populations, nursing homes, or banks. In addition, if the area between Zion Road and State Route 13 develops into larger commercial uses, the areas outlined on the west side of Zion Road may become more desirable as well. Since these uses will be adjacent to the areas outlined for future residential growth they should be of a more neighborhood scale and character. These uses can ultimately face the road with residences behind. As these parcels develop the township should make sure that bike / multi-purpose trails are included along the right-of-way of Zion road to provide a bike / pedestrian connection between Thornville and Thornport and the lake.

# Future Land Use

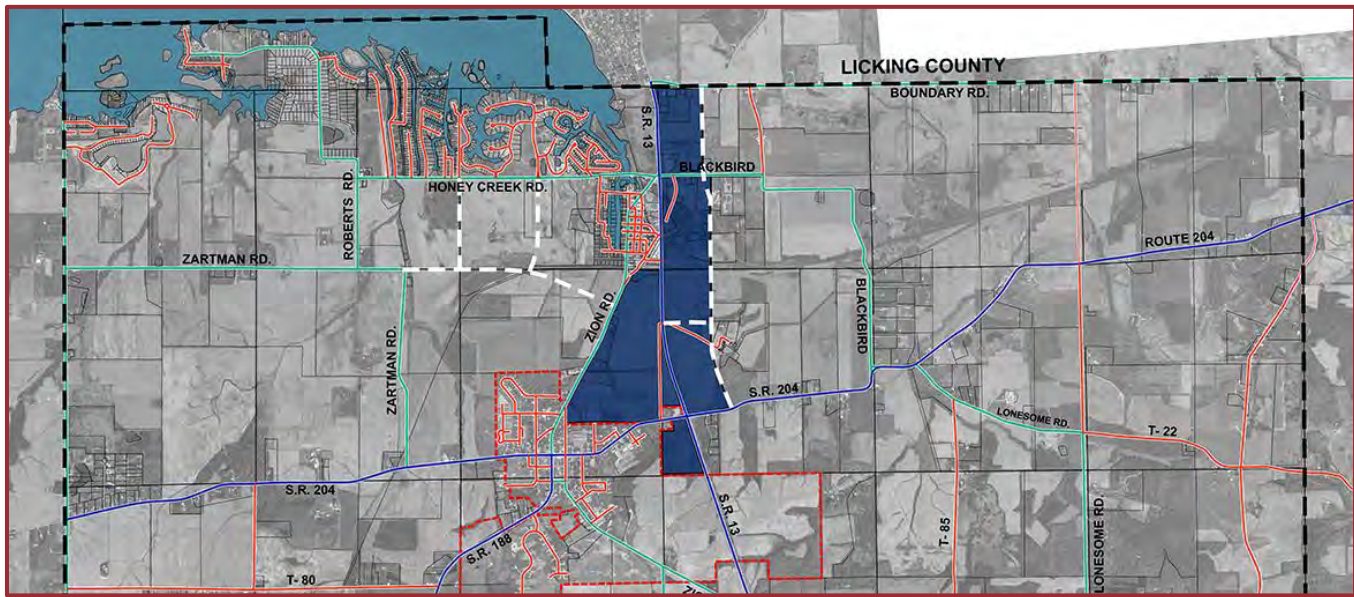


Figure 3-13: Highway Oriented Business

## Highway Oriented Business

Throughout the planning process both township leaders and township residents expressed a desire to have more commercial services and employment opportunities in the township. The Highway Oriented Business district defines an area that is suitable for those types of uses. Although the area has infrastructure available, and great visibility from State Route 13, attracting any substantial commercial or employment growth has had its challenges for the township. Commercial services such as restaurants and stores typically want to be assured of enough demand to locate in the township. For most commercial businesses, this demand is defined by ADT (Average Daily Traffic), Demographics, and the number of rooftops in the trade area. It is also difficult to see much demand for any substantial industrial growth, given the proximity to areas like Hebron where infrastructure and incentives are already in place to entice these uses. Given these factors, it is most likely that any commercial / industrial growth is going to serve the more local population, than support a regional destination, until the area develops further. Restaurants and stores will likely either be locally owned, tourism driven, or convenience oriented, and business growth will likely be local employers looking to set up shop closer to home or capitalize on business opportunities created by the needs of the township / village residents and lake population. This does not mean, however, that the township should relax its standards in these areas to try and incentivize new growth. Trying to attract businesses by being the cheapest place to locate often leads to growth in businesses that are riskier, less attractive to the community, less likely to invest in the community, and less likely to be sustainable long term. Given that these areas are the front door to the township, special attention should be given to new applications for zoning in these areas to make sure that proposed business growth meets the needs and expectations of the township, and establishes an appropriate character. With more land designated in this district than is needed to feed the short term demand, the township should prioritize land just north and south of Blackbird lane where some commercial growth has already started, and land between Zion Road and State Route 13 if possible.

Another challenge facing potential businesses locating in these areas will be access. For almost the entire portion between the township line and State Route 204 the right-of-way of State Route 13 is considered limited access. This means that the Ohio Department of Transportation is unlikely to give any business a driveway curb cut directly onto S.R. 13. To support new growth the township will have to work with businesses to develop a system of access roads paralleling State Route 13. These access roads will need to be far enough away from State Route 13 to support the development between but not so far away as to create a lot of unusable land or inefficient property utilization for the commercial developments.

## DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS

To help achieve the desired character of the community and the vision developed by the township, several development techniques and tools are provided here for the consideration of the township trustees, Zoning Commission, and staff. These techniques are standard, proven methods in community zoning and development. They can be regulatory or optional, but all serve a specific purpose in achieving a desired goal for the community.

### Planned Development Districts

A planned development district is an optional zoning district intended to allow for more creativity and flexibility in the zoning process than would be allowed in a standard zoning district. Planned Development Districts have been in use for quite some time and are used by many communities today. PDD's are preferred in certain areas where a higher standard is desired or where the site is more difficult to work with. Requirements are typically more flexible so long as the goals and intent of the Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan are being met. A planned development district may be used to permit new and innovative concepts that are not allowed in other zoning districts.

Planned developments typically encourage the provision of common open space, more creative lot configurations, a mix of different uses, preservation of natural features, and a higher standard of design and use. As part of the zoning, the developer typically provides a project narrative and site plans that include a description of the project and proposed uses, the market concept and feasibility of the project, the proposed development standards, and any deviations from current requirements.

While greater flexibility is given to allow more creative design options, enhanced review procedures are also established to ensure the increased flexibility is not misused. Township staff and officials hold several meetings with the applicant to develop the plan, address concerns and negotiate aspects of the plan until both parties end up with a product that is beneficial to both the developer and the community. It is up to the township to write clear, successful standards for the Planned Development District and negotiate with the developer for as long as it may take to get the product they want. Thorn Township has planned development regulations in place but they are limited to mostly residential development, and may not allow enough flexibility, protection, and specificity to accomplish the townships future goals. The township should look to revise these standards first, especially with the prospect of mixed-use development being proposed in the township.

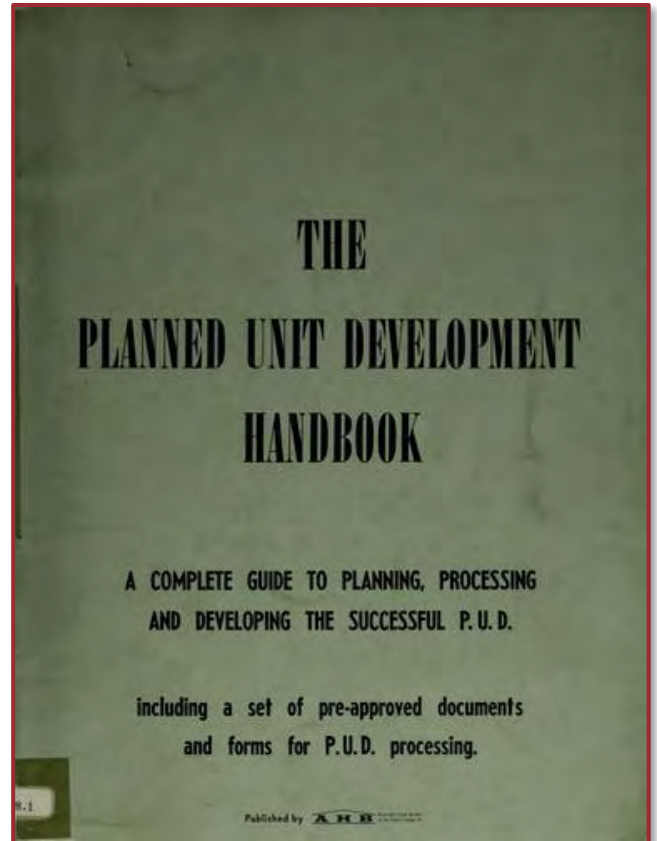


Figure 3-14: AHB PUD Handbook circa 1970



Figure 3-15: Example Mixed-Use PUD Site Plan

## Future Land Use



Figure 3-16: Traditional neighborhood example

### New Urbanism / Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

New Urbanism or Traditional Neighborhood Development is a type of development that can occur within a planned district. New Urbanism / TND includes a variety of housing types, a mix of land uses, an active center, and a walkable design. It was created to emulate the towns and suburbs built in the early-mid 20th century more than the automobile dominated suburbs from the 60s and beyond. TND can be implemented through a form-based code or a planned development district to achieve the desired elements and often requires strict architectural and site design standards that promote a high quality of life. It can be used in new areas or in areas needing redevelopment. Gross densities typically range from 3-6 du/acre with the mixed use core sometimes achieving densities of 10 du/acre or higher. Housing includes narrow front setbacks, sidewalks, front porches, and detached rear garages or alley-loaded parking. The street network is suitable for pedestrians, cars, and bicyclists, and other buildings and uses are located within walking distance to the homes (generally 1/4 mile).



Figure 3-17: Traditional neighborhood

TNDs or New Urbanism developments can range from small-scale developments (10-15 acres in size), to much larger-scale projects (in excess of 500 acres). Open space is usually 10-20% of the area, and 70-80% is comprised of residential blocks. The remaining space is for mixed use with a focus on commercial uses and civic spaces. Regardless of the size of the site, the overall goal is to create a compact, walkable neighborhood, with a mix of uses for all residents.

*New Urbanism / TND can occur in areas of the village / township that contain open land and have few environmental features. It can be done on a smaller scale with infill projects or on a larger scale with new developments.*

## Conservation Development

Conservation development is a type of development used to preserve and protect open space while providing a common open space for residents and creating a greenway network for the community. This type of development was popularized by Randall Arendt in his book “Rural By Design”. In conservation development, builders can construct the same number of homes while using less raw land and conserving open spaces. Rather than converting most of the buildable land to development, the extra land can be permanently preserved for environmental, aesthetic and recreational benefits. It is important that not only critical areas be preserved, but usable open space as well. For example, while typical neighborhood development would normally occur at densities of 1-2 units per acre, conservation development would require 50% open space (percentage varies) and concentrate development in pockets of higher density.

Conservation development can occur through zoning or as a development technique. In both methods, typically half or more of the land within a residential development is devoted to permanent open space. If part of a conservation zoning district, developers must use conservation techniques in the designated zoning districts. They have the option to increase or decrease the density based upon how much land they preserve and what market they are trying to serve (for example, estate lots vs. village lots). Conservation zoning expands the range of development choices available to landowners and developers. Used as a development technique, standards would be created in the zoning code but the land would not necessarily be part of a conservation zoning district. It may be a permitted or conditional use as part of a residential district for example and the density of that district would determine the number of houses permitted in the zoning district. The developer would first identify the noteworthy features, then locate sites for the houses in the remaining areas that maximize views of the open space. Finally streets, trails, and lot lines are placed into the site plan. This process is the reverse of the traditional subdivision design process. In many instances these types of development can cost less due to a decrease in roadway length, infrastructure, and grading and clearing needed.

*Conservation development should occur through a Planned Development District in areas of the township where sewer and water are available on parcels that contain significant natural features or where there is a desire to preserve productive agricultural lands.*



Figure 3-18: Typical Subdivision layout (Randall Arendt)



Figure 3-19: Conservation Alternative (Randall Arendt)



Figure 3-20: Conservation design image

# Future Land Use

## Rural Conservation Development

One of the largest land use challenges faced by most townships is the loss of agricultural land and rural road frontage due to residential lot splits. While creating desirable homesteads for many families this type of development puts additional strains on a townships resources and can slowly alter the character of the township. Since these splits occur primarily along the frontage of existing roads it increases the number of driveways and culverts on township and county roads. This can lead to increased road and ditch maintenance costs to the township. In addition, it also removes the once rural view from these roads and converts that view to a more suburban nature.

To address the challenges and loss of character and resources associated with frontage lot splits the township could incorporate zoning incentives that would promote more creative options, or discourage simple frontage lot splits. With the increased demand for this type of housing the township may want to consider some creative options that would permit a few more lots while achieving the same goals of maintaining a more rural appearance and conserving resources. A normal 5 lot split along existing road frontage would typically result in 5 new driveway curb cuts, 5 new culverts, and an additional 1000 feet or more of new suburban lawn on existing rural roads (figure 4-33). One option for the township to consider would be to keep strict requirements for lot splits on existing frontage. To promote more a more conservation oriented alternative the township could work with landowners and the county to develop lots at the minimum size necessary to support septic and well systems provided new lots access a new public road, private road, or common access drive rather than an existing public road. To promote this type of responsible development the township could permit some additional lots if all lots meet these requirements. In addition, these small subdivisions should provide additional dedicated open space, large rural setbacks, or the preservation of significant natural features.



Figure 3-21: Rural road ditch and culvert



Figure 3-22: Typical Lot Split Scenario

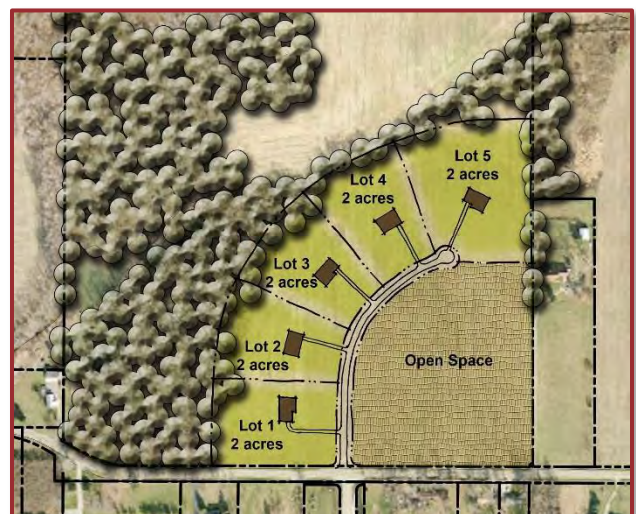


Figure 3-23: Alternate rural lot development scenario

## **Overlay Districts**

An overlay district is an additional zoning requirement placed on an area that does not change the underlying zoning. These districts are used to impose development restrictions or additional standards to protect natural resources, promote health, or maintain the character of an area. The township determines which areas to create overlay districts for and developers would be required to follow those standards when developing in those areas - they are not optional. Areas which may utilize an overlay district include historic neighborhoods, downtowns, villages, road corridors, floodplains, and areas with scenic views. This approach allows the township to update their current codes and regulations while addressing the special needs of sensitive areas. Developers are aware of the specific requirements of those areas at the onset which makes the design and approval process much smoother.

*This tool could be used in a number of ways to the benefit of Thorn Township. An overlay district could be developed to govern the look and feel of new development, or re-development, within the Village of Thornport. Most participants of this plan expressed an interest in seeing Thornport become a more thriving mixed-use community with greater attraction to the tourism industry. An overlay could work to establish the guidelines through which that happens. In addition, the overlay could be used to establish a character for developments adjacent to the lake, or to protect sensitive natural areas like floodplains.*

## **Low Impact Development (LID)**

Low impact development is a development technique used to conserve and protect natural resource systems while reducing infrastructure costs. Land can still be developed, but in such a way that environmental impacts are mitigated. Many techniques are available to developers to utilize this concept making them able to choose which ones are specifically suited to the site in question. LID looks at how standard development practices impact water quality and runoff, and seeks to reduce those impacts through treating the water at its source instead of at the end of the pipe. Some of these techniques include minimizing impervious surfaces, directing rainwater toward rain gardens or swales, bio retention, filter strips, wetlands, rain barrels, sand filter and evapotranspiration systems for wastewater treatment, and alternative street design. If these techniques are to be used then the township must ensure that their ordinances allow for these techniques for ease of implementation. Incentives could also be provided by the trustees that encourage use of LID techniques (i.e. reduced fees, expedited permitting process, density bonuses).

# Future Land Use

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## LAND AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION TOOLS

To help the township conserve land, agriculture and natural resources, and achieve the vision developed by the township community, several techniques and tools are provided here for the consideration of the community leaders and decision makers. These techniques are proven and available methods and tools in conserving land and resources. They can be regulatory, self-imposed, or optional, but all serve a specific purpose in achieving a desired goal for the community.

### **Land Preservation Benefits**

Thorn township is a rural community, and through the public visioning sessions the community has said they would like to maintain the rural character in some areas of the township while maximizing the benefit of the lake in others. Part of this rural character includes the farming culture still evident throughout the township and these tools provide some possible avenues that the community or individual landowners can take to preserve these resources. The benefits of farmland preservation are far-reaching, and affect not only the township residents, but also the central Ohio community and beyond. Some of the benefits include:

*Food Security* - Farmland preservation is essential for providing a sustainable food supply. The planning area is blessed with good agricultural opportunities that should be regarded as a treasured natural resource. Fresh, locally-grown food is nutritious, reduces transportation costs, and decreases the risk of food shortages from natural or man-made disasters.

*Rural Character* - Recent township community meetings confirm that maintaining rural character and small town charm is an important factor for residents. Farmland open space, with its pleasant view sheds, nourishes that character and connects us to the agricultural heritage of the area.

*Natural Habitat* - Woodlots, grassways, meadows and riparian areas on the farm provide diverse habitats for a healthy wildlife population, plus a variety of woodland wildflowers and native grasses. Trees and other vegetation growing on undisturbed soils sequester carbon, reducing the rate of global warming.

*Economic Impacts* - Agriculture/food is the primary industry in the State of Ohio. Although some farms are not self-supporting in today's economic environment, many are, and their commodities are profitably sold on the global market. Other farmers choose to value-add to their products, or tap niche markets (organic, community supported agriculture [CSA], farmers' markets, greenhouse vegetable production, orchards, aquaculture, U-Pick operations, supplying food to local institutions, etc.). Both farmers and non-farmers offer agri-businesses, such as selling/cleaning seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, etc., and provide essential custom services. Hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities are available on some private lands.

*Alternative Energy Opportunities* - As our supply of fossil fuels diminishes, open spaces and farmland will become more important sites for generating clean energy from solar, wind, and biofuels. Livestock operations offer opportunities to generate heat and electricity from methane.

*Sprawl Control* - Planned farmland preservation incorporates "smart growth," which minimizes destruction of prime farmlands for non-agricultural use, respects the natural features of the land, and directs development to designated areas where infrastructure already exists or can easily be extended cost-effectively with minimal environmental impact. Floodplains can be protected from development, and groundwater recharged, replenishing our vital aquifers.

*Cost of Community Services* - In those counties that have studied the relative costs of community services (fire, police, schools, roads, etc.) for residential areas compared to farmland, the results have unanimously proven that residential developments rarely take in enough tax dollars to cover infrastructure costs, while farmers overpay – essentially subsidizing residential areas. This is not to say that residential growth is not desired in any community, however, that residential growth must be balanced with farmland preservation and other types of growth if possible to help maintain the fiscal health of the township.

*Social Structure* - Preserving farmlands and the farm families that steward them supports a strong social structure focused on community and family. Many farms have been passed down through generations and serve as a symbol of stability, family pride and solid values in the community. They are good places to raise children - instilling in them a strong work ethic, an enduring connection to the land, and an appreciation of natural ecosystems and man's impact upon them.

### **Land Preservation Techniques**

Below is a list of tools that should be available to all land owners in Thorn Township. Many land owners may be enrolled or participating in some of these programs already. These tools are constantly being evaluated, updated, changed or being discontinued in favor of other methods. This guide is intended to serve as a reference / overview only and to outline the various options available and point the user in the right direction. For this reason, this plan will not go into extensive detail on the specific requirements or benefits of each program. For more complete information and current requirements for these various programs the reader may wish to look to the program administrators for more complete and current information.

*Land use taxation* –Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) is a real estate tax assessment program that affords owners of farmland the opportunity to have their parcels taxed according to their value in agriculture, rather than full market value. To qualify, the landowner must have 10 or more acres dedicated to commercial agricultural use or produce an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500. This program helps to preserve farmland by preventing local farmers from being pushed out of business by an inability to pay for the increasing operating costs, when they use few local services. By permitting land values to be set below true market values, the CAUV program normally results in a substantially lower tax bill for working farmers.

County auditors are in charge of administering this program in Ohio. They will supply the initial CAUV enrollment forms and verify that the parcel meets the requirements set forth in the law. The auditor then reports this information to the Department of Tax Equalization at the end of the year.

Millions of acres have been enrolled in CAUV across the state throughout the program's inception, and there are participants in each county. Most agricultural parcels in Perry County are enrolled in this program already.

*Agricultural Districts* - An Agricultural District is created through a voluntary agreement between farmers and local government to maintain land in farming for a set term, usually 4-10 years, 5 years in Ohio. This action is temporary, but it is stronger than zoning. Being part of an Agricultural District also protects against nuisance suits, provides deferment of tax assessments, and an additional review process if the land is taken by eminent domain.

Applications are available from county auditor's office to place land into an agricultural district. If the land is in a municipality, the legislative body of the municipality must then have a public hearing on the application within 30 days. For farms in unincorporated areas, the county auditor will certify the application if it meets the eligible criteria.

## Future Land Use

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*Defined growth areas* - In a defined growth area, or growth boundary, new development is steered toward the central area of growth. Development efforts are focused inside this boundary and any policies created emphasize the importance of the growth area. Infrastructure can be limited or restricted outside of these areas. Capital improvement spending and development regulations direct development to these areas as well. Keeping development inside this boundary restricts outside development and preserves the integrity of the farmland. In turn, development is focused in one area, hopefully with a detailed plan in place for its design and growth. However, in some places where a defined growth area is in place housing prices may increase due to the limited space where development can occur. Housing becomes more expensive within the boundary if there is not enough supply to meet the demand for the set number of years that the boundary will be in place. Creating a defined growth area also requires extensive cooperation between local leaders depending on its size and location. These growth areas are established by the local or regional governing body as part of a comprehensive or regional plan and can be in effect for any number of years, or established to accommodate a projected population increase.

*Land Trusts/Conservancies* - Land Trusts are non-profit organizations that work with landowners to protect their land. They can acquire land or rights in land through purchase or donation. Working with a land trust can be faster than working with the government, and some individuals prefer working with a non-governmental organization. Appalachia Ohio Alliance is the local land trust alliance for Perry County (source: Land Trust Alliance). The Trust for Public Land, and the North American Land Trust are examples of a national land trust. These organizations can assist agencies and communities in identifying priorities, lands to be protected, available funding, and in structuring and negotiating land transactions.

*Agricultural Easement Donation Program (AEDP)* - The Agricultural Easement Donation Program allows landowners to donate development rights of their land to the State of Ohio or local governments to protect productive farmland from conversion to non-agricultural use. The donated easement can be permanent and short-term and is completely voluntary. In order to participate, the farmland must be at least 40 acres, part of an Agricultural District, and part of the CAUV tax program. Generally, the land must also be in an area designated by the township for agriculture in an adopted comprehensive land use plan. The donation of an easement can result in potential estate, income and capital gains tax relief. Donation is also a creative, flexible technique that meets landowner needs, is permanent, and has easier administration than a purchase program.

Landowners wishing to participate in this program can obtain a donation deed from the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Before accepting a donated agricultural easement, ODA will give notice of the donation to the local government officials who will then have 30 days to review and comment on the donation.

*Ag Estate Planning* - Farmland is vulnerable to conversion pressures when passing from one owner to the next. Good estate planning can help transfer both the land and the business from generation to generation. Basic elements of estate planning include completing a will and keeping it updated, creating a living will and power of attorney, and setting up both a management and transfer plan for land and other operating assets. There are five basic goals behind estate planning. The primary goal is to facilitate the transfer of ownership and management of the farm business, farmland, and other assets. The second goal of estate planning is avoiding unnecessary transfer taxes. The third goal of estate planning is to ensure financial security for all generations - without proper documentation showing how assets should be allocated, the state has the ability to distribute the estate as it sees fit. The fourth goal of estate planning in the farm/ranch context is to develop the next generation's management skills. The fifth goal of estate planning may be to keep productive land in agriculture. When starting an estate plan, farmers should work to set goals, inventory assets, assemble a team (including

accountant and/or lawyer), and then determine ownership and assets. A proper estate plan is one of the best ways to protect farmland.

### **Land Conservation and Stewardship Programs**

*CRP - Conservation Reserve Program* - The Conservation Reserve Program a voluntary program for agricultural landowners administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Through CRP, you can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) makes annual rental payments based on the agriculture rental value of the land, and it provides cost-share assistance for up to 50 percent of the participant's costs in establishing approved conservation practices. Participants enroll in CRP contracts for 10 to 15 years.

Natural Resources Conservation Service works with landowners to develop their application, and to plan, design and install the conservation practices on the land. The Conservation Reserve Program reduces soil erosion, protects the Nation's ability to produce food and fiber, reduces sedimentation in streams and lakes, improves water quality, establishes wildlife habitat, and enhances forest and wetland resources. It encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filter strips, or riparian buffers. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices.

### *CREP - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program*

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a federally funded program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that offers farmers the opportunity to take highly erodible and environmentally sensitive lands out of production, thereby improving water quality, reducing soil erosion and increasing grassland, wetland and riparian habitat for wildlife. The program seeks significant increases in the rental rates farmers are currently offered through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) making it more economically feasible for them to participate. By combining CRP resources with state, tribal, and private programs, CREP provides farmers and ranchers with a sound financial package for conserving and enhancing the natural resources of farms.

### *WRP - Wetlands Reserve Program*

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program to restore and protect wetlands on private property. It is an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore wetlands that have been drained for agriculture. Landowners who choose to participate in WRP may sell a conservation easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. The landowner and NRCS develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. The program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10- year duration.

# Future Land Use

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## Additional Tools

Below is a list of tools that may be available to landowners within the Thorn Township planning area with resolution of support or some other sort of participation by the Township Trustees. Zoning tools will need to have a new Zoning Resolution developed. Other tools listed will need a means of financial support to make the program work.

*Agricultural Security Areas (ASA)* - The Agricultural Security Areas program authorizes one or more landowners of at least 500 acres of contiguous farmland to request from the boards of township trustees and county commissioners to enroll into an Agricultural Security Area for a 10-year period. To be eligible, the land must also be in an Agricultural District and be enrolled in the CAUV tax program. Enrollment in a security area protects against non-farm development. ASAs are not designed to stop development, but to protect farmland by creating special areas where agriculture is encouraged and protected. It also includes a state income tax credit up to a maximum of \$2,500 and a real property tax exemption on new or improved farm buildings of up to 75%.

Applications for this program are available from the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Eligible farmers can submit an application requesting a resolution of support from both the township trustees and county commissioners to form an ASA for 10 years. The trustees or commissioners may hold separate or joint public hearings prior to approving or rejecting an ASA application.

*State-level Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program* - The Purchase of Development Rights program enables a locality or land trust to purchase development rights on a property. The landowner gets compensation and gets to keep the land. A permanent deed restriction is placed on property that states that the property will remain agricultural in perpetuity. The price offered to the landowner is the difference between the market/development value and the agricultural value. PDR programs are voluntary and protect agricultural as well as open space, recreational, ecological pieces of land. PDRs can turn a land asset into a cash asset, along with assuring continued protection of the land. It may reduce property and estate taxes as well. Some disadvantages include the owner losing a piece of taxable property, lack of landowner participation and challenging program administration.

*Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP)* - The Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program is the state-level PDR program. It is part of the Clean Ohio Fund to preserve farmland and greenspace. The program grants up to 75% of the points-based appraised value of the farm's development rights with a cap of \$2000/acre and \$500,000/farm. In order to participate, the farm must be at least 40 acres.

County commissioners, township trustees, municipal councils, soil and water conservation districts, and land trusts apply on behalf of farmland owners. They submit paper copies of the completed application to the Office of Farmland Preservation in the Ohio Department of Agriculture by the posted deadline.

The program is very competitive with approximately one in fifteen applications being funded. According to the most current information available the Office of Farmland Preservation has received approximately 2,900 applications since the programs inception in 2002, and easements have been secured on approximately 375 farms totaling approximately 63,000 acres across Ohio.

*Agricultural Conservation Easement Program* – the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program replaced the Farm And Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) through the Agricultural Act of 2014, and is funded and administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. The USDA partners with state and local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire farmland. The program provides matching funds used to help purchase agricultural easements on farms and ranchlands. USDA provides up to 50% of the fair market easement value of the agricultural easement. If the NRCS determines that grasslands of special environmental significance will be protected, the NRCS is authorized to contribute up to 75 percent of fair market value.

For this program, the landowner submits an application to the applicable state or local program that has a farmland protection program. These programs that are awarded funds from FRPP then acquire permanent agricultural easements from landowners.

*Fee Simple Acquisition* - Public acquisition of lands with high environmental or agricultural significance can be achieved through fee-simple purchase. Fee-simple acquisition is generally the most expensive land preservation option; however, it gives the government entity control of the property, restricted only by constraints imposed by funding sources and any agreements that were obligated by the purchase. Public access could be allowed. If agricultural land were purchased, the government agency could lease the land to local farmers.

*Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) SWAP* - The Transfer of Development Rights program includes sending areas, which are the areas to be protected, and receiving areas, which are areas focused on development and growth. The owner of the farmland has their property (the sending area) placed into an easement in exchange for development rights for that property, which the owner can then transfer to an eligible area (the receiving area). A transfer of development right is in essence a unit – one TDR is equal to a certain acreage of farmland being preserved, which then equals a certain density or unit added to the receiving area. Developers can decide to pay a certain dollar amount in lieu of each TDR required for increasing density if they prefer (\$10,000 in Portage County for example). These proceeds are then used to purchase easements from eligible sending sites. Communities can require TDR's for any increased density through their comprehensive plan. TDR programs can be mandatory or voluntary, but most are voluntary. They provide landowners compensation, provide permanent land protection, help implement local plans and zoning ordinances, and can be tailored to meet community land use goals. TDR's are complex to administer though, and there may be a lack of desire for higher density development in the receiving areas, or a lack of willing buyers when there is a willing seller.

Ordinances for this program are produced at the county or township level. In order to create a Transfer of Development Rights program, a community must have significant development pressure. There must also be a comprehensive plan and zoning in the area for the TDR program to achieve its goals of preserving designated areas, without allowing for developers to receive variances to increase density, otherwise there is no incentive to purchase TDR's.

# Future Land Use

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## Zoning and subdivision regulations

Zoning is the traditional method for communities to influence development. The application of zoning tools can be an effective way to minimize the impact of development on significant natural or unique features of the land. Communities that create zoning districts with the intent to preserve farmland and open space are more apt to preserve large areas of land, and as such, preserve larger ecosystems. Concerns over zoning as a preservation tool include the fairness to property owners, the loss of both property rights and potential development profit, and the need for collaboration among local governments to preserve features that overlap into other jurisdictions.

The following are a number of zoning tools that can be used by local governments to preserve open space and/or agricultural land:

*Agricultural zoning* - This zoning classification is the most general and can allow for different degrees of residential development and uses. Typically, farming is the primary use and other uses are discouraged. Densities are limited, rural character is preserved, and property taxes stay level where agricultural zoning is in place. Once a community starts to develop and the agricultural nature of the area is compromised, regulations may have to be tightened to discourage certain types of new development. While agricultural zoning is inexpensive, comprehensive and effective, it is vulnerable to change.

*Sliding scale zoning* - Sliding scale zoning limits the number of times that a parent parcel can be split, based on its size. Sliding scale zoning is useful in agricultural areas where there are significant development pressures and land speculation. This method allows smaller parcels to be subdivided at greater density than larger parcels, which results in a reduction in the potential development density of large parcels. For example, if a lot is between 1-10 acres, it is permitted to be split once. For a lot that is 10.1-20 acres it is permitted to be split 2 times, a lot 20.1-40 acres, 3 times. This method does allow for some non-farm residential development without special review. Parcels that have utilized sliding scale zoning resulting in small developments can be rezoned at any time. Landowners may decide they would like to have more development and pressure local governments for more lots. As a consequence, sliding scale zoning often requires significant administration and on-going monitoring.

*Voluntary Agriculture Exclusive use zoning* - With exclusive use zoning, new, non-farm residences are strictly regulated. Approvals are given only through special land use/permit process. This method is most appropriate where there is limited pressure for residential development and there are already existing large areas of prime or unique agricultural resources. Development standards would include a maximum lot area for non-farm, residential uses, a large minimum lot area for a farm dwelling unit, a maximum lot width to depth ratio of 1:3, and/or large minimum lot widths and setbacks. Incentives can be offered to landowners since this type of zoning substantially limits alternatives to the use of their land.

# Transportation & Mobility

# Transportation and Mobility

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## VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

### Introduction

Transportation involves the various modes that people use to move around the area and the region. These modes connect the township and villages to each other and to the greater region. In addition, transportation and land use are heavily intertwined and interdependent. The ability of the transportation network to absorb future growth has a tremendous impact on the success of an area and the quality of life of its residents. In most areas, transportation networks have begun to evolve from being solely focused on the automobile to looking at a broader system, including bicycling, walking, transit, and rail. Each of these modes make up a part of the system and they work together to provide a well-integrated, efficient network of moving people and goods from one place to another in a healthy, safe, cost-effective and responsible manner.

### State, County and Township Roads

These classification levels are used by the State as a basis for statewide system needs and fiscal studies. They are also used in decision-making for capital improvement choices. Design criteria, maintenance allocations, and data collection needs are also based on functional classification level.

There is a network of State, County, and Township roads that connect the community to the larger, regional thoroughfare system. These roads, and their classifications are identified on the thoroughfare map (opposite page)

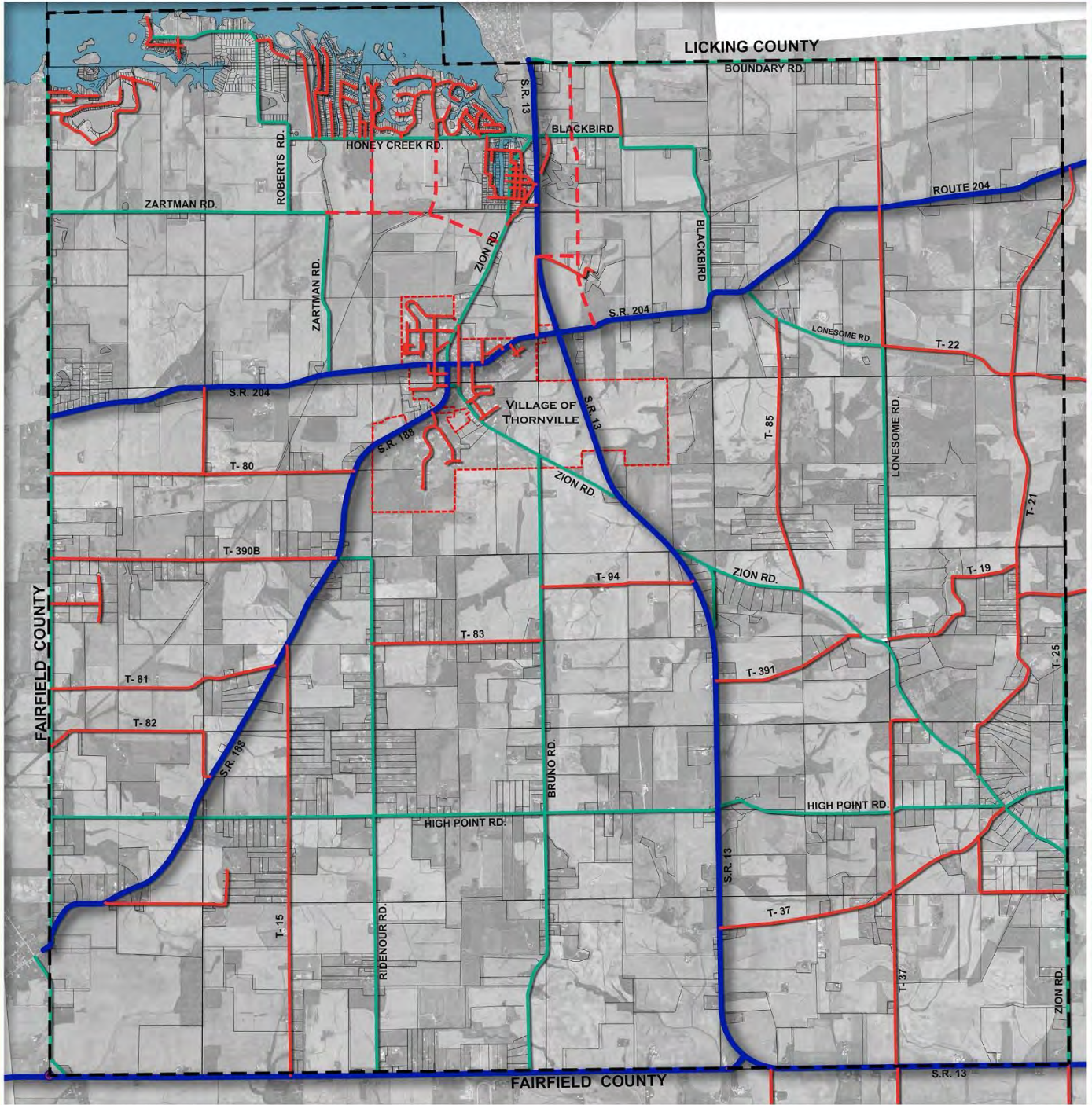
*State Routes* – State Routes are typically major or minor collectors that provide service to a county seat, larger towns, and other county destinations such as schools, parks, or important mining and agricultural areas not served by an interstate. State Routes extend beyond county borders and connect multiple counties or large municipal areas. State Routes are governed and maintained by the Ohio Department of Transportation (O.D.O.T.) sometimes in conjunction with County or local government agencies. The Ohio Department of Transportation also typically has authority over driveways and access onto State Routes. In addition, in cases like State Route 13, the Ohio Department of Transportation can designate whole sections of a road “Limited Access” and close off road access completely.

*County Roads* – County roads are typically minor collectors or local roads that connect different areas of the county and feed into State Routes. County roads typically serve as collectors for township roads and are usually maintained by the county engineer, sometimes in partnership with the different townships. County roads are not typically limited access but the county typically controls access for new development.





*Township Roads* - township roads provide access to adjacent land; and serve travel over relatively short distances. These roads typically connect into county roads or state routes and serve the local population. It is not uncommon for some more rural township roads to be unpaved or gravel roads. The township trustees are responsible for the maintenance, resurfacing and improvement of these roads but are subject to the general charge and general supervision and direction of the county engineer. Public roads constructed within new subdivisions will automatically become township roads. Culverts on township roads are typically the responsibility of the township as well which is one reason why new houses on existing township roads adds costs to the townships maintenance budget.

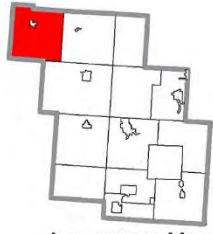
### Proposed Roadway connections

The proposed roads shown on the adjacent map are not based upon, nor intended to portray, a county level thoroughfare planning document. The new roads shown are intended to be a graphic indication of where the township will likely need new roads if it is to support the proposed growth mapped out in the future land use plan. These roads are primarily located on the east side of S.R. 13 to support potential new business growth, and west of Zion and north of Honey Creek Road to support better road connectivity and new residential growth.

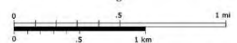


**THOROUGHFARE PLAN LEGEND**

-  EXISTING TOWNSHIP ROAD
-  PROPOSED TOWNSHIP ROAD
-  EXISTING COUNTY ROAD
-  EXISTING STATE ROUTE



**LOCATION MAP**  
THORN TOWNSHIP,  
PERRY COUNTY, OHIO



**THOROUGHFARE MAP**  
JANUARY 1, 2017

# THORN TOWNSHIP

ESTABLISHED 1804

# Transportation and Mobility

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## Proposed Roadway connections Cont'd

The roads paralleling State Route 13 will be required to support new commercial growth along State Route 13. Since S.R. 13 is limited access from the county line all the way to S.R.204, the Ohio Department of Transportation will not allow new driveways to access the road. New businesses will have to be accessed from parallel roads located to the rear of the business. These parallel roads will then have to tie into existing roads that have access to S.R. 13. It is unlikely that the township will have the resources to pay for the construction of this parallel road system leaving the developer of the parcel or business to incur the cost. The only other option is to find additional funds through either a TIF or through grants to help pay for the construction of the roads in advance.

The new road connections proposed between Zion, Zartman, and Honey Creek Road will ultimately help the township with better connectivity between the residential areas of the lake and the Village. This would also dramatically decrease the time it takes emergency responders to reach new residential development. The township should work with the County and developers to ensure that these future connections are made in some form as the property develops. Inter-connectivity between developments will be important as well and the township should ensure that new residential projects include stub streets to the adjacent properties for future connection.

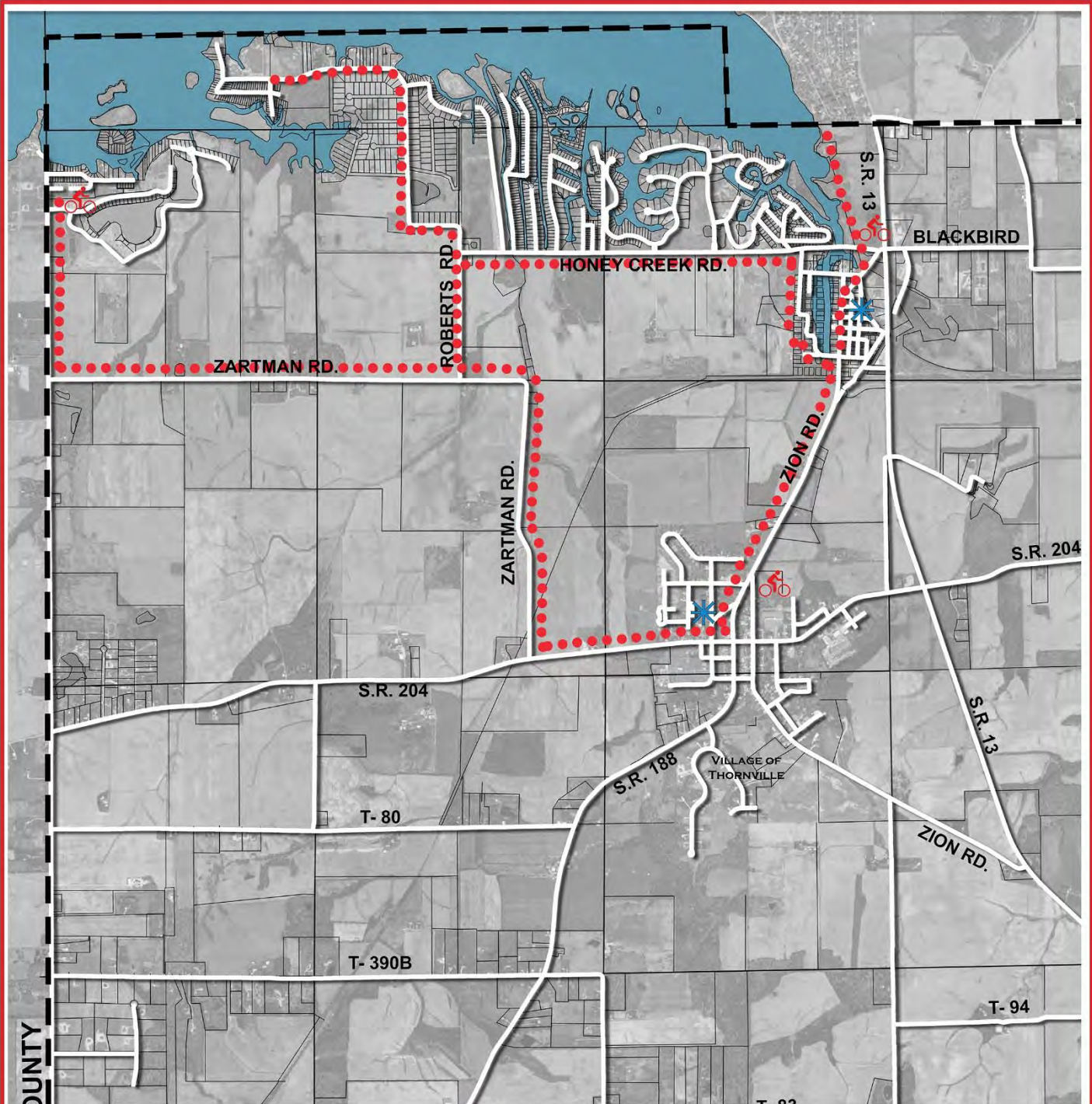
## Public Input

Throughout the public input process the residents and community leaders expressed a strong interest in the development of a connected network of Pedestrian / Bicycle facilities. Currently the automobile represents the only choice when considering traveling between the two villages or from the villages to the recreational areas of the lake. Residents are especially concerned that the lack of pedestrian / bicycle mobility will hamper efforts to attract more tourism and place a greater reliance / congestion on the roads. Creating new opportunities for biking and walkability could have a positive effect on the tourism industry as well as the health, safety, vibrancy and desirability of the township community. The economic value of trails, both in property values and increased tourism dollars, has been well documented through various studies and as a result of their popularity, many communities are beginning to look at incorporating bike paths and trails as a minimum standard necessary to thrive in the highly competitive race to attract residents and businesses.

As the Township considers future development proposals the inclusion of leisure trails and a connecting leisure path system should be at the forefront of the discussion. These trails should provide connectivity between the Villages and the lake as well as connect various existing and new developments to the overall trail system. Leisure trails can be provided within the R.O.W., in easements located adjacent to the R.O.W and, in stream and open space corridors.

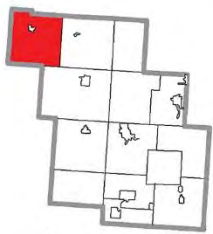
The following are recommendations for the development of pedestrian/bike routes within the Township:

- All new single family developments, lot splits, and commercial development should include sidewalks (internally) and leisure trails along all major Township roadways where indicated on the adjacent plan.
- Leisure trails should provide interconnection between developments, connection to the Lake, and connection to the Villages as shown on the Proposed Trail Network Plan.
- Leisure trails should be a minimum 8 feet wide to provide for adequate room to support both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Trailheads can be completed as part of the trail system to allow people to park and ride.
- Leisure trails can be paid for through private development or, where critical connections cannot be made through private development, public participation if funds or grants are available.
- Leisure trails can be paved surfaces, such as asphalt, where appropriate. Where greater sensitivity is required, such as stream corridors, leisure trails can also be a permeable walking surface such as crushed and compacted gravel. These types of surfaces are cheaper to construct, however, require a higher degree of maintenance to keep in usable condition

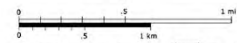


**FUTURE TRAIL LEGEND :**

- RECOMMENDED LOCAL TRAILS
- \* RECOMMENDED CONNECTION POINTS
- 🚲 POTENTIAL TRAIL HEAD LOCATION



LOCATION MAP  
THORN TOWNSHIP,  
PERRY COUNTY, OHIO



**PROPOSED TRAIL NETWORK**  
JANUARY 1, 2017

# THORN TOWNSHIP

ESTABLISHED 1804

# Transportation and Mobility

## Residential Sidewalks

Residential sidewalks are an extremely important element in defining connectivity and community character. Sidewalks give us an opportunity to walk, jog and bike through our community without exposing ourselves to potential conflicts with vehicles. Sidewalks give us an opportunity to smile and interact with our neighbors in a neutral outdoor setting, and make our communities appear more friendly. Sidewalks connect us with our destination, provide us an opportunity for a little evening exercise, and also create a sense of activity on a pedestrian scale that attracts others to join. The inclusion of sidewalks into every neighborhood and new development should be a priority for Thorn Township. Sidewalks in residential neighborhoods should be a minimum of 4 - 5 feet in width, while sidewalks in larger, more commercial developments should be at least 5-6 feet in width.

## Multi-Use Path / Leisure Trail

Multi-Use Paths / Leisure Trails are wider paths that have a more exercise / recreation / bicycle focus. These trails provide enough room to be comfortably shared by pedestrians and bicycles alike. Multi-Use paths are typically 8-12 feet in width and are more suitable for use in providing recreation opportunities and connecting more distant community elements. Examples where this type of trail should be installed are shown on the future trails map on the preceding page. These types of trails are preferred over the use of sharrows because they separate pedestrians / bicyclists from vehicular traffic and create a safer environment. In many cases however these types of trails can be challenging to implement if it requires the acquisition of new right-of-way from existing land owners. For this reason the township should look to negotiate completed trails through the zoning process when new projects are proposed in the township.

## Sharrows

Sharrows are striped areas of the street or roadway that indicate a preference for bicycles, or an alert to motorists that bicycles “share” the roadway (hence the term “Sharrows”). Sharrows typically appeal mostly to the experienced biker and do not create an effectively safe environment for pedestrians or smaller, younger cyclists who may be prone to straying or ‘wandering’ outside of the confines of the striped area. The benefit of sharrows is that they can be implemented fairly cheaply, do not necessarily require road reconstruction and/or acquisition of new right-of-way, and provide a safer environment for the growing segment of the population who prefer bicycles for exercise or short/mid-range transportation. If the road area is wide enough sharrows can be striped for exclusive bicycle use and if not they can simply indicate a warning to motorists.

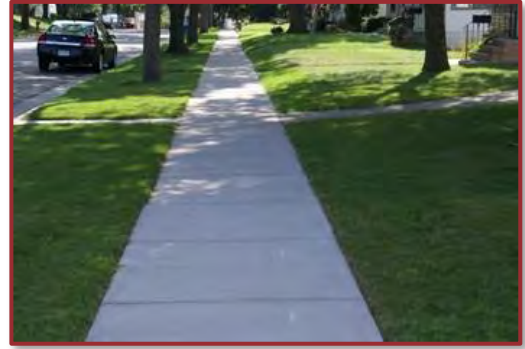


Figure 4-1: Neighborhood sidewalk



Figure 4-2: Neighborhood sidewalk



Figure 4-3: Multi-Use Trail



Figure 4-4: Sharrows

# Implementation Strategies

Thorn Township  
Land Use Plan

# Implementation

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## INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is to be used by the Township to help make future decisions regarding proposed growth and development. It is intended to be a high-level view of the Township, and provide information on existing overall conditions, community goals and desires, future land use and transportation improvements. By its nature, it is not intended to create detailed plans or strategies that deal with very specific issues. It is the implementation strategies and action items identified in this chapter that are essential to make the goals and objectives of this plan come to life. Without successful implementation strategies, the plan becomes merely a conversation piece and most often collects dust on a shelf.

Successful implementation is the key to the long-term viability of any Land Use Plan document. It will be up to the Trustees, Zoning Commission, staff, and residents to ensure that the plan is implemented successfully over time. The defining principles, land use recommendations, and transportation recommendations outlined in this plan define implementation strategies to be undertaken through adoption of this document and cooperation with surrounding communities, government agencies, landowners, and developers.

## GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### **1. Pass a Resolution adopting this Strategic Land Use Plan as the official planning policy of Thorn Township. (Timeline: Immediate)**

As future decisions are made the township should examine this plan, and the goals / policies contained within, to ensure that those decisions are in compliance with the intentions of the plan. Following the recommendations of the plan will create more stable, predictable, and defensible outcomes. In addition, the plan becomes a legally defensible basis for decisions if the township is challenged over land use and development issues in court.

### **2. Require compliance with the plan in rezoning / development requests and maintain a written record for decision making for all zoning and development requests. (Timeline: Ongoing)**

This document, and the vision and strategies contained herein, can be used as a reference by township trustees and Zoning Commission members in their statements of support or denial when voting on future re-zonings. Maintaining documentation that decisions are consistently made in compliance with the plan will provide a sound legal basis for all decisions. This record and legal basis will protect the township in the event of a legal challenge over development decisions.

### **3. Identify champions within the township staff and leadership that will be responsible for monitoring and promoting the progress of the plan. (Timeline: 0-6 Months)**

This success of this plan will largely rest on the persistency by which it is pursued. Assigning responsibility to key member(s) of the staff and township leadership to maintain a focus on the recommendations of the plan will help in keeping this plan at the forefront of everybody's mind. Consistent updates on progress at community meetings will help to ensure everyone stays involved and up to date.

### **4. To the extent possible, involve community members and stakeholders in the implementation of this plan. (Timeline: Ongoing)**

Many of the recommendations of this plan, including the creation of consistent development standards, require the participation of the community. This participation will ensure that community members are continually engaged in guiding the future of their community. It will also increase support for the plan and subsequent policies, and it will foster transparency and trust in community leaders.

**5. Identify and obtain funding to help achieve community goals. (Timeline: 1 year – Ongoing)**

The recent funding awarded to the township for the acquisition of park lands is an excellent example of the grants and funds that are available to various communities to help achieve certain goals. In addition, several creative funding mechanisms can be set up in the township to help pay for various projects. Some examples are TIF (Tax Incentive Financing) districts, JED (Joint Economic Development) Districts, Community Authorities, and Hotel / Bed taxes. Some of these may, or may not be appropriate for the township in various circumstances. Given the townships limited resources, the township should continue to research, identify, apply for funding / grant opportunities, and establish other mechanisms that may assist the community in achieving its goals.

**6. Continue to monitor changes in development patterns, community sentiment, and other trends, and update this plan as changes in these conditions warrant. (Timeline: Ongoing)**

Over time circumstances change as it relates to the needs and desires of the community. Demographic changes might create changes in housing needs, one large development might stimulate further investment, and changes in transportation may require additional planning. These are just some of the instances that could necessitate a fresh look at the concepts and vision established in the plan. In absence of major changes like these, the plan should be refreshed periodically (4-6 years) to update progress, document changes, and make minor adjustments as necessary. Major changes could trigger a more immediate examination of the plan if necessary to capitalize on new developments or circumstances, or prevent future harmful consequences.

**7. Update the current Township Zoning Resolution (Timeline: 1 year)**

The current township Zoning Resolution will need to be updated to achieve many of the townships goals within this plan. The township will need a more comprehensive Planned Development ordinance and process to help ensure that new developments reflect the standards and vision established within. In addition, the township should look to provide more comprehensive standards in its resolution moving forward. As the township grows having good standards in place for land use, signage, buffering and landscaping, and protection of resources will help protect the character of the township. If these items are not included, or are not communicated clearly or enforceable, developers or property owners may choose to develop their properties at a lower quality than the township would like to see.

# Implementation

## GOAL SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Goal Specific Strategies	Timeline
<b>Goal # 1 - Recognizing that commercial and retail services are necessary to provide goods, services, and employment opportunities to the residents of the township, the township will look for ways to encourage the establishment of these types of business in locations that are suitable to support such uses.</b>	
<b>Goal # 2 - The township, through good planning and decision making, will protect sensitive areas of the township from over-development while guiding development to locations that are less sensitive and can be supported by existing infrastructure.</b>	
<b>Goal # 3 - Protect the rural character, small town charm, and agricultural heritage of the southern areas of the township when considering future growth and development decisions.</b>	
<b>Goal # 4 - Effectively manage growth opportunities to protect the ecology of the lake and to promote the lifestyle and tourism opportunities that the lake provides to the residents and businesses of the township.</b>	
<b>Goal # 5 - Promote economic development and the growth of jobs and industry, in areas that are suitable for such growth, to help reduce the need for local residents to commute outside the township and to provide additional tax revenue to support the essential services that the township provides.</b>	

Goal Specific Strategies Cont'd	Timeline
<b>Goal # 6 - To accommodate the need for growth in the township, strategically target areas that can build upon existing infrastructure and minimize the need for the community to invest in new infrastructure development.</b>	
<b>Goal # 7 - Promote and preserve farmland as a viable industry where appropriate in the township.</b>	
<b>Goal # 8 - To promote the health and vitality of the township, reduce auto related congestion, promote tourism and economic growth, and increase connectivity and access to the lake, the township shall work to encourage or provide walking and biking opportunities between existing and new development, the lake, and the villages of Thornville and Thornport.</b>	
<b>Goal # 9 - Promote cooperation and collaboration with the Village of Thornville and Perry County on the issues of economic development, future growth, the securing of grants, and the provision of infrastructure and utilities to share resources, plan wisely, and secure a better future for the entire community.</b>	
<b>Goal # 10 - Ensure that the townships zoning regulations can effectively guide and manage growth and development while protecting the character of the community that is held so valuable by its residents.</b>	

# Implementation

Goal Specific Strategies Cont'd	Timeline
<b>Goal # 11 - Promote development and re-development opportunities in the Village of Thornport to take advantage of the proximity to the lake and develop a future tourism hub for the community.</b>	
<b>Goal # 12 - Look for opportunities to increase the branding / visibility of the township, the villages, and the tourism opportunities of the lake through the creation of gateways on prominent roads or the inclusion of signage at strategic locations in the township.</b>	

