

This Update is Dedicated to the Memory of:

Thomas Heine
February 11, 1940 - March 5, 2002

Whose Foresight and Dedication
Produced the 1998 Comprehensive Plan

Knox County Comprehensive Plan

Update - Adopted January 2006

SECOND PRINTING

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***This Update Was Made Possible
By Financial Support Provided by***

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This Update of the Knox County Comprehensive Plan (1998) affirms and sustains the local desire for managing growth and development in Knox County. This Update is the product of dedicated efforts by residents, volunteers, community leaders and planners who assisted the Knox County Regional Planning Commission (RPC). Participants in this process shared the belief that logical, well-thought-out community planning is vital for shaping the future of Knox County.

The 1998 Plan was spearheaded by the Knox County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber was among the first local organizations to appreciate the facts that pressures for development were increasing and that change might not occur in desirable ways without local planning. It was noted in 1998 that while the population of Knox County had increased by 16,500 in the previous 50 years, the projected rate of growth would add that number in less than 25 years. Thus, the foundation of the 1998 Plan was drawing attention to impending growth, the resulting planning issues and the need for action on many levels.

While some of the initiatives and recommendations for action in the 1998 Plan have not been fully achieved, progress is evident on many fronts. Chief among these is the fact that the RPC is now a much more effective and relevant voice in local planning. Compelling evidence of this is found in the fact that this Update was prepared by the staff and members of the RPC, whereas the 1998 plan was not.

The 1998 Plan served as a beginning, a launching pad toward higher levels of planning. Knox County's leaders and residents still have high expectations for the future, and a desire to make good choices about development that are consistent with a carefully crafted vision of the future.

Purpose of the Knox County Comprehensive Plan

The 1998 Knox County Comprehensive Plan had four fundamental purposes, which remain appropriate for today:

1. **To develop a plan that will help direct future development and redevelopment in a way that will enhance the physical, social, and economic environment of Knox County;**
2. **To serve as the beginning of an ongoing planning process that defines a long-term community vision;**
3. **To view the completion of this Comprehensive Plan as the beginning of dedicated implementation efforts; and**
4. **To define both countywide and local planning perspectives.**

Comprehensive Plan Update: Roots and Process

This Update has roots in other planning efforts undertaken between publication of the 1998 Plan and 2005. The fact that other focused planning efforts took place is a positive statement of our community's resolve to dig deeper into complex issues. These efforts are described in detail in Chapter 5, and include a Farmland Preservation Task Force Report (2000), a Cost of Community Services Study (2003), and a Comprehensive Study of the Kokosing River Watershed (2004).

As with the 1998 Plan, the RPC recognized the importance of maintaining a high level of community participation throughout the updating process. Perhaps even more than during the "Focus 2100" process that resulted in the 1998 Plan, the process that produced this Update provided many and varied opportunities for citizens to participate, to contribute and to build consensus. As also described throughout Chapter 5, various efforts to engage local community leaders and residents took place to assess their attitudes toward and perceptions of planning issues. These efforts began with a public workshop in January 2004 and concluded with a series of workshops in the winter and early spring of 2005.

What Has Been Gained With Completion of This Update?

A similar question was asked when the 1998 Plan was completed, and it remains a highly relevant question. Although individuals might note a wide array of possible attainments, in general terms the following are viewed as most important:

- Growth and development occurring since the 1998 Plan have been incorporated in the Update. This includes data from the 2000 Census. This provides a more substantial context for making decisions and affirms earlier projections of the pace of change in Knox County.
- More and more reliable geographic data were available and were incorporated in the Update. In 1998, the availability of data and computer software were severely limited compared with 2005. Now, the Knox County Regional Planning Commission (and other county offices) is equipped with much richer data and capabilities in terms of both quality and quantity. County offices are also working well together to share data.
- Transportation issues have been restudied and updated. The fundamental concepts expressed in the 1998 Plan have been validated, but some modifications are proposed.
- Important perspectives on environmental issues have been sharpened. Beyond simply stating the need to protect and preserve groundwater resources and floodplains from inappropriate use and development, the concept of "green infrastructure" has meaning among local officials.

Chapter 2

Challenges

An increasing population characterizes the counties in central Ohio and this increasing population continually adds to the human impact on every aspect of the built and unbuilt environment. Adjusted figures from the 2000 Census showed Knox County with a population of 55,503, a 14.8 percent increase over 1990. Current forecasts estimate a population of 58,357 in 2005, and at least 61,604 by 2010. In simple terms, over 6,100 additional residents are expected in Knox County by the time this Update is five years old.

This fundamental reality continues to generate significant challenges, which the 1998 Plan characterized as likely to remain long-term and relevant for "...years from now."

What Challenges Face Knox County?

- Four trends and circumstances cited in the 1998 Plan still foster poorly planned or unplanned development. These are:
 - Knox County's high quality of life continues to attract new residents.
 - Demand for large rural lots in a country setting remains strong.
 - Employment opportunities in the Columbus metropolitan area have moved closer to Knox County, e.g. Easton and Polaris. This encourages commuting from Knox County to capture those opportunities.
 - The number of people making commutes to work of over 40 minutes has risen.
- Keeping proper focus on key planning principles aimed at maintaining and enhancing livable social and natural environments, while balancing growth and expanding economic opportunities.
- Addressing issues related to an increasing population in positive ways and with long-term vision requires sustained and coordinated planning. Patterns of slow growth and slow change that passed unnoticed have been replaced with increasing demand for residential and commercial development and with more rapid change in the community. This trend can, in turn, provoke polarized, contentious and controversial attitudes toward any growth. This is not likely to lessen in the near future.
- Maintaining Knox County's cherished historic, cultural and rural atmosphere will be more difficult, but not impossible. Deliberate steps to maintain and enhance critical elements of the local quality of life will require public awareness, dedication and perseverance. Such steps should include periodic updating of the Comprehensive Plan to implement new efforts to enhance and preserve historic and cultural resources and the rural atmosphere needed to keep Knox County at the forefront of livability.
- Maintaining the RPC as an effective organization able to focus on long-term countywide planning, while remaining flexible enough to meet current issues creatively.

Chapter 3

Community Setting

Considerable effort was placed on gathering pertinent information to describe Knox County effectively in this Update. This information was organized in the following areas:

- Historic Roots of Knox County
- Knox County Communities and Background
- Social Infrastructure
- Natural Environment
- Population Characteristics
- Economic Characteristics
- Housing Characteristics
- Agricultural Characteristics
- Cultural Characteristics
- Existing Land Use
- Quality of Life Indicators
- Community Facilities
- Transportation Characteristics
- Regional Development

Historic Roots of Knox County

Originally, the area known as Knox County was home to many Native Americans, including the Adena Tribes who were its first farmers. The rich lands and rivers provided the Tribes with food and shelter for more than 1,000 years. The area was also well known to fur trappers and pioneers who traversed it in the mid- to late-1700's. The first settler on record in Knox County was Andrew Craig who reportedly lived in a log cabin near the juncture of Center Run and Kokosing River "before 1801." The Knox County we know today was organized in 1808 and named after Henry Knox, a general in the American Revolution and the Secretary of War during George Washington's administration.

Agriculture has played a major role in the history of Knox County and the rich farmlands still make agriculture the primary business in Knox County. Mineral resources of Knox County have also been an important factor in local development, especially natural gas. The "gas and glass boom" of the early 1900's was an early impetus for industrial development.

Knox County Communities and Background

Knox County is organized into political subdivisions, including townships, villages, and a city. There are 22 townships and seven villages (Centerburg, Danville, Fredericktown, Gambier, Gann, Martinsburg, and Utica, which is only partially in Knox County). The only city is Mount Vernon.

Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon is located in central Knox County and is the County Seat. Mount Vernon is an attractive community with a diverse topography and architecture. In recognition of its high quality of life, Mount Vernon was named an “All-American City” in 1965 by *Look Magazine* and the National Municipal League. In 1990, Mount Vernon was featured on the cover of *Ohio Magazine* and praised for its elegant charm. In 1994, it was named Ohio’s “Most Livable Community.”

The first pioneer to view what is now Mount Vernon was John Stilley. As a captive of Native Americans, Stilley traversed Owl Creek (Kokosing River) from its mouth upward in June 1779. Established in 1805 by Joseph Walker, Thomas B. Patterson, and Benjamin Butler, the settlement of Mount Vernon was named after George Washington’s homestead. Early inhabitants were from Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The original plat of Mount Vernon included a town square as a hub of commerce and community activity. In the center of the square, a monument erected in 1877 honors Knox County residents who died in the Civil War to preserve the Union.

Major historical attributes of Mount Vernon include the following:

- Daniel Decatur Emmett (born October 29, 1815), Mount Vernon’s most famous son, was the author and composer of “Dixie,” the beloved song of the south during the Civil War and one of the nation’s favorite songs. He also wrote the children’s classic “Old Dan Tucker.”
- The Woodward Opera House (circa 1851) in downtown Mount Vernon is one of the oldest opera houses in the United States. In addition to close ties to Daniel Emmett, it is considered the most historically significant pre-Civil War theater in America.
- The residential area surrounding the town square contains impressive examples of nineteenth century architecture (e.g., Greek Revival, Italianate, and High Victorian Gothic). To draw attention to these historic resources, a walking tour map of Mount Vernon’s East Gambier Street, East High Street, and North Main–North Gay Street Historic Districts was created by the Knox County Historical Society. These three areas were designated historic districts by the National Register of Historic Places. Some properties along these streets have become popular bed and breakfast inns.
- Mount Vernon’s downtown area is very attractive with a number of family-owned businesses. Brick streets in the area date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Like the surrounding residential area, the downtown area has a strong historic flavor with many older, well-maintained buildings.
- Mount Vernon was home to Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman), who is credited with planting apple trees throughout the region.

Centerburg

Centerburg is located 14 miles to the southwest of Mount Vernon in the far southwest corner of Knox County. This Village was laid out by Stephen Sutton and Jacob Houck in 1830. As the name implies, the Village is situated in the geographical center of Ohio. The Centerburg Town Hall was built in 1896.

Danville

Danville is located in eastern Knox County, 15 miles from Mount Vernon. The settlement was originally named Sapp's Settlement. Later, it was renamed after Daniel (Dan) Sapp, a distinguished veteran of the War of 1812 and an original settler. Some notable elements of Danville's history include:

- Saint Luke Catholic Parish in Danville is the "second oldest congregation in Ohio," having been founded in 1820. The church cornerstone was laid on August 11, 1895.
- Arrival of the railroad in the 1870's established the community as a local service center for agriculture, trade and commerce.
- Buckeye City and Rossville were established next to Danville during the late 19th century, but merged with it in 1923.

Fredericktown

Located seven miles north of Mount Vernon, the Village was founded in 1807 by John Kerr as a mill site and named after Frederick, Maryland. The community is an important market center for agriculture and is credited with being the home of the original design of the Future Farmers of America jacket.

Gambier

Located just four miles east of Mount Vernon, Gambier is home to one of America's most distinguished liberal arts colleges. Kenyon College was founded in June 1824 by Philander Chase, the first Episcopal Bishop of Ohio. The College includes 50 buildings with distinctive stone architecture and is the oldest private liberal arts college in Ohio. With approximately 1500 students, Kenyon College has a distinctive reputation for academic excellence.

Gann (Brinkhaven)

Gann is a small village of less than 200 persons, located along the scenic Mohican River in the northeastern portion of the County. Although "Gann" is the legal name for this Village, it is also locally known as Brinkhaven.

Martinsburg

Martinsburg is another small village of less than 200, located in the south-central Knox County. Martinsburg was founded in 1828 when the Villages of Williamsburg and Hanover combined. Recent growth in the area has included a number of Amish families.

Utica

Only the northern part of Utica is located in Knox County, with the remainder located to the south in Licking County. Utica is well known as the home of Velvet Ice Cream and the associated "Ye Olde Mill." The Mill, built in 1817 and restored with an 1800's ice cream parlor, contains the nation's only ice cream museum and is a tourist attraction. Production of ice cream creates a demand for locally-produced dairy products.

Apple Valley

Apple Valley is a large recreational and residential community in east-central Knox County. Although unincorporated, but with thousands of existing residents, ample available vacant lots, and expected growth, Apple Valley could become an incorporated municipality.

Natural Environment

Knox County is blessed with a beautiful rural landscape including gently rolling hills, river valleys, lakes, cultivated areas, pastures, and woodlots. The varied topography is largely the product of glaciation. The

major river valleys include those of the Kokosing River, Mohican River, and North Fork of the Licking River. Most of the County is farmland.

General Topography

The highest elevation in Knox County is on the western side in Liberty Township and the lowest is on the eastern side, where the Kokosing River leaves the County in northeastern Butler Township. The difference in elevation is approximately 600 feet. General contour elevations are shown on **Map 1**.

The steepest slopes in Knox County are found toward the northeastern parts of the County near the Mohican River. Other areas of steep slopes (greater than 15 percent) are shown on **Map 2**. Generally, slopes greater than 15 percent present some limitations for urban development.

Geology

Knox County is on the outer edge of an area once covered by continental glaciers. The latest of the glaciations, the Wisconsin, covered the western part of the County 15,000 to 16,000 years ago, leaving thick deposits. Most of the relief in this part of Knox County was caused by uneven glacial deposition and subsequent erosion of the glacial mantle.

Most of the eastern part of the County was covered by the Illinion glaciation more than 100,000 years ago. Although it was not strong enough to level the existing bedrock, the ice flowed between the hills, leaving thick glacial deposits in some areas and almost none in others. The northeastern and southeastern corners of the County were not glaciated.

Several valleys in Knox County carried large volumes of glacial meltwater, which laid extensive deposits of gravel and sand along ancient riverbeds. Today, gravel and sand mining areas can be found in these areas.

Mineral Resources and Natural Gas

The most common natural resources mined today are glacially deposited sand and gravel along the Kokosing River and its tributaries. Many quarries along the River are close to abandonment and redevelopment and will likely change the width of the River in a few places. Sandstone has been mined productively in Knox County.

Although Knox County once had an abundance of natural gas, current levels of production are not close to those of the early 1900's. In the past, rock formations that once held natural gas were used as storage reservoirs for gas imported from other areas. Knox County is fortunate, however, to have several large capacity natural gas transmission lines along with widespread distribution systems.

Soil Conditions

A detailed survey describing soils throughout Knox County was completed in 1986¹ by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Because of the interest in farming, the agricultural properties of soil remain of particular interest. The USDA defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to grow food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Such land may be cultivated, pasture, or woodland, and can produce the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources and with the least damage to the environment. According to the soil survey, more than half (57 percent) of the total acreage of the County is classified as prime farmland. While prime farmland is found throughout the county, the largest concentrations of are found to the south where slopes are more gentle. Prime farmland is shown on **Map 3**.

¹ This is the most recent survey available.

Surface Water

According to the Soil Survey of Knox County, Ohio, most of the county is drained by the Kokosing River, North Fork of the Licking River, Mohican River, and Wakatomika Creek. These waterways are part of the Muskingum River Watershed. A small part of western Knox County is drained by Big Walnut Creek, which is part of the Scioto River Watershed. The surface water features of the county are shown on **Map 4**.

The Kokosing River

The dominant surface water feature in Knox County is the Kokosing River. In September 1997 the Kokosing was designated a Scenic River under the Ohio Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Law, following extensive local effort and the completion of the Kokosing River Study. The Study, by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves assessed whether the River met the criteria for designation as a wild, scenic, or recreational river. Consequently, the Study included a detailed biophysical description of the River, some of which is particularly relevant to this Update. This includes:

- Slow growth and the stable land use patterns of the past allowed the river system to maintain a high quality.
- There is a high degree of interaction between the surface water of the Kokosing River and subsurface groundwater. This interaction varies from location to location and can alternate from where flow is augmented by groundwater to where groundwater is recharged by flowing water. According to the Study, "it is imperative that land use decisions regarding groundwater recharge areas are made carefully with consideration to the pollution potential of the aquifer."
- In terms of aquatic habitat, the Kokosing River has some of the highest quality aquatic assemblages in Ohio. Segments of the River have been designated either "exceptional warm water habitat" or "warm water habitat." "Exceptional warm water habitats" are waters that can support and maintain an unusual community of warm water organisms, comparable to the 75th percentile of sites statewide. "Warm water habitats" are waters that support and maintain a balanced, integrated, and adaptive community of warm water organisms with a specific species composition, diversity, and organization.

In April 2004 the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (DNAP), released the *Kokosing Scenic River Watershed Plan*. The purpose of that plan was to "identify and reduce non-point sources of pollution and to identify and protect high quality habitat areas." The plan is comprised of an analysis of environmental, recreational, socio-economical, and historical factors related to the watershed. The plan describes strategies for restoration, enhancement, and protection of the watershed's resources. The plan will help DNAP, non-profits, and local governmental entities with making decisions about the River and its tributaries. Important highlights from this plan include:

- Forty-one miles of the main branch of the River have been given a "Scenic River" designation by the Director of the Department of Natural Resources. The designation means that the River "is representative of a waterway that still retains much of its natural character for the majority of its length. Shorelines are for the most part undeveloped, but the river may exhibit signs of disturbances by human activities. The adjacent river corridor must be forested to a minimum

depth of 300 feet for 25% of the stream's length."² The designation offers assistance for protecting and preserving the River.³

- The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) uses several techniques to evaluate the health of waterways in Ohio. According to the Index of Biological Integrity (IBI), the values for the Kokosing indicate water quality that rates among the best in Ohio. The IBI measures and evaluates biological communities based on fish species, presence of indicator species, and other characteristics of the fish in the river. Calculated scores for the Kokosing range from 38 to 58 with an average of 48.8. Typical ranges for Ohio streams range from 12 to 60.
- The Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI) is used to measure the quality and health of Ohio's streams. This method examines various properties of the physical habitat, such as instream cover and geomorphology (characteristics, configurations, and evolution of rocks). The Ohio EPA assessed the River and produced index scores ranging from 69 to 90.5. Such scores indicate that the habitat is excellent.

Thirteen goals to improve and protect quality and quantity of the water resource were proposed as shown below:

1. *Restore riparian vegetation in the North Branch Kokosing River headwaters to near State Route 13 subwatershed by approximately twenty percent (19,000 linear feet) and in the Jelloway Creek subwatershed by approximately twenty-six percent (19,100 linear feet) by September 2007.*
2. *Protect approximately 500 acres of high value/high function riparian corridor habitat by October 2009.*
3. *Restore destabilized streambanks in the North Branch Kokosing River headwaters to near State Route 13 subwatershed by approximately thirty-six percent (10,000 linear feet) and in the Jelloway Creek subwatershed by approximately fifty-nine percent (19,100 linear feet) by September 2007.*
4. *Restore streams in the North Branch Kokosing River headwaters to near State Route 13 subwatershed by approximately twenty percent (19,900 linear feet) and in the Jelloway Creek subwatershed by approximately forty percent (19,100 linear feet) by September 2007.*
5. *Manage stormwater and development to protect water quality and floodplain functions in the watershed.*
6. *Protect approximately 100 acres of wetlands in the Kokosing River below Dry Creek to above Big Run subwatershed and restore approximately 100 acres of wetlands in the Kokosing River below South Branch to below Mile Run and Kokosing River Headwaters Subwatersheds by September 2009.*

²

Source: Kokosing Scenic River Watershed Plan, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, April 2004, p. 4.

³

Ibid.

7. *Protect groundwater quantity and quality of the aquifer underlying the Kokosing River by monitoring water withdrawals, increasing public awareness of the importance of ground water quality, protecting the City of Mount Vernon's well field and acquiring easements over 620 acres in the well field area by September 2009.*
8. *To increase the capacities of local government entities and watershed landowners to make informed decisions concerning protection of resources in the Kokosing watershed.*
9. *Protect 9,000 acres of agricultural lands from inappropriate development by 2009 in the Kokosing watershed.*
10. *Using geographical information system technology, map headwater streams in the watershed.*
11. *To develop a spill containment plan for the Kokosing River.*
12. *To increase outdoor recreation open space, opportunity and safety by 1,000 acres by September 2007 in the watershed.*
13. *To raise awareness and appreciation for the protection of Kokosing watershed resources by engaging the public in environmental education and public participation processes.*

The complete study, "Kokosing State Scenic River 2004 Watershed Plan," was published in 2005.

Beyond regulatory considerations that exist by virtue of the Scenic River designation, the presence of the high water quality in the Kokosing River System influences effluent limitation from wastewater treatment plants. New anti-degradation regulations adopted by the OEPA have an impact on the operation of wastewater treatment plants. This will be addressed later in this Chapter under the subject of community facilities.

Flood Plains

Flood plains are low flat areas bordering watercourses that serve as areas for storage and flow of excess water beyond the normal capacity of a river or stream. The general location of the 100-year flood plain map is illustrated on **Map 5**. The 100-year flood plain refers to the area next to waterways that is expected to flood at least once in a given 100-year period, i.e. the annual risk of flooding is one percent. This frequency is based on expected precipitation levels and surface conditions. Detailed flood plain maps are available for all of Knox County through the National Flood Insurance Program. The largest flood plains are associated with the Kokosing and Mohican Rivers, but every watercourse has a flood plain, whether mapped or not. Except for areas in Mount Vernon and other urbanized places, most flood plains are used for agriculture (crops or woodlands).

Regulations addressing limitations on development in the flood plain are adopted and enforced by Knox County (for all unincorporated areas) and by each municipality (in their respective jurisdictions). Adoption of flood plain regulations is a requirement for a local government to remain eligible for disaster relief from the federal government.

Lakes

There are three major lakes in Knox County. All are manmade bodies within the Kokosing River watershed. Apple Valley Lake is a 511-acre private body of water located east of Mount Vernon. Knox Lake, constructed in 1954 northeast of Fredericktown, covers about 500 acres and includes boat launching and related facilities at three locations. Kokosing Lake, approximately 160 acres, is located northwest of Fredericktown and was constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers for flood control and recreation in 1971. It is part of approximately 1300 acres, managed for fish and wildlife, but also containing camping and picnic grounds, latrines, wells, and a public launching ramp for boats.

Subsurface Water

Knox County has extensive groundwater resources, as illustrated on **Map 6**. A large aquifer along most of the Kokosing River provides an excellent source of water for Mount Vernon and Apple Valley. Other areas of the County have less groundwater. Nevertheless, groundwater availability is generally sufficient for most needs. Subsurface water resources will be protected by utilizing the map, "Ground Water Pollution Potential of Knox County," published in 1991 by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water.

Wetlands

There are numerous wetlands identified in Knox County. Information on wetland sites can be obtained through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the National Wetlands Inventory Maps. Wetlands are protected under federal law and have restricted potential for development.

Green Infrastructure

Apart from a purely descriptive view of Knox County's natural characteristics, certain elements of the natural environment can be viewed in the context of the public benefits provided by their natural functions. As an example, flood plains may appear to be undeveloped land, but they are sites for storing periodic floods. Developing these areas, or altering existing topography, may increase the severity of flooding. Similarly, undeveloped land near underground sources of drinking water protects groundwater from potential contamination from urban land uses. Wetlands also naturally filter surface water, removing material that can degrade the quality of water in streams and lakes. **Map 7** is an initial attempt to identify and to illustrate the green infrastructure of Knox County, including areas either within one-and five-year ground water protection areas (as defined by local studies of transit times) or the 100-year flood plain (as shown on FEMA maps from 1982).

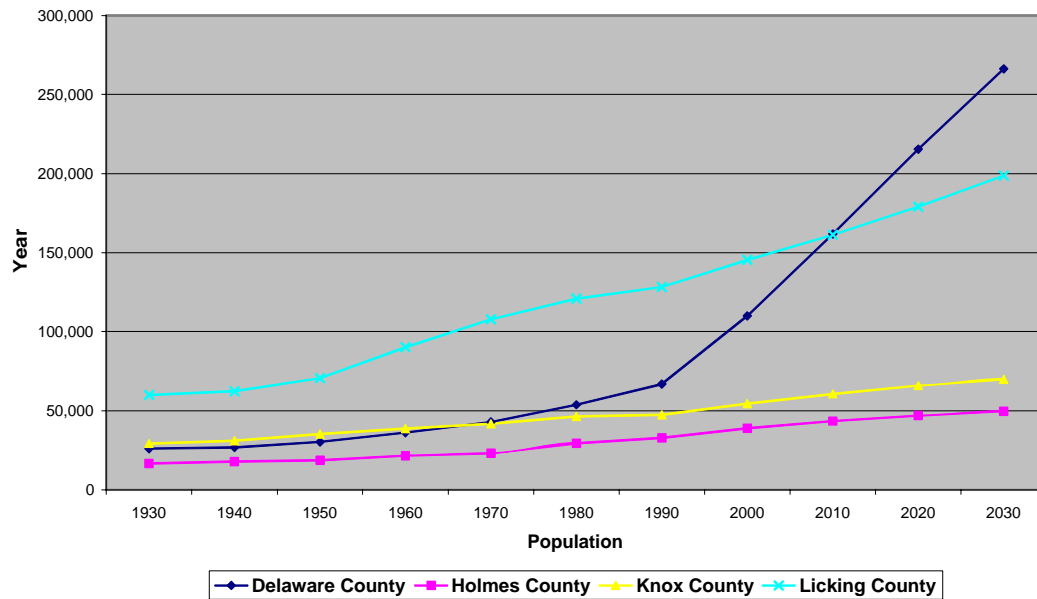
Population Characteristics

The characteristics of an area relative to development are directly related to the area's changing population. Generally, local change in population influences the demand for various types of housing, commercial space, and employment opportunities. The changing population in a community also influences the demand for public facilities and infrastructure.

Population Change

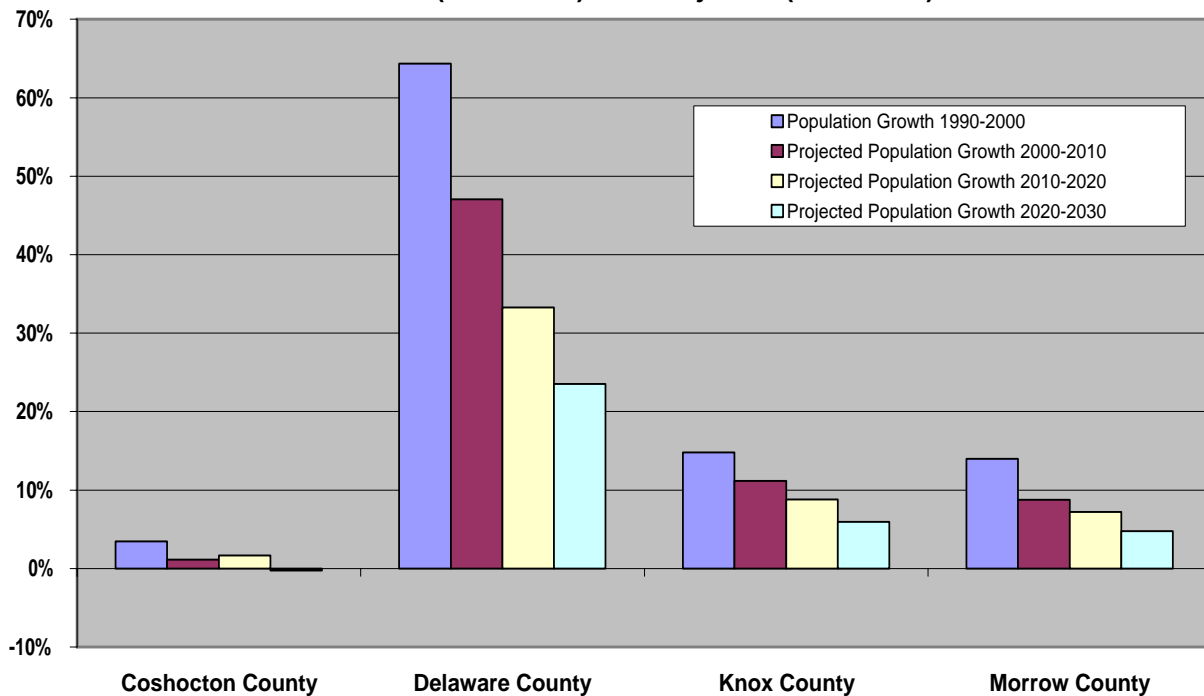
Figure 1 shows the population and projected population for Knox County and surrounding counties from 1930 through 2030. This figure shows steady growth for Knox County over the 100-year period. That steady growth is in sharp contrast to the rapid growth in neighboring Delaware County. The Ohio Office of Strategic Research has predicted that the population of Delaware County will more than double between 2000 and 2030 (from 109,989 people to 266,196). Licking County is predicted to experience a 37% increase from 2000 to 2030. Knox and Holmes Counties, the third fastest growing areas, have a predicted growth rate of 28% during this same thirty-year period. Much of the growth in central Ohio is related to expanding opportunities for employment in the Columbus/Franklin County area.

**Figure 1: Population Growth by Selected Counties
1930-2030**



While Knox County's growth rate is less than some adjacent counties closer to Columbus (Franklin County), it has still grown. Franklin, Holmes, Knox, and Morrow counties are all predicted to grow more than 20% during 2000-2030. During the same time, Ohio is only expected to grow 8.5%. For selected surrounding counties, **Figure 2** shows the actual growth from 1990-2000 along with the projected growth from 2000-2030.

**Figure 2: Population Growth Rate of Neighboring Counties by Decade
Actual (1990-2000) and Projected (2000-2030)**



Data for the graphs on this page, from US Census and Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research.

Municipal and Township Population Change. (Using revised Census numbers)

Census data from 1980 and 1990 showed that the population of Knox County increased by 1,169. During that ten-year period, 67% of the villages and Mount Vernon gained population, while 59% of the townships gained population. However, the total City and Village population grew by 289, while the total township population grew by 880. Among the villages and City, Fredericktown experienced the highest growth (6%), while Danville and Martinsburg experienced the highest loss (-11%). Among the townships, Howard Township showed the greatest gain (38%) and Middlebury Township showed the greatest loss in population (-11%).

The 2000 Census confirmed the intensifying movement of population from urban to rural areas. From 1990 to 2000, Knox County's population grew from 47,473 to 54,503, an increase of 7,030. During this period only 43% of the villages and the City had an increase in population, while 95% of the townships had an increase in population. For the City and villages, the increase in population was 782, while increase for all townships was 6,248. Among the villages and City, Danville experienced the greatest growth (10%) while Gann experienced the greatest loss (-20%). Howard Township, including Apple Valley, showed a 101% increase in population from 1990 to 2000. The only township experiencing decline was Clinton Township (-5%). The maps below show the growth in population by percent for each township, village, and city from 1980 to 1990 and from 1990 to 2000. See also Appendix I for percent change from 1970 to 1980, 1980 to 1990, and 1990 to 2000.

While six of the twenty-two townships experienced growth of over 30% from 1990-2000, it is important to keep in mind the absolute number of persons versus only the percentage of change. For example, Butler Township grew 58% between 1990-2000, but the change was from 504 to 798, an increase of 294. Comparatively, Mount Vernon showed a modest 5% growth during the same period, but the increase equaled 706 persons. In absolute terms, Mount Vernon grew 2.5 times more than Butler Township despite the difference in the percentages of growth. However, the 58% percent change in population is a very dramatic increase for persons living in rural townships. Consequently, it is likely that the citizens of Butler Township were more aware of, and perhaps more affected by, the growth in their township than were the citizens of Mount Vernon by growth in the City.

According to the U.S. Census, over the last 20 years Knox County grew by approximately 8,000 persons. An overwhelming 87% of this growth occurred in townships and only 13% occurred in municipalities. In other words, the data show that in recent times the population of Knox County grew much more in rural, unincorporated areas than in municipalities.

The following illustrations show historic growth from a geographic perspective.

Age, Gender, and Households

Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of Knox County's 2000 population that was male and female by age bracket. After World War II, the United States experienced a "baby boom," an unusually high number of births, which lasted into the early 1960's. The effect of the baby boom shows in **Figure 3** as the bulge in the number of "middle aged" persons. The figure also shows a second bulge in younger age brackets, sometimes called the "echo boom," due to children of "baby boomers." The spike in population in the 15-24 age brackets can also be partly attributed to Kenyon College and Mount Vernon Nazarene University. Kenyon College enrolled approximately 1,550⁴ students and the Mount Vernon Nazarene University enrolled over 2,400 students in 2004⁵.

While the median age for Knox County (36.5 years) is only slightly above the median age for Ohio (36.2 years), the county's median age varies considerably from region to region. For example, the Village of

⁴ Enrollment figure found on Kenyon College's website. www.kenyon.edu.

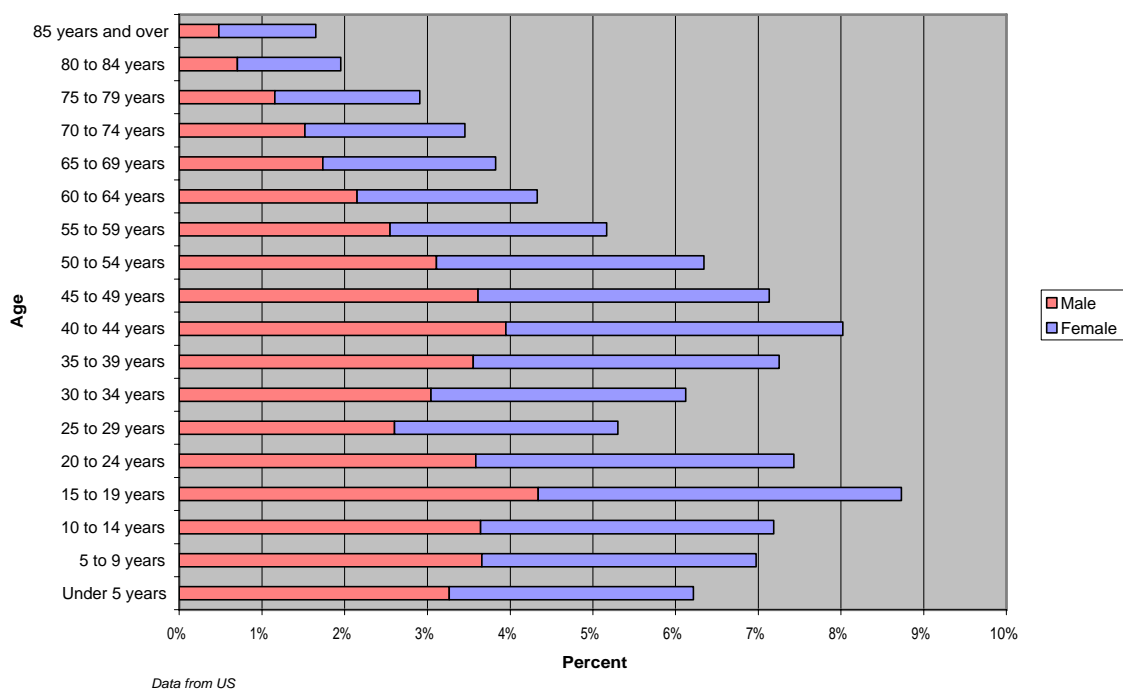
⁵ Found at <http://www.mvnu.edu/news/PressReleases/0405/enrollment.html>.

Gambier and College Township have median ages of 20.7 and 21.0, respectively. The difference from the median age of the County is due to the student population of Kenyon College. Higher than average median ages can be found in Howard (40.3 years), Clinton (41.4 years), Monroe (42.6 years), and Morris (42.8 years) Townships. The greatest differences in median ages of men and women occurred in Mount Vernon (6.1 years) and Fredericktown (5.5 years). The median age of women in Mount Vernon was 40.0 while the median age of men was 33.9. The median age of women in Fredericktown was 38.9 years while the median age for men was 33.4 years. In 2000, Mount Vernon had 963 more women than men 60 years or older.

Knox County had a significant number of older residents as shown in **Figure 3**. One reason for this is that places such as Apple Valley have become retirement destinations for older persons. Evidence of this is found not only in **Figure 3**, but also in the 2000 Census, where Knox County had a higher percentage of adults over age 65 (13.8 percent) than the State (13.3 percent).

The following Figure 3 is calculated in the year 2000.

Figure 3: Population by Age & Gender



Economic Characteristics

Knox County has enjoyed a strong, stable, and diverse local economy with a healthy mixture of agricultural operations, industry, and services. Knox County's proximity to employment centers in adjacent and nearby counties provides opportunities to persons willing to commute. The number of commuters driving out of the county to work rose from 4,350 in 1990 to 7,401 in 2000. This accounts for approximately 29.5% of the workforce the county. Comparatively, approximately 27% of all Ohioans commute to employment outside their counties of residence. **Map 8** shows the average commute times for Knox County residents.

Over 40% of commuters from Knox County travel to Franklin County and almost 18% travel to Licking County. Richland and Delaware counties each receive over 11% of the commuters from Knox County. Townships and municipalities with more than 50% of workers commuting outside of Knox County in 2000 are Brown, Clay, Hilliar, Jackson, Milford, and Morgan townships, and Martinsburg, and Centerburg. With the exception of Brown Township, these jurisdictions are in the southern portion of Knox County.

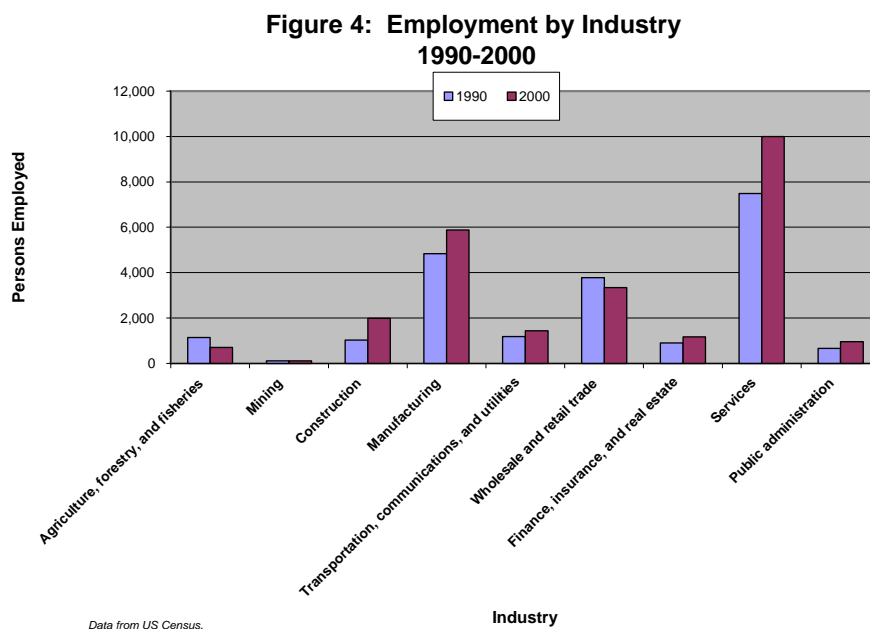
Knox County is also a destination for commuters. In 2000, more than 2,800 residents of neighboring counties traveled to Knox County for work. This figure is up from approximately 1,500 persons in 1990. Most in-commuters in 2000 came from Licking (25%) and Richland (19%) counties⁶.

Major Local Private Sector Employers

Major employers in Knox County include: Ariel Corporation, Jeld-Wen/Wenco Windows, Kenyon College, Knox Community Hospital, Kokosing Construction Company, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Mount Vernon City Schools, Rolls-Royce, State of Ohio, and TRW Automotive.

Industrial Employment

The 2000 U.S. Census showed an increase in employment in many sectors (see **Figure 4**). The Census also showed a decrease in two sectors: (1) agriculture, forestry, and fishery and (2) wholesale and retail trade. Significant areas of employment included services, manufacturing, and wholesale and retail trade.

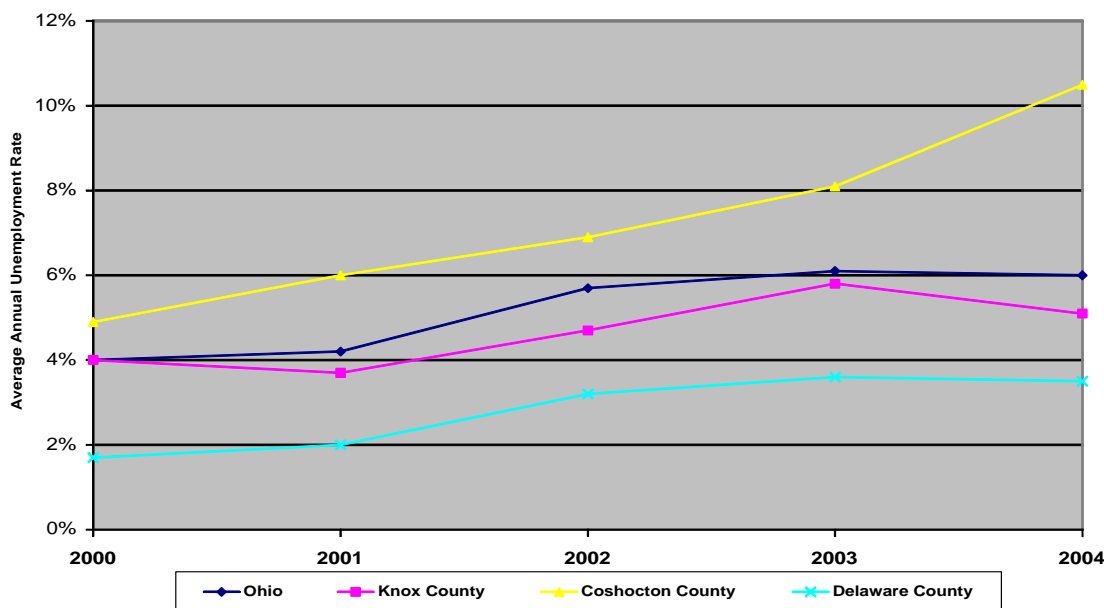


⁶ From Ohio State University Department of Human and Community Resource Development.

Despite the loss in jobs between 1990 and 2000, the agricultural sector of the local economy remained significant as is best indicated by gross receipts, which totaled over \$59 million in 2001⁷. Dairy products, livestock, corn, soybeans, and grains generate the largest amounts of farm income.

Knox County's unemployment rate grew from 4.0% in 2000 to 4.8% in 2003. However, through September 2004, this rate has fallen to 4.6%. **Figure 5** shows the unemployment rates for Ohio and Knox, Holmes, and Coshocton Counties for the past five years.

Figure 5: Historical Unemployment Rate



Data from Office of Workforce Development, Ohio Labor Market Information.

Tourism

Local attractions and nearby attractions make tourism a significant aspect in the economy of Knox County. Apart from local attractions, Knox County is next to Holmes County, a tourist destination for approximately four million visitors in 2004. Knox County is considered part of "Mohican Country," a major tourist destination for camping, canoeing, and related activities.

The Knox County lodging tax suggests that travel tourism is increasing. From 1998 to 2004 the tax collected increased by \$30,000. The largest increase during this period was between 2003 and 2004 when tax collections increased by \$11,000.

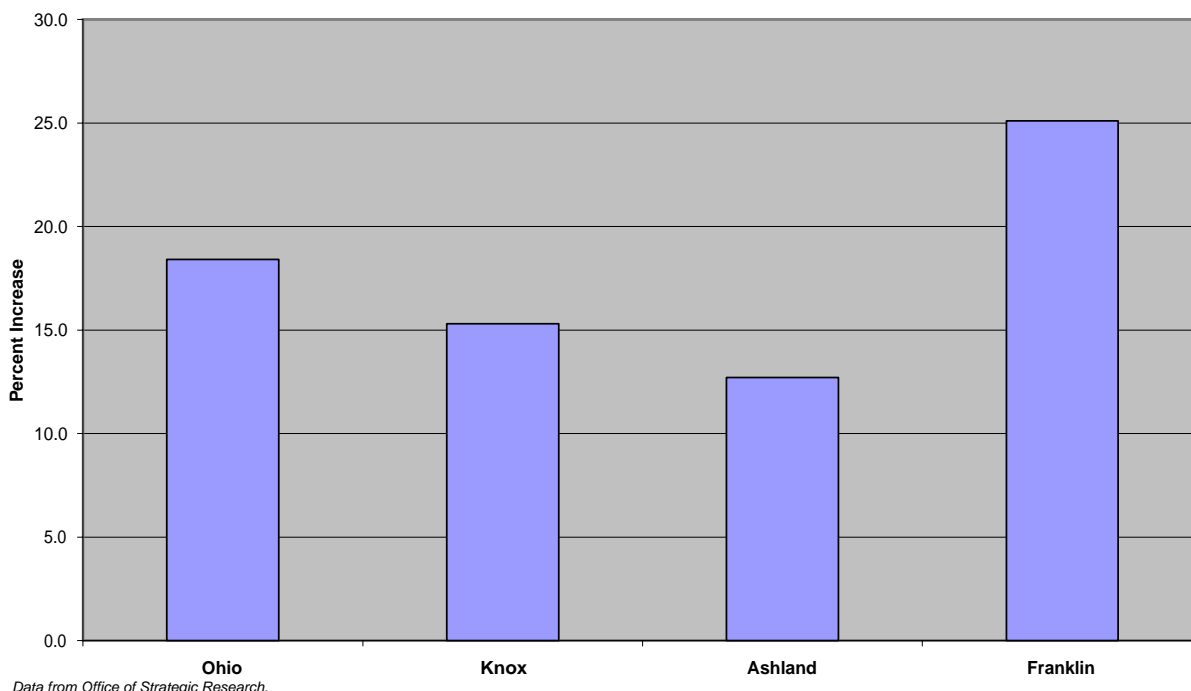
Income

The two-income family is becoming the most common economic structure of households. This is due in part to the shift from a manufacturing to a service-oriented economy. Therefore, personal income growth remains a significant indicator of employment trends. **Figure 6** illustrates the growth of personal income between 1997 and 2002 for selected counties and Ohio. Personal income growth (percentage of change) in Knox County was less than for Ohio (18.4%), but at 15.3% it was comparable to surrounding counties. Between 1988 and 1993, Knox County had a greater increase in personal income (over 30%) than Ohio

⁷ Ibid.

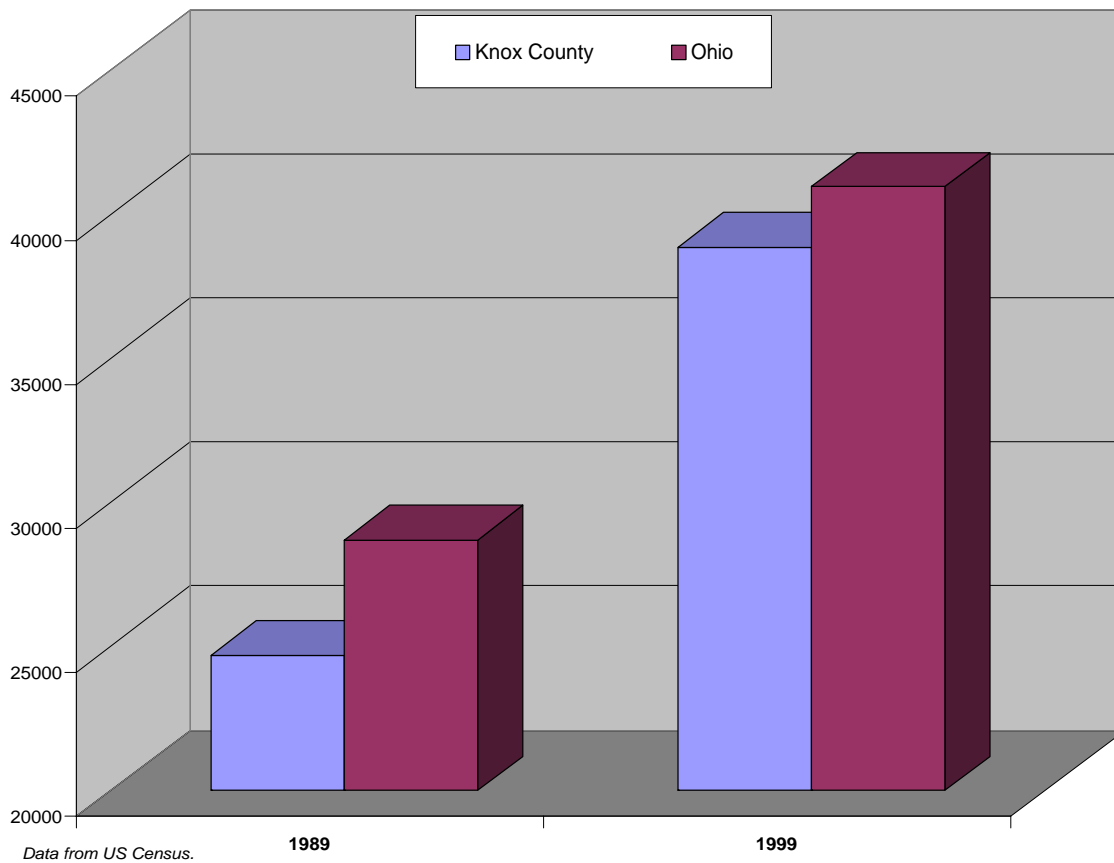
(25%). However, now Knox County's personal income growth is slowing compared to the rest of Ohio. The 2002 per capita income in Ohio was \$29,195, but in Knox County it was \$23,925. The difference of over \$5,000 in per capita income suggests that residents of Knox County have less to spend on goods, services, and housing, as compared to the State overall.

**Figure 6: Percent Change in Per Capita Income
1997-2002**



US Census data allow comparison of median household income in Knox County with the State's for 1990 and 2000. According to the US Census, a household "includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence." Between 1990 and 2000, the median household income for Knox County increased more than that for Ohio as a whole. In 1989, the County's median household income was \$24,701 and Ohio's was \$28,706. In 1999, Knox County's median household income had risen to \$38,877 (+57.4%), compared with the Ohio's \$40,956 (+42.7%). Thus, during the 1990's, the percentage increase in household income in Knox County was greater than that for Ohio. However, the County's median household income remained slightly less than the State's as shown in **Figure 7**. In 1989, Ohio's median household income was \$4,000 higher than Knox County's. In 1999, the State's median household income was \$2,000 higher than Knox County's. Thus, in absolute dollars, Knox County has narrowed its gap with Ohio's median household income by fifty percent.

Figure 7: Change in Median Household Income



Housing Characteristics

Apart from agriculture, residential development is the dominant land use throughout Knox County. Important observations about housing include new housing construction, the age of existing housing, and housing needs for low-and moderate-income (LMI) persons

Recent Housing Construction

Between 1990 and March of 2000, 3,714 new housing units were built in Knox County. A large proportion of these was built in the Apple Valley area (27 percent). In 2000, the US Census Bureau counted 21,793 housing units in Knox County. This was an increase from the 1990 figure of almost 18 percent. During this period, Ohio's number of housing units increased by 9.4 percent. **Map 9** shows housing units built during the 1990's in Knox County by US Census block group.

Documenting residential construction since 2000 is somewhat difficult. The US Census Bureau tracks residential permits, but not all areas have local zoning, and other areas for various reasons might not be included in annual Census Bureau reports. Nevertheless sound data are available:

- The Knox County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management reported fairly steady assignment of house numbers from 2000 through June 2004. During this period, 1,253 house numbers were assigned with a high of 301 in 2000 and a low of 249 in 2003. These

figures do not include new houses in Apple Valley, where all house numbers were assigned previously. Apple Valley reported that 491 houses were built from 2000 through June 2004, with a high of 122 in 2003 and a low of 99 in 2002.

- The number of new septic permits remained steady from 2000 until 2003. There were 975 septic permits issued during this time (a high of 294 in 2002 and a low of 202 in 2000).
- According to the Office of Strategic Research, 408 building permits for private housing units were authorized in Knox County in 2003. This gave the County a ranking of 25th in the State for residential building permits in 2003.

Age of Homes

Examining housing units by year of construction provides insight into the history of residential development. Housing in Knox County is generally newer than in the City of Mount Vernon. According to the 2000 US Census, the median year housing structures were built is 1952 for Mount Vernon, 1962 for the State, and 1963 for Knox County. Comparatively, in the 1990 Census the median year structures were built are 1950 for Mount Vernon, 1959 for the State, and 1957 for Knox County. When considered with statistics on recent housing construction, these data show that more new housing is being built in Knox County than in Mount Vernon or the State.

Approximately 50 percent of the housing in Mount Vernon was built before 1950. By contrast, less than 37 percent of housing in Knox County and less than 32 percent of housing in Ohio was built before 1950. The age of housing units is important because it suggests locations for possible historic districts and indicates the number of older housing units that may require extra effort to maintain.

Low- and Moderate-Income Housing

An analysis of housing needs for LMI residents is available in the Knox County Community Housing Improvement Strategy (Fiscal Years 2004 to 2008), which was developed by the joint Knox County/City of Mount Vernon Housing Advisory Committee. The report also includes proposed actions and strategies to address the housing needs of persons with low and moderate incomes through rehabilitation programs, infrastructure improvements, home repair programs, renter assistance, and housing assistance.

Agricultural Characteristics

Farming has been a major part of Knox County culture and the local economy for at least 1,000 years. Because of different terrains in the county (ranging from hilly in the east to rolling in the west), a variety of agricultural products is produced on farms in Knox County. According to the US Department of Agriculture, in 2002 the four top agricultural sale values by commodity group in the County were: grains; cattle and calves; milk and other dairy products from cows; and nursery, greenhouse, and floriculture. According to the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Knox County ranks 1st in the State in sheep; 7th in hay and 11th in milk and cattle production; and 15th in oats harvested.

Some important facts about Knox County agriculture include:

- Knox County was known as the sheep capital of the country in the first part of the 20th century. Today, Knox County has the distinction of being the largest sheep and wool producing county in Ohio.
- Producers Livestock on Columbus Road southwest of Mount Vernon is a center for selling livestock, is an important aspect of the local farm economy, and draws farmers from a multi-county area.
- Knox County was once called the “No-Till Capital of the World.” This type of farming emphasizes soil and water conservation with properly applied herbicides. It is preferred to plowing generally because it protects the soil from erosion by wind and water.

- Historically, the sizes and numbers of farms have fluctuated in Knox County. Between 1969 and 2002, the average farm increased in size from 157 to 166 acres, a 5.7% change. However, over the same period, the number of farms declined from 1,596 to 1,258, a 26.9% change.^{8 9}
- Between 1992 and 2002, the price of farmland increased more than 108% (from \$1,396 to \$2,878) per acre. This economic change may help account for the fact that from 1987 to 2002 the number of farms of less than 50 acres increased from 304 to 494 (62.5%), while traditional family farms of 50-500 acres decreased from 785 to 674 (14.1%).
- In 2002, Knox County ranked in the top third of Ohio Counties (27 out of 88) in terms of total value of agricultural products sold.¹⁰
- In 2002 the average age of the principal operator of a farm was 52.5 years and 43% were older than 55. Only 32% of principal operators were full-time farmers.¹¹

Family Farming

The family farm is fundamental to local culture, community life, rural values, and the economy in Knox County. A description of farming is available through the Family Farm Project, a three-year study exploring family farming in Knox County. The Project has been the recipient of awards from organizations such as the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums and the American Farm Bureau Federation. Besides an Internet web page, the Family Farm Project includes an audio series and a booklet titled *Rural Delivery-Family Farming in Knox County, Ohio*.

Some findings of the Family Farm Project on the state of family farming in Knox County include:

- Family farming is deeply rooted in Knox County as a way of life and as part of local culture. Beyond a source of income, individuals engaged in family farming share a connection to the land, close family relationships, and a great passion for farming.
- Family farmers have struggled with decisions about using emerging farming technology, engaging in specialized operations or continuing current familiar practices.
- The Grange, 4-H, Future Farmers of America, and the Farm Bureau are important social organizations that support rural values and a sense of community.

⁸ From 2002 Census of Agriculture County Profile.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

- There is a large Amish community in Knox County committed to preserving traditional farming methods.

Cultural Characteristics

Knox County offers many opportunities for cultural enrichment, which enhance the quality of life. These cultural characteristics include physical facilities, cultural events, and organizations.

Cultural Facilities

While it is not the intent of this section to identify all cultural attractions in Knox County, some prominent ones are shown on **Map 10** and listed below:

- The Memorial Theater (Mount Vernon): Since 1925, the Memorial Building has been a focal point of the cultural activities. Symphony concerts, lectures, theater performances, and exhibits are conducted in the 1100-seat theater. Since 1972, the Memorial Theater has been the home of Ohio's Junior Miss Scholarship Program, an annual event honoring outstanding female high school seniors and attracting hundreds of spectators.
- Dan Emmett House (Mount Vernon): Daniel Decatur Emmett (1815-1904) was the father of the American minstrel show, composer of "Dixie," "Old Dan Tucker," "Blue Tail Fly," and other classic American songs. Period furniture creates a 19th-century atmosphere.
- Fredericktown Historical Museum (Fredericktown): The museum is on South Sandusky Street in a former Methodist church. It displays nineteenth-century artifacts, including photos from area homes, and a recent video tape of local history.
- Kenyon College (Gambier): The nationally prominent liberal arts college, founded in 1824, stands on an 800-acre campus with excellent examples of Gothic collegiate architecture. The College offers a full schedule of cultural events including plays, concerts, readings, lectures, art exhibits, and films.
- Knox County Historical Society Museum (Mount Vernon): Located at 875 Harcourt Road, the Museum displays artifacts from 19th-century domestic life, trades, and professions. A collection of self-propelled farm and other engines, artifacts, and documents relating to Daniel Decatur Emmett is displayed.
- Knox County Agricultural Museum (Mount Vernon): The site, located in the Knox County Fairgrounds, includes more than 2,000 implements and items related to agriculture and rural life in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Special attractions include a Conestoga wagon, a log cabin dating from 1881, and prehistoric Native American implements.
- Mount Vernon Nazarene University (Mount Vernon): The University is affiliated with the Church of the Nazarene. Its 210-acre campus is the site of cultural events including concerts, lectures, plays, and exhibits.

Cultural Events and Organizations

While cultural facilities are important, events and organizations are essential to sustaining local culture and character. A sampling of local events and organizations that help define local culture are presented below:

- Mount Vernon Players: This community theater group offers a musical every summer at the Memorial Theater and several dinner theater performances each year at the Alcove Restaurant.
- Knox County Symphony: The symphony performs three to four concerts yearly.
- Community Concert Association: This organization sponsors five to six concerts yearly.

- Kenyon College and Mount Vernon Nazarene University: Art exhibits, lectures, and concerts are regularly sponsored by both institutions. The Lecture Artist Series sponsored by Mount Vernon Nazarene University brings nationally known artists and scholars to the area. The University also holds a fall concert with music from the Big Band Era.
- Knox County Fair: Because of deep farming traditions, the Knox County Fair is a major event and an important aspect of local culture. The annual event regularly features harness racing, horse racing, antique tractor parades, tractor pulls, demolition derbies, amusement rides, top-name country entertainment, agricultural and 4-H exhibits. An important aspect of the Knox County fair is that it brings farmers and non-farmers together to a major community event.
- Dan Emmett Music and Arts Festival: Activities include concerts featuring top national and regional talent, fiddle and banjo contests, children's performances, arts and crafts sales, a quilt show, an antique show, Civil War encampments, classic vehicle shows, and tours of historic buildings. The annual series of events during a weekend draws more than 10,000 participants.
- Mohican Bluegrass Festival: The annual event, held near Danville at the Mohican Wilderness campgrounds, features 24 hours of music with nationally known bands. Camping, canoeing, and horseback riding are also featured activities.
- Old Time Farming Festival: The annual festival is held in Centerburg and features displays of antique tractors and farm machinery, demonstrations of traditional farm skills, craft shows, and contests.
- Gambier Craft Sale: The pre-Christmas craft sale features crafters and artisans from central Ohio. This sale has an Austrian market theme and includes home baked goods and other food items.
- Christmas Walk - Downtown Mount Vernon: The two-day event begins with a Christmas Parade on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. The next day, Sunday, an "open house" in Mount Vernon's Central Business District features horse-drawn wagon rides, roasted chestnuts, carolers, period costumes, storytelling, and candle-lighting.

Social Infrastructure

Apart from the cultural and social aspects of Knox County, there are delivery systems for public services. That delivery system can be viewed as a "social infrastructure" made up of various districts, councils, and organizations (governmental, quasi-governmental or private), providing social services directly or indirectly to residents. Although "social infrastructure" might be defined in various ways, for the purpose of this Update its main components in Knox County's are:

- Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS)
- Schools
- Zoning Administration
- Arts Council
- Historic Preservation
- Organizations of elected officials

Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Multiple fire districts exist in Knox County (see **Map 11**). All districts provide mutual aid and have a long history cooperation, stemming from mutual-aid agreements. Public input sessions for this Update

revealed an interest in additional cooperation. Discussions on greater cooperation and coordination are warranted as improved response times and lower costs would benefit everyone in the County. Meaningful progress will require focused effort by the various fire districts, local officials, members of the health-care delivery system, and the Knox Emergency Management Agency.

Schools

Multiple local school districts serve different portions of Knox County. Community members at public input sessions for this Update expressed concern over administrative costs that collaboration and/or consolidation might contain. Progress on this issue will require a focused effort by the individual districts and the communities they serve.

Zoning Administration

Knox County has 18 zoned townships and as many part-time zoning officials. Although each township should retain control over local decisions about land use, opportunities for collaboration and shared resources exist. For example, the RPC could supply an inspector to administrative zoning for several townships. Alternatively, two or more townships could share one zoning inspector. Either way, a more full-time position could be created, providing more consistent and timely service to participating townships.

Development of local programs for zoning officials (annual meetings, conferences, training sessions, etc.) could strengthen administrative capacity throughout the County. Such programs could be organized for both townships and municipalities by the RPC.

Arts Council

Creation of an Arts Council has been discussed as a way to formalize relationships in Knox County. Such an umbrella organization could coordinate art-related activity throughout the County and adjacent areas. This would enhance synergy between specific events and coordination of ongoing activities. The umbrella organization could be housed in the renovated Woodward Opera House. The non-profit Knox Performing Arts Coalition could become part of, or could be transformed into, an arts council.

Historic Preservation

Knox County's historic districts are a part of the social infrastructure. Currently the County has 42 listings on the National Historic Register, including 5 districts and 37 sites. Three of the historic districts (East Gambier Street, East High Street, and the North Main/North Gay Street) are in Mount Vernon. The other two historic districts are in Gambier (Gambier Historic District and Kenyon College).

Organizations of elected officials

More can be done to organize local elected and appointed officials to foster exchanging ideas and sharing expertise. Associations for township, municipal, county, and zoning officials could encourage collaboration and the sharing of ideas among the various governmental officials in the County.

Existing Land Use

The Knox County Auditor codes parcels of land by use for taxation. (See Appendix VII.) Land use codes assigned by the Auditor were grouped into categories to show general land use patterns in the county. The resulting map of land use in Knox County as of October 2004 is shown on **Map 12**.

As noted previously, and as shown on **Map 12**, agriculture is the dominant land use in Knox County. However, it is also evident from **Map 12** that residential land use is a significant element of the landscape in unincorporated parts of the County. This is because the use of land for residences, rather than agriculture, increased substantially in recent years. Better roads and the growing metropolitan region of Columbus have contributed to increased demand for residential lots in Knox County. Areas originally planned as resort housing, like Apple Valley, have become home to full-time residents. Also, one- to two-acre lot splits for single-family homes along established roads have become common in rural areas.

In addition to commercial centers in the hearts of most villages, commercial land use is concentrated in three areas in Knox County. Two of the areas are regional commercial centers: the well-established area on Coshocton Avenue and a smaller, but emerging, area on Harcourt Road. Both areas are located on major routes in or next to Mount Vernon and generate significant vehicular traffic. Coshocton Avenue is an ordinary commercial strip with several “big box” retailers and numerous smaller retailers and restaurants. Downtown Mount Vernon, the third major commercial area, is unlike the other two commercial areas because it offers a historic atmosphere, a pedestrian-oriented environment, and more specialized retail and service businesses.

Major areas of industrial land are found south of Mount Vernon and in specific locations adjacent to villages. The industrial area on the south side of Mount Vernon has been expanding rapidly due to marketing efforts of the Area Development Foundation and other private and public groups.

Quality of Life Indicators

Residents of Knox County enjoy a high quality of life for a variety of subjective reasons. However, objective statistical comparisons between the County and Ohio also support the idea that residents enjoy a high quality of life. Measurable indicators of quality of life include:

- **Families With Incomes Below the Poverty Level**
The percentage of families in Knox County with incomes below the poverty level is less than for Ohio. According to the US Census, the percentage of families in Knox County with incomes below the poverty level in 2000 was 7.4 percent as compared with 7.8 percent of households in Ohio.
- **Teen Birthrate per 1,000 Population**
According to the Office of Strategic Research, the birthrate for females ages 15-19 in Knox County is lower than for Ohio. The teen birthrate for Knox County is 38.9, while that for Ohio is 42.5, per thousand.
- **Divorce Rate per 1,000 Population**
According to the Office of Strategic Research, the divorce rate in Knox County is very low. The number of divorces per 1,000 population is just 0.6. The divorce rate per 1,000 population in Ohio is 4.2.
- **Unemployment Rate**
Over the past several years, Knox County has had a consistently lower unemployment rate than Ohio. In 2004 the rate of unemployment in the County was 5.1%, but it was 6.0% in Ohio.

Community Facilities

Various community facilities and transportation improvements form the infrastructure needed for urban development in Knox County. Effort was made, therefore, to identify the characteristics of water supply systems, wastewater treatment systems, and public parks and land open to the public.

Existing Publicly Operated Community Water Systems

A public water system is the source of water for more than half the dwellings in Knox County. According to the 1990 Census, 9,904 houses received water from a public system. The remainder obtained water from wells or other sources. The following table shows sources of water in Knox County compared with Ohio, according to the 1990 Census.

	Knox County	State of Ohio
Public System	51.9%	77.6%
Wells	45.7%	21.5%
Other Sources	2.4%	0.9%

All public water systems are illustrated on **Map 13** and are described below:

- **City of Mount Vernon**

The City of Mount Vernon owns and operates the largest water supply system in Knox County. The system currently serves 5,800 customers inside and outside the corporation limits and has contracts with Clinton Township Water and Sewer District (currently being negotiated) and the Board of County Commissioners to serve the unincorporated areas next to the City. The City of Mount Vernon also provides water to the Village of Gambier by agreement. Under current policy, annexation is not required by the City for extension of water service outside the municipality.

Current average usage is 2.9 MGD with a 4.7 MGD peak usage. Construction was recently completed on a new water treatment plant, near the western intersection of U.S. 36 and S.R. 229, that cost nearly \$14,000,000. The new plant provides 7.5 MGD in capacity with the potential to double that capacity to meet future demand.

Besides plant capacity, water storage capacity is important for both supply and pressure. The Mount Vernon water system includes a twenty-year old, 150,000-gallon elevated storage tank on Wooster Road, a 450,000-gallon elevated storage tank on Coshocton Avenue, and 2,000,000 gallons of storage in ground tanks.

- **Village of Fredericktown**

The Village of Fredericktown uses three wells to access groundwater. The water treatment plant has a 630,000 GPD capacity and current average usage is 220,000 GPD. The Village has an elevated 100,000-gallon storage tank and an in-ground clear well storing 150,000 gallons. The system uses iron and manganese high pressure filters. Four filters are in operation. The upgraded water treatment plant is expected to supply adequate water for the foreseeable future, given the current growth rates. However, problems with water pressure, fire protection, and/or the potential need to supply a large industrial user could create the need for other improvements.

- **Village of Gambier**

The Village of Gambier purchases treated water from the City of Mount Vernon by agreement. The average daily flow to Gambier is 300,000 gallons. The water is pumped into the Village's 250,000 gallon elevated storage tank and then distributed. Recently, the Village conducted a study to examine the feasibility of extending water and sewer services northward toward New Gambier Road. This study was conducted in association with preliminary plans for private development.

- **Village of Centerburg**

The water treatment plant serving the Village of Centerburg has a maximum capacity of 200,000 gallons per day. The average daily usage in the Village is 137,000 gallons. From two wells, the Village serves 560 customers, 30 of which are outside the corporate limits. The Village maintains a 200,000-gallon elevated storage tank. With water usage at more than two-thirds of capacity, the water treatment plant capacity is unlikely to provide adequate water for the foreseeable future, given current growth rates. Additionally, problems with water pressure, fire protection, and/or the potential need to supply a large industrial user could create the need for improvements.

- **Village of Danville**

Approximately 480 customers inside and 12 water and/or sewer customers outside the corporation limits are served by the Village of Danville water system. The Village currently has an ordinance indicating willingness to provide water outside the corporation on a case-by-case basis, subject to the recipient's agreement to annex. The Village operates two wells for its water supply, which is treated at its 600,000 GPD plant. Average daily usage is 120,000 GPD. The Village has 165,000 gallons of underground storage. With water usage at a fraction of capacity, the treatment plant should provide adequate water supply for the foreseeable future, given current

growth rates. However, general water pressure problems, fire protection and/or the need to supply a new large industrial user could create the need for other improvements.

- **Village of Martinsburg**

The Village of Martinsburg has a water treatment system with a capacity of 16,000 GPD.

- **Clinton Township Regional Water and Sewer District**

The Clinton Township Regional Water and Sewer District was recently established under Section 6119 of the Ohio Revised Code. Existing water customers were served by an agreement between the Board of County Commissioners and the City of Mount Vernon that was transferred to the District.

The City and the District are currently negotiating an agreement for water service in the District. The agreement, as proposed, would provide for construction of distribution lines by the District, which would be maintained and operated by the City after one year of operation. The City would provide treated water and bill the end user directly for services. The contract would be for 50 years with extension for an additional 25 years and would allow expansion beyond the boundaries of the District (currently Clinton Township) with approval of the City.

Existing Publicly Operated Wastewater Systems

The method of sewage disposal for more than half the County's houses is by means of a public sewer system. However, 8,451 houses dispose of wastewater with a septic system and tile field, and 218 dispose of it by other means. All wastewater districts were previously illustrated on **Map 13**.

- **Anti-degradation**

Anti-degradation rules adopted by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) have significant impact on the construction of new wastewater treatment plants and the expansion of existing wastewater treatment plants. Consequently, before describing existing wastewater treatment plants, it is useful to consider how current anti-degradation regulations and designations of area waterways may impact future allowable discharges of wastewater effluent from treatment plants into Knox County's waterways.

The Kokosing River is included in the Ohio Scenic Rivers System and has very high water quality. This led to the classification of the Kokosing River and the North Branch of the Kokosing River as "Outstanding State Water." "Outstanding State Water" is surface water that has special significance for the State because of exceptional ecological values. To qualify on the basis of exceptional ecological values, such waters must have superior high quality and be demonstratively among the best waters of the State ecologically. Exceptional ecological values are based on the extent to which streams and rivers 1) provide habitat for Ohio or federal endangered species; 2) provide habitat for Ohio threatened species; 3) harbor stable populations of a declining fish species that coincides with the presence of a suitable habitat; and 4) display a level of biological integrity equivalent to the exceptional warm water habitat index of biological integrity and/or invertebrate community index criteria listed in OAC 3745-1-07.

The classification of the Kokosing as "Outstanding State Water" presents a major limitation on discharges from wastewater treatment facilities. For example, under this designation, the director of OEPA requires that new sources of pollution may not discharge directly to Outstanding State Water or points located upstream unless it can be demonstrated that the chemical and biological quality of the water will not be adversely affected. Additionally, the director of OEPA requires a reserved set-aside of 70 percent of the remaining available pollutant assimilative capacity, for which water quality criteria have been adopted or developed pursuant to chapter 3745-1 of the Administrative Code. The reserved portion can not be allocated to any source unless the applicant requests and the director of OEPA approves a credit project per OAC 3745-1-05(C)(7).

- **Knox County Water District**

The Knox County Water District was established countywide in the early 1990's and includes one water service area known as the Howard/Apple Valley District. The water supply system serves approximately 1,670 residential customers with a capacity of 1,115,000 GPD and with average daily usage of 650,000 GPD. The system, which is comprised of four wells, a chlorine chamber, two storage tanks, and more than 61 miles of water distribution lines, was designed to serve all lots in Apple Valley and Howard, which has approximately 150 dwellings.

- **City of Mount Vernon**

The City of Mount Vernon currently collects and treats wastewater from approximately 5,850 customers within and outside the corporation limits. The City has agreements with the Clinton Township Water and Sewer District and the Board of County Commissioners to provide services to adjacent unincorporated areas. No annexation is required for the service.

The wastewater system is owned and operated by Mount Vernon and includes a gravity collection system with three lift stations and a mechanical treatment plant providing primary and secondary dechlorination and handling of sludge. The design capacity of the plant is 8.5 MGD. Average usage is 3.4 MGD. The City does experience overloading of the plant during heavy rainfall due to inflow and infiltration, but is attempting to reduce the problem with continuous repair and maintenance of the system.

The Mount Vernon wastewater treatment plant discharges effluent into the Kokosing River, which is listed as an exceptional warm water habitat under current OEPA water quality standards. For current anti-degradation purposes, the ten-year, 30-day low flow is used to calculate assimilative capacity of the receiving stream. This flow is approximately 27 cubic feet per second. Based on that flow rate, it appears that there would be significant capacity in the river to assimilate more wastewater discharge under current regulations. The existing difference between the design capacity of the wastewater treatment plant and average usage is equivalent to supporting an additional 20,000 persons (or an equivalent amount of combined residential and nonresidential flow). While capacity is substantial, some additional wastewater flow will be added to the Mount Vernon Wastewater Plant as new Clinton Township customers are added to the system. There are no current OEPA "findings and orders" for the wastewater treatment plant.

- **Village of Fredericktown**

The Village of Fredericktown operates a gravity-collection system and wastewater treatment system using a trickling filter. The facility, constructed in 1938, was expanded in 1991. Currently, capacity of the plant is 300,000 GPD and the average daily flow is 280,000 GPD. The collection system includes some combined sewers and has had some problems with infiltration of rain water. This adds to peak flow rates and creates periodic problems. The Village is building a new plant with a 700,000 GPD capacity which should eliminate problems with peak flow and afford adequate wastewater treatment for some time based on current growth rates. There are no current OEPA "findings and orders" for the wastewater treatment plant.

- **Village of Gambier**

Wastewater treatment is provided by an oxidation ditch completed in 1996. The gravity collection system includes three lift stations. The design capacity of the plant is 500,000 GPD and average daily use is less than half of capacity at 220,000 GPD. The last renovation of the plant was completed in 1996. As noted previously, the Village recently conducted a study to examine the feasibility of extending water and sewer services northward toward New Gambier Road. The treatment plant discharges effluent into the Kokosing River. Downstream from Gambier to the confluence of the Walhonding River, the Kokosing is classified as "State Natural Resource Waters" and "Exceptional Warm Water Habitat." Being downstream from Mount Vernon, it seems that there would be significant capacity in the river to assimilate more wastewater discharge under current regulations. The existing difference between plant design capacity and average daily usage is equivalent to supporting an additional 2,800 persons (or an equivalent amount of

combined residential and non-residential flow). This capacity should provide adequate wastewater treatment for some time based on current growth rates. There are no current OEPA “findings and orders” for the wastewater treatment plant.

- **Village of Centerburg**

The Village of Centerburg owns and operates a gravity-collection system and wastewater treatment plant that uses a conventional trickling filter followed by a sand filter. The plant has a design capacity of 200,000 GPD with an average daily usage of 130,000 GPD. The plant serves 380 customers inside the Village. The plant, originally constructed in 1956, was retrofitted in 1987 and 1988. The Village experiences some inflow and infiltration problems and has experienced some problems with the treatment plant which are currently being addressed. The Village is located in the headwaters of the North Fork of the Licking River. In this area, the North Fork is classified as “Warm Water Habitat.” Future increases in plant capacity will depend on the assimilative capacity of the stream and the best available wastewater treatment. The existing difference between plant design capacity and average usage could support an additional 600 persons (or an equivalent amount of combined residential and non-residential flow). Given current and projected growth, a plant expansion may be needed in the future. There are no current OEPA “findings and orders” for the wastewater treatment plant.

- **Village of Danville**

Approximately 480 customers inside the Village and 12 outside the Village limits are served by the Danville Wastewater Treatment System. The system is approximately 30 years old and includes a gravity collection system and an aerated lagoon. The design capacity of the system is 200,000 GPD and average daily usage is 115,000 GPD. Recent renovations included an extended capacity of 800,000 GPD to control overloading during high periods of inflow and infiltration, along with lagoon lining and a chlorinating system. New collection improvements have been made to address inflow and infiltration problems. The wastewater treatment system discharges effluent into the East Branch of Jelloway Creek, which flows into the Kokosing River. Future increases in plant capacity will depend on the assimilative capacity of the stream and the best available wastewater treatment. The existing difference between plant design capacity and average usage is equivalent to supporting an additional 700 persons (or an equivalent amount of combined residential and non-residential flow). This treatment capacity should provide adequate wastewater treatment for some time based on current growth rates. There are no current OEPA “findings and orders” for the wastewater treatment plant.

- **Clinton Township Regional Water and Sewer District**

Most customers served by the Clinton Township Regional Water and Sewer District were previously served by the City of Mount Vernon through an agreement with the Board of County Commissioners. The District recently completed an agreement with the City of Mount Vernon to provide wastewater services to additional residents. The agreement is for 50 years. The District will construct the collection system and retain ownership. The City will provide wastewater treatment and billing directly to the end user. After one year of operation, the City will also provide operation and maintenance of the collection system. The agreement allows expansion beyond the District boundaries (currently Clinton Township) with approval by the City.

- **Knox County Sewer District**

Knox County Sewer District was established in 1971 and it owns and operates several wastewater systems in unincorporated portions of the County. The largest system serves the Howard/Apple Valley District, which currently has approximately 1,670 customers. The wastewater plant (which has primary, secondary and tertiary treatment) has a maximum capacity of 2,000,000 GPD, and like the water system, was designed to serve the Apple Valley development and Howard. The collection system includes several lift stations and more than 116 miles of sewer mains. The existing difference between plant design capacity and average daily usage is equivalent to supporting an additional 18,000 persons (or an equivalent amount of

combined residential and non-residential flow). There are no current OEPA “findings and orders” for the wastewater treatment plant.

The county operates two other treatment facilities. One serves East Knox Elementary School in Bladensburg. The other, a lagoon system, serves the Pleasant View Acre Subdivision and has a maximum capacity of 59 houses. These facilities are illustrated on **Map 13**.

Parks and Recreation

Recreation and park land includes areas for active recreation such as ball fields and passive recreation such as nature trails and gardens. The rolling hills, streams, and open fields provide many outdoor recreational opportunities including hiking, water and snow skiing, biking, fishing, and boating. Public parks are classified in three categories: neighborhood parks, major urban parks, and regional parks. Publicly owned park and recreation facilities, excepting the privately owned Ramser Arboretum, are shown on **Map 14**.

- **Neighborhood Parks:** There are 11 neighborhood parks in Knox County, ranging in size from 1 to 18 acres. Their primary function is to serve residents within the immediate area, although some may have facilities available for larger events. Parks in this category cover approximately 73 acres.
- **Major Urban Parks:** The four major urban parks, provide public recreational space for a larger section of the community, or provide enough space and facilities for local and regional events. These parks range from 20 to 50 acres in size. Parks in this category cover approximately 140 acres.
- **Regional Parks:** These parks serve a regional area and provide active and passive recreational activities, including boating, hiking, fishing, hunting, biking, and camping. Roadside parks are also included in this category because they used by travelers as rest areas. Combined acreage of regional parks is approximately 3,182 acres. These parks include three large wildlife areas (the Mohican, Kokosing, Knox Lake Wildlife Areas) and Wolf Run Regional Park.
- The Mohican River Wildlife Area consists of two separate units called the Upper and Lower Areas. Most of the land was acquired from the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District in 1958. The areas are on the eastern boundary of Knox County and in Coshocton County. The stretch of Mohican River which flows through the Area averages one hundred feet in width and is comprised of relatively long, deep pools with occasional ripples. Recreational activities in wildlife areas include fishing, canoeing, and hunting. Conservation activities include protection and improvement of the shrubbery and permanent grasslands, maintenance of small portions of open bottom land, and habitat development for native wildlife. The only facilities are a parking lot and a primitive boat launching ramp at the Upper Area.
- The Kokosing Wildlife Area, north of Fredericktown, provides good cover for deer, rabbits, turkeys, and pheasants. Public hunting is permitted on the 580-acre tract during the appropriate seasons. The Kokosing Reservoir, along Waterford Road north of Fredericktown, is stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, saugeye, crappies, catfish, and other common species. The Kokosing River, flowing from northwest to southeast through the County, offers scenic views and good water quality.
- The Knox Lake Wildlife Area, northeast of Fredericktown, is stocked with largemouth bass, crappies, bluegills, perch, and other common species. Knox Lake is twenty-feet at its deepest point near the spillway. The lake then tapers at the northern end to between two and four feet. There are boat ramps, boat rental, bait, and parking facilities.

Kokosing Gap Trail

Besides more typical public park and open areas, the Kokosing Gap Trail (KGT) is a popular outdoor recreation facility for residents and visitors. The KGT is a paved trail through the woods along the Kokosing River between Mount Vernon and Danville via Gambier and Howard. The KGT is owned by the Board of County Commissioners and is maintained by the Board of Trustees of the Kokosing Gap Trail, Inc., a 501 (C) (3) tax-exempt organization. This organization is responsible for day-to-day maintenance, fund raising, and coordination of volunteers. All support facilities, such as water fountains, rest rooms, benches, parking lots, and equipment were funded by donations and gifts coordinated by the Board of Trustees, which receives no federal, state or local funds for daily operation. The KGT was constructed on a former railroad right-of-way and is considered the heart of a “Greenway” from central to northeastern Knox County. The term “greenway” has been applied to generally linear areas that can tie local parks together to form a more cohesive park and recreation system. This concept is discussed in more detail later.

The total distance of the KGT is 13.8 miles and the route is shown on **Map 15**. Each segment of the KGT (Mount Vernon to Gambier, Gambier to Howard, and Howard to Danville) is approximately 4.5 miles.

In Mount Vernon, there is a spur along the Kokosing, near Mount Vernon Avenue that heads westward toward Route 13. Eventually this segment will become part of the KGT.

Since the KGT was constructed, its popularity has increased and a number of associated improvements have been made. Some recent improvements include:

- Five plaques describing local history were placed along the trail.
- A bridge was built between the KGT and the Brown Family Environmental Center at Kenyon College.
- 2000 flowering bulbs were planted along the KGT.
- The 1924 Chesapeake & Ohio railway caboose was relocated from the former Pennsylvania Railroad station on South Main Street in Mount Vernon beside the trail in Gambier.
- Rotary Park was constructed along the trail near the Village of Howard. This new park includes play ground equipment, landscaping, restrooms, and picnic facilities. It was funded by the Rotary Club which raised private donations and secured volunteers to help construct the improvements.

At the northeastern end of the KGT in Danville is the Mohican Valley Trail (MVT). The MVT is 4.8 miles long and links Danville to Gann. At Gann the trail crosses the Mohican River through a 370-foot covered bridge called the “Bridge of Dreams.” East of the bridge the trail extends into Holmes County and connects to the Holmes County Trail.

Outdoor Recreation Space

One negative indicator of the quality of life in Knox County is the available acreage of parks and outdoor recreation areas. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources publishes the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) as Ohio’s official policy document for outdoor recreation. The SCORP provides data on outdoor recreation acreage by county. According to the ODNR, the total size of Knox County is 338,672 acres (over 529 square miles). This ranks the County in the top one-fourth (number 21) of Ohio’s 88 counties by geographic size. However, Knox County does not rank favorably in amount of public outdoor recreation acreage (land and water). Knox County has 5,871 acres of recreation

acreage (land and water) or approximately 2 percent of the total area. This places the county near the bottom of the third quartile of Ohio's 88 counties in percentage of area available for outdoor recreation (number 61).

Knox County has 108 acres of outdoor recreation area per 1,000 residents. Although this ranks Knox County 47th among the 88 counties in Ohio, this ratio is still significantly below the state average of 132 acres per 1,000 residents. Typically, however, counties with smaller amounts of outdoor recreation acreage per 1,000 residents are in areas with more extensive agricultural activity.

Transportation Characteristics

Previous Planning Efforts

The following transportation studies and planning efforts are referenced as background information: A Thoroughfare Plan for the Mount Vernon Area, Mount Vernon Bypass Study, and Access Ohio¹².

- A Thoroughfare Plan for the Mount Vernon Area: The Plan was adopted by the City of Mount Vernon in May 1992.
- Mount Vernon Bypass Study: The Study was completed in May 1995 and it developed some concepts advanced in the 1992 Thoroughfare Plan. The Study focused on assessment of the need for a connecting roadway around Mount Vernon.
- Access Ohio: This transportation plan is a comprehensive view of the State's highway network. It classified roads as arterials and collectors and identified deficiencies and proposed improvements.
- The Ohio Department of Transportation, Division of Planning conducted a study of traffic conditions on state routes and in 2004 issued a report, "Mount Vernon Transportation Planning Study: Analysis of Existing Traffic Conditions." The Study documented the daily loss of 2063 more hours by motorists in Mount Vernon than would be lost if all traffic proceeded continually at the posted speed limits. The loss occurs primarily in the downtown area. The Study concluded that none of the traffic in Mount Vernon met the ODOT criteria for congestion.

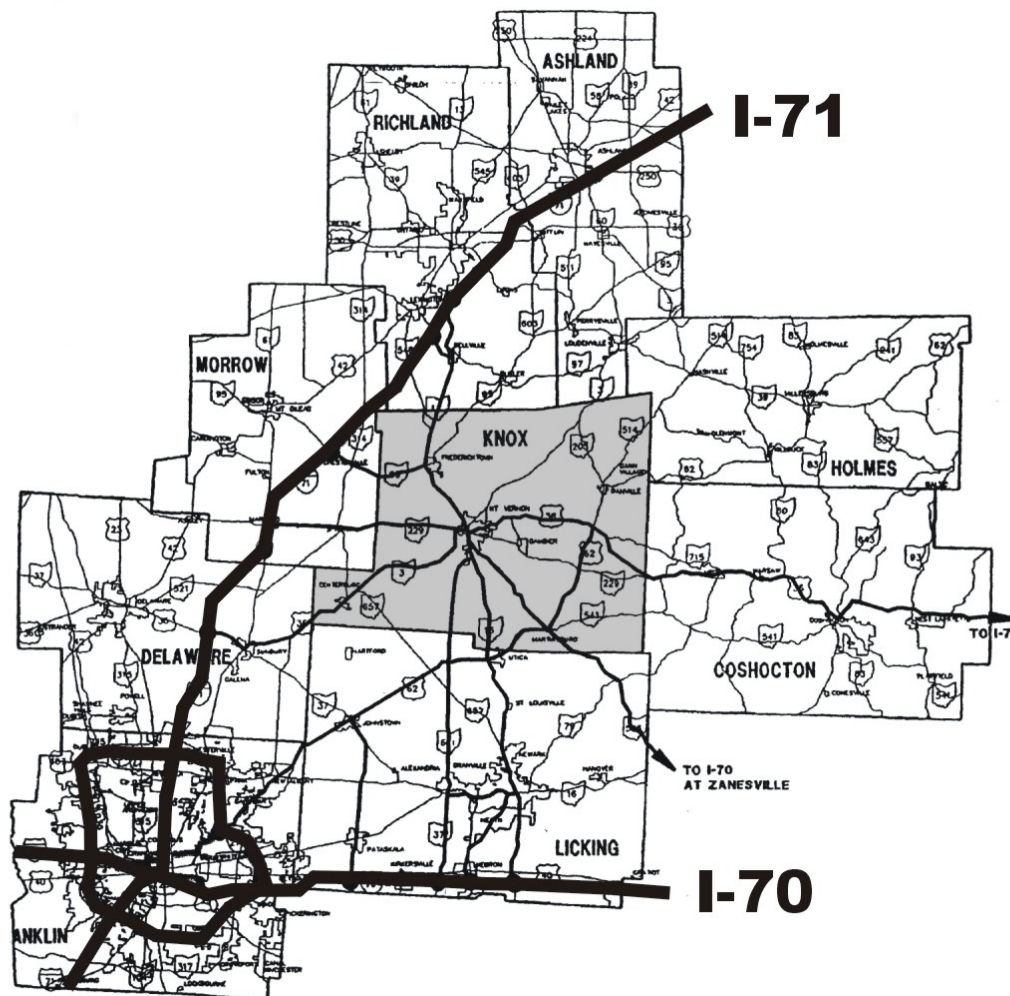
Nevertheless, the traffic patterns found by the Study characterized the routes serving Mount Vernon as an interchange, rather than a junction. In an interchange, multiple routes converge to a single area for distribution. As a result, the flow of traffic on all of the roadways is similar as illustrated below. Because the routes traverse downtown Mount Vernon on two or more streets, they must jog or "dog-leg," necessitating turns. Traffic counts in the Study demonstrate that at intersections where such jogs occur, large numbers of vehicles, including trucks, leave the marked route and continue on streets that are not part of the current routing.

¹² These plans are addressed in more detail in 1998 Comprehensive Plan.

Interstate Linkages

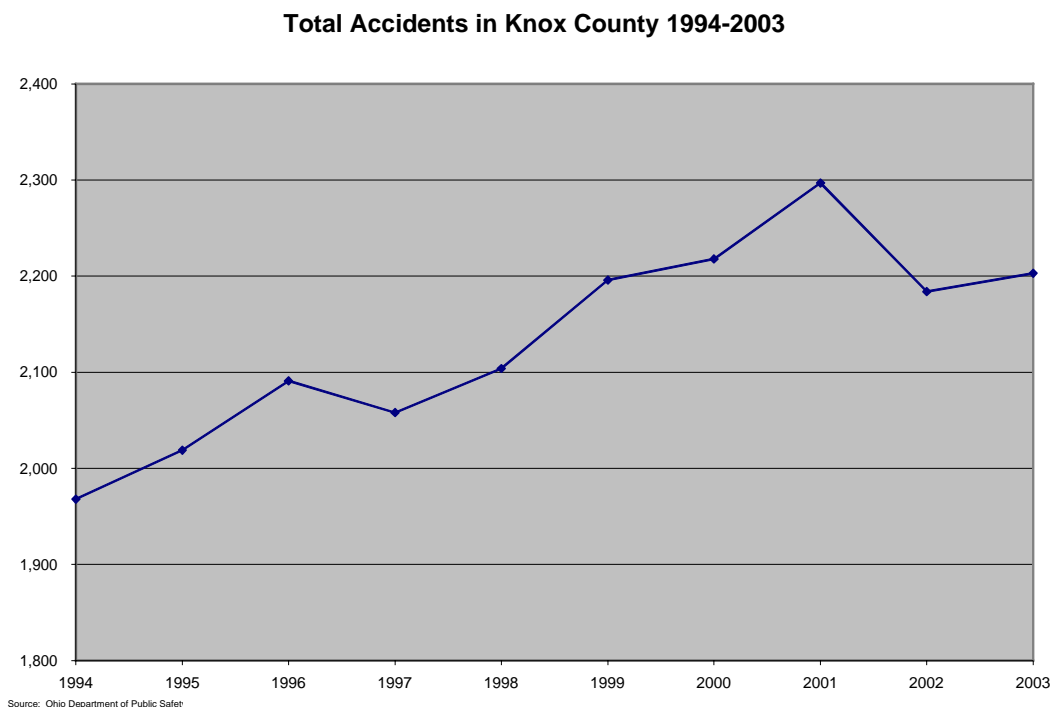
Figure 8 below, illustrates the primary routes in and out of Knox County, and their connections to interstate highways. There are three interstates in the region: I-71, I-70, and I-77. Interstate 71 is nearest, nearly touching the northwestern corner of the County, and providing a connection with the Columbus Metropolitan area. It is accessible by way of SR 95, SR 229, SR 13, and US 36. Interstate 70 travels east-west through Columbus and is most directly accessible from Knox County by SR 661 and SR 13. Interstate 77 is accessible to the east by U.S. 36.

Figure 8 Regional Routes



Accident Counts

The chart below shows the annual accident count in Knox County from 1994 to 2003.



Traffic Accidents in Knox County

The Ohio Department of Public Safety keeps a record of all reported accidents by county. Information on accidents in 2003 was compiled and analyzed. There were 2,203 accidents reported in Knox County in 2003. The roads with the greatest number of traffic accidents were:

- US 36 (35.8 miles) -- 229 accidents (10.4 percent of all reported or 6.4 accidents per mile)
- SR 13 (23.0 miles) -- 106 accidents (4.8 percent of all reported or 4.6 accidents per mile)
- Coshocton Avenue (1.8 miles) -- 102 accidents (4.6 percent of all reported or accidents 56.7 per mile)
- SR 229 (25.4 miles) -- 99 accidents (4.5 percent of all reported or 3.9 accidents per mile)
- SR 3 (18.2 miles not overlapping with U.S. 36) -- 66 accidents (3.0 percent of all reported or 3.6 accidents per mile).

The record also shows the intersection of Coshocton Road and Vernonview Drive as a common site for accidents.

Many intersections along US 36 also appear in the record as frequent sites of vehicular crashes, including: Oliver (T.R. 403), Updike (T.R. 109) and Wilson (T.R. 110). Not surprisingly, US 36 is one of the most heavily traveled and most dangerous roads in the county in terms of accidents.

Recent data indicate that fatal traffic accidents have been declining. In 1999 there were 14 fatal accidents in Knox County. This figure fell to 10 fatalities in 2000 and 2001 and 9 fatalities in 2002 and 2003.

Vehicle Registration

The following table shows the number of vehicles registered in Knox County by year from 2000 to 2004 and the annual increase or decrease. The total increase in passenger cars over the five-year period was approximately 5.2%. By comparison, the number of vehicle registrations issued in Ohio increased by approximately 1.8% from 8,260,870 in 2000 to 8,409,129 in 2004. The number of locally-owned vehicles on Knox County roads increased significantly more than the number in Ohio.

Year	Passenger Vehicle Registration	Percent Inc / Dec
2000	36,913	
2001	37,879	2.6%
2002	38,600	1.9%
2003	38,988	1.0%
2004	38,954	-0.1%

Source: Ohio Department of Motor Vehicles

Significant Areas of Traffic Generation in Knox County

Areas that are major origins and destinations for vehicular trips include:

Coshocton Avenue Within Mount Vernon

The eastern side of Mount Vernon along Coshocton Road (U.S. 36) is the primary highway-oriented shopping district in Knox County. The commercial activity makes Coshocton Avenue one of the busiest roadways in Knox County, with traffic approaching 27,000 cars per day.

One reason for the high accident rate on Coshocton Avenue is the conflict between access to adjoining property and movement of through traffic. This is a common problem on high-volume commercial roadways throughout Ohio. Without innovative measures, such as access roads and shared access points, a roadway cannot maximize both through traffic and access to adjoining property because of the inherent conflict between turning traffic and through traffic.

The problems with the flow of traffic on Coshocton Avenue have prompted studies and subsequent improvements. In 1989 a traffic study recommended both short-term and long-term improvements in response to increasing traffic volumes and proposed commercial development. One recommendation was development of an access management plan, including construction of future access roads. In 1994 the City of Mount Vernon initiated an improvement project for widening Coshocton Avenue to five full lanes from Vernonview Drive to Upper Gilchrist Road with curbs, gutters, sidewalks, associated drainage improvements, and two new traffic signals. That project was completed in 2003.

In August 1997, an updated plan for access roads with two new signals to improve traffic flow along Coshocton Avenue was proposed. One access road south of Coshocton Avenue would connect Yaeger Road with Coshocton Road. The other access road would be north of and almost parallel to Coshocton Road, from Vernonview Drive eastward. Funding for these improvements is still being investigated.

Harcourt Road

Development along U.S. 36 south of the intersection with OH 229, on the outskirts of Mount Vernon in Clinton Township has been limited by the availability of public water and sanitary sewers. With the extension of public water lines and the anticipated extension of public sewer lines to the area, development on Harcourt Road is expected to increase. Later in this Update the need to encourage redevelopment of this area, as opposed to expanding it as a commercial strip south westward along U.S. 36, is discussed.

Industrial Area South of Mount Vernon

A large industrial area, partly in Clinton Township and partly within the City, is south of Mount Vernon between Oh 13 and Oh 661. The area generates significant worker and truck traffic. Finding better ways for trucks to carry goods into and out of the industrial area efficiently and safely is a major economic issue. This concern was a significant issue in the development of the 1992 Thoroughfare Plan and the subsequent Bypass Study.

Apple Valley

Apple Valley continues becoming less a resort and more a place for permanent year-round homes. In recent years housing construction in Apple Valley has equaled about twenty percent of residential construction in the County (as described more fully later). Concern for how current and future residents will travel to and from places to work and shop is emerging as a significant transportation issue.

Despite current construction, “build-out” of Apple Valley will not occur for many years because it currently contains approximately 1,500 housing units, but was platted with approximately 6,600 lots. While some existing houses are located on two or more lots, and some future homes will also be located on two or more lots, the remaining number of building sites is very large. The potential for impact on roads and streets is equally large.

For illustrative purposes assume that 4,000 lots remain vacant and three-fourths of them will become home sites. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) calculates that each detached single-family housing unit generates an average of 9.57 trips ends per day (each trip end is a trip to or from a housing unit). Although that estimate of trips per day may be high given the composition of households in Apple Valley, it suggests that traffic flow could increase by 28,710 trip ends per day.

Thus, with current and projected traffic flow into and out of Apple Valley, the intersections of S.R. 36 and Apple Valley Boulevard (County 3) will likely become more dangerous and congested. This will likely produce the need for additional lane improvements or traffic controls to maintain the safety and capacity of U.S. 36.

Downtown Mount Vernon

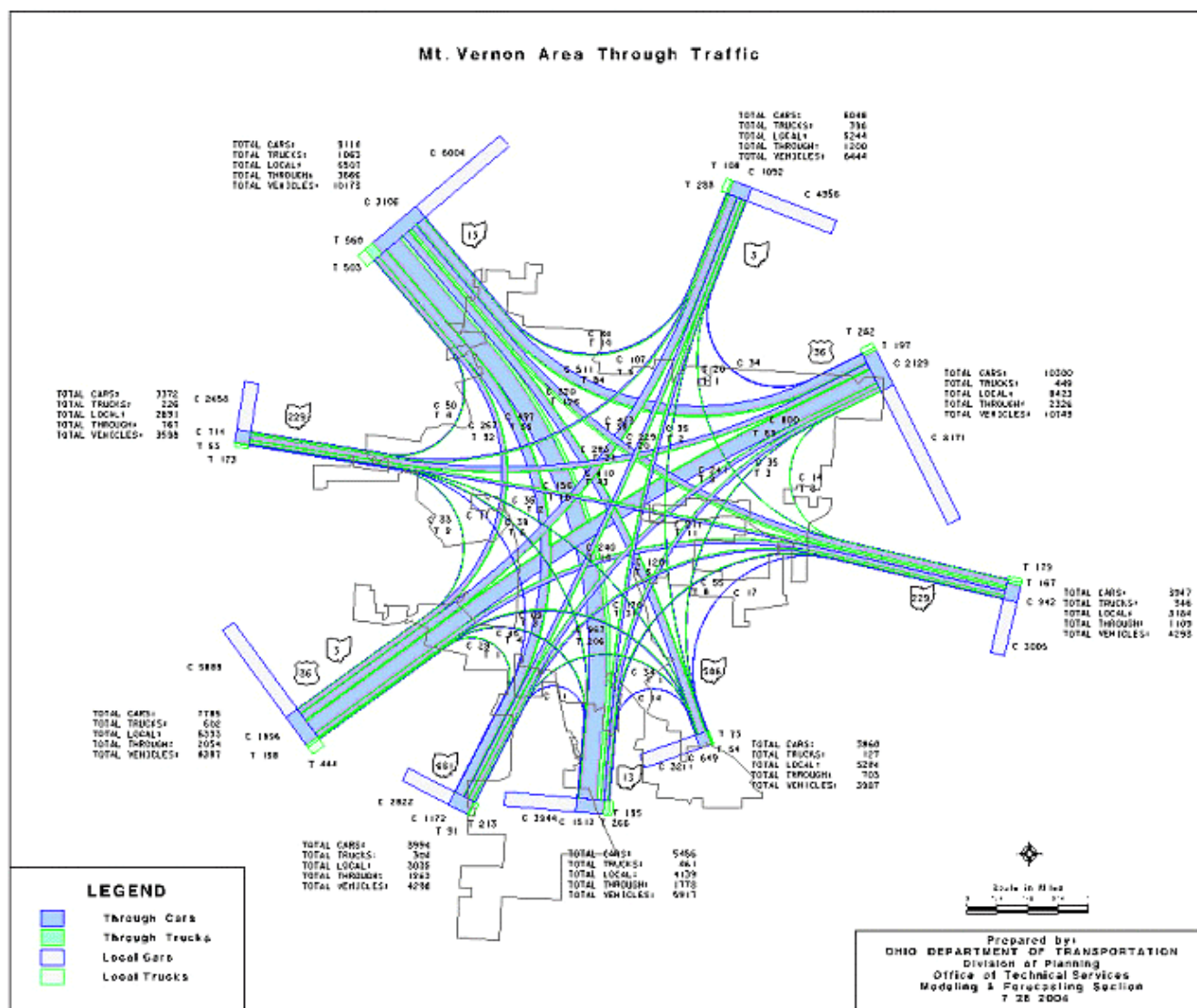
The downtown area of Mount Vernon is both a thriving local center of business and a regional tourist attraction for dining, shopping, and entertainment. The downtown square is also the intersection of several local and regional highways, namely U.S. 36, S.R. 3, S.R. 13, and S.R. 229. Two of the highways, U.S. Route 36 and State Route 13 were designated major arterials in the 1998 Plan. State Route 3 and S.R. 229 were designated minor arterial routes. Traffic around the square travels one way clockwise. It is especially difficult for trucks to pass through this intersection. Also, the additional traffic makes the square hazardous for pedestrian-oriented activities and could compromise the atmosphere that attracts tourists. Traffic counts at this intersection show it as the busiest in Knox County.

The “Mount Vernon Transportation Planning Study: Analysis of Existing Traffic Conditions” issued in December 2004 concluded that none of the traffic in Mount Vernon met the ODOT criteria for congestion. The study identified impediments to the flow of traffic, including traffic signals and left turns on state routes, and provided a data-based conceptual framework for addressing them.

Brick Streets

Mount Vernon has a substantial mileage of brick streets, which adds to the historic atmosphere. However, the cost of repairing the brick streets is a major concern for the City. Although brick streets can far outlast conventional pavements, repair can be very expensive. The City disbursed \$125,000 in 2002 to repair McKenzie Street from East High Street to East Chestnut Street and to repair the intersection at East Chestnut. In 2003 the City disbursed \$90,000 to repair curbs and gutters on Ohio Avenue eastward from Gay Street. Meeting the need to reconstruct approximately 7.5 miles of brick streets is estimated at \$11 million. The continued existence of the brick streets is related to truck movement through central portions of Mount Vernon, because heavy trucks hasten damage.

(From: "Mount Vernon Transportation Planning Study, 2004.")



Railroads

When a comprehensive plan was prepared in 1974, two active rail lines traversed Knox County. One was the Penn-Central line, which followed an irregular east-west path across the county through Centerburg, Mount Vernon, Gambier, and Danville. This line was abandoned and the right-of-way from Mount Vernon to Danville was redeveloped as the Kokosing Gap Bike Trail. The Penn-Central right-of-way from Mount Vernon to the county line southwest of Centerburg will be developed as the Heart of Ohio Trail. The other line was the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (CSX) running north/south through the County. Part of this line, from Newark to Mount Vernon, was leased in late 2004 by the Ohio Central Railway and serves industrial and agricultural cargo uses. The part of the line from Mount Vernon to Fredericktown has been proposed for redeveloped as the Owl Creek Bike Trail. The part north of Fredericktown was abandoned.

Transit Facilities

Transit services are provided by the Mid-Ohio Transit Authority (MOTA). Services vary and include buses picking up elderly and disabled at their homes, taxi service throughout the County, and shuttle services.

Airports

There are seven airfields, two heliports and one county airport in Knox County. Five of the airfields are private, while two are public. All serve either corporate or pleasure craft. The two heliports serve Knox Community Hospital and Kokosing Construction.

Knox County Airport

The Knox County Airport (KCA), located four miles southwest of Mount Vernon in Miller Township, is a public-use airport owned by the Knox County Regional Airport Authority. The airport is accessible from S.R. 661 and U.S. 36, south of Mount Vernon. Classified as a general aviation airport, its single runway and related improvements support the general aviation needs of Knox County. By the end of 2006 the runway will be nearly 5,500 feet in length and 100 feet in width with a parallel taxiway. A terminal building provides space for passengers along with offices and restrooms. Several hangars provide space for storing aircraft. A pilot school is also associated with the airport.

Regional Development

Major development projects are underway or completed near Knox County. Because of their sizes, these developments will impact the quality of life in Knox County as build-out occurs. Two major developments include:

- Easton: Located near 1-270 and Morse Road, Easton is a 1,300 acre development that will have 12 million square feet of mixed use development and employ 40,000 people when completed. The development currently draws 30 million visitors annually.
- Polaris: Polaris is located along 1-71 in southern Delaware County. The development offers a variety of mixed uses, including shopping, dining, lodging, and corporations. The Polaris Fashion Mall is a new \$200 million regional mall. The mall has 1.5 million square feet and over 160 stores.

Chapter 4

Development Trends

Communities are in a constant state of change as they respond to social and economic forces. Some of these forces of change are the result of local conditions, while others are the result of influences from regional, national, or even global considerations. Identifying trends and the direction of social and economic change is useful in understanding the influences on future community development. However, it is important to recognize that trends can change, and often do.

Trends in Rural Growth

For most of the last century, metropolitan areas grew more rapidly than non-metropolitan areas as people migrated to urban areas to take advantage of opportunities for employment. More recently, this trend began to reverse and rural areas generally experienced greater population gains in the 1990s than did urban areas. During the early part of that decade, three out of four non-metropolitan counties gained population. This growth is thought to have been fueled by more rural residents staying in rural areas and an in-migration of persons who preferred a more rural environment (*The Rural Rebound Revisited*, American Demographics, July 1995). This trend continues today.

The recent increase in migration to rural areas is due partially to an increased willingness to commute greater distances to employment. According to U.S. Census statistics, between 1960 and 2000, the number of workers who commuted to other counties more than tripled from 9 million to 29.6 million. As a result, construction of houses in rural and suburban areas boomed, while that in central cities and on the fringes of metropolitan areas nearly halted.

The decentralization of residential development may continue and even accelerate in the future due to several factors (The State of the Nation's Housing, 1996, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University). Advances in telecommunications, preferences for rural life styles, and second homes for vacation and retirement are factors that may contribute to the sustained movement of population toward more suburban and rural areas.

Exurban Growth

A new pattern of growth began emerging in the latter part of the 20th century. This pattern, exurban growth, is different from typical suburban growth in that exurbs are located further from urban centers and contain a variety of land uses and populations¹³. In these areas, farms are dispersed among a variety of low-density types, sizes, and ages of housing and rural towns are intermixed with commercial, retail, and industrial developments. Basically, exurban areas are in the process of transitioning from rural to more urban conditions. Although multiple definitions for exurban areas exist, the general characteristics of exurbia are:

- Located 10-50 miles from urban centers with populations of 500,000, **OR** located 5-30 miles from a city with a population of 50,000;

¹³ Information for this section obtained from "The Exurban Change Program: Analyzing Rural-Urban Change", The Ohio State University Extension, Defining Exurban. Also, "The Exurban Change Project: Trends, Causes, Impacts of Growth in Rural-Urban Areas, Elena Irwin, Dept of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, Ohio State University, and OSU Extension.

- Workers commute at least 25 minutes one way to work;
- Communities are comprised of new and long-term residents;
- Development is low-density; and
- A mixture of rural and urban land uses.

Many factors have helped foster exurban development. Some of these factors include: better road systems, increased and better technology, more affordable land in rural areas, the perception that rural life is better than urban life, and desires for larger homes and yards. These factors have helped many exurban areas experience much higher growth rates than some urban areas.

The Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, Ohio State University, and OSU Extension has worked to describe and to characterize the exurban growth process and how exurban areas differ from one another in Ohio¹⁴. The goal was to analyze characteristics of townships to identify trends that “characterize stages of exurbanization and identify characteristics of exurban subsets.” With some counties remaining rural, the analysis identified six stages in the exurbanization of townships. These are:

Stage 1: Early Stage—*“Almost Rural”*, Low urban, slow growth

Stage 2: Early Stage—*“Taking Off”*, Low urban, above average growth

Stage 3: Mid Stage—*“Rapid Change”*, Low urban, fast growth

Stage 4: Mid Stage—*“In Full Gear”*, Medium urban, above average growth

Stage 5: Late Stage—*“Mature”*, Medium urban, below average growth

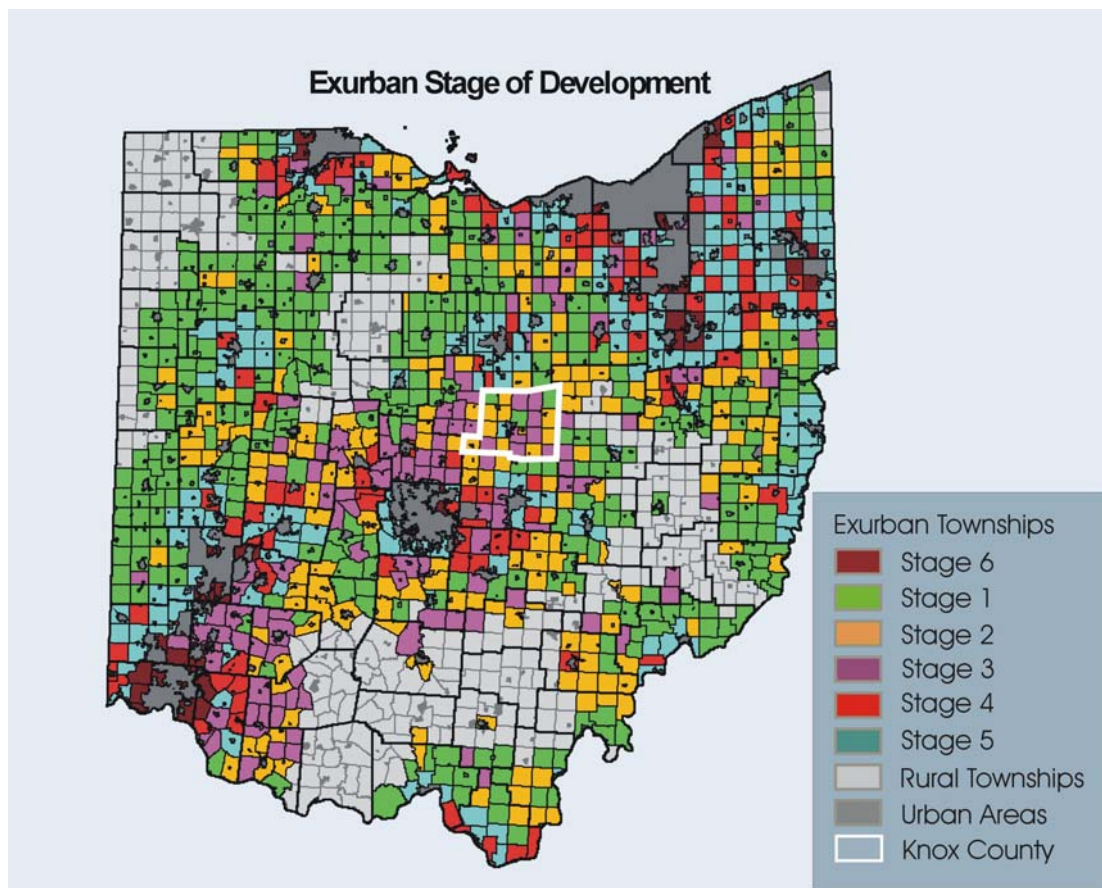
Stage 6: Late Stage—*“Urban Equivalent”*, High urban, above average growth

According to this study, three Knox County townships are in Stage 1, ten townships are in Stage 2, eight townships are in Stage 3, and one township (Clinton) is in Stage 5. **Figure 1** illustrates the statewide analysis¹⁵ and each township in Knox County.

¹⁴ From “The Exurban Change Project: Trends, Causes, Impacts of Growth in Rural-Urban Areas, Elena Irwin, Dept of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, Ohio State University, and OSU Extension.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Figure 1



State Rural Growth Trends

One trend in Ohio is a large proportion of rural subdivision activity. Under Ohio law, local counties may adopt and enforce subdivision regulations that commonly categorize subdivisions into three types. Major platted subdivisions typically include new streets and central water and/or sewer services. Lots in platted subdivisions typically are smaller and land is developed more efficiently with consideration being given to issues such as drainage, new road intersections, buffering, etc. Minor subdivisions are often between one and four residential lots that are less than five acres created from a larger parcel (commonly a farmstead). In most counties, such minor subdivisions (or "lot splits") receive only cursory review in terms of minimum lot size and well/septic system feasibility before they are recorded. Besides major and minor subdivisions, land divisions that involve lots larger than five acres are specifically exempt from subdivision review.

A survey was conducted statewide in 1996 by the County Engineers Association on subdivision activity in the unincorporated areas of Ohio. The survey found that major platted subdivisions encompassed approximately 19,483 new lots and consumed 9,730 acres. By comparison, 22,377 new lots were created under the rules for minor subdivisions or were more than five acres. The lot splits and exempt subdivisions involved 68,740 acres of land. While it is not likely that all minor and exempt subdivisions were subdivisions for development purposes, the ratio of land being subdivided in less dense and random parcels compared with platted subdivisions is approximately seven to one. This raised serious issues about the consumption of land resources and the pattern of sprawl in rural areas throughout Ohio.

Other evidence of this consumptive trend is found in the fact that, between 1990 and 2000, Ohio ranked 22nd in the nation in population growth. However, the State ranked 8th for rate of urbanization, demonstrating that the conversion of land from agricultural to residential use is taking place at a much

faster rate than population growth¹⁶. Between 1997 and 2002, Knox County lost 8,139 acres of farmland, an average of over 1,600 acres per year or approximately 4.5 acres per day¹⁷.

Regional Growth Trends

Knox County is socially and economically linked to the central Ohio region and aspects of its future are tied to regional trends. Many national trends in rural and suburban growth identified above are strongly evident in central Ohio. Central Ohio has been a growth area within the state and substantial portions of this growth have been outward from Columbus and Franklin County. Between 1990 and 2000, Franklin County had the largest share of population growth in the region (52 percent)¹⁸. However, between 2000 and 2030 Franklin County is expected to account for only 34 percent of the region's growth. This change may be supported to some extent by future employment opportunities. According to projections prepared by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), the concentration of jobs in Franklin County is declining. By 2030 Franklin County's regional share of jobs will have decreased from 77 percent in 2000 to 71 percent as jobs move to outlying areas. Projections of this nature are confirmed by developments such as Easton and Polaris, which have added or will add thousands of jobs within and near the outerbelt (I-270).

Communities such as the Village of Sunbury (approximately 10 miles southwest of the Village of Centerburg) are currently experiencing rapid growth. There, a 710-home development was approved in 2004 by the planning and zoning commission. According to the US Census Bureau, the Village has been experiencing rapid growth. Between 1980 and March 1990, 103 new homes were built. This figure increased to 239 between 1990 and March 2000 (a 230% increase).

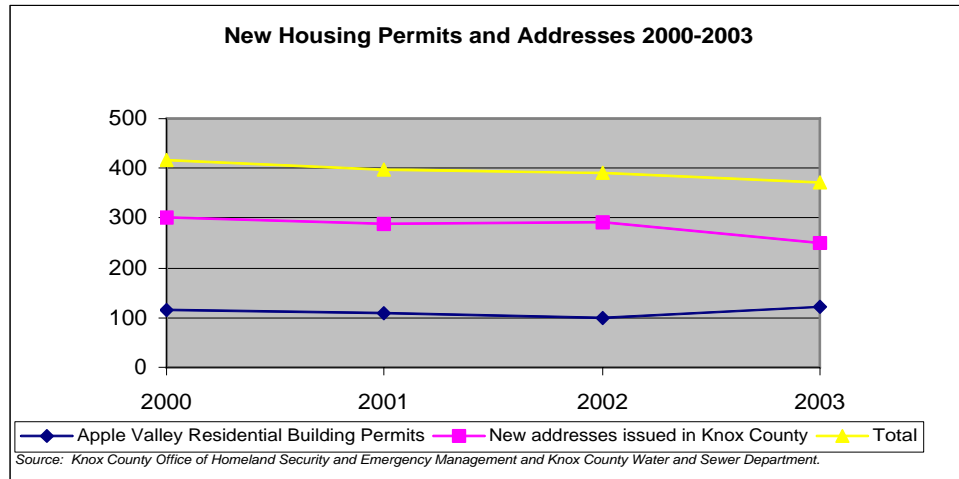
Data from the US Census can quickly become outdated because the federal government only conducts a full-scale census every 10 years. As the year 2010 approaches, data from the 2000 U.S. Census for Knox County will become less informative. For this reason and because of a belief that construction activity has increased since 2000, effort was made to document residential development in the County since 2000.

Documentation of residential construction activity focused on two primary sources of information: 1) the Knox County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, which issues new addresses for all new residences; and 2) the Knox County Water and Sewer Department, which provided information about the number of houses built in the Apple Valley area. It was necessary to combine these sources of information since Apple Valley is already platted and has assigned addresses. These two sources showed that new housing construction has likely been occurring at the rate of approximately 400 units per year over the last several years. This construction activity is shown in **Figure 2** on page 42. Given the current average of 2.5 persons per household, Knox County has been growing at a rate of approximately 1,000 per year since the 2000 Census.

¹⁶ From *Preserving Ohio's Farmland: A Report of Recommendations to the Ohio House Subcommittee on Growth and Land Use* by Sara Nikolic, Ohio Policy Director, American Farmland Trust, July 2004.

¹⁷ Data calculated from the 2002 *Census of Agriculture-County Data*. Table 8 and the Ohio Office of Strategic Research *Ohio County Profiles*.

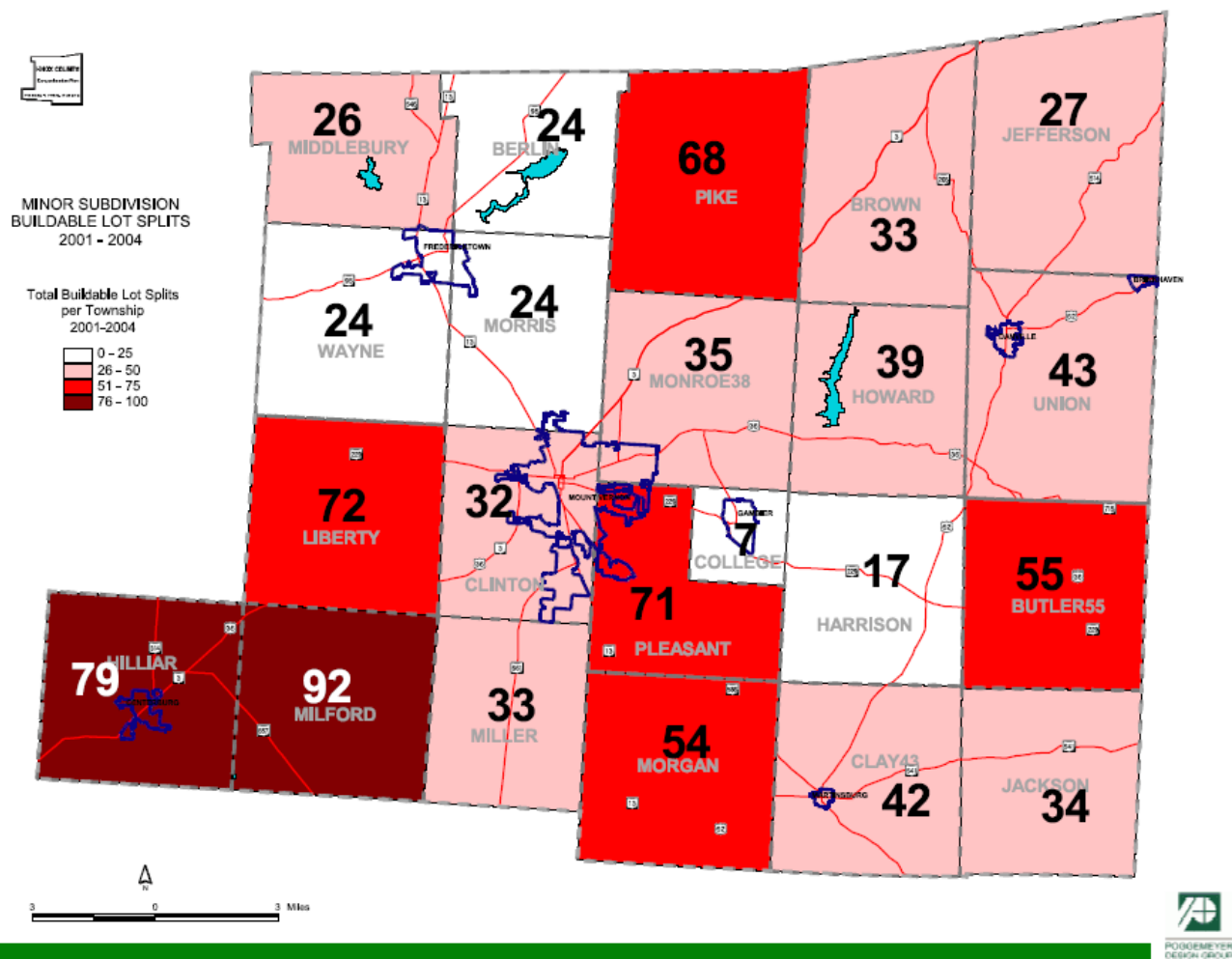
Figure 2



This rate of housing construction is verified by new well/septic tank permits issued by the Knox County Health Department. Since 2000, between 200 and 300 new well/septic tank permits have been issued annually by the Department. New well/septic tank permits would not be an indicator of the amount of residential construction occurring in incorporated areas with central water and sewer or in unincorporated areas, such as Apple Valley, where central water and sewer are available.

The number of well/septic tank permits indicates that a high percentage of new housing is being constructed in the unincorporated areas of Knox County not served by central water and sewer. As noted previously, between 1980 and 1990 more than two-thirds of growth in population in Knox County occurred in unincorporated areas. Between 1990 and 1997, the Knox County Health Department issued permits for more than 1,500 new septic systems, suggesting a substantial trend toward rural development. The 975 new permits issued by the Health Department between 2000 and 2003 substantiate continuation of that trend.

Another indicator of the trend of rural development is minor subdivision activity (lot splits). Between 2001 and 2004, there were 1,018 total lot splits in Knox County with 931 splits being buildable. The overall trend for the County during this time was approximately 200-250 buildable lot splits per year. The townships with the most lot splits during this time were Milford (92), Hilliar (79), Liberty (72), and Pleasant (71). The map below shows the total buildable lot splits for each township between 2001 and 2004.



Projected Knox County Growth

Predictions for future populations can be unreliable and can vary substantially from source to source. The most straightforward methods for projecting population is to use current trends, assuming that what has been happening in the past will continue. Of course, there is no guarantee that this will be true and in fact, it is more likely that current trends will change.

Population projections for Knox County, published by Claritas, show a continued trend of steady population growth for the County. The projection indicates the addition of 5,710 residents between 2000 and 2009. The 2009 population of Knox County is therefore projected to be 60,210. This projected growth will have an impact on the County through increased demands on community facilities, housing, and infrastructure. Population projections prepared by the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) Office of Strategic Research project similar growth in Knox County, i.e. a 2010 population of 60,598.

The growth projections for Knox County indicate that the slower growth of the 1980s in Knox County has been replaced by much more rapid growth. The Office of Strategic Research is predicting that Knox County's population will grow by 11.2 percent by 2010 while the State's will increase by just 2.8 percent.

Given this projected level of overall growth, effort was made to identify growth areas within Knox County that are likely to experience higher than average levels of growth. If the 1990-2000 population trends continue, it is expected that growth will be highest in the following areas:

- Centerburg
- City of Mount Vernon
- Apple Valley and Howard Township
- Rural Townships: Middlebury, Brown, Butler, Clay, and Morgan: While growth in absolute figures will not be as significant as the three areas above, growth in these townships was above 30 percent during 1990-2000.

It is interesting to note that if the current rate of housing construction is sustained over the next 20 years, there will be an additional 2,230 housing units in Apple Valley. Assuming an average household size of 2.5, the resulting population of Apple Valley will then approach 10,000. That population is commonly associated with a small city.

It is likely that there will be continued pressure for residential development in scattered rural unincorporated areas. Currently, a substantial part of the demand for residential sites is satisfied by minor subdivision activity (lot splits from farms and larger rural tracts). Such development is expected to continue, although it is expected to be affected by initiatives described later in this Update.

Projected Age Groups

In the future, the dominant age groups within Knox County's population will change. The post-World War II baby boomer is becoming middle-aged. By the year 2009, when all of the baby boomers will be more than 50 years old, more than 32 percent of the County's population will be over 50, compared with 29 percent in 1990¹⁹. In 2009, the median age of the Knox County population is projected to be 37.3 compared with 34 in 1990.

Increases in the "empty nester" (people between the ages of 45 and 64) and "senior" (people 65 and older) groups will most likely change the types of demands placed on the community for social services, housing, employment, health care and other factors. Often, people in these age groups do not require large houses because their households are typically only one or two persons. These trends vary nationally, however, and there are indications that new houses are actually becoming larger. This is examined further in the section entitled "Housing Trends." Additionally, aging of the population will lead to slower rates of population growth in the future.

Life Expectancy

People are living longer than at any point in history, and the clear trend has been toward even longer life expectancies. Life expectancy for those born in 2002 is 77.4 years²⁰. This is an increase of two years over those born in 1990, whose life expectancy is 75.4 years. This longer life expectancy has long-term implications for life in the twenty-first century. For example, not only will older residents make up a greater proportion of the population, but people in the highest age bracket (85 and older) will increase at a faster rate than the total elderly population. One estimate suggests that by the year 2050, one in eight Americans will be 75 years or older²¹. Increasing longevity and improved health at older ages may delay effective retirement and allow persons to stay in the work force longer. Since Knox County currently has a

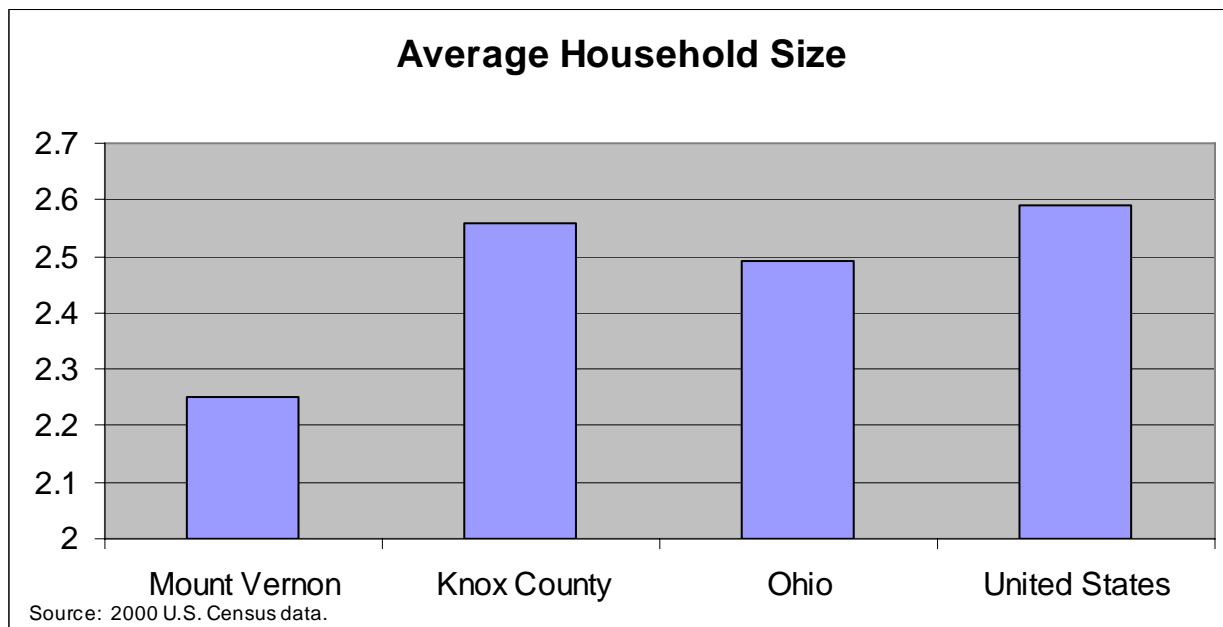
¹⁹ Source: Claritas, Pop-Facts: Demographic Trend, Knox County, OH.

²⁰ From the US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. "Health, United States, 2004".

²¹ From the US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. "Health, United States, 2004".

high proportion of older residents, this trend is especially noteworthy and will affect employment trends, health care, and demands for social services.

Household Trends



Household size is getting smaller in Knox County as it is in most other places in the United States. In 1980, the average number of persons per household in Knox County was 2.72 and had fallen to 2.57 by 1990 and to 2.56 by 2000. The chart above shows average household size in 2000 for Mount Vernon, Knox County, Ohio, and the U.S.. While Knox County had an average household size (2.56) larger than that of Ohio (2.49), the County's average was still smaller than that of the US (2.59). Mount Vernon, at 2.25, was significantly smaller than either the County or the State.

There are several reasons for the decline in household size. Among them is that more people are choosing single life over marriage. Further, when couples do get married, they often choose to delay having children until their careers are well established or choose not to have children at all. Increased longevity also contributes to decreased household size. Senior citizens often live in small households of only one or two. The result of decreased household size is that more dwellings must be constructed to house the same number of people. Thus, one very important result of this trend in household size is increased demand for new housing units.

Housing studies typically indicate that along with population growth, demand for new housing is a key determinant in the change in number of households. This is demonstrated when the percentage of increase in number of households is greater than the percentage increase in the population. In Knox County, the number of households increased by more than eight percent between 1980 and 1990 (from 15,895 to 17,230) compared with a 2.5 percent increase in population during that period. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of households increased (15.9%), almost twice as much as between 1980-1990, while the population increased by 14.8 percent.

General Trends In Housing Construction

A comparison of values between Knox County and the State of Ohio shows that the County's median home value (\$48,900) was over 22 percent less than the State's median home value (\$62,900) in 1990. By 2000 Knox County's median home value (\$92,100) was approximately 11 percent lower than the State's (\$103,700)²².

As the population of Knox County grows older, it is likely the demand for various types of housing will change. For example, as the numbers of smaller households increase, shifts toward smaller housing units can be expected. However, recent national trends show that new home buyers want much larger houses with larger rooms than buyers wanted 30 years ago. To obtain this, home buyers are willing to put the house on a smaller lot. The National Association of Home Builders suggests that the average size of new homes has increased from 1,500 square feet in 1970, to 2,080 square feet in 1990, to 2,230 square feet in 2002²³. In 2002 the percentage of new homes with 2,400 square feet or more accounted for 37 percent of the new units constructed compared to 10 percent in 1970 and 29 percent in 1990.

Employment Trends

The long-term employment and economic trends for Knox County are positive although lagging other regions of the State. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services project a 6.4 percent growth in employment in the North Central Ohio Economic Development Region between 2000-2010²⁴. This region encompasses Ashland, Crawford, Huron, Knox, Marion, Morrow, Richland, Seneca, and Wyandot counties. The agency predicts that approximately 15,000 new jobs will be created in the North Central Region. Almost all of these are expected to be in the service sector. This prediction follows the national shift from manufacturing to service sector jobs. Projected employment growth in the North Central Region is less than the Central Region, which includes Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Licking, Logan, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties. That region's projected employment growth for the same period is 16.1 percent.

Tourism

According to the Ohio Department of Development, during the 2003 travel year, 156 million travel trips were taken in or to the State of Ohio. Over 122 million of these trips were day trips with Central Ohio having the largest day trip market, 35.1 million visits. The top travel activities in the State include: special events (sports, festivals), touring, theme parks, and outdoor activities. Two types of tourism, heritage tourism and ecotourism, are gaining popularity and appear to be ideally suited to Knox County's natural features and built environment.

Heritage Tourism

Tourism related to historic and cultural sites, "heritage tourism," is gaining popularity nationwide. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 81 percent of U.S. adults included in their travels at least one historic/heritage, cultural, or arts related activity. Although actual statistics are difficult to obtain, a 2001 Report on Cultural and Historic Tourism stated that tourists to historic sites spend more money and stay longer than other types of tourists²⁵. Heritage tourists spend \$631 per trip as compared

²² Data from 2000 U.S. Census "Specified owner-occupied housing units."

²³ New Home Characteristics from "Housing Facts, Figures, and Trends."

²⁴ The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Job Outlook to 2010.

²⁵ www.ruralheritage.org/heritagetourism, website for "National Trust for Historic Preservation: Rural Heritage Program."

to \$457 for all US tourists. Heritage tourists also spend an average of 4.7 nights per trip as compared to 3.4 nights for all tourists. A 2001 article by the ParkNet National Park Service reported visiting cultural and historical sites ranked second behind shopping in activities engaged in while on vacation²⁶. Part of this increasing interest in historic areas is being attributed to the growing number of older vacationers who want educational experiences while traveling. The increase in heritage tourism is relevant to Knox County given the many local historical and cultural features identified previously.

The Rural Heritage Program cites the benefits of Heritage Tourism as new business and job creation, higher property values, and building community pride. However, the Program proposes that the best benefits from this niche tourism market are the diversification of area economies and preserving the unique character of a community.

The National Trusts' Heritage Tourism Program helps communities with the development of heritage tourism programs. The Trust created five principles to help communities "...develop appropriate strategies for sustaining economic growth without compromising either the integrity of the heritage resources or the quality of life for local residents."²⁷ These five principles include (1) collaboration, (2) preservation and protection, (3) making sites and programs come alive, (4) focusing on authenticity and quality of experience, and (5) finding the fit between a community or region and tourism.

Ecotourism

While definitions of ecotourism and nature tourism vary from organization to organization, generally speaking this segment of tourism involves traveling to outdoor places to enjoy nature. Ecotourists commonly participate in activities ranging from hiking to canoeing to mountain climbing. Ecotourism is defined by The Ecotourism Society (TES) as "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people." A survey cited by TES in their *USA Ecotourism Statistical Factsheet* reports that almost half of vacationers participate in a nature-based activity²⁸.

Based on surveys conducted by consulting firms, TES developed an ecotourist market profile²⁹. Following are some of the highlights from this profile:

- College graduates accounted for 82 percent of surveyed ecotourists.
- Sixty percent of surveyed ecotourists prefer to travel as a couple, with 15 percent preferring to travel with their families.
- Fifty percent of experienced ecotourists³⁰ preferred trips that were 8-14 days in length.
- Experienced ecotourists will spend more than general tourists. Twenty-six percent of the respondents are willing to spend \$1,001 to \$1,500 per trip.
- The three most important elements of an experienced ecotourist's trip are (1) wilderness setting (2) wildlife viewing and (3) hiking/trekking. Experienced ecotourists' top two motivations for taking their next trip are (1) to enjoy scenery/nature and (2) new experiences/places.

²⁶ <http://crm.cr.nps.gov>, ParkNet National Park Service, Vol. 25, No. 5. "Heritage Tourism" by Cheryl M. Hargrove.

²⁸ This factsheet can be found at www.ecotourism.org.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ An experienced ecotourist in this profile is defined as being a tourist who has taken at least one ecotourism trip. Ecotourism for this survey was defined as "nature/adventure/culture oriented travel."

Knox County's rural character, varied landscape, hiking/biking trails, and access to both the Kokosing and Mohican Rivers provide opportunities for ecotourism/nature tourism. With the longer trip duration and higher amount spent per trip by ecotourists, Knox County may want to consider targeting this vacation population.

Trends in Family Farming and Agriculture

An increasing demand for rural land has resulted in increasing land values for farmland in Ohio. Between 1992 and 2002, the average value of farmland increased 108 percent (from \$1,396 per acre to \$2,878 per acre). Besides this important trend, the Family Farm Project has documented many important trends with respect to local agriculture and family farming practices. Many of these trends are disturbing from the perspective of changing rural character. Some of these trends are identified below:

- Family farms are becoming fewer in number and larger. The number of farms in Knox County declined about 25 percent from approximately 1,700 in 1973 to 1,258 in 2002. During this time, the average farm size has increased from approximately 157 acres to 166 acres. For some family farms, there is a perceived need to grow to remain competitive, while others see a need to maintain a smaller size to remain a family farm.
- Many farm operators are getting older and few are actually full-time farmers. In 2002 the average age of the farm's principal operator in the State was 53.8 years. Only 55.9 percent of Ohio's farmers list farming as their primary occupation.
- There is a general trend toward specialization on farms. The general farm of the past with crop and vegetable production, cows, pigs, chickens, etc., is disappearing in favor of more specialized operations.

Cooperative Development Attitudes

Historically in Ohio, the desire to develop a growing local tax base pitted municipalities against townships. This was the case because often growth and urban development involved extending urban services to undeveloped land and municipal annexation of that land. The annexation process was largely driven by property owners who sought annexation to obtain the urban utility services necessary to support intensive development. Townships often resisted annexation when faced with the prospect of losing territory, residents, and tax revenue in the process.

In recent years, tools for economic development have evolved, enabling a more cooperative approach between townships and municipalities that provides a sharing of development costs and benefits. Some of the benefits from these agreements can include facilitating the provision of public services (e.g. water and sewer), tax sharing, and tax incentive programs. Because of the various differences between the available economic development programs, communities must consider a wide range of issues when evaluating the available options.

Knox County officials have explored the use of newer development tools and it is expected that even greater use of these mechanisms will be seen in the future as pressures for development increase. It is beyond the scope of this Update to fully explore all available tools and mechanisms (and they are subject to periodic change pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code). However, it is useful to point out that there are essentially four cooperative options that include Joint Economic Development Zones and Districts (JEDZ and JEDD), Cooperative Economic Development Agreements (CEDA's) and Joint Agreements. The following material is a chart generally comparing and contrasting these four municipal-township agreement options, which vary in complexity.

MUNICIPAL - TOWNSHIP AGREEMENT OPTIONS

	JEDZ	JEDD	CEDA	Joint Agreements
Establishes new/additional governing body	X	X		
Can levy income tax in TWP (within Zone/District without annexation)	X	X		
Area contiguous to territory of two parties		X		
Requires voter approval in TWP no earlier than 75 days after adoption by TWP trustees	X			
Requires County Approval within 30 days		X		
Cannot include existing residential or zoned residential land		X		
District not larger than 2000 acres		X		
Provides for services, improvements, etc	X	X	X	X
Provides for agreed to tax sharing	X	X		X
Provides for payments for services/fees to city, townships and/or			X	X
Provides for Payment in Lieu of Taxes to TWP			X	X
City can issue industrial bonds, etc. for projects outside the corp but			X	
Governing Board Includes Representative(s) of:			N/A	N/A
City	3	1		
Township	3	1		
Workers		(1)		
Business Owners		(1)		
Appointed At-Large		1		
Income tax rate < or = city income tax rate	X	X		
Income tax must be approved by residents of zone	X			
Can utilize tax incentive programs	X	X		X

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
JEDZ	Can levy income tax w/o annexation	Additional layer of government
		Requires TWP voter Approval
		Time to establish - 1-2 years
		Legal expertise reqd./Cost
JEDD	Can levy income tax w/o annexation	Additional layer of government
		Requires County Approval
		Time to establish - 9-12 months
		Legal expertise/Cost
		No more than 2000 acres
CEDA	Flexible/relatively simple to establish	Structured by State statute
		No income tax without annexation
Joint	Flexible/simple to establish	No income tax without annexation
	Tailor for situation	
	No requirement for public hearing	
	No requirement for voter approval	
	Less expensive to establish & monitor	

JEDZ - Joint Economic Development Zone
 JEDD - Joint Economic Development District
 CEDA - Cooperative Economic Development Agreement

Chapter 5

Community Planning Attitudes and Trends

Attitudes toward the way communities develop and redevelop underwent change throughout the 20th century. This is true not only in terms of the beliefs held by developers and planners, but also in terms of public attitudes toward what constitutes positive community development. In many respects, newer attitudes challenge conventional thinking toward development and redevelopment of communities.

A brief explanation of certain national, state and local attitudes and trends is provided in this chapter to help form a basis for later discussion of key initiatives in Knox County. It is important to recognize that there are many common ideas among these trends and emerging attitudes. Local planning attitudes were identified from the different events held during the updating process and are summarized in this chapter.

National Planning Trends

Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development has gained popularity with planners and community leaders since the early 1990s. Essentially, the concept of sustainable development advances the simple idea that communities are built for people and that the development of a community should enhance the quality of life of its residents, not detract from it. This concept promotes the idea that development should not create excessive environmental, social, or economic costs for current or future generations.

Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington are among the larger cities that have embraced the concepts of sustainable development. Both communities are high-growth areas that often appear as highly rated places to live and work. Challenged by how to grow without losing control of environmental quality, economic stability, and social problems, these communities have taken strong steps toward sustainable development through active community planning.

Sustainable development generally includes the following types of approaches or initiatives:

- Create an urban growth boundary. An urban growth boundary is an official limit to the geographic expansion of urban development. Land within the boundary is targeted for higher-density development and investment in public infrastructure such as water and sewer improvements. Land beyond the boundary is designated for rural uses. The creation of such a boundary helps to separate urban and rural land uses and to reduce sprawl.
- Avoid continuous commercial zoning along arterial roads by fostering pedestrian-friendly clusters of commercial development. Commercial strips that extend for miles are not pedestrian-friendly and essentially require the use of autos to access goods and services. This type of development is tremendously consumptive of land and is inefficient. More compact, pedestrian-friendly commercial nodes can be developed to produce a more livable environment.
- Encourage mixed-use development. Traditional zoning has encouraged a separation of uses. If properly planned, mixed-use developments can produce inviting commercial space and livable residential atmospheres. Mixing uses can produce more of a sense of community and reduce reliance on auto travel to distant destinations for everyday needs. Development should include a high diversity of housing types, sizes, and styles and should offer the potential to live, shop, and work at sites within walking distances of each other.
- Revitalize existing urban areas. A decaying urban core in large communities is not unusual. Yet, investment is often directed toward sprawling suburban development, which consumes

tremendous amounts of land. The costs to support this trend are considerable, given the need for new or upgraded roadways and other infrastructure. Conversely, most (if not all) of the necessary infrastructure is in place in developed urban areas, and revitalization can provide new residential and commercial space with far less environmental impact.

- Provide a more balanced mix of transportation alternatives. Many sustainable development principles relate to the idea of allowing for alternatives to automobile transportation. In more urban areas, this includes integrating development with mass transit options along with organized opportunities for car pools and van pools. In less developed areas, the focus is more toward designing developments with separate bike/walking paths to provide for more opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle transportation, along with potential ride-sharing.

LEED™

The U.S. Green Building Council has developed a national sustainable building program, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™). According to the Council's mission statement, "LEED™ encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted standards, tools and performance criteria." The LEED™ program offers sustainability design guidelines and training along with a certification standard that recognizes green buildings meeting the LEED™ rating system. The LEED™ Green Building Rating System® is a consensus based and voluntary national standard for sustainable buildings.

LEED™ promotes the most sophisticated strategies for energy efficiency, water savings, indoor environmental quality, materials selection, and sustainable site development. LEED™ offers certification for (1) new commercial construction and major renovation projects, (2) existing building operations, (3) commercial interiors projects, (4) core and shell projects, (5) homes, and (6) neighborhood development. In order to become LEED™ certified, applicants must meet or exceed LEED™ requirement point totals in six categories: (1) Sustainable Sites, (2) Water Efficiency, (3) Energy and Atmosphere, (4) Materials and Resources, (5) Indoor Environmental Quality, and (6) Innovation and Design Process. Within each of these six categories, there is at least one required standard that each project must meet and several optional standards from which an applicant can choose. Just meeting the required standards will not lead to LEED™ certification—several optional standards must also be met. LEED™ certification is awarded in different categories based on the number of points applicants receive in the categories listed above. The highest LEED™ certification is platinum, followed by gold, silver, and certified.

An abbreviated example of a Site Selection LEED™ requirement may be to "avoid development of inappropriate sites and reduce the environmental impact from the location of a building on a site." Some examples of how applicants can then meet this requirement are by not developing on sites with prime farmland, endangered species, or within 100 feet of any water feature.

New Urbanism or Traditional Town Planning

New urbanism or traditional town planning has become increasingly popular in recent years, as it has become more apparent that the traditional American suburb has many social, economic, and environmental flaws. Proponents of new urbanism or traditional town planning believe that disinvestment in central cities, spread of suburban sprawl, increased separation of persons by race and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural land, and erosion of the built heritage create one interrelated complex problem. Some new urbanism or traditional town planning concepts include the following:

- Existing urban centers should be revitalized and new developments should be constructed as real neighborhoods. These neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population and should be designed for pedestrian, public transit, and auto travel. The natural size for a neighborhood is about 200 acres, which allows for a five minute walk to most destinations within the neighborhood.

- There should be a mix of housing types within each development. Many developers produce residential projects that are very uniform in lot size, housing style, dwelling size, and type of unit and cost. While there is some demand for this uniformity, it can lead to unintended consequences, especially if the trend is primarily toward large-lot and large home development in suburban settings. A community with little variety in housing types limits the ability of seniors and young families to stay or live in the community. Seniors and empty-nesters sometimes prefer low-maintenance and lower-cost housing units. Most young families cannot afford large homes in large-lot developments. There are also potential social implications from having a community with uniform housing types. A broad range of housing types can bring people of more diverse age, race, and income into more daily interaction that can help strengthen social bonds in a community.
- Concentrations of civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in neighborhoods and districts, not in remote, single-use complexes. Schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them.
- A range of parks, from tot-lots and village greens to ballfields and community gardens, should be distributed within neighborhoods. However, conservation areas and open space should be used to define and connect different neighborhoods and districts.

Among the best-known examples of new urbanism or traditional town planning is a development called Kentlands in Maryland. Advertisements for this successful development highlight the following characteristics:

- Narrow, two-lane streets designed to slow traffic.
- Homes built close to the street and close to each other to encourage human interaction.
- Sidewalks that link schools, recreation centers, shopping, restaurants, and other destinations that are close to homes.
- A variety of complementary housing types located next to each other. This results in condominiums on the same street with estate homes, town homes, mansions, and cottages.
- A block-long village green along with preserved natural landscapes and water features.

Updated Development Standards

The requirements embodied in local zoning codes and subdivision regulations are responsible for many characteristics found in the built environment of most communities. These development standards are often wasteful, ineffective, and simply unnecessary. In more progressive communities, many standards for development are being reexamined and changed to require a more desirable development pattern. Examples of these updated development standards include the following:

- Modifying parking requirements for commercial development: Parking requirements for retail business are often blamed for excessive amounts of parking. The requirements can result in vast expanses for parking that are seldom used and waste land. Requirements vary considerably from as low as two spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail space to as much as 10 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Recommendations from organizations such as the Urban Land Institute include a minimum of four spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail space. Some communities have established maximum parking standards or have otherwise discarded extensive parking areas.
- Reducing parking lot standards: Zoning codes typically include standards used for parking lots such as aisle widths, parking stall widths, and numbers of spaces that can be for compact cars. These standards can be modified to use land more efficiently. For example, aisle widths in

parking lots can be reduced to 22 feet (or sometimes 20 feet) and standard parking spaces can be reduced to 8.5 feet in some cases.

- Allowing zero lot line, single-family housing to increase housing choices: Zero lot line housing can provide affordable housing opportunities in a community and are not necessarily an inferior type of residential development. Minimum lot sizes can range from 3,000 square feet to much larger lots with side setbacks that are 10 feet on one side and zero feet on the other. Zero lot lines on both sides of the lot are uncommon.

Conservation Design

Although conservation design is not necessarily a new concept, the idea that subdivisions should be constructed to incorporate open space networks and produce more than simply housing lots and streets is becoming more popular. This concept has been advanced most recently by Randall G. Arendt in books such as "Conservation Design for Subdivisions." Earlier related ideas have been sometimes called "cluster subdivisions" and "planned unit developments."

Current thinking on the subject of conservation design requires the design of a new residential subdivision to begin with the identification of the land to be preserved, given the natural amenities of the site. These amenities might include woodlots, open meadows, river corridors, etc. Then, given the total number of units that would be allowed under conventional zoning classifications, the subdivision design should cluster housing units in the remaining areas of the development. In this way, the conservation design is "density-neutral," given that the same number of units would be allowed on the site under conventional development and conservation design.

Some major advantages to the practice of conservation design include the following:

- Lower development costs: Clustering development can significantly reduce development costs with reduced requirements for streets, utility lines, and other infrastructure. This advantage is quite clear and direct since conservation design can leave half or more of a site unimproved. These reduced development costs can be passed on to the home buyer and result in more affordable housing.
- Environmental advantages: Conservation design can have tremendous environmental advantages since it provides the flexibility necessary to preserve ecological assets on a site that might otherwise be destroyed. Typical subdivisions are often designed with the primary objective of maximizing the number of lots that can be placed on the property. Conservation design allows for the maximum number of units to be constructed while protecting waterways, wetlands, and similar features that might otherwise be cleared, graded, or covered with pavement and rooftops.
- Preservation of the rural atmosphere: It is ironic that as more people seek to live in and enjoy a rural atmosphere, that which is cherished and treasured becomes lost to urban development and sprawl. Conservation design is one way that development can occur along with efforts to preserve and protect important elements of the rural environment.

The following page provides an illustration that compares creative with conventional development practices using conservation design principles³¹.

³¹ Source: Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley" A Design Manual for Conservation and Development, Published by The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, September, 1998.



Conventional Development Creative Development



Conventional Development Creative Development

Walkable Communities

Currently many communities are attempting to return to the walkable communities of our past.³² A walkable community can be defined as a community where people do not have to use their cars in order to get somewhere—the grocery store, a park, etc. Instead, people of all ages and abilities can get to attractive destinations without using automotive transportation.

Walkable Communities Inc., a non-profit corporation that helps communities become more walkable and pedestrian friendly, lists several characteristics of walkable communities. Following are some of these characteristics³³:

- Intact town centers with a pleasant main street and healthy stores.
- Mixed income and mixed use residential are located near the town center.
- Public space is available for people to play and gather.
- The walkways are accessible and feasible for walking by all.
- Trails and streets are well linked in a highly connected pattern.
- Towns and neighborhoods have a vision or master plan.
- The town is designed for people, not cars.

Many communities in the U.S. are also giving more attention to pedestrian movement. Communities are trying to improve their pedestrian walkways not only for safety concerns, but also to create a more pleasant environment. Existing pedestrian walkways can be improved by well-designed street crossings, level and well maintained walking surfaces, improved connectivity between walkways, and basic amenities such as benches and landscaping. It is important that developers are aware of all aspects that make communities walkable—not just the width or quantity of sidewalks.

Statewide Planning Trends

Future Growth Projections

Projected changes in demographics and markets will affect the number of new physical structures that must be built in order to accommodate predicted growth. According to a discussion paper prepared for the Brookings Institute Metropolitan Policy Program by Arthur C. Nelson³⁴, in 2030 approximately half of the residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in the United States will have been built after 2000, with most of the new buildings being residential. The report projects that, while the Midwest will experience small overall growth, Ohio will be one of the top five states in new industrial growth³⁵.

In 2030 over 28 percent of Ohio's residential buildings are projected to have been built after 2000. When also considering that many housing units will be lost in this 30 year period, Nelson estimates that

³² From www.aarp.org/health-active/walking/Articles/a2005-01-19-walking.html.

³³ These characteristics are taken from www.walkable.org/article3.htm.

³⁴ *Toward a New Metropolis: The Opportunity to Rebuild America* by Arthur C. Nelson, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, December 2004.

³⁵ Ibid, page v-vi..

1,551,447 new residential units will be built in Ohio during this period. The author calculates that low-density development is the most expensive density to service with infrastructure. For one-acre lots, the cost of infrastructure to fully serve the lot is \$90,000. The cost rises to \$130,000 for a five-acre fully served lot.

These large development figures may seem overwhelming. However, Nelson feels that this predicted need for development can be an opportunity:

“While these projections may seem overwhelming, they also demonstrate that nearly half of what will be the built environment in 2030 doesn’t even exist yet, giving the current generation a vital opportunity to reshape future development.”³⁶

While Nelson notes that in some parts of the Midwest new development may occur further away from urban areas, he hypothesizes that overall for the nation only 25-50 percent of the development will occur in conventional sprawl patterns. He predicts that sprawl will not be the dominate growth pattern that it has been for the past 50 years. He suggests that a large portion of new development may occur on current surface parking lots as suburban America appears to have approximately one-third more parking spaces than needed. Additionally, household residential preferences appear to be changing as demand for higher density housing choices is increasing.

Nelson outlines recommendations to help facilitate the creation of a built landscape that can lessen sprawl and improve the quality of life for the nation. Some of Nelson’s key recommendations include: detailed long-term development needs projections, inventories of current land uses and development potential, public engagement, visioning and goal setting, benchmarking and progress evaluation, and cooperative negotiation among jurisdictions.

Farmland Preservation

The issue of farmland preservation has emerged as a major area of national concern over the last 20 years. During this time, many agriculturally-oriented states confronted the issue and developed programs and initiatives to address the diminishing agricultural land resources.

In Ohio, attention to the subject of farmland preservation increased dramatically in 1996 when Governor Voinovich established the Ohio Farmland Preservation Task Force (OFPTF). Twenty-one members were appointed to the OFPTF, including representatives from business, government, academic, and environmental concerns. The task force studied the issue in Ohio, conducted public meetings throughout the State, and released a report in June of 1997.

This new focus on farmland preservation in Ohio drew attention to many important statewide land use trends. Some land use trends:

- Between 1950 and 2002, over seven million acres of farmland (over 30 percent of the total state land in agriculture) was lost³⁷. According to the American Farmland Trust, this is an area equivalent approximately 23 Ohio counties³⁸.

³⁶ Ibid, page vi.

³⁷ From *Preserving Ohio’s Farmland: A Report of Recommendations to the Ohio House Subcommittee on Growth and Land Use* by Sara Nikolic, Ohio Policy Director, American Farmland Trust, July 2004.

³⁸ Ibid.

- Ohio ranked 2nd in the nation for prime farmland lost to non-agricultural uses between 1987 and 1997.³⁹
- Ohio ranked 22nd in the nation in population growth from 1990 to 2000. However, the State ranked 8th for rate of urbanization, demonstrating that the conversion of agricultural land is taking place at a much faster rate than the growth of the population⁴⁰.
- According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, Ohio lost almost 155,000 acres of farmland between 1997 and 2002. This is an average of 30,000+ acres per year, or approximately 85 acres a day. During this same period, Knox County lost 8,139 acres of farmland, an average of over 1,600 acres per year or approximately 4.5 acres per day. Therefore, Knox County accounted for approximately 5 percent of the State's farmland loss during this period.
- Knox County's land area is approximately 337,672 acres of which 209,067 (61.7 percent) was "land in farms" in 2002. At the current rate of loss of land in farms (1,628 acres per year), it would still take 25 years for Knox County's total farmland acreage to fall to 169,336 acres, or 50 percent of the total county land area. However, what must be kept in mind is that Delaware County only lost 4,882 acres of land in farms during the 1997-2002 time period. This was an annual loss of approximately 976 acres per year or 2.7 acres per day—only 60 percent the rate of loss of farmland in Knox County⁴¹.

Other Ohio Farmland Protection Efforts

It is important to note that local efforts to preserve farmland have been demonstrated in many areas around the State of Ohio for some time. Conservancy organizations have formed in many areas with the goal of acquiring development rights and/or conservation easements over land as a means to preserve agricultural land or environmental assets. Typically, these organizations are privately funded and have comparatively few resources given the vast scope of the task of preserving farmland.

Fiscal Impact of Development

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and ACP-Visioning & Planning Ltd. published a *Regional Fact Book: Regional Growth Strategy, Central Ohio* in August 2004. While this fact book specifically discusses Columbus (Franklin County) and the surrounding six counties, many of the principles and ideas discussed are applicable to Knox County due to its close proximity to the core of the central Ohio. Central Ohio is the 33rd most populated metropolitan area in the country, growing significantly faster than the Cincinnati and Cleveland metropolitan areas⁴². The report projects that the surrounding counties, particularly Delaware County, will absorb much of the future regional growth in population. The concentration of jobs in the Columbus area is declining as jobs are moving outward into the surrounding areas, with Delaware County projected to experience the greatest gains in employment⁴³. These projected trends will have a direct impact on Knox County.

³⁹
Ibid.

⁴⁰
Ibid.

⁴¹
Data for this paragraph was calculated from the 2002 *Census of Agriculture-County Data*. Table 8 and the Ohio Office of Strategic Research *Ohio County Profiles*.

⁴²
Regional Fact Book: Regional Growth Strategy, Central Ohio. Prepared by Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and ACP-Visioning & Planning, Ltd. August 26, 2004. Page 2.2.

⁴³
Ibid, page 3.1.

The negative fiscal impacts of development in rural areas are often not taken into consideration by townships and municipalities. As outlined below by the authors of the *Regional Fact Book*, the costs of providing public services to new rural residential developments tend to be more than a municipality's budget can handle.

"In the short term, development in these areas is win-win for both the buyers and sellers. The new neighborhoods are close to the city for access to the social and economic community, but have more green space and less congestion.

In the long term, these new communities face mounting costs of additional public services to maintain acceptable levels of traffic and the quality of life that the residents desire. The perceived green spaces, which were actually agricultural fields, are developed. The revenue structure in these formerly rural areas is either not in place to fund the necessary improvements, or there is competition for public funds with the older parts of the cities that are also demanding maintenance and public infrastructure improvements.

Eventually, these new neighborhoods begin to experience problems in terms of traffic congestion, local funding for schools, police and fire protection, and other public services.

*The development community responds to the market demands by offering new neighborhoods on the edges of these now suburban communities, and the cycle continues. As a result, public budgets become stretched to the point of impoverishment and local taxes are repeatedly levied to pay for mounting costs."*⁴⁴

In the Knox County Cost of Community Services Study section below, there is a summary of a detailed financial analysis of new development costs. This detailed analysis was conducted by the American Farmland Trust for Knox County in 2003.

Greenways and Park Linkages

The term "greenway" has been applied to areas that tie public lands together to form a cohesive system of parks, recreational sites and open spaces. The concept of greenways grew from considering parks and recreational or open spaces as more than isolated locations. Greenways allow movement by walking, jogging, bicycling, and in-line skating between active or passive recreational areas. Greenways typically follow natural features, although manmade greenways can be built corridors located within subdivisions or along utility easements.

Several statewide conservation organizations, such as Rivers Unlimited and the Ohio Chapter of the Ohio Rails-To-Trails Conservancy, partnered to provide research, education, technical assistance, and strategies for greenways throughout Ohio. The partnership, Greenways Ohio, has conducted regional meetings and statewide conferences, assisted regional and local planning, and created maps and studies on greenways. In 1998 the project published *A Blueprint for Action*, which was endorsed by over one hundred organizations, municipalities, and park districts. As a result of the publication, the Ohio Greenways Roundtable was formed with members representing four state agencies and eleven nonprofit organizations. The Roundtable reviews state-administered programs, services, and funding policies affecting greenway development and also to evaluate resources and needs.⁴⁵

Outside Knox County, a good example of a greenway in Ohio is the Huron River Greenway, currently being constructed by the local park district. Erie Metro-Parks has been involved in planning this greenway for several years with the support of the Huron River Greenway Coalition, Inc. (a 501 (c)(3), tax-exempt organization). When completed, this approximately seven-mile greenway will follow a former railroad route

⁴⁴ Ibid, page 4.7.

⁴⁵ From www.ohiogreenways.org website. Accessed 12/8/04.

along the Huron River, beginning near Huron, Ohio and ending in Norwalk, Ohio. The official opening of a three-mile continuous stretch occurred on September 12, 2004⁴⁶.

Other Statewide Planning Initiatives

In 2003 the Ohio House of Representatives formed a subcommittee of the County & Township Government Committee to investigate the current status of Ohio's urban and rural areas. Representative Larry Wolpert published a report based on his observations and recommendations from the eight hearings held across the State⁴⁷. Representative Wolpert offered fifteen recommendations, including the creation of Urban Homestead Zones (UHZ) to encourage the resettlement of urban core areas, new funding for agricultural easement purchases, allowing counties and townships to collect an impact fee, giving all counties and townships the ability to transfer development rights (TDR), reauthorizing the Clean Ohio Fund, and providing state tax credits for historic rehabilitation.

Local Planning Trends

Knox County Cost of Community Services Study⁴⁸

In October 2003 the American Farmland Trust (AFT) published a Cost of Community Services Study (COCS) for Knox County. To understand the financial contributions of various land uses in Knox County, the AFT compared county-level revenues generated from residential, commercial/industrial, and farm/open space land uses to the expenditures required to provide county services to those uses. The end product "provide[d] a snapshot in time of net revenues versus costs based on the public service demands of current land uses."⁴⁹

The results of the study show that more money is spent providing county-level services to residents than is generated by residential land use. Farm/open space and commercial/industrial land uses make up for the shortfall. These two land uses generate more revenue than is spent to provide county-level services to them. The results (summarized as revenue-to-expenditure ratios in the following table) show the expenditures required for county-level service per \$1 of revenue generated by each type of land use.

	Residential	Commercial / Industrial	Farm / Open
Final Land Use Ratio	\$1:\$1.05	\$1:\$0.38	\$1:\$0.29

These results show that farm/open and commercial/industrial land uses help Knox County maintain fiscal equilibrium by offsetting the revenue-to-expenditure shortfall created by residential land uses. The report suggests that "...decisions that retain and enhance commercial, industrial and agricultural land uses, which make a positive net contribution to county coffers, can help improve the long-term fiscal stability of the county."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ From www.eriemetroparks.org website. Accessed 12/8/04.

⁴⁷ "Report of the Subcommittee on Growth and Land Use," by Representative Larry Wolpert, Chairman, Ohio House of Representatives, County & Township Government Committee, December 27, 2004.

⁴⁸ Information for this section taken from *Cost of Community Services Study*, Knox County, Ohio. Prepared by American Farmland Trust, October 2003.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.5.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 4.

Following are some of the findings from the COCS⁵¹:

- *A balance of land uses, including agricultural and open lands, is needed to supply adequate revenue to pay for community services. Without such a balance, new residential development is likely to create the need for tax increases.*
- *Differential property tax programs are justified as a way to provide an incentive to keep land open and in active agricultural use. Even with a reduced assessed value, agricultural properties contribute a surplus of revenue to pay for public services for residents of Knox County.*
- *Strategies to retain land in agriculture should be a good long-term investment.*

Knox County Farmland Preservation Taskforce Report

The Knox County Farmland Preservation Taskforce (FLPTF) was formed in 1998 to evaluate the County's agricultural production, explore alternatives to unplanned development, and develop recommendations for farmland preservation⁵². After working extensively with the agricultural community in 1998 and 1999, the taskforce developed eight recommendations for the County to implement.

The FLPTF initially researched the issues and then developed goals based on those issues. The goals could further be broken down into three categories:

1.Agricultural and residential development:

Map and document county soil, farm and agribusiness information in order to make better planning decisions.

2.Regulatory issues:

*Model agricultural district zoning,
Subdivision regulation review,
Investigation of Land Trust/Purchase of Conservation Easements programs, and
Try to limit rural lot splits on the county level.*

3.Administrative and community issues:

*Community education,
Suggest methods to enhance and promote the agricultural economy in Knox County, and
Work with the Park District and the Regional Planning Commission to develop effective farmland policies for Knox County.*

A significant trend researched by the FLPTF was the change in land use patterns in Knox County during a 15-year period from 1983 to 1999⁵³. Based on research by Cleveland State University, the FLPTF noted that commercial and industrial lands remained a fairly constant percentage of the total land valuation. In 1983 commercial land was 9.7% of the real property assessed values and in 1998 commercial land accounted for 10.7% of the total. Industrial land percentages between 1983 (4.0%) and 1998 (3.4%) stayed similar. However, residential lands increased from 56.8% of the annual real property assessed value in 1986 to 68.2% in 1998. At the same time, the relative valuation of agricultural land decreased as a percentage share of total real property valuations. In 1983, agriculture's share of total

⁵¹
Ibid, p. 12.

⁵²
Information for this section was obtained from the "Knox County Farmland Preservation Taskforce Report", published by the Knox County Board of Commissioners and CDC of Ohio.

⁵³
Ibid, p. 9.

real property valuation was 28.7%, but in 1998 the percentage had fallen to 17.5%. This trend is also supported by the increase in residential housing prices in the county. Over a five year period in the late 1990s, the average price of Knox County residential housing increased by approximately \$5,000 per year⁵⁴.

Maintaining Knox County Farmland

The FLPTF concentrated its efforts on two regulatory approaches to maintain farmland in Knox County. One approach was to develop a model zoning code for townships. The model code is available to the townships interested in adopting agricultural district codes. The development standards in the model "...permit residential development, while recognizing the rural and agricultural basis of the community."⁵⁵

The second regulatory approach studied by the FLPTF was the creation of land trusts to assist with voluntary preservation of farmland. Two private land trusts, the Owl Creek Conservancy (working countywide and in counties adjacent to Knox County) and the Philander Chase Corporation (working primarily in and around College Township) were formed. The approaches of land trusts to preserving farmland include permanent conservation easements, private land donations, community land-use planning, education, and the purchase of lands through donations and grants.

Recommendations

Below are the Knox County FLPTF's recommendations for Farmland Preservation with progress on those recommendations through January 2005 shown in bold. Progress on the goals was taken from "Where is Knox County? Summary of Progress Toward Farmland Preservation Goals in Knox County"⁵⁶.

- *Create direct funding sources for a countywide voluntary Purchase of Development Rights Program to be administered by an appointed Farmland Preservation Board. **The Knox County Commissioners set aside \$100,000 in general fund revenue to use as "matching" funds for properties in Knox County that may be accepted into the OAEPP. No County Farmland Preservation Board has been established.***

Suggested funding sources for this program:

1. *Increase the parcel conveyance fee by \$2. **Initiative was declined by Commissioners.***
2. *Place a quarter percent sales tax increase on the ballot. **No proposal was developed.***
3. *Pursue state and federal matching funding. **The Taskforce Report was concluded before the initiation of the OAEPP. The State program in essence provides a matching program for the purchase of agricultural easements at the local level. Federal funds are available through the current Farm Bill and are utilized by the State program.***

⁵⁴
Ibid, p. 10.

⁵⁵
Ibid, p. 14.

⁵⁶
By Rob Clendening, Administrator, Knox Soil and Water Conservation District.

- Give the duties of administrative support for farmland protection programs and the Farmland Preservation Board to a Knox County Planning Commission staff member. **While the staff of the Commission provides support for the OAEP, it is probably not to the extent intended in the Farmland Preservation Taskforce Report.**
- Create a private countywide land trust. **Two Land Trusts currently exist in Knox County. The local Soil and Water Conservation District was also recently granted authority in state legislation to accept agricultural easements.**
- Create comprehensive land use-plans for townships that identify and address not only residential and commercial areas, but also critical masses of productive agricultural lands. **Only three townships have, or are, adopting land-use plans.**
- Educate all townships on a program for calculating the true cost of community services. **In 2003 the American Farmland Trust conducted a “Cost of Community Services Study” for Knox County. Members of the Farmland Preservation Committee reviewed the results of the study with each Board of Township Trustees in the county.**
- Educate and encourage townships to create their own farmland protection programs through special agricultural zoning or PDR (Purchase of Development Rights)/TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) programs. Initiate a series of continuing educational seminars for local attorneys and tax accountants on the tax benefits of Purchase of Development Rights programs. **The Planning Commission, Owl Creek Conservancy, OSU Extension and Knox SWCD conducted a session for local attorneys and accountants focusing on these subjects in March of 2002.**
- Form a joint committee to look at incentives to revitalize and develop existing urban areas that are already served by public infrastructure and services. **No progress was made on this specific item; however, individual groups (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, City of Mount Vernon) have attempted to address such issues individually.**

Local Land Trusts

Owl Creek Conservancy—The Owl Creek Conservancy is a member of the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization of land trusts. The Conservancy concentrates its efforts in two areas: protection and education. In early 2005 the Conservancy held three permanent conservation easements totaling 93 acres. Educational programs and events sponsored by the Conservancy in collaboration with other organizations include the annual “Explore the Nature of Knox County” adventure series, an annual “Garden Contest,” and the “Envirothon.” Envirothon is a nationwide environmental education program for high school students interested in the environment and/or farming. The Conservancy is also collaborating with private land trusts throughout the State to form a coalition of shared talent and pooled resources. The Conservancy maintains a website: www.owlcreekconservancy.org.

The Philander Chase Corporation—The Philander Chase Corporation (PCC) holds and monitors conservation easements on 632 acres of land. PCC also co-holds and/or acts as a local partner on additional easements with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. These agricultural partnerships account for an additional 158 acres of easements.

Local Planning Attitudes

The development of this Update deliberately included efforts to reach out to various segments of the community to understand local attitudes and perceptions toward community planning issues. Because each technique to engage local leaders has certain benefits and limitations, reaching out in several distinct ways enhanced the possibility of obtaining meaningful input.

Public Input Workshop - January 24, 2004

The Knox County Ohio State University Extension facilitated a day-long public workshop on the 1998 Plan for the RPC near the beginning of the process leading to this Update. From two to five of the 17 goals (and the associated policies and initiatives) in the Plan were reviewed and discussed in 11 sessions. The very strong consensus was as follows:

- All seventeen goals in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan should be retained.
- All policies and initiatives should be retained, except for (1) those that had been accomplished, (2) the one related to concentrating residential development near rural residential areas such as Brandon, and (3) the one related to developing new commercial districts.
- The Update should incorporate the many suggestions for modifying and expanding the goals, policies and initiatives in the 1998 Plan.

The full text of the summary “Report on Public Input” is in Appendix III and its content was incorporated throughout this Update.

Public Input Sessions “Sharpening the Policies and Initiatives in the Comprehensive Plan”

The Knox County Ohio State University Extension also facilitated a series of workshops for the RPC to obtain public input. These events were organized by topic and included:

- Recreation & Tourism January 8, 2005,
- Arts and Culture January 8, 2005,
- Historic Preservation January 10, 2005,
- Farmland Preservation January 15, 2005,
- Quality of Life and Care of Community February 2, 2005, and
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services February 23, 2005.

The sessions began with two presentations. The first examined the big picture of the topic at hand, while the second looked at what had been done since 1998 in Knox County relating to the topic. Goals from the 1998 Plan that related to the topic were pulled into the second presentation. Both presentations framed the discussion that followed. Participants were asked to answer the question, “How can we sharpen the policies and initiatives to accomplish the goals in the Plan?” Twenty to 25 persons attended each session and each session received extensive coverage in the *Mount Vernon News*. The results from this substantial effort are provided in the Appendix and were incorporated in Chapter 8. While the complete report can be found in Appendix IV, summaries of the sessions follow:

Recreation and Tourism

Residents felt that getting the public connected, involved, and educated should be the first priority relative to recreation and tourism. Participants unanimously felt that the Update should contain the most recent information, such as including all bike trails.

Arts and Culture

Participants felt that creating a collaboration or an Arts Council in Knox County would help use assets more effectively and bring more festivals and activities into the county.

Historical Preservation

The participants felt very strongly that owners of historic structures and the public should be educated in historical preservation, and that documenting, inventorying, and preserving historical places was a necessity.

Farmland Preservation

Participants felt that educating the public on farmland preservation should be the top priority. Expanding existing and developing new strategies for encouraging consumption of locally grown food should be a high priority.

Quality of Life and Care of Community

Participants felt that promoting public awareness and collaboration to improve residents' health and well-being should be a top priority.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services

The top suggestion from participants was cooperation, coordination, and improved communication among the districts and with other local, county, and state agencies.

Survey of Elected Officials

The 189 elected officials in Knox County were surveyed on an array of issues related to their present understandings and planning for the future. The 69 respondents included seven county officials, four mayors, 19 municipal officials, 10 members of school boards, 10 township clerks and 19 township trustees. These individuals had lived in the County for an average of 43.3 years and had represented their communities for an average of 13.2 years.

Since every respondent did not answer each question, the percentages discussed in the following paragraphs may not total 100%. Similarly, the responses to some questions did not provide significant information and, therefore, are not discussed. Details for all questions and responses may be obtained in the data attached to this summary.

In response to the first question, "Is Knox County balancing the needs for rural and urban land uses appropriately?" 45% answered, "Yes." Significantly, 19% answered, "No," and 32% answered, "Don't know." Respondents answered the related question, "Have local zoning and county planning served the entire county well?" essentially the same way with 44% agreeing, 25% disagreeing and 30% not knowing. Clearly, a third of respondents remain undecided on these two fundamental questions. This is especially important because local zoning regulations are the current and future plan for land use through which any "balance" between rural and urban land uses is and will be attained in the County.

Nevertheless, 87% of respondents would encourage their adult children to move to or live in a house in Knox County. They would do so, at least in part, because they rated as "excellent" or "good" not only the current quality of life (97%), but also the current effort to maintain or improve the overall quality of life (80%). Respondents also rated the following as "excellent" or "good": housing choices (81%) and affordability (83%); schools (88%); park facilities (87%); recreation for youth (64%) or adults (62%) or seniors (64%); garbage collection (81%); recycling (74%); crime rate (77%); police (83%) and fire protection (96%); EMS (96%); health services (87%); wastewater management (57%); sense of community (77%); and the preservation of the natural environment (75%) or farmland/agriculture (58%). Respondents would still encourage their adult children to move to or live in a house in Knox County although they rated the following as "poor" or "needs improvement": job opportunities (68%), shopping (49%) or entertainment (55%) opportunities, and storm water management (48%).

Annexation in Knox County concerned 68% of respondents "very much" or "somewhat." Relative to annexation, respondents expressed the following:

- The Regional Planning Commission could contribute (75%) to concerns about annexations by making recommendations (36%), mediating (10%), or providing land use planning (29%).
- Municipalities and Townships should work together on annexations (94%).
- The County should investigate options for joint economic development districts between neighboring townships and municipalities (54%).

Respondents believed that the top three zoning issues needing attention are:

- “Zoning violations and enforcement” (54%);
- “Open space requirements for new development” (48%); and
- “Minimum lot size” (38%).

The two most important visual elements that define “rural character” are farm fields (77%) and wood lots (25%), and 96% of respondents believed that it is important to maintain a “rural character” in Knox County. However, 61% of respondents believed that public transportation, which is typically associated with urbanization, is important in the county.

Opinions about transportation by automobiles and trucks were collected. Respondents ranked US 36/SR 3 from Centerburg to Mount Vernon (26%) and US 36 from Mount Vernon to Coshocton (16%) as segments of roadway where additional traffic would raise the most significant concern for planning or control. Respondents believed that US 36 from Mount Vernon to Coshocton (39%), US 36/SR 3 from Centerburg to Mount Vernon (30%), and SR 13 from Mount Vernon to Mansfield (25%) need substantial improvements to correct current problems in the flow of traffic. Additionally, respondents thought that US 36/SR 3 from Centerburg to Mount Vernon (33%), US 36 from Mount Vernon to Coshocton (29%), and SR 13 from Mount Vernon to Mansfield (25%) need access management to limit new driveways.

Respondents identified four roads in greatest need of being designated “scenic byways.” These were SR 229 from Mount Vernon toward Coshocton (28%), US 36 from Mount Vernon toward Coshocton (23%), and US 62 from Utica to Gann and SR 3 from Mount Vernon to Jelloway (both 22%).

Respondents agreed (at 90% or greater) that none of 12 major segments of roadways need increased or decreased speed limits. However, the 37 suggestions of intersections needing modification or additional traffic controls and the 39 suggestions of roadway segments needing upgrades were disparate and not readily grouped.

According to the 2000 Census, the number of households in Knox County increased by 7%, in the previous 10 years. This level of growth did concern 33% of respondents, but did not concern 64%. Conversely, the possibility of households increasing by 14% between 2005 and 2015 concerned 71% of respondents, but did not concern 22%.

Conservation subdivisions were recognized by respondents as minimizing the number of driveways connecting to existing roads (49%), as helping to maintain rural character (64%), and as providing access to natural areas (70%). A residential lot in a conservation subdivision would satisfy 51% of respondents. Encouraging a variety of housing types related to life stages was viewed as important by 73% of respondents.

Respondents agreed that new commercial (87%) and industrial (88%) developments are important for the economic viability of the County. There was no consensus in respondents’ comments about where commercial development should be placed because the convenience of shopping or dining close to home is attractive. However, the consensus in the comments was that industrial development should be placed in areas designated for it.

While 45% of respondents agreed that the local unit of government that they represented was doing a “good job” of informing residents about issues related to current and future planning, 51% disagreed. Similarly, while 36% of respondents agreed that the County as a whole was doing a “good job” of informing residents about issues related to current and future planning, 59% disagreed. The need for more effective communication is confirmed at both local and county levels. The details of responses to questions suggest that respondents had not found local and county web sites informative about current or future planning.

Respectively, 88% and 86% of respondents rated the levels of services provided by their local units of government and those provided countywide as “acceptable.” Respondents agreed that volunteers serve the public interests “adequately” on both local (74%) and countywide (59%) committees.

Respondents agreed (73%) that the system of bicycle and pedestrian trails should be expanded or connected to existing or proposed regional trails. While 45% of respondents agreed with the statement, “enough is being done to set aside land for open space (trails, parks, agricultural/conservation easements and wetlands),” 54% either disagreed or did not feel sufficiently informed to answer. Nevertheless, 77% of respondents believed that it is important to “protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as streams, floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands and woodlands.”

A complete summary of the survey of elected officials can be found in Appendix V.

Community Leader Telephone Survey

In August and September of 2004, an interviewer from Poggemeyer Design Group conducted telephone interviews with the 15 community leaders. (See Appendix II.) Interviewees were identified by the RPC Steering Committee as community leaders and as career professionals (in commerce, banking, business, information, building, agriculture and education) who worked and resided throughout Knox County. All requested to participate did so.

Each participant was informed that no specific attribution regarding his or her comments would occur. This was done to encourage candid feedback. The 15 expressed no reservations about being identified as a participant, provided that “non attribution” assurances would be honored by the RPC Steering Committee.

The typical interview length was to have been approximately 30 minutes; they averaged about one hour. Each participant was advised prior to questioning that “yes” and “no” answers could be elaborated at will. Thus, the lengths of the interviews depended on the extent of voluntary comment or elaboration offered by each participant. The questions paralleled the quality of life, transportation, land use, zoning, planning, and growth management topics in the survey of elected officials. A Survey Key Sheet was prepared, summarizing collective input from the 15 community leaders.

Residency in Knox County of the 15 ranged from 62 years to just over 2½ years, with an average of 33.2 years. Their career work in the county ranged from 56 to 2½ years with an overall average of 29.5 years. Each was asked if he or she would encourage their adult children or others to move to and live in Knox County. Each answered “yes,” but expressed concern that a lack of appropriate jobs prevented this option in some cases.

Although each participant had specific views and concerns, which are presented in the following report, the following common concerns clearly emerged:

- Proactively solving long-standing problems in the transportation network;
- Determining and implementing viable traffic bypasses around Mount Vernon to remedy traffic congestion;
- Addressing the lack of consistency in zoning and building requirements between townships and municipalities;

- Developing coordinated strategies for managing growth for all of Knox County;
- Providing short- and long-term planning assistance to the southern communities of the County, which are the most pressured due to their proximity to Columbus and Newark;
- Providing ongoing coordinated assistance with planning to communities (The assistance should remain “advisory” and not directive);
- Make ongoing (rather than periodic) updates in the Comprehensive Plan in order to create a “Focused Plan;”
- Advocating that the RPC help townships and municipalities work together on annexations and similar land use matters (This was a unanimous consensus.);
- Advocating efforts by the RPC to seek input from both private and public property owners on short- and long-term impacts of development and growth on Knox County (This was a unanimous consensus.);
- A strong majority (86%) indicated that current land use and planning are not well coordinated between local governments (Relative to coordination of land use and planning between local governments, 13 of 15 respondents indicated that too much “turf” sensitivity seemed to prevail);
- Most respondents (13 of 15) support additional mediation and planning assistance as appropriate functions that the RPC should perform in helping local communities with planning; and
- This same majority supported having the RPC investigate Joint Economic Development Zones (JEDZs) between neighboring townships and municipalities.

There were areas where the respondents were fairly divided in their views. These areas include the following:

- Efforts to preserve farmland and agriculture (1/3 saying not enough is being done);
- Sixty percent indicated that zoning and county planning had not served the entire county well (citing local “turf” and the poor coordination between local zoning codes as the root causes); and
- Respondents were uniformly split over whether annexation concerned them “very much,” “somewhat,” or “not at all.”

Quality of Life. Each participant was asked the same quality of life questions presented to local elected officials. Respondents rated the issues from “good” to “excellent” overall. All “no opinion” responses reflected a lack of knowledge in the area surveyed. All respondents tried to avoid bias in their answers. Areas identified as needing improvement include the following:

- **Job opportunities.** More effort was needed to (1) broaden job opportunities and (2) diversify job locations countywide.
- **Shopping and dining opportunities** need improvement. Twenty percent rated these opportunities as “poor.”

- Forty percent of the respondents felt that **entertainment opportunities** needed improvement while 20% rated these opportunities as “poor.”
- Forty-six percent felt that **erosion and sediment control** in new developments need to be improved.
- The group was divided on **preservation of the natural environment** and **farmland/agriculture**.
- Over half of the respondents indicated that **zoning enforcement** needs improvement countywide.

Land Use. Each participant was asked for his or her views on the most critical land use issues facing Knox County over the next five years. They collectively noted all of the issues identified in the survey were important, but varied in opinion as to which of them was “critical” over the next five years. Those indicated as “critical” include the ones listed here:

- **Urban Land Use:** Eleven respondents identified this issue as critical. They cited uncoordinated development between townships as a chief concern. They also expressed concern over the lack of adaptive reuse of existing commercial storefronts and commercial centers throughout the county.
- **Rural Land Use:** Thirteen identified this issue as critical. Respondents cited encroachment on farmland, inappropriate lot split strategies used by some developers, and growth encroachment from commercial and residential projects. The respondents also identified the need to preserve visual rural character to the greatest extent feasible.
- **Farming and Agriculture Use:** Eleven respondents identified this issue as critical over the next five years due to poor land use regulations for controlling development among various townships and communities.
- **Open Space:** Sixty percent identified this issue as critical. They viewed current development, especially residential projects, as a threat to the remaining areas of open space in Knox County. (The entire group clearly understood that open space preservation was separate from farmland preservation.)
- **Airport Development:** Forty percent ranked development of the airport over the next five years as “critical.” There was recognition that such development is not widely supported, particularly by rural landowners near the airport. Expansion to accommodate corporate aircraft is seen as a possible lure for future industry as corporate aircraft based in Knox County could avoid Columbus and Newark airports.
- **Floodplain Management:** Sixty percent saw this as important, but not critical; 40 percent saw it as critical.
- **Aquifers:** Seventy-three percent (11 of the 15) identified the protection of public supplies of drinking water as an ongoing critical issue that should be kept foremost in the planning and educational efforts of the RPC. Elaboration provided by the group included awareness that floodplain management and aquifer protection are related issues.
- **Commercial and Industrial Land Use:** The majority recognized commercial and industrial land use as important for the long-term economic viability of the County. The uniform opinion was that commercial and industrial land use policies need to do the following:
 - Encourage adaptive use of existing commercial sites over approving new sites;

- Avoid encouraging further commercial “strip” development;
- Place industrial development first in existing industrial areas; and
- Diversify industrial and commercial development in individual communities to the extent demographics and market forces permit.
- **Zoning Issues:** The group differed on specific zoning issues, but showed consensus on the following:
 - Zoning violations and enforcement need attention and improvement;
 - Setbacks should be appropriate, but not excessive;
 - Open-space requirements for new subdivisions should be enforced and possibly expanded;
 - The granting of variances needs better scrutiny and consistency countywide; and
 - Minimum road frontage for various permitted uses should be developed and enforced countywide.

Rural Character: Twelve of the 15 identified preserving rural character throughout the county as being important. All, to varying degrees, said that the following visual characteristics were important features that should be preserved:

- Wooded lots;
- Farm fields, traditional buildings, and barns;
- Traditional village and city centers (especially historic buildings and places);
- Natural, undeveloped rivers and streams;
- Livestock in fields; and
- Dark night skies.

The respondents did not see long, uninterrupted views of openness or narrow, rural roadways as key components of rural character.

Transportation: Each leader was asked for opinions on the 12 transportation segments that were presented to elected officials. On the issues of transportation, participants expressed the strongest agreement. The transportation network system elicited concerns because participants had seen little progress on solutions to longstanding countywide roadway issues.

Areas of concern to the RPC Transportation Committee were not disclosed by the interviewer; nevertheless, the participants identified the same roadway conditions and segments as identified by the Committee as needing current and future attention. There was some difference of opinion as to what improvements were needed. Each participant was careful to disclose whether he or she traveled the segments in question. Participants separated the need for public transportation from issues related to the overall transportation system.

Substantial or moderate improvements were identified as needed by a majority of participants. The group was consistent in opinion that new road connections southwest and northeast of Mount Vernon are

essential to solving or moderating long-term traffic problems. Mount Vernon was seen as a barrier to movement from the north, northeast and southwest.

Subdivision Development: There was consensus that the open space/conservation form of subdivision would be preferred over continued lot-split and conventional subdivision developments. But eight of the 15 would choose to reside in rural, large-lot or conventional subdivisions. Overall awareness of the features of the open-space/conservation type of residential development was not high. This suggested that better education and outreach would be needed to promote such development.

Recreation and Environment: Thirteen of 15 respondents cited the need to complete bike and pedestrian trails (connecting, existing, and planned trails). Although two participants nominated an additional trail, the remaining 13 felt that planned future trail links were sufficient.

- Eleven respondents felt that enough effort was being made in the county to set aside land for open space (trails, parks, conservation and agricultural easements), while three felt that not enough effort was taking place.
- Thirteen respondents felt that the County definitely needed to be proactive in protecting sensitive environmental areas. One respondent proposed that farmland should be in the “environmentally sensitive” category.

Final Questions: Community leaders were asked the same questions as presented in the elected official survey.

When asked to identify up to **five positive attributes** of living in Knox County and/or their local community, their individual answers varied but had some overlap. These answers include the following:

- Positive rural character and high work ethic among the labor force;
- Overall perceived high quality of life;
- Excellent public schools and overall low taxes;
- Great sense of community and local historic appeal;
- Improving land use controls (though more progress was urged);
- Easy access to nearby Newark and Columbus; and
- Relatively low housing costs.

When asked to identify **up to five shortfalls** of living in Knox County and their community, the respondents’ answers included those listed below:

- Poor/weak transportation network and the lack of adequate transit for seniors;
- Poor dining and shopping opportunities;
- Having comprehensive planning moving beyond “advisory level” (This was viewed as inappropriate.);
- Having few private school options;
- Farmland preservation efforts do not appear to be advancing; and
- Limited cultural opportunities reduce overall quality of life.

Chapter 6

Core Planning Issues

The core planning issues in the 1998 Plan have been reviewed and revised for inclusion in this Update. New demographic trends apparent from the 2000 census and local studies such as the Farmland Preservation Report (2000) figure substantively in this Update. Nevertheless, the core planning issues identified in 1998 remain central to shaping and managing growth and development to attain a better future for Knox County. How local leaders deal with these core issues will profoundly affect whether the overall quality of life in Knox County improves or declines over the next twenty years. These core issues are re-identified and explained anew below.

Organizational Issues

As with the 1998 Plan, completion of this Update should not be viewed as the end of the planning process. Rather, this Update serves as a series of guideposts on a path toward a broadly shared and inspired vision of Knox County. Attainment of that shared vision of a better future depends on coordinated and sustained planning on a countywide basis. The Knox County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is the sole public agency with the statutory responsibility to address planning countywide, to maintain and update a comprehensive plan, and to coordinate collaborative efforts to guide development for the public good.

The extent to which planning in Knox County is actually an effective ongoing process depends in large part on the organization and functioning of the RPC. Significant positive accomplishments have been made in both organization and function of the RPC since 1998.

Importantly, on January 1, 2003, the RPC became an independent agency supported by members, including most notably, the Board of County Commissioners. The RPC is functioning now as intended by statutory authority, but organizational and programmatic challenges remain. These include:

- **Providing Adequate Professional Staff.** At present, a single planner and a part-time secretary support the planning efforts of the RPC. Adequate staff is essential for meeting the demands for making and implementing plans. The combined demands for handling lot splits, maintaining GIS databases, preparing technical reports, handling public and private inquiries and coordinating the membership of the RPC are sufficient to hinder not only meeting basic needs, but also to overwhelm progress on issues critical for coordinating and sustaining long-term planning.
- **Establishing Realistic Service Fees.** Fees for services provided by the RPC should reflect the real cost of delivering these services. For example, administrative fees charged for lot splits need to be brought in line with those charged by comparable planning commissions. Increased fees could generate additional income to help with funding additional staff.
- **Reporting on “Planning in Knox County”.** Presenting an annual report to the community could increase awareness of the need for sustained and coordinated planning and could highlight progress on key issues effectively. Such a report could be prepared and presented in collaboration with the Area Development Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce.
- **Encouraging Broader Participation.** Presently membership in the RPC is open to all townships and municipalities in Knox County and to the Board of County Commissioners. Additional participants could include, for example, the Chamber of Commerce and the Knox County Health Department, each of which is currently an ex officio member of RPC without vote and paying no dues.

Land Use Issues

Core issues related to the use of land remain unchanged since 1998. Nevertheless, the benefits and rewards of new technology (for example, the Geographic Information System) and broader environmental issues have been incorporated in this Update.

General Land Use Issues

- **Centralized Land Use Information Depository.** The RPC has a central depository of information on land use. The information is available to residents, local officials and developers. It is anticipated that the RPC will be increasingly the single best source of information on land use for all of Knox County.
- **Geographic Information System (GIS).** Along with more general information on land use, the RPC has been heavily involved in developing and maintaining a local Geographic Information System (GIS) of computerized maps. The lack of computerized aerial photography and other related data was a significant hindrance to the 1998 Plan. Subsequent efforts have created a good base of computerized data to support local planning. Given this excellent start, the RPC is challenged to maintain and to continue development of the GIS system and to share data with public and private entities.
- **Current and Future Land Use Plans.** The 1998 Plan presented a generalized concept for future land use in the County relative to principles of wise land use and to anticipated growth of the population. That concept proved useful, but new projections using better GIS mapping now allow more complete and soundly based descriptions of current land uses and of future land uses.

Environmental Issues

Environmental issues related to management of growth and development also remain central to countywide planning. Since publication of the 1998 Plan, public awareness about storm water management, erosion control, ground water pollution, and management of the Kokosing Watershed has increased. Environmental issues are a daily concern to citizens and to elected officials at all levels of government.

- **River Corridor Preservation and Use.** The Kokosing and Mohican Rivers are important economic, scenic, historic and environmental assets to Knox County. Tributaries of the Licking River are also an important asset. Future planning should emphasize the following:
 - Ways to incorporate both the Kokosing and Mohican Rivers in a countywide open space system.
 - Sound river shed/flood plain management to prevent encroachment of structures in the flood plain and to reduce costs associated with flooding.
 - Local and regional efforts need to be coordinated to increase public access to rivers with high quality water.
 - Public review of possible environmental impacts from the construction or alteration of dams, bridges, roads or other publicly funded projects.
- **Watershed Management.** Sound watershed management is vital in preventing the decline of water supplies, river sheds, streams and creeks and controlling soil erosion.
 - Where Watershed Management Plans (WMPs) do not exist, they should be developed in compliance with guidelines from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The WMP for the Kokosing River should be implemented.

- Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations need to incorporate design measures to meet standards for avoiding pollution of storm water and ground water.
- Well fields and aquifer recharge areas need to be protected from inappropriate surface land uses.
- The natural functions of flood plains need to be recognized and conserved and included as part of Knox County's "Green Infrastructure."
- **Air Quality Management.** Knox County was recently included along with metropolitan Columbus in a "non-attainment area." This designation means that air in the County failed to meet standards set by the federal EPA for quality. Since this classification denotes a threat to the public health and potentially could limit future industrial development, plans to improve local air quality and to collaborate in regional efforts to improve air quality should be developed and implemented.
- **Solid Waste Management.** Presently no active landfill in the Delaware-Knox-Marion-Morrow Solid Waste District (created in 1988) accepts solid waste. Private firms haul solid waste from Knox County to Wyandotte County.
 - The ten-year plan contemplated by the Solid Waste District for locating landfills should be studied and coordinated with this Update to avoid negative impacts.
 - Recycling and litter awareness programs are needed countywide to minimize the volume of recoverable materials entering the solid waste stream.
 - Awards and incentives should be established to recognize individual and collaborative, public and private reductions of solid waste streams.

Rural Development Issues

- **Lot Split Standards.** Splits of productive or fallow farmland are the most common way new rural lots are created in the County. Improved subdivision standards and/or zoning requirements are needed to help assure that choices between possible uses of land are made wisely. Specifically:
 - Regulations for controlling placement of driveways or curb cuts, for reducing erosion and sedimentation, for managing storm water, and for assuring sanitary disposal of wastes on rural lots should be administered to assure that rural lots are held to standards appropriate for maintaining the qualities that make the countryside attractive.
 - "Conservation subdivisions" should be encouraged and promoted to protect significant natural features and/or elements of rural character. "Conservation subdivisions" often include 50% open space and can work with on-site septic and water systems.
- **Preventing Sprawl and Protecting Farmland.** Agricultural land use is very important in Knox County and protecting farmland from inappropriate uses is a critical challenge for planning and zoning. This Update emphasizes farmland preservation so that inappropriate development does not occur in locations where the land is better suited to agricultural uses.
 - Presently, the dominant pattern of growth in Knox County involves large individual rural lots that consume huge amounts of land per new home site or new resident. To the extent that such land is prime farmland, this pattern of growth consumes the base for the agricultural industry by converting it into home sites and lawns.

- Some, if not most, new residential development should occur in municipalities where adequate infrastructure is available and public services can be provided most economically without the loss of additional agriculturally productive land.
- Local and statewide efforts to purchase the development rights of prime farmland or to otherwise conserve the land base of the agricultural industry should continue.

Land Use Regulations

The use of land has been more and more regulated in Ohio and Knox County as the density of the human population has increased. Such regulations are multi-layered and serve the public good most effectively and efficiently when coordinated between and across collaborating local political entities.

- **RPC Zoning Assistance.** Demand for development coupled with a range of outdated zoning codes and lack of organizational structure have increased awareness of the need for a higher level of assistance for townships and villages relative to zoning ordinances and to their enforcement. With a larger RPC staff, townships and villages could rely more on RPC for assistance with all aspects of zoning. The RPC could provide carefully crafted model zoning ordinances, incorporating standards to prevent urban and rural sprawl, poor access management or insufficient provision for open space in plans for developments.
- **Collaborative Zoning.** Conflicting patterns of development across jurisdictional boundaries can be avoided through collaborative and coordinated zoning ordinances. Collaboration and coordination of the ordinances and the administration of those ordinances can be facilitated through the RPC for public benefit.
- **Coordination of Development.** Incompatible patterns of development in neighboring political entities can be avoided, or moderated, through the collaborative and coordinated consideration by townships and municipalities of plans for development and of related regulatory measures. Installation of public infrastructure, such as water and sewer systems, could be planned and coordinated to focus and to foster “pay-as-we-go” development compatible with the physical and man-made environment in the County. Collaboration and coordination can be facilitated through the RPC for public benefit.
- **Coordination of Countywide Regulations.** Just as watersheds, storm water, flood water, erosion and sediment transcend local political jurisdictions, so too the regulatory controls or management systems for such matters should transcend those jurisdictions. Adoption of the same, or appropriately modified, regulations by different jurisdictions (townships and municipalities) could allow countywide administration of flood plain and other similar regulations through the RPC for public benefit.

Commercial Development

- Residential development and population growth continue to spur demand for additional commercial space in Knox County. Without thoughtful planning, strip commercial developments tend to proliferate along major road corridors, producing ever more congestion and greater need for managing access to public roads and streets.
- Where possible, redevelopment of existing sites is preferred to creating or expanding “strip” commercial developments. Newer commercial development, whether centralized or decentralized, competes with existing development and this can produce vacant commercial spaces in older parts of a community even as new spaces are built elsewhere.
- Communities have found that certain commercial uses can demand more in services than they provide in tax revenue and, thus, can be a net drain on public budgets. Negative fiscal impacts are likely when unlimited commercial development is permitted without, for example, clear-eyed

consideration of the direct costs of public safety services or public infrastructure and of the indirect costs of public subsidy of one competitor over another.

Industrial Development

Successful expansion of local options for employment depends on identifying and protecting key areas of Knox County with the potential for industrial development. Significant growth in new employment requires physical spaces for industry and it is important that such spaces be clearly identified and protected from inappropriate development.

- Population gains in the County confirm the attraction for living and playing in less densely populated areas. Nevertheless, local opportunities for jobs must be provided to avoid the fiscal problems commonly associated with bedroom communities.
- Many residents in the County commute long distances to work, but often express preference for local employment to avoid commuting.
- A broad industrial base provides local jobs and attracts persons with managerial and technical skills. When residents, such persons may contribute to public life.
- Knox County's increasingly diverse and skilled labor pool makes the County competitive for attracting new opportunities for employment.
- Many in the labor force seek non-traditional seasonal, flexible-schedule and part-time employment attractive to firms with "job sharing" strategies to reduce costs.
- Classification of Mount Vernon by the U.S. Census Bureau as a "Micropolitan Area" confirms the increasing economic and educational diversity of residents on the County.

Transportation Issues

Fundamental transportation problems identified in the 1998 Plan still require deliberate action to develop short and long term solutions. This Update provides a renewed vision of desired improvements, broken into short- and long-term projects. Solutions for specific problems (for example, a roadway misalignment or a need for improving an intersection) and the need for construction of new roads are placed in a countywide context to offer alternative and more efficient routes for the flow of traffic.

- Options for public transportation are now minimal. A more fully developed system is desired to help reduce congestion. Education about the present public transportation system and about the public significance of expanding it are important to maintaining the quality of life in the County.
- Public policy should include measures to correct existing and evolving deficiencies in the capacity or safety of roadways and to prevent additional congestion or safety problems from poorly planned and poorly coordinated developments.
- Policies and regulations to manage access are critical tools to help prevent unsafe placement of driveways and to aid the planning and development of safe, efficient access roads.

Quality of Life Issues

Quality of life is sometimes thought of as social, cultural and economic factors resulting apart from any planning process. In fact, planning impacts the quality of life every day. We live, work, play, study and undertake daily living in an environment. This environment has physical, manmade, cultural, social and economic components tied directly to good planning. Places characterized as having a high “quality of life” result when all of the physical, social, cultural and economic components of the environment have been coordinated harmoniously.

- Careful planning and regulation achieve protection of physical and man-made environments.
- Healthy riversheds affect the quality of life. The Kokosing, Mohican and Licking Rivers are vital parts of the physical, cultural and historic features of Knox County.
- Historic places, features and buildings need to be identified, preserved and protected for the sense of place they provide. This requires not only substantial information for documentation, but also clear public policies to support preservation and protection.
- Cultural amenities such as libraries, colleges, historic neighborhoods, township and village centers need similar preservation and protection to maintain quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors.
- Locations for present and future social services such as senior centers, health care facilities, schools and government offices must be planned and coordinated with existing and future development to assure countywide delivery of those services.
- Measures that create communities with opportunities for walking and other lifelong active recreational activities would help emphasize wellness and the prevention of disease.

Chapter 7

Vision and Goals

As in 1998, a fundamentally important result of this Update is a renewed vision for long-term growth and change throughout Knox County. The 1998 Plan is regarded as an excellent “first step” on a long path of sustained efforts to shape the direction of community change. Notably, this Update placed an even greater emphasis on community participation with a range of efforts that reached many residents and various local leaders. As a result, the reshaped vision and community goals are even more reflective of local attitudes than ever before.

The vision for Knox County is again expressed from both technical and non-technical perspectives. The technical perspective includes updated community goals and the non-technical perspective is presented as though a resident in the year 2025 could somehow write a letter to a present day resident. This imaginary retrospective letter is presented below from a person living in Knox County in 2025 to a current resident.

Dear 2005 Resident of Knox County:

I am happy to report to you that the Knox County of 2025 is an excellent place to live and work. Looking back over the years it is clear that in 1997, local leaders began a commitment to community planning that has endured. The 1998 Plan served the community well and a few years later, people could see meaningful progress toward accepted goals. In 2004 and 2005, this county-wide Plan was updated with even greater community participation. This work was also aided greatly with better data from a computerized geographic information system (GIS) that substantially sharpened the understanding of land resources, land use, land ownership and physical constraints for development. Further, supportive studies such as the report from the Farmland Preservation Task Force (2000), the Cost of Community Services Study (2003) and the Kokosing Scenic River 2004 Watershed Plan dramatically added to the level of understanding of many complex issues.

Knox County maintained efforts to avoid being another unfortunate example of urban sprawl in Central Ohio. Between the completion of the 1998 Plan and the 2005 Update, the Columbus urban area continued along a path of growth and greater influence on Knox County. Fortunately, local leaders continued work on many initiatives and stuck to key policies, that helped maintain farmland and rural character. Farming has remained an important part of local culture and the economy. Locally-produced agricultural products are used and revered as the products of choice by residents and institutions not only locally, but also in the greater Columbus area.

The overall environmental quality of Knox County is better than ever. The Kokosing and Mohican River corridors are centerpieces of an impressive county-wide open space system that connects to urban areas in functional and aesthetic ways. The term “green infrastructure” has meaning to Knox County residents who are connected to the land. Apart from helping to define rural character, the green infrastructure and open space system provides for an expanded system of trails, linear parks and outdoor recreational opportunities that is ample for every resident. Residents of Knox County are much healthier since walking, and other types of non-motorized travel are truly options for local transportation and for recreation.

Jobs are available in Knox County. Early on, local leaders recognized that balanced growth meant having places to live and work. Commuting long distances to work is

uncommon, rather than the rule, and employment opportunities have grown with local tourism and high-tech business activity. Well planned and accessible industrial and other employment centers in Knox County provide places for the growth of additional opportunities for employment.

Recent commercial growth has been measured and a positive addition to the community. Empty commercial buildings are rare and local attitudes favor reuse and redevelopment of commercial spaces, rather than converting green fields to commercial uses. Downtown Mount Vernon is clearly a viable center of specialty commercial uses, services, cultural activities, government, and entertainment.

You can look forward to the future in Knox County; it is a wonderful place to live.

Sincerely,

The Next Generation

Besides the vision of where Knox County can go long-term, specific goals and specific policies and initiatives to achieve them were also developed. The goals are similar to the goals in the 1998 Plan, but vary somewhat based on attainment of the original goals, new public input, and local attitudes. Most of the change relative to the goals is in the policies and initiatives proposed to achieve them. The goals are:

General Goals

- To maintain and to continue development of an effective, adequately staffed and funded planning organization in Knox County.
- To have organized, relevant and up-to-date information on the land resources of Knox County readily available to local officials and the public.

Land Use Goals

- To guide overall development effectively in accord with a plan for future land use and basic principles of wise land use.
- To protect the natural resources and environmental assets of Knox County.
- To protect Knox County's farmland and rural character.
- To establish areas for residential growth consistent with desires to preserve farmland and rural character.
- To develop and redevelop attractive, accessible and viable commercial areas to serve the needs of Knox County residents.
- To identify (and reserve) areas especially suitable for industrial development and provide adequate industrial sites for future employment needs.

Transportation Goals

- Protect roadway capacity with good planning.

- Build new roads to address current problems.
- Encourage other forms of transportation besides motorized vehicles.
- Maintain a good experience of traveling through Knox County.

Quality of Life Goals

- Identify, recognize and protect historic resources.
- Increase outdoor recreation space in accord with the growth of the population.
- Reduce the incidence of preventable disease.

Chapter 8

Policies and Initiatives

The preceding chapters of this Update describe Knox County as a whole in 2005, public opinions on planning, an updated long-term vision for the Community, and goals to attain that vision. Guides for actions directed toward ultimate attainment of the goals and, thus, the long-term vision are needed. Specific guides for actions are listed below as policies and initiatives for each goal. **Map 20**, showing in part “A” geographic and in part “B” manmade elements important for planning, summarizes the non-built and the built environments where the policies and initiatives in this Update can be implemented.

GENERAL GOAL:

TO MAINTAIN AND TO CONTINUE DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE, ADEQUATELY STAFFED AND FUNDED PLANNING ORGANIZATION IN KNOX COUNTY

1. Continue to Define Organizational Roles. (Policy)

The role of the Knox County RPC has expanded in recent years due to staffing and leadership provided by representatives to the RPC. Since completion of the 1998 Plan, the RPC has evolved from an un-staffed organization, largely focused on reviewing minor subdivisions and changes in zoning, to a professionally-staffed organization engaged in both current and long-range planning. Great strides have been made in terms of the influence and relevance of RPC. Feedback from public input to this Update suggested that the RPC focus on the following activities:

- The RPC should serve in the capacity of mediator, coordinator and consensus-builder among and between the City, the villages, the townships, and the County as a whole. The RPC is, and should be, viewed as an impartial advocate for good planning and wise land use. Specific activities where this role could be particularly useful include annexations and economic development.
- When the RPC addresses planning and development issues directly, it should be in the context of matters of countywide significance or in terms of inter-jurisdictional issues (joint economic development districts, special service districts, projects that involve more than one jurisdiction, etc.). Although planning issues having impact on only one jurisdiction are local responsibilities, the RPC should provide assistance when requests are made.
- The RPC can provide services and staff to local governments. One example would be assistance with keeping zoning ordinances current and providing the personnel to administer local zoning for several jurisdictions.

2. Model Codes and Regulations. (Initiative)

As in the 1998 Plan, the need for model codes and regulations continues to be strong. While each jurisdiction is unique and each set of land use controls should reflect local planning policies, there are enough common elements to warrant development of model zoning language that could be used by many local jurisdictions. Examples of important common problems that model regulations could cover include telecommunication facilities, adult entertainment establishments and group homes. In addition, there is an apparent need for model subdivision regulations that can be adopted by local villages. In some cases, local villages have not yet confronted the need for subdivision regulations that would define minimum standards for new road construction, procedures for subdivision plats, or minor lot split approval. With the demand for development expected to increase even more than it has, it would be highly desirable to develop such standards before an immediate need to respond to a proposal to change the use of land. The Knox County Subdivision Regulations are an obvious base for a local model, but municipal subdivision regulations are considerably different in both legal terms and because the design of infrastructure in a municipality is much different from that in rural townships.

3. Updating the Comprehensive Plan. (Policy)

Implementation is the key aspect of any plan. Thus, implementation of the components of this Update should be continually coordinated and assessed for effectiveness and relevance as the future unfolds. Revision of this Update will be appropriate as its policies and initiatives are implemented. Three components of implementation and revision are identified:

- Attainment of the goals in this Update will occur through implementation of its policies and initiatives. Standing and special committees of the RPC should report at least annually on how their activities implement the policies and initiatives in this Update. So that progress on all fronts can be assessed, quarterly, semi-annual or annual meetings should be held with organizations and agencies not involved directly with the RPC, but which are involved in implementation of one or more of the policies or initiatives.
- As policies and initiatives are implemented and as new information becomes available, opportunities to revise segments of this Update will arise. These should be captured through a public process and the corresponding segment of this Update should be revised accordingly.
- As planning is an ongoing, community-wide process, the Knox County Comprehensive Plan should be fully reviewed in a public process conducted by the RPC no less than every five years.

GENERAL GOAL:

TO HAVE ORGANIZED, RELEVANT, AND UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON KNOX COUNTY LAND RESOURCES READILY AVAILABLE TO LOCAL OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

1. Continue to Develop Geographic Information System (GIS) Data Base. (Policy)

Knox County as a whole has made a considerable investment in developing a strong GIS system. The County Auditor, Engineer and RPC have all moved forward with new aerial photographs, parcel-specific property information and a wide range of new data that is all geographically referenced in local GIS files. All maps produced for this Update are similarly consistent with local GIS conventions and formats. Future challenges include sustained efforts to assemble and organize all GIS data so that the RPC serves as a central depository for land use information and data. Key elements include:

- Computerized zoning maps and codes from all municipalities and townships;
- Water and wastewater treatment facilities and planned expansions;
- Locations of conservation easements;
- National Register nomination listings;
- Local land use plans and updates;
- Mining activities, planned operation duration and reclamation plans;
- Proposed municipal and township roads;
- Current land use information;

- Flood plains;
- Wellhead protection and aquifer recharge areas;
- Park plans and expansion plans; and
- Farming information, such as locations of containment farms, regional changes in production, or regional failures to produce because of outside influences.

2. Improve Data Accessibility with Web Posting. (Initiative)

Much has been done to assemble information on land resources in a central repository. Now, public access to that information is even more important. Often, organizations make information available to anyone interested in local planning and zoning through a well designed and informative web site. To move forward and put assembled information to maximum use, the development of an RPC web site should be an initiative. Ultimately, a considerable amount of information about Knox County, land development activity, local planning and zoning policies, and related information could be put on an RPC web site for easy and convenient public access.

3. Improve Local Zoning Maps. (Initiative)

Existing local zoning maps at both the township and municipal levels could be improved given the recent availability of parcel-specific data from the County Auditor. Some of this work has been completed as part of this Update, but more needs to be done to reach maximum usefulness for zoning enforcement.

LAND USE GOAL:

TO GUIDE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PLAN FOR FUTURE LAND USE AND BASIC PRINCIPLES OF WISE LAND USE

1. More Specifically Define Desirable Land Development. (Initiative)

There is a continued need to express formally and completely principles for desirable land development for Knox County. This should be done in the form of a separate document titled "Knox County Development Design Manual." The Manual would be separate and distinct from enacted regulatory measures and should offer preferred and creative approaches to development. The approaches should include mixtures of different types of development, traffic calming measures, a neighborhood orientation, and design criteria that reflect adjacent historic properties. The Manual would not have the force of law, but could be used to clearly identify the local view of "good" development by including conservation design and sustainable development principles as guidelines for residential subdivisions. The Manual could also help define how elements such as signage, lighting, and landscaping can express community character within commercial areas and entryways. Requiring not less than five percent of new parking lots to be landscaped islands with trees is another example of how to maintain community character. Desirable exterior building characteristics could also be defined in terms of roof lines and facades. The design manual for the Connecticut River Valley in Massachusetts would make an excellent model for Knox County due to physical similarities between these two areas.

2. General Land Uses and Future Development Concepts. (Policy)

Map 16 contains an illustration of desired future land use and development concepts, from a county-wide perspective. **Map 16** illustrates local zoning ordinances, where they have been enacted, as the expression of desired land use. (See Appendix VI.) It is recognized that localized land uses could vary from the concepts illustrated, but that there are many broad land use issues that have significance and importance. Fundamentally, **Map 16** expresses the following land use principles:

- Land development should be sensitive to natural resources and environmental assets.

- Future growth should be directed toward defined urban areas where centralized services are currently available or can be provided economically.
- Infill development should be encouraged to use underdeveloped areas more effectively.
- Development in urban areas should emphasize creative approaches, such as mixtures of development types, traffic calming measures, a neighborhood orientation, and design criteria that reflect adjacent historic properties.
- Revitalization of deteriorated urban areas should be encouraged instead of fostering or emphasizing continued development of vacant green-field sites. New development of all types outside urban growth areas should be allowed, but should be held to a high standard in terms of preservation of rural character, agricultural land and open space.
- Mixtures of land use types should be allowed and encouraged in new developments when properly screened and buffered and when appropriate site planning is provided.

LAND USE GOAL:

TO PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS OF KNOX COUNTY

1. Define Special Planning Areas Associated with Wellhead Protection Areas. (Policy)

Map 16 illustrates defined wellhead protection areas that supply water for public water systems. From the perspective of wise land use planning, these areas are sensitive, since certain land uses and certain types of human activity pose threats to sources of drinking water. As a result, developmental activity should be controlled in those areas to maintain existing sources of safe public drinking water.

2. Define a Special Planning Area Adjacent to Knox Lake and to Apple Valley Lake. (Policy)

Both Knox Lake and Apple Valley Lake are significant resources that could benefit from being designated special planning areas. Future unplanned development will present problems due to the lack of central sewers, accelerated storm water runoff and general environmental consequences. Calling attention to these issues is a fundamental, but important first step in recognizing the relationships between land use and water quality. As in the 1998 Plan, creation of a special planning group, under the auspices of the RPC, is a logical first step toward addressing and preventing negative environmental consequences.

3. Green Infrastructure System. (Policy)

As previously noted, the functions of certain elements of the natural environment supply public benefits. Land in the regulatory flood plains is not just “undeveloped land;” it is potential storage for flood water, and development in these areas, or alteration of existing topography, will increase the severity of local and downstream flooding. Similarly, undeveloped land near underground sources of drinking water helps protect groundwater from potential contamination from urban land uses. Wetlands also naturally filter surface water, removing material that can degrade the water quality of streams and lakes. **Map 16** identifies key natural areas of “green infrastructure” that continually perform critical public functions because they are not “developed.”

4. Watershed-Based Land Use Planning Approaches. (Policy)

Completion of the Kokosing Scenic River Watershed Plan (2004) was a significant positive step in local land use planning. The process leading to KSRWP gathered and analyzed data on a watershed and sub-watershed basis. Building on recommendations in the 1998 Plan, the KSRWP contains information useful for making decisions about local land use. Further, with the information in the KSRWP, changes in the watershed and sub-watersheds can be monitored over time. This will help underscore relationships between land use, development and water quality.

LAND USE GOAL:

PROTECT KNOX COUNTY'S FARMLAND AND RURAL CHARACTER

1. Knox Rural Design Initiatives (KRDI). (Initiative)

As proposed in 1998, the KRDI was to be a collection of regulatory and voluntary measures that could protect local farmland and rural character. Since the completion of the 1998 Plan, Knox County formed a Knox County Farmland Preservation Task Force, which in turn produced the Knox County Farmland Preservation Task Force Report. Later, a Cost of Community Services Study was prepared by the American Farmland Trust for Knox County. All these, and related efforts (as discussed more fully in Chapter 5), have helped move the County toward greater protection for farmland and rural character. However, while advancement is recognized on many fronts, certain tasks have not been fully accomplished. Thus, new actions are warranted given past progress, new regulatory options and current local conditions. As in the 1998 Plan, these include a mixture of regulatory, policy and voluntary initiatives and include the following:

- Implementation of a program to purchase agricultural easements at the local level using the available combination of federal, state and local funds. Targeted properties for such a local program should be consistent with this planning document and any township land use plan.
- Continued encouragement and support for local township land use plans, along with support for any locally developed agricultural zoning or purchase of development rights program.
- Expanded educational efforts to alert property owners of potential positive tax advantages available from donating property and/or easements.
- Sustained and expanded efforts to focus developmental activity within urban service areas and to help make redevelopment of existing urban areas more attractive.
- Update the Knox County Subdivision Regulations to regulate minor subdivisions to 20 acres in size in a manner consistent with recent amendments to the Ohio Revised Code. Among the most important of these updates is to amend the Knox County Subdivision Regulations to restrict rural lot splits to a limited number (as of a certain date), so that any future subdivision activity must then be accomplished as a major subdivision.
- Move forward with the development of a model zoning code for townships that includes higher development standards, such as cluster subdivisions and conservation design. Clustering residential density and the corresponding preservation of site amenities should be specific requirements, in the context of being "density neutral."
- Refine the present Comprehensive Plan with analytic programs that allow for a more precise description of priority areas for protection.

2. Local Food Production. (Initiatives and Policies)

Progress has been made on the goals in the 1998 Plan that drew attention to the importance and significance of local food production. A local farmers' market has been established and information on local food sources is available in Knox County. These efforts can be expanded, along with more effort to encourage local institutions to use locally produced food. Knox County residents spend over \$100 million each year on food and much of it could be grown locally. Drawing attention to the significance of locally produced food is a positive way to connect residents with the agricultural activity that surrounds them, to stabilize an economic base for local farming, and to help the local economy.

LAND USE GOAL:

TO ESTABLISH AREAS FOR RESIDENTIAL GROWTH IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH DESIRES TO PRESERVE FARMLAND AND RURAL CHARACTER

1. Encourage New Residential Development in Appropriate Areas. (General Policy)

Residential growth should be encouraged within areas identified on **Map 16**. Encouragement in this sense refers to subsequent decisions about rezoning and the provision of infrastructure to support higher density residential development. Such appropriate areas include:

- Land next to Mount Vernon to which central water and sewer can be provided;
- Areas within Apple Valley where hundreds of vacant residential lots are available;
- Knox County Villages (In most cases, the villages provide both central water and sewer and are logical areas for residential growth); and
- Areas within urban service boundaries, when established.

2. Protect Rural Features within Lower Density Rural Residential Developments. (General Policy)

When a lower-density rural area is developed for residential use, it should be developed as one or more platted subdivisions and designed as density-neutral conservation subdivisions with common open space. Protected open spaces should include cultivated farm fields, traditional buildings and barns, wooded areas, undeveloped rivers and streams, and livestock in fields.

LAND USE GOAL:

TO DEVELOP AND REDEVELOP ATTRACTIVE, ACCESSIBLE, AND VIABLE COMMERCIAL AREAS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF KNOX COUNTY RESIDENTS

New Major Commercial Development Should Occur in and Adjacent to Existing Commercial Areas. (General Policy)

Outward expansion of commercial areas should be limited to encourage the development and redevelopment of existing vacant and/or underused commercial property. It is natural to expect that a growing population will require more commercial space. However, the pace of new commercial development often extends far beyond what is needed to serve more residents and the average square footage of retail space per person rises significantly. Often new commercial development is the result of competition between commercial uses. This trend, along with the shortening life cycles of commercial spaces often results in vacant or underused commercial buildings, even as new ones are built. A policy of measured and balanced increases in the supply of commercially zoned land is seen as a way to encourage redevelopment of commercial areas, while also allowing newer and better commercial structures to be built. Apart from commercial centers in the villages in Knox County and in downtown Mount Vernon, major commercial areas of countywide significance include:

- Coshocton Road: The existing strip of commercial establishments along Coshocton Road should end near Upper Gilchrist Road. This would minimize the eastward extension of problems with the flow of traffic, would encourage more infill of existing commercial areas, and would continue current policy.
- Harcourt Road: This area is expected to become prominent commercially, especially with the availability of central sewer and water. The area is naturally limited by West High Street and the flood plains of the Kokosing River on the north, but there is concern that

strip development could extend haphazardly along U.S. 36/S.R. 3 to the southwest. Future zoning decisions that add to the commercially zoned land in this area should be carefully considered and weighed against the desire to redevelop existing commercial property in the area and throughout the greater Mount Vernon area.

LAND USE GOAL:

TO IDENTIFY (AND RESERVE) AREAS ESPECIALLY SUITABLE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROVIDE ADEQUATE INDUSTRIAL SITES FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

1. Encourage Industrial Expansion in Areas Shown on Map 16. (General Policy)

As Knox County grows and changes, the continued development of centers of employment to serve as sources of jobs and tax revenue remains important. The industrial area near S.R. 13 and S.R. 661 on the south side of Mount Vernon is the largest existing area of this kind in the County and it is a logical place for expansion to occur. Future uses should be limited to "light" industrial activities with high development standards that address landscaping requirements and building design. Future development in the area could include more "office park" uses and buildings. The suitability of this area as a growing and prominent center of employment for all of Knox County is based on considerations such as existing or potential availability of utilities, the proximity of transportation (see also related transportation sections), and the character of existing land uses in the area. Some of the area is also free from significant environmental constraints such as flood plains and steep slopes.

In addition to the S.R.13 and S.R. 661 area, other much smaller centers of employment include the Danville Industrial Area near U.S. 62 and the industrial area at Fredericktown near S.R. 95 and S.R. 13.

2. Target Specific Industries for Economic Development. (General Policy)

While it is likely that local officials will pursue all prospective businesses that could lead to good local jobs, it is sensible to define the most desirable types of industries and businesses relative to land use, environmental concerns, the existing labor pool, and similar factors. Results from the public input sessions for this Update provided clear indications that there is public support for land use policies that place new manufacturing enterprises that help to diversify the local economy in existing industrial areas. Industries that are high-tech and have low environmental impact were identified as most desirable.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

The transportation goals in the 1998 Plan were reviewed and updated in the context of the whole planning process. Updated transportation goals, policies and initiatives were developed by the Transportation Committee of RPC. The Committee, in agreement with public input, concluded that the existing transportation goals remained relevant. The formal goals shown below summarize how the County should approach transportation matters.

- 1) **Protect roadway capacity with good planning.** The ability of a roadway to carry traffic is greatly influenced by how well or how poorly adjacent land uses and curb cuts are developed. Since new road construction and/or significant upgrades are often costly and since congested corridors are often sites of vehicular accidents, it is incumbent on local leaders to make sure that roadway capacity is not diminished by poorly planned development.
- 2) **Build some new roads to address current problems.** The existing roadway network presents significant problems, especially in Mount Vernon. There, a radial pattern of major routes funnels car and truck traffic into the heart of the City, creating traffic congestion and some delay. The

concept of a large bypass was summarily rejected by the community in the late 1990's. This focused attention on developing a series of modest roadway connections to address current and burgeoning problems.

- 3) **Encourage other forms of transportation besides motorized vehicles.** Options allowing individuals to use other forms of transportation, such as walking or riding a bike, are influenced largely by how their surroundings are planned and built. Knox County can work to make physical environments more pedestrian- and bike-friendly. Having such an environment would allow and encourage more physical activity as a normal part of living in Knox County, and thus would benefit the well being and health of residents.
- 4) **Maintain a good experience traveling through Knox County.** Transportation is more than getting from point "a" to point "b." Knox County is among Ohio's most attractive areas with scenic corridors and byways. Formal recognition of this is needed in planning for land use and transportation to help maintain the attractive views and vistas that contribute to the quality of life and attract tourists.

Taking a more structured approach to these issues and expanding on these summaries, the following goals, policies and initiatives are provided:

TRANSPORTATION GOAL:

MAXIMIZE THE CAPACITY AND FUNCTION OF EXISTING ROADWAYS AND PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE AND EFFICIENT MOVEMENT OF TRAFFIC BETWEEN LOCAL AND REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

1. **Classify Knox County Roadways According to Function. (General Policy)** Categories include: Major Roads, Minor Roads and Local Roads.

Map 17 illustrates a general classification of roadways as major, minor and local roads. These classifications serve as a general planning function and are a foundation for more specific classification systems under development in both the Knox County Subdivision Regulations and Access Management Regulations. The following table defines the terms: "Major Routes," "Minor Routes," and "Local Routes." It is important to note that Sycamore Road (C.R. 27), Fredericktown-Amity Road (C.R. 66) and Sparta Road (C.R. 11) are designated as Minor Roads to reflect their significance as east-west routes south and north of Mount Vernon, and the likelihood of greater volumes of traffic moving on them. Further, roads such as Paige (C.R. 48), Monroe Mills (C.R. 3) and Gilchrist (C.R. 8) northeast of Mount Vernon are designated as Minor Roads to reflect anticipated additional traffic between Apple Valley and the Mount Vernon area.

Type of Road	Traffic Moving In and Out or Passing through Knox County	Traffic Moving between Major Areas of Traffic Generation throughout Knox County; including Municipalities	Traffic Moving to Minor Areas of Traffic Generation or Local Destinations
Major Road	Primary Function	Primary Function	Secondary Function
Minor Road	Secondary Function	Secondary Function	Primary Function
Local Road	Not Generally a Function	Not Generally a Function	Secondary Function

This general classification system of roadways should be refined in county-wide and/or municipal regulations. These regulations include local zoning which can provide specify building setbacks

along major, minor and local roads to allow for adequate distances between traffic volumes and speeds and future building.

2. Regulate Land Development to Accommodate Roadway Function. (Policy)

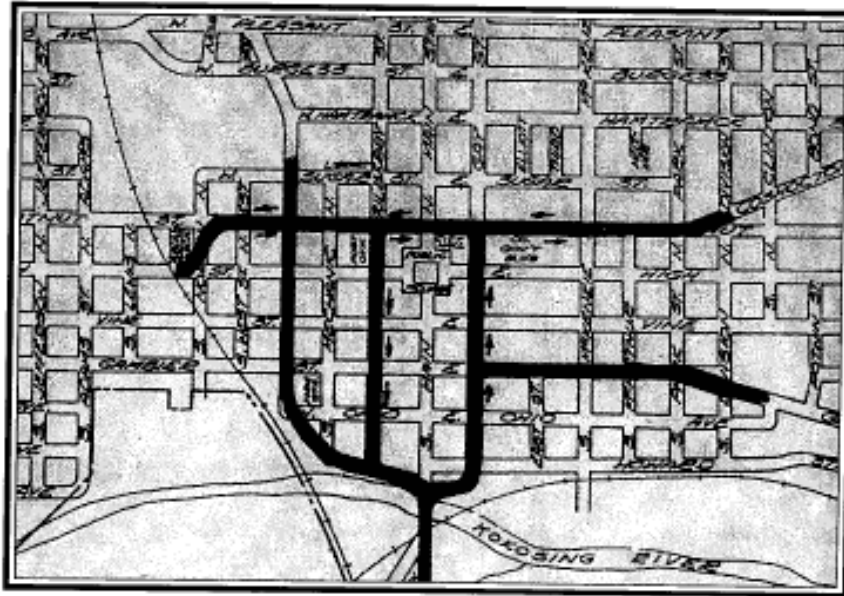
Township zoning should require setbacks for new construction and the Knox County Subdivision Regulations should be amended similarly to require setbacks for new platted subdivisions.

- **Building Setback Requirements for Major Roads:** A minimum front building setback line of 150 feet from the centerline of the right-of-way should be established in township zoning ordinances. This would allow for widening and could allow front access roads when needed. This would also allow for adequate separation between traffic flow on Major Roads and adjacent development.
- **Building Setback Requirements for Minor Roads:** A minimum front building setback line of 100 feet from the centerline of the right-of-way should be established in township zoning ordinances. This would allow for widening and for turn lanes next to intersections or sources of high traffic volumes. This also would allow for adequate separation between traffic flow on Minor Roads and adjacent development.

3. Designate Truck Routes in and Near the Mount Vernon Area Using Existing Key Roadways. (Short-Term Initiative)

The existing patterns of roadways in and near Mount Vernon, which were originally designed as a system of radial roadways, do not provide for efficient movement of high volumes of truck or other traffic. All major traffic flow is directed toward the town square in Mount Vernon, which has limited capacity for traffic. Also, it is undesirable for large volumes of through passenger and truck traffic to be forced into the pedestrian environment of downtown Mount Vernon. Long-term solutions to congestion may involve construction of new roadways (defined later). The primary near-term concern is development of routes to direct the flow of truck traffic in the most acceptable manner, given the shortcomings of the existing roadway network. Therefore, the following truck routes are proposed as a short-term solution until new roadways can be constructed:

- **Granville Road - Parrott Street - Columbus Road Truck Route :** The Granville Road-Parrott Street-Columbus Road Truck Route is established to connect the industrial area south of Mount Vernon with SR 229 and US 36/SR 3 that link Knox County with I-71 and the Columbus area.
- **Downtown Truck Route:** The movement of trucks through downtown Mount Vernon is an undesirable, but necessary, consequence of the current roadway network and land use system. No solution involving truck movement through downtown is desirable for the long-term; but for the short term, the truck route shown on page 91 is one feasible solution.



TRANSPORTATION GOAL:
TO CONSTRUCT NEW ROADWAYS AND UPGRADE EXISTING ROADWAYS TO ADDRESS
CURRENT AND PROJECTED TRAFFIC FLOW

Potential corridors for new roadways should be defined now so that the opportunities to extend roadways are preserved for the future. Whether actual road construction occurs with private land development, or as a future public improvement project, it is important for the community to identify key areas where new roadways are needed to address existing and reasonably foreseeable future traffic demands.

There are many public purposes that warrant local attention to the need for a well-connected system of roadways. When the local roadway system provides for quick and direct access to destinations, vehicular trips are shorter on average. This obviously saves time as individuals travel a more direct route to destinations. Further, more direct routes and fewer miles driven results in less gas consumption and reduced air pollution. Perhaps most important, a well-connected system of roadways allows for better response times by emergency vehicle, thus enhancing protection of life and property.

When local governments have an adopted plan for new streets and highways, then new subdivisions should be designed within that planning context. Usually, new subdivisions involve local streets that function primarily to provide access to new lots, and therefore have little impact on area-wide traffic circulation. However, it is probable that without proper planning and review, a subdivision could be designed and built in a manner blocking the best alignment for extending a major road. Similarly, a poorly designed subdivision on one side of a street could restrict needed road widening. Once blocked, or otherwise restricted, extra public costs and project delays are likely as less desirable road alignments or other improvement options are defined and explored.

Section 711.10 of the Ohio Revised Code addresses the need for a local plan for major streets and highways in the context of a county or regional planning commission's ability to adopt subdivision regulations. Section 711.09 similarly addresses municipal subdivision regulations. Providing for review of proposed subdivisions in the context of regional needs for the circulation of traffic is a primary justification for subdivision review by any local government.

Individual projects described below are phased and ranked to indicate a general sense of intended sequence. It is difficult to identify a sequential list of projects because many of the projects identified herein are expected to take place in conjunction with private development. Thus, decisions a current or

subsequent property owner makes about development will be a key element in timing projects. The challenge for local officials includes the critical need to review all subdivisions in the context of larger circulation needs. In considering the following list of projects, it should be noted that the proposed alignments are suitable for general planning purposes only. It is also likely that additional studies and site-specific investigations may provide other viable alignments.

The identification of future roadway segments is not an effort to establish a “beltway” or “bypass” around Mount Vernon. Individual segments have value independent of other segments and represent steps for improving the flow of existing and future volumes of traffic. It should also be clear that in some cases, the intersection between the existing road system and new proposed roads would create the need for varying degrees of improvement of those intersections. In some cases, the intersections might involve work to improve sight distances, installation of traffic control measures, or the addition of turn lanes to accommodate a larger number of turns. However, effort to define the needed improvements more specifically at this point would be premature.

A graphic illustration of all future roadway segments and the location of expected intersection improvements is provided on **Map 18**.

Short-Term Initiative:

One short-term initiative addresses immediate transportation issues and problems. This short-term initiative is consistent with a longer-term vision for an effective transportation system in Knox County.

Conduct a Feasibility Study of Continuing Blackjack Road Extension to US 36/SR 3:

Among the most needed (and perhaps most costly) roadway extensions is a connection between Blackjack Road and US 36/SR 3. As noted in the 1998 Plan, this extension would allow industrial traffic south of the City of Mount Vernon to gain access to I-71 and the Columbus area without going through downtown Mount Vernon.

There are several options for alignments that warrant focused study. Between the existing intersection of Granville Road with Blackjack Road and US 36/SR 3, there are roads (Kinney Road and Henry Road), a developing rails-to-trails bikeway, a waterway (Dry Creek), and many private property interests, including an abandoned gravel quarry. Addressing all these considerations adequately will require substantial effort, but this issue should be considered in depth in the near term, before options are precluded by private development. The specific location for a connection between an extended Blackjack Road and US 36/SR 3 is a major consideration that warrants thorough study. A key consideration is the best location for a new intersection at US 36/SR 3.

This additional study and effort is scheduled to be completed in early 2006 and will consider alternative routes and a specific roadway design. The new roadway could be similar to SR 661 (in number of lanes, design speed, and right-of-way width). However, the character of this future roadway could also include considerations such as a boulevard, special lighting or landscaping, or other distinctive elements. Future land use in this area is expected to include light industrial development which could benefit from additional design elements to create a more distinctive place.

Lastly, funding options are important. Funding options might include use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to leverage the positive tax flow from associated development. Further, as this area is likely to attract development that produces jobs, it is likely that state and federal resources would be made available to help fund construction costs.

Attention to this issue and the need for a feasibility study, is a high priority because of the expected benefit of a more direct east-west route south of the City of Mount Vernon, and because development south and west of Mount Vernon (especially along US 36/SR 3) is likely to be very strong.

Regardless of how soon related transportation improvements are built to provide better access to SR 13 north of the City, the Blackjack Road Extension to US 36/SR 3 has benefit and merit as a stand-alone project.

Longer-Term Policies:

Apart from the preceding short-term initiatives, the longer-term policies defined below summarize a community view of needed transportation projects. These policies should guide decision-making on proposals for private development and on which options to pursue for funding.

Before focusing on the important issues in and around Mount Vernon, other transportation issues in Knox County are discussed. These include:

Improvement of SR 95 between I-71 and Fredericktown:

The issue of improving SR 95 between Fredericktown and I-71 has been discussed locally for some time and relates economic development to a more effective connection between the northwestern portion of Knox County and the interstate system. Although no effort for design improvements is underway, as currently discussed, improvement of SR 95 would take the form of a “super 2” (essentially a higher capacity two-lane road with engineering upgrades to further enhance capacity and safety, particularly at intersections). Improvements on SR 95 would be especially useful when considered with future improvements discussed later in and around Mount Vernon.

Class X Roads:

Certain township roads in some Knox County townships are Class X and action is needed by township trustees to reduce the potential liability associated with them. The Knox County Engineer has appropriate legal documents that Township Trustees can sign to address this situation in a manner consistent with the Ohio Revised Code. Class X roads involve non-maintained road status made possible by House Bill 299.

Brinkhaven Area Transportation Enhancement Project:

Unique transportation elements converge in the Brinkhaven/Danville area. The Mohican Valley Trail is a 4.8-mile trail built on abandoned railroad right-of-way connecting the villages of Brinkhaven and Danville. At Brinkhaven the trail crosses the Mohican River through a 370-foot covered bridge, called the Bridge of Dreams. East of this Bridge the trail connects with the Holmes Country Trail. Future plans are to build a park at the Bridge; provide a drinking water well; install benches, hitching posts, more fencing, improved parking areas along the trail; and build a rest area at the Danville end of the trail. There are wide ranging potential projects that could enhance this area and could build on existing and potential transportation synergies. The Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP), available from ODOT, is a good match for funding.

Centerburg Transportation Issues:

In Knox County, many county and township roads intersect state routes at angles that create poor sight distances. Ideally, roadway intersections (especially those involving higher traffic volumes and vehicular speeds) should intersect at right angles. In the Centerburg area particularly, some roadways intersect US 36/SR 3 at angles that create sight/distance and safety issues. These roadways include Oliver, Updike and Wilson Roads. Since US 36/SR3 is expected to experience increasing traffic, it is critical that intersection improvements be made to maximize capacity and safety of this important corridor to the Columbus area.

Mount Vernon Area Transportation Issues:

Traffic flow in and around Mount Vernon is frequently discussed. After an extensive by-pass was proposed and rejected by the community, the 1998 Plan offered a more modest, but effective system of connections between existing roads. The following policies are generally consistent with the 1998 Plan and earlier visions of a more fully connected roadway system that does not force vehicles into downtown Mount Vernon. This long-term vision for roadway connections around the City of Mount Vernon includes the following elements (apart from the previously discussed extension of SR 661 westward to US 36/SR3):

The Greenbelt Parkway:

This approach to existing and projected traffic flow issues on the western side of Mount Vernon builds on and refines prior planning. It includes a possible connection between US 36/SR 3 and SR 13 on the western side of Mount Vernon. Such a route would be an attractive alternative to the current pattern that now funnels trucks through the downtown area of Mount Vernon.

No engineering analysis with respect to the proposed alignment has been made. An alternative to the proposed project is described below that could be the subject of more study and investigation.

The proposed road is called the “Greenbelt Parkway” for several reasons (other possible names include Green Valley or Pleasant Valley Parkway). One is the fact that final alignment of the road (to be defined after much more study) may impact land included in the City of Mount Vernon’s wellhead protection area and land that is in the 100-year regulatory flood plain. Furthermore, the proposed road is likely to impact prime farm land. Consequently, design of the road and the related land use planning must address these environmental concerns and respond accordingly. Responses should include measures to limit both development near the roadway and to control access to the new road, as well as amenities that include appropriate landscaping and bike path connections to existing and future trails. Finally, with proper land use policies and planning, the new roadway could become an urban growth boundary to help prevent urban sprawl.

The Greenbelt Parkway could be built in two phases. A first phase could be a new road beginning at a point where Green Valley Road intersects SR 13 north of the City. This new road would connect with SR 229 west of the Green Valley Subdivision. In combination with Harcourt Road, and the continuation of Blackjack Road Extension to US 36/SR 3 to the south, the road would create a new route for north and southbound passenger vehicles and trucks to travel around the western side of Mount Vernon. This route would be circuitous, but it would reduce truck-related congestion in downtown Mount Vernon. Attention to the design and redesign of intersections is also recognized as a need (especially at the intersection of Green Valley Road and SR 13) all along the length of the proposed Greenbelt Parkway.

As with the previous discussion about continuing Blackjack Road Extension west of SR 661, an engineering feasibility study should be conducted to produce a focused evaluation of alignment options, potential costs, and environmental impacts. Among the major concerns is the chance that private development could eliminate or preclude the best alignment option. The community is in a much better position to manage development when a general alignment and options are predetermined.

Due to the environmental constraints of the flood plain and wellhead protection area, development is not encouraged in this area (as shown on the Plan for Future Land Use). Therefore, it is unlikely that there are opportunities to capture tax revenue from private land development to help finance the proposed Greenbelt Parkway. Rather, it is likely that this project would rely more exclusively on public dollars. Once built, this new road probably would be classified as a Major Road.

Given Phase 1 of the Greenbelt Parkway, there would be an opportunity for a secondary access to Sandusky Street via Banning Road and Tilden Avenue. Banning Road becomes Tilden Avenue in the City of Mount Vernon and the existing bridge over the Kokosing River provides a connector to Sandusky Street (SR 13) in Mount Vernon. Some minor improvements and upgrades to Tilden Avenue and Banning Road may be needed to accommodate heavier traffic volumes, but it would remain two lanes. The connection to Sandusky Street is not ideal for trucks, given the grade and sight distances north of the Sandusky Street/Tilden Avenue intersection. This intersection is developed and improvements such as turn lanes or greater radii would be expensive and difficult to install. Given these constraints, this segment is not viewed as having high traffic volumes in the future, but it would create a secondary east and west access in the northern part of Mount Vernon.

Where Tilden Avenue crosses the abandoned rail line that is expected to become a bike trail could be a key point of access for bicyclists and pedestrians. As a result, bike lanes and perhaps even a staging area or a small park should be incorporated into plans for improvements to both Tilden Avenue and Banning Road. A bike lane connection between the Greenbelt Parkway and the future bike trail along the River would be an outstanding amenity for pedestrians and bicyclists.

A second phase to the Greenbelt Parkway would be a new road between US 36/SR 3, and SR 229. The road would begin at the intersection of the Blackjack Road Extension (See above.) and would proceed northward to the southern end of the first phase of the Greenbelt Parkway (west of Green Valley Subdivision). Construction of the second phase recognizes that Harcourt Road is likely to experience greater traffic with anticipated development. Bringing the second phase of the Greenbelt Parkway west of Harcourt Road and limiting access to existing roadways would help ensure that this transportation improvement was no inducement for sprawl.

Greenbelt Parkway Alternative:

As an alternative to the proposed Greenbelt Parkway, a more modest alternative is to build a new road east of the Kokosing River beginning at West High Street. Such a new road could follow the existing levy and the River northward, ultimately connecting to SR 13 near the north corporation limit of the City of Mount Vernon. Such a project would probably be far less costly than the proposed Greenbelt Parkway discussed above, but could impact the river, the flood plains and groundwater, as well as on Riverside Park. As noted, a separate study of this alternative is scheduled to take place in 2006 to determine costs and benefits more specifically in comparison with the proposed Greenbelt Parkway.

Roadway Segments on the Northern Side of Mount Vernon:

Movement of east-west traffic on the northern side of Mount Vernon is severely limited because of the radial nature of the roadway network in and around the City. A direct connection between SR 3 and SR 13 would help general traffic patterns, but such a connection would be very difficult to achieve given existing development.

Recognizing that a direct connection between SR 3 and SR 13 is unlikely, two other projects are potential steps to moderate existing and anticipated problems with the flow of traffic. One option is to extend Beech Street westward to connect to SR 3, aligning it with Yoakam Drive to avoid creating an offset intersection. Such a project is expected to be constructed as part of private development.

Secondly, an extension of Taylor Avenue, westward to Belmont Avenue, is desirable. Such an extension impacts the southern edge of the elementary school property, and might be accomplished along with future redevelopment of the school. As with the extension of Beech Street, mentioned above, the extension of Taylor Avenue should be sought when development is under consideration.

Thirdly, an extension of McKenzie Road westward to SR 13 is a desirable connection that would help the flow of traffic throughout the northern side of the Mount Vernon. As with other segments, this should be considered in the context of future private development.

Roadway Segments on the Eastern Side of Mount Vernon:

Traffic flow on the northeastern side of Mount Vernon would benefit from another direct connection between US 36 and SR 3. Thus, a proposed connector is illustrated with an intersection at McKenzie Road, where the problematic intersection has been reconfigured to enhance safety and the flow of traffic.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL:

ENCOURAGE ALTERNATE FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION.

1. Strengthen County and Municipal Subdivision Regulations (and Local Zoning Where Appropriate) to Require Pedestrian Linkages when New Residential Development is Near Existing or Proposed Trails, Schools, Parks, Playgrounds, Commercial Areas, or Community Facilities. (General Initiative):

Local subdivision regulations (and in some cases, local zoning) are tools that can help assure the construction of pedestrian linkages. The following material was obtained from the Federal Highway Administration and it shows how local zoning and subdivision ordinances can be amended to require more attention to the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. Additional standards can be found in FHWA materials.

Subdivision Layout: Residential subdivision layouts (including Planned Unit Developments) should provide safe, convenient, and direct bicycle and pedestrian access to nearby (within ¼ mile for walking and 2 miles for bicycling) residential areas; bus stops; and centers of neighborhood activity, such as schools, parks, commercial and industrial areas, or office parks.

Cul-de-Sacs: Cul-de-sacs have proven to be effective in restricting automobile through-traffic. However, they also have the effect of restricting bicycle and pedestrian mobility unless public accessways are provided to connect them with nearby streets. Trail connections between cul-de-sacs and nearby streets should be provided wherever possible to improve access for bicycles and pedestrians.

Future Extension of Streets: During the development of properties, streets, bicycle paths, and sidewalks should be designed to connect to adjacent properties that are also likely to be subdivided. Thereby, a system of connecting roads and sidewalks could be developed over time. When subdivisions are built with only one outlet to a main thoroughfare, the result is heavy traffic congestion and intersections difficult for both motorists and pedestrians.

Inclusion of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities in Phased Development: Areas proposed for pedestrian and bicycle use should be defined in projects that occur in a phased or otherwise piecemeal fashion. For projects in which only part of the land owned by an applicant is proposed for development, a sketch plan showing the tentative and alternative locations of streets, bicycle facilities, and public accessways should be developed. The sketch plan should also show the proposed development and nearby existing or proposed trails, schools, parks, playgrounds, commercial areas, or community facilities for all of the land owned. This will help ensure that subsequent construction phases can be designed to produce a network of connections.

Drainage Areas and Pedestrian / Bicycle Facilities: Most new residential subdivisions built in Knox County are likely to be designed without curbs and gutters, and are likely to rely on natural swales and green spaces to accommodate storm water in the right of way and/or along parallel landscape strips. Given this, there are opportunities for designing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in such areas.

Internal Bicycle/Pedestrian Circulation for Commercial and Business Developments: Adequate provisions should be made for bicycle and pedestrian circulation between buildings and other points on development sites (the Americans With Disabilities Act [ADA] also contains regulations for on-site circulation).

Grade: Sidewalk grades should be kept to no more than 8 percent.

Landscaping: Landscaping should be arranged to permit sufficiently wide, clear, and safe pedestrian walkways. Combinations of turf, shrubs, and trees are desirable in border areas along a roadway. Low shrubs in commercial areas and near schools are often desirable to channel pedestrians to crosswalks or crossing areas.

Rural Sidewalks: Sidewalks along rural roadways should be provided as near the right-of-way line as is practicable. If a swale is used, the sidewalk should be placed at the back of the swale. If a guardrail is used, the sidewalk must be behind the guardrail.

Bridge Sidewalks: Sidewalks on bridges should be placed on both sides.

Street Lighting: For both safety and security, most sidewalks require street lighting. Lighting is needed both for movement of pedestrians and for their detection by motorists when they cross a roadway. Normal placement of street luminaries, such as cobra heads, provide sufficient lighting for safe pedestrian movement.

Minimum Width of Sidewalks: The minimum required width of sidewalks in non-residential areas should be 5.0 feet to provide an adequate pedestrian space. Even greater widths are justified in areas next to schools and shopping districts.

Border Areas and Buffers: Wherever practical, a buffer width of 12 feet or more should be provided between the curb and the sidewalk for safety and environmental enhancement.

Along with the criteria listed above, site and subdivision plans should be reviewed in accordance with the following criteria:

Overall System:

- Can pedestrians take advantage of "shortcut paths" that encourage walking instead of driving?
- Does the pedestrian system consider the type and probable location of future development on adjacent or nearby parcels of land?
- Does flexibility exist to provide direct connections to adjacent parcels?
- In commercial areas, is there a defined pedestrian path between the sidewalk in the right-of-way and the building entrance?
- Are walkways along the street buffered from traffic as much as possible?

Safety and Security:

- Are pathways generally visible from nearby buildings and free from dark, narrow passageways?
- Is lighting adequate for nighttime security of pedestrians?
- Are "sight lines" at intersections adequate for pedestrian visibility? Are pedestrians able to see on-coming traffic, given typical speeds?
- Do pathways lead to road crossing points with the least conflict?
- In general, are pedestrian/vehicle conflict points kept to a minimum?
- Are pedestrians given adequate time to cross the road at intersections?

2. Continue to build a data base of information on all existing bike trails and planned extensions in Knox County and in municipalities. This general initiative should be carried out by the Knox County Park District, in cooperation with the Knox County Regional Planning Commission and Kokosing Gap Trail Board.
3. Continue to work toward the establishment of a network of bike routes and lanes throughout Mount Vernon. This should be facilitated by the Knox County Park District, the Kokosing Gap Trail Board, and the City of Mount Vernon. Attention should be paid to provisions for parking areas for bikes as well as for making roadways more accommodating for cyclists.
4. Continue to educate children about bike safety, including the use of helmets, through the development of special programs. The Kokosing Gap Trail Board, along with the school systems in Knox County, should coordinate these programs.
5. Encourage ride sharing with appropriate facilities (such as free parking lots) and programs, especially for commuters to the Columbus area.
6. Establish connections by bus or other forms of public transit between Mount Vernon and Apple Valley. Routes should circle Apple Valley via Apple Valley Drive.
7. Build on the designation of the Kokosing State Scenic River Water Trail. The Water Trail begins at Riverside Park on the western side of Mount Vernon and runs downstream to the eastern county line.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL:

TO ENHANCE AND PROTECT THE POSITIVE EXPERIENCE OF TRAVELING WITHIN KNOX COUNTY.

1. **Establish Additional Development Standards along Key Corridors and Entrance Ways into Knox County. (General Initiative)**
Harcourt Road and Coshocton Avenue, along with the U.S. 36/SR 3 and SR 95, are key corridors and entrance ways for Knox County. Clinton Township adopted an Overlay Zone along Harcourt Road that requires additional landscaping and signage along US 36/SR 3. Further development of appropriate requirements should be encouraged along this corridor, and similar efforts are desirable elsewhere. The development of the model zoning requirements (with specific standards to further this objective) is a logical approach.
2. **Establish Special Requirements for Outdoor Advertisement along Scenic Routes. (General Initiative)**
Since certain roadways in Knox County are designated as scenic routes, there should be a concerted effort to include additional development standards along these routes to protect the views in Knox County. For example, placement, size and composition of billboards should be controlled. **Map 19** illustrates the scenic routes.
3. **Further Develop the Formally-Designated Scenic Byway System in Knox County. (General Initiative)** Specific projects include seeking scenic byway status on SR 514 beginning near Danville at US 62 and ending at the county line to the northeast. This proposed scenic byway would join the existing Wally Road Scenic Byway that starts in Greer at SR 514 and continues northward to the county line and into Ashland County). Other future designated scenic byways include all of US 62 from its northern to its southern points in Knox County.

QUALITY OF LIFE GOAL:

IDENTIFY, RECOGNIZE AND PROTECT HISTORIC RESOURCES

- 1. Continue to Place Individual Properties and Districts on the National Register of Historic Places. (Initiative)**
Efforts to designate individual buildings, the downtown area of Mount Vernon and surrounding residential areas as Nationally-Designated Historic Places or Districts should continue. Similar efforts are also needed in older portions of villages and for older structures throughout Knox County.
- 2. Document Historic and Environmental Features Within the Kokosing and Mohican River Corridors. Historic Features Include Indian Trails, "Smoke Rings," Burial Grounds, Etc. The Land Adjacent to and the Water in Each River Are Major Environmental Resources in Knox County. (Initiative)**
A major step forward was taken with this initiative with completion in 2004 of the Kokosing Scenic River Watershed Plan. This work provides an inventory of both social and natural resources that are verbally described and mapped in a GIS format. Continued expansion and routine use of this extensive database is needed.
- 3. Inventory Historic Farms in Knox County. (Initiative)**
The Knox County Historical Society has provided some documentation of local historic farms, but an expansion of this effort is needed throughout Knox County.

Major changes continue in the way farming is done, resulting in the disappearance of family farms. These trends are well documented by the Family Farm Project at Kenyon College, but continued efforts to identify local farming operations particularly relevant to the history of Knox County are necessary. Concurrent or later initiatives could include plaques to identify historically significant farms and farm buildings. The local Agricultural Museum is a partner in this effort.
- 4. Biography of People and Places in Knox County Today for Use in the Future. (Initiative)**
Continued efforts to document local history are needed throughout the County. Many older Knox County residents possess information about the past that should be formally documented by video or audio tape and other means. Residents clearly recognize the importance of creating and defining a legacy for future residents and the need for a central place for this information to be collected and stored.
- 5. Continue Efforts to Revitalize the Woodward Opera House and Target It as a Cultural and Historic Anchor for Downtown Mount Vernon and Knox County. (Initiative)**
The revitalization of the Woodward Opera House is well along and is beginning to redefine downtown Mount Vernon. Along with the theater, other existing and future uses of the building could combine to create a significant attraction in downtown Mount Vernon. These efforts, which have been underway for many years should be sustained.
- 6. Redevelop the Train Depot on West High Street. (Initiative)**
The proposal in the 1998 Plan to acquire and to redevelop the Train Depot on West High Street was achieved, restoration is underway, and plans for its reuse are being made. This project represents a step toward reclaiming a sense of local history. Maintaining the historic built environment allows residents to feel a sense of place.
- 7. Review and/or Develop Design Review Regulations for Downtown Mount Vernon and Residential Areas along North Main Street and East Gambier Street. (Initiative)**
Existing design review regulations affecting historic property in downtown Mount Vernon should be evaluated for adequacy. Such regulations cannot be retroactive, so it is important that local requirements are reasonable, effective and appropriate. Inappropriate renovation of one or a few downtown properties could diminish the historic qualities and charm of a larger area. Similarly,

residential areas along North Main Street and East Gambier Street in Mount Vernon may be subject to inappropriate redevelopment and/or renovation.

8. Encourage and Support Villages and Other Local Units of Government to Protect and Enhance Historic Resources. (General Policy)

A sense of pride develops as local communities focus on their unique built environments. Apart from the Village of Gambier (which has a designed Historic District), smaller units of government in Knox County have not undertaken preservation initiatives to protect their historic resources. Local funding for such initiatives is an issue. Consequently, there is an ongoing need to support and encourage local historic preservation from the county level. County support might include technical resources and assistance with coordination of efforts.

9. Investigate a Knox Heritage Trust or Similar Measure. (Initiative)

A further step in protecting historic resources would be to create a Knox Heritage Trust as a vehicle for acquisition of key properties. Alternatively, an existing organization might assume this responsibility using private funds to acquire and perhaps renovate significant historic properties.

10. Create a Knox County Arts Council.

An umbrella organization is needed to help coordinate arts-related activities in Knox County. There are several arts-related organizations in Knox County, and preliminary discussions have taken place about the need for a single organization to help coordinate and enhance the arts-related activities in Knox County. Such an organization could coordinate events; create combined promotional materials and work toward creating synergies between organizations and events.

11. Develop Formal Historic Tours with Uniform Identification and Signage. (General Initiative)

Walking or driving tours of downtown Mount Vernon and various historic areas and buildings throughout Knox County should be developed and denoted with proper signage. Further, the definition and promotion of a scenic loop associated with tourist activity and Holmes County could be a helpful addition to the on-going work of attracting tourists. The tours and the scenic loop should be promoted by the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

12. Pursue "Certified Local Governments (CLG)" Status. (Initiative)

CLG status opens additional funding possibilities and technical assistance from the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. The CLG program can also provide training for local officials.

QUALITY OF LIFE GOAL:

TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE OUTDOOR RECREATION SPACE WITH POPULATION GROWTH

1. Amend the Knox County and Mount Vernon Subdivision Regulations to Include a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland with Subdivision Activity. (Initiative)

Many local governments in Ohio have adopted a standard under which the dedication of parkland is required when land is developed for residential purposes under local subdivision regulations. Typically, this standard relates to some acreage per 1,000 residents expected to reside in the new subdivision. Where the development is smaller or where a park is not feasible or desirable, providing a fee in lieu of actual dedicated land is generally an option. According to 2003 data from ODNR, Knox County ranks 47th among Ohio's 88 Counties with 108 acres of outdoor recreation space per 1,000 people. This large jump upward occurred because of recent projects such as Wolf Run Regional Park and Foundation Park (discussed more below), both of which were acquired with funds from the Ohio Public Works Commission.

2. Define the Kokosing and Mohican River Corridors as a "Greenway" and Centerpiece of an Extensive Countywide, Multi-Purpose Open Space System. (Policy)

The Kokosing and Mohican River Valleys are major environmental assets and provide significant opportunities for passive recreation. Geographically, these Valleys form a linear system of open

spaces that could tie together parks, historic sites, and natural areas in a “greenway.” Additional documentation of environmental and historic resources within the Valleys is needed.

3. **Continue Aggressively Seeking Additional Funds to Acquire Parkland Through Applications for Public Grants, Private Foundation Grants, and Private Donations. (Policy)**
Few public grant programs exist for park and recreation development. Consequently, important projects must be accomplished with limited public resources and significant private efforts.
4. **Continue to Pursue a Dedicated Source of Local Tax Revenue for the Knox County Park District. (Policy)**
The Knox County Park District has accomplished major initiatives using minimal funding from Knox County. However, the District’s efforts to secure permanent funding through a tax levy was not successful. Across the State of Ohio, most active Park Districts have exercised their local taxing authority and have passed a small millage (generally one mill) to fund programs and activities.
5. **Extend Bike Trails Where Possible Along the Former Rail Right-of-Way. (Policy)**
The Kokosing Gap Trail and other trails have been a tremendous success in Knox County and efforts to expand the system clearly enjoy wide public support. Planned extensions of bike trails were illustrated previously.
6. **Continue with Planning and Implementation of a Major Recreational Focal Point Near Downtown Mount Vernon, on the Southern Side of the Kokosing River. (Initiative)**
The City of Mount Vernon has completed a master plan for redevelopment of the former gravel pit next to the Kokosing River, south of downtown Mount Vernon. The area, now called Foundation Park, has the potential to become an important recreational attraction and asset for the downtown area.
7. **Develop and Implement Plans for River Walk Along the Southern Side of Downtown, Serving as a Pedestrian Connection Between Downtown, the Kokosing Gap Trail, the Developing Heart of Ohio and Owl Creek Trails, and Foundation Park. (Initiative)**
To gain maximum impact and synergy from these significant public features, a pedestrian connection, such as a river walk is desirable. A river walk might include outside vendors and seasonal activity, along with permanent buildings having frontage on both vehicular and pedestrian areas.
8. **Continue to Support and Encourage Activity by Private Land Trusts.**
As recommended in the 1998 Plan, the activity of private land trusts has dramatically increased in Knox County and now represents a substantial local force for conservation and preservation of land, especially agricultural land. Within the County (and other Counties), these private organizations have become a principal means to use funding from programs such as Clean Ohio to purchase protective easements providing for recreational opportunities, preservation of agricultural land and protection of environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and aquifer recharge areas.

QUALITY OF LIFE GOAL:

REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF PREVENTABLE DISEASE

1. **A Knox County Wellness Task Force. (Initiative)**
Since 1998, individual efforts have gone forward, but no task force has been created. The central goal of this initiative remains shifting focus from the treatment of disease to the prevention of disease as a matter of public policy. Establishment of a local group to help coordinate wellness programs conducted by organizations such as the Health Department, Knox Community Hospital, and private industry could maximize the effectiveness of these programs and could bring greater visibility to the issue of preventing disease.

2. Encourage the Development of Sidewalks, Bike Trails and Other Pedestrian Connections to Promote Healthy Life Styles That Include Walking as a Mode of Travel and a Source of Exercise. (Policy)

The Kokosing Gap Trail was illustrated in a recent article in *Planning Magazine* (April 2005), that addressed how advocates of trails and healthcare agencies are joining forces to promote healthy and less sedentary lifestyles. The article pointed to new research indicating that trails provide more in health benefits than they cost in terms of construction and maintenance. Specific local operational policies that further this objective include:

- Requiring sidewalks in all residential subdivisions (unless very, very low density);
- Requiring pedestrian connections between new developments and adjacent parks, public facilities, or other pedestrian facilities; and
- Requiring physical upgrades at points of intersection between vehicular and pedestrian movement to address safety issues.

QUALITY OF LIFE GOAL:

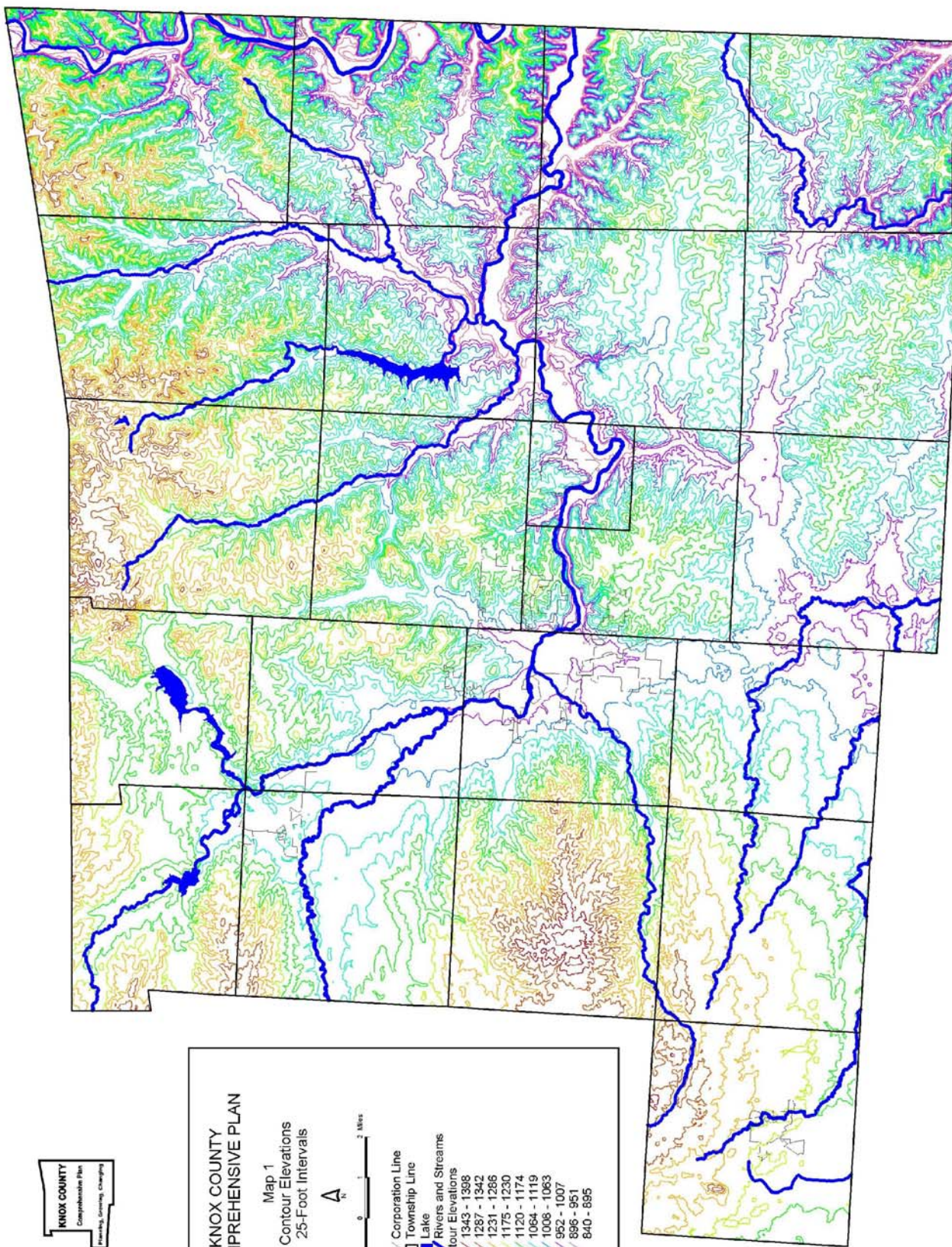
TO ASSURE CONTINUING DELIVERY OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES THROUGHOUT KNOX COUNTY

1. To Encourage and Support Efforts to Coordinate Fire and Emergency Medical Services. (Policy)

Like most inhabitants of rural counties in Ohio, many Knox County residents receive fire and emergency services from special districts covering specific areas. Public perspectives on this system indicate that more coordination and cooperation between organizations is desirable for both effectiveness and cost efficiency. There also is a need for greater education of the public to develop an understanding of the costs and funding options for both service providers (including their mandatory continuing educations) and equipment. There is increasing dialog about these issues among the involved organizations, and this trend is the positive outgrowth of a long history of mutual aid and collaboration between existing districts. Sustained efforts to build on this history of collaboration should be supported and the RPC may be able to provide the neutral forum for such efforts.

THE END

MAPS

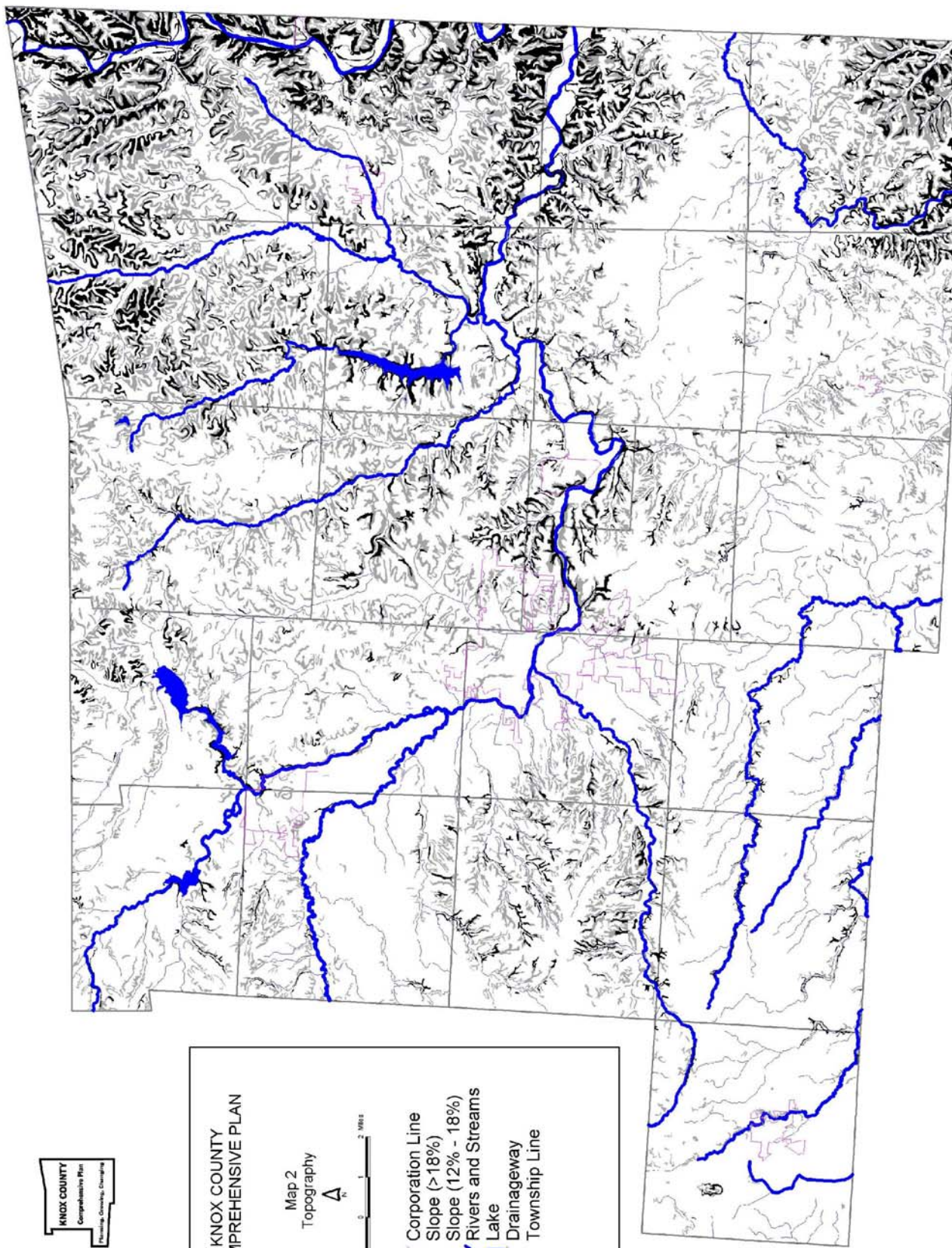
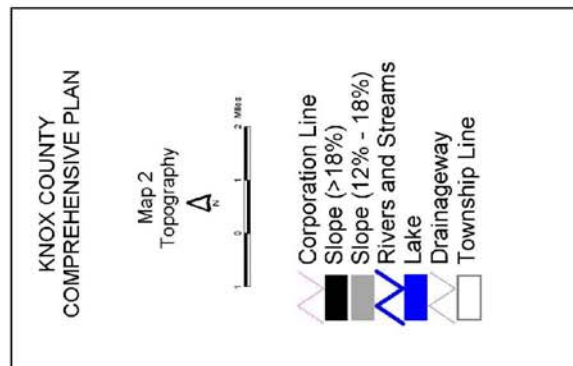


KNOX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 1
Contour Elevations
25-Foot Intervals



- Corporation Line
- Township Line
- Lake
- Rivers and Streams
- Contour Elevations
- 1343 - 1308
- 1287 - 1342
- 1231 - 1286
- 1175 - 1230
- 1120 - 1174
- 1064 - 1119
- 1008 - 1063
- 952 - 1007
- 896 - 951
- 840 - 895





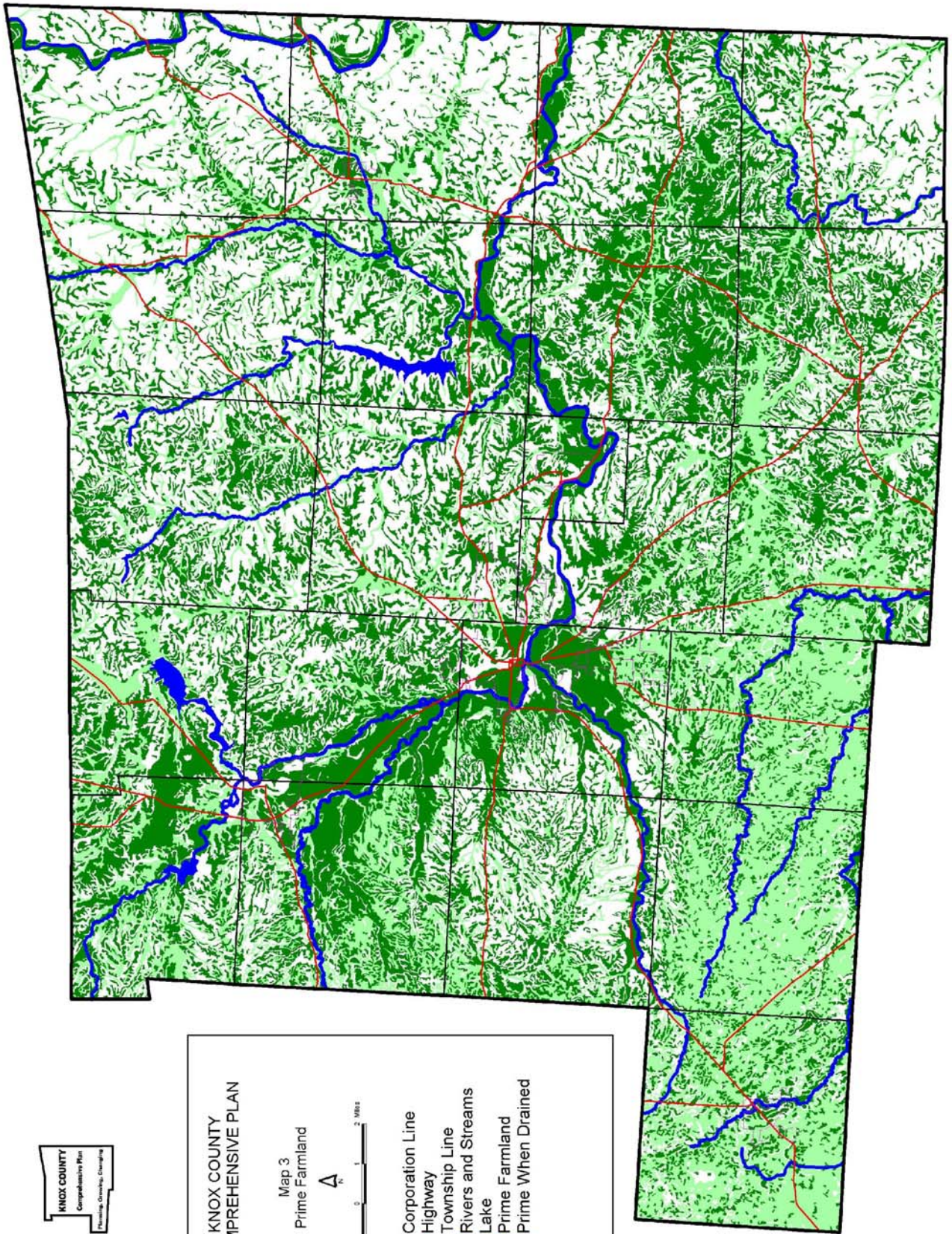
KNOX COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

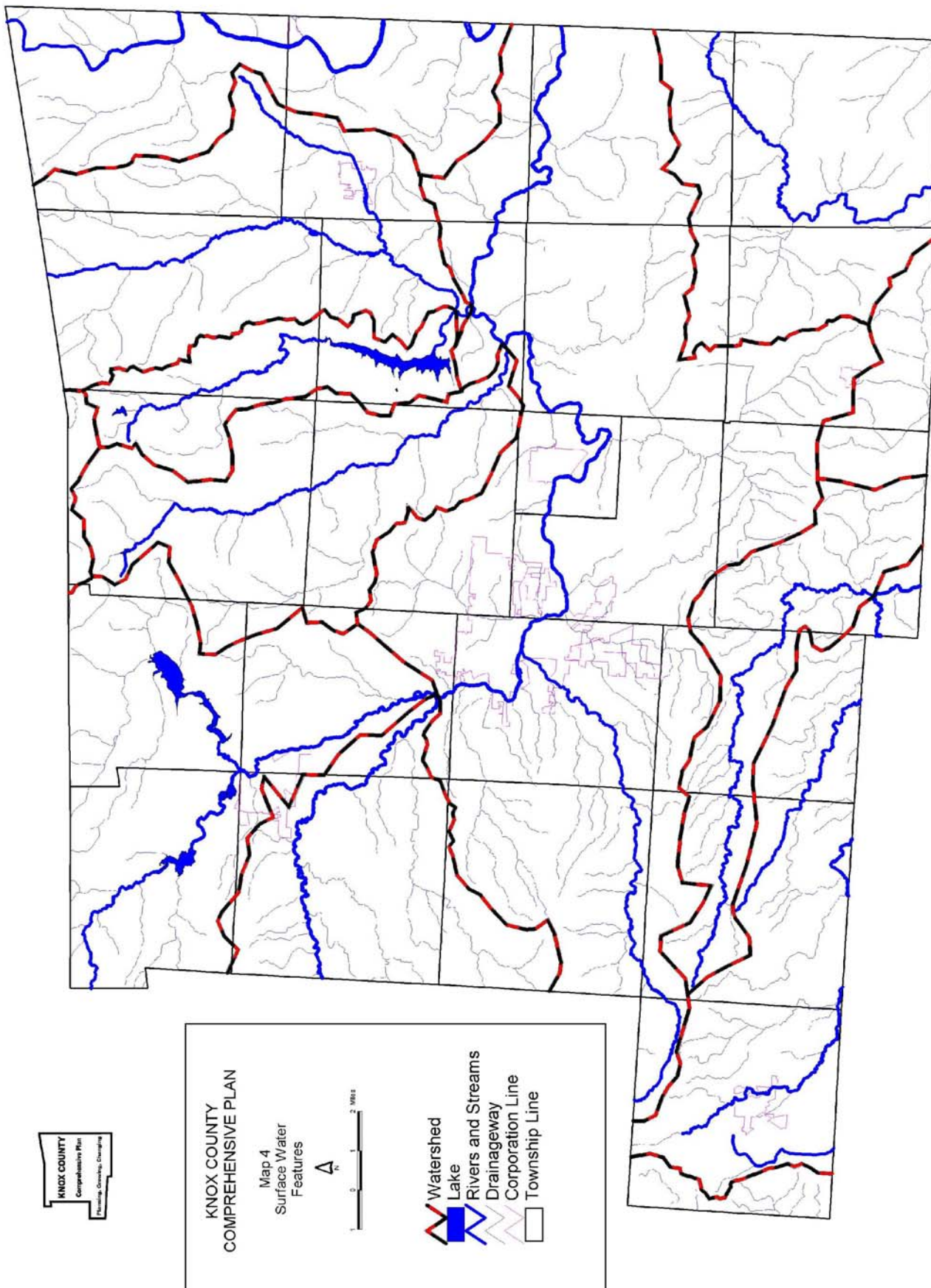
Map 3

Prime Farmland



- Corporation Line
- Highway
- Township Line
- Rivers and Streams
- Lake
- Prime Farmland
- Prime When Drained



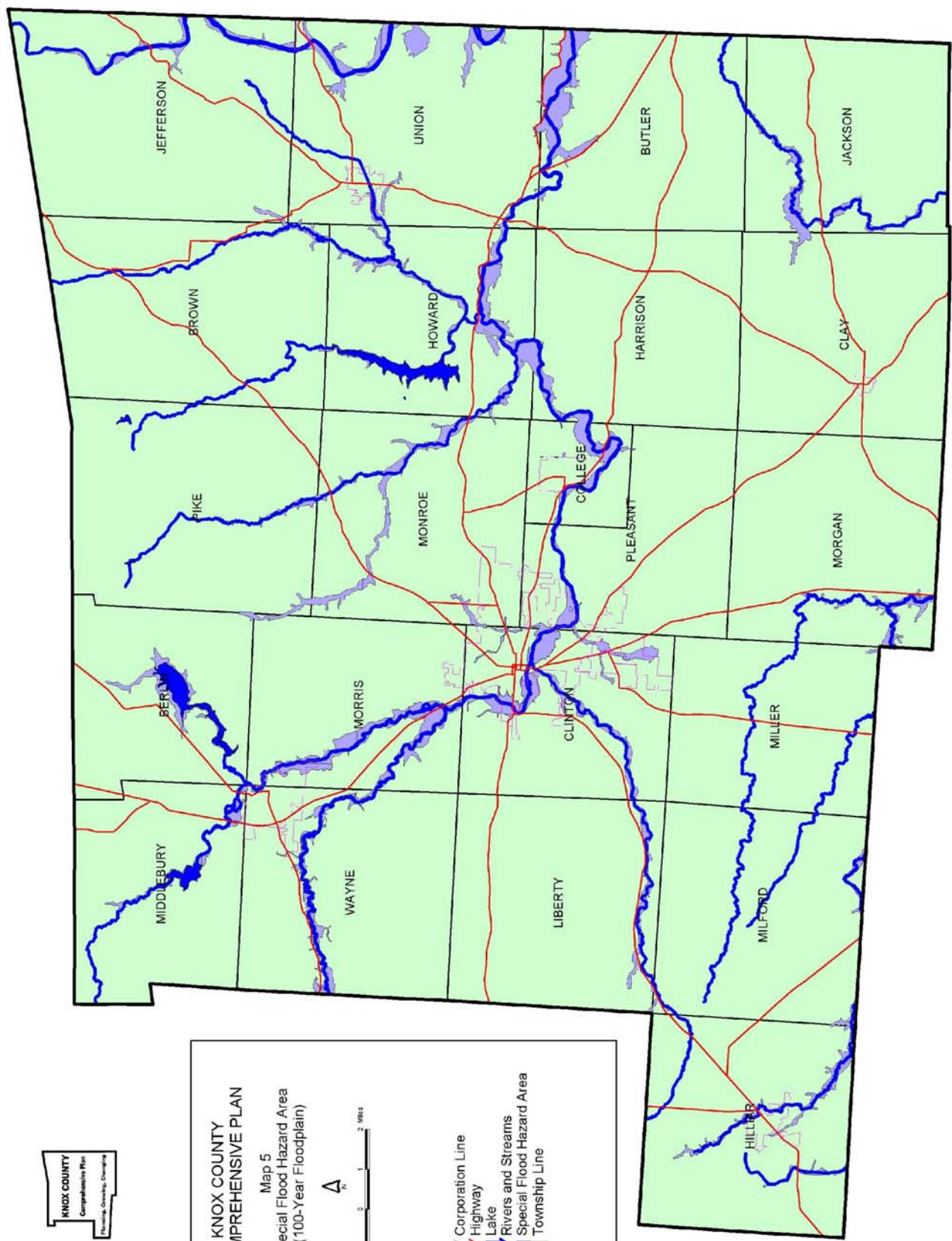


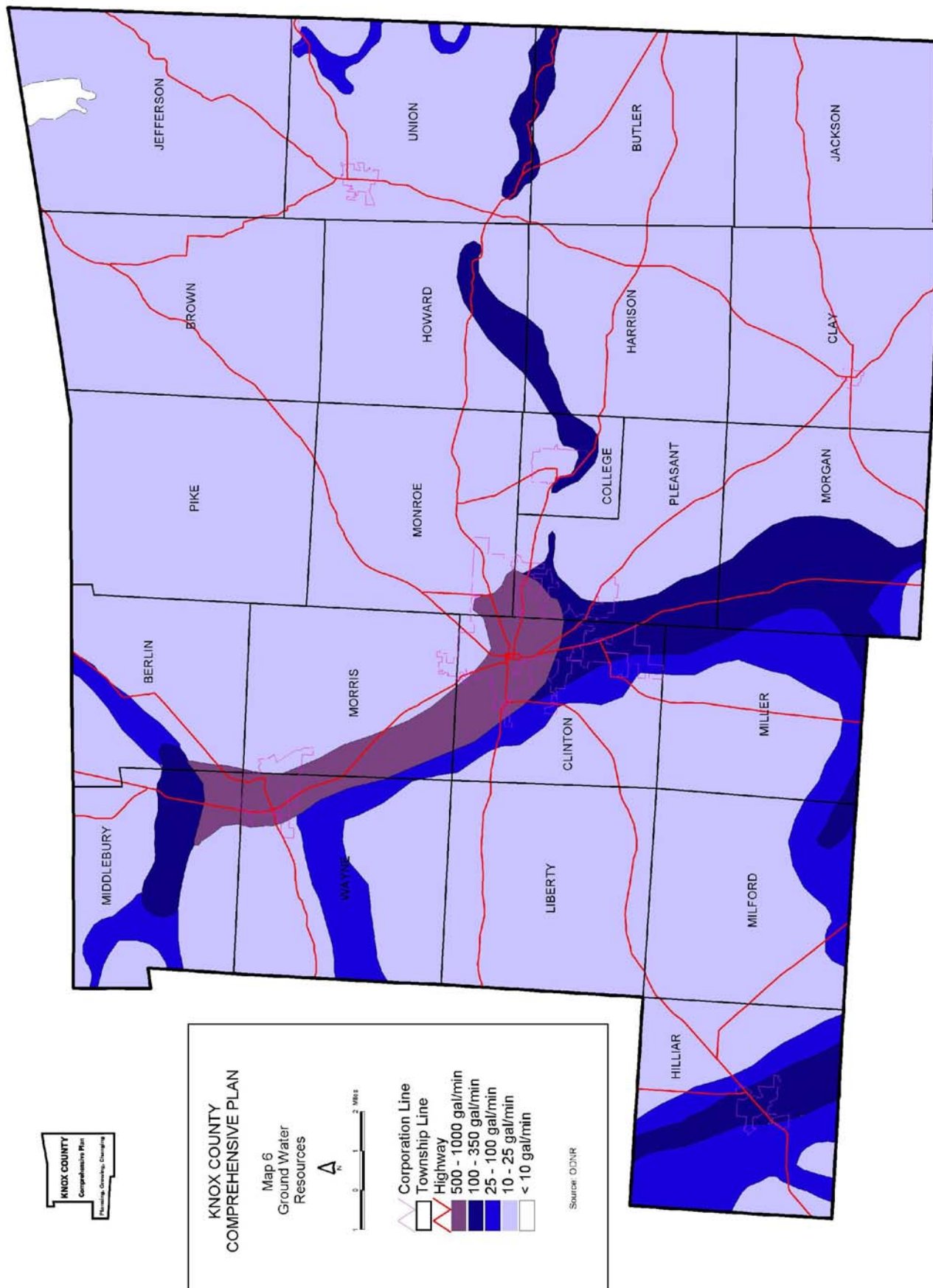


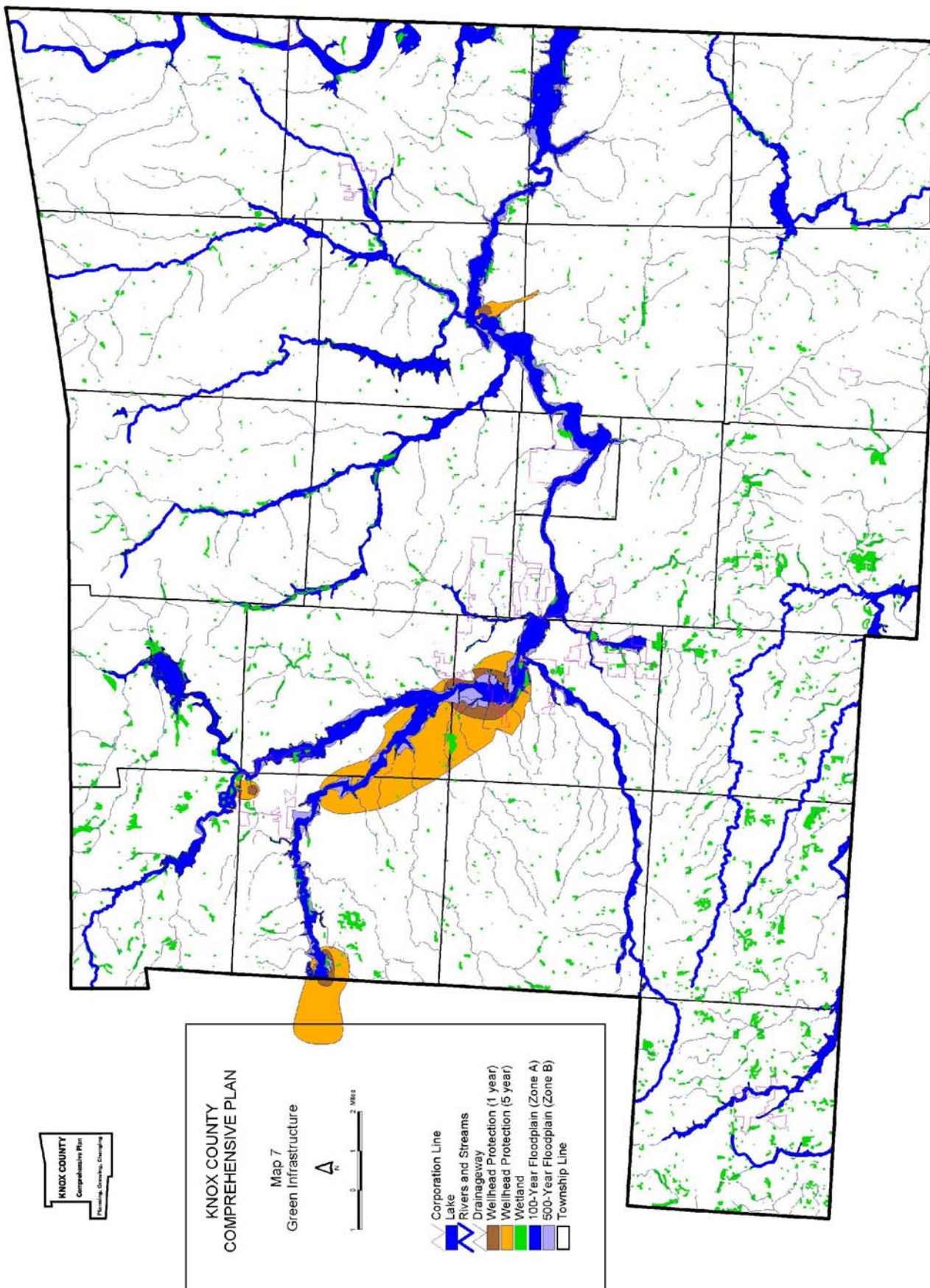
**KNOX COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

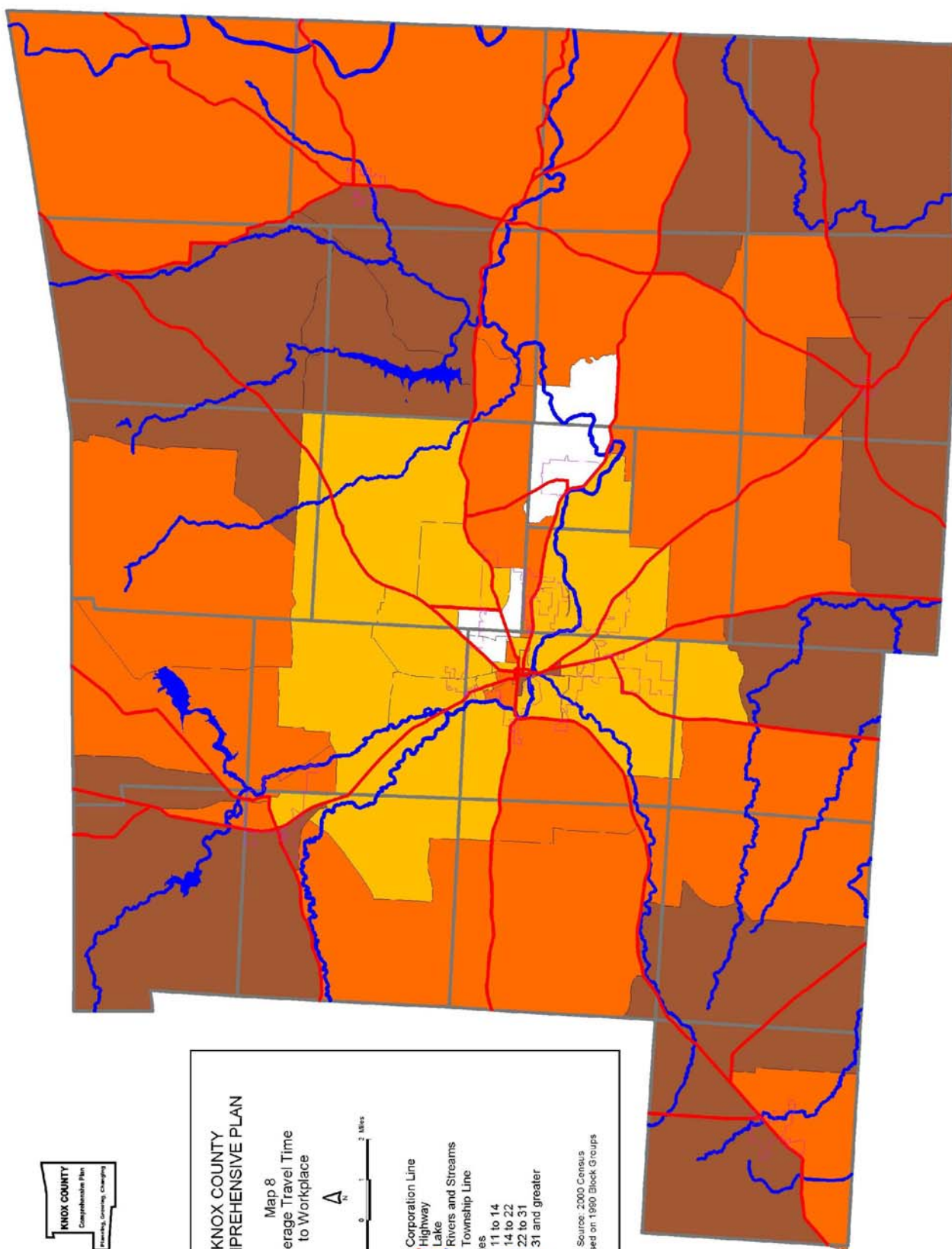
Map 5
Special Flood Hazard Area
(100-Year Floodplain)

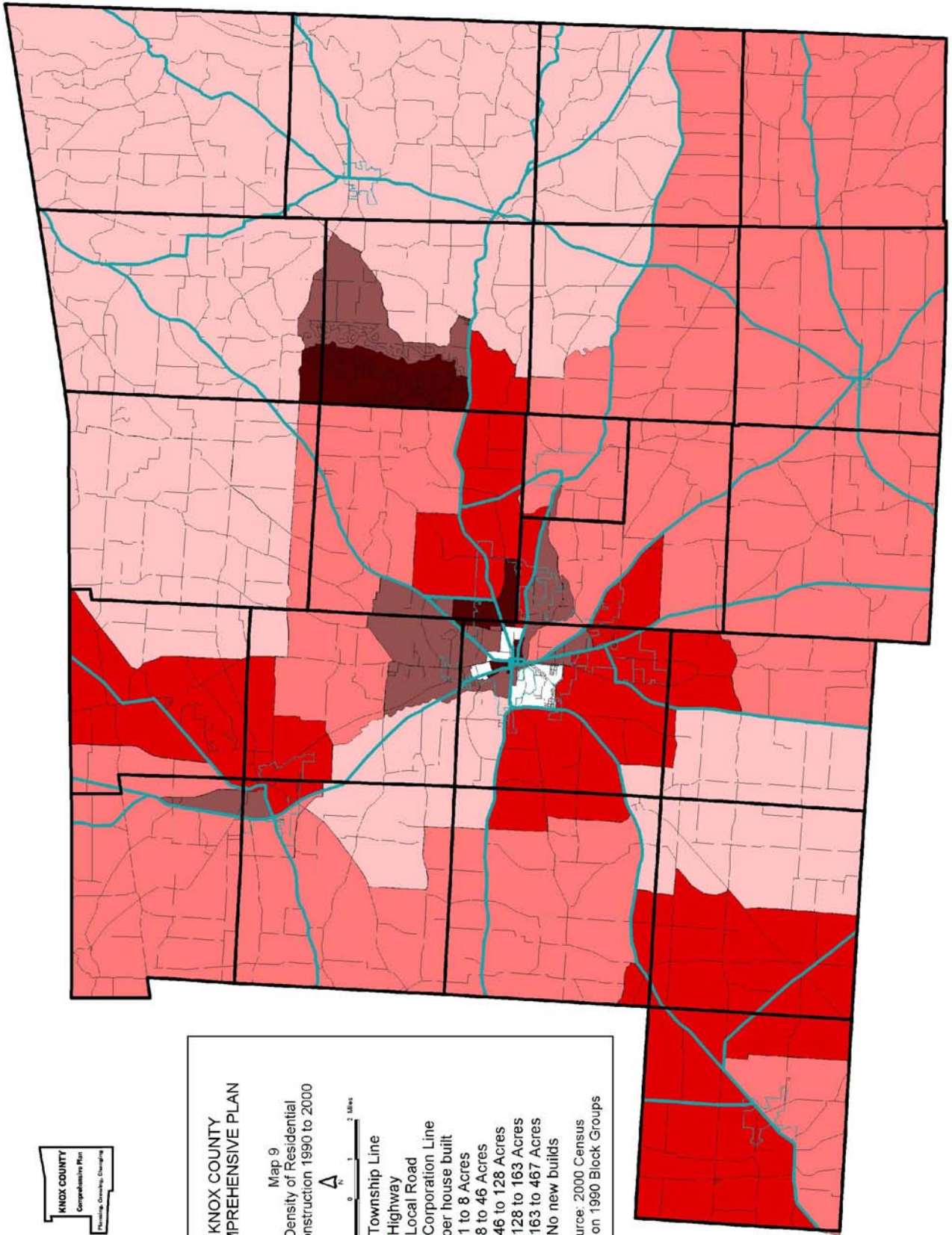
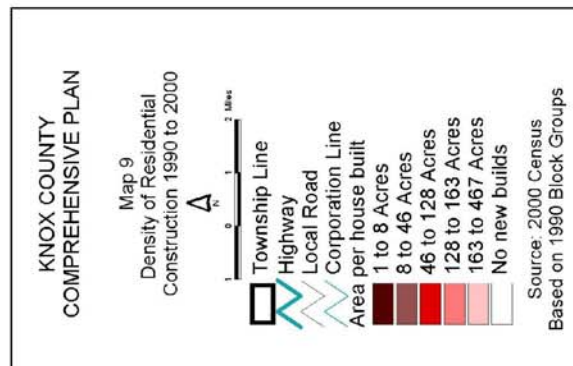
- Corporation Line
- Highway
- Lake
- Rivers and Streams
- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Township Line









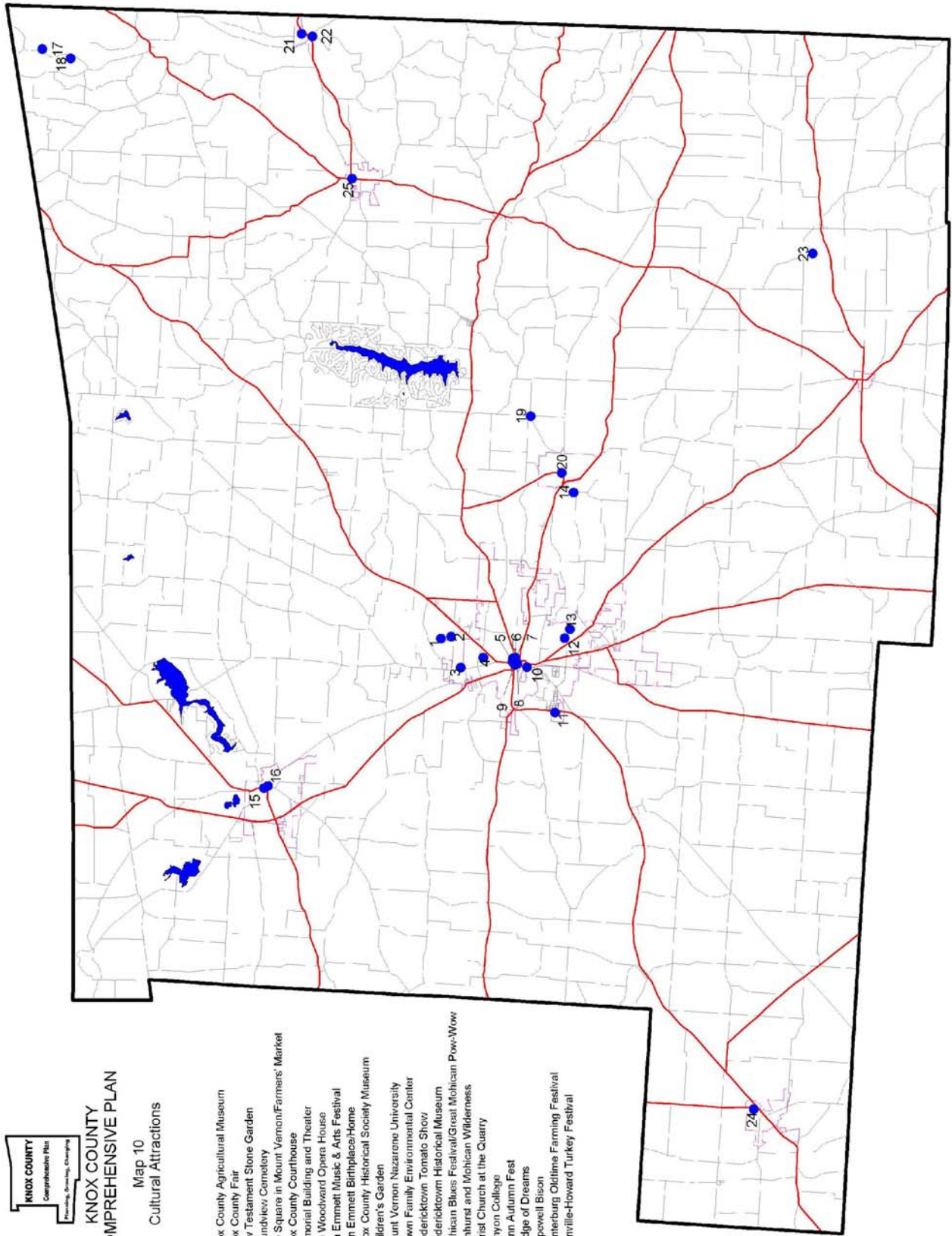




KNOX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 10
Cultural Attractions

- 1 Knox County Agricultural Museum
- 2 Knox County Fair
- 3 New Testament Stone Garden
- 4 Moundview Cemetery
- 5 The Square in Mount Vernon/Farmers' Market
- 6 Knox County Courthouse
- 7 Memorial Building and Theater
- 8 The Woodward Opera House
- 9 Dan Emmett Music & Arts Festival
- 10 Dan Emmett Birthplace/Home
- 11 Knox County Historical Society Museum
- 12 Children's Garden
- 13 Mount Vernon Nazarene University
- 14 Brown Family Environmental Center
- 15 Fredericktown Tomato Show
- 16 Fredericktown Historical Museum
- 17 Mohican Blues Festival/Great Mohican Pow-Wow
- 18 Kenhurst and Mohican Wilderness
- 19 Christ Church at the Quarry
- 20 Kenyon College
- 21 Gann Autumn Fest
- 22 Bridge of Dreams
- 23 Hopewell Bison
- 24 Centerburg Oldtime Farming Festival
- 25 Danville-Howard Turkey Festival



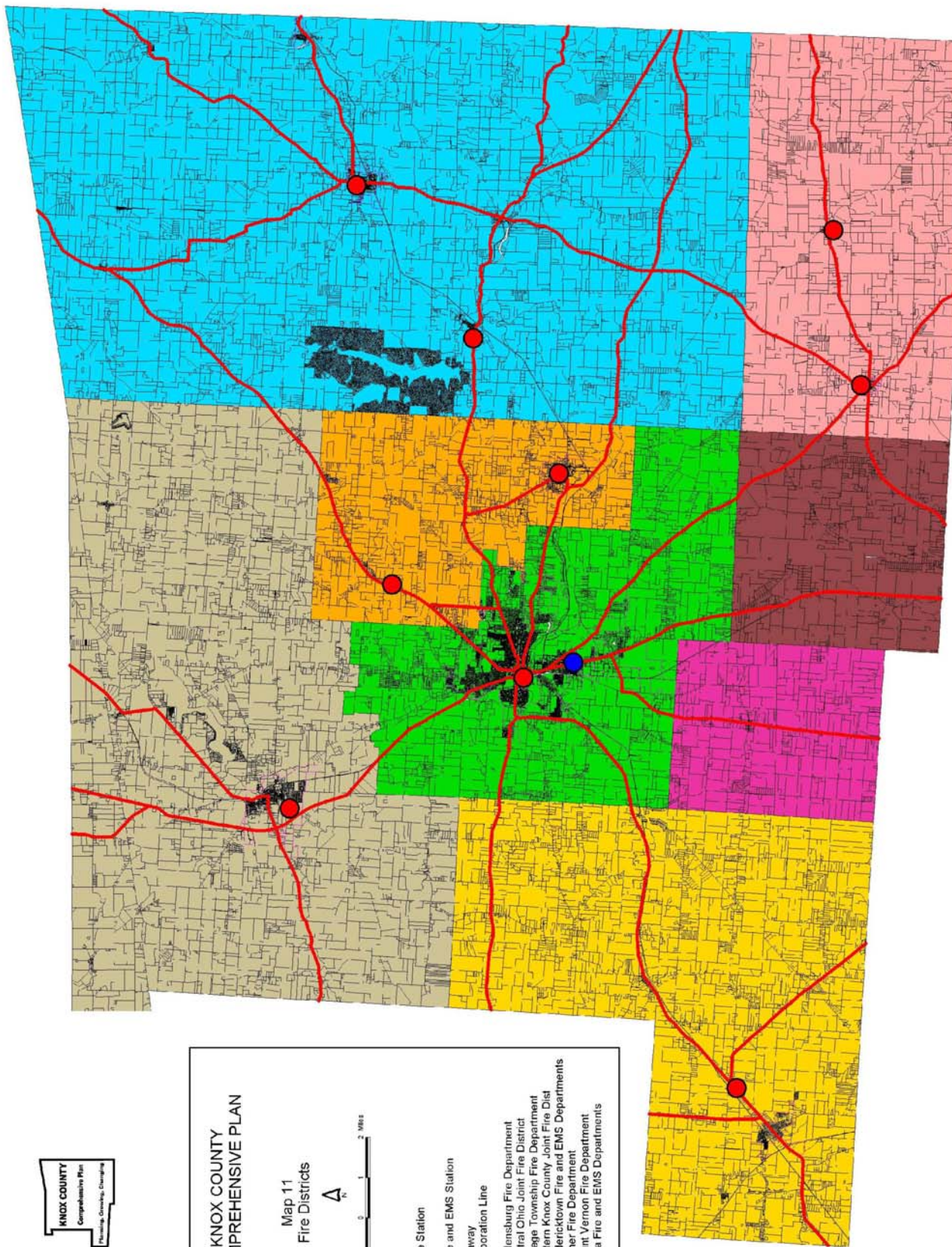


KNOX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 11
Fire Districts



- Fire Station
- Fire and EMS Station
- Highway
- Corporation Line
- Bladensburg Fire Department
- Central Ohio Joint Fire District
- College Township Fire Department
- Eastern Knox County Joint Fire Dist
- Fredericktown Fire and EMS Departments
- Homer Fire Department
- Mount Vernon Fire Department
- Utica Fire and EMS Departments



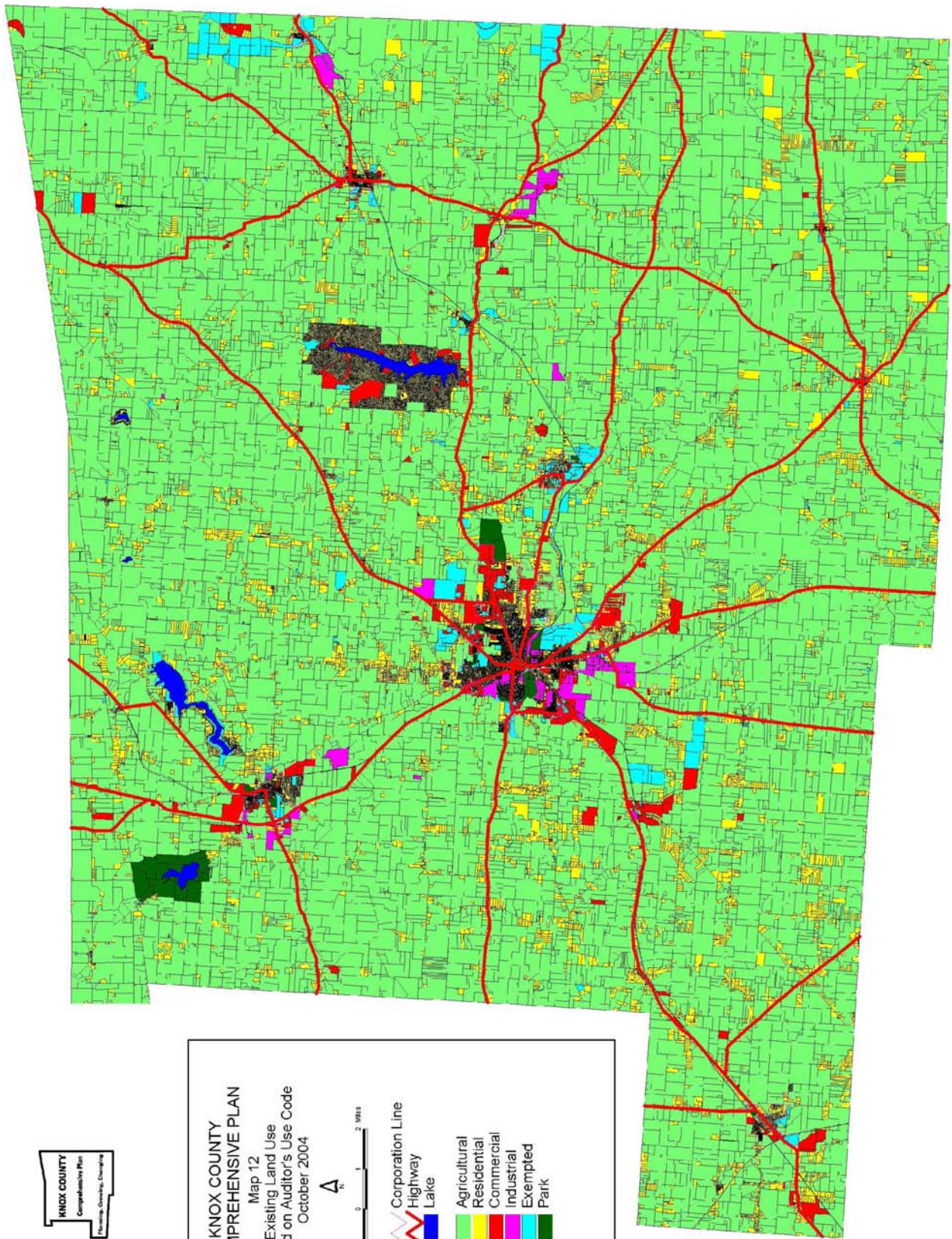


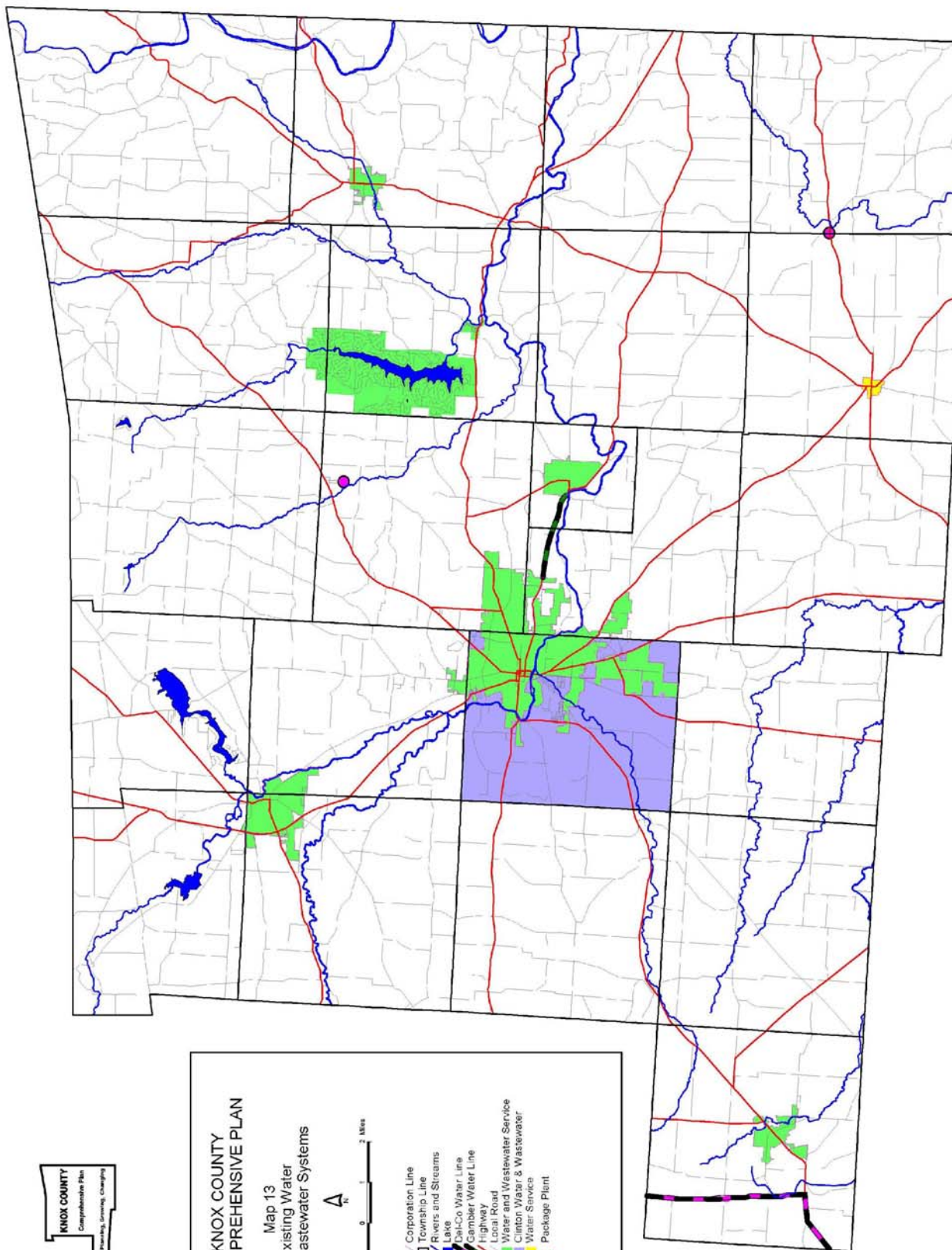
**KNOX COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Map 12
Existing Land Use
Based on Auditor's Use Code
October 2004

Corporation Line
 Highway
 Lake

Agricultural
 Residential
 Commercial
 Industrial
 Exempted
 Park

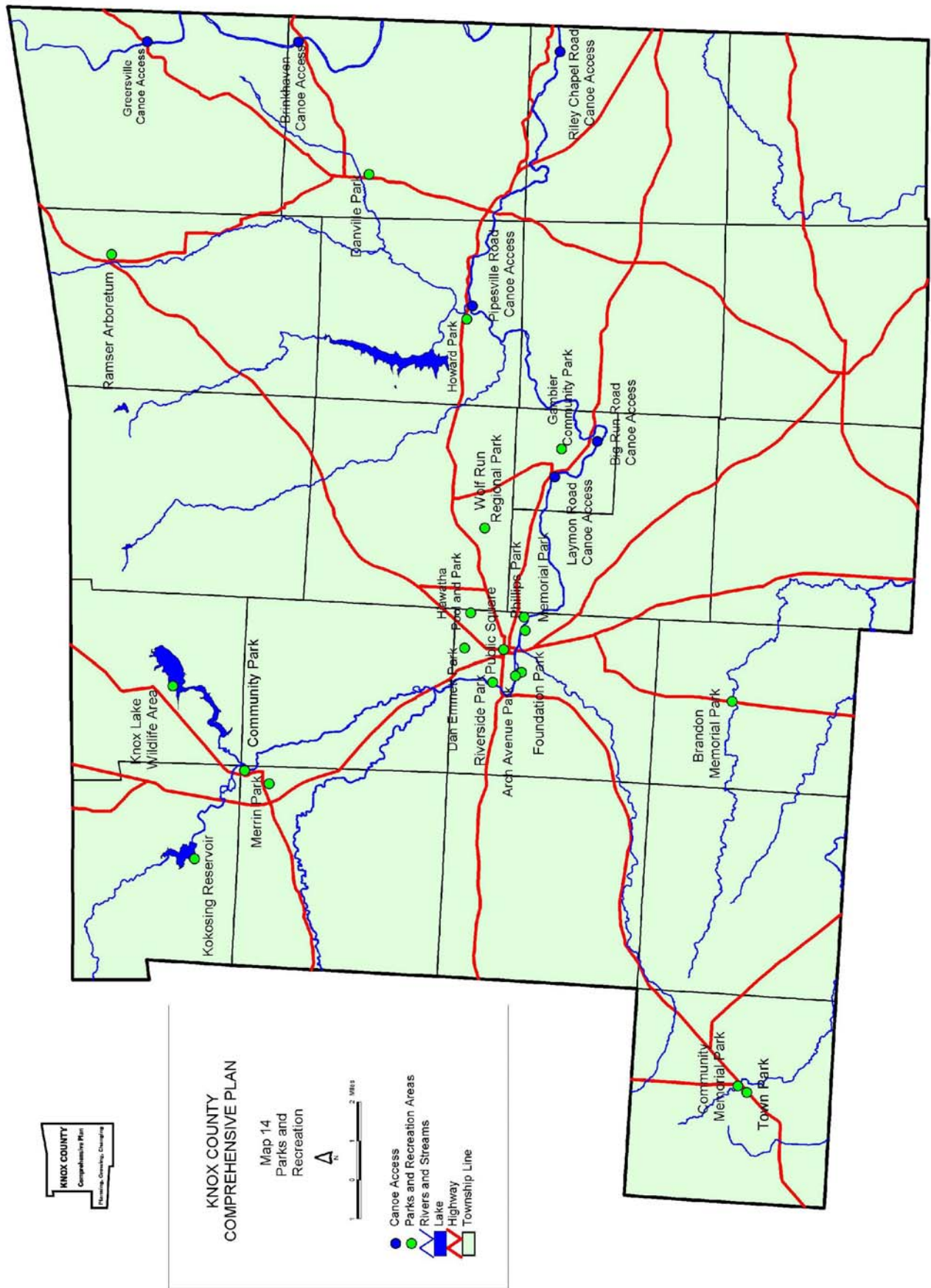


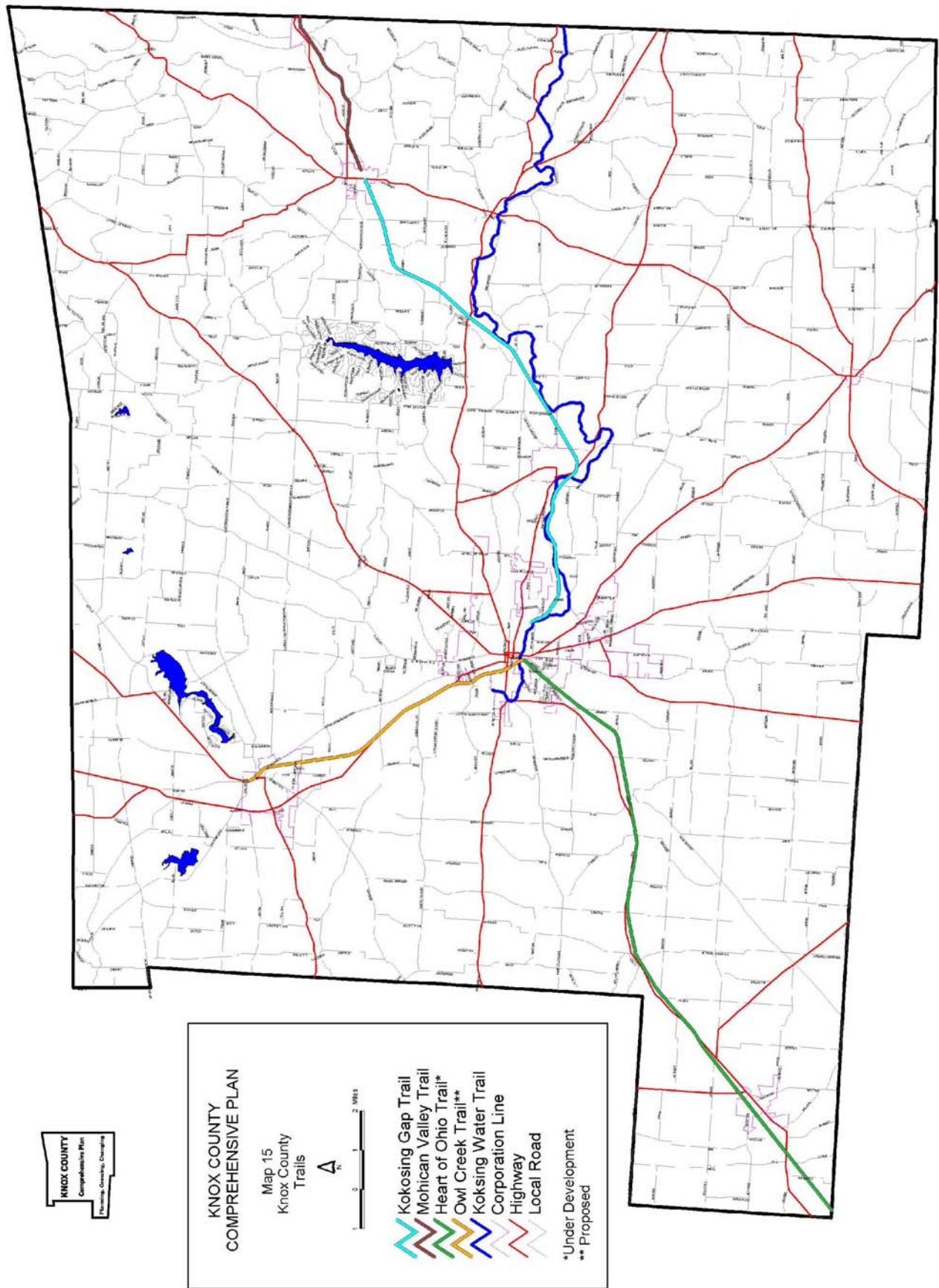


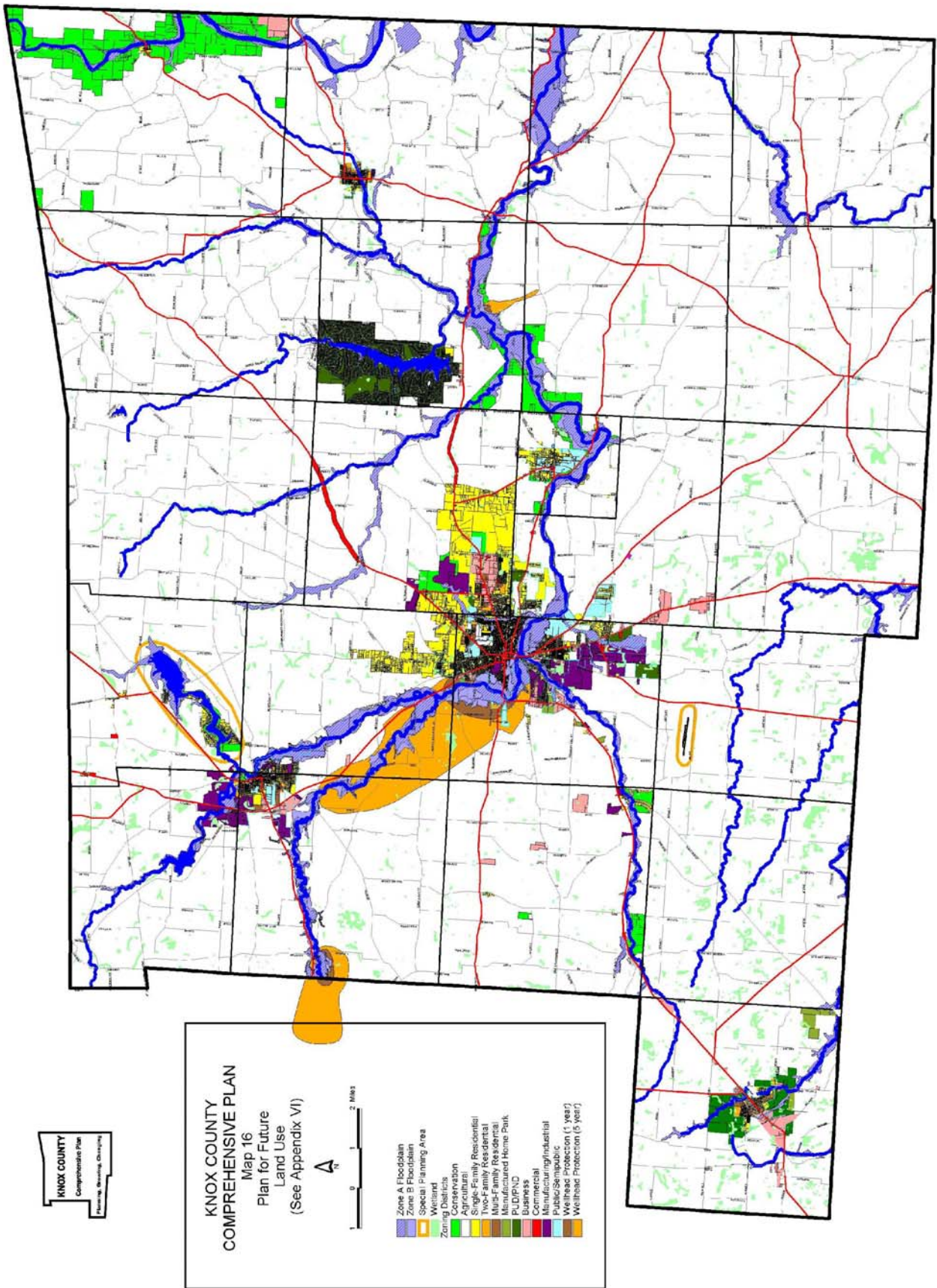
**KNOX COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
Map 13
Existing Water
and Wastewater Systems

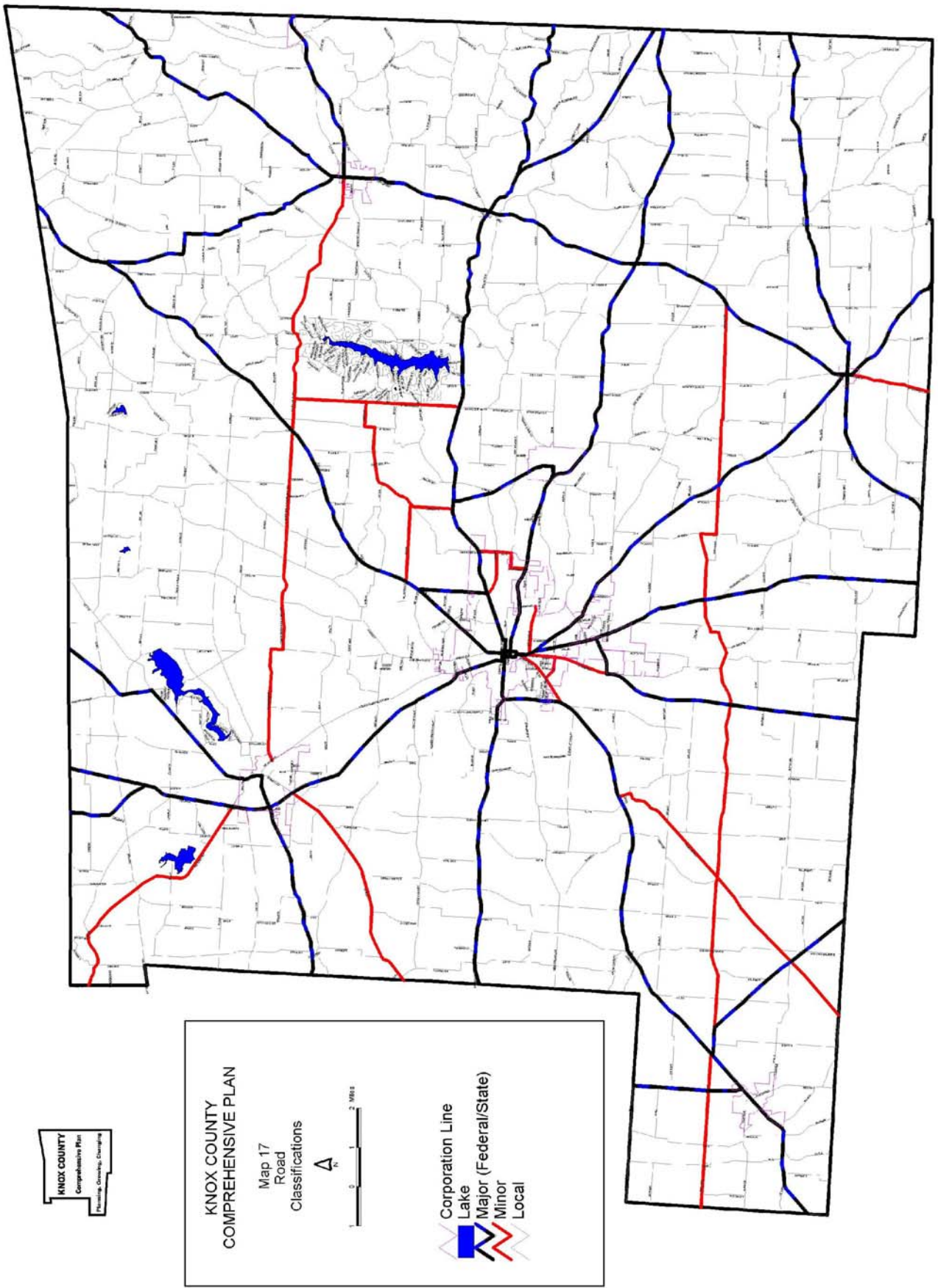


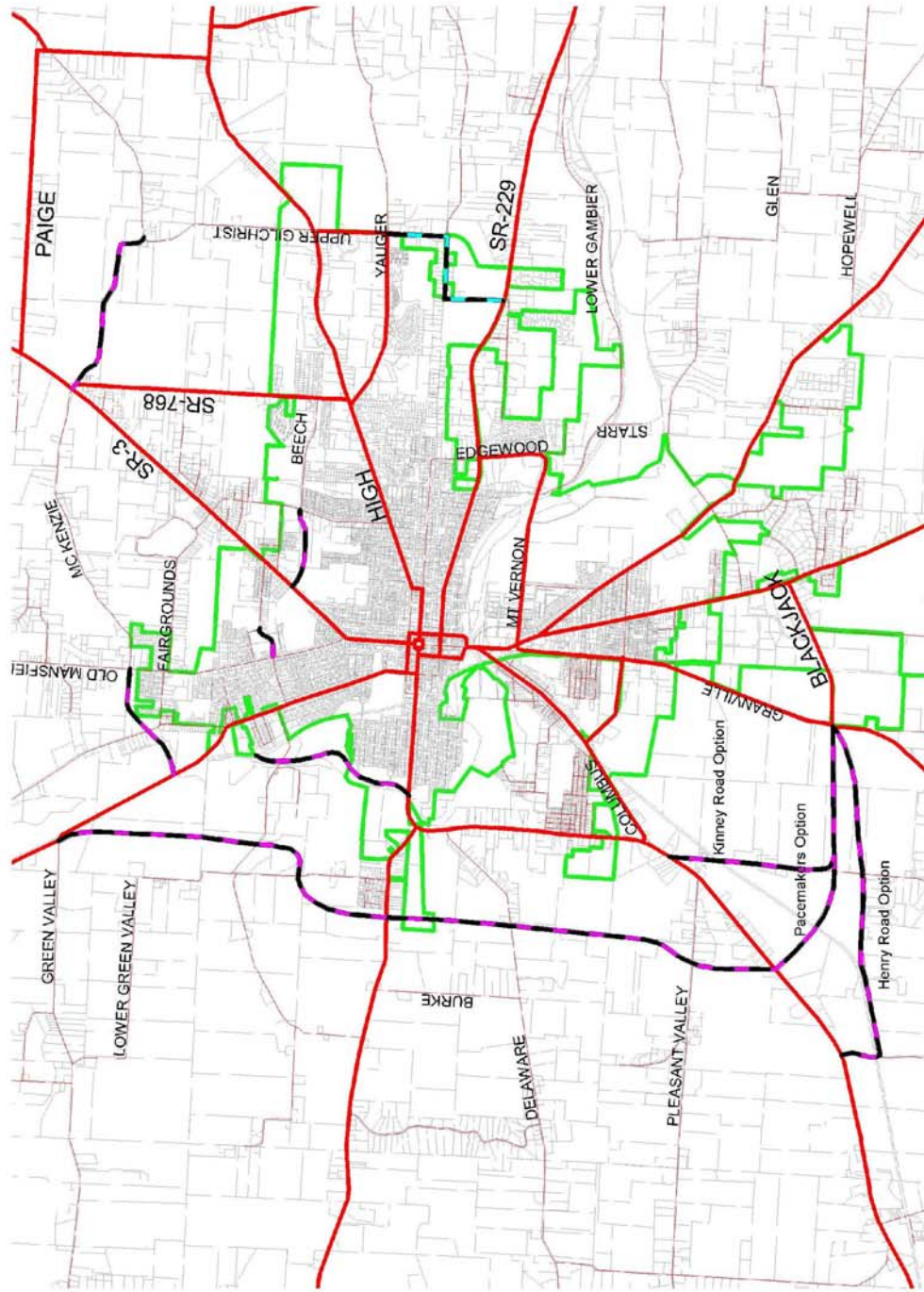
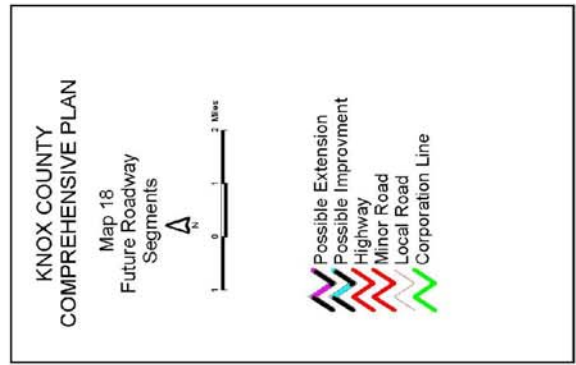
- Corporation Line
- Township Line
- Rivers and Streams
- Local Roads
- EastCo Water Line
- Gambler Water Line
- Highway
- Local Road
- Water and Wastewater Service
- Clinton Water & Wastewater
- Water Service
- Package Plant

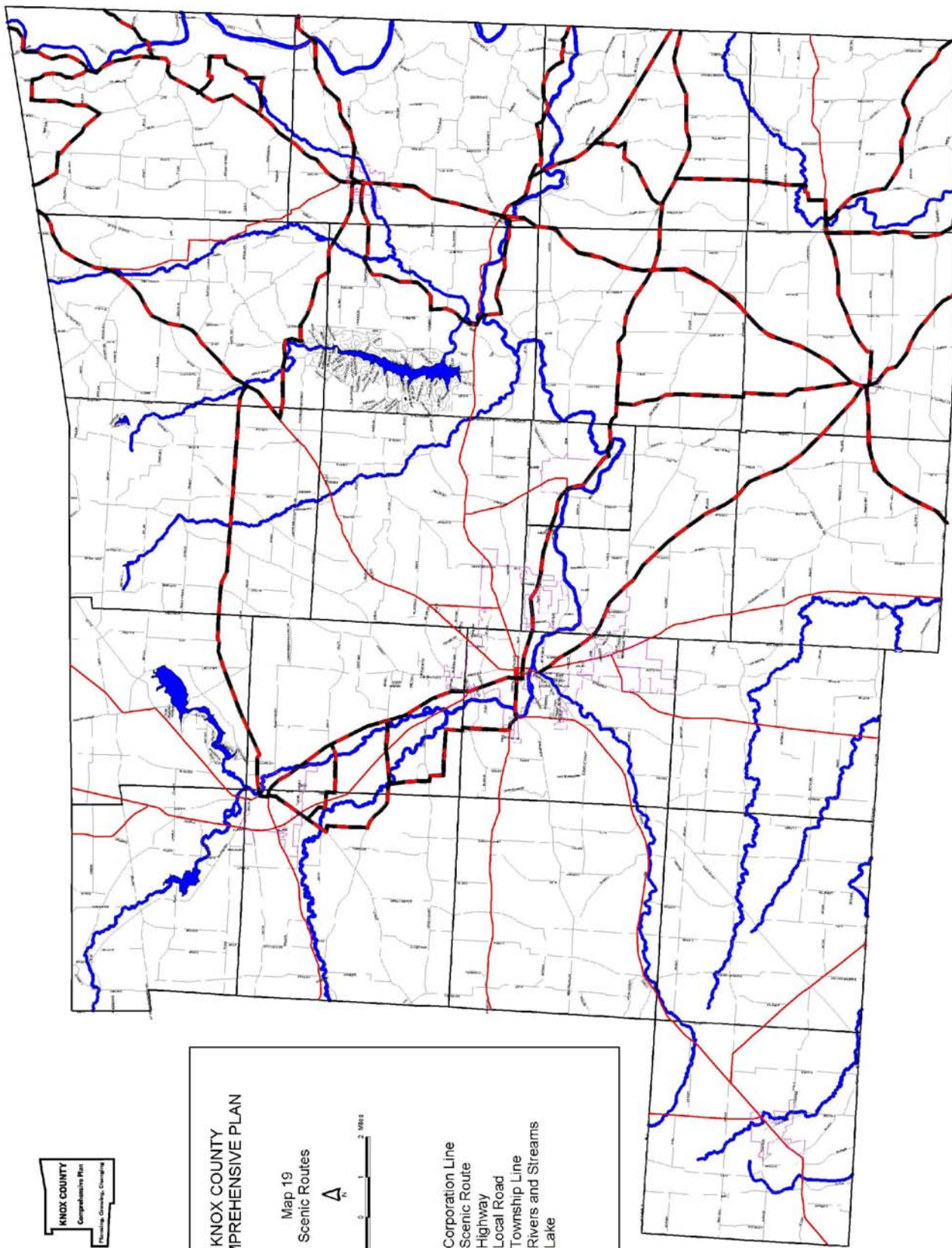
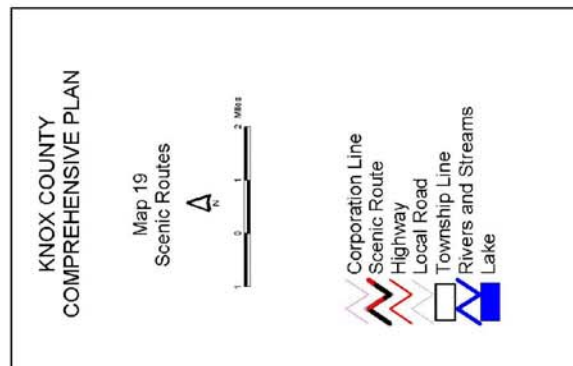


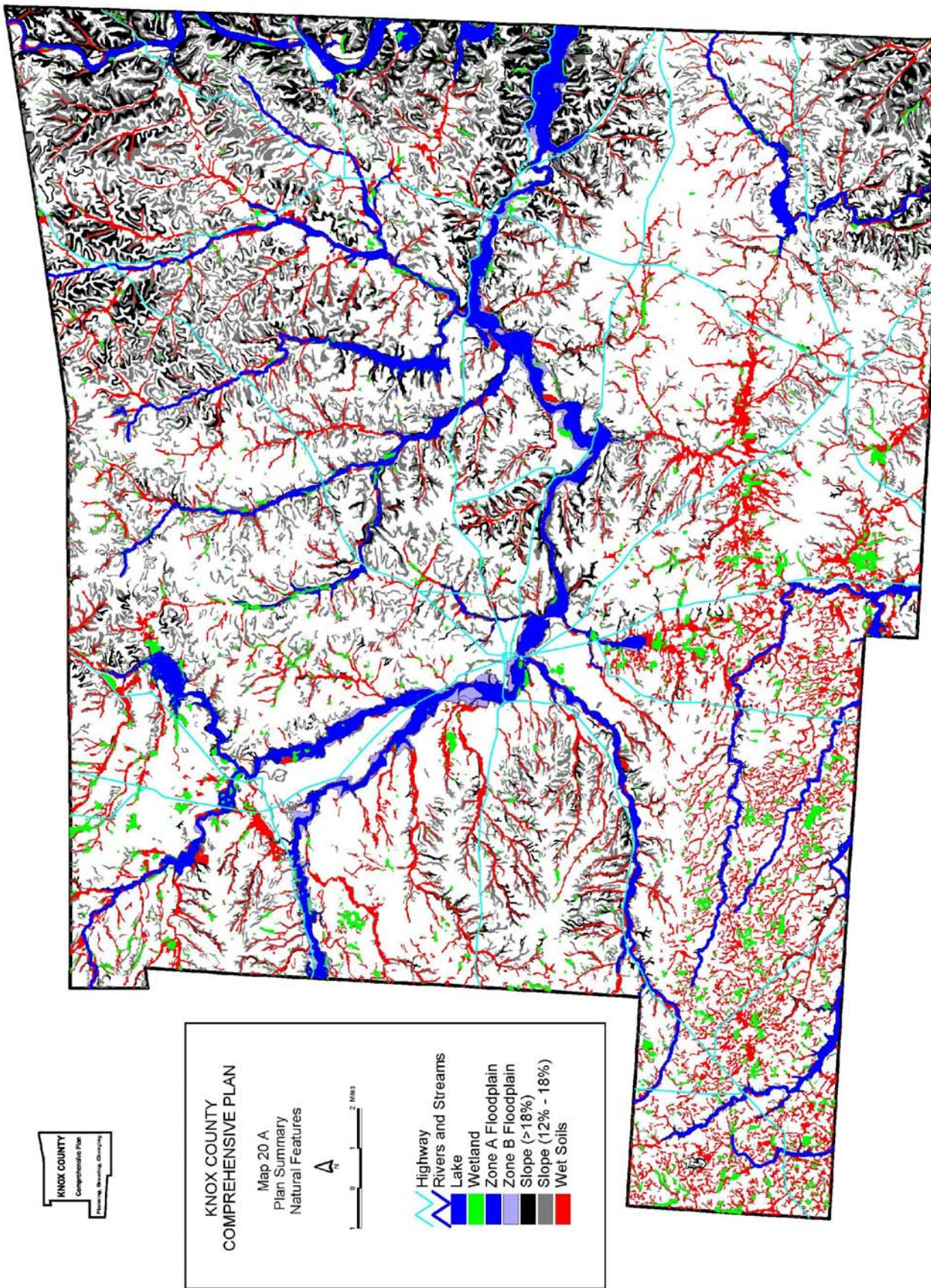


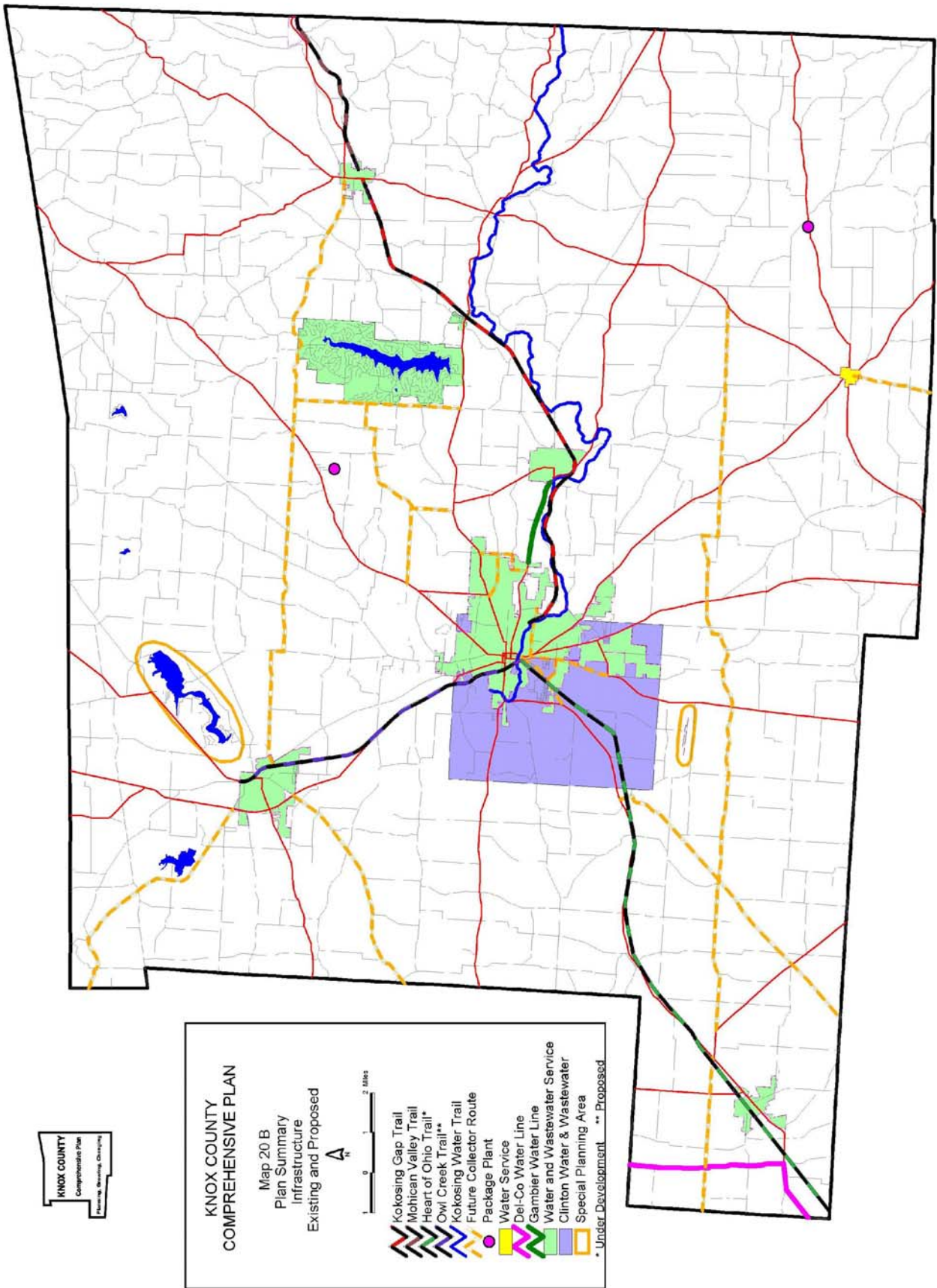












APPENDICES

Appendix I
Knox County Population Change by Political Subdivision
Showing Percent Increase (Decrease) from Census to Census

Area	1970	1980	% Change	1990	% Change	2000	% Change
Knox County	41,795	46,304	11%	47,473	3%	54,503	15%
Berlin Township	1,192	1,452	22%	1,388	-4%	1,789	29%
Brown Township	816	1,000	23%	1,019	2%	1,425	40%
Butler Township	373	449	20%	504	12%	793	57%
Clay Township	819	1,040	27%	1,084	4%	1,328	23%
Martinsburg Village	234	240	3%	213	-11%	185	-13%
Balance of Clay Twp.	585	800	37%	871	9%	1,143	31%
Clinton Township	3,072	3,600	17%	3,502	-3%	2,930	-16%
College Township	1,854	2,363	27%	2,421	2%	2,385	-1%
Gambier Village	1,571	2,056	31%	2,073	1%	2,016	-3%
Balance of College Twp.	283	307	8%	348	13%	369	6%
Fredericktown Village	1,935	2,299	19%	2,443	6%	2,551	4%
Harrison Township	529	559	6%	586	5%	752	28%
Hilliar Township	1,889	2,337	24%	2,645	13%	3,080	16%
Centerburg Village	1,038	1,275	23%	1,323	4%	1,449	10%
Balance of Hilliar Twp.	851	1,062	25%	1,322	24%	1,631	23%
Howard Township	947	1,557	64%	2,149	38%	4,323	101%
Jackson Township	498	674	35%	680	1%	878	29%
Jefferson Township	562	558	-1%	524	-6%	604	15%
Liberty Township	1,006	1,277	27%	1,213	-5%	1,422	17%
Middlebury Township	783	950	21%	849	-11%	1,138	34%
Milford Township	766	1,075	40%	1,175	9%	1,422	21%
Miller Township	649	722	11%	717	-1%	893	25%
Monroe Township	2,215	2,172	-2%	2,062	-5%	2,287	11%
Morgan Township	634	636	0%	624	-2%	846	36%
Morris Township	1,644	1,896	15%	1,801	-5%	1,915	6%
Mount Vernon City	13,373	14,323	7%	14,550	2%	15,643	8%
Pike Township	913	1,057	16%	1,065	1%	1,298	22%
Pleasant Township	1,166	1,321	13%	1,454	10%	1,489	2%
Union Township	2,098	2,124	1%	2,150	1%	2,454	14%
Danville Village	1,025	1,127	10%	1,001	-11%	1,105	10%
Gann Village	172	173	1%	179	3%	139	-22%
Balance of Union Twp.	901	824	-9%	970	18%	1,210	25%
Wayne Township	874	863	-1%	868	1%	858	-1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

APPENDIX II

Community Leader Telephone Survey Report to Knox County RPC Steering Committee

Poggemeyer Design Group conducted telephone interviews with the fifteen community leaders identified by the RPC Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee. These community leaders, located throughout Knox County, are all career professionals in commerce, banking, business, information, building, agriculture and education sectors within Knox County.

Each participant was informed that no specific attribution regarding their comments would occur. This was done to encourage candid feedback to the RPC Steering Committee. The fifteen community leaders selected did not express reservations about being identified as participants in phone interviews provided that “non attribution” assurances are honored by the RPC Steering Committee.

The typical interview length was to have been approximately 30 minutes. With one exception the average length of each interview was approximately one hour. Interview length depended on the extent of voluntary comments or elaboration offered by each participant. Each participant was advised prior to questioning that they could expand or elaborate on “yes” and “no” answers at their option. Two (2) interviews actually ran one and one-half hours. The questions presented parallel the quality of life, transportation, land use, zoning, planning, and growth management topics associated with the RPC’s survey of elected officials countywide. A Survey Key Sheet was prepared, summarizing collective input received from these fifteen community leaders.

Residency in Knox County among these fifteen leaders ranges from 62 years to just over 2 ½ years, with an average residency of 33.2 years. Their career work in the County spans a range of 56 to 2 ½ years with an overall average of 29.5 years. Each was asked if they would encourage their adult children or others to move to and live in Knox County. They each answered a unanimous “yes,” but expressed concern that the lack of appropriate jobs prevents this option in some cases.

As a target group identified by the RPC for planning input on the Comprehensive Plan Update, each had some specific views and concerns which are presented in the following report. However, common concerns clearly emerged in several areas including:

- Proactively solving long standing transportation network problems.
- Determining and implementing viable traffic bypasses around Mount Vernon in order to remedy traffic congestion.
- Addressing the lack of zoning and building code consistency between townships and municipalities.
- Developing coordinated growth management strategies for all of Knox County.
- Providing short and long term planning assistance to the southern County communities which are the most pressured due to their proximity to Columbus and Newark.
- Providing ongoing coordinated planning help to communities. The assistance should remain “advisory” and not directive.
- Make ongoing (rather than periodic) Comprehensive Plan updates in order to create a “Focused Plan.”
- Advocating that the RPC help townships and municipalities work together on annexations and similar land use matters. (This was a unanimous consensus.)
- Advocating efforts by the RPC to seek both private and public property owner input along with short and long term development and growth impacts to Knox County. (This was a unanimous consensus.)
- A strong majority (86%) of community leaders indicated that current land use and planning matters between local governments are not well coordinated.
- Most respondents (13 of 15) support additional mediation and planning assistance roles as appropriate functions that the RPC should perform in helping local communities in planning matters.
- This same majority supports having the RPC investigate Joint Economic Development Zones (JEDZs) between neighboring townships and municipalities.

There are areas of concern where the fifteen respondents are fairly divided in their views. These areas include:

- Efforts to preserve farmland and agriculture (1/3 saying not enough is being done).
- Coordination of land use and planning matters between local governments (13 of 15 respondents indicated that too much “turf” sensitivity seems to prevail).
- Sixty percent indicate that zoning and county planning has not served the entire County well (citing local “turf” and the poor coordination between local zoning codes as the root causes).
- They were uniformly split over whether annexation concerned them “very much,” “somewhat,” or “not at all.”

Quality of Life. Each of the fifteen was asked the same quality of life questions as presented to local elected officials. The Interview Key Sheet summarizes their responses. The respondents rated the issues from good to excellent overall. All “no opinion” responses in the Key Sheet reflect individual inability to comment for lack of knowledge in the area being surveyed. All respondents tried to avoid bias in their answers. Areas identified as needing improvement include:

- **Job Opportunities.** More effort needed to (1) broaden job opportunities and (2) diversify job locations countywide.
- **Shopping and dining opportunities** need improvement. Twenty percent rated these opportunities as “poor.”
- Forty percent of the respondents feel that **entertainment opportunities** need improvement while 20% rate these opportunities as “poor.”
- Forty-six percent felt that **erosion and sediment control** in new developments need to be improved.
- The group was divided on **preservation of the natural environment** and **farmland/agriculture**.
- Over half of the respondents indicated that **zoning enforcement** countywide needs improvement.

Land Use. Each of the fifteen were asked for their personal views regarding the most critical land use issues facing Knox County over the next five years. They collectively note all of the issues identified in the survey were important, but varied in opinion as to which of these is “critical” over the next five years. Those indicating “critical” include:

- **Urban Land Use:** Eleven respondents identified this issue as critical. They cited uncoordinated development between townships as a chief concern. They also expressed concern over the lack of adaptive reuse of existing commercial storefronts and commercial centers throughout the County.
- **Rural Land Use:** Thirteen identified this issue as critical. Respondents cited encroachment on farmland, inappropriate lot split strategies used by some developers, and growth encroachment from commercial and residential projects. The respondents also identified the need to preserve visual rural character to the greatest extent feasible.
- **Farming and Agriculture Use:** Eleven respondents identified this issue as critical over the next five years due to poor existing land use development controls among various townships and communities. Four said that the absence of some zoning conformity in all townships to protect farms was problematic.
- **Open Space:** Sixty percent (9 of 15) indicate this issue as critical. They viewed current development, especially residential projects, as a threat to the remaining open space areas. (The entire group clearly understood that open space preservation was separate from farmland preservation.)
- **Airport Development:** Just forty percent (6 of 15) feel that airport development is critical over the next five years. There is recognition that such development is not widely supported particularly by rural landowners near the airport. Expansion to accommodate corporate aircraft is seen as a possible lure for future industry as they could base aircraft there in order to avoid Columbus and Newark airports.
- **Floodplain Management:** Sixty percent see this as important but not critical. Forty percent say it is critical.

• **Aquifers:** Seventy-three percent (11 of the 15) say this is an ongoing critical issue that needs to be kept foremost in RPC planning and education outreach efforts. Elaboration provided by the group included awareness that floodplain management and aquifer protection are related issues.

• **Commercial and Industrial Land Use:** The majority recognizes commercial and industrial land use as important in Knox County's long term economic viability. Their uniform opinion is that commercial and industrial land use policies need to:

- Encourage adaptive use of existing commercial sites over approving new sites.
- Avoid encouraging further commercial "strip" development.
- Place industrial development first in existing industrial areas.
- Diversify industrial and commercial development in individual communities to the extent demographics and market forces permit.

Zoning: Sixty percent of the group (9 of 15) was very clear that they do not feel current zoning between communities is consistent or well coordinated. They recognize the need for coordination but also urge the RPC to avoid becoming a "directive rule making" planning agency. They view the RPC's best roles as providing countywide guidance, mediation, facilitation, and advisory planning support.

- They were also clear that the lack of zoning in some townships was something to overcome long term.
- There was concern that approaches to countywide zoning are good, but should not preclude local decision making in villages and townships.

The group differs on specific zoning issues, but show consensus on the following:

- Zoning violations and enforcement need attention and improvement.
- Setbacks should be appropriate, but not excessive.
- Open space requirements for new subdivisions should be enforced and possibly expanded.
- The granting of variances needs better scrutiny and consistency countywide.
- Minimum road frontage for various permitted uses should be developed and enforced countywide.

Rural Character: Twelve of the fifteen identified preserving rural character throughout the County as being important. They all, to varying degrees, say the visual characteristics in the Survey Key Sheet are important features to be preserved. These include:

- Wooded lots.
- Farm fields, traditional buildings, and barns.
- Traditional village and city centers (especially historic buildings and places).
- Natural, undeveloped rivers and streams.
- Livestock in fields.
- Dark night skies.

The respondents did not see long uninterrupted views of openness or narrow rural roadways as key components of that rural character.

Transportation: This issue had the best consensus from the group of respondents. They separated the need for public transportation from the overall transportation system issues. The transportation network system elicits the respondents' concern because they see little progress to long standing roadway issues countywide. Each leader was asked for their opinions regarding the same 12 transportation segments that were presented to elected officials. RPC Transportation Subcommittee areas of concern were not disclosed when asking segment questions of these leaders. Yet, these leaders identified identical roadway conditions and segments as needing current and future attention in general. There is some division in opinion as to what improvements are needed. Each leader was careful to disclose whether they traveled the segments in question.

Substantial or moderate improvements were identified as needed by a majority of these leaders. The group was consistent in opinion that new road connections to the SW and NE of Mount Vernon are essential to long term traffic solutions. Mount Vernon is seen as a barrier to movement from the north, northeast and southwest. The Survey Key Sheet details these segments.

Subdivision Development: There is a general consensus that the open space/conservation form of subdivision would be preferred over continued lot split and conventional subdivision developments. But eight of the fifteen chose to reside in rural large lot or conventional subdivision situations. The overall group awareness of the open space/conservation development features was not high. This suggests that better education and outreach would be needed in order to promote this kind of development.

Recreation & Environment: Thirteen of the fifteen respondents cite the need to complete bike and pedestrian trails (connectors, existing, and planned trails). Two leaders each nominated an additional trail. These are segments 1 and 7 on the key sheet. The remaining leaders feel the planned future trail links are sufficient.

- Eleven respondents feel that enough effort is being made in the County to set aside land for open space (trails, parks, conservation and agricultural easements) while three respondents feel that not enough effort is taking place.
- Thirteen respondents feel that the County definitely needs to be proactive in protecting sensitive environmental areas.
- One leader stated that the County should include farmland in the “environmentally sensitive” category.

Final Questions: Community leaders were asked the same questions as presented in the elected official survey.

When asked to identify up to **five positive attributes** of living in Knox County and/or their specific local community, their individual answers varied but had some overlap. These answers include:

- Positive rural character and high work ethic among the labor force.
- Overall perceived high quality of life.
- Excellent public schools and overall low taxes.
- Great sense of community and local historic appeal.
- Improving land use controls (though more progress is urged).
- Easy access to nearby Newark and Columbus.
- Relatively low housing costs.

When asked to identify **up to five shortfalls** of living in Knox County and their community, the respondents’ answers included:

- Poor/weak transportation network and the lack of adequate para transit for seniors.
- Poor dining and shopping opportunities.
- Having comprehensive planning moving beyond “advisory level.” This was viewed as inappropriate.
- Having few private school options was a limitation.
- Farmland preservation efforts do not appear to be advancing.
- Limited cultural opportunities reduce overall quality of life.

They were asked to define the most **important things** their local **community** should accomplish over the next five years? Their answers include:

- Fixing the local transportation network!
- Resolving the problems of getting through Mt. Vernon.
- Improving countywide zoning enforcement and enforcing traffic speeds.
- Attracting more light industry to stem the loss of the younger labor pool.
- Making the adaptive reuse of existing downtown storefronts and vacant retail strips a land use priority (Norwalk was cited as an example by several leaders).
- Regulating new subdivision development (locations, open space, infrastructure, and traffic impacts).
- Improving public safety (locations of new fire stations were mentioned).
- Striving to improve cultural diversity for all residents of Knox County.
- Improving overall municipal and township water supply quality and services (poor water was cited in several townships.)
- Developing SR 95 to I-71 with improved access (seen as a major North County issue).
- Examining downtown redevelopment strategies using CDBG and grant sources.
- Striving harder to reopen the Woodward Opera House as a cultural resource.
- Protecting school districts from development that does not contribute fair shares to educational programs.
- Improving public health and wellness efforts.

- Protecting local farms from inappropriate development impacts.
- Protecting the existing groundwater aquifers.

Asked next to define **the most important planning tasks** to be coordinated Countywide over the **next five years** these community leaders identified the following issues (transportation was the majority's priority):

- Improve the transportation system to handle current and future traffic flows countywide and around Mount Vernon.
- Plan and commence necessary highway bypasses to resolve longstanding highway capacity problems.
- Fix the dangerous and deadly intersections.
- "FIX" Coshocton Avenue now!
- Develop viable road connections around central Mount Vernon to the NE and SW.
- Help Centerburg to deal with the likely planning challenges due to its proximity to Columbus on US 36.
- Develop a coordinated growth strategy for development based on infrastructure and available public service capacity.
- Focus on airport development (only a minority of the leaders indicated that this is a critical item over the next decade).
- Implement ongoing and periodic updates of the Comprehensive Plan. Make this a "focused plan" effort.
- Expand the overall job base in Knox County, but diversify these jobs countywide.
- Address township and municipal zoning inconsistencies, including the lack of any zoning in some areas.
- Create a cultural center for performing and fine arts in Knox County (possibly at Woodward Opera House).
- Development urban and rural anti-blight enforcement programs.
- Improve and expand countywide "wellness" programs, including the creation of walkable communities and walking tours.
- Expand the County's regional health care delivery facilities in order to meet the needs of all residents.
- Strive to improve public transportation services and accessibility. (MODA is currently not seen as economically viable or user friendly.)
- Develop coordinated assistance for uniform countywide zoning and community design.

APPENDIX III
Knox County Regional Planning Commission
Steering Committee
117 East High Street, Suite 221
Mount Vernon, Ohio, 43050
Telephone: 740-393-6718 Fax: 740-393-6705
**Report on Public Input
From the
Workshop on Saturday, January 24, 2004**

Notes:

The 17 goals in the 1998 Plan were considered in six different sessions, all but one of which was held in the “morning” and the “afternoon.” General Goals 1-2 were considered only in a morning session.

Facilitators labeled input from three sets of sessions (Land Use Goals 1-3 and 4-6 and Quality of Life Goals 1-5) with “morning” and “afternoon.” Consequently, inputs from these sessions could be distinguished.

The facilitator labeled input from the sessions on Transportation Goals 1-2 with “morning” and “afternoon,” but summarized the inputs without capturing detail.

The facilitator for Transportation Goals 3-4 combined the inputs from the morning and afternoon sessions. Consequently, these inputs could not be separated by session.

In the following Report, input from “morning” sessions is not underlined. Input from “afternoon” sessions is underlined.

General Goals: 1-2 morning session only

General Goal One: To establish an effective and adequately staffed and funded planning organization in Knox County. (Page 91)

General comment:

Goal one should be retained. This goal should be rewritten to reflect the organizational structure that has evolved since 1996-1998. That rewrite should emphasize the statutory role of the RPC as an arena for the discussion of significant public issues related to planning, recognizing that the RPC lacks legislative power, but can implement plans administratively through regulations enacted by entities with legislative power.

Suggestions:

1. A staff equal to the need for making and implementing plans is equated with better planning and better implementation of plans. Thus, the staff of the RPC should grow now.
2. Relative to staffing:
 - a. Add secretarial assistance, part-time or shared with another agency.
 - b. Hire a long-range planner.
 - c. Part of some position should include responsibility for writing grants.

3. Potential sources of funding to expand the staff should be re-examined (e.g. administrative support from grants and subdivision fees).
4. More emphasis needs to be placed on implementation and accountability relative to policies and initiatives in the Plan.
 - a. Responsible groups, associations, agencies, boards, authorities, etc. should be identified.
 - b. Methods to measure implementation and the timely meeting of responsibilities are needed.
 - c. Emphasis should be on coordinating activities to implement the goals.
5. The possibility of an annual retreat focusing on long range planning and facilitated by OSU Extension should be considered.

General Goal Two: To have organized, relevant and up-to-date information on Knox County land resources readily available to local officials and the public. (Page 92)

General comment:

Goal two should be retained. The utility of the GIS is appreciated. Nevertheless, the impact of the GIS on planning is obvious only to those actively involved in planning.

A central and organized depository of information is needed. Information is, and should be, kept in a system that facilitates access, updating and continuity. Such a system could make accountability for implementation of the Plan explicit and could encourage follow-up and follow-through planning. Nevertheless these possibilities (and those in Goal One) cannot be attained without adequate funding and staffing of the RPC.

Suggestions:

1. Use a web site as a way to make information in the depository publicly available.
2. Develop a better planning library.

Land Use Goals: 1-3 morning and afternoon

Land Use Goal One: To effectively guide overall development in accordance with a plan for future land use and basic principles of wise land use. (Page 94)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed, goal one should be retained. Discussion of this goal noted that:

1. The population of Knox County is increasing as it is throughout central Ohio.
2. The County has abundant resources that attract population. Resources include a rich rural history, the understanding of which should contribute to the preservation of “rural character”).
3. Land is a limited resource and plans are needed for how it should be used.

4. Growth cannot be stopped, but planning can guide (control) development, allow the County to determine its future, and preserve its current quality of life.
5. A general plan for future land use is a good way to control development and is the base needed for such specific plans as those for:
 - a. Roads and streets (current capacity as well as new roadways).
 - b. Wellhead protection.
 - c. Separating conflicting land uses (for example farming and dwellings).
6. A Future Land Use Plan is a component of a Comprehensive Plan. The current land use plan in Knox County is the zoning of each township and municipality. A land use plan could
 - a. Concentrate development and reduce the cost of providing public services over larger areas. Concentrating development would preserve farmland, open space, natural resources and the rural character of the County.
 - b. Educate the public to reduce fear about an uncertain future.
 - c. Permit local governments to avoid problems afflicting other communities.
7. A Future Land Use Plan requires a rational, detailed base, including for example, more discussion of brown-field redevelopment.
8. Such a Future Land Use Plan could make Knox County a model for other communities.
9. The absence of a "Knox County Development Design Manual" was seen as a call to action. The identified need remains.

Factors identified as contributing (positively or negatively) to development of a Future Land Use Plan fell into two categories, political considerations and tools to guide development.

1. Political considerations
 - a. The need to define a set of basic principles of wise land use.
 - b. Concepts of private property rights and the relation to development of the ways those concepts are exercised.
 - c. The need to build positive relationships between political entities and to foster understanding of how entities impact each other.
 - d. The need to establish urban growth boundaries to limit sprawl and to encourage re-development of, for example, brown-fields.
2. Tools to guide development
 - a. The economic realities associated with farming need to be faced in relation to preserving the rural character and open space of the County. Local markets for farm products, a Plan for Future Land Use, 1.d above and b and c below affect assessment of these realities.
 - b. Conservation and agricultural easements.
 - c. Conservation developments in which sites for dwellings are based on factors other than road frontage.

Suggestions:

1. A report of progress on and utilization of the Model Zoning (Page 92) is needed.
2. Discussion of countywide coordination of the administration of local zoning regulations by a professional staff is needed.
3. The Future land Use Map needs more specifics, for example, a flood plain management component. It also needs a tactical plan for implementation, including who is responsible and at what points in time implementation is to occur.

Land Use Goal Two: To protect the natural resources and environmental assets of Knox County. (Page 97)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed, goal two should be retained. The natural resources specifically identified in the Plan are ground water, lakes and rivers. The listed natural resources:

1. Contribute to the quality of life in the County. Both sessions.
2. Are fundamental to human health and safety.
3. Are easily harmed by inappropriate development and difficult to repair.
4. Contribute to property values, at least partly because of their contributions to the rural landscape, including the protection of wildlife.
5. Attract tourists (which contributes to economic activity).
6. Are held in trust by current inhabitants for future generations.
7. Comprise an inadequate list of areas needing attention. Both sessions. The GIS could help in the identification of natural resources and areas worthy or in need of attention, for example, areas of hydric soils in southern Knox County. The GIS could also be the core of an environmental information service.
8. Suggested the concept of a river "greenway" (page 98). That concept needs
 - a. A progress report, if any.
 - b. Delineation of responsible parties, if any.
 - c. Public education to increase buy-in.
9. Point directly to the need for a watershed-based approach to planning in the County, including
 - a. Protecting the high-quality habitats of aquatic- and land-based organisms.
 - b. Protecting public water supplies by maintaining agriculture near wellheads.
 - c. Implementing regulations to limit timbering along streams.
 - d. Discouraging fragmentation of large woodlands by development.
10. Should be the subjects for public education (why and how to protect them) through, for example local media.

Land Use Goal Three: Protect Knox County's farmland and rural character. (Page 98)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed, goal three should be retained.

"Rural character" needs to be defined. The definition should relate to the following:

1. Agriculture (economically viable farming, including productive woodlots) is central to defining rural character.
2. Protecting rural character would protect simultaneously agricultural activities, the agricultural industry and the natural resources of the County. Moreover, maintaining agriculture and conserving the natural resources of the County would maintain rural character.
3. Rural character contributes to a positive quality of life, promotes tourism and is aesthetically pleasing.

The purchase of development rights (page 99) to meet more than one land use objective would help compensate for the expense of the purchases.

Initiatives #4 (a farmers' market, page 101), #5 (a guide to local food sources, page 102) and #6 (institutional use of local foodstuffs, page 102) are possible aids to the local farm economy as #4 especially has demonstrated. Implementation is needed. The farmers' market contributes to a sense of community, to the local economy (to individual farm families and to the wider community), and promotes tourism. Additionally, the farmers' market is an outlet for organically grown produce, which can be related to issues of health.

Additional tools identified as potential aids for preserving agricultural activities and simultaneously rural character included:

1. Identification of agricultural security areas and urban growth boundaries beyond which public water and sewer systems would not be extended.
2. Identify incentives to encourage farmers to produce foodstuffs for the local market rather than just corn and soybeans. For example, the farmers' market is an outlet for locally produced foodstuffs.
3. Lobbying the state legislature to permit impact fees, to continue the OHDA Easement Purchase Program, and to allow county/statewide transfer of development rights.
4. Understanding the land use goals of adjacent counties.
5. Adding to the planning staff of the RPC to
 - a. Identify critical regulatory needs.
 - b. Locate potential regulatory options to fill those needs.
 - c. Educate to build community support for the regulations.

Suggestions:

1. Public support for protecting farmland and rural character needs to be expanded and used to support specific action steps.
2. Voluntary farmland preservation is good. A permanent, local source of funds for it should be established.
3. No countywide sewer and water systems should be permitted.
4. Identification and protection of historical farms, sites and structures in rural areas should be part of the Plan.
5. Refine the present comprehensive plan with LESA or other analytic programs.
6. Develop educational programs on land use in the County for use in elementary schools.
7. Develop a yearly "Knox County Summit" on matters related to the Plan.
8. Identify mechanisms to improve relations between all levels of government.
9. While the policies and initiatives associated with goal three are good,
 - a. Terms need to be defined more fully.
 - b. Specific measures and benchmarks need to be established (for example, acres to protect in the agricultural easement program, density of housing, and surface water quality).

Land Use Goals 4-6 morning and afternoon

Land Use Goal Four: To establish areas for residential growth in a manner consistent with desires to preserve farmland and rural character. (Page 102)

General comment:

Both sessions agree that goal four should be retained.

The fundamental issue relevant here is residential development leads to sprawl. To protect farmland and rural character, the following are needed:

1. Educate the public about the positive aspects of living in urbanized areas and make such areas more attractive as places for residences than five-acre, rural lots.
2. Identify potential incentives for urban living.
3. Remove incentives that shift any part of the cost for placing a new residence in a rural area from the developer to the public.
4. Have the Plan adopted and used as a guide to manage growth by all levels of government.

Suggestions:

1. An overall policy to guide development is needed as the base for this goal.
2. Definitions are needed for terms such as "farmland" and "rural character."
3. Education is central to attainment of this goal. This includes education
 - a. On specific tools available in zoning regulations (for example, PUD with mixed use, PND and conservation developments).
 - b. To foster public (including all levels of government) acceptance of the entire Plan.
4. Attainment of this goal should not be at the expense of Land Use Goal 2 (To protect the natural resources...). Areas for residential growth

should avoid sensitive areas such as wetlands, flood plains and historic sites.

5. Expansion of Sewer and water systems beyond the areas shown in the current Plan should be prohibited.
6. Buffers should be created between residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Both sessions.
7. A current land use map is needed as the first step in setting the boundaries for residential growth. Such a map would be related to current zoning and could be used to manage growth.
8. A map of population density could be helpful in illustrating growth in the County.

The following points about preservation of farmland were made relative to residential development outward from Mount Vernon, in Apple Valley and in existing villages (Page 102):

1. Changing the use of land from agricultural to residential is an essentially permanent change. Failure to manage growth will ruin one of the reason persons have been attracted to the County. Therefore, boundaries should be set for residential growth. These boundaries could be defined in part with the GIS.
2. Managing growth is understood in the context of the existing rights of landowners.
3. The idea of the need to "preserve" farmland should be replaced by the idea of managing farmland, including woodlands, to protect a productive agricultural industry, which is an important component in the economy of the County.
4. The focus on "rural character" is a focus on quality of life.

The concept of establishing areas for residential growth at or adjacent to existing concentrations of residences (Page 103) was rejected. Both sessions. The following points were made:

1. Relative to problems of pollution from wastewater as a reason to install central sewer, the responsible agencies should be coordinated to enforce existing regulations in a timely manner to protect the community.
2. Expansion of municipal water and waste water systems to these rural areas should not occur.
3. Education on zoning would help these areas, as would adoption and implementation of the remainder of the Plan.

Land Use Goal Five: To develop and redevelop attractive, accessible and viable commercial areas to serve the needs of Knox County residents.

General comment:

The morning session agreed that this goal should be retained. The word "develop" should be replaced by "establish." Nevertheless, focus should be on downtowns and existing commercial areas, especially relative to:

1. Use of existing structures.
2. Identifying incentives to encourage local businesses (large and small) to remain or locate there.
3. Creating a climate to encourage a commercial community to serve residents.
4. The uniqueness of the land and buildings and the sense of place they provide.

The afternoon session rejected retention of this goal until the desired economic mix (and future employment) for the County is defined. The session felt that citizens who only live in the County have different orientations from those who live and work in the County.

The afternoon session specifically noted that all goals in the Plan are inter-connected with, for example, transportation goals directly impacting commercial development and with incentives and planning affecting re-development (brown-field or not).

Both sessions rejected the concept of the emergence of a more prominent commercial area on Harcourt Road, stating that

1. Commercial areas should be confined to established districts.
2. Boundaries for expansion should be established and enforced.

Land Use Goal Six: To identify (and reserve) areas especially suitable for industrial development and provide adequate industrial sites for future employment needs. (Page 104)

Both sessions agreed that the goal should be retained only if:

1. Industrial expansion is held to the existing and any newly identified areas.
2. Emphasis is placed on
 - a. Re-development. (Governmental and other incentives to foster redevelopment should be identified.)
 - b. Agriculturally related or small, local industries.
 - c. High-technological, low-impact activities.
 - d. Industrial activities that build on existing skills.
3. Air and water quality are not negatively impacted.

Transportation Goals 1-2 morning and afternoon

Transportation Goal One: To maximize the capacity and function of existing roadways and to provide for the safe and efficient movement of traffic between local and regional destinations. (Page 105)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that Goal One and its policies and initiatives should be retained.

Suggestions:

1. Problems and issues associated with transportation should be cross-referenced in the Plan.
2. Initiative 2 (Page 106) should be restated to support Land Use Plans as "Regulations for zoning and for subdivisions should accommodate roadway access and capacity."
3. Any state route not now designated a regional route should be designated a collector route.
4. Consider changing "maximize" to "optimize" in the wording of the goal.
5. Revise Goal One to focus on existing transportation issues.

Transportation Goal Two: To construct new roadways and upgrade existing roadways to address current and projected traffic flow. (Page 109)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that Goal Two and its policies and initiatives should be retained.

Suggestions:

1. Consider controlled and/or limited access roads for new construction to minimize congestion and to control development.
2. Be aware that actions planned or taken may create new problems.
3. Planning for new or upgrades of existing roadways requires consideration of and studies relative to:
 - a. Well fields and aquifers.
 - b. Wetlands.
 - c. Recreational areas.
 - d. Prime farmland.
 - e. Flood plains.
 - f. Historic areas.
4. Current truck routes through Mount Vernon need review.

Transportation Goals 3-4 morning and afternoon combined

Transportation Goal Three: Encourage alternative forms of transportation. (Page 114)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that Goal Three should be retained. The following points were made:

1. Alternative forms of transportation frequently involve physical exercise and, therefore, may be perceived as recreation.
2. MOTA and "Station Break" service are current modes of public transit and provide alternatives to private automobiles.
3. No public transit in the county connects to regional transit.
4. MORPC has a website for carpooling. This suggests the need for a "Park and Ride" parking lot in Knox County.
5. Separate lanes for alternative transportation are not currently financially possible along local roadways. Nevertheless lanes for buggies may be necessary on some roadways (SR 205) in the County.
6. Bike paths are needed to provide a safer alternative to the shoulders of roadways.
7. Bike paths and/or sidewalks should be encouraged for all new schools because after-school activities without them will create dangerous conditions.
8. More accesses to the Kokosing and Mohican Rivers for launching canoes are needed.
9. Adequate recharge sites for motorized wheelchairs should be considered in the planning of bike paths. (Two sites exist now: at Philips Park in Mount Vernon and at the restrooms for the bike path in Gambier.)

Transportation Goal Four: To enhance and protect the positive experience of traveling within Knox County. (Page 115)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that Goal Four should be retained. The following points were made:

1. The positive experience of traveling in the County can be enhanced and protected by:
 - a. Having tree-lined thoroughfares.
 - b. Turn lanes.
 - c. Uniformity on signage.
 - d. Restriction of signage along scenic routes.
 - e. Condensing or eliminating excess signage countywide.
 - f. Identifying routes on bridges so that the identification would be visible from the level of the water in the stream.
 - g. Relieving congestion due to traffic.
2. Improving the highways or any other component of "traveling" in the County could or would intensify existing or create new problems or opportunities. These include:
 - a. Making the County more inviting as a bedroom community. This is currently occurring countywide, resulting in new dwellings.
 - b. Developers and subdivisions should incorporate sidewalks, trails, curbs and gutters, and pedestrian access to schools and parks.
3. The routing of trucks in Mount Vernon has raised concern about safety. This has suggested the need for a by-pass.
4. Decisions about land use must be reviewed in concert with transportation goals and vice versa. Access management is on mechanism to assure an appropriate review.

Quality of Life Goals 1-5 morning and afternoon

Quality of Life Goal One: To identify and recognize historic resources. (With four policies and initiatives, Pages 117-118)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that this goal should be retained. Comment on the stated policies and initiatives are separated below.

P/I 1.1. Place downtown Mount Vernon and surrounding residential neighborhoods on the national register of historic places. (Page 117)

The following points were made:

1. Brick Streets should be preserved, where traffic permits.
2. Some individual structures along North Main, East Gambier and East High Streets in Mount Vernon have been placed on the NRHP.
3. Such preservations and identifications are building blocks for tourism.
4. Preservation and identification should include more buildings in Mount Vernon.
5. Such preservation and identification should occur throughout the County. Both sessions. The former community of Zuck (washed away in 1913 flood) is an example of the type of place that should be identified.
6. Information on the designations should be collected in one place, for example in the GIS.

P/I 1.2. Document historic and environmental features within the Kokosing and Mohican River corridors, which represent major environmental and historic resources in Knox County. Historic features include Indian trails, "smoke rings," burial grounds, etc. (Page 117)

The following points were made:

1. Documentation may now exist, but the relevant state and county histories and other documents should be collected and catalogued.
2. The Watershed Plan (GIS) for the Kokosing River has identified natural and historical features. That material is available, but needs to be placed in a central repository. A plan for the Mohican River remains to be completed.
3. Develop a means for public access to the information.

P/I 1.3. Inventory historic farms in Knox County. (Page 117)

The following points were made:

1. The "Family Farm Project" by Howard Sacks (Kenyon) documented trends in local farm life.
2. Medallions or plaques could be used to denote historically important farms.
3. The widespread disappearance of barns suggests that historically significant ones should be saved or documented.
4. Agricutlural history of Knox County includes:
 - a. Knox County was the site for propaganda films during WWII.
 - b. Farm life was filmed to promote American values in Latin America.
5. Some of this policy has been achieved, but the information has not gotten to the Planning Commission (or Farm Bureau).
6. Interest could be generated/maintained through the *News*, featuring a weekly article about a Knox County family farm (as does Morrow County *Sentinel*).
7. Attempts were made to assign responsibility for implementation of the policies/initiatives to persons or groups. Time frames to achieve policies and initiatives were set. The responsibilities have gone largely unmet.
8. The committee structure of the RPC should be explored as a mechanism to achieve the policies and initiatives in this section.
9. The history of the Underground Railroad should be documented, as should the Anti-Abolitionist Movement in the County.

P/I 1.4. Develop a video biography of people and places in Knox County today for the future. (Page 118)

The following points were made:

1. The "Wallpaper Project," a series of theatrical skits of historical events, is documenting local history.
2. The Bicentennial Committee is documenting people and places. Concerns were raised:
 - a. Will the information be linked to the national project?

b. Who will archive the information?

c. If archived, how will the information be made public in a useable format?

Quality of Life Goal Two: To protect and enhance historic resources. (With 6 policies and initiatives, Page 118-119)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that this goal should be retained.

P/I 2.1. Revitalize the Woodward Theater and target it as a cultural and historic anchor for downtown Mount Vernon. (Page 118)

The following points were made:

1. The Woodward Project is underway and is the beginning of redefining downtown Mount Vernon.
2. The Woodward will need support by the public.

P/I 2.2. Acquire the train depot on West High Street for renovation and reuse into either a public or semi-public facility. (Page 118)

Both sessions were aware that the project is well along in being completed. The afternoon session expressed the desire that the station used at least partly for civic activities rather than solely for tourist activities so that it could be useable more of the time. An example would be an off-site training facility.

P/I 2.3. Develop specific plans for a major civic focal point within the existing gravel pit area on the south side of the River within the next year. Specific study parameters are needed. (Page 118)

The following point was made in the morning session: The cultural opportunity in downtown Mount Vernon should be linked to environmental Quality of Life goals through good walkways and, possibly, bikeways.

P/I 2.4. Develop a River Walk extending along the river corridor, together with plans to develop a major civic focal point and to extend the Kokosing Gap Trail westward. (Page 119)

The afternoon session was aware of the project, but did not know if more land needed to be purchased. The session also stated that as development occurs preservation of natural resources should be assured.

P/I 2.5. Review existing design review regulations for residential areas along North Main Street and East Gambier Street and for the Downtown Area. (Page 119)

The following Points were made:

1. Preservation could make Mount Vernon a site for tourism and other activities such as making movies.
2. Use zoning to prevent demolition of historic structures.

P/I 2.6. Encourage and support villages and other local units of government to protect and enhance historic resources. (Page 119)

The afternoon session made the point that while Gambier/Kenyon have designated historic districts, efforts are needed to involve more areas of the County in planning for historic preservation.

Quality of Life Goal Three: Promote historic resources. (With 3 policies and initiatives, Page 120)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that this goal should be retained. The morning session felt that other Quality of Life issues might have greater priority than this one.

P/I 3.1. Appoint a marketing director for area theaters. These theaters include Memorial, Olin and Woodward. (Page 120)

The following points were made:

1. The Woodward will become self-funding, thereby reducing concerns about fiscal issues.
2. One director would likely produce more advertising for public and private theaters. This would increase awareness.
3. A director to also coordinate local festivals (for example, the Dan Emmett) could be helpful.
4. Support for the performing arts would draw tourists and enhance the quality of life for residents.

P/I 3.2. Develop formal historic tours with uniform identification signage. (Page 120)

The following points were made:

1. A scenic by-loop could tap into the tourist market of Holmes County and, thereby, bring money into the County for preservation.
2. Tourists are an important factor in the success of the Woodward and Downtown Mount Vernon.
3. Walking tours would encourage wellness because the same walkways for tourists would be continually available for residents.

P/I 3.3. Municipalities in Knox County should become "certified local governments." (Page 120) [The classification requires a minimum population of 150,000. One or more municipalities or an association of political entities (e.g. counties) could supply the requisite population.]

The afternoon session indicated no knowledge of the matter.

Quality of Life Goal Four: To increase outdoor recreation space by 1,000 acres by the year 2005 to satisfy current needs, and by 2,000 acres by the year 2020 to meet projected demand. (With 5 policies and initiatives, Pages 120-122)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that this goal should be retained. The morning session felt that implementation should proceed quickly because of escalating prices of land.

The following general comments were made:

1. Both sessions knew that outdoor recreation areas have increased. These include:
 - a. 2 acres on Lower Gambier Road on the Kokosing.
 - b. 292 general park, including the 60 acres of Knox Woods.
 - c. 80 acres sand & gravel and water acres just south of downtown Mount Vernon, which being developed as "Foundation Park."
 - d. Additional Rails to Trails (Mount Vernon to Centerburg [165 acres] and Mount Vernon to Fredericktown [80 acres].
2. Knox County is currently below the recommended average number of acres of outdoor recreational space relative to population.
3. Much of the current open space in the County is farmland and farmland is being converted to other land uses.
4. Conversion of prime farmland to parkland would be at cross-purposes with efforts for preserving farmland.
5. Soils highly susceptible to erosion would not be suited for some activities that could occur in a public park.

P/I 4.1. Amend the Knox County and Mount Vernon subdivision regulations to include a mandatory dedication of parkland with subdivision activity. (Page 120)

The following points were made:

1. This policy/initiative has not been addressed. The problem may be due to lot splits rather than subdivisions. Both sessions,

2. Impact fees and open space requirements on all new subdivisions would address this policy/initiative.
3. Storm water retention areas should not be counted as meeting subdivision requirements for open space.
4. When developments includes persons of all ages, open space for recreation and safe places for children are a must.
5. This goal overlaps land use goals.

P/I 4.2. Aggressively seek additional parkland acquisition funds through available public grant programs, private foundation grants and private donations. (Page 121)

This is the way Wolf Run Regional Park was made a reality.

P/I 4.3. Pursue a dedicated source of local tax revenue for the Knox County Park District. (Page 121)

A tax levy was attempted, but failed.

P/I 4.4. Extend the Kokosing Gap Trail where possible along the former rail right-of-way.

(Page 121)

Work continues on this.

P/I 4.5. Create a community land trust. (Page 122)

This has been done.

Quality of Life Goal Five: Reduce the incidence of preventable disease. (With 1 policy and initiative, Page 122)

General comment:

Both sessions agreed that this goal should be retained.

P/I 5.1. Create a Knox County Wellness Task Force. (Page 122)

The following points were made:

1. Individual efforts have been made, but no task force has been formed.
2. A Wellness Task Force would be consistent with federal initiatives and the Health Department's "Healthy People 2010."
3. Needs for a task force include:
 - a. Funding. Both sessions. Nevertheless, attainment of this initiative is expected to be cost effective.
 - b. An action plan looking beyond the Hospital and the Health Department because people are going out of the County for health care. For example, wellness/prevention should be topics for education in the public schools. This could include consideration of the content of meals served by schools.
 - c. A responsible agency with an action plan to work on this.
4. The Health Department has programs to work on tobacco use, childhood obesity, and diabetes.
5. Outdoor recreation areas and sidewalks are important here because they contribute to health and fitness. Schools without sidewalks are identified as a problem. Sidewalks are identified as an expression of a community that supports wellness/health.
6. The Centerburg area has more households with kids. These families go south, out of the County, for health care.
7. Wellness/health should receive more attention throughout the Plan, since all parts of the Plan affect health, for example, transportation and economic development are critical to health care.
8. The Plan needs an over all orientation toward promoting life-long physical and mental activity.
9. Pull all stakeholder groups into planning for wellness/health.
10. More nursing homes would give more options for Knox County residents who need help and could help economic development.

11. Attention to the needs (especially mobility needs and access to buildings) of the disabled should continue.

Potential goals to implement broader aspects of the concept for a Wellness Task Force include:

1. Attract care facilities to Knox County (not prevention focus):
 - a. Nursing homes.
 - b. Home health care.
2. Develop better health care facilities and opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Suggestions:

Issues identified as affecting the overall quality of life that should be incorporated in the Plan:

1. The Plan should contribute to building/maintaining a sense of community.
2. Support for the Plan is broad. The Plan contributes to the Quality of Life. Action is needed to fund personnel to implement the Plan to improve the Quality of Life.
3. Community Safety:
 - a. Promote a sense of community (e.g., require sidewalks).
 - b. Assess safety of sidewalks already in place.
 - c. Assess lighting of public spaces.
4. Fire Safety:
 - a. Assess possibility of coordination across departments/areas.
 - b. Assess placement of station houses relative to fire and EMS response times.
5. Flooding Safety:
 - a. Place labels visible to watercraft on bridges to identify roads.
 - b. Manage storm water.
6. Economic Development:
 - a. Look for clean industries relative to economic and wellness impact on employees
 - b. Protect long-time employees in the County and long-time businesses from displacement, in part, to protect the uniqueness of the community.
 - c. Encourage people to patronize local business.
 - d. Foster local jobs. (Both sessions.)
7. Education needs to have its own set of goals. Education is related to:
 - a. Health, economic viability of the community, and personal satisfaction with life.
 - b. Trend of combining elementary schools affects community/neighborhood.
 - c. Open enrollment undermining sense of community/neighborhood.
 - d. Deteriorating schools contribute to causing neighborhoods to become more run down.
 - e. Historic neighborhood schools should be protected.
8. Educate Community about funding opportunities for Quality of Life issues, for example:
 - a. Levies to pay for some opportunities.
 - b. Foundation grants.
 - c. Grants from RPC for planning.
 - d. Community Foundation.

General recommendations for the Quality of Life Goals:

1. Goals 1, 2, & 3 (Historic Preservation) should be condensed and an action plan should be created for implementation.
 2. This section of the Plan contains some very important ideas. Nevertheless, the idea of "quality of life in Knox County" should be broadened.
 3. Consideration should be given to rewriting the goals in "Quality of Life."
- Suggested categories:

- a. Recreation and Tourism.
- b. Open space.
- c. Arts and Culture.



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Appendix IV
**Results from Public Input Sessions:
Sharpening the Policies and Initiatives in the
Comprehensive Plan.**

Sessions included:	Recreation & Tourism	January 8, 2005
	Arts & Culture	January 8, 2005
	Historic Preservation	January 10, 2005
	Farmland Preservation	January 15, 2005
	Quality of Life & Care of Community	February 2, 2005
	Fire & Emergency Medical Services	February 23, 2005

For the:
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Steering Committee
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Introduction

The Steering Committee of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission sought additional input and refinement of the policies and initiatives in the Comprehensive Plan. To accomplish this, six public meetings were held looking at the policies and initiatives from different perspectives. The perspectives included: Recreation & Tourism, Arts & Culture, Historic Preservation, Farmland Preservation, Quality of Life & Care of Community, and Fire & Emergency Medical Services.

Each meeting was formatted the same. Two presentations started the sessions. The first presentation looked at the big picture of the topic at hand. The second looked at what had been done in Knox County relating to the topic. Goals from the Comprehensive Plan that related to the topic were pulled into the second presentation. Both presentations framed the discussion that followed.

Participants were then asked to answer the following question.

How can we sharpen the policies and initiatives to accomplish the goals in the Plan?

Each participant was asked to write their own answers to the question. Each person was then asked for their answers. All answers were written on a flip chart and posted in front of the group. After all answers were solicited from the group then the entire list was reviewed, for clarity.

Since answers could have similarities, the list was again reviewed, with participants making suggestions for grouping ideas together. After the groups were agreed upon the participants were then asked to pick the four most important groups from the list. They were given four stickers numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4. They were instructed to place the sticker with the number 4 on the group they felt was most important, the number 3 on the second, the number 2 on the third and number 1 on the fourth.

Report Format

In the following pages the input received during each session is reported. The groups of suggestions are listed in ranked order with the total points and the count of individual weighted votes. Votes were weighted as follows, #4 was the most important, #3 second, #2 third, and #1 fourth.

Within a group the separate answers are listed by bullets. No order is intended in that list. They are simply listed as received.

At the end of each session's report are suggestions that were placed in the 'Parking Lot.' These were suggestions that did not fit the intention of a comprehensive plan. For example, they identified specific groups to do the work or spent public money. Also included at the end of each session are suggestions that the participants felt unanimously should be done.

Special Note: For the Fire & Emergency Medical Services session, no specific goal existed in the Comprehensive Plan for the participants to relate to the question. So the participants were asked to assume there was a "Quality of Life Goal: To assure the continued availability of fire and emergency medical services to meet needs throughout Knox County."

Attendance/Participation

Session	Number of Participants
Recreation & Tourism	17
Arts & Culture	19
Historic Preservation	21
Farmland Preservation	28
Quality of Life & Care of Community	21
Fire & Emergency Medical Services	24

Supporting Documentation

Each session was covered by reporters from the *Mount Vernon News*.

Boyce, J. (2005, January 10). A new look at the comprehensive plan. Mount Vernon News. [on-line] <http://www.mountvernonnews.com/local/011005/01.html>

Breithaupt, G. (2005, January 10). Workshop deals with art, culture. Mount Vernon News. [on-line] <http://www.mountvernonnews.com/local/011005/02.html>

Splain, C. (2005, January 11). Education key to accomplishing goals. Mount Vernon News. [on-line] <http://www.mountvernonnews.com/local/011105/03.html>

Schehl, P. (2005, January 17). Farmland preservation topic at 4th RPC workshop. Mount Vernon News. [on-line] <http://www.mountvernonnews.com/local/011705/farmland.html>

Boyce, J. (2005, February 3). Workshop looks at sharpening policies of Focus 2100. Mount Vernon News. [on-line] <http://www.mountvernonnews.com/local/020305/2100.html>

Worner, N. (2005, February 24). RPC discusses fire, EMS portion of plan. Mount Vernon News. [on-line] <http://www.mountvernonnews.com/local/022405/rpc.ems.html>

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to: the meeting hosts, Pat Crow, Chuck Kindel, Mark Ramser, Jim Gibson, Doug Givens, Rob Clendening, Dennis Murray, Pam Palm and Larry Hatton; Britney Beavers, intern at the Extension Office from Mount Vernon Nazarene University for transcribing the original input notes; and Cindy Torppa and Troy Cooper, OSU Extension, for facilitating the Quality of Life & Care of the Community Session.

Recreation and Tourism

The “Big Picture” and Where is Knox County? – Pat Crow

List of prioritized suggestions provided by the public:

First Priority – 29 total points (Voting weight ... 6-#4's, 1-#3's, 0-#2's, 2-#1's)

- Get the public connected, involved, and educated

Second Priority – 20 total points (Voting weight ... 1-#4's, 4-#3's, 2-#2's, 0-#1's)

- Define work efforts by entities (entities must be in agreement), and follow through by initiative. Include a formal public pledge by that entity.
- Commitment is needed; possibly create an entity where there is a need.
- Organize all interested groups to take action.
- Create an action plan

Third Priority – 15 total points (Voting weight ... 0- #4's, 0 -#3's, 6-#2's, 3-#1's)

- Land Use Plan – a. county, township, municipal leadership; ownership and buy-in, b. process to define direction without emotions, but logical reasoning (LESA)

Fourth Priority – 12 total points (Voting weight ... 2-#4's, 1-#3's, 0-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Identify and preserve “heart and soul” of what Mount Vernon/Knox County is – to not lose charm.
- Knox County pride celebrate accomplishments and rural character

Fifth Priority – 11 total points (Voting weight ... 2-#4's, 1-#3's, 0-#2's, 0-#1's)

- 2020 – Increase Parks to 3,000 acres

Sixth Priority – 10 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 2-#3's, 1-#2's, 2-#1's)

- Promote local historic resources – Marketing Director of Knox County (define entity) for theatres (if arts council – broader than theatres) and parks.
- Place in a central location.

Seventh Priority – 6 total points (Voting weight ... 1-#4's, 0-#3's, 1-#2's, 0-#1's)

- Create “grass roots” efforts to educate public
Promote county pride through this.

Recreation and Tourism continued

Eighth Priority – 5 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 1-#3's, 1-#2's, 0-#1's)

- Create a Historical Building Trust at County Level.

Ninth Priority (tie) – 3 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 1-#3's, 0-#2's, 0-#1's)

- Create a Road Corridors Plan.

Ninth Priority (tie) – 3 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 0-#3's, 1-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Create Visitor's Bureau group to bring small towns and villages together to encourage recreation and tourism while maintaining current integrity. Market this to increase awareness.

Ninth Priority (tie) – 3 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 1-#3's, 0-#2's, 0-#1's)

- Formal effort to check progress of plan – groups implementing

Twelfth Priority – 2 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 0-#3's, 0-#2's, 2-#1's)

- Future collaboration of Venues – to include education and increase involvement.

Thirteenth Priority – 1 total point (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 0-#3's, 0-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Get local people to use recreational facilities.

Other items listed but receiving no votes

- Discussion and planning cooperatively
- Improved communication, send minutes of meetings to other organizations.
- From page 119 & 120 of current plan – Historic Documents and Certified Local Government, feasibility? Education, define entity – overall.
- Maintain Constitutional Rights of landowners and taxpayers.
- Celebrate accomplishments of the Plan!
- Mohican and Kokosing Corridor Plan – look at and update. This plan is still relevant.

Two items suggested that the participants unanimously decided needed to be done.

Update verbiage in the Plan – include all park trails

Include children and young adults in the video biography

Arts and Culture

The “Big Picture”- Howard Sacks

Where is Knox County? – Chuck Kindel

List of prioritized suggestions provided by the public:

First Priority – 42 total points (Voting weight ... 8-#4's, 2-#3's, 1-#2's, 2-#1's)

- “Knox Performing Arts Coalition” – combine diverse groups (before Woodward is finished)
- “Knox Partnership for Arts and Culture,” working together
- Art gallery – school and community collaborations – open door, use assets more effectively.
- Collaboration of community groups and use of facilities
- Local colleges have performances at Woodward and Memorial, community collaborative
- Extend to county – identify a liaison to each community, an ongoing “hub” leading to progress in goals.
- Collaborate with outside groups (regional) to bring more into Knox County (international festivals, concerts, etc)
- Director/Coordinator of 6 stages and activities. They will market outside of the county, remind people what they have here in Knox County, and constantly let people know what is available.
- Two galleries are available now, one coming on North Main. How about a children’s gallery, MVNU gallery, Woodward gallery? (6 stages – bring children to galleries, have 6 total galleries in MV)
- Council – grant writers

Second Priority – 21 total points (Voting weight ... 1-#4's, 4-#3's, 2-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Educate, celebrate and publicize July 16th (MV birthday).
- Focus on education of youth and adults, bring groups together
- Foster art and culture with children and all ages
- Acquisition – Documentation public programs, educate (Porter book, video project, life along Kokosing publications – The Looking Glass, make this a regular column for Arts & Culture section and make it appealing to average resident.
- Tours – take next step

Arts and Culture continued

Third Priority – 11 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 2-#3's, 2-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Downtown – Opera House possibilities

Fourth Priority – 8 total points (Voting weight ... 1-#4's, 0-#3's, 1-#2's, 2-#1's)

- GIS – include a land resource addendum to include historical and recreational “spots”
- Include cultural resources, changing and active exhibits.
- Map of historical markers and their locations
- Riverwalk- Rivers to be made a beauty spot, use area sculptors and landscapers

Fifth Priority – 7 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 2-#3's, 0-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Place downtown on National Registry – keep alive.
- Three districts – publicize!
- Restoration efforts – Heritage Trust for Historical Properties

Sixth Priority – 4 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 1-#3's, 0-#2's, 1-#1's)

- People and Places video

Seventh Priority – 2 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 0-#3's, 1-#2's, 0-#1's)

- Enlargement of MOTA to outlying areas – out of county

Historical Preservation

The “Big Picture” – Kevin Kuchenbecker

Where is Knox County? – Mark Ramser

List of prioritized suggestions provided by the public:

First Priority – 32 total points (Voting weight ... 2-#4's, 4 -#3's, 6 -#2's, 0-#1's)

- Public education – a specific office to coordinate collaboration. Also more and various types of media to promote public awareness, repeatedly.
- Encourage outlying communities to coordinate activities at festivals to bicentennial. (#6, protect and enhance)
- Solicit information and history from resources/entities that exist and build on that.
- Promote public education by more round table discussions (ex.- barns, furniture)
- Encourage area students to develop a website, so they can fill in gaps about historical preservation on their own.
- Create a History Club for high schools.
- Create an “Ag-burb” – link web sites to one central site.
- Build and maintain a volunteer base to do the Plan (website).
- Add “Utilizing Resources”. Knox County has a rich range of organizations- recognize and use these resources.
- Create a Resource Bureau. This would contain old items from residents to share for display, but not gifted. Create a list of available items in Knox County.
- Increase communication between associations and have regular, scheduled collaboration.
- Educate homeowners (all types of homes) about the history of their home.

Second Priority – 31 total points (Voting weight ...6 -#4's, 1-#3's, 0-#2's, 4-#1's)

- Make progress and expand upon Historic Farm Inventory and villages. Make city efforts county-wide.
- Video biography, Legacy, include places that exist today and repeat this process regularly. (This will be used as a record for future applications.) Store this in a central location.
- Document businesses – maintain history annually. (ex.- Buckeye Candy, empty downtown storefronts, Quarry Chapel, and Woodward Opera House)
- Subdivision guidebooks, education and publicity for bicentennial
- Documents and personal property, include the “little things” such as cultural documentation (a day in the life of a factory worker), and put these into a book. Use already existing groups to do this.
- Document and preserve, when possible, farms, barns and other historical farm buildings. Make a township by township list.

Historical Preservation continued

Second Priority Continued

- Save the “ugly brown (1800’s) houses. Involve more “ordinary” people and “typical” homes.
- Document how South Vernon, East Vernon, etc., developed. Include towns throughout Knox County, ones that no longer exist, how historical events such as the Underground Railroad played a part in their development.
- Collect blueprints as new buildings are constructed.
- Make a listing of historic people that are from Knox County.
- Map out Indian mounds/battlegrounds (markers?). Promote awareness and education of 16,000 year old culture.

Third Priority – 27 total points (Voting weight ... 2-#4’s, 4-#3’s, 3-#2’s, 1-#1’s)

- Implement the Plan
- Create a follow-through plan to keep it moving.
- Assist and encourage participation in the National Registry.

Fourth Priority – 10 total points (Voting weight ... 1-#4’s, 1-#3’s, 1-#2’s, 1-#1’s)

- Merge natural with historical concerning trails (#2 from current plan)
- Preserve trees – markers.

Fifth Priority – 8 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4’s, 1-#3’s, 1-#2’s, 3-#1’s)

- Raise public consciousness of historical preservation using upcoming Bicentennial events.
- Distribute Bicentennial documents to public schools – ASAP!
- Local Pride- encourage pride where you are living, this could begin a national initiative!

Sixth Priority – 5 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4’s, 1-#3’s, 0-#2’s, 2-#1’s)

- Certified Local Government – needed to help efforts to historical preservation. (5)

Seventh Priority – 5 total points (Voting weight ... 1-#4’s, 0-#3’s, 0-#2’s, 1-#1’s)

- Create an entity “Knox Heritage Trust” that can act on behalf of historic properties, concerning buying or preserving.

Eighth Priority – 2 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4’s, 0-#3’s, 1-#2’s, 0-#1’s)

- Financial Center for restoration and historic tax credit.

Farmland Preservation

The “Big Picture” – Howard Wise and Sara Nikolic

Where is Knox County? – Rob Clendening,

List of prioritized suggestions provided by the public:

First Priority – 45 total points (Voting weight ...7 - #4's, 3 -#3's, 3 -#2's, 2 -#1's)

- Educating Trustees on farmland preservation and where money is going.
- Ag Security – include tax rebate incentive (county level input)
- Educate (land trusts and benefits)
- Extension type informational meetings – regarding Ag Security Area, set goals (1 per twp.), involve multiple agencies (all aspects of Ag programs)
- County-wide training for zoning officials
- Link farmland preservation to municipalities (Wolpert study)
- Educate public about farmland and urban residents, preservation progress and plans, food, farming, and rural life.
- Pending designations, ex. Scenic byway,– promote rural space
- Increase awareness of (recognize) groups that support farm land preservation (and related impacts)

Second Priority – 41 total points (Voting weight ...4 - #4's, 2 -#3's, 8 -#2's, 3 -#1's)

- Local Food Sources – develop sustainable market for food produced in Knox County include “Food for Thought” (pt. 6, 7, & 8 found on pages 101-102, in current plan)
- Strategy for economic development in Agribusiness – County level incentives – infrastructure improvements (Ag services maintained) to promote overall economy
- Promote/Buy “Knox County” pay attention to who you support, where you buy
- Systematic Community Food Assessment (production -> consumer) GIS
Develop infrastructure for value added – emphasis on emerging markets.

Third Priority – 38 total points (Voting weight ...2 -#4's, 8 -#3's, 1 -#2's, 4 -#1's)

- Comprehensive (working) Map – LESA system and id areas want to protect, where residential growth
- Subcommittee of Planning Commission to evaluate software
- Technical committee to share info (auditor, Engineer, Regional Planning, SWCD, FSA)
- County tracking – where farmland “goes”
- Map “future” plans for growth development

Farmland Preservation continued

Fourth Priority – 20 total points (Voting weight ...2 -#4's, 1 -#3's, 2 -#2's, 5 -#1's)

- Educate, advocate, urge and facilitate township land use plans to prevent urban sprawl
- Examine advantages and disadvantages of county-wide zoning
- Develop urban growth boundaries
- Municipalities honor boundaries – not expand water and sewer beyond

Fifth Priority (tie) 10 total points (Voting weight ...1 -#4's, 1 -#3's, 1 -#2's, 1 -#1's)

- Emphasize Soil Conservation and waterway maintenance
- Preserve water quality and quantity on working farms
- Protect drainage and erosion control

Fifth Priority (tie) 10 total points (Voting weight ...0 -#4's, 2 -#3's, 1 -#2's, 2 -#1's)

- Create incentives for higher density development and disincentives for lower density
- Explore implementing impact fees

Seventh Priority - 9 total points (Voting weight ...1 -#4's, 1 -#3's, 1 -#2's, 0 -#1's)

- Action by Regional Planning to adopt American Farmland Trust recommendations to Ohio House (endorse)

Eighth Priority - 3 total points (Voting weight ...0 -#4's, 0 -#3's, 1 -#2's, 1 -#1's)

- Systematic coordination between incorporated and township entities

Other suggestions receiving no votes

- Township trustees and villages to utilize regional planning – encourage full representation
- County lot review
- Impact of growth/residential development on school systems (tax burden)
- Brookings Institute Study – Ohio – Cost of road sprawl in Central Ohio – utilize in plan - \$90,000 cost per house, source data National
- Office or individual to promote/evaluate progress of plan

Quality of Life & Care of Community

The “Big Picture” – Dennis Murray

Where is Knox County? – Pam Palm

List of prioritized suggestions provided by the public:

First Priority – 36 total points (Voting weight ... 2-#4's, 7-#3's, 3-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Promote “Health Awareness Week” at fair
- Safety concerns with equipment/machinery (farm, lawn, recreational)
- Clearinghouse for available resources including traditional medicine, alt. medicine & religious
- Collaborate with agencies throughout the entire county
- Newspaper insert that explains/summarizes availability of health services
- Public awareness of health of health issues (radio, public workshops, newspaper, internet)
- Encourage employers to promote health and well being in the workplace
- P.M. (night) Amish safety
- Parenting education
- Computer ergonomics

Second Priority – 32 total points (Voting weight ... 5-#4's, 3-#3's, 1-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Expand public transportation to evenings, weekends and out of county doctor appointments
- Identify top health issues in Knox County & prepare to address
- Task force to address top drug & alcohol issues
- Study to determine level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction w/quality of life. Then create task force
- Create a wellness task force (include all agencies – alternative health services)
- Accessibility and usability of existing services
- Investigate issues for under employed & under insured
- Task force to bring in mental health services
- Include youth in task forces
- Provide services nights & weekends

Third Priority – 25 total points (Voting weight ... 4-#4's, 0-#3's, 3-#2's, 3-#1's)

- Look at alternative sewage treatment systems to protect green space
- Address air quality issues
- Plan to handle “doggie doo doo” in public places and teach practices
- Methodology for affordable housing needs
- Assure proper & adequate water supply to community

Quality of Life & Care of Community continued

Fourth Priority – 17 total points (Voting weight ... 1-#4's, 2-#3's, 3-#2's, 1-#1's)

- Complete county trail system to promote walking & exercise (biking)
- Establish exercise circuits along county trail systems
- Recreational and cultural activities
- Expand facilities & programs at facilities for extra curricular activities

Fifth Priority – 16 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 2-#3's, 3-#2's, 4-#1's)

- Address mental health issues
- Fight stigma associated with diseases/disorders
- Insurance purity
- Emphasis on men's health issues
- Character development in youth (anger management)

Sixth Priority – 10 total points (Voting weight ... 2-#4's, 0-#3's, 0-#2's, 2-#1's)

- Explore details of smoke free environments
- Work with businesses to discourage smoking among employees (cessation programs)
- Diversity education for alternative lifestyles and minority for youth and adults

Seventh Priority – 7 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 0-#3's, 2-#2's, 3-#1's)

- Develop proper nutritional life skills in youth
- Effort work with schools to improve health (physical and mental) for youth and make priority

Eighth Priority – 3 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 1-#3's, 0-#2's, 0-#1's)

- Effort to establish healthy fast food businesses

Item in “Parking Lot”

Steering committee – identify and gain buy in for action delivery

Fire & Emergency Medical Services

The “Big Picture” and Where is Knox County? – Larry Hatton

Assume there was a "Quality of Life Goal: To assure the continued availability of fire and emergency medical services to meet needs throughout Knox County."

List of prioritized suggestions provided by the public:

First Priority – 52 total points (Voting weight ... 5-#4's, 8-#3's, 4-#2's, 0-#1's)

- Coordination/cooperation of adjoining districts AND other counties
- Better agency (local & county & state) communications
- Cooperation /coordination between departments
- County disaster response plan (utilizing current resources)
- Mutual aid plans between departments
- Timely availability of medics in all parts of county
- Establish Haz Mat organization
- Establish the governing body to identify who's in charge
- Communication between groups regarding levies and millage

Second Priority – 47 total points (Voting weight ... 4-#4's, 4-#3's, 7-#2's, 5-#1's)

- Educate public to justify need for paid departments
- Education of proper use of 911 services
- Educate community regarding cost of services in comparison to farm ground and development
- Public education regarding cost of making a “run”
- Educate public regarding costs of equipment, facilities and trained personnel 24/7
- Expand community involvement – block watch, 1st response Knox boxes
- Education for citizens to care for selves and neighbors till professionals arrive and marking existing and new homes with numbers

Third Priority – 39 total points (Voting weight ... 5-#4's, 1-#3's, 4-#2's, 8-#1's)

- Establish funding system not entirely based on property taxes
- Entity to seek and apply for grants
- Funding from new development
- Maintain support and funding to meet needs and address growth projections

Fire & Emergency Medical Services continued

Fourth Priority – 25 total points (Voting weight ... 4-#4's, 1-#3's, 3-#2's, 0-#1's)

- System to provide dispatchers for EMS and fire

Fifth Priority – 22 total points (Voting weight ... 1-#4's, 4-#3's, 2-#2's, 2-#1's)

- Programs in place to meet educational requirements of EMS and fire service providers
- Initiative to educate on state and federal initiatives and mandates continually educate or evolving terms
- Good resource training center for education/hours and training equipment

Sixth Priority – 10 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 1-#3's, 2-#2's, 2-#1's)

- Recommendations to townships for zoning for access require of equipment
Improved location system

Seventh Priority – 2 total points (Voting weight ... 0-#4's, 0-#3's, 0-#2's, 2-#1's)

- Plan, utilize and train with private organizations

Other suggestions receiving no votes

- Research to determine the need for resources to match need for services (to plan to have services where needed)

APPENDIX V SURVEY OF ELECTED OFFICIALS SUMMARY

By Richard Stallard

The 189 elected officials in Knox County were surveyed on an array of issues related to their present understandings and planning for the future. The 69 respondents included 7 county officials, 4 mayors, 19 municipal officials, 10 members of school boards, 10 township clerks and 19 township trustees. These individuals had lived in the County for an average of 43.3 years and had represented their communities for an average of 13.2 years.

Since every respondent did not answer each question, the percentages discussed in the following paragraphs may not total 100%. Similarly, the responses to some questions did not provide significant information and, therefore, are not discussed. Details for all questions and responses may be obtained in the data attached to this summary.

In response to the first question, “Is Knox County balancing the needs for rural and urban land uses appropriately?” 45% answered, “yes.” Significantly, 19% answered, “no,” and 32% answered, “don’t know.” Respondents answered the related question, “Have local zoning and county planning served the entire County well?” essentially the same way with 44% agreeing, 25% disagreeing and 30% not knowing. Clearly, a third of respondents remain undecided on these two fundamental questions. This is especially important because local zoning regulations are the current and future plan for land use through which any “balance” between rural and urban land uses is and will be attained in the County.

Nevertheless, 87% of respondents would encourage their adult children to move to or live in a house in Knox County. They would do so, at least in part, because they rated as “excellent” or “good” not only the current quality of life (97%), but also the current effort to maintain or improve the overall quality of life (80%). Respondents also rated the following as “excellent” or “good:” housing choices (81%) and affordability (83%), schools (88%), park facilities (87%), recreation for youth (64%) or adults (62%) or seniors (64%), garbage collection (81%) and recycling (74%), crime rate (77%) and police protection (83%), fire protection (96%) and EMS (96%), health services (87%), wastewater management (57%), sense of community (77%), and the preservation of the natural environment (75%) or farmland/agriculture (58%).

Respondents would still encourage their adult children to move to or live in a house in Knox County although they rated the following as “poor” or “needs improvement:” job opportunities (68%), shopping (49%) or entertainment (55%) opportunities, and storm water management (48%).

Annexation in Knox County concerned 68% of respondents “very much” or “somewhat.” Relative to annexation, respondents felt that:

1. The Regional Planning Commission could contribute (75%) to concerns about annexations by making recommendations (36%), mediating (10%), or providing land use planning (29%).
2. Municipalities and townships should work together on annexations (94%).
3. The County should investigate options for joint economic development districts between neighboring townships and municipalities (54%).

Respondents believed that the top three zoning issues needing attention are:

1. “Zoning violations and enforcement” (54%).
2. “Open space requirements for new development” (48%).
3. “Minimum lot size” (38%).

The two most important visual elements that define “rural character” are farm fields (77%) and wood lots (25%), and 96% of respondents believe that it is important to maintain a “rural character” in Knox County. However, 61% of respondents believed that public transportation, which is typically associated with urbanization, is important in the County.

Opinions about transportation by automobiles and trucks were collected. Respondents felt that the segments of roadway where additional traffic would raise the most significant concern for planning or control was US 36/SR 3 from Centerburg to Mount Vernon (26%) and US 36 from Mount Vernon to Coshocton (16%). Respondents believed that US 36 from Mount Vernon to Coshocton (39%), US 36/SR 3 from Centerburg to Mount Vernon (30%), and SR 13 from Mount Vernon to Mansfield (25%) need substantial improvements to correct current problems in the flow of traffic. Additionally, respondents thought that US 36/SR 3 from Centerburg to Mount Vernon (33%), US 36 from Mount Vernon to Coshocton (29%), and SR 13 from Mount Vernon to Mansfield (25%) need access management to limit new driveways.

Respondents identified four roads in greatest need of being designated “scenic byways.” These were SR 229 Mount Vernon toward Coshocton (28%), US 36 Mount Vernon toward Coshocton (23%), and US 62 Utica to Gann (22%) and SR 3 Mount Vernon to Jelloway (both 22%).

Respondents agreed (at 90% or greater) that none of 12 major segments of roadways need increased or decreased speed limits. However, the 37 suggestions of intersections needing modification or additional traffic controls and the 39 suggestions of roadway segments needing upgrades were disparate and not readily grouped.

According to the 2000 Census, the number of households in Knox County increased by 7% in the previous ten years. This level of growth did concern 33% of respondents, but did not concern 64%. Conversely, the possibility of households increasing by 14% between 2005 and 2015 concerned 71% of respondents, but did not concern 22%.

Conservation subdivisions were recognized by respondents as minimizing the number of driveways connecting to existing roads (49%), as helping to maintain rural character (64%), and as providing access to natural areas (70%). A residential lot in a conservation subdivision would satisfy 51% of respondents. Encouraging a variety of housing types related to life stages was

viewed as important by 73% of respondents.

Respondents agreed that new commercial (87%) and industrial developments (88%) are important for the economic viability of the County. There was no consensus in respondents' comments about where commercial development should be placed because the convenience of shopping or dining close to home is attractive. However, the consensus in the comments was that industrial development should be placed in areas designated for it.

While 45% of respondents agreed that the local unit of government that they represented was doing a "good job" of informing residents about issues related to current and future planning, 51% disagreed. Similarly, while 36% of respondents agreed that the County as a whole was doing a "good job" of informing residents about issues related to current and future planning, 59% disagreed. The need for more effective communication is confirmed at both the local and the county level. The details of responses to questions suggest that respondents had not found local and county web sites informative about current or future planning.

Respectively, 88% and 86% of respondents rated the levels of services provided by their local units of government and those provided countywide as "acceptable." Respondents agreed that volunteers serve the public interests "adequately" on both local (74%) and countywide committees (59%).

Respondents agreed (73%) that the system of bicycle and pedestrian trails should be expanded or connected to existing or proposed regional trails. While 45% of respondents agreed with the statement, "enough is being done to set aside land for open space (trails, parks, agricultural/conservation easements and wetlands)," 54% either disagreed or did not feel sufficiently informed to answer. Nevertheless, 77% of respondents believed that it is important to "protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as streams, floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands and woodlands."

The final segment of the survey asked for responses to the following:

1. "Relative to the issues addressed in this survey, please list up to five positive attributes of living in the governmental unit you represent."
2. "Relative to the issues addressed in this survey, please list up to five shortfalls of living in the governmental unit you represent."
3. "Relative to the issues addressed in this survey, what are the most important things that the level of government you represent should accomplish over the next five years? Please list up to five."
4. "Relative to the issues addressed in this survey, what are the most important planning tasks that need to be coordinated countywide over the next five years? Please list up to five."

The four following tables summarize the responses, which (with 215, 135, 145, and 142 responses, respectively) were more extensive than in other parts of the survey. Each table shows the order in which the responses were given (from 1st to 5th), the sum of responses in each category, and the percentage of the whole represented by each category. The most frequent types of responses in the tables are discussed below.

The top four “positive attributes” (and the percentage of responses in the category) of living in the governmental unit represented by the respondents were: the “facilities” (21%), the unit is “rural” (17%), the “services” (15%), and neighborliness/involvement of those living in the unit (14%). The “facilities” of the governmental units included those for recreation, education, transportation, and physical/spiritual well being. Positive attributes related to “rural” related to a quiet, low-density agricultural community with open spaces and fertile farms. Emergency and police “services” were singled out as noteworthy. “Neighborliness” encompassed friendly persons caring for not only each other, but also the community through volunteerism, good citizenship and public service.

Table One: Positive attributes	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	Sum	%
Facilities Recreational facilities Schools/educational facilities, colleges, academic influence Parks Roads, minimum traffic, adequate transportation and maintenance Churches Activities for youth Health system Good water	6	12	10	10	7	45	21.0
Rural Rural agricultural setting, character, atmosphere, community Peaceful, quiet Open space Fertile farmland Farmland/agricultural preservation Low density, not overrun yet	13	8	6	5	4	36	16.7
Public Services Good fire/EMS protection Low crime, safety services Snow removal Services meeting needs We know the needs of our citizens	7	8	7	5	5	32	14.9
Neighborliness/Involvement Good neighbors, friendly People helping people, caring, close Citizens getting involved, proactive, strong volunteerism Responsible citizens, good constituents Trying to involve citizens, opportunity for service	6	10	3	5	7	31	14.4

Strong community feeling/spirit Quality of life issues paramount Opportunity for church/societal interaction Retirement opportunities							
Small Small town, village, community, self-governing unit Proximity to shopping and services Good urban/rural balance	8	3	3	3	3	20	9.3
Government/Leadership Active zoning board Strict zoning Good leadership, school board, government Cooperative units of government, collaboration Comprehensive plan, RPC moving forward Attitudes changing	5	2	2	1	4	14	6.5
Physical Environment (including specific characteristics other than farmland) Natural beauty, scenic rivers and streams Apple Valley Lake, Kokosing River Rails to trails Clean air	2	3	3	3	0	11	5.1
Economy/Cost of Living Robust economy Affordable utilities Low taxes, cost of living Low unemployment/ steady employment	1	0	3	2	1	7	3.3
Housing Variety Availability and availability of sites for houses Beautiful architecture Good housing	1	2	2	0	2	7	3.3
Location In county or state	1	0	1	0	0	2	0.9
No Zoning	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.9
Non-responsive	2	2	3	1	0	8	3.7
Total	52	50	43	36	34	215	100

The top three “shortfalls” (and the percentage of responses in the category) of living in the governmental unit represented by the respondents were: “transportation” (18%), the “populace and government” (11%), and “regulations/laws and public services” (11%). “Transportation” covered the need to change for development, barriers to public transportation, management of

increasing traffic, and problems with maintaining or improving roadways. “Populace and government” merged both the shortcomings of individuals (nosey, petty, uninvolved, apathetic) and their governments (need for cooperation between various units and for civility). “Regulations/laws and public services” incorporated comments about the need for additional (e.g. countywide zoning/building codes and high quality EMS) and objections to building codes as well as to the administrations of local zoning codes.

Table Two: Shortfalls	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	Sum	%
Transportation Transportation needs to change for development Public transportation Barriers to public transportation Increasing traffic/trucks Traffic management/patterns Roads need repairs Roadways Dirt/gravel roads Access to interstate Access management	13	5	5	1	1	25	18.5
Populace and Government NIMBY Nosey people Petty politics Lack of unity in local government Need new representatives Can be insular Better cooperation between incorporated and county area Public awareness/education Resistance to modernity Low community involvement Public apathy to change Low voter turnout	6	4	4	1	0	15	11.1
Regulations/Laws and Public Services Need countywide zoning/building code No building code Unenforceable building code Zoning enforcement/deviations Unenforceable laws Law protection Ability to provide high quality EMS Increasing crime	3	5	3	4	0	15	11.1
Purchased goods/services Lack of, or limited shopping Restaurants Distance to health services	6	2	1	2	1	12	8.9

Development Urban encroachment Loss of farm/hunting ground Too much development Urban sprawl Lot splits	1	3	3	3	1	11	8.1
Funding and Taxes Lack of funds/resources Finances Expenses High/increasing taxes	6	2	1	1	1	11	8.1
Business Concern for saving central business district Getting business community organized Small businesses failing Little business Lack of industrial development	3	4	1	0	3	11	8.1
Water, Sewers and Storm Water High-cost water Public water Aging/inadequate sewer/water infrastructure Storm water management Control of storm water in residential areas	1	4	0	2	3	10	7.4
Jobs Limited job/employment opportunities	3	3	1	1	0	8	5.9
Housing Lack of housing options for independent elderly High cost of housing for low income residents Need more housing Too many empty houses	0	1	3	0	0	4	3.0
Litter and Solid Waste Increasing litter Loss of Spring Cleanup	1	2	0	0	0	3	2.2
Wildlife Skunks spraying in the back yard Squirrels and chipmunks at the bird feeder Deer	0	1	1	1	0	3	2.2
Mining operations	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.7
No recreation for youth	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.7
None or Non-responsive	2	0	1	2	0	5	3.7
Total	45	37	24	19	10	135	99.8

The top two accomplishments (and the percentage of responses in the category) that each respondent's governmental unit should address over the next five years were related to:

“development” (22%) and “transportation” (19%). These results are consistent with the threats that development represents to the positive attribute of “a quiet, low-density agricultural community with open spaces and fertile farms.” Furthermore, this is consistent with “transportation” having been the most commonly identified shortcoming of respondents’ local governmental units. “Development” covered the need to govern growth by planning at the township and county level through better zoning (and enforcement), comprehensive plans, annexation agreements, and emphasis on quality of life. “Transportation” encompassed improvement or repair of existing infrastructure, managing the flow of traffic, accomplishing the transportation goals in the Comprehensive Plan, and pedestrian or public transportation.

Table Three: Accomplishments, 5 Years	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Sum	%
Development Plan/prepare/be ready for growth Govern growth Continue comprehensive zoning/planning Implement township master plan Update township planning/zoning Better zoning code/enforcement Better planning (through: control of residential developments, access management, conservation districts) Emphasize Quality of Life Issues Work with others to help promote growth for all Pre-annexation agreements for appropriate areas Residential development Stop population growth Keep Columbus out	12	7	8	3	2	32	22.1
Transportation Accomplish as many transportation goals as possible Improve/repair/maintain streets/roads/bridges/ditches Improve traffic Road improvement planning that has order Better pedestrian protection Outer belt/bypass Confront the automobile problem with vigor Public transportation	12	8	3	3	2	28	19.3
Water, Sewers and Storm Water Reduce water leaks Water conservation Install public water system Wastewater expansion/management/upgrade Get septic system for township house Storm water regulations/management/improvement Erosion control	4	2	1	4	3	14	9.7

Jobs Community development Balance residential development with some light industry Local business expansion Increase industrial growth Try to save CEDA with Hilliar Township Revitalize downtown area/downtown Centerburg Develop village center Industrial/commercial growth in village Create more local jobs Encourage retail development	4	4	2	0	3	13	9.0
Funding and Taxes Balanced budget Fiscal responsibility Limit tax increases Remove 5 mills of wasted tax dollars Control fire department overtime Locate funds to assist townships/ improve parks and trails Solidify school funding concern Go after grants for work on intergovernmental cooperation Share equipment/personnel with other entities Get voters to approve road levy	5	4	2	1	0	12	8.3
Public Services Maintain public services Continue with College Township Fire and EMS Improve Fire and EMS Reduce/lower crime rate Develop building code Enhance recreation activities programs for seniors/youth	0	2	6	3	1	12	8.3
Populace and Government Educate the community Address citizens' concerns more adequately Provide additional avenues for input from/feedback to citizens Keep up with technology Encourage voter registration Get more people involved in the town's history Embellish the idea of an "inclusive community" Develop new leadership for the community Dissolve	3	2	2	4	0	11	7.6
Schools Deal with growth of school system Manage school construction	3	2	3	0	0	8	5.5

Collaborate with agencies dealing with children Expand and improve educational and community use of school facilities Improve graduation rates Discuss merging school districts							
Agriculture and Rural Areas Continue with land preservation/green space set-asides Retain farmland Maintain rural character Protect environment and preserve property values Reverse urbanization	1	3	1	0	2	7	4.8
Parks Improve parks/ village parks Development/connection of trails Increase size of Foundation Park	1	2	0	2	0	5	3.4
Litter and Solid Waste Reinstate Spring Cleanup	1	1	0	0	0	2	1.4
Non-responsive	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.7
Total	46	37	28	20	14	145	100.1

The top three planning tasks that need to be coordinated countywide over the next five years (and the percentage of responses in each category) were: “transportation” (26%), “development” (16%) and “jobs” (11%). These results are consistent with:

1. “Transportation” having been the most commonly identified shortcoming of respondents’ local governmental units;
2. “Development” representing a threat to the positive attribute of “a quiet, low-density agricultural community with open spaces and fertile farms;” and with
3. “Job” opportunities having been identified as “poor” or “needs improvement” by 68% of respondents.

Here, planning for “transportation” included attention to infrastructure, access management, public transportation, and the flow of traffic in and around Mount Vernon. Planning for “development” covered envisioning the future, administering well-known techniques to manage development better, enforcement of zoning, and countywide zoning by township. Planning for “jobs” encompassed additional economic development (industrial, commercial and retail), while retaining current businesses (on main streets) and industries.

Table Four: Countywide Planning Tasks	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	Sum	%
Transportation Dealing with traffic patterns/problems Transportation infrastructure Access to interstate Access management Public transportation Better traffic flow around Mount Vernon Bypass/outer belt	16	13	3	5	0	37	26.1

Development Envision our future Plan/prepare for growth Plan, but do not take away our freedoms Good long-range planning Commercial zoning Strict zoning enforcement Control development (with specific tools: conservation subdivisions, designated rural/urban areas, unified land use/zoning regulations and policies, managing lot splits, develop regulations to focus residential development near urban areas) Countywide zoning by township Countywide standardized zoning Leave landowners alone	6	3	9	2	3	23	16.2
Jobs Economic development Industrial/commercial/retail/dining development Coordinate industrial growth Attract industry Better industrial development Keeping current businesses/industries Keeping Main Street stores occupied	5	3	3	2	3	16	11.3
Agriculture and Rural Areas Preserve agriculture/farmland/open space/woodlands /streams Increase small farms Maintain rural areas/rural atmosphere Preserve our legacy/heritage	4	4	5	1	0	14	9.9
Government Develop a Master Plan for Growth Revise Comprehensive Plan More staff at RPC Close out the county regional planning commission Unity among governmental entities Better coordination between city and township Foster cooperativeness between governmental entities Support mediation of Monroe Township relations Open communication with residents Get off the mentality of “the bottom line above all else.”	3	2	2	1	3	11	7.7
Water, Sewers and Storm Water Protect water supply Wastewater management Countywide water/wastewater utility Upgrade of storm sewers	1	3	1	4	1	10	7.0

Storm water control/management							
Storm water runoff							
Public Services	2	0	2	2	2	8	5.6
More law protection							
Fire/police protection							
Housing for low/moderate incomes							
Countywide medic availability							
Parks and Recreation	1	3	1	0	2	7	4.9
Support/planning for development of trails/parks							
More accessible/useable green space							
Entertainment for teenagers							
Motorized recreation opportunities							
Schools	2	2	1	1	0	6	4.2
Funding							
Placement of new schools in Mount Vernon							
Better schools							
Should mergers be encouraged?							
Are five separate school districts appropriate?							
Building Codes (Pro, consider, con)	1	1	1	0	2	5	3.5
Countywide building code (2)							
Further consideration of building codes? (2)							
Stay away from building codes (1)							
Litter and Solid Waste	1	0	0	1	1	3	2.1
Promote recycling							
Better waste management							
"None"	2	0	0	0	0	2	1.4
Total	44	34	28	19	17	142	100.0

END OF SUMMARY

Note: Compilation of the data in the surveys by Beth P. Steinberg is gratefully acknowledged.

APPENDIX VI

Township	Conservation	Agricultural	Single-Family	Two-Family	Multi-Family	Manufactured Home Park	PUD/PND	Business	Commercial	Manufactured / Industrial	Public/Semipublic	Historic
Berlin	C-2	AG	R-1						C-1	I-1		
Brown	FP	R-1										
Clinton		RRA	SER, R-1	R-2	R-3	RMHP	PND	LB, GB, AB		M-1		
College	C-1	AG	R-1									
Harrison	C-1	AG										
Hilliar	C-1	AG	R-1	R-2		MHP		B-1		I-1		
Howard	C-1	AG	R-1				PUD	B-1				
Jefferson	C-1	AG	R-1					B-1		M-1		
Liberty	C-1	AG	R-1					B-1		M-1		
Middlebury		AG/R								M-1		
Milford		AG										
Miller		AG										
Monroe	R-C	A-1	A-2						C-1	M-1, M-2		
Morgan		AG										
Morris		AG/R	R-1					HOB				
Pike	FP	R-1										
Pleasant	FP	AG/R						HOB		M-1		
Wayne		AG-R						B-1		M-1		

***Notes**

Butler, Clay, Jackson and Union Townships are unzoned

Municipality

Centerburg	OS		RR, R-1, ES	R-2	R-4			RO, CC, VC				
Danville			R-1	R-2	R-3	MHPD-1		NB-1, GB-1		LI-1		
Fredericktown	C-1	AG	R-1	R-2	R-3	MHP		B-1		M-1	P-1	
Gambier	C		R					M			I-1, I-2, I-3	
Mount Vernon	FDPD	RR	R-1	R-2	R-3		PND	CB, GB	NC, TOC, O/I	M-1, M-1A	P-1	HD

***Notes**

Gann and Martinsburg are unzoned

The portion of Utica Village within Knox County is zoned AG

APPENDIX VII
Knox County Auditor's Parcel Codes
For Map 12

Agricultural	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Exempted	Park
100	500	400	300	600	660
101	501	401	310	610	
102	510	402	320	620	
103	520	403	330	630	
104	530	410	340	640	
105	540	411	350	650	
108	550	412	370	670	
110	560	415	380	680	
111	599	416	390	685	
112		419	399	690	
113		420	800		
114		421			
115		422			
120		424			
121		426			
190		429			
199		430			
		435			
		439			
		440			
		441			
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