

UTICA

2024

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VILLAGE OF UTICA



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the steering committee members, stakeholders, community members, staff, and officials who invested their time and expertise in the creation of this Comprehensive Plan for the future of Utica.

Utica Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

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PATTS
RESTAURANT



01

Plan Overview

01

PLAN OVERVIEW

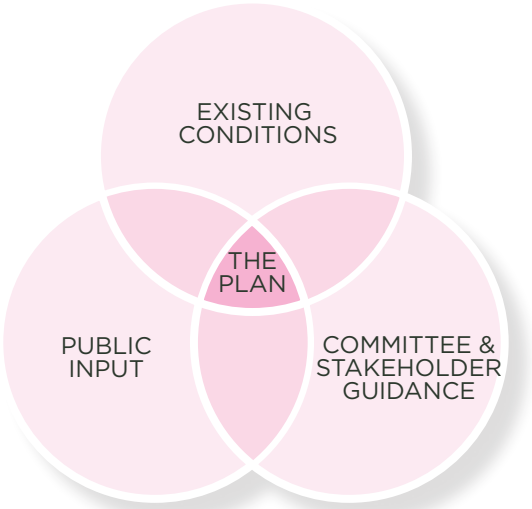
ABOUT THE PLAN

In 2024, the Village of Utica partnered with OHM Advisors to create a new comprehensive plan to guide the village in land use, zoning, housing, transportation and economic development planning over the next ten years. The planning process included extensive research to understand current conditions and develop a vision rooted in community feedback. The process also included abundant public input ensuring the plan recommendations are based on the values and aspirations of the community. It was created with guidance from village staff, a project Steering Committee, village residents and business owners. The Steering Committee included broad representation from the community, including elected and appointed officials, local stakeholders from the public and private realms, and general community representatives.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan is a vital community blueprint. It sets the direction for where and how the village should grow over the next ten years. Within this broader goal there are a number of community wide objectives the plan achieves. These include economic, land use, infrastructure, housing, and other broad community objectives.

The following are some specific objectives the Plan helps achieve:

- Establishes a uniform vision for Utica through future land use designations
- Identifies opportunities for new catalyst projects that will generate new village revenue while enhancing the character and brand of the community
- Supports future development through creative redevelopment strategies and incentives
- Creates a plan that has broad public and private sector support
- Supports future funding initiatives (e.g. state and federal grant programs)



The Plan was created by integrating three key inputs: existing conditions, public input, and committee and stakeholder guidance.

PLAN INPUTS

The Comprehensive Plan is a holistic and informed blueprint for future growth and development. Many layers of input from quantitative and qualitative analyses were considered, and extensive community involvement was conducted to create a technical and community-informed vision. The following describes these inputs and how they informed the plan.

Existing Conditions

Community existing conditions such as current land use, demographics, parks and open space, mobility, development character, community character, and infrastructure were analyzed along with current market trends. With an understanding of the these, the planning team and the Utica Steering Committee worked to create the plan.

Public Input

Throughout the planning process, the planning team facilitated public engagement sessions to gain insight into community values and aspirations for how and where the city should grow. These sessions revealed important insights on the issues and opportunities within the community, and preference for a desired growth strategy.

Committee & Stakeholder Guidance

The planning team also facilitated discussions through steering committee and stakeholder meetings. Issues and opportunities made apparent during these discussions were used to validate findings from analyses and community engagement, and build focus and direction for the plan recommendations. These dedicated community members helped create the project framework and championed the plan on behalf of their community.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

GUIDE...

THE COMMUNITY IN EVALUATING PROPOSED PUBLIC, PRIVATE, OR JOINT PROJECTS.

INFORM...

CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE PROPERTY OWNERS AND DEVELOPERS ON DESIRABLE GROWTH PATTERNS.

MEASURE...

PROGRESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECTS IN UTICA TO ENSURE THEY STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.



Utica has a rich history stemming from a rail town, glass production, and agriculture. These elements were considered and honored as part of creating the plan. (Source: Utica.gov)

PLANNING PROCESS

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan process spanned approximately nine months and included both technical research and public involvement. The planning process was developed at the beginning of the project. This process helped guide project activities, many of which were carried out concurrently in order to maintain the overall project schedule.

Investigate

During this initial step in the planning process, the scope of services was defined for the planning team, data collection and mapping was performed, and there was a cursory review of existing conditions. Members of the Steering Committee were also identified and invited to participate during the process. The first steering committee involved setting the goals for the project and initial visioning.

Inform

Throughout spring 2024 and the start of summer, the consultant team collected data around all aspects of Utica's existing conditions and analyzed it individually and alongside current market trends. This analysis, which informed the plan recommendations, was reported to the Steering Committee for general feedback and verification.

Insight

Concurrently with the existing conditions assessment, public input was collected by reviewing a 2023 public survey, and using a combination of Steering Committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, and a public open house, to gain insight regarding the community's aspirations for the future.

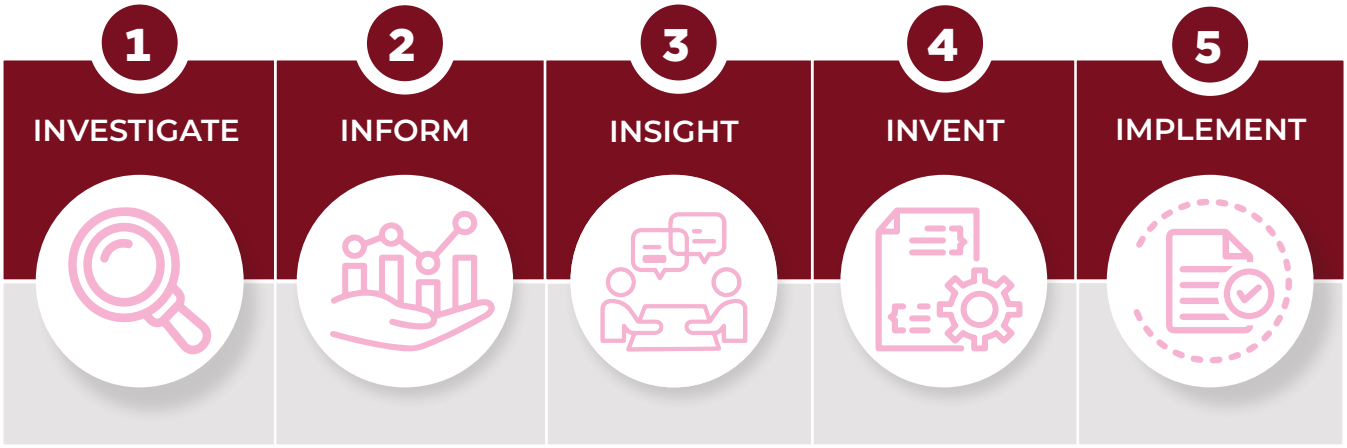
Invent

This step in the planning process involved developing recommendations for public and private improvements in the village. A draft future land use plan was created, and design concepts were articulated for three focus areas.

The Steering Committee was engaged in an iterative process to review and provide feedback, and the general public was invited to review and provide feedback on a draft version of the plan. This was a key step in ensuring the plan is supported by the public, and recommendations are calibrated with community insights.

Implement

Once the plan components were completed, compilation of the plan document was performed, and targeted implementation steps were developed to guide the plan in the future. The final plan is a concise, coherent, and easily understandable document. It is meant to be read and used by Utica leadership and community members.



PLAN FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The integration of the Plan inputs of existing conditions analysis, public input, and committee and stakeholder insights informed the development of the entire Plan Framework (*see Chapter 4*).The complete Plan will serve to reinforce future development character and shape the village for years to come.

The Plan Framework chapter is broken into six Plan Elements.

1. Future Land Use
2. Downtown Revitalization
3. Housing & Economy
4. Mobility & Connectivity
5. Parks & Recreation
6. Community Image & Brand

The important Future Land Use plan element section illustrates how land should be developed or zoned in the future, and gives direction on how to update the village's zoning code to align with the community's land use vision.

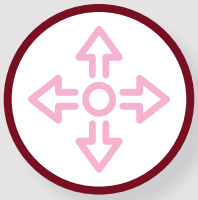
Another highlight within some of these elements is a series of priority projects. These projects were identified for their ability to advance the future land use plan, provide development opportunities and enhance the community image outlined in the Plan. These concepts are intended to be used as a guide for the village and developers to usher Utica into the future through proven design principles and forward-thinking development and placemaking.

PLAN ELEMENTS


Future Land Use

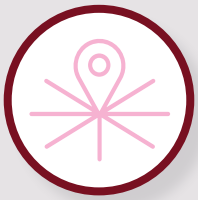

Downtown Revitalization


Housing & Economy


Mobility & Connectivity


Parks & Recreation


Community Image & Brand


Priority Projects

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan ("the Plan") is a living document which should be reviewed annually and updated periodically. The village will oversee the plan implementation and coordinate the efforts of the parties identified as being responsible for its implementation. As conditions change and various sections of the plan are implemented, the village might find additional projects and/or strategies with which to achieve its desired goals and objectives.

A comprehensive plan is a community's "blueprint" for the future. It is the vision of what a community wants to become and a proposal for the steps needed to realize that vision. Specifically, the Plan achieves the following:

- Documents and illustrates what the community looks like today and what direction it wants to go in the future; it includes assessments of existing resources and issues, projections of future conditions and needs, and consideration of collective goals and desires.
- Translates the community's values into specific actions. It is a policy guide which not only addresses land use and infrastructure, but also includes important social, natural resource, and economic values of the community.
- Covers an approximate time frame of 10 years; however the plan should be reviewed annually to ensure it is current and reflects changing conditions.
- Complements and informs other municipal documents and initiatives.

WHO WILL USE THIS PLAN?

The Plan is intended to be used by a variety of audiences. The following are select groups that may most frequently utilize the plan:

- Citizens - Residents, business owners, and developers use the plan to submit development proposals to the city.
- Village Council - Elected officials use it to guide policy decisions regarding land use, zoning, and development proposals.
- Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and other Village Organizations and Boards - Citizens appointed by Village Council can use the plan to provide policy recommendations to Village Council.
- Village and County - Use the plan to communicate with the public and development community on the priority initiatives for Utica.

ADDITIONAL PLAN INTEGRATION METHODS

The following are some additional ways in which potential projects from this plan can be implemented:

Annual Work Programs & Budgets

Individual village departments and administrators should be cognizant of the contents of the Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. Plan recommendations should be considered when reviewing budgets and capital plans.

Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning, major site plans, and conditional use permits, should be a central means of implementing the Plan. Decisions by elected and

appointed officials should reference relevant plan recommendations and guidelines. Village plans and codes should also reflect and support the Plan vision and recommendations.

Capital Improvements & The General Fund

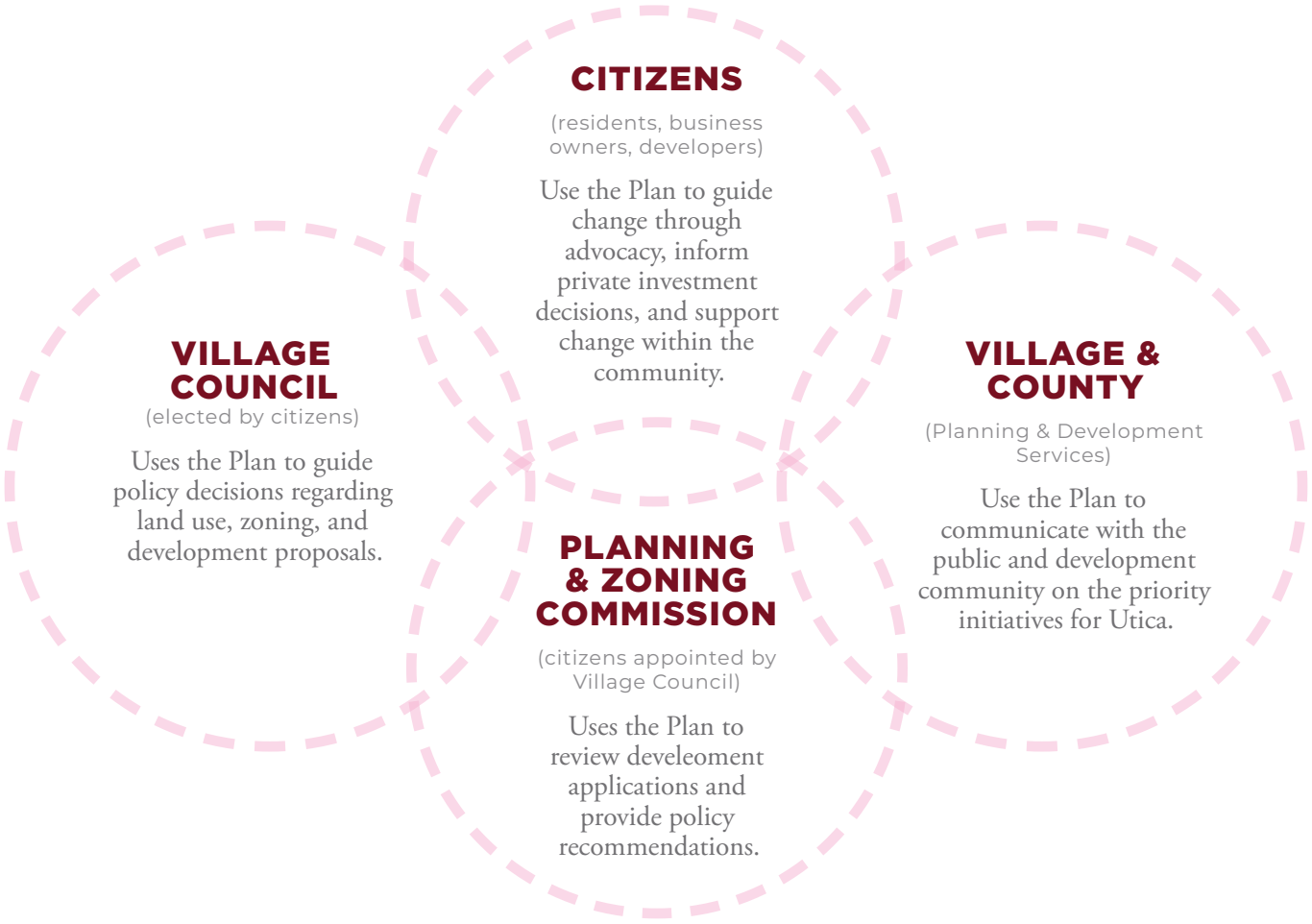
The village's plan for capital improvements and use of the general fund should be prepared consistent with the Plan's policies and infrastructure recommendations.

Economic Development Incentives

Economic development should align with the recommendations of the plan, and the plan should be used to support future funding applications.

Private Development Decisions

Property owners and developers should consider the plan's goals and strategies in their land use planning and investment decisions. Public decision makers will be using the Plan as a guide in their development deliberations such as zoning matters and infrastructure requests. The city should use this plan as a tool to clearly communicate to property owners and developers the overall vision for growth in Utica.







02

Existing Conditions

02

EXISTING CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW

The following section outlines key data, metrics, and perspectives of the village, and provides an analysis of those existing conditions alongside current market trends. This analysis, together with public input and committee and stakeholder guidance, helped form the plan's foundation. Through this approach, the plan's vision and recommendations are both technically and intuitively informed.

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Study Area

The primary study area consists of the land within the existing Utica Village boundary. The secondary study area includes the land within a half-mile radius outside the existing village boundary. The Steering Committee chose the secondary study area after considering various potential boundaries. The decision to use the half-mile boundary was based on factors such as future growth, infrastructure, and future growth pressures. The study areas are located in Licking County and Knox County.

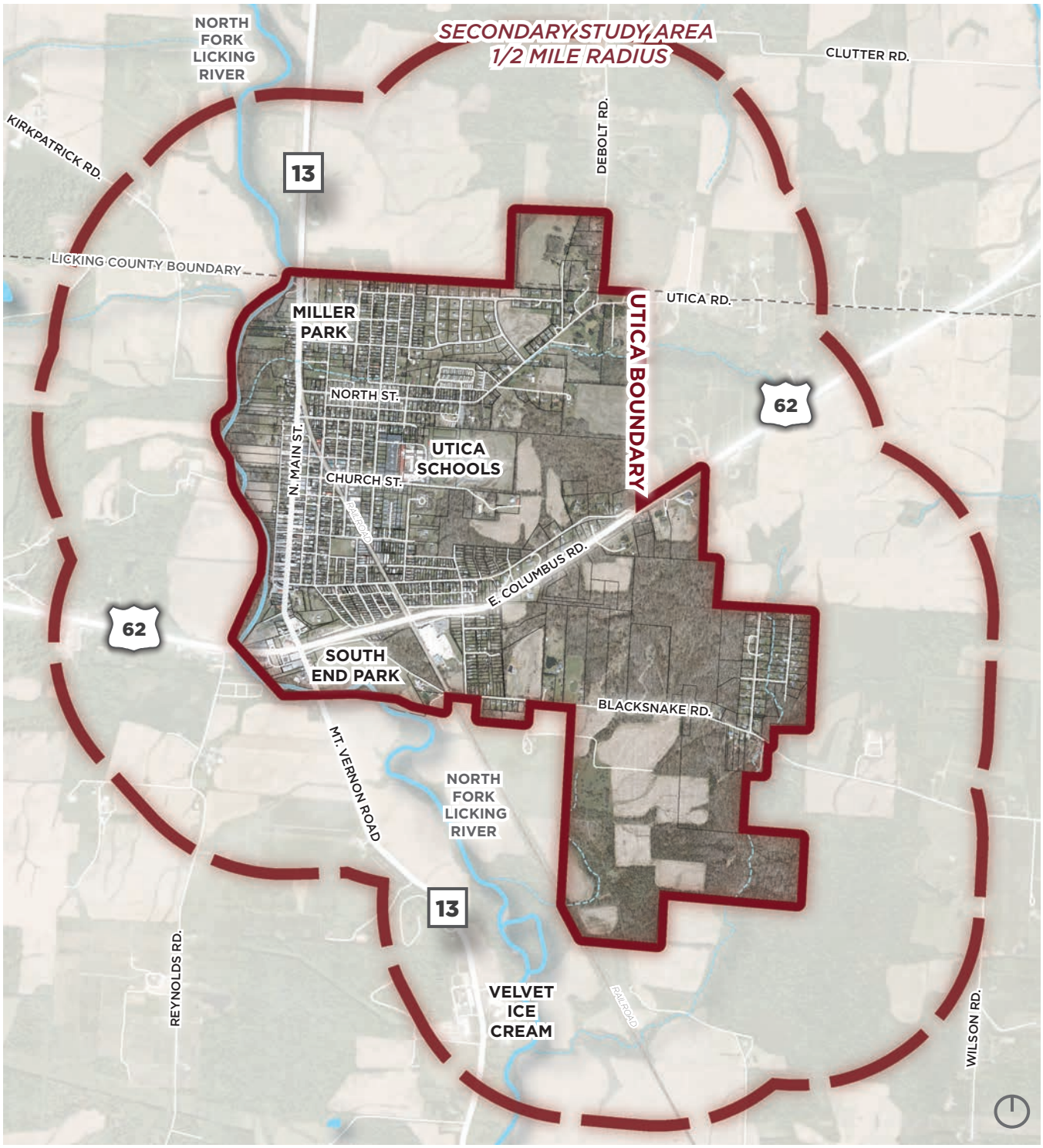
The main vehicular routes in the area are U.S. Route 62, which runs from east to west, and Ohio State Route 13, which intersects the study area from north to south. The North Fork Licking River runs north to south on the western edge of the village boundary. The main streets in the city include North Main Street and East Columbus Road. Notably, the Village of Utica serves as the gateway to Amish Country. Nearby cities include Newark to the south, Mount Vernon to the north, and Johnstown to the west.



Aerial view of the Village of Utica

FIGURE 2-1: Study Area Map

The project study area includes a half-mile area beyond the current village boundary. This secondary was established by the steering committee as an area that should be considered and planned for in the event of future growth or annexation.



COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

The Village of Utica, located in Knox and Licking Counties has a rich history, a vibrant present, and a promising future. Utica was historically known as the home of the U.S.'s largest hand-blown window glass factory. Present day, the village is home to Ye Olde Mill, a historic and iconic part of the national Velvet Ice Cream Brand. The Village of Utica is vibrant, with an active community that hosts annual events like the Ice Cream Festival and includes the North Fork Licking School System. Less than thirty minutes from the future Intel plant, a semiconductor manufacturing facility set to create a surge in employment and economic activity in Licking County, the Village of Utica will be at the center of future innovation and regional connectivity.

POPULATION

The Village of Utica's 2020 U.S. Census population was 2,064 (and the 2024 Esri Business Analyst population was 2,216). Over the last twenty years, the village's growth has stayed mostly stagnant. However, future population growth in Licking County may impact the village in the future as Licking County continues to grow, especially due to the development of Intel.

MEDIAN AGE

The median age of the Utica community is 40.4 years, which is similar to the median ages of Licking and Ohio. The largest age category in Utica is people aged 60-64, which has implications for ongoing housing needs analyses and development.

2,126

Utica 2023 Population

2020: 2,064
2010: 2,154
2000: 2,075

40.4

Median Age

41.4 in Licking County
39.9 in Ohio

2.41

Household Size

2.54 in Licking County
2.38 in Ohio

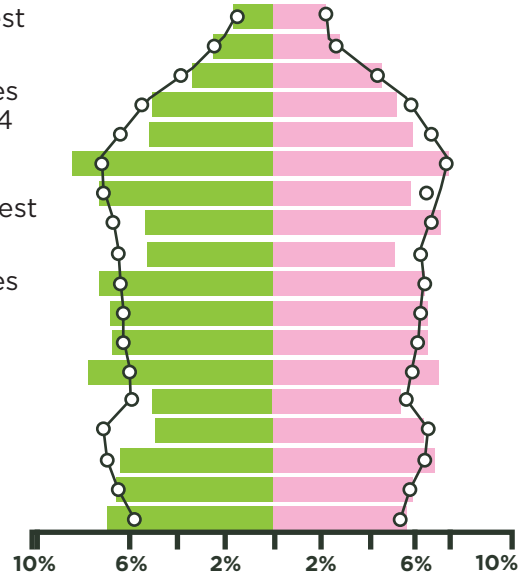
Age Pyramid

The Largest Group:

2023 Males Age 60-64

The Smallest Group:

2023 Males Age 85+



Source: 2024 Esri Business Analyst; ACS Community Snapshot Data.
Note: The data shown above should be frequently reevaluated and reanalyzed to reflect the growth and change within the community.

HOUSEHOLDS & HOUSING STOCK

In 2024, there were approximately 859 households in Utica, with an average of two people per household. Single-family homes are the predominant type of housing, with around 61.3% of these units being owner-occupied. Other residential types in the area include a small number of multifamily structures. Additionally, the village is home to a small senior assisted living ranch community. As of 2024, 9.4% of housing units were vacant, indicating a need for more housing.

The median gross rent is $591, significantly lower than the Ohio median. The median household income was $69,397, which is lower than the median household income of Licking County and Ohio. Furthermore, Utica's median home value of $145,089 is lower than Licking County and Ohio's median home value. The Housing Affordability Index for the area was 187: An index above 100 signifies that a family earning the median income has more than enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a median-priced home, assuming a 20 percent down payment.



$69,397

Median Household Income

$77,076 in Licking County

$65,720 in Ohio



$145,089

Median Home Value

$240,302 in Licking County

$204,100 in Ohio

859

Total Households

70,179 in Licking County

4.8 million in Ohio

9.5%

Vacant Housing Units

61.3%

Owner-Occupied Housing Units

66.8% Ohio average

$591

Median Gross Rent

$945 in Ohio

187

Housing Affordability Index*

*This index measures whether or not **a typical family earns enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a typical home** at the national and regional levels based on the most recent price and income data.*

An index above 100 signifies that family earning the median income has more than enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a median-priced home, assuming a 20 percent down payment.

EXISTING ZONING

The Village of Utica has seven zoning classifications and one floodplain overlay district. The four residential zoning districts - single family, two family, multifamily, and suburban residential - make up the most significant portions of the village. The GB (general business) district is primarily zoned along North Main Street, regionally known as Route 13. The overlay floodplain district highlights land within the 100-year floodplain that restricts future development.

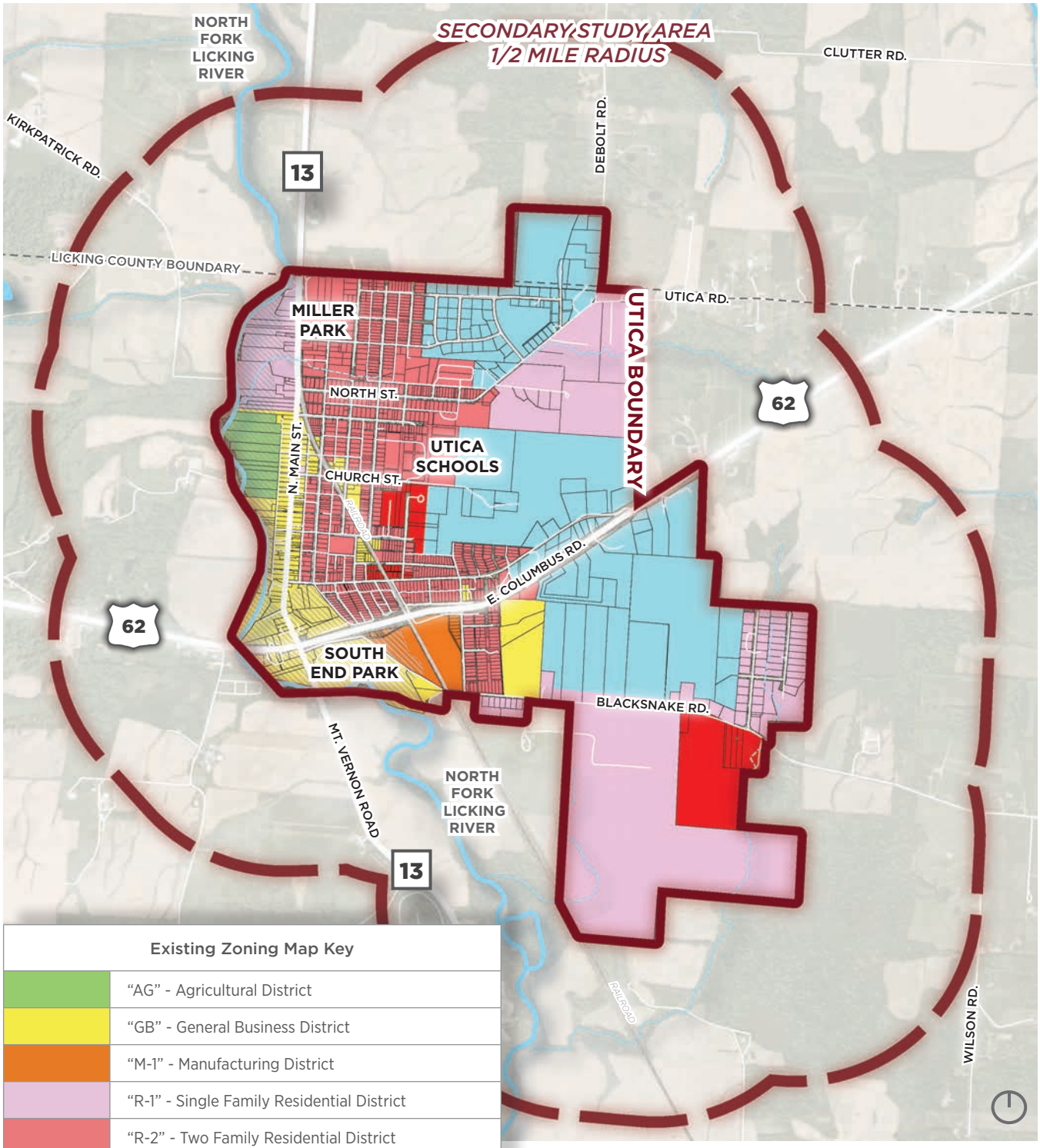
The smallest designated areas are the M-1 (manufacturing district) and the AG (agricultural district). The M-1 district encompasses the village sewer plant and Cardinal CT, a glass manufacturing plant. The AG (agricultural) district encompasses ten parcels west of North Main Street and adjacent to the North Fork Licking River.

A strong understanding of these zoning designations is important to set a baseline for how land can be developed today, and serves as a reference point when comparing the future land use plan to today's land use condition versus the future vision for how the village may grow.



View of businesses along North Main Street, an example of the General Business District zoning.

FIGURE 2-2: Existing Zoning Map



Existing Zoning Map Key	
	"AG" - Agricultural District
	"GB" - General Business District
	"M-1" - Manufacturing District
	"R-1" - Single Family Residential District
	"R-2" - Two Family Residential District
	"R-3" - Multifamily Residential District
	"SER" - Suburban Residential District
	"FP" - Floodplain Overlay District

EXISTING LAND USE

Understanding current land uses in the study area provides context for how land may be planned in the future. The primary study area consists mainly of single family residential and agricultural land uses. A single family residential land use designates any parcel on which a single family home is built, regardless of parcel size. Due to Utica's agricultural history, some residential areas are simultaneously utilized for farming.

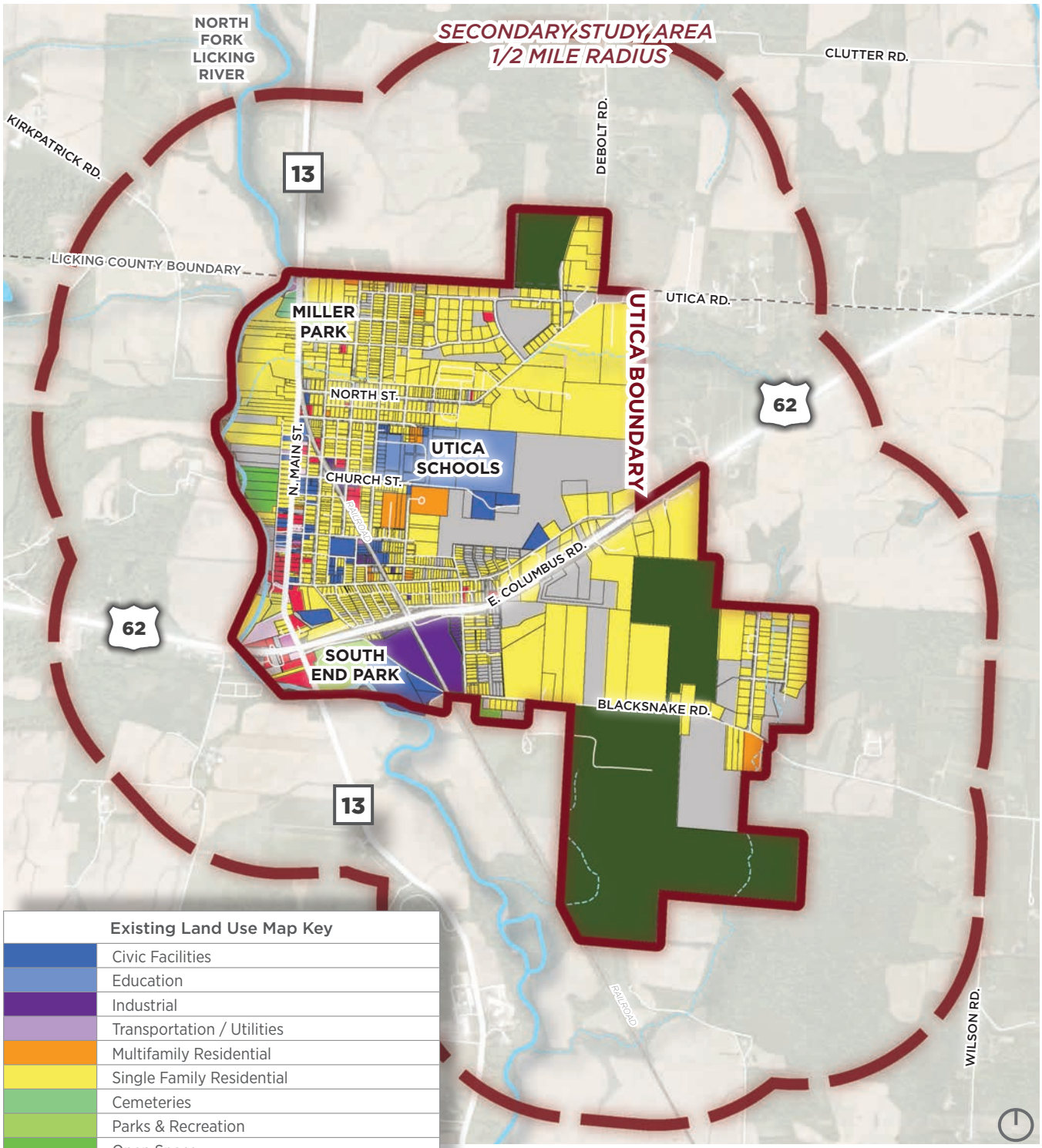
On North Main Street, various land uses exist, including retail, commercial, commercial recreation, industrial, and parks and recreation. The parks and recreation area focuses on two parks within the study area boundary: Miller Park on the northern end of North Main Street and South End Park on the southern end of North Main Street. East of North Main Street on Church Street are Utica's three schools: North Fork Elementary, Middle School, and High School, designated as Education.

Properties designated with the "other" land use are vacant or underdeveloped parcels that present a significant opportunity for further development in various forms. Notably, within the current land use, there are no mixed use land designations, despite existing buildings that could be used for both residential and commercial purposes. Similarly, no designation exists for the historic downtown area on North Main Street.



North Fork High School, an existing education land use example.

FIGURE 2-3: Existing Land Use Map



Existing Land Use Map Key	
	Civic Facilities
	Education
	Industrial
	Transportation / Utilities
	Multifamily Residential
	Single Family Residential
	Cemeteries
	Parks & Recreation
	Open Space
	Agriculture
	Commercial Recreation
	Retail Commercial
	Office
	Other

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Utica evolved fom a traditional street grid which makes up the the older downtown portion of the village along North Main Street. It extends into the suburban area west and south of downtown and transitions into rural agriculture. The primary vehicular connectivity includes U.S. Route 62, east/west, and Ohio Route 13, north/south. These connections provide convenient access to Utica from surrounding communities and vice versa. There are three gateways into and out of the village. The primary gateway is at the intersection of Ohio Route 13 and U.S. Route 62, followed by the secondary gateways at the north end of Ohio Route 13 and the east end of U.S. Route 62.

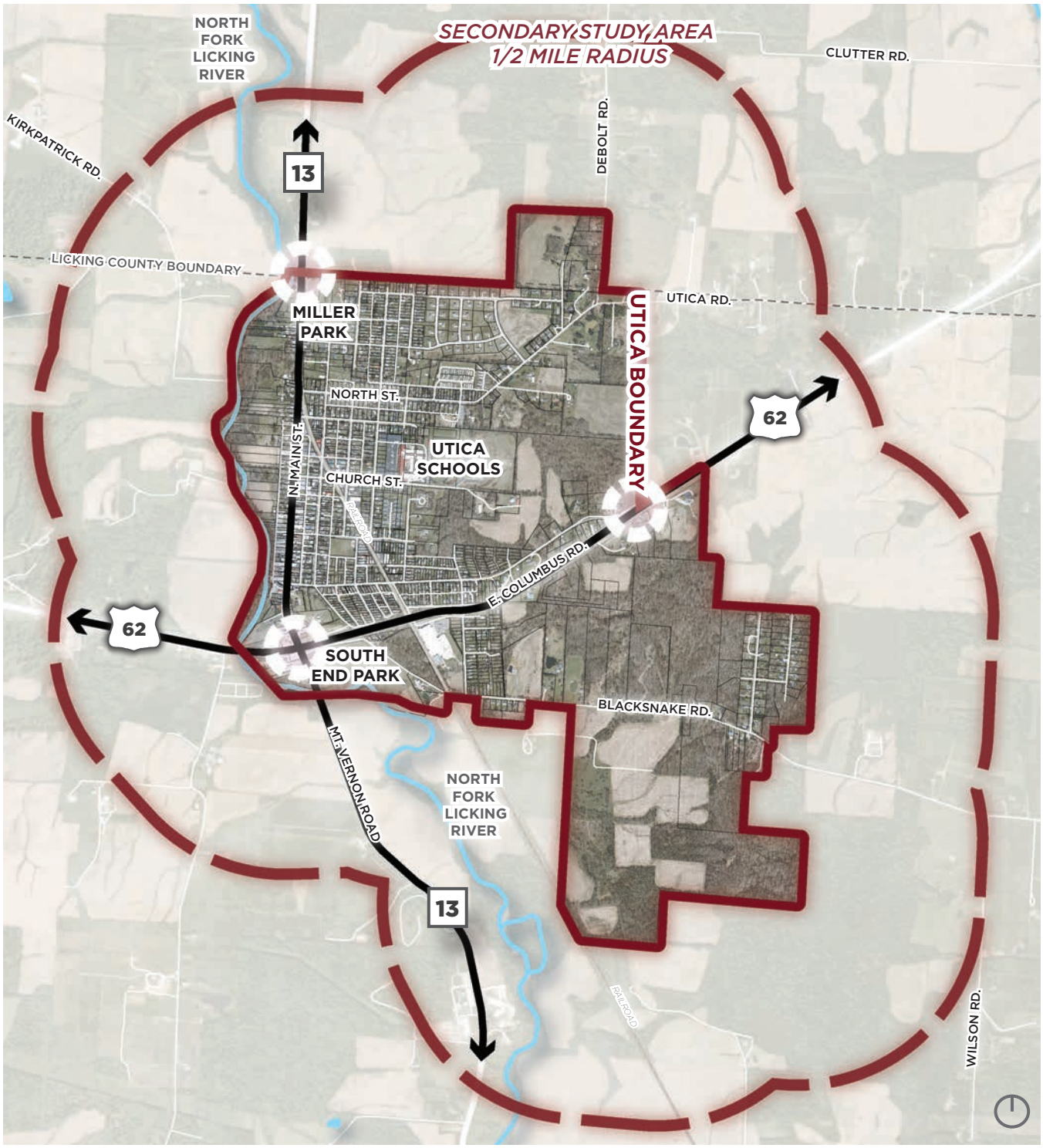
In 2016, Licking County created a focus area plan for the village. The plan included goals for a better-connected and more complete non-motorized transportation network throughout the downtown. The aim was to prioritize downtown pedestrian walkability by improving and widening sidewalk conditions and other connectivity improvements, such as crosswalks and midblock crossings. While the downtown pedestrian connectivity goals set by Licking County in 2016 were not achieved, they provide a foundation for change, and are considered as part of this planning effort.

Sidewalk conditions and non-motorized connectivity require improvement or implementation throughout the entire village, as there is a severe lack of safe and accessible paths and sidewalks for residents and visitors to use within the village. Similarly, no multi-use paths or trails exist within the village. As such, the public has indicated a desire for enhanced local non-motorized connectivity. By strengthening local connections the village can continue to enhance its residents' and visitors' overall quality of life.



Northeast view of the existing gateway at the intersection of Ohio Route 13 and US Route 62.

FIGURE 2-4: Mobility & Connectivity Map



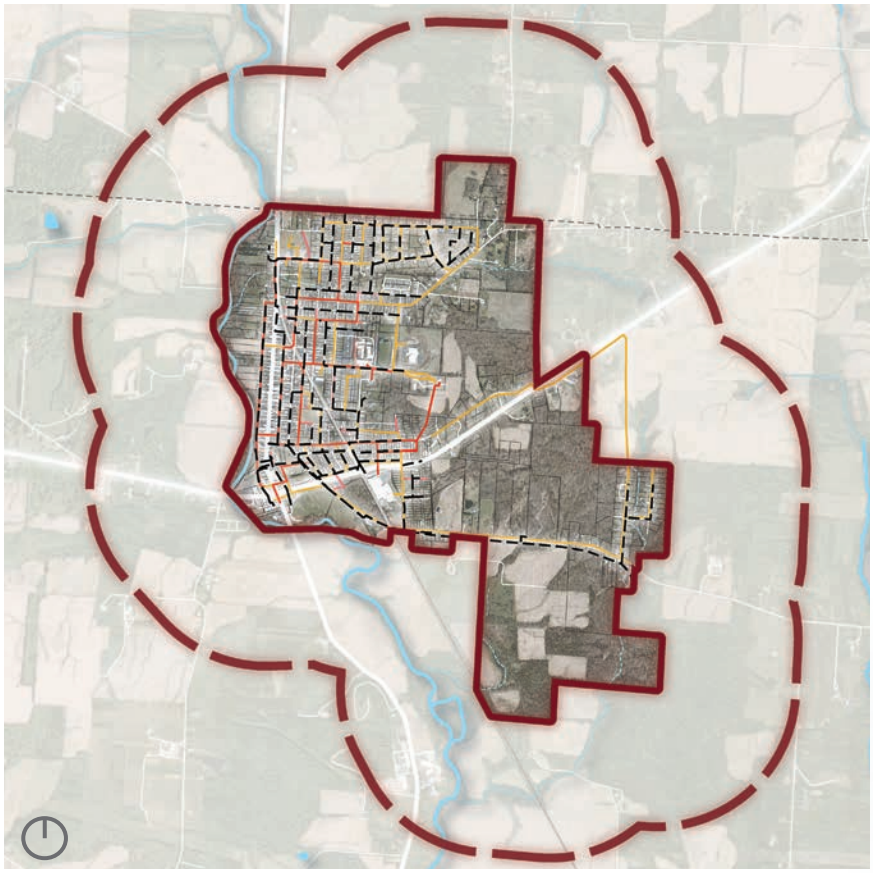
Mobility & Connectivity Map Key			
⟷	Primary Roadway Connections	○	Gateways

SEWER & WATER

The Village of Utica stands out from most other villages by providing its residents and businesses with sewer and water services. The village's water and wastewater treatment facilities are designed to accommodate up to 10,000 residents. Currently, the water capacity can serve twice the current number of residents. Recognizing the need to cater to the current population and future growth, the village plans to upgrade its sanitary treatment facility within the next year.

In contrast, those residing outside the village boundary rely on septic tanks for sewage disposal and typically depend on well water for their water needs. For planning purposes, the locations of the existing sewer and water main lines are indicated on the map below. These current positions, along with their accessibility and connections to land beyond the village boundary, offer valuable insights into potential expansion areas for the village. These insights may guide the village in making informed decisions about potential boundary extensions and development opportunities.

FIGURE 2-5: Sewer & Water Map



Sewer & Water Map Key	
	Sewer Main - Gravity
	Water Main - Cast Iron
	Water Main - PVC
	Water Main - Copper

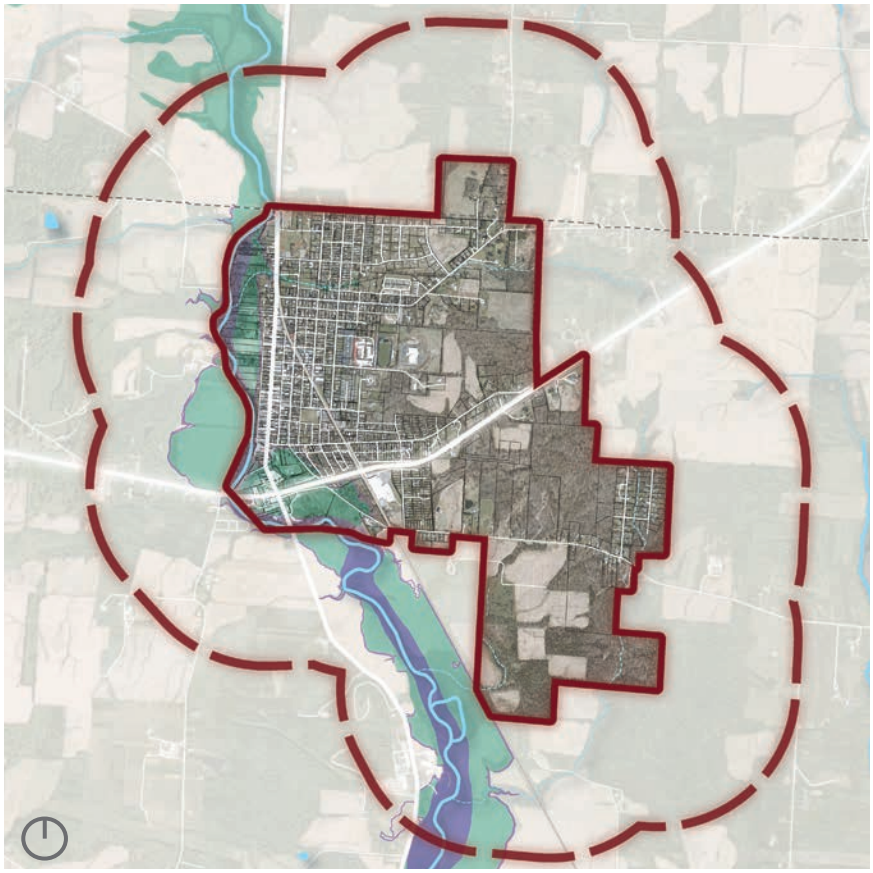
FLOODPLAIN

A river floodplain is a flat area on either side of a river channel subject to flooding during high water flow. River floodplains are essential natural features that help to absorb and dissipate floodwaters, reducing the risk of damage to surrounding areas. These areas often support diverse ecosystems and are crucial to wildlife habitat and ecological health.

The map below shows The North Fork Licking River floodplain. The regulatory floodplain is primarily west of North Main Street. The map also identifies areas with chances for a 100-year flood and a 500-year flood. A 100-year flood has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year, while a 500-year flood has a 0.2% chance of occurring in any given year. These terms are used in floodplain management to indicate the probability of a particular flood event.

Floodplains can significantly impact development due to their susceptibility to flooding. Because floodplains are prone to periodic flooding during high water flow, they are unsuitable for most types of development. The risk of damage from flooding makes it challenging and risky to build and maintain structures within floodplain areas. As a result, floodplains often limit development options and are typically used for agricultural purposes or preserved as open space. Additionally, developing within floodplains can lead to increased infrastructure costs, potential property damage, and safety concerns for residents. Therefore, floodplains play a crucial role in urban planning and development regulations to ensure the safety and sustainability of communities.

FIGURE 2-6: Floodplain Map



Floodplain Map Key	
	Sewer Main - Gravity
	Water Main - Cast Iron
	Water Main - PVC
	Water Main - Copper

GREEN & BLUE ASSETS

Green and blue assets refer to natural resources, such as forests, water bodies, and agricultural land. These assets are important because they provide various ecological, economic, and social benefits. For example, green assets like forests help in carbon sequestration, provide wildlife habitats, and support recreational activities. Blue assets like rivers, lakes, and oceans offer water resources and support biodiversity. Urban planners also consider parks and recreation spaces as green assets because they are preserved land for various community uses.

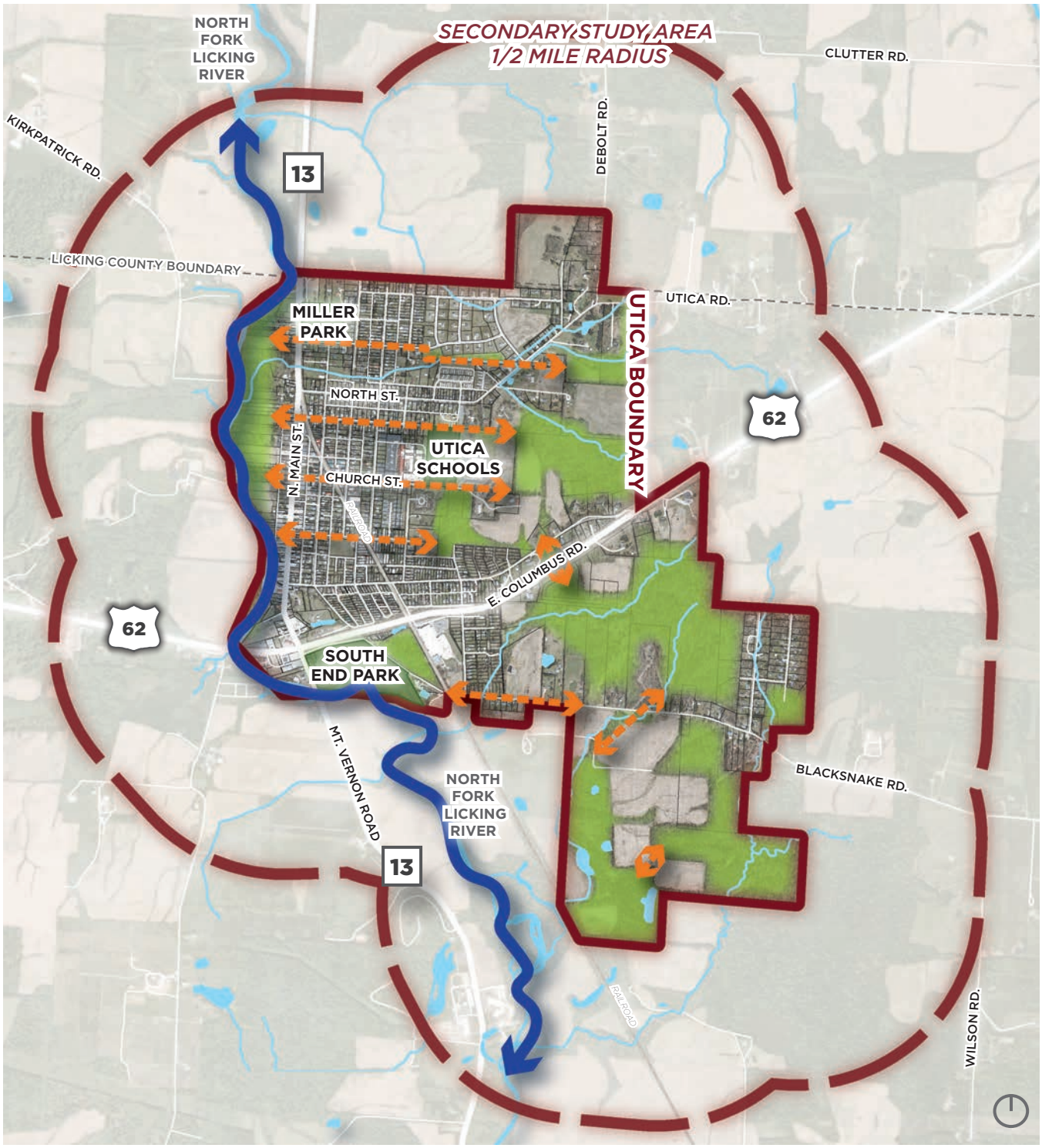
The Village of Utica is home to numerous green and blue assets, some more familiar than others. Among the most prominent are the existing parks and recreation spaces, Miller Park and South End Park, and the North Fork Licking River. This river, flowing from north to south along the village boundary, is more than just a recreational spot for residents. It's a vital wildlife habitat, contributing significantly to the area's biodiversity. The village also boasts several wooded areas that have been safeguarded from development. The map on the right highlights these wooded areas in green and suggests opportunities for creating more extensive greenway connections within the village. A greenway, which is a linear open space corridor typically established alongside natural features like rivers, streams, or ridgelines, is designed to preserve natural environments, provide recreational opportunities, and establish connections between different communities.

Preserving and sustainably managing green and blue assets is crucial for maintaining ecological balance, supporting livelihoods, and ensuring the well-being of present and future generations. As the village continues to grow and develop, it is important to consider protecting these assets and using them as a catalyst for creating greater ecological and pedestrian connections.



Character image of a river as a "blue asset" to a community.

FIGURE 2-7: Green & Blue Assets



This map highlights the village's green and blue assets, emphasizing the importance of protecting these resources while fostering ecological and pedestrian connections as the village continues to grow.

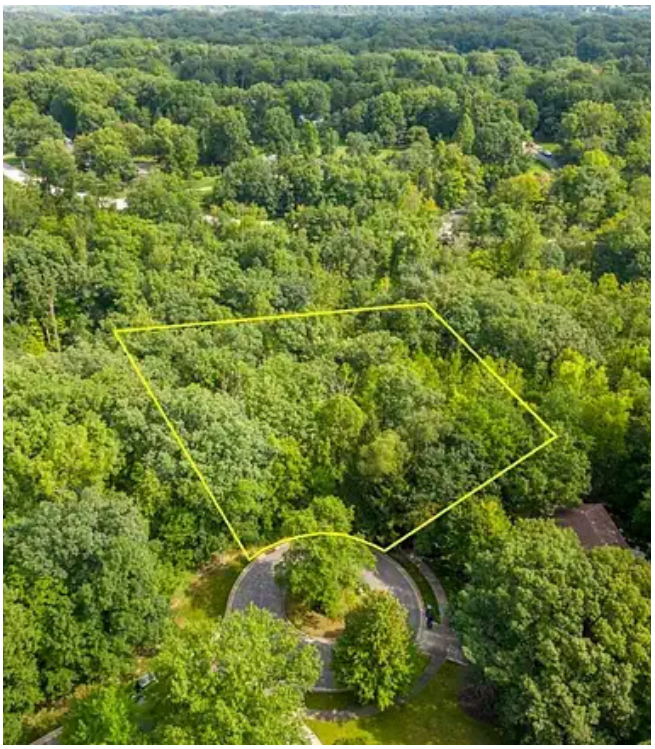
Green & Blue Assets Map Key							
↔	North Fork Licking River	← →	Green & Blue Connections		Existing Parks & Rec Areas		Wooded Areas

UNDERDEVELOPED LAND

There is a considerable amount of underdeveloped land within the village, specifically designated for residential development. Undeveloped land totals approximately 465 acres, and is currently zoned for single family residential, multifamily residential, and suburban residential use. This represents an opportunity to protect some unique open spaces in the community, and accomodate new growth, or maintain land for agricultural production.

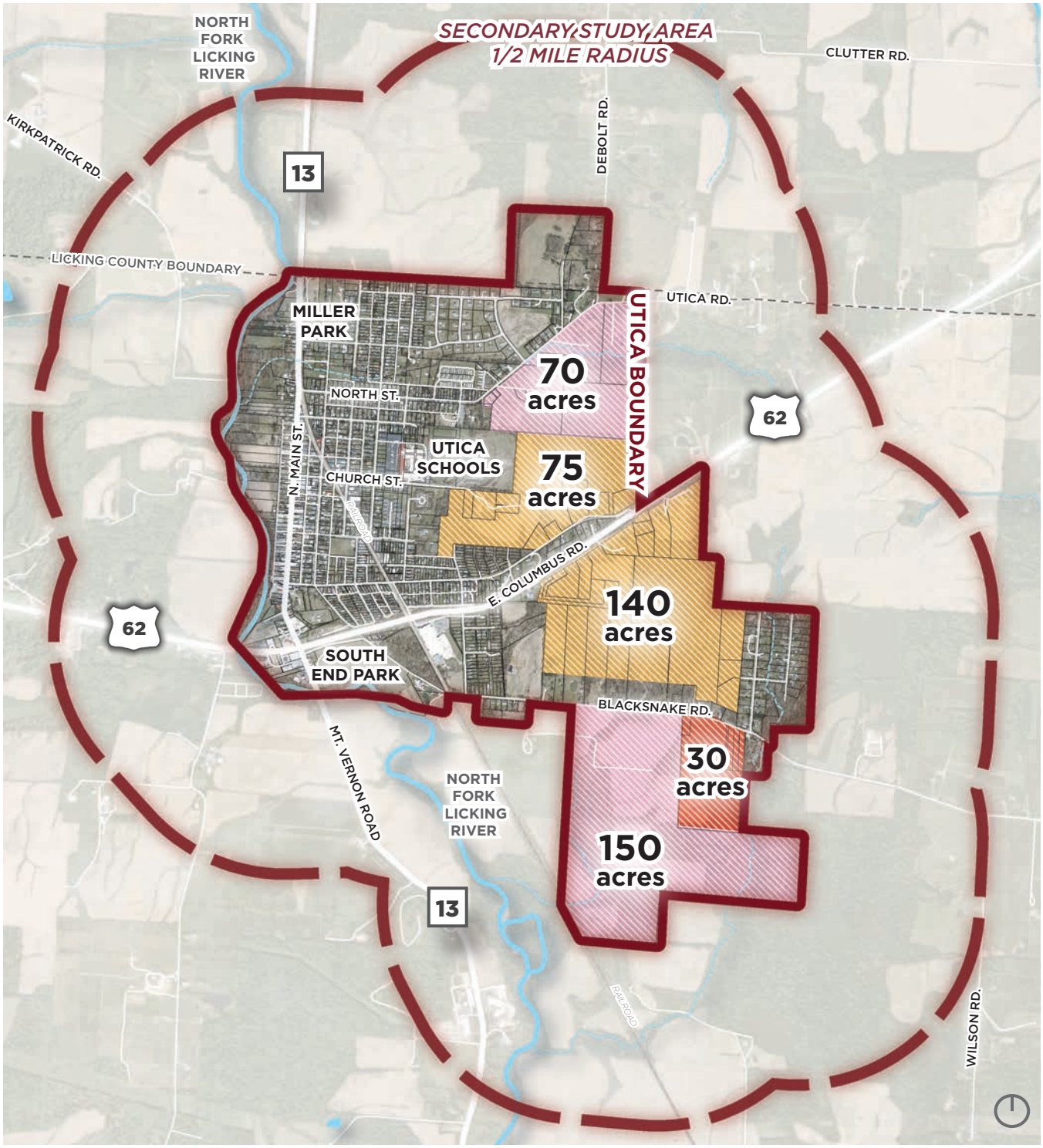
As currently zoned this undeveloped land has the potential to support the approximately 880 single family dwelling units, 215 suburban residential units, and 360 multifamily dwelling units. Collectively, this underdeveloped land presents an opportunity to introduce a total of 1,455 new dwelling units within the village boundaries.

As development proceeds, it will be imperative for the village to consider which areas should be prioritized for future growth, and what percent of the area should be maintained as natural open space or in agrcultural production.



Character image of underdeveloped land.

FIGURE 2-8: Underdeveloped Land Map



The map outlines undeveloped or open land within the village limits, along with its assigned zoning classifications, highlighting significant opportunities for future development and conservation.

Underdeveloped Land Map Key					
	R-1: Single Family Residential = 4 U/A		R-3 : Multifamily Residential = 12 U/A		SER: Suburban Residential = 1 U/A

EXISTING CONDITIONS KEY FINDINGS

This page summarizes key takeaways from the existing conditions analysis. These, along with the engagement section and research trends, helped inform the development of the plan framework and focus area concepts.

The village is not land-locked by adjacent municipalities, providing **opportunities for growth within and outside the village boundary.**

North Main Street and the historic downtown infrastructure support **potential future implementation of mixed-use development.**

There is a need for **more residential housing and a broader range of housing options** that cater to individuals at all stages of life.

Underdeveloped or vacant land zoned residential presents an opportunity for future housing development.

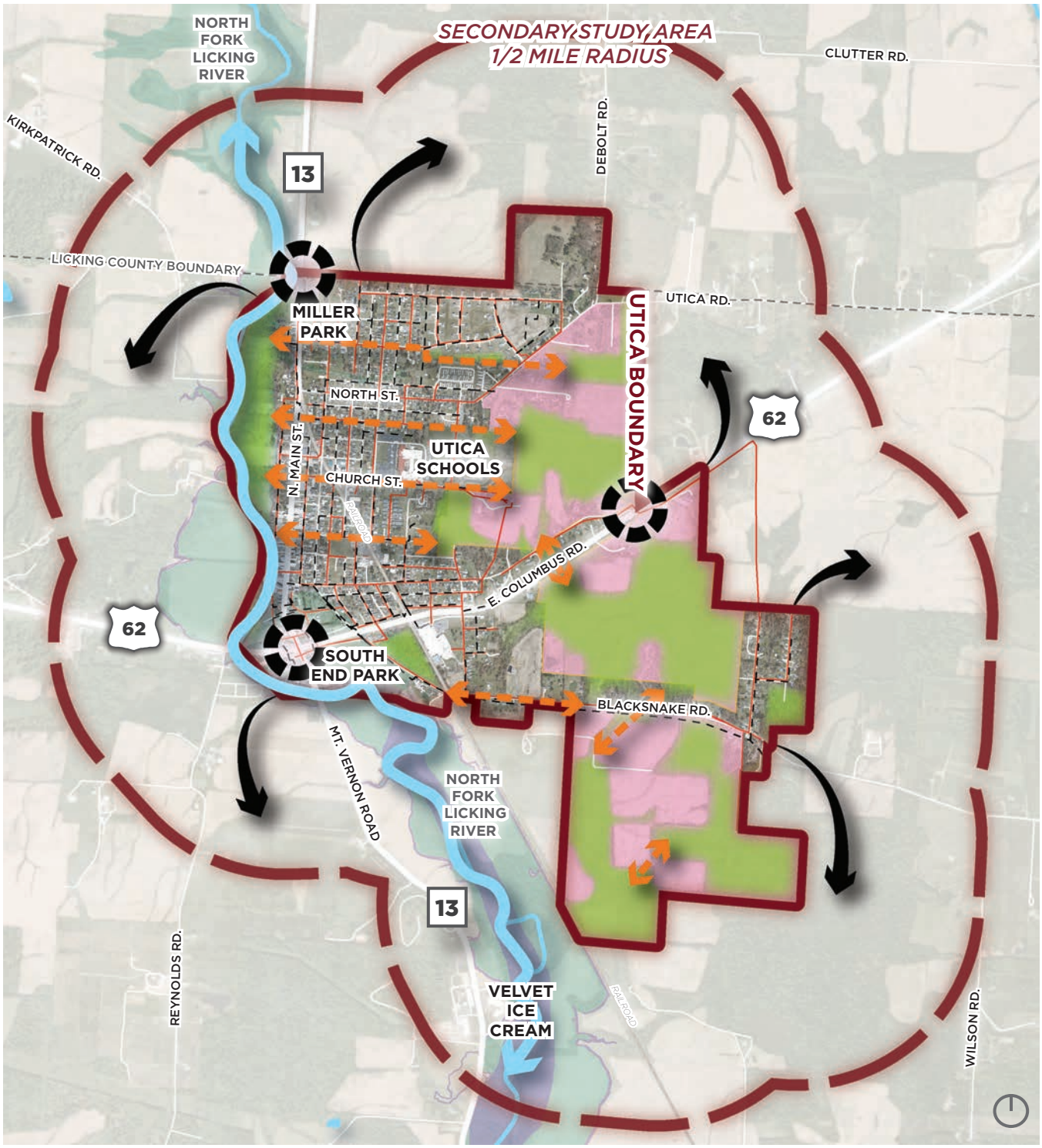
The **North Fork Licking River is a valuable community asset**, but the **floodplain restricts future development** and needs to be considered.

The existing **sewer and water infrastructure,** while it may need to be updated, **provides support for potential future growth and expansion.**

The **lack of non-motorized connectivity** is a concern and s**hould be a priority for future investment.**

The village's natural features, such as **the river and wooded areas**, could serve as **potential greenway connections.**

FIGURE 2-9: Existing Conditions Key Findings Map



The map below highlights key existing conditions identified during the existing conditions analysis. These conditions, along with the key takeaways, guide the future land use map and plan framework.





03

Community Engagement

03

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

The public engagement process for the 2024 Utica Comprehensive Plan began with the first Steering Committee meeting on April 10, 2024, and continued throughout the summer of 2024.

The village staff and the consultant team used various outreach methods to engage local stakeholders and community members. The engagement process also included the village's 2023 online public survey.

The first community open house occurred during the evening farmers market on June 4th, 2024. The village posted notices of the open house throughout the community and on social media pages. Throughout June and July, village staff conducted phone and in-person stakeholder interviews. At the same time, the consultant team met with the Utica Merchants Association on July 10th to solicit input on the issues and opportunities facing the community in the future. Additional engagement was conducted toward the end of the planning process when residents could review and provide input on the draft plan through an online public survey.

Altogether, residents, property owners, and business owners were afforded multiple ways in which to share their insights regarding the future of Utica, and their hundreds of ideas helped shape the foundation of the Plan. The following is a summary of the engagement efforts and the input received from each effort.

8 Steering Committee Members
provided input and aided in shaping the plan framework

25+ Stakeholders
collaborated through interviews and at the merchants committee meeting

20+ Community Open House Participants
engaged at the local farmers market with planners and village officials

250+ Community Open House Participants
gave input on the 2023 online survey



Many residents commented on the importance of planning for the future while celebrating and protecting the local heritage of the community.



Residents and local community members had the opportunity to participate in the planning process during the evening open house at the local farmers market.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

As part of each engagement event a common question was asked: "What do you believe are the issues and opportunities facing Utica in the coming years"? Hundreds of ideas were recorded. The following are the key takeaways/themes from the many responses received to these two important questions.

*"What do you believe are the **biggest issues** in your community?"*



Infrastructure

The community values local roadways and pathways, and sewer and water delivery, and would like these to be important areas of focus.



Connectivity

There is a lack of non-motorized connectivity within the village, particularly with sidewalks and multi-use paths.



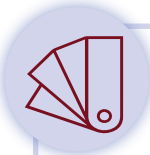
Commercial & Medical Services

Residents would like to see a grocery store and medical services within the village.



Recreation

There is a lack of youth programming and indoor recreational spaces within the village, beyond school and sporting events.



Brand & Character

There is no recognizable village brand; however, the history and culture of the area could lead to a cohesive and unique brand.



Housing

Residents noted a desire for more diverse housing options, and better code enforcement to enhance property maintenance.

*"What do you believe are the **greatest opportunities** in your community?"*

Growth

There is an interest in growing within and outside the existing village limits.

Housing

Large areas within and outside the village limits are opportunities to grow and diversify the local housing stock.

Downtown Revitalization

There is an opportunity to revitalize the downtown area through streetscape and building improvements.

Multimodal Connectivity

The lack of connectivity presents an opportunity to link the village through multimodal paths and additional sidewalks.

Riverfront Connection

The riverfront is an asset that should be protected and integrated into the community fabric.

Economic Development

The growth in Licking County is an opportunity for Utica to add local services and support the regional economy.

2023 COMMUNITY SURVEY

In 2023, the Village of Utica conducted an online community survey to gather feedback and insights from all community members, including individuals, families, and businesses, on a wide range of topics important to the village's future growth and development. A number of key findings from the survey helped to inform the Plan's development. The following is a summary of the essential findings and results that informed the planning process.

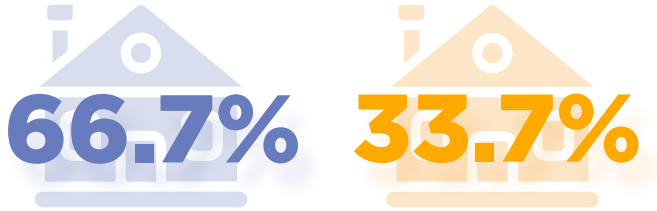
Key Findings

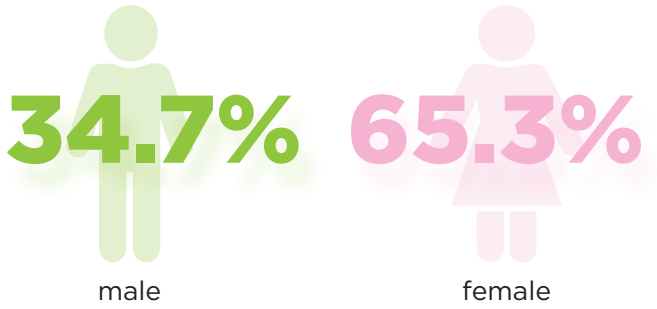
The following are key findings from the 2023 community survey.

- The highest rated quality of life aspect for the village was "as a place to live", while "as a place to work" was the least.
- The top three programs and activities participants were interested in were community special events, youth sports programs, and nature-based programs.
- A grocery store was the number one business participants would like to see inside the village limits, followed by medical services.
- Respondents requested improvements to the existing sidewalks and the addition of pedestrian connectivity across the village.
- There are public concerns regarding the sewer and water systems.
- Property maintenance is a concern that residents would like to see addressed.

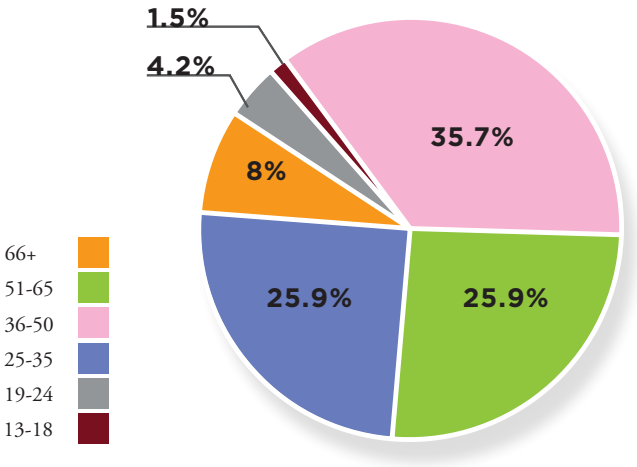
Survey Demographics







Survey Respondent Age Range



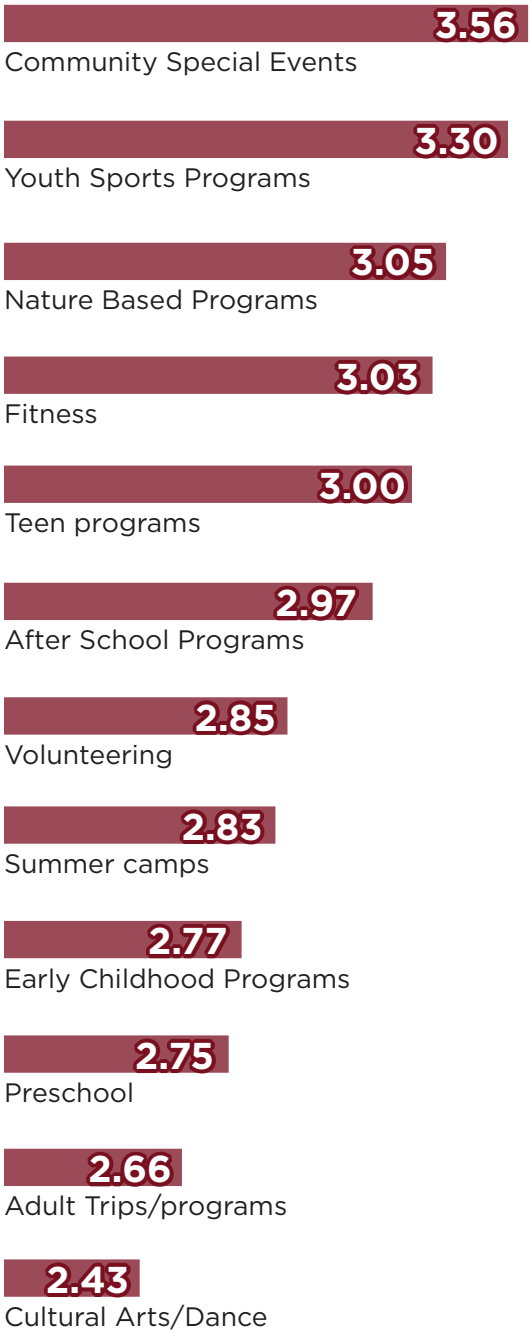
Key Survey Questions & Results

Three important survey questions provided important resident perspective on the future of the community. The results of these three questions were instrumental in the initial formation of the comprehensive plan framework.

Question 08

Indicate your level of interest in each of the following programs and activity.

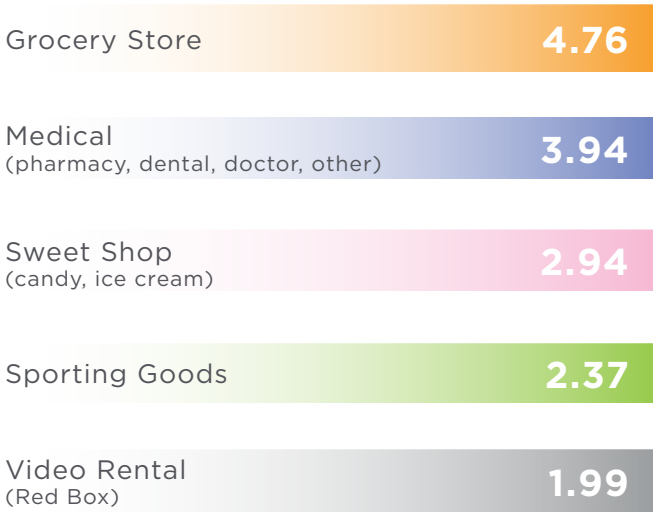
(5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest)



Question 12

What type of business would you like to see inside the Village limits?

(5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest)



Question 13

Give one idea you have for the Village that may not have been listed in this survey.

- Main Street Redevelopment
- Sports Field Maintenance
- Youth Center/Recreation Center
- Park / Splash Pad
- Walking / Biking Paths
- Nature Park / Dog Park
- Updating Fire House
- Updating Signage
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Public Safety Improvements
- Property Maintenance
- Senior Living

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

During the first half of the planning process the consultant team and village staff interacted with and listened to local stakeholders to gain targeted insight into desires for the future of the village. Two groups were involved as part of stakeholder engagement, including stakeholders-at-large identified by the project steering committee, and Utica's Merchants Association members.

In June 2024, local stakeholders were engaged in the planning process by phone or in-person interviews. During the interviews, stakeholders were asked to provide input on the most significant issues and opportunities related to Utica and any big ideas they had for the city's future.

In July, OHM Advisors met with Utica's Merchants Association. The merchants' association is a collective organization of business owners who collaborate on issues affecting their community and promote economic growth through coordinated efforts. The group's engagement during the planning process was vital. As business owners, they have a crucial understanding and play a pivotal role in the future of Utica's growth and development. During the merchants association meeting, members were asked to provide input on the most significant issues and opportunities related to the future of the community.

The following are key takeaways from the local stakeholder interviews and the merchants association meeting.

LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

ISSUES

- Grocery/Medical Store
- Route 13 Intersection
- Road Infrastructure (turning lanes)
- Lack of Industry
- Family & Child Activities
- Main Street
- Parking
- Property Maintenance
- Public Safety
- Water/Sewer/Gas
- Lack of Walkability
- School Funding

OPPORTUNITIES

- Licking River
- Small Businesses
- Historical Town
- Tourist Attractions
- Build Up Infrastructure
- Expanding Village Limits
- Housing Development
- Additions of Parks
- Preservation of Agricultural Land
- Signage Updates
- Velvet Ice Cream Walkable Connection

BIG IDEAS

- Create Something on the River
- River Walk
- Kayak/Canoe Drop
- Community Center
- Sports Complex
- Village Buyback of Vacant Property
- Revitalize Downtown
- Create Village Entry Points
- Use Local Writers for Grant Applications
- Act on Intel Growth
- Clean Up the Alleys

MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUES

- Tax Revenue
- Lack of Growth
- Housing
- The Village Inn
- Public Parking
- Lack of Overflow Parking
- Lack of Grocery Store
- Village Services
- Infrastructure
- Lack of School Funding
- Existing Agricultural Zoning Restricts Ability of Families to Build Houses on their Land

OPPORTUNITIES

- Collaborate with Surrounding Townships
- Expand Existing Village Boundary
- Choose Direction of Growth
- Nice & Safe Place to Live
- Update & Improve Sidewalks
- Bring Money into the Community
- Preservation of Agricultural Land
- Bring more Local Commercial (fast food)
- Build Up Industry
- Build Up Infrastructure
- Velvet Ice Cream Walkable Connection

BIG IDEAS

- Dog Park
- Apply for Grants to Fix Older Homes
- Annex Adjacent Areas into the Village

"Intersection of Route 13 & 62 is not prepared for the uptake in traffic coming in the future"

-Utica Stakeholder

"The community must look to the future and not live in the past if we want to grow"

-Utica Stakeholder

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The consultant team held a community open house on Tuesday, June 4, during the evening farmers market. The consultant team recorded public comments and spoke to community members about the planning process and purpose. Participants engaged in a series of activities designed to solicit specific feedback that would help inform development of the Plan. The following are the results of these activities.

Note that issues, opportunities, big ideas, and general comments were included and summarized as part of the issues and opportunities outlined on the previous pages.



Participants at the community open house engaging in various activities.

Top Issues & Opportunities

» The top three issues noted by community members were a lack of a grocery store or medical services, infrastructure issues relating to pedestrian connectivity, and a lack of activities or places for children to play.

» The top four greatest opportunities community members identified were: available space and desire to grow, potential for connections through trails and walking paths, schools, and the growing regional economy.

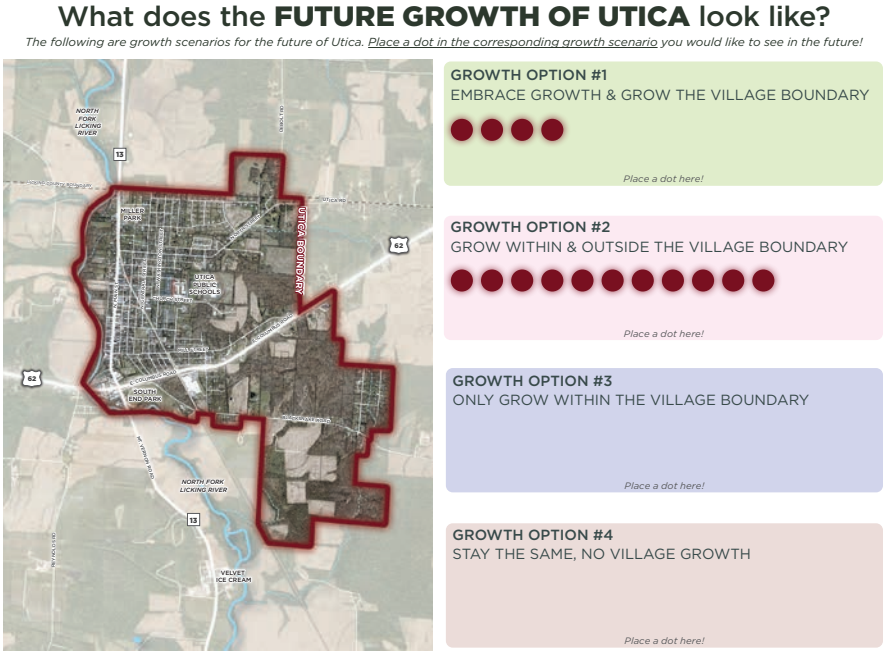


Future Growth Board

When asked what the future growth of Utica looks like and given varying degrees of growth options, community members overwhelming agreed with two options:

» Option One: embrace growth and grow the existing village boundary to extend in various directions.

» Option Two: grow within and outside the village boundary; internal growth in the downtown and underdeveloped areas would be seen, along with extending the existing village boundary in various directions.



Priority Community Elements Board

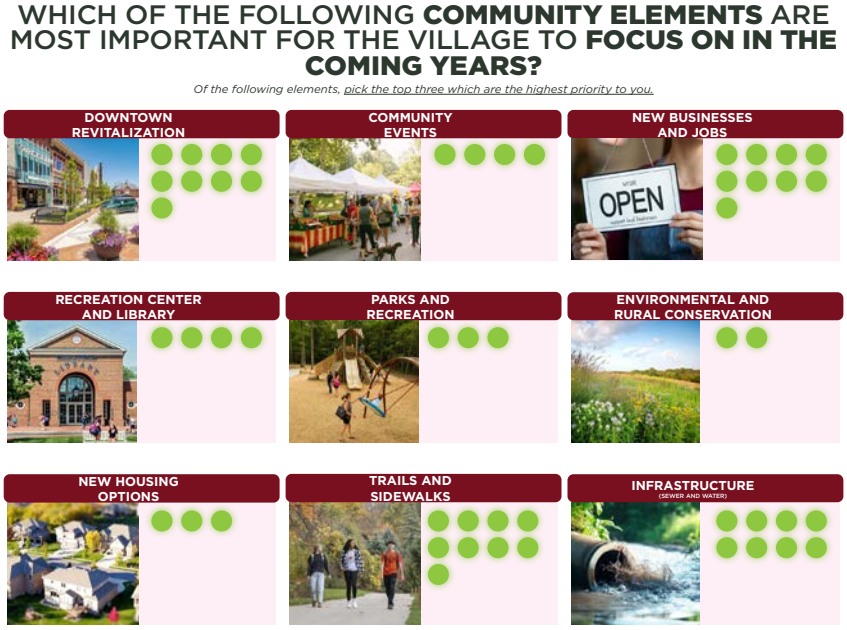
The top four types of elements community members would like to see focused on in the coming years are:

» Downtown revitalization

» Trails and sidewalks

» New businesses and jobs

» Infrastructure (sewer & water)



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY FINDINGS

This page summarizes the key takeaways and themes from hundreds of ideas generated from the community input. These themes and takeaways, together with the existing conditions and trends research, informed the development of the plan framework.



There is a desire for strategic growth over the long term, balancing **inward and outward growth through new development and preservation.**



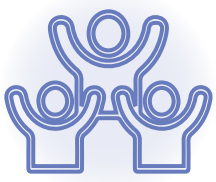
Respondents noted there are issues regarding housing maintenance and a lack of **housing options for all demographics.**



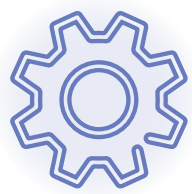
There is a need to **develop community connectivity and walkability** throughout the village.



There is a desire by the community to **connect with the riverfront through preservation, recreation, and new development.**



Residents would like **more indoor and outdoor recreation spaces** to accommodate youth and senior programming.



Residents expressed concerns about **long-term sewer and water infrastructure issues**.



Respondents would like to see continued **improvements and development of Main Street in the Downtown.**



There is a need for a **cohesive village brand** that is **displayed at key gateways and on wayfinding signs.**



There is a lack of **commercial and medical services,** making residents travel outside the village.



There is a desire to collaborate and work in **partnership with the surrounding municipalities and adjacent counties.**


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04

Plan Framework

04

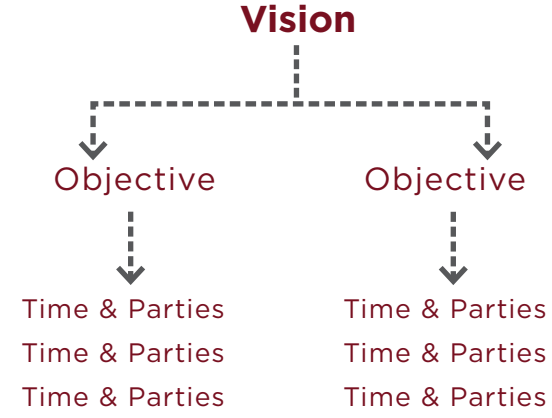
PLAN FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW

This section contains the Plan vision, future land use map and recommendations for each plan element. These elements include **Future Land Use, Downtown Revitalization, Housing & Economy, Mobility & Connectivity, Parks & Recreation, and Community Image & Brand.** The Plan Elements were derived from the existing conditions and market trends analysis and community feedback, with guidance from the Steering Committee.

Each section contains an overall **Vision** which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome and future condition. The vision serves as the foundation for the recommendations that are found in each section. Each section contains:

- Overview
- Insights & Analysis
- Key Findings
- Plan Recommendations

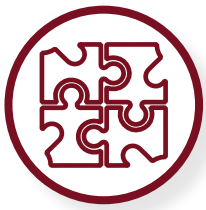


Vision: Desired outcome
expressed in simple terms.

Objective: Statements
that serve as the framework for future decision making.

Time Frame & Parties: Sets
the stage for the planning and people involved

PLAN ELEMENTS



Future Land Use

Land use recommendations guide the pattern and character of future growth in Utica and serve as the foundation of the Plan, guiding where and how the village should grow in the future.



Downtown Revitalization

The downtown is the central core and heart of the community. Planning for the stabilization and revitalization of this important community district will help create a center of commerce and activity in the community, build around the historic core, and connect to the Licking River.



Housing & Economy

Planning for the diversification and stabilization of housing is critical to the future of Utica. A diverse housing stock will help to support residents' needs at all stages of life. New housing will help attract new residents and support future commercial growth desired by residents. Stabilizing existing housing will help elevate the local quality of life.



Mobility & Connectivity

A diverse mobility network that includes both motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation leads to a healthy and attractive community. Planning for both modes, and considering a brand aesthetic as part of future mobility projects can also help to define the community's image and brand.



Parks & Recreation

Access to parks, open spaces, and recreational spaces can improve community mental and physical health, create places for the community to gather, and make Utica a desirable place to live and visit. These elements will also help to serve to elevate the quality of life and attract new economic investment.



Community Image & Brand

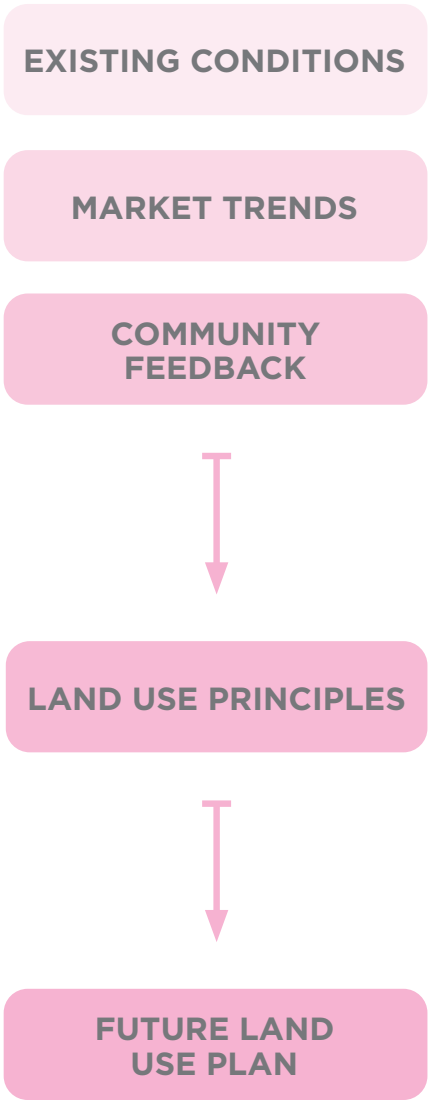
A community identity expresses the overall impression, culture, and feel of a community. Identifiable image branding on gateways and signage can improve a community's overall sense of community and pride and bring awareness to visitors.

Future Land Use

OVERVIEW

The Future Land Use plan is a foundational element in this collective Plan that is meant to guide development in and around the community, as there is a significant amount of land that could potentially be developed to accommodate growth in the coming decades, and various focus areas that could be redeveloped and reimagined.

The Future Land Use plan and corresponding map were developed from a set of land use principles shaped by the planning team's existing conditions and market trends technical analysis, together with the community's feedback and insights. It is meant to guide the pattern and character of future growth in Utica so that growth is balanced and financially and environmentally sustainable, and aligns with the aspirations of the community.



Right: An illustration of how the Future Land Use plan was shaped.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

The Village has a significant amount of land for potential development to accommodate growth in the coming decades as well as historic downtown and neighborhoods that can be preserved and celebrated, and agricultural areas that need to be planned or protected. The Future Land Use plan is a blueprint to guide how these areas should be planned in the future, and includes policies to guide future decision making.

The land use principles and map were built on an extensive community engagement process which generated hundreds of ideas for how the village should grow in the future. They reflect key considerations related to housing, economic development, mobility, character, community gathering spaces and other elements of village life. Most importantly, they reflect the community's desire to consider and preserve Utica's traditions while thoughtfully moving the community forward.



The topics and quotes shown here influenced how the project steering committe built the Future Land Use Plan.

The future of Utica ....

"...values and protects open spaces and valuable natural resources like the Licking River."

"...showcases rich history and hometown feel."

"...accommodates growth promoting fiscal health and quality of life."

"...conserves important farmland and rural vistas through conservation principles."

"...embraces a new era of residential and commercial character with mixed-use development, offering a variety of amenities and housing options."

FUTURE LAND USE PRINCIPLES

The following land use principles form the basis of the Future Land Use plan and associated map. These principles are statements of intent to guide how land in the Village of Utica should be used and developed in the future, and should be considered as decisions are made regarding future programs, policies, or development - all of which should support and be in alignment with them.

FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE VILLAGE SHOULD:



Keep a Small Town Feel & History

Maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate Utica's rich history through new development, preservation, and quality design.



Provide a Variety of Housing Options

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options to maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



Foster Creative Redevelopment

Allow for high quality development to create economic and living options for all residents.



Encourage Economic Growth

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.



Be a Connected Community

Connect the community through a network of trails, pathways, and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility options, and healthy lifestyles.



Preserve Open Spaces

Protect open spaces and valuable natural resources by embracing and following conservation development principles.



Promote Regional Proximity

Position Utica for success within a growing region as a unique location and gateway to Amish Country and Licking County.



Create Community Spaces

Provide opportunities for social gathering and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, riverfront, shopping, restaurants, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).

FUTURE LAND USE MAP, DISTRICTS & TYPOLOGIES

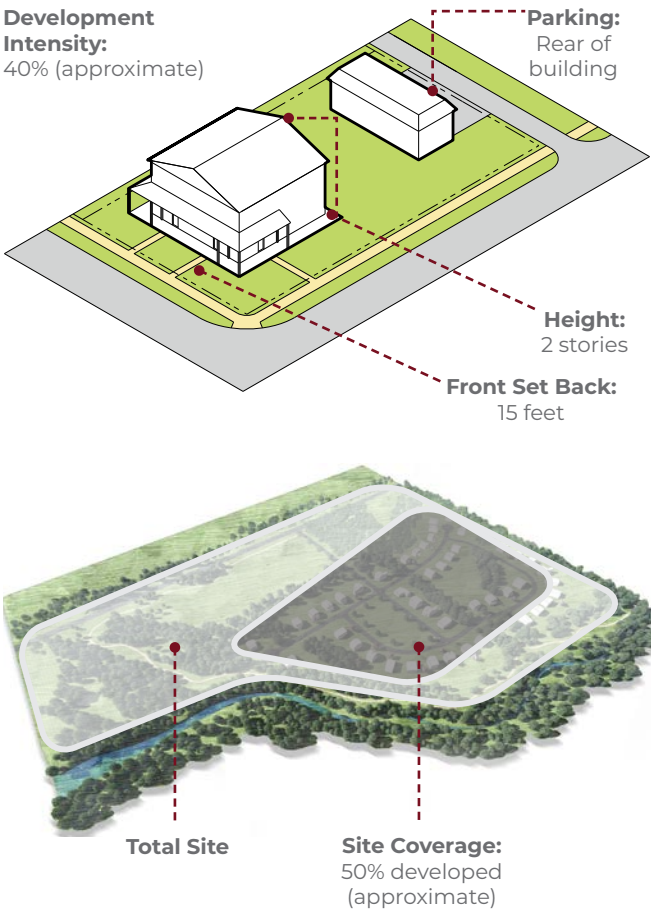
The Future Land Use map on the following pages illustrates how the village should grow in the future. As development occurs, future zoning, developments, capital projects, and policy decisions should align with the map and designated districts.

Each district is a unique land use typology and has a prescribed set of characteristics (see image to the right and below). The Land Use Typologies Matrix outlined on the following pages describes the desired future character and form for each type of land use along with associated development standards.

The Future Land Use map, districts and typologies are intended to be used as a general guide for how development could occur in the future and how land could be rezoned in the future, or how zoning text may be updated or changed to align with the Future Land Use map. It is understood current village zoning designations may not align with the Future Land Use map presented here, and zoning changes may be necessary in the future. It is important to note that to rezone any property, potential applicants would follow the village's legal process to amend the zoning code, which includes, but is not limited to, an application, multiple hearings, and formal approval procedures.

Land Use Character Definitions

- **Land Use** - Describes the variety of ways (i.e. residential, commercial, etc.) people make use of the land.
- **Height** - Describes the general height of a building in number of stories.
- **Front Setback** - The minimum distance between the front edge of a site and the building on the site.
- **Parking** - General requirements related to parking standards including location and screening.
- **Development Intensity** - The approximate concentration or compactness of buildings on a site.
- **Recommended Uses** - The proposed development type for a site.

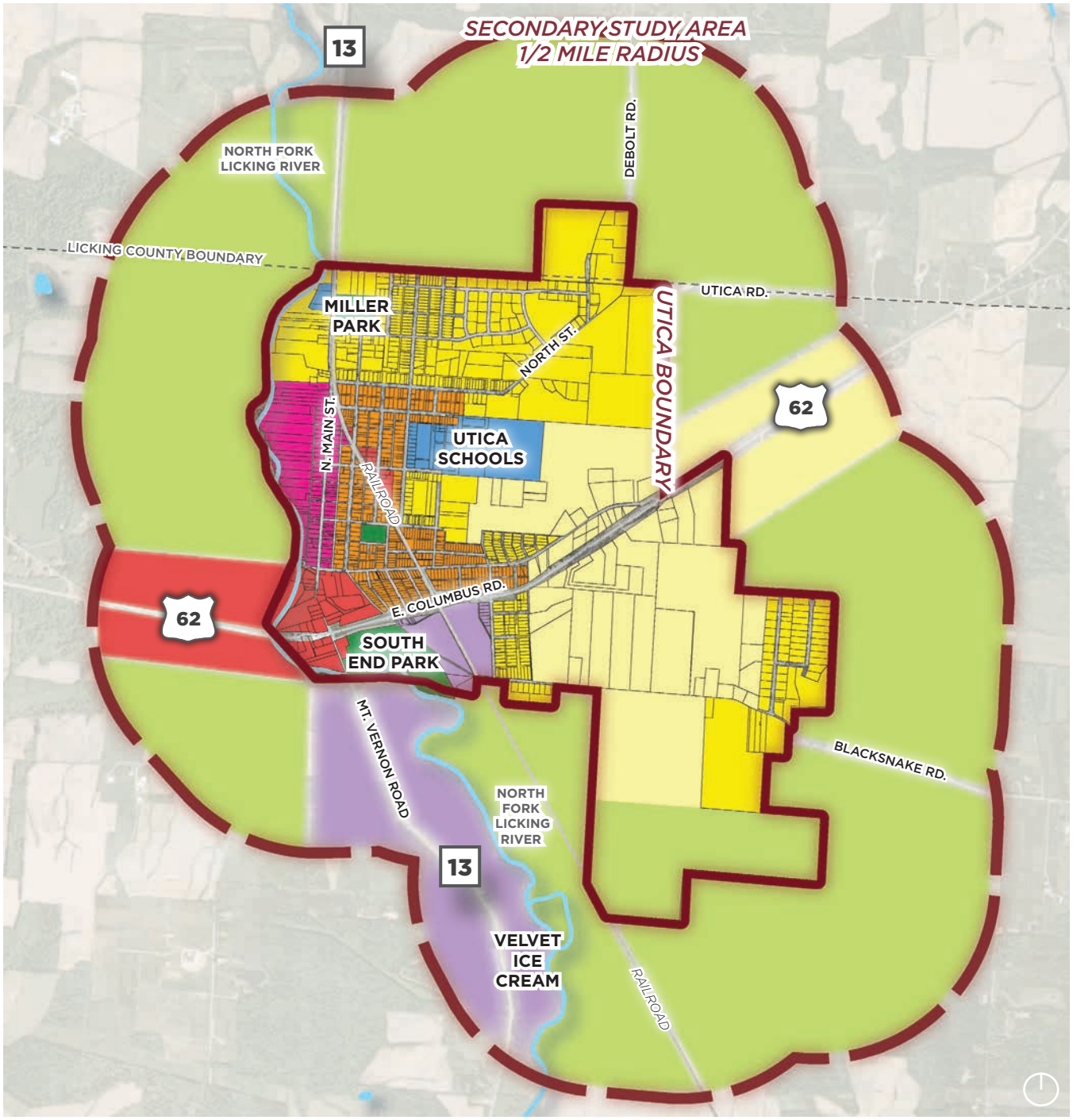


The above graphics illustrate the development characteristics

TABLE 4-1: Future Land Use Typologies Matrix

Land Use	Height	Front Setback	Parking Arrangement	Recommended Development intensity	Recommended Uses
Institutional	--	--	--	--	• Public Institutions
Parks & Open Space	--	--	--	--	• Public Services • Parks & Recreation • Natural Areas
Rural Cluster	1-2 stories	30-100 ft	Side or front facing garages	Conservation of 50-75% of site or overall development, approx. 1 du/ac	• Attached & Detached Single Family • Condos
Suburban Cluster	1-2 stories	25-100 ft	Side or front facing garages	Conservation of 25-50% of site or overall development, and up to 2 du/ac	• Detached Single Family • Attached Single Family
Suburban Residential	1-3 stories	25-30 ft	Front, side or rear facing garages (side or rear preferred). Alley access where appropriate	Building coverage 30-50% up to 6 u/acre	• Detached Single Family • Attached Single Family • Multifamily
Traditional Legacy Neighborhood	1-3 stories	10-30 ft	Front, side or rear facing garages (side or rear preferred). Alley access where appropriate	Building coverage 30-50% up to 10 u/acre	• Detached Single Family • Attached Single Family • Multifamily
Downtown Mixed Use	1-5 stories	0-25 ft	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighboring uses (multifamily/ commercial only)	Building coverage 30-70% Development intensity, 10-30 u/acre	• Multifamily • Mixed Use w/ Retail • Mixed Use w/ Office
Local Commercial	1-2 stories	0-30 ft	Rear or side of building, screen from street/ neighboring uses	Individual buildings less than 10,000-15,000 sf/acre	• Retail • Office • Commercial Services
Innovation	1-2 stories	25-200 ft	Screening from street/ neighboring uses	15,000 - 25,000 sf/acre	• Light Industrial • Logistics • Research & Development • Commercial Office

FIGURE 4-1: Future Land Use Map



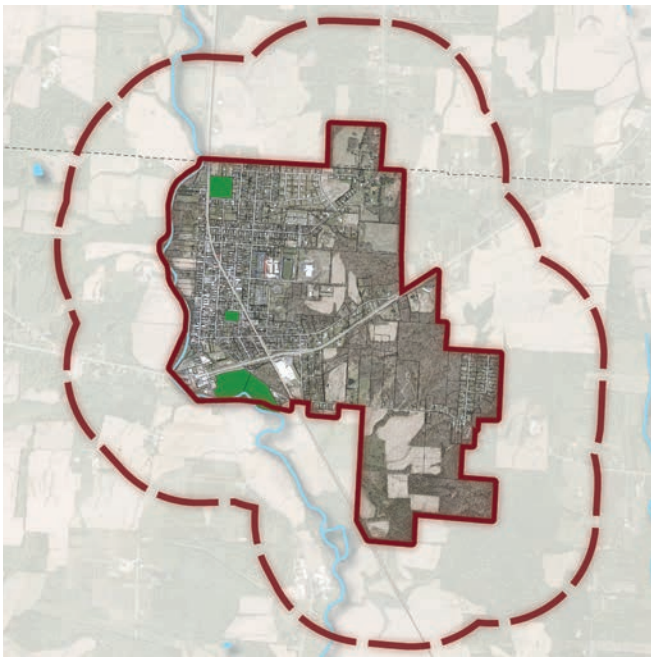
Future Land Use Districts Key					
	Institutional		Traditional Legacy Neighborhood		Rural Cluster
	Parks & Open Space		Downtown Mixed Use		Suburban Cluster
	Innovation		Local Commercial		Suburban Residential

PUBLIC PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Description

Public parks and open spaces are areas intended to accommodate public and semi-public uses. Such facilities should be well designed and integrated into their surroundings. Pedestrian access is within these areas and must be ADA accessible. Structures should be connected to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the area, and enhanced crossings should be provided to ensure pedestrian safety at key roadway crossings

When considering the development of large expanses of greenfield land, it is important to recognize the value of open space and recreational areas and land remaining in its natural state. Residential neighborhoods and mixed-use developments often gain greater value when located in proximity to parks and open space. Park facilities should include a range of active and passive uses or activities, and be designed to reduce maintenance expenses. The existing park network should be expanded into new areas of development.



Development Character

Height	--
Front Setback	--
Parking	--
Recommended Development Intensity	--
Recommended Uses	• Public Services • Parks & Recreation • Natural Areas





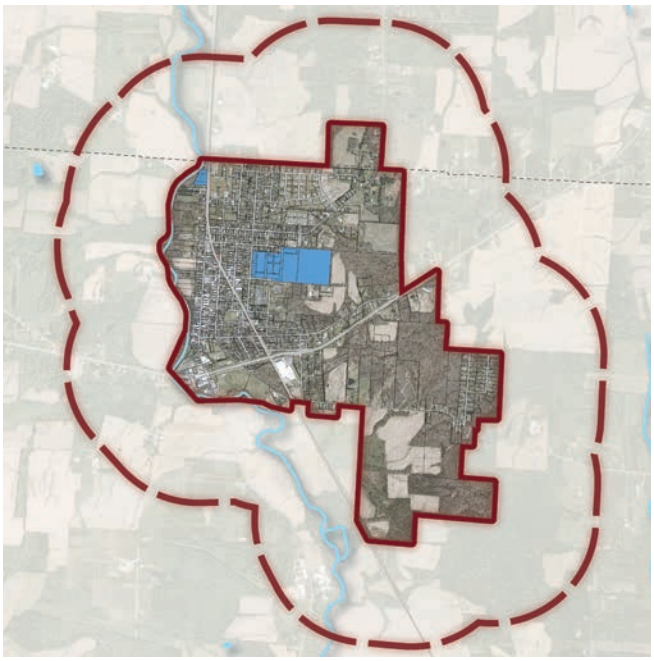


A variety of park spaces within a village creates amenities for residents and improves the local environment.

INSTITUTIONAL

Description

Institutional areas are intended to accommodate public and semi-public uses. Buildings and land owned by the government, libraries, village emergency and service departments, religious uses, and schools share this development character. Such facilities should be well designed and integrated into their surroundings. Pedestrian access is key on these sites and must be ADA accessible. Structures should be connected to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the area, and enhanced crossings should be provided at roadways to ensure pedestrian safety. Attractive landscaping, streetscape elements, and signage should be used to integrate larger sites into the existing street network.



Development Character

Height	--
Front Setback	--
Parking	--
Recommended Development Intensity	--
Recommended Uses	• Public Institutions







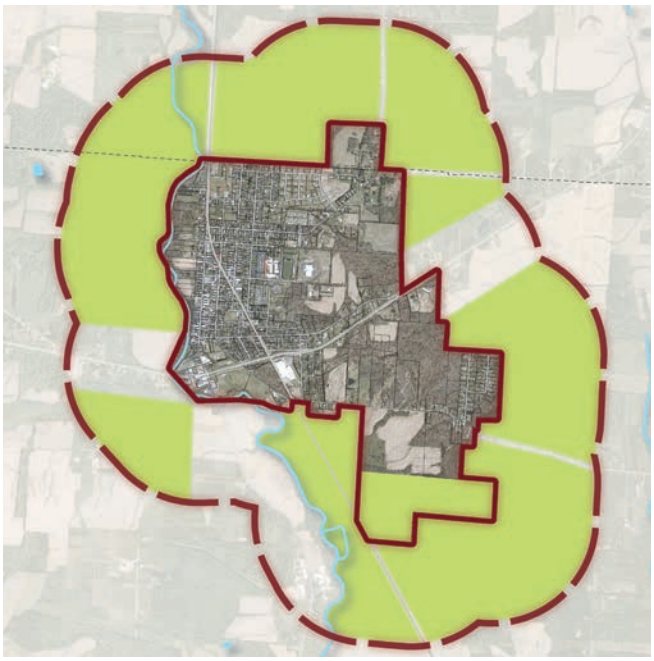
A variety of institutional places within a city offers services for residents and improves quality of life.

RURAL CLUSTER (CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT)

Description

Rural Cluster Development allows for single family homes and condos that are clustered within a larger site to reduce land consumption and preserve rural and natural features.

- **Development Character** should be single family residential, condos, and community facilities that consume smaller percentages of the total site and the remaining land is communal and left undisturbed or developed for public use.
- **Development Intensity** in this area should be approximately one dwelling unit per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved in some areas. Density bonuses may be considered for development that exceeds 75% open space dedication.
- **Open Space** should consist of 50-70% of the site and primarily include preservation areas where land has been restored to its natural state and sensitive features are protected. Recreational paths can be included within open space. Landscaping consisting of native plants that require little care and support a variety of habitats are encouraged.
- **Connectivity** should be of a rural character with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees and green stormwater infrastructure.



Development Character

Height	1-2 stories
Front Setback	30 - 100 feet
Parking	Side or front facing garages
Recommended Development Intensity	Conservation of 50-75% of site or overall development, and up to 1 du/ac
Recommended Uses	• Detached Single Family Homes • Attached Single Family Homes • Condos







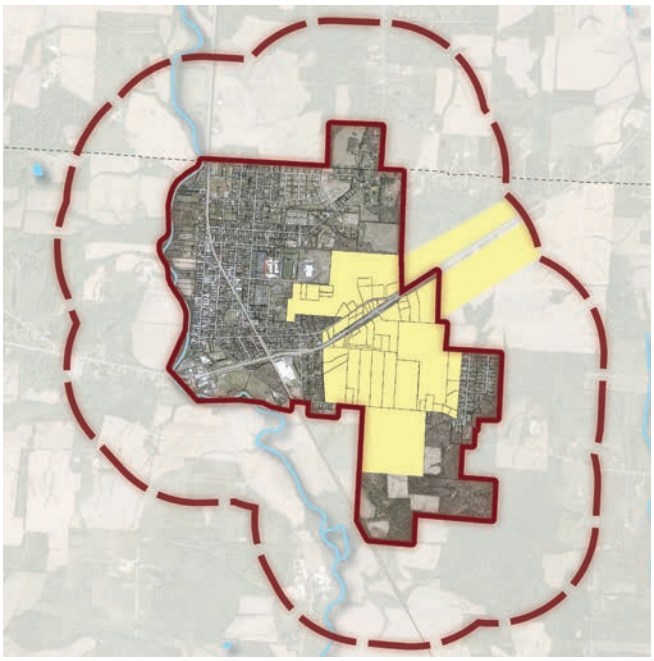
Distinct architecture and natural materials create attractive neighborhoods while preserving natural features within the landscape.

SUBURBAN CLUSTER

Description

Suburban Cluster Development is characterized by a clustering of single family homes with a slightly less quantity of conservation/open space areas.

- **Development Character** should be single family residential and community facilities that consume smaller percentages of the total site, with the remaining land being communal and left undisturbed.
- **Development Intensity** in this area should be approximately two dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed two units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.
- **Open Space** should make up at least 25% of the overall development and primarily include preservation areas where land has been restored to its natural state and sensitive features are protected. Recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths whenever possible. Open spaces should be landscaped with native plants that require little care and support a variety of habitats.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.



Development Character

Height	1-2 stories
Front Setback	25-100 feet
Parking	Front, rear, or side facing garages. Alley Access where appropriate.
Recommended Development Intensity	Conservation of 25-50% of site or overall development, and up to 2 du/ac
Recommended Uses	• Detached Single Family Homes • Attached Single Family Homes







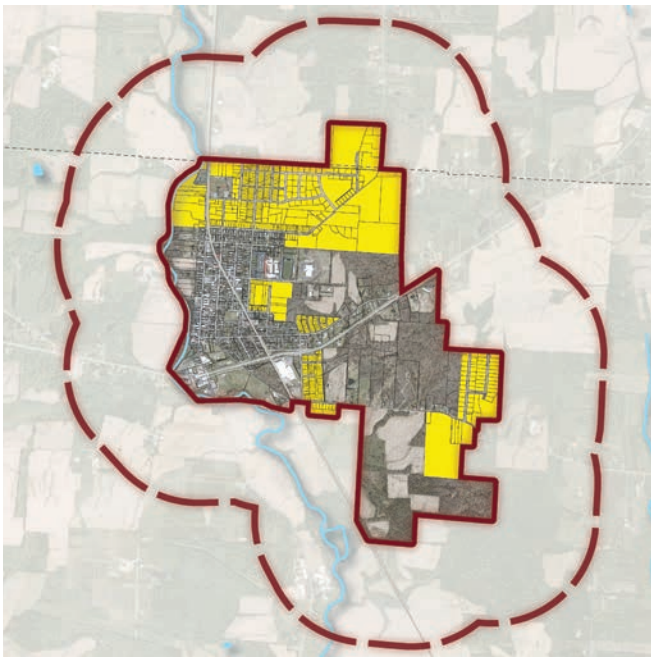
Residential clusters can include various housing types while preserving large areas of open and natural space, accessible to all residents.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Description

Suburban Residential is characterized by communities with a range of dense single and multifamily housing options with on-site, shared amenities.

- **Development Character** should be single family, multifamily residential, and community facilities that offer various amenities to residents such as a community center, recreational paths, and natural areas.
- **Development Intensity** in this area should 6-12 dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed 12 units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.
- **Open Space** should be integrated into site and primarily include areas for gathering for residents within the development. Recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths whenever possible.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.



Development Character

Height	1-3 stories
Front Setback	25-30 feet
Parking	Rear or side facing garages. Alley access where appropriate.
Recommended Development Intensity	Building coverage 30%-50% up to 6-12 units/acre.
Recommended Uses	• Detached Single Family Homes • Attached Single Family Homes • Multifamily







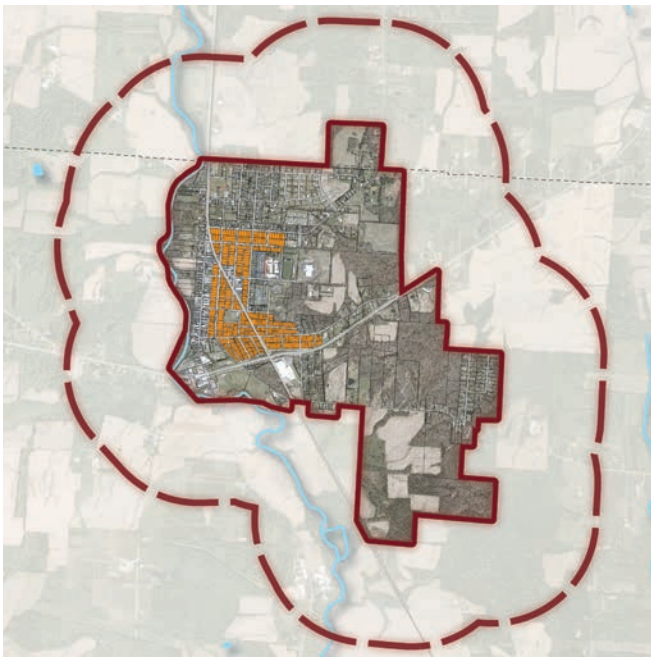
New residential neighborhorhoods provide a variety of housing types and accommodate residents of all ages.

TRADITIONAL LEGACY NEIGHBORHOOD

Description

Traditional Legacy Neighborhood is characterized by single family housing options in established districts and neighborhoods.

- **Development Character** should be single-family residential character that supports the proximity to commercial and institutional uses nearby.
- **Development Intensity** in this area should be up to 10 dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed 15 units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.
- **Open Space** should be integrated into site and primarily include areas for gathering for residents within the development. Recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths whenever possible.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.



Development Character

Height	1-3 stories
Front Setback	10-30 feet
Parking	Rear or side facing garages. Alley access where appropriate.
Recommended Development Intensity	Building coverage 30%-50% up to 10 units/acre.
Recommended Uses	• Detached Single Family Homes • Attached Single Family Homes







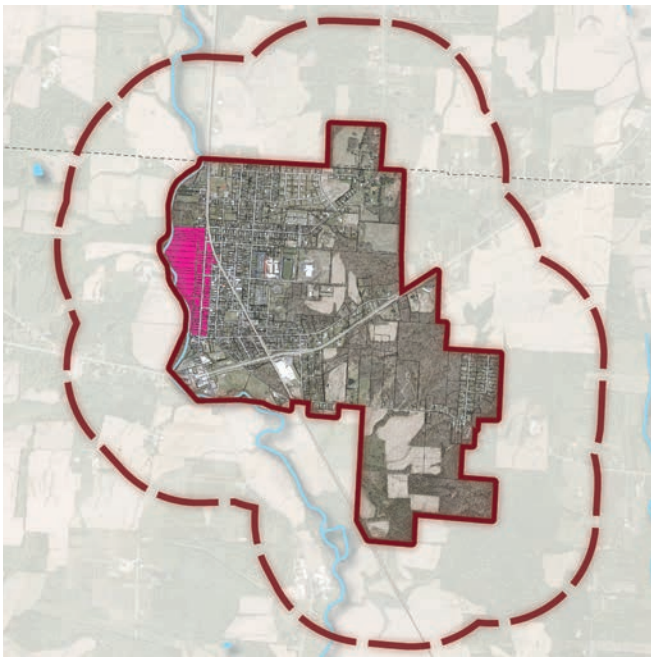
Single family and older neighborhoods that have been developed over time create legacy districts.

DOWNTOWN MIXED USE

Description

Downtown Mixed Use is characterized by vertical and/or horizontal mixes of use, with high public and private realm features that promote walkability, social interaction, and a connection to environmental assets. This area is the primary urban center of the village and supports the surrounding neighborhoods and community as a whole.

- **Development Character** should be mixed use development that blends complementary uses including retail and office, but prioritizes residential uses in an urban mixed-use development styles. These uses can be integrated vertically in the same building, or horizontally in the same development, and create a live-work-play environment. Public amenities such as outdoor cafes, plazas, and green space provide both residents and visitors areas to relax and socialize.
- **Development Intensity** in this area may range from 10 to 30 units per acre for residential and 10,000 to 30,000 square feet per acre for non-residential uses.
- **Open Space** should be highly connected and create both small and large places for people to gather including plazas, green lawns, and natural areas.
- **Connectivity** should incorporate "Complete Streets" principles so it is safe and efficient for all modes of travel. Streetscape elements should be cohesive and enhance the public realm. Cross-access drives are encouraged between developments to reduce curb-cuts on major roadways.



Development Character

Height	1-5 stories
Front Setback	0-25 feet
Parking	Rear or side facing of building, screen from street and neighboring uses (multifamily/ commercial only)
Recommended Development Intensity	10-30 du/acre
Recommended Uses	• Multifamily • Mixed Use w/ Retail • Mixed Use w/ Office







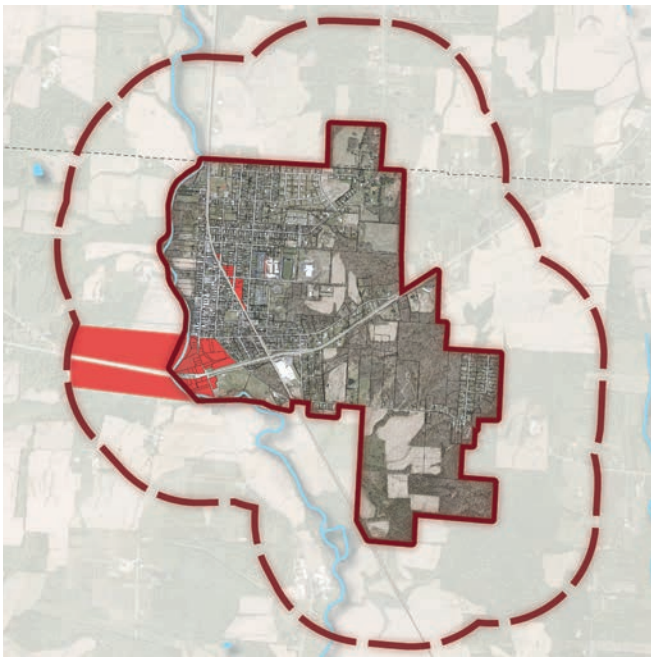
Historic downtowns with a mix of commercial, residential, and public spaces create dynamic centers for people to live, work, and play.

LOCAL COMMERCIAL

Description

Local Commercial is characterized by small-scale retail, office, and commercial services that complement and support nearby neighborhoods and residential uses.

- **Development Character** should have a distinct presence from the street and be highly attractive. Buildings should face the street with windows looking onto the street.
- **Development Intensity** is this area should be high scale, with individual buildings being no greater than 10,000-15,000 square feet.
- **Open Space** should be used to define and add character to a development. Ornamental landscaping within the setback, within parking lots, and along buildings is encouraged.
- **Connectivity** should incorporate "Complete Streets" principles so it is safe and efficient for all modes of travel. Streetscape elements should be cohesive and enhance the public realm. Cross-access drives are encouraged between developments to reduce curb-cuts on major roadways.



Development Character

Height	1-2 Stories
Front Setback	0-30 feet
Parking	Rear or side facing, screen from street/neighboring uses
Recommended Development Intensity	Individual buildings less than 10,000-15,000 sf/acre
Recommended Uses	• Retail • Office • Commercial Services







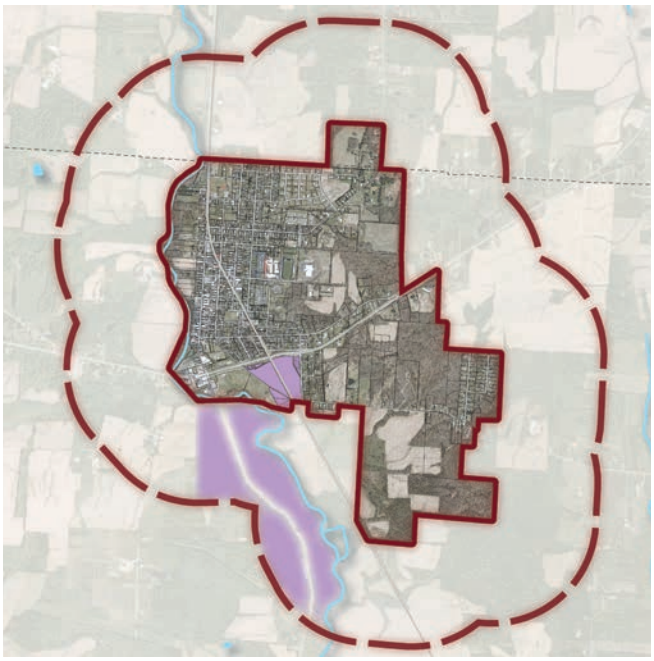
Small-scale retail, neighborhood services, and office uses can complement and support nearby residential uses.

INNOVATION

Description

Innovation is characterized by small-scale industrial, research, and office uses that demand proximity to local, regional, and national transportation networks and create and require synergy between adjoining uses and businesses.

- **Development Character** should be a variety of industrial, research & development, laboratory, design, and technology uses. Retail may be considered as a secondary use to accommodate workers. High interconnectivity through a connected mobility network, green spaces, and pathways within and around the area should create a campus of cross-collaboration. Parks, public amenities, and pedestrian and bicycle access should be included.
- **Development Intensity** in this area may range from 15,000 to 25,000 square feet per acre and allow for large format users.
- **Open Space** should be incorporated into site design as appropriate.
- **Connectivity** should allow safe travel for cars, trucks, and freight with consideration for roundabouts where appropriate. Branding signage may also be considered in this area.



Development Character

Height	1-2 stories
Front Setback	25-200 feet
Parking	Screen from street/neighboring uses
Recommended Development Intensity	15,000 -25,000 sf/acre
Recommended Uses	• Logistics • Light Industrial • Research & Development • Commercial Office







Modern industrial buildings with well-landscaped and architecturally distinct entrances can improve building aesthetics.

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KEY FINDINGS - FUTURE LAND USE

The following key findings from the existing conditions analysis (Chapter 2) and the community engagement (Chapter 3) aided in the development of the plan framework's Future Land Use section.

Existing Conditions & Community Engagement

There is a desire for strategic growth over the long term, balancing **inward and outward growth with a focus on rural conservation on the edges.**

There is a community desire to **connect with the riverfront through preservation, recreation, and new development.**

There is a lack of **commercial and medical services,** making residents travel outside the village.

There is a desire to collaborate and work in **partnership with the surrounding municipalities and adjacent counties.**

Residents would like to see continued **improvements and development of Main Street in the Downtown.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Vision** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The vision statements are listed below and are accompanied by **Objectives** designed to help guide implementation.

FUTURE LAND USE

Vision Statement: A vibrant downtown that serves as an entertainment and cultural hub of the community, integrates and celebrates the local history and natural environments, and supports a growing local economy.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Accommodate growth outside of the city limits and protect and maintain a rural character and view sheds.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously acted on and worked upon by the village until completed.	• Licking County • Developers • Private Property Owners
Encourage the development of a wide range of housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents.		• GROW Licking County • Licking County
Protect and promote the natural assets in the community such as the North Fork Licking River.		• Licking County Soil & Water • Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Plan for new commercial uses that support the needs of current and future residents.		• GROW Licking County • Private Property Owners
Plan new areas for job creation and income generating uses.		• GROW Licking County • Licking County • Jobs of Ohio

Downtown Revitalization

OVERVIEW

The Downtown Revitalization section of the plan framework for the village is a crucial component that harmoniously integrates with other sections such as future land use, mobility and connectivity, and image and branding. The aim is to restore and rejuvenate this core district to align with the current and future needs of the community, while also embracing its rich historical significance and natural elements. This strategic approach not only seeks to elevate the functionality and appeal of the downtown area, but also ensures a seamless connection with the village's heritage and environment. In addition, the plan emphasizes the promotion and support of local businesses, fostering a vibrant economic environment within the downtown area.

INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis regarding the downtown were gathered through the public engagement process and an assessment of existing conditions and current market trends. The key findings from this analysis directly informed the vision and objectives in this section.

Public Input

Throughout the comprehensive plan's engagement process and as evidenced by the 2023 village survey, downtown revitalization emerged as a key focus of the community. A majority of respondents passionately advocated for a future Utica that prioritizes the implementation of an updated and cohesive downtown, citing the potential for economic growth, community gathering spaces, and preservation of the village's historical charm. These sentiments were further reinforced by the existing conditions analysis, which revealed underutilized parcels and a lack of connection to the North Fork Licking River within the downtown area. The following are key desired downtown elements discussed throughout the engagement process.

- Utilization of Vacant Lots & Buildings
- Streetscape Appeal (Pedestrian Safety)
- Riverfront Connectivity
- Mixed Use Residential & Commercial
- Improved Public Space

REVITALIZATION TRENDS

Downtown revitalization has become a significant focus across the United States as cities seek to attract residents, businesses, and visitors back to urban cores. One of the key trends driving this revitalization is the rise of mixed-use developments, which combine residential, commercial, and entertainment spaces within walkable environments. These developments cater to a growing demand for vibrant, live-work-play neighborhoods that offer convenience and community. Cities are also investing in infrastructure improvements, such as better public transportation, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and green spaces, to enhance the appeal of downtown areas. This approach not only fosters economic growth but also helps to create more sustainable and resilient urban environments.

Another national trend in downtown revitalization is the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Rather than demolishing old structures, cities are preserving their architectural heritage by converting these buildings into modern spaces that can house offices, apartments, restaurants, and cultural venues. This trend reflects a broader cultural shift towards sustainability and appreciation for history, as well as the economic benefits of maintaining unique local character. Additionally, downtowns are increasingly embracing technology and smart city initiatives, such as free public Wi-Fi and smart parking systems, to enhance the urban experience and attract tech-savvy populations. These efforts are often supported by public-private partnerships and community engagement, ensuring that revitalization projects are inclusive and reflective of local needs.



Celebrating the village's historic identity through timeless elements like brick pavement blends tradition with modern charm.



Creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape to enhance accessibility and community engagement is part of downtown revitalization.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The vision for the future of the downtown is one that thoughtfully blends the village's rich history, natural beauty, and modern needs. This revitalized downtown will honor the architectural and cultural elements that have long defined the area, preserving the character of historic buildings and streetscapes. These elements will be thoughtfully integrated with new developments, creating a seamless blend of old and new that respects the village's past while embracing its future.

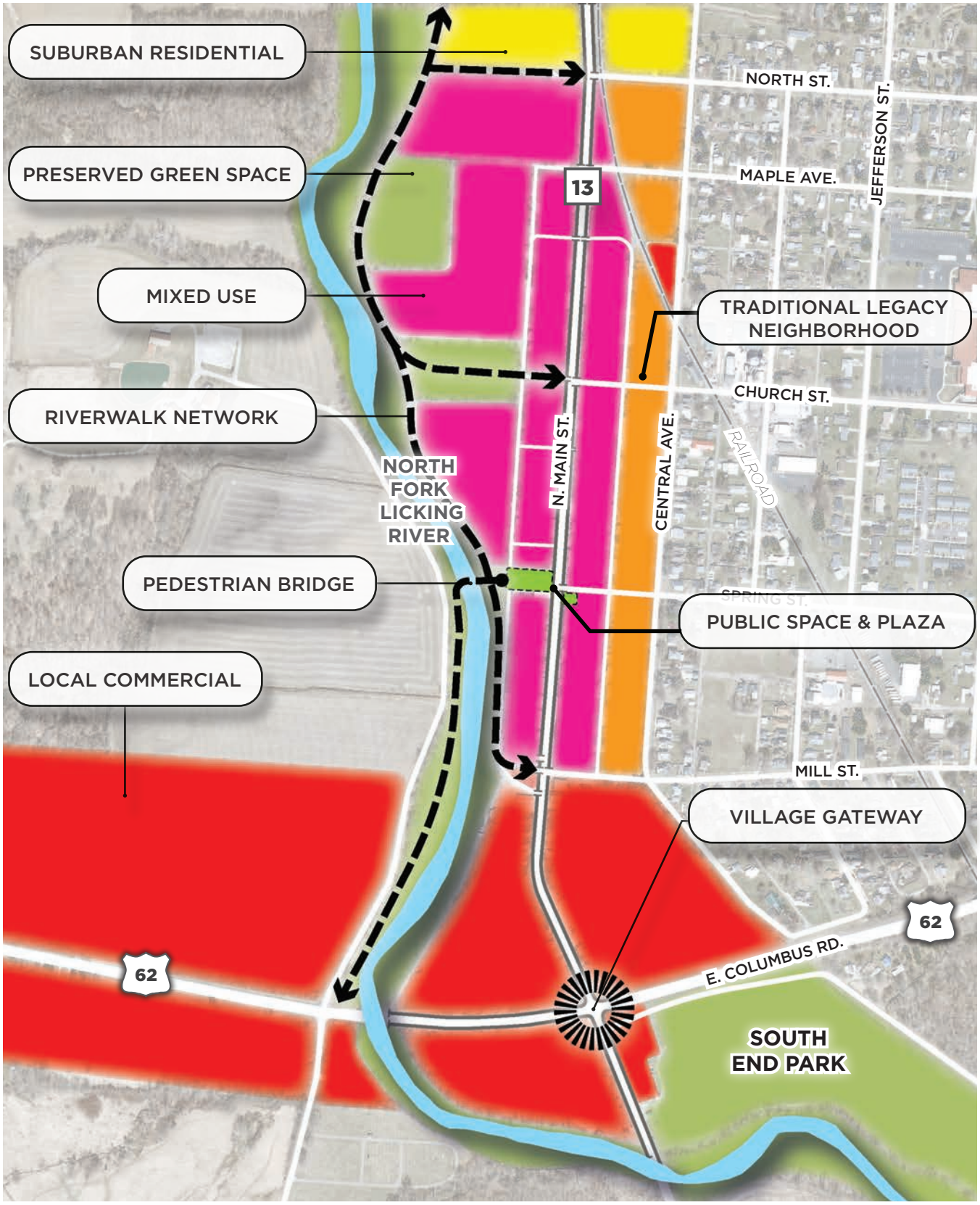
The revitalization will extend outward, ensuring that the downtown smoothly connects with the adjacent traditional legacy neighborhoods, allowing the charm and community feel of these areas to flow naturally into the new developments. The plan also includes enhancing connectivity with the local commercial intersection to the south, creating a cohesive and accessible network that ties the village together.

Incorporating the natural beauty of the North Fork Licking River, the downtown will feature non-motorized pathways that invite residents and visitors to explore the area on foot or by bike, promoting a more sustainable and active lifestyle. The mixed-use spaces will provide a dynamic environment where people can live, work, and play, offering diverse housing options alongside small businesses and commercial spaces that cater to the community's needs. This vision aims to create a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable downtown that celebrates Utica's heritage while providing opportunities for future growth and development



Downtown Gahanna is an example of a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use downtown area that incorporates natural elements such as Big Walnut Creek.

FIGURE 4-2: Downtown Plan Framework



DOWNTOWN PLAZA

The purpose of the downtown plaza is to breathe new life into Utica's historic downtown by creating a welcoming, communal space where residents and visitors can gather and further connect to the North Fork Licking River. Central to the project is a plaza adorned with lush greenery, seating areas, and a stage, all thoughtfully designed to reflect the rich history of Utica while catering to modern needs. An adjacent pocket park beneath the iconic Utica mural, along with an enhanced streetscape and intersection, will further enrich the area. By prioritizing pedestrian-friendly features and seamlessly connecting local businesses, the project aspires to foster economic growth, encourage social interaction, and elevate the overall aesthetic of downtown.

Issues & Opportunities

The project area offers a unique opportunity to transform a currently vacant lot into a vibrant public space for visitors and residents. However, challenges include navigating the floodplain and acquiring the necessary land parcels to bring the vision to life.

Project Elements

Streetscape & Intersection (Main St. & Spring St.)

- Improved Street Lighting, Crosswalk, Bricked Streetscape, Sidewalks, Tree Lawns, Light Pole Banner

Pocket Park (Southeast Corner of Main St. & Spring St.)

- Improved Lighting for Mural, Additional Landscaping, Seating, Art Installation

Public Plaza (West side of Main St.)

- Plaza Entrance Sign, Screened Seating, Green Space, Stage, Path Connection to North Fork Licking River

Implementation

To first implementation step is to secure necessary parcels through acquisition agreements, followed by developing detailed construction documentation. The project must also be approved by the Zoning and Planning Commission. Simultaneously, efforts to build public support will be crucial for the project's success. To ensure the success of this project, the village should explore parking options, including nearby lots or vacant areas that could be transformed into parking.

FIGURE 4-3: Overhead rendering view of the downtown plaza



FIGURE 4-4: Rendering view of the east corner of Main St. & Spring St.



FIGURE 4-5: Rendering view of the plaza and signage on the west side of Main



KEY FINDINGS - DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

The following key findings from the existing conditions analysis (Chapter 2) and the community engagement (Chapter 3) aided in the development of the plan framework's Downtown Revitalization section.

Existing Conditions & Community Engagement

There is a desire for strategic growth over the long term, balancing **inward and outward growth through new development and preservation.**

There is a desire by the community to **connect with the riverfront through preservation, recreation, and new development.**

Respondents would like to see continued **improvements and development of Main Street in the Downtown.**

There are **issues** surrounding the **amount of housing and housing options for all demographics.**

There is a need to **develop community connectivity and walkability throughout the village.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Vision** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The vision statements are further below and are accompanied by **Objectives** designed to help drive implementation.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Vision Statement: A vibrant downtown that serves as an entertainment and cultural hub of the community, integrates and celebrates the local history and natural environments, and supports a growing local economy.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Promote new businesses and infill development in the downtown.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously acted on and worked upon by the village until completed.	• GROW Licking County • Private Developers • Private Property Owners
Support facade improvements through programs and policies.		• Heritage Ohio • Licking County CDBG
Connect and integrate the downtown with the North Fork Licking River.		• Private Property Owners • Clean Ohio
Improve key gateways into and out of the downtown.		• Ohio Department of Transportation
Create new high quality public spaces.		• Private Developers • Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Explore and identify village parking within the downtown for visitors and residents. (Old firehouse building and the lot next to Town Hall)		• Village of Utica • Private Property Owners

Housing & Economy

OVERVIEW

One of the main focuses of the planning process was understanding the current housing availability for people of all ages and backgrounds and planning for a future that meets the needs of both current and future residents. Additionally, the process involved identifying the need for housing incentives and initiatives to develop the workforce, which will contribute to the growth of the local economy. Although residential land uses make up the majority of the zoned land in Utica, a significant portion of this land remains undeveloped. This lack of development results in limited housing options, primarily consisting of suburban single family homes, and represents a missed opportunity for the village to generate tax revenue.

As Utica looks to the future, the village must adjust to the community's changing needs. Utica needs to expand its housing options to accommodate a range of economic demographics. It is essential to develop age-friendly homes with smaller footprints for transitional housing and workforce housing to meet the growing demands of Licking County, one of the fastest-growing counties in Ohio. As new housing is developed, it is crucial to ensure that the character of the housing complements the strong agricultural, small-town community and preserves its natural environmental assets.

Understanding and planning for economic activity within the community will support the needs of residents and create financial revenue for the village. Currently, there are segments of land used for small commercial and industrial purposes, but there is a desire to create more of those types of uses throughout the village—specifically, commercial spaces that allow for more dining and entertainment options and innovation uses that provide job opportunities and generate income tax.



Character image of a residential ranch style duplex. Housing options, like a ranch or a duplex, offer more residential choices.

INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis on Housing & Economy were gathered through the public engagement process and an assessment of existing conditions and current market trends. The key findings from this analysis directly inform the vision and objectives of this section.

Public Input

In a public survey and throughout the engagement process (see Chapter 03), residents and community members provided input on topics and questions related to the village's housing and economy. When asked about the village's highest quality, residents responded that the village is "a great place to live." At public meetings and in a 2023 online survey, residents repeatedly expressed the concern that there needs to be adequate and diverse housing types for all demographics in Utica, especially options like renting and downsizing. When community members were asked what the future growth of Utica would look like, an overwhelming majority responded with growing within and outside the village.

Another significant finding from the engagement process was the residents' strong desire for more local commercial and innovation opportunities within the village. The public input overwhelmingly highlighted how Utica's residents often leave the village to find goods, services, and employment opportunities. When planning for the future, the village must consider residents' desire to expand opportunities and incentives for local commercial and industrial businesses, creating more accessible access to amenities, job opportunities, and tax revenue.



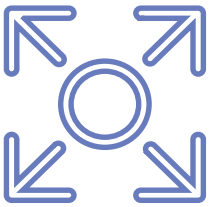
HOUSING



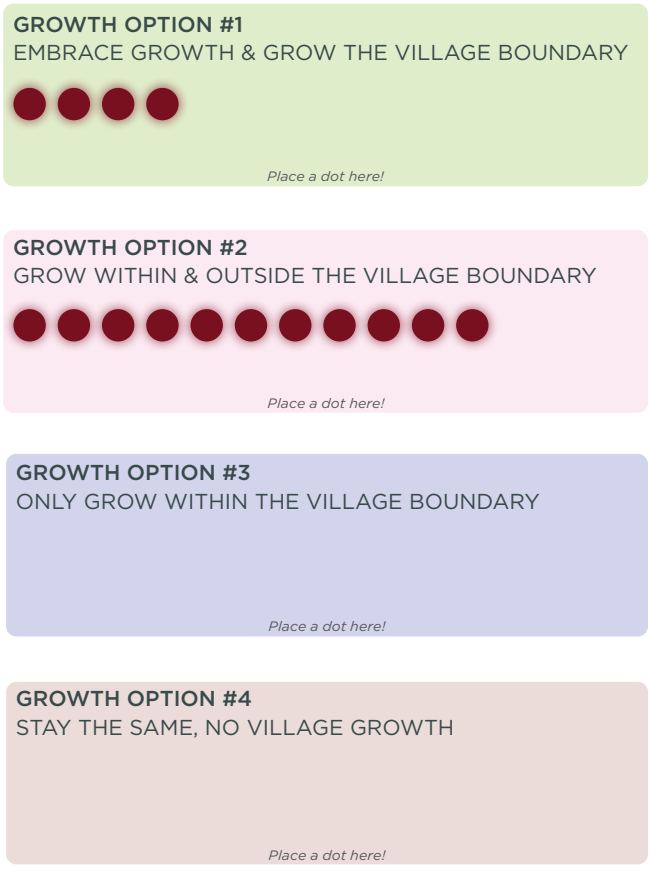
ECONOMY



OPTIONS



GROWTH



Results from a public open house where residents were asked to choose their vision for Utica's future growth.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

The condition of housing in a community has important implications on its livability, quality of life, and fiscal health. The following section provides an analysis of the existing housing stock within the community in relation to future market demands and resident needs. Understanding the current state of housing in Utica ensures the Plan may be responsive to present community housing needs while preparing for appropriate land use and planning decisions in the future.

OLDER HOUSING STOCK

The housing stock within the village of Utica is predominantly older, with many homes dating back several decades. This older housing stock often features charming architectural details and larger lot sizes, reflecting the historical character of the village. While older homes can offer unique character and craftsmanship, they may also require more maintenance and updates compared to newer construction.



An example of older housing stock

PREDOMINANTLY SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

The Village of Utica is predominantly made up of single family homes which can lead to challenges for both existing homeowners and individuals seeking a different lifestyle. The limited availability of alternative housing options, such as townhouses or condominiums, may restrict the choices for those looking for a more low-maintenance or community-oriented living arrangement. Additionally, existing homeowners may face difficulties in finding suitable housing if they wish to downsize or transition to a different type of residence within the village. This emphasis on single-family homes underscores the need for diversification in housing options to accommodate the evolving preferences and needs of residents and potential residents of Utica.



An example of predominatly single-family homes stock

REGIONAL & NATIONAL MARKET TRENDS

As Utica's population continues to grow and the village develops, there are national and regional trends that will inevitably affect the demographics of the population and the types of communities where people prefer to live. By incorporating these expected trends into planning efforts, the village can sustain or increase its competitiveness in the housing and commercial market and prepare for the correct amount of village services, including schools, senior services, utilities, and parks, among others.

PLACE FIRST

Current national trends indicate a swing in how individuals choose where to live. A growing number of Millennials and Gen Z'ers choose where they want to live first and then resolve the logistics of finding employment and housing in their desired location. Younger generations seek destinations that offer a superior quality of life and ample amenities.

This quality of life, or satisfaction with one's health, community, employment, and environment, should be considered. These generations prefer in-town areas that feature diversity and walkability near jobs and entertainment.

The result of this change is more competition for jobs and housing in areas that have a high quality of life with a diverse array of amenities. A subsequent decrease in the desire to live in suburban areas with limited amenities has resulted for some within the Baby Boomer, Millennial, and Gen Z cohorts.

Buying vs. Renting

While owning a home may be desired by some, current trends indicate that many individuals are more inclined to rent instead. Buying can offer a greater return on investment over time but carries a significant amount of financial risk as well as long-term maintenance. Renting often does not carry the financial risk or maintenance of owning property. Longevity is also an important factor in determining whether to buy or rent. While owning typically involves a long-term commitment from the buyer, renting can offer short- or long-term living solutions and allows tenants the flexibility to move when desired or needed.

Health & Sustainability

Healthy and sustainable initiatives can enhance the overall quality of life in a community, attract talented employees, and encourage high-quality development. Investments in park space, trails, and other community amenities promote a healthy lifestyle for residents and draw regional visitors. Downtowns can increase sustainability by incorporating these initiatives as well as supporting the long-term financial health of their businesses and increasing residential density. Compact, walkable environments have the greatest potential for sustainability.

Walkability & Connectivity

An emphasis on a complete transportation system allows people to easily travel by foot, bicycle, or car. Factors that influence walkability include pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, crosswalks, wayfinding, and signage. Communities easily navigated on foot are desired as more Millennials want to live near employment and entertainment options, and the ease and convenience of walkable and well-connected communities is preferred. Focusing on the pedestrian experience and finding creative ways to utilize funding and partnerships is what has been helping downtowns across the country revitalize.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

As development and planning have evolved, so have the options for how residential developments are designed within an area. When developing a neighborhood, it's essential to consider the available land and how it can be utilized to preserve natural spaces. The layout can be tailored to the land's characteristics to create a balance between residential areas and natural surroundings. Natural greenways and parks can be incorporated to provide recreational areas and support biodiversity. Additionally, the layout can take advantage of the natural topography and features of the land to maximize scenic views.

As the Village of Utica continues to expand, it will be increasingly important to accommodate a variety of residential housing styles, such as condos, single family homes, and multifamily units, while simultaneously considering the overall layout. By carefully considering the available land and its natural attributes, a neighborhood can be harmonious with the environment, offering a balance of residential options while preserving natural spaces.

SUBURBAN CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT - SINGLE FAMILY

This development type entails clustering units on smaller lots to preserve open space and promote community-wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into the community's system. Single family lots are smaller and more clustered than conventional development types, while still maintaining existing development rights.



SUBURBAN CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT - MULTIFAMILY

This development type can also entail clustering multifamily units on smaller parcels to preserve even more open space and promote community-wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into community's system. Various unit types, such as multifamily, can be more clustered than conventional development types, while still maintaining existing development rights.

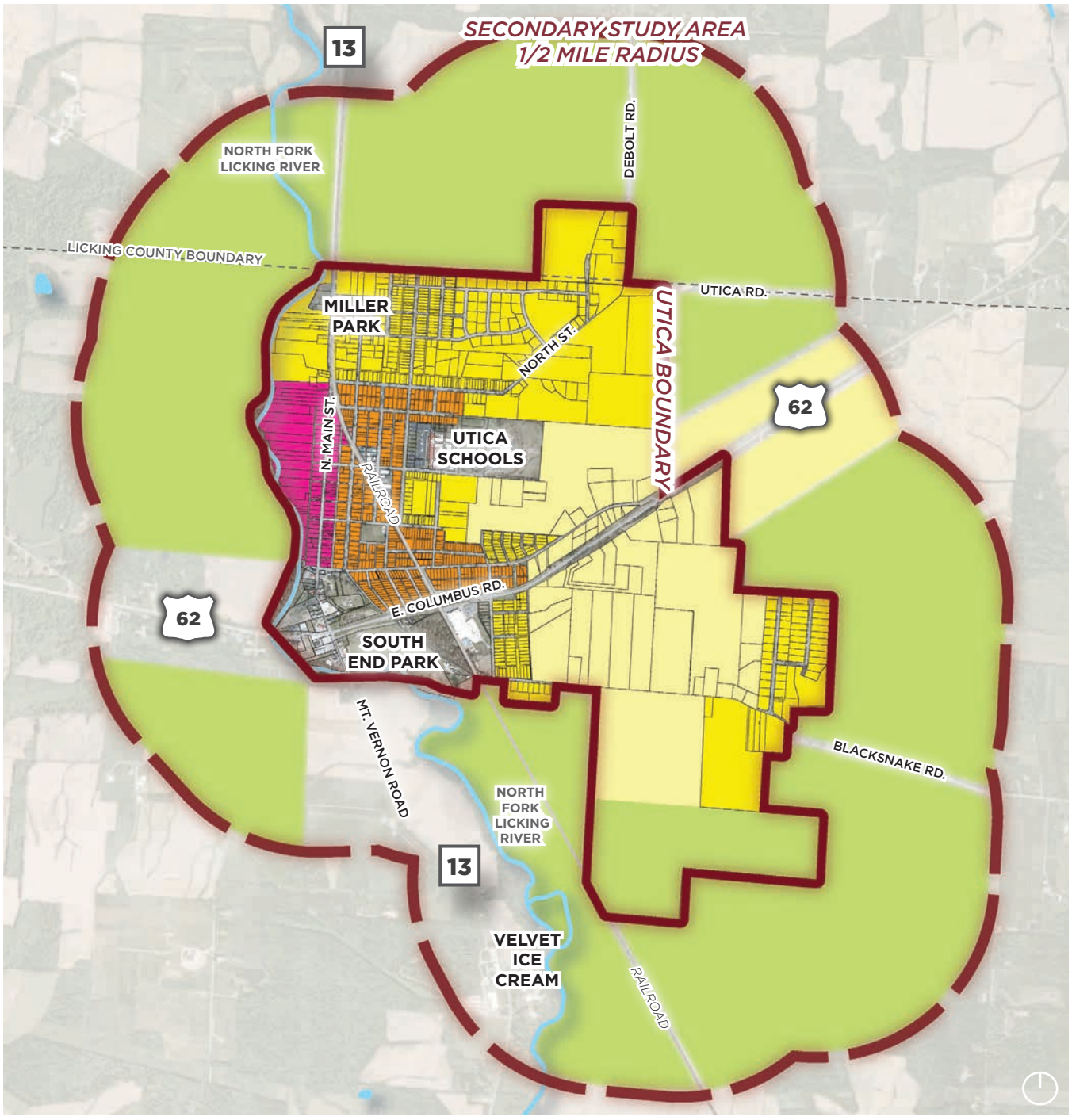


SUBURBAN CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT - MIXED UNIT

This development type can also entail clustering various unit types on smaller parcels to preserve even more open space and promote community-wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into community's system. This development type would increase the density and intensity of development, but would still preserve more open space than conventional suburban development.



FIGURE 4-6: Residential Land Use Categories Map



Residential Districts Map Key			
	Rural Cluster = 1 u/ac		Traditional Legacy Neighborhood = 10 u/ac
	Suburban Cluster = 2 u/ac		Downtown Mixed Use = 10-30 u/ac
	Suburban Residential = 6 - 12 u/ac		

RETAIL TRENDS

CONSUMER PREFERENCES

While community members expressed a desire for more retail and entertainment options, the need to balance development with conservation and preservation of Utica's rural and historic character was paramount in public engagement. In line with this, community members desired neighborhood focused retail and not big-box stores or large regional shopping centers.

This sentiment generally aligns with national trends in retail. Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis shows spending on travel, recreation, and eating out has steadily increased over the last decade while spending on household goods, clothing, and other goods has steadily dropped. Regionally and nationally, retail stores manage to stay competitive within this experience-based market by locating in experiential or destination locations. Some of these retailers now offer services beyond traditional shopping, including cooking or fitness classes, community gathering spaces, restaurants, and service amenities.



Ace Hardware Store a local commercial example that would fit into the need and wants of the community and future village aesthetic.

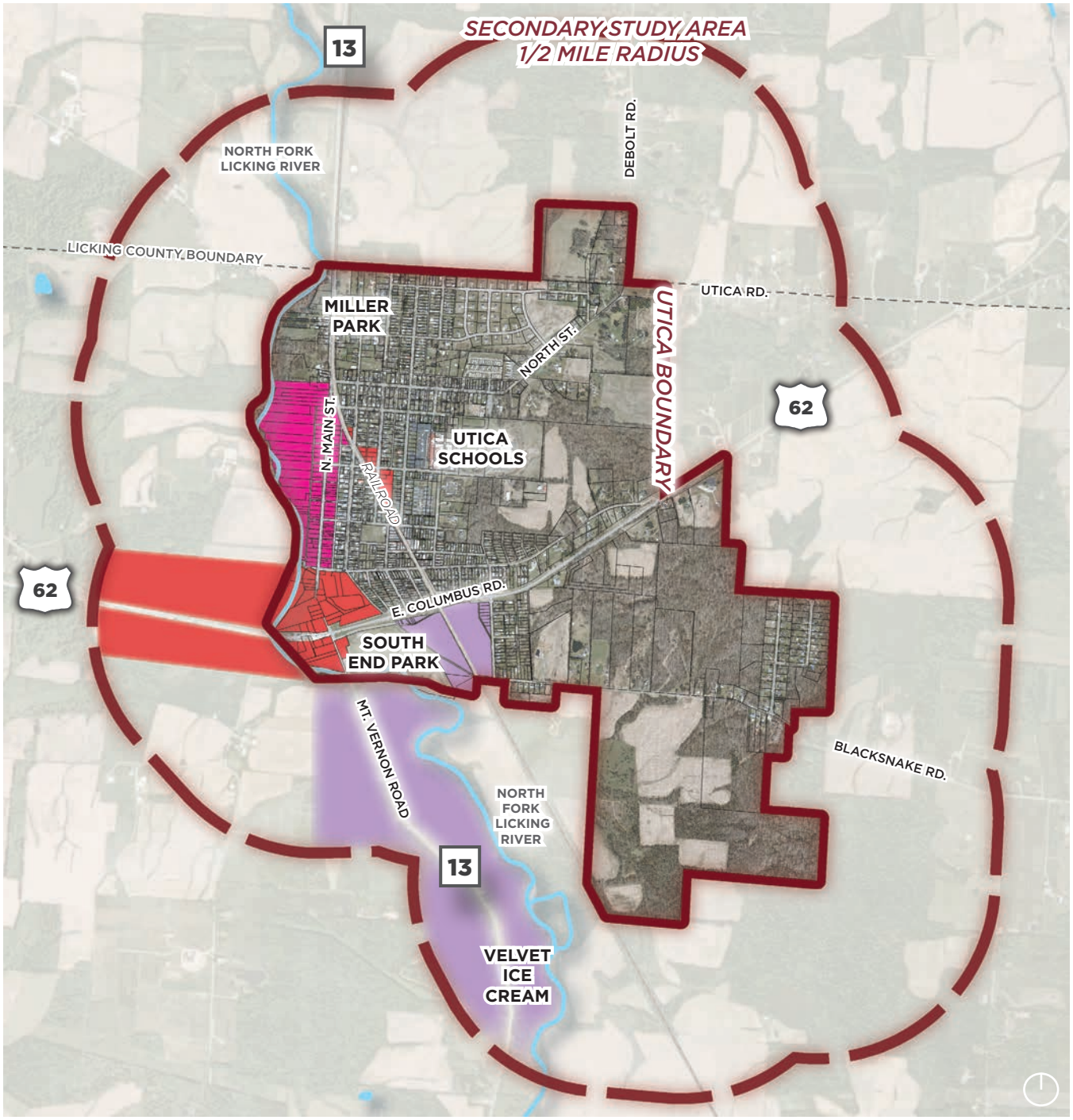
EXPERIENCE-BASED PLACES

Utica can develop immersive environments by creating distinctive spaces, such as the public plaza in the downtown revitalization area and the gateway in the image and brand section. These spaces can serve as focal points for community members to gather, work, shop, and enjoy entertainment. These areas are designed to move beyond traditional big-box retail settings and instead establish a vibrant hub where residents can access the shopping and entertainment options they seek. In addition to these spaces, special events like markets and festivals contribute to the village's commercial activity and economy by drawing in residents and visitors to shop and support local businesses such as Velvet Ice Cream or Watts Restaurant.



Watts Resturant, an experience-based place and locally owned business provides dining options and fits into the downtown environment.

FIGURE 4-7: Economic Land Use Districts



Economic Land Use Districts Map Key		
Innovation	Local Commercial	Downtown Mixed Use

U.S. 62 LOCAL COMMERCIAL

The U.S. Route 62 Local Commercial project aims to enhance the street's appeal by improving street conditions and introducing local commercial businesses. The objective is to create an inviting environment for residents, visitors, and passersby. The project will see the enhancement of street lining, landscaping barrier, and well-planned commercial developments and will revitalize the area and stimulate economic development. It will establish Utica's portion of Route 62 as a destination that embodies the unique character and spirit of Utica.

Issues & Opportunities

The project offers the opportunity to enhance Route 62 and transform an area adjacent by implementing local commercial businesses for visitors and residents. Challenges include acquiring the necessary parcels to bring the vision to life and working with state authorities to comply with the existing Route 62 infrastructure.

Project Elements

Streetscape (S.R. 62)

- Improved Street Lining, Landscaping Barrier

Local Commercial (South Side of S.R 62)

- Small Local Commercial Business designed to fit the village aesthetic with building set back within the parcel
- Parking will be in the front but obscured from the street view with landscaping

Implementation

For the U.S. Route 62 Local Commercial project to occur, the first step would be annexing the intended land into the village limits and rezoning the land for local commercial. The next step would be coordinating with a developer or potential business owner, followed by securing the necessary parcels through acquisition agreements and developing detailed construction documentation. Simultaneously, building public support will be crucial for the project's success. The Zoning and Planning Commission must also approve the project.

FIGURE 4-8: Improved Streetscape Rendering



FIGURE 4-9: Rendering of Local Commercial Addition

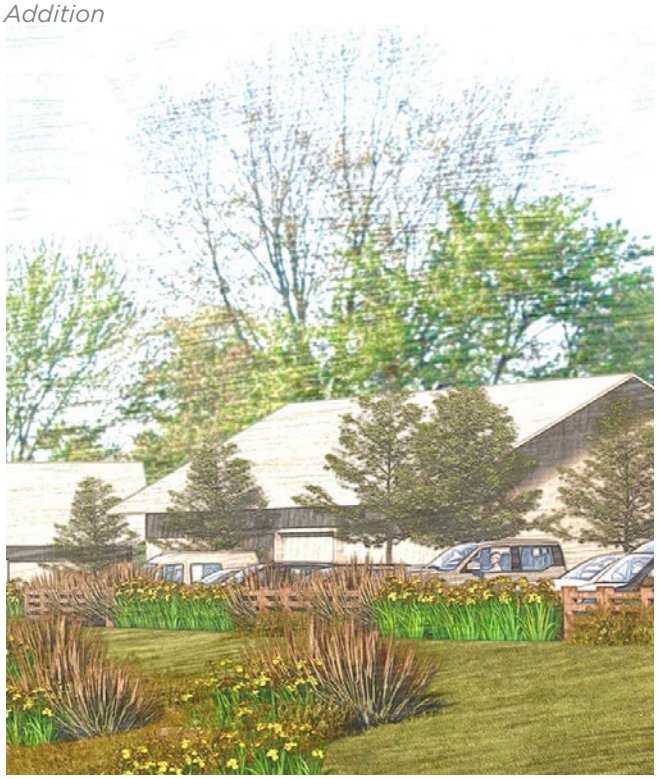


FIGURE 4-11: Existing conditions view on S.R. 62



FIGURE 4-10: Route 62 Streetscape & Local Commercial Rendering



KEY FINDINGS - HOUSING & ECONOMY

The following key findings from the existing conditions analysis (Chapter 2) and the community engagement (Chapter 3) aided in the development of the plan framework's Housing & Economy section.

Existing Conditions & Community Engagement

There is a desire for strategic growth over the long term, balancing **inward and outward growth through new development and preservation.**

There are **issues** surrounding the **amount of housing and housing options for all demographics.**

Respondents noted the **opportunity to grow and provide housing for the nearby Intel development.**

There is a **lack of commercial and medical services,** making **residents travel outside the village.**

There are **existing tourist attractions and local businesses** that **contribute to the local economy.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Vision** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The vision statements are further below and are accompanied by **Objectives** designed to help drive implementation.

HOUSING & ECONOMY

Vision Statement: A community that has a diverse housing stock that meets the needs of current and future residents at various incomes and stages of life, and a growing local economy that provides services to residents and visitors.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Create opportunities for new housing developments.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Developers
Identify existing utilities and potential to expand and provide village services (utilities).		• Village of Utica • Private Property Owners • Developers
Work to stabilize and enhance existing residences.		• Village of Utica • Private Property Owners • Developers
Maintain a high-quality character and ensure quality new residential construction.		• Village of Utica • Private Property Owners • Developers
Work to develop the US Route 62 commercial corridor vision.		• Grow Licking County

Mobility & Connectivity

OVERVIEW

Mobility within a village plays a major role in residents' and visitors' experiences. Mobility and connectivity networks not only provide access, but are a significant portion of the public realm within a city. Providing options for all modes of transportation - including automobiles, bicyclists, and pedestrians - and ensuring safe, reliable conditions, is key to enhancing mobility and creating a well-connected community.

As Utica accommodates new growth and development, strengthening connectivity and leveraging infrastructure investments will be critical. High-quality streetscape design, improved pedestrian connectivity and safety, and trail connectivity are important investments in a mobility network that balance function and character. The recommendations in this section support the Future Land Use framework, highlight necessary vehicular and pedestrian mobility improvements, and outline areas to focus on regarding non-motorized greenway connectivity within and around the village.

INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis were gathered for the mobility section during the public engagement process and through an analysis of existing conditions and trends. The key findings from this analysis directly informed vision and objectives within this section.

PUBLIC INPUT

Improving vehicular and pedestrian mobility and connectivity will be needed as the village grows, and is a present concern expressed by residents throughout the public engagement process. Key findings from the 2023 village community survey highlighted the need for improvements to existing sidewalks and a request for additional non-motorized connectivity across the village. When asked at an open house which community elements should be most important for the village to focus on in the coming years, attendees responded that trails and sidewalks were the second-priority element. During stakeholder interviews, respondents pointed out issues regarding U.S. Route 62 and State Route 13 intersection, lane configurations, signage, and wayfinding. The public engagement process also revealed how residents desire greater community connectivity to the North Fork Licking River and other natural surrounding areas.

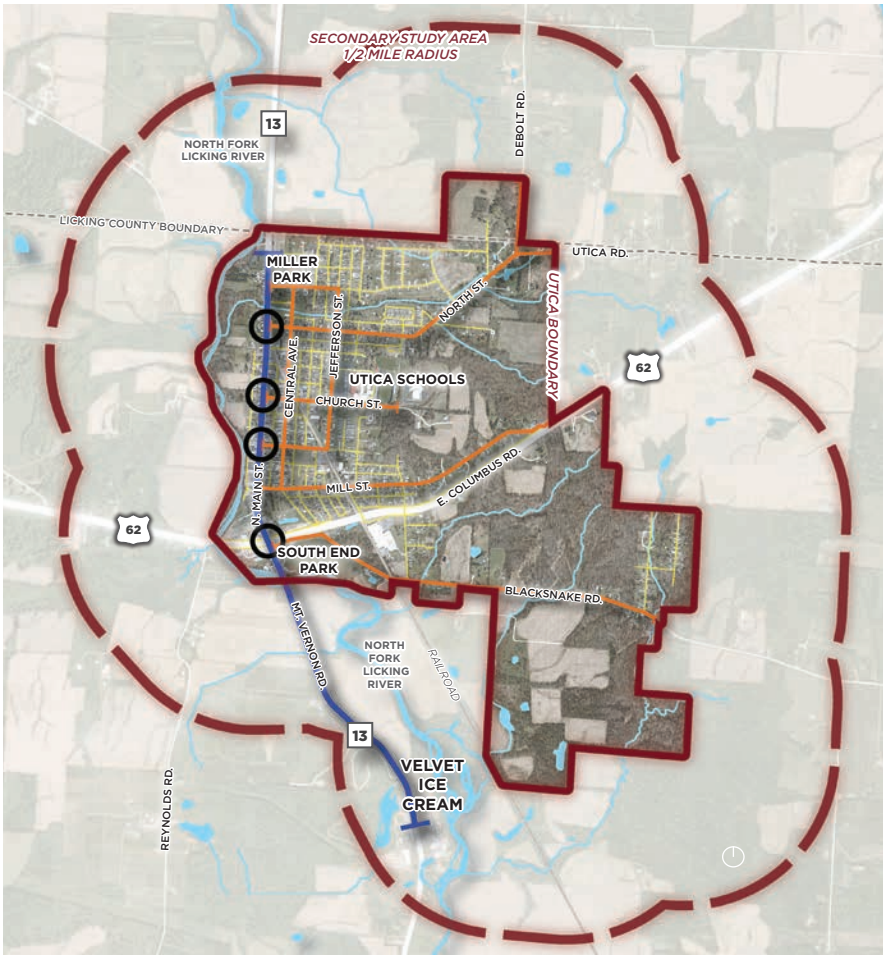
Key Mobility & Connectivity Elements To Focus On:

- Improved & Additional Sidewalks
- Non-Motorized Connection from the Downtown to Velvet Ice Cream
- Riverfront Connectivity
- Multi-Use Trails
- Improved Road Infrastructure

NON-MOTORIZED CONNECTIVITY

A well-connected and accessible transportation network should incorporate facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Within the village, there is a need to construct more sidewalks in residential neighborhoods. Similarly, existing sidewalks in the historic downtown area need to be improved due to weathering and wear and tear. Another aspect to consider for non-motorized connectivity is ensuring that pedestrians have safe access to commercial, institutional, and recreational facilities. The installation of sidewalks or multi-use paths in strategic locations will improve access for those in need, such as a multi-use path connecting the downtown district along State Route 13 to Velvet Ice Cream. As the village expands, it will be essential to ensure safe and accessible non-motorized connectivity for both residents and visitors.

The map on the right illustrates priority improvements and additions of non-motorized connections for the future of Utica. The village's first priority should be enhancing the existing sidewalk infrastructure and crosswalks along Main Street. The second priority should be connecting strategic service locations, amenities, and recreational areas within the village. The final element to complete non-motorized connectivity within the village is the addition of residential sidewalks where they are currently absent.



Future Land Use Districts Key			
○	Primary Intersections	▬	Primary Non-Motorized Connection
▬	Secondary Non-Motorized Connection	▬	Tertiary Non-Motorized Connection

To further develop the network, it may be necessary to reassess the planned phases and organize them according to the Plan's future vision. Additionally, there are some connections that still need to be included in the plan but may be worth evaluating for future planning, such as trails. Creating an updated non-motorized transportation plan for the future and prioritizing the phases is a significant project that the community can work on over the next 3-5 years.

GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY & GREEN NODES

A green network is a system of interconnected green spaces within a city that promotes movement between places and connects people with nature. The benefits of having a green network include a healthier lifestyle for residents, increased tourism rates, and potentially robust economic development. The positive effects of a well-established green network - such as Northeast Ohio's famous “Emerald Necklace” - have been seen in many cities.

Having a green network in a city also helps protect agricultural areas that are important to the community's character. The network also provides opportunities to create new natural areas and recreational corridors. The non-motorized network consists of sidewalks, bike paths, multi-purpose trails, and on-road shared paths and lanes, among other features.

An established greenway system connects people and nature between places. It promotes the movement of both people and nature and elevates the overall quality of life in the area. The greenway network in the study area was built around protecting and connecting open spaces, woodlands, and linking the area as a whole. Future development should integrate the identified greenway network to provide natural open space and community connections as an essential natural amenity.

The green spaces are open and safe for everyone to use. People can walk, bike, socialize, or simply enjoy the fresh air. The green network allows for the expansion of different land uses while protecting valued agricultural land. Instead of turning farmland into entirely new development, the spaces are left open for everyone to enjoy and learn more about the land.

Implementing a green network would improve the economy, environment, and quality of life of the community. It is an excellent way to connect people with nature and create a healthier, more sustainable community quality of life.

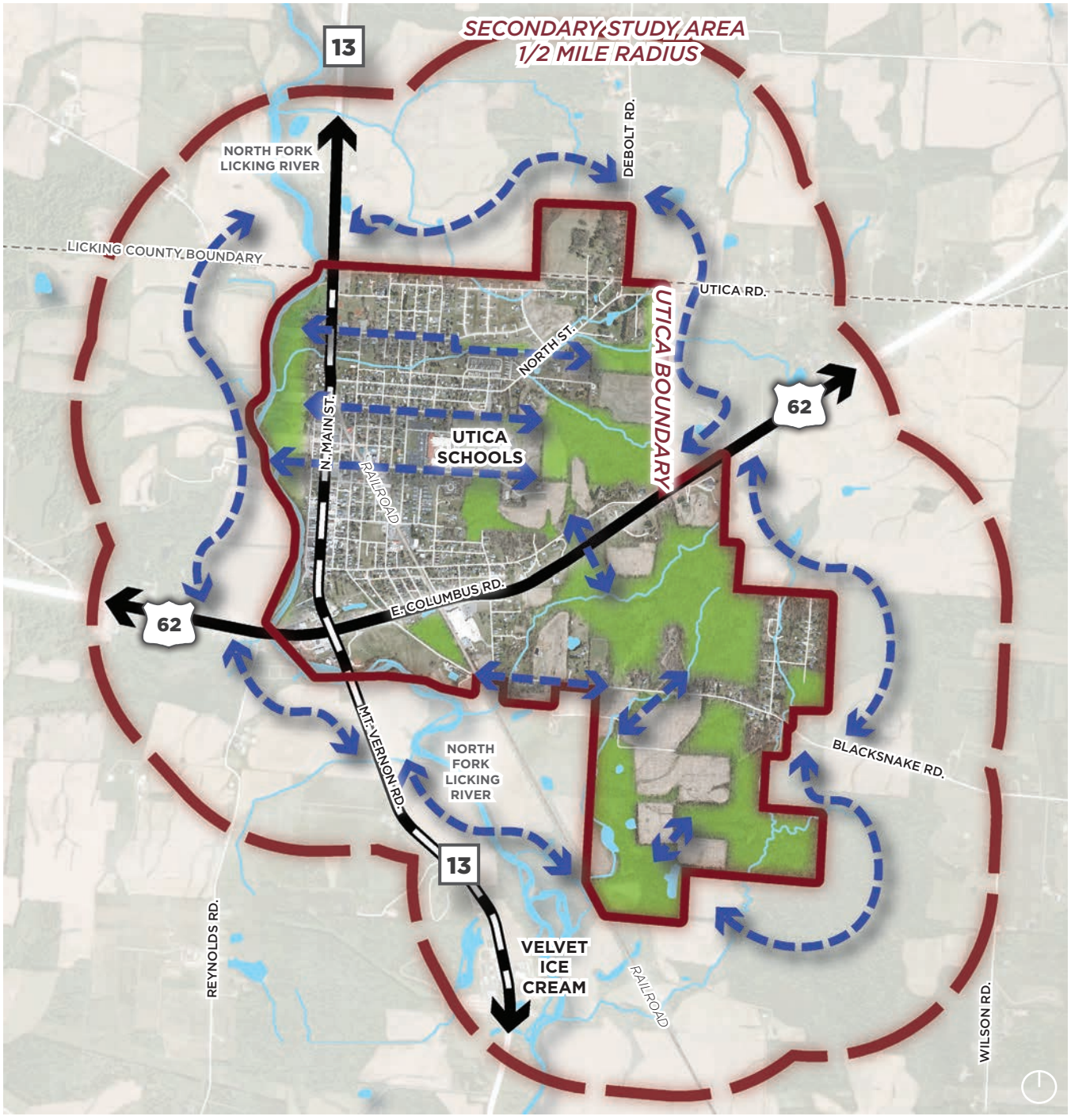


Multi-use paths are a great example of greenway connectivity, as they allow pedestrians and bicycles to move through an area.



Greenway connectivity can coexist and interact with the natural environment and assets like creeks and rivers.

FIGURE 4-13: Greenway Connectivity & Green Nodes Map



Future Land Use Districts Key			
⟷	Primary Roads	← →	Greenway Connectivity
▬	Pedestrian S.R. 13 Path *(Downtown to Velvet Ice Cream)*	▬	Green Nodes / Preserved Green Space

ROADWAYS

The Village of Utica is unique, as its environment is divided by both state and federal roadways: Ohio S.R.13 and U.S. Route 62. These routes provide transportation not only to residents and visitors, but also to people traveling regionally. This section highlights this unique aspect of Utica and how it should be considered as part of the future planning and development of the motorized transportation network. It also touches on planning for Complete Streets, and working with local and state officials to ensure that existing roadways are safe and updated to accommodate a growing village and surrounding counties.

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets are defined as roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a safe and efficient manner. A transportation network comprised of Complete Streets can be easily navigated by travelers of all ages and abilities and across all mobility modes including car and truck vehicles, transit, rail, bicycles, and foot traffic. The application of Complete Streets is dependent on the context of the community including the community's needs and function of the roadway. Therefore, appropriate design standards and engineering requirements must be balanced to meet users' needs within the context of the street. For example, a Complete Street in a rural area may not include sidewalks and curbs, but could feature a multi-use path on one side of the street to provide a meaningful transportation option in that setting. This means all "Complete Streets" will not look the same.

Features of Complete Streets may include:

- Sidewalks and Bike Lanes
- Safe & Frequent Crossing Opportunities with Pedestrian Signals
- Curb Extensions and Median Islands
- Marked Lane Configurations & Signage
- Tree Lawns (landscaping barriers)
- Stormwater Management



Character image for Complete Streets



Character image for Complete Streets

OHIO S.R. 13

To improve and maintain the infrastructure of the growing village area intersected by an Ohio roadway, the village could collaborate with state officials by developing a strategic partnership focused on sustainable growth. This would involve actively participating in regional planning sessions with state transportation and infrastructure departments to address the unique challenges posed by increased traffic, population growth, and economic development. The village could provide crucial local data, such as future development plans and community needs, to help shape state-level infrastructure projects that align with local goals. Joint efforts could include upgrading S.R. 13 to handle higher traffic volumes, enhancing pedestrian and cyclist safety, and integrating smart technologies for traffic management. Additionally, the village could work with state officials to secure funding for ongoing maintenance and future expansions, ensuring that the infrastructure supports both current and anticipated growth while preserving the quality of life for residents. Through ongoing collaboration, the village and state officials could create a resilient and well-maintained infrastructure that accommodates growth and fosters long-term prosperity.



Imagery example of the Ohio State Route 13 North sign.

U.S. ROUTE 62

The village can collaborate effectively with national transportation officials in coordinating the improvement and maintenance of U.S. Route 62 by establishing a clear and consistent communication channel. A partnership would involve engaging in regular meetings with federal and state transportation agencies to discuss the specific needs of the route, including safety upgrades, resurfacing, and infrastructure enhancements. The village could contribute valuable local insights, such as traffic patterns and community concerns, to ensure that the project aligns with both federal standards and local priorities. Additionally, the village could assist in securing funding through grants or joint initiatives, and help coordinate construction schedules to minimize disruption to residents and businesses. By fostering a collaborative relationship, the village and U.S. officials could ensure that the route remains a vital and well-maintained part of the transportation network, benefiting both local and national interests.



Imagery example of the U.S. Route 62 East sign.

KEY FINDINGS - MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

The following key findings from the existing conditions analysis (Chapter 2) and the community engagement (Chapter 3) aided in the development of the plan framework's Mobility & Infrastructure section.

Existing Conditions & Community Engagement

There is a need to **develop community connectivity and walkability throughout the village.**

There are **issues** surrounding the **existing sidewalk infrastructure and improvements are needed.**

There is a need for a **cohesive village brand** that is **displayed at key gateways and on wayfinding signs.**

Community members pointed out the **opportunity to create connectivity** between the **downtown and village amenities and tourist attractions.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Vision** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The vision statements are further below and are accompanied by **Objectives** designed to help drive implementation.

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Vision Statement: A community that embraces and supports all modes of transportation, thoughtfully designed to complement the rural environment and enhance the overall quality of life for current and future residents and visitors.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Create new non-motorized connections in the village.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Licking County • Ohio Department of Transportation • Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Evaluate and enhance existing roadways.		• Ohio Department of Transportation • Licking County
Improve key gateways and intersections.		• Ohio Department of Transportation • Licking County
Promote the historical significance of the Underground Railroad through cultural peacemaking and education opportunities. (e.g trails and memorials)		• Ohio History Connection • National Park Service • Ohio Department of Transportation

Parks & Recreation

OVERVIEW

Access to parks and open spaces can improve people's mental and physical health, create spaces for community gathering, and help make a community a desirable place to live, work and visit. Organizations such as Smart Growth America have conducted research showing that parks and open spaces positively affect communities by increasing property values and revenue for local businesses.

Currently, Utica residents have access to two parks - Miller Park and South End Park - which include recreational fields, playgrounds, and a basketball court. However, there is opportunity to expand and improve the park system by updating existing spaces and increasing connectivity through greenways and trails. Similarly, there is the potential to create new small "pocket" park spaces, and a future community center that is in combination with the library and other programing. The following section outlines how the Village of Utica can maintain its existing parks and also provides recommended initiatives for the village's future parks and recreation system.

INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis on Parks & Recreation were gathered through the public engagement process and an assessment of existing conditions and current trends. The key findings from this analysis directly informed the Plan vision and objectives.

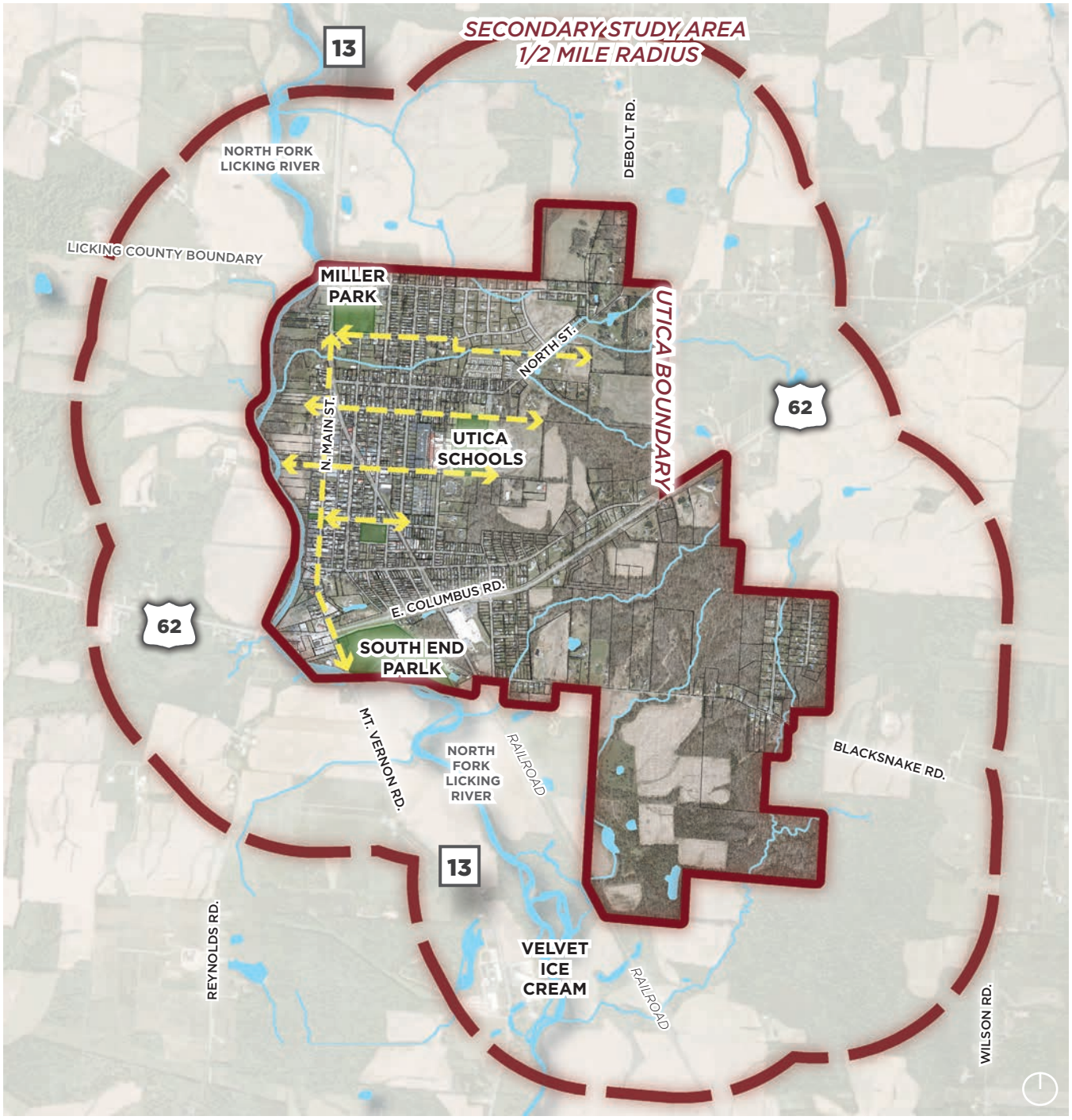
PUBLIC INPUT

In the 2023 survey and the comprehensive plan engagement process, an overwhelming number of community members and residents called attention to the need for more indoor and outdoor recreational spaces. Respondents noted the need for an updated library or a future community center that could support youth and senior programming. During stakeholder interviews, various attendees desired to create a greater connection with the North Fork Licking River for recreational activities and trail connections. Public input also highlighted the existing parks as a significant asset to the community, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing their maintenance and keeping them up to date as the village grows. The following are the top five programming elements desired by the community:

- Library/Community Center
- Youth & Senior Programming
- Non-Motorized Connectivity / Multi-Use Trails
- River Access & Connectivity
- Public Space for Village Events

FIGURE 4-14: Parks & Recreation Map

The map below highlights existing park space and public areas, along with key connectivity paths between these areas. As the village grows, it will be important to recognize these spaces along with the primary connection routes. This map should be used as a tool when making decisions regarding the village's future programming or additions to the parks and recreation system.



Future Land Use Districts Key	
Parks & Open/Public Space	Parks & Recreation Primary Connection Routes

MAINTAINING PARKS

Existing parks within the village, such as Miller Park and South End Park, should be prioritized for regular maintenance and periodic assessment to ensure they remain vibrant, safe, and enjoyable spaces for the community. These parks serve as essential hubs for recreation, social interaction, and community events, making their upkeep crucial to the village's overall quality of life. Routine inspections should be conducted to identify any immediate maintenance needs, such as repairing playground equipment, resurfacing walking paths, or addressing landscaping issues. Additionally, the village should establish a long-term plan for potential upgrades, taking into account changing community needs, technological advancements, and environmental sustainability. This proactive approach not only preserves the parks' existing value but also enhances their appeal, ensuring they continue to meet the evolving demands of the community for years to come.



Miller Park, an asset within the Village of Utica, should be maintained and observed for potential future updates.

FUTURE VISION: PARKS

The Village of Utica might consider developing pocket parks as an innovative way to create more recreational spaces throughout the community without requiring large parcels of land. These small, strategically placed parks can transform underutilized areas into vibrant green spaces that enhance the village's aesthetic appeal and offer residents convenient spots for relaxation and socialization. Pocket parks can also be a strong selling point for potential new residents, showcasing the village's commitment to providing accessible, community-oriented spaces while maintaining a compact, efficient use of land. By integrating these parks into the village's landscape, Utica can boost its attractiveness and improve the quality of life for its residents.



Pocket parks are an innovative way to create more recreational spaces throughout a community and boost environmental biodiversity.

FUTURE VISION: COMMUNITY CENTER

Utica residents have expressed a strong desire for a community center that would serve as a hub for diverse programming, including recreational activities, a potential new library, and workspaces. To move forward with this vision, the next steps would involve conducting a thorough analysis to determine the specific programming needs and the appropriate building size to accommodate those functions. Following this, a location analysis should be performed to identify the most suitable site for the community center within the village. Finally, research and advocacy efforts should focus on identifying and securing funding options, such as grants, to bring this community center from concept to reality, ensuring it meets the needs and aspirations of Utica's residents and projected future growth.

The following is a general list to consider when thinking about potential programming elements that could be combined within one community center. For a village like Utica, it will be important to maximize the use of the future community center space and support people of all ages.

PROGRAMMING IDEAS

Intergenerational Programs
- Mentorship
- Tutoring
- Lecture Series

Education & Skills
- Library & Work Stations
- STEM Workshops
- Life Skills Workshops

Health & Wellness
- Fitness & Activities for all ages
- Health Workshops
- Walking Club

Social & Recreational
- Game Nights
- Movie Nights
- Outdoor Activities



A community center can provide a location for various programming year round and serve residents of all ages.



Community center planning requires determining needed building space and desired programming, and researching funding opportunities.

KEY FINDINGS - PARKS & RECREATION

The following key findings from the existing conditions analysis (Chapter 2) and the community engagement (Chapter 3) aided in the development of the plan framework's Parks & Recreation section.

Existing Conditions & Community Engagement

There is a need to **develop community connectivity and walkability throughout the village.**

Residents would like **more indoor and outdoor recreation spaces** to accommodate youth and senior programming.

There is a desire by the community to **connect with the riverfront through preservation, recreation, and new development.**

Community members **highlighted the lack of programming for youth**, beyond school and sports.

The existing parks need to be **monitored for safety, maintenance, and potential future improvements.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Vision** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The vision statements are further below and are accompanied by **Objectives** designed to help drive implementation.

PARKS & RECREATION

Vision Statement: A well-maintaned park system that serves current and future residents, promotes healthy lifestyles, protects and celebrates natural resources, and complements future economic development activities.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Create a new community center with library, integrated health care clinic, and senior center in the downtown core.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Licking County • Private Health Care • State Library of Ohio
Create a signature park space in the downtown to promote entertainment and programming.		• Ohio Department of Natural Resources • National Parks Service • Project for Public Spaces
Ensure new development efforts plan for and incorporate new park space.		• Developers • Private Property Owners
Plan for new open space and greenway areas as part of new development, and connect the areas to create a greenway network.		• Developers • Private Property Owners
Monitor existing parks for maintenance and potential future improvements and updates.		• Village Services • National Parks Service

Image & Brand

OVERVIEW

A community's identity reflects its values and expresses its overall impression on residents and visitors - its culture and "feel." How well-maintained is it? Does it offer places to publicly gather? Do its streets and neighborhoods reflect investment? Can residents and visitors easily identify the community's brand on signage? The Village of Utica's community identity serves as a promise to residents and visitors to deliver the long-term future vision defined throughout this Plan.

Community identity is more than a logo or banner: it leverages the best qualities of a place to tell a compelling story to targeted audiences and consistently delivers on its brand promises. This identity can be cultivated through branding, marketing, and the physical realm, including signage, streetscape design, or public spaces. The following chapter includes insights and analysis on Utica's current identity. It supports recommendations for supporting that image through branding and physical improvements. These deliberate and targeted actions can help unite Utica in a shared vision for its future while securing a self-defined perception and sense of place.

INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis on community identity were gathered through the public engagement process and an assessment of existing conditions, market trends, and best practices. The key findings from this analysis directly informed the visions and objectives.

PUBLIC INPUT

In both the public stakeholder meeting and public open houses, there were concerns about the existing village branding, specifically regarding signage and the need for more consistency across the village. Attendees expressed the need for a more unified branding approach, as different colors and fonts have been used over time. Most engagement interviewees and attendees requested a prioritization of consistent village image and branding. Similarly, community members highlighted the opportunity for the village to curate a new identity that honors the village's historic roots while moving toward the future. The following are key image and branding elements mentioned during the engagement process:

- Lack of cohesive village branding
- Lack of wayfinding throughout the village
- Lack of consistent imagery and branding

IDENTITY TRENDS

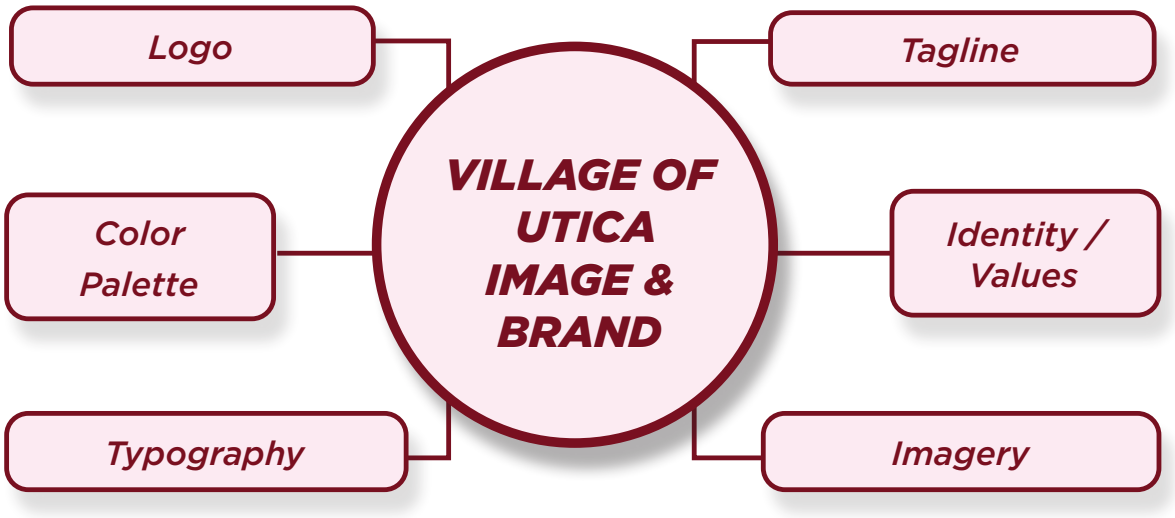
Across the nation, communities are increasingly adopting branding initiatives as a strategic approach to cultivating a unique identity and deepen the sense of pride among their residents. By crafting distinctive logos, slogans, and visual themes that encapsulate the essence of their local culture, history, and values, these communities are creating a strong and memorable image that resonates both within and beyond their borders. This process of branding not only distinguishes them from neighboring areas but also fosters a deep sense of belonging among residents, as they see their heritage and communal spirit reflected in a cohesive and recognizable brand. Moreover, a well-executed branding campaign can be a powerful tool for economic development, attracting tourists, new residents, and businesses drawn to the village's distinct character and charm. As these efforts take root, they often lead to enhanced community pride and a stronger collective identity, reinforcing the emotional and cultural bonds that make these small communities thrive.



Currently, the village displays a variety of color palettes and sign styles. As the village grows, it should prioritize establishing a consistent standard.

IMAGE & BRAND LAUNCH TOOL BOX

The following image and brand toolbox should be seen as a resource for village officials and community residents who wish to contribute to shaping the future image and brand of the village. Each element around the circle should be curated and considered in conjunction with the surrounding elements. Once an element is created, it should be recorded and consistently used when the village creates any marketing, signage, or general informational posts about the village.



PHYSICAL REALM

While some recommendations of this Plan are targeted to specific signature places in Utica, such as the Main St. Plaza, the following physical realm elements should also be applied villagewide.

STREETSCAPE

Utica's streets make up a significant portion of its public realm. Therefore, their quality, upkeep, and appearance impact the perception of the village as a whole and the viability of the businesses and residences that inhabit a particular street. There are many elements that can be incorporated into an attractive and functional streetscape. This includes physical aspects like materials, landscaping, signage, street "furniture" (benches, trash receptacles, etc.), sidewalks, and stormwater infrastructure, as well as intangible elements such as safety, comfort, and sustainability.

SIGNAGE

Signage can influence the visual aesthetics of a community and can also have an impact on wayfinding and the success of local businesses. Signs that are too large, have overwhelming or unattractive color or materials, or do not reflect the surrounding context may detract from the public realm. For businesses, signage can direct customers, reinforce a company's brand, improve customer experience, and communicate information. According to the Sign Research Foundation, 34% of North American shoppers associate sign quality with store and product quality. Therefore, signs should support strong design while also being easily readable for all passersby (automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, etc.).

Similar to how a business would have signage to establish an identity and visual aesthetic, the village might also consider incorporating village branding throughout the village signage. As Utica continues to grow, properly regulating and locating signage so it positively supports the aesthetics and wayfinding of the community will be

FIGURE 4-15: Village Streetlight Banner Rendering



Utica can consider adding consistent street signage, such as a banner on a street light that is consistent with the village's color palette, typology, and logo.

especially important along major commercial corridors and in the downtown district.

Common elements that greatly impact signage aesthetics include location, scale, materials, color, lighting, and signage type, such as whether a sign is mounded or sits on pole.

Throughout the village, signage in Utica should continue to:

- Reflect the desired identity and image of Utica
- Attract future residents, visitors, and businesses to Utica
- Guide visitors to destinations within Utica
- Adhere to the Utica branding colors, typology, and logo

GATEWAYS

Primary gateways are the entryways into a community and act as a first impression, signifying to travelers that they have arrived at a destination. Currently, the village of Utica does not have a signature gateway. The following section outlines a place and method for implementing a signature entry gateway on U.S. Route 62. Welcoming travelets into the village provides a sense of location awareness for visitors and pride for community members. In the future, Utica should consider not only adding village gateway signage as outlined, but also adding another signature gateway at the east side of U.S. Route 62 or the north side of the village on S.R. 13. Creating recognizable and cohesive branding at all gateways can help establish a sense of place and reinforce the community's vision for the future.

FIGURE 4-16: Village Signature Gateway Sign Rendering



A village signature gateway can incorporate rural and modern elements, highlight the village's identity, and be visible to both vehicles and pedestrians.

VILLAGE GATEWAY PROJECT

The Village Gateway Project at the intersection of U.S. Route 62 and Ohio S.R.13 aims to transform the area into a welcoming and visually appealing entrance that enhances the overall streetscape for both pedestrians and vehicles. By installing streetlight banners and a signature gateway sign, the project will not only improve visibility and aesthetics but also reinforce the village's branding and imagery. This gateway will serve as a prominent marker, signaling to residents and visitors alike that they have entered the village. The design will create a more enjoyable and cohesive space while ensuring that the intersection remains functional and safe.

Issues & Opportunities

The Village Gateway Project involves navigating challenges, like coordinating with local and state authorities for streetscape approvals, while also presenting the opportunity to engage the community in creating cohesive imagery and branding. By involving the public, the project can develop a design that reflects the village's identity, ensuring both regulatory compliance and community pride in the final outcome.

Project Elements

Streetscape (U.S. Route 62 & Ohio S.R. 13 Intersection)

- Complete Streets streetscape elements (traffic and crosswalk & pedestrian signals, lighting, street line painting, curb and tree lawn additions, landscaping)

Gateway & Signage

- Implementation of street light banners
- Implementation of gateway signage & landscaping

Implementation

For the Village Gateway Project to succeed, several preliminary steps are essential. First, the village must implement its image and brand launch tool kit, establishing consistent brand elements like color, typography, and a logo that can be integrated into the gateway signage. Additionally, the village will need to collaborate with state and local authorities to secure approvals for the streetscape improvements. Public support and funding will also be crucial to ensure the project's feasibility and community alignment.

FIGURE 4-17: Village Gateway Project Plan View

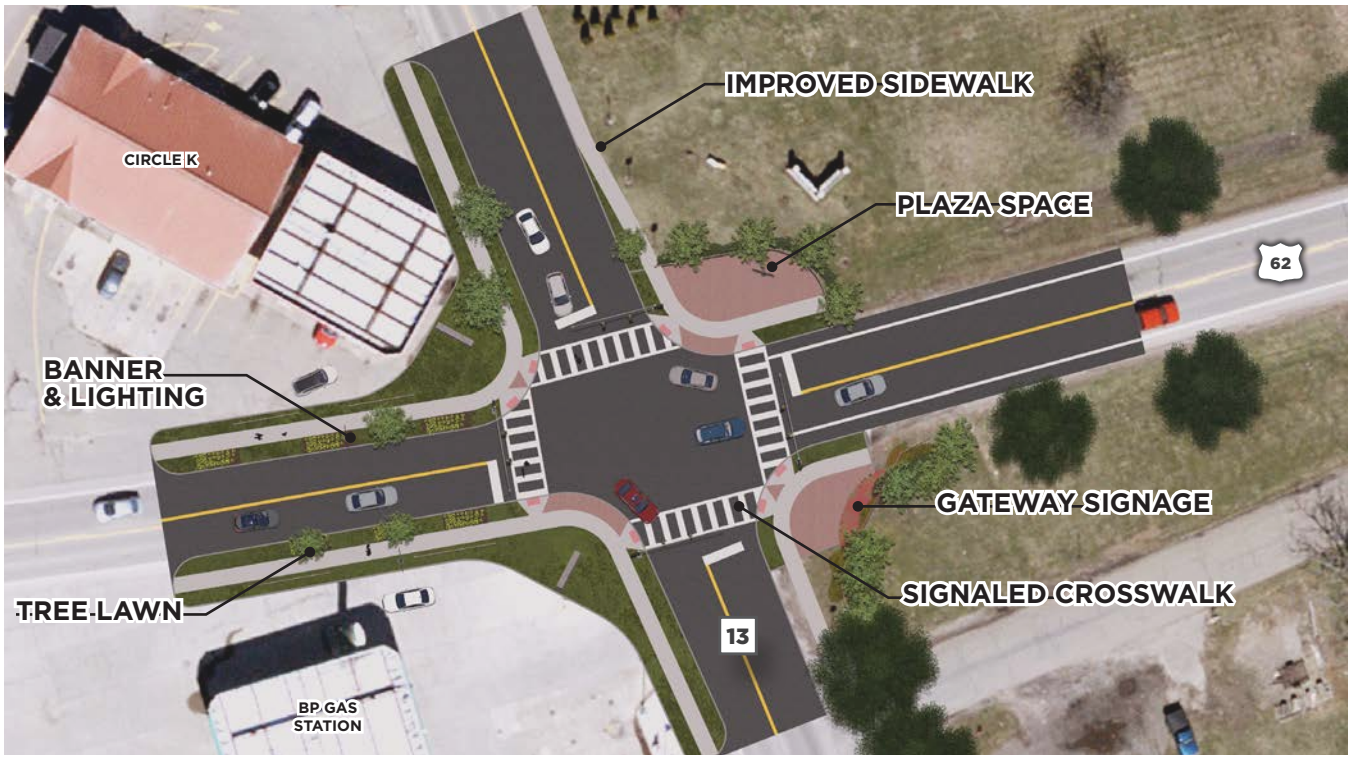


FIGURE 4-19: Existing conditions view on U.S. Route 62



FIGURE 4-18: Village Gateway priority project rendering view on U.S. Route 62



KEY FINDINGS - IMAGE & BRAND

The following key findings from the existing conditions analysis (Chapter 2) and the community engagement (Chapter 3) aided in the development of the plan framework's Image & Brand section.

Existing Conditions & Community Engagement

There is a need to **develop community connectivity and walkability throughout the village.**

Residents pointed out the **variety of village sign aesthetics and colors throughout the village**.

There is a desire by the community to **connect with the riverfront through preservation, recreation, and new development.**

Community members **highlighted the importance of acknowledging the village's historical roots.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Vision** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The vision statements are further below and are accompanied by **Objectives** designed to help drive implementation.

IMAGE & BRAND

Vision Statement: A well-defined and easily recognizable brand, evident in various forms throughout the area, which showcases the Village's rich history and values while instilling a sense of pride and identity among residents and visitors.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Create a unique image and brand standard for the village.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Village Planning & Council
Develop a marketing and communications strategy.		• Village Planning & Council
Apply the village brand to signage, wayfinding, and gateways.		• Private Businesses • Ohio Department of Transportation


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Recommendations Matrix



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Recommendations Matrix

FUTURE LAND USE

Vision Statement: A vibrant downtown that serves as an entertainment and cultural hub of the community, integrates and celebrates the local history and natural environments, and supports a growing local economy.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Accommodate growth outside of the city limits and protect and maintain a rural character and view sheds.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Licking County • Developers • Private Property Owners
Encourage the development of a wide range of housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents.		• GROW Licking County • Licking County
Protect and promote the natural assets in the community such as the North Fork Licking River.		• Licking County Soil & Water • Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Plan for new commercial uses that support the needs of current and future residents.		• GROW Licking County • Private Property Owners
Plan new areas for job creation and income generating uses.		• GROW Licking County • Licking County • Jobs of Ohio

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Vision Statement: A vibrant downtown that serves as an entertainment and cultural hub of the community, integrates and celebrates the local history and natural environments, and supports a growing local economy.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Promote new businesses and infill development in the downtown.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• GROW Licking County • Private Developers • Private Property Owners
Support facade improvements through programs and policies.		• Heritage Ohio • Licking County CDBG
Connect and integrate the downtown with the North Fork Licking River.		• Private Property Owners • Clean Ohio
Improve key gateways into and out of the downtown.		• Ohio Department of Transportation
Create new high quality public spaces.		• Private Developers • Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Explore and identify village parking within the downtown for visitors and residents. (Old firehouse building and the lot next to Town Hall)		• Village of Utica • Private Property Owners

HOUSING & ECONOMY

Vision Statement: A community that has a diverse housing stock that meets the needs of current and future residents at various incomes and stages of life, and a growing local economy that provides services to residents and visitors.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Create opportunities for new housing developments.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Developers
Balance the expansion of local utilities with future growth and create cost sharing measures with private developers.		• Village of Utica • Private Property Owners • Developers
Work to stabilize and enhance existing residences.		• Village of Utica • Private Property Owners • Developers
Maintain a high-quality character and ensure quality new residential construction.		• Village of Utica • Private Property Owners • Developers
Develop U.S Route 62 corridor with new commercial uses.		• Grow Licking County

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Vision Statement: A community that embraces and supports all modes of transportation, thoughtfully designed to complement the rural environment and enhance the overall quality of life for current and future residents and visitors.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Create new non-motorized connections in the village.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Licking County • Ohio Department of Transportation • Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Evaluate and enhance existing roadways.		• Ohio Department of Transportation • Licking County
Improve key gateways and intersections.		• Ohio Department of Transportation • Licking County
Promote the historical significance of the Underground Railroad through cultural peacemaking and education opportunities. (e.g trails and memorials)		• Ohio History Connection • National Park Service • Ohio Department of Transportation

PARKS & RECREATION

Vision Statement: A well-maintaned park system that serves current and future residents, promotes healthy lifestyles, protects and celebrates natural resources, and complements future economic development activities.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Create a new community center with library, integrated health care clinic, and senior center in the downtown core.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Licking County • Private Health Care • State Library of Ohio
Create a signature park space in the downtown to promote entertainment and programming.		• Ohio Department of Natural Resources • National Parks Service • Project for Public Spaces
Ensure new development efforts plan for and incorporate new park space.		• Developers • Private Property Owners
Plan for new open space and greenway areas as part of new development, and connect the areas to create a greenway network.		• Developers • Private Property Owners
Monitor existing parks for maintenance and potential future improvements and updates.		• Village Services • National Parks Service

IMAGE & BRAND

Vision Statement: A well-defined and easily recognizable brand, evident in various forms throughout the area, which showcases the Village's rich history and values while instilling a sense of pride and identity among residents and visitors.

Objective	Time Frame	Project Partners
Create a unique image and brand standard for the village.	No specific time frame was given for achieving these objectives, as the objectives should be simultaneously worked on and acted upon by the village until completed.	• Village Planning & Council
Develop a marketing and communications strategy.		• Village Planning & Council
Apply the village brand to signage, wayfinding, and gateways.		• Private Businesses • Ohio Department of Transportation

2024

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VILLAGE OF UTICA