

SPENCER TOWNSHIP

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

2024



01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

02

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Spencer, Township Hall

SPENCER TWP.
RECYCLING
STATION
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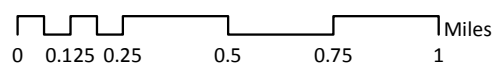
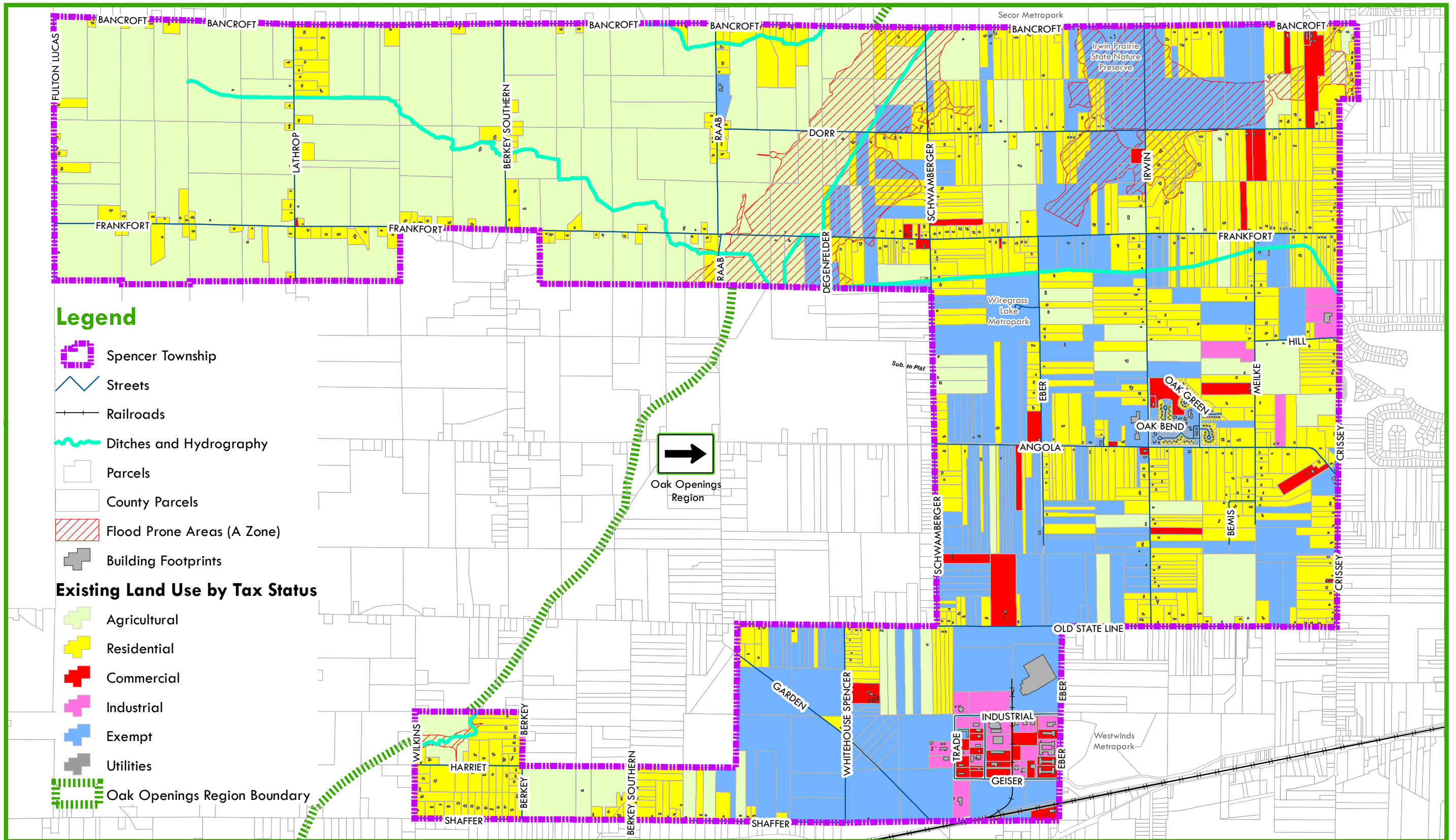
LOCATED
AT THE

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. The foreground is dominated by large, rectangular fields. One field is a vibrant green, while the others are a brownish-tan color, suggesting different stages of crop growth or different types of land. A paved road runs diagonally across the lower portion of the image, with several buildings and trees scattered along its path. In the background, a small cluster of houses and more fields are visible under a clear sky. The entire image has a dark green overlay, and the text '03' and 'PLANNING CONDITIONS' is overlaid on the right side.

03

PLANNING CONDITIONS

EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Source: Lucas County Auditor / Engineer, TLCPC, Toledo Metroparks, FEMA, Reveille



The Spencer Township Comprehensive Community Plan is intended to be a dynamic planning document – one that responds to changing needs and conditions. Over time, each strategy may need to be revised or amended to reflect the current planning environment, and removed when accomplished. The Plan Implementation Section is structured into an Action Matrix that decision-makers can easily utilize to achieve the vision and recommendations outlined within this Plan.

This Plan will be used in the following situations:

Planning and Zoning Affairs

The usual processes for reviewing and processing development projects, subdivision plans, and zoning amendments provide significant opportunities for implementing this Comprehensive Plan. Each zoning, development and subdivision decision made by the Spencer Township Board of Township Trustees, Zoning Commission, and Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission should be evaluated and weighed against applicable recommendations and policies contained herein.

There may be situations that township officials encounter where development and zoning proposals do not reflect the Plan's vision and recommendations. If and when this happens, a consistent process should be utilized that allows additional dialogue and evidence to be reviewed as to why a deviation from this Plan is needed. This

Plan should be considered a flexible document, one that should be renewed and updated along with the regulatory tools that support it, like the zoning resolution.

Intergovernmental Relations

The recommendations and vision of this Plan will require township officials to coordinate and work with many organizations and stakeholders that maintain and interest township. These organizations may include the Whitehouse Spencer Township Joint Economic Development Zone, Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission, Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, TMACOG, and Lucas County offices of County Commissioners, Engineer, Sanitary Engineer, Health Department, Sheriff, and Planning and Development, to name a few. This Plan could be helpful to advance programs and initiatives that these entities could mutually benefit from.

Capital Improvements

This Plan should be utilized when working to promote the overall quality of life in the community and in making capital improvement decisions. Whether it is the extension of pedestrian connectivity elements, the extension of public infrastructure, or encouraging the reimagining of the downtown area, it should be done in accordance with the Plan's vision.

Plan Review

The 2024 Spencer Township Comprehensive Community Plan should be reviewed annually by the Zoning Commission, Township Trustees, and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to ensure progress is being made. This discussion should identify the Plan's beneficial impacts and recognize areas where the Plan may not have assisted in facilitating the visions and strategies. To further assist discussion, planning stakeholders can assign a "percentage complete" to each plan strategy (See: Plan Implementation Table). In situations where the Plan assisted progress it should be noted. It should also be noted in what areas, if any, the Plan failed to facilitate its strategies and the best management practices highlighted in the Plan Implementation Toolbox.



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

CONNECTIVITY



Element No.	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization					County Organizations	Local / Other Organizations	Time Frame	Percent Complete
		Twp Trustees	Zoning Commission	Twp Departments	Parks / Rec Organizations	Whitehouse Spencer Twp (JEDZ)				
C 1	Identify and Enhance Pedestrian Connectivity Corridors	✓	✓	Fire Dept; Road and Building Maintenance Dept; Zoning	Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, ODNR	✓	Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission; County Engineer	Anne Grady; Spencer Twp. Neighborhood Center; Springfield Twp; Columbia Gas; US DOT; ODOT; TMACOG	0	
C 2	Improve Community Identity Elements	✓		Finance Dept; Road and Building Maintenance Dept	Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, ODNR	✓	County Engineer	Spencer Twp. Neighborhood Center; Private Sector Businesses; Property Owners; Consultants	M	
C 3	Establish a dedicated capital improvement fund for pedestrian connectivity	✓		Finance Dept; Road and Building Maintenance Dept; Zoning		✓	County Engineer	TMACOG; ODOT	S	
C 4	Prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan	✓		Road and Building Maintenance Dept; Zoning	Metroparks Toledo; Nature Conservancy; ODNR	✓	Springfield Township; Sylvania Area Joint Recreation District (SAJRD)	Spencer Twp. Neighborhood Center; Private Sector Businesses; Property Owners; Consultants	M	
C 5	Pursue the Feasibility of Creating a Mixed-Use District for "Spencer-Sharples Corners"	✓	✓	Road and Building Maintenance Dept; Zoning			Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission; Lucas Metro Housing	Spencer Twp. Neighborhood Center; Developers; Property Owners; Residents; Stakeholders	S	
C 6	Identify Systemic Safety Roadway and Conduct Safety Studies where necessary	✓		Road and Building Maintenance Dept	Metroparks Toledo	✓	County Engineer	ODOT; TMACOG; Consultants	0	
C 7	Promote Public/private partnerships that enhance the quality of life	✓		Road and Building Maintenance Dept	Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, ODNR; Green Ribbon Initiative	✓	Lucas Metro Housing; County Engineer; Lucas County Economic Development	Spencer Twp. Neighborhood Center; ODNR; Westwinds Business Park; Private Sector Businesses; Churches; Property Owners	0	

S = Short (less than 2 years), M = Medium (3-5 years), L = Long (6-10 years), O = Ongoing

SUSTAINABILITY & LAND USE MANAGEMENT



Element No.	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization							Time Frame	Percent Complete
		Twp Trustees	Zoning Commission	Twp Departments	Parks / Rec Organizations	Whitehouse Spencer Twp (JEDZ)	County Organizations	Local / Other Organizations		
SLM 1	Embrace Sustainable Land Use Policies and Practices	✓	✓	Fire Dept; Road and Building Maintenance Dept	Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, ODNR; Green Ribbon Initiative	✓	Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission; County Engineer; Sanitary Engineer; Health Dept; Sheriff	Business and Property Owners	0	
SLM 2	Conserve Prime Farmlands and Environmentally-Sensitive Areas	✓	✓	Zoning	Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, ODNR; Green Ribbon Initiative		Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission; Lucas County Engineer / Floodplain Manager; Health Dept.	TMACOG; Property Owners; Farmers; Interested Stakeholders	0	
SLM 3	Update the Zoning Resolution	✓	✓	Zoning		✓	Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission	Business and Property Owners	S	
SLM 4	Optimize Development Opportunities in the Westwinds / Spencer-Sharples Planning Area	✓	✓	Zoning; Fire Dept; Sheriff; Road and Building Maintenance Dept	Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, ODNR	✓	Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission; County Engineer; Sanitary Engineer; Sheriff	RGP; Property Owners; Developers	S/O	
SLM 5	Pursue the Development of a Community Reinvestment Area to Promote Community Revitalization	✓				✓	Lucas County Commissioners	Spencer Twp. Neighborhood Center; Lucas County Planning and Development Dept.	S	
SLM 6	Leverage grants, incentives and grassroots efforts to improve neighborhoods and public infrastructure and community facilities	✓	✓	Zoning; Fire Dept; Sheriff; Road and Building Maintenance Dept	Metroparks Toledo, Nature Conservancy, ODNR	✓	Toledo Lucas County Plan Commission; Lucas County Economic Development; County Engineer; Sanitary Engineer; Lucas County Land Bank	Spencer Twp. Neighborhood Center; Lucas County Planning and Development Dept; TMACOG; ODOD; ODNR; US DOT; ODOT; Jobs Ohio; Property Owners; Developers	0	
SLM 7	Complete "loops" in the water distribution system to eliminate dead-ends and improve resilience and water quality	✓	✓	Fire Dept; Road and Building Maintenance Dept; Zoning			County Engineer; County Sanitary Engineer	Property Owners; Consultants; TMACOG; Ohio EPA	M	
SLM 8	Pursue feasibility of extending potable water supply to serve developing areas and eliminate well systems	✓	✓	Finance Dept; Road and Building Maintenance Dept; Zoning			County Engineer; County Sanitary Engineer	Property Owners; Consultants; TMACOG; Ohio EPA	L	
SLM 9	Pursue feasibility of extending sanitary sewer service to eliminate failing septic systems	✓	✓	Road and Building Maintenance Dept; Zoning			County Engineer; County Sanitary Engineer; Lucas County Health Department	Property Owners; Consultants; TMACOG; Ohio EPA	L	

S = Short (less than 2 years), M = Medium (3-5 years), L = Long (6-10 years), O = Ongoing

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

Tool	Summary	Future Land Use Area	Best Practice Examples
Access Management	Limits new access points on most roads (except for access to new roads, which may serve major subdivisions). Limits number of lot splits along Major and Minor arterials and may require joint use driveways or cross access easement to meet driveway spacing requirements. There are a variety of locations along key thoroughfares like SR-163 and SR-105 where access management techniques could be deployed.	All Future Land Use Areas	Butler County, OH Licking County, OH Lucas County, OH
Agricultural Districts	Provides protection against nuisance suits over farm operations, deferment of tax assessments on land to build sewer and water lines, and allows for additional review if land is taken by eminent domain for a public purpose. Land or combination of lands must total 10 acres or more to be included in the district, or have generated an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500 during the past three years.	Agriculture	Fairfield County, OH
Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs)	Agricultural BMPs are tools that help to minimize nonpoint source pollution load in water systems by decreasing the velocity of runoff after storm events. BMP tools include nutrient management, conservation tillage and no-till, contour strip cropping and livestock husbandry. In urban settings, vegetative buffers, filter strips, grassed swales, constructed wetlands and innovative stormwater retention and infiltration systems can be used along with overlay zoning techniques.	Agriculture	Ottawa County SWCD Wayne County SWCD
Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP)	Agricultural easements provide a great tool for farmers to use to not only protect prime farmland from development and receive financial assistance. To be eligible, the farmland must be located in an agricultural preservation area (see Future Land Use Planning Areas Map), must be enrolled in CAUV, and be 40 acres or more (unless adjacent to another farm, then the minimum is 25 acres).	Agriculture	Fairfield County SWCD Fairfield Land Preservation Association Wayne County
Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program	ASA Programs create blocks of at least 500 acres of farmland where agriculture is encouraged and protected and may include multiple farmland owners. Farmlands must be enrolled in Agricultural district and CAUV. Local governments agree to not initiate, approve, or finance development for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes for 10 years while landowners commit to exclusively engage in agricultural activities and related development. The land owners located in ASAs can apply for a real property tax reduction on new ag improvements. There currently is no ASAs in Spencer Township or Lucas County.	Agriculture	Fairfield County, OH Wayne County, OH
Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program	The CAUV program allows farmland devoted exclusively to commercial agriculture to have reduced property taxes based on agricultural value of the land, rather than on full development value. Value is based on the soil types on the property. To qualify for the CAUV, the property must be ten or more acres or produce an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500 and must be devoted exclusively to commercial agricultural use.	Agriculture Rural Residential & Conservation	N / A
Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)	Authorized under ORC 1724, all political subdivisions can create CICs for the purposes of advancing, encouraging, and promoting economic and civic development. A CIC can also facilitate the reclamation and reutilization of vacant, abandoned, tax-foreclosed, or other real property, and be used to assemble, clear, and clear the title of real property in a coordinated manner. Ottawa County currently has a CIC (Ottawa County Improvement Corporation).	All Future Land Use Areas	N / A
Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program	Provides businesses locating in a designated CRA an exemption of up to 100 percent of improvement value for up to 15 years on real property taxes. A company must make an agreement with the local community prior to going forward with the qualifying project. Currently, the Village's municipal boundaries serve as a CRA.	Mixed Use (Spencer-Sharpley Planning Area)	Any Post-94 CRA community that requires mandatory school donation agreements and is marketed appropriately.
Conditional Development (Commercial)	This regulation is meant to provide more flexibility for construction site standards for non-residential development, and to encourage enhancement of community character with quality architectural design and aesthetic qualities. Calls for the preservation of significant natural features to the maximum extent possible.		Delaware, OH Delaware County, OH Rootstown Twp, OH Portage County, OH
Conservation Easements	A conservation easement allows landowners to voluntarily restrict their land to a specific use such as recreation, forestry or farming, or to buffer and protect vital natural amenities, in exchange for certain tax and financial benefits. The primary easement programs used in Ottawa County are: Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, Conservation Easements, and Flood Easements		Fairfield County SWCD Wayne County SWCD

Tool	Summary	Future Land Use Area	Best Practice Examples
Conservation Development	Model language with an emphasis on creating contiguous open space and protection of steep slopes and riparian areas. Yield plan used as basis for development intensity.		Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP) Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) 21st Century Land Development Code
Compact Development	Promotes a mixture of uses with pedestrian orientation. Sets standards for what types of uses will be on the first and second floors of buildings.	Mixed Use	Shaker Heights, OH Cleveland, OH Mantua, OH
Common Access Drives	Allows Common Access Drives to minimize and control access to lots that front public roads.	All Future Land Uses	Union County, OH Van Buren Twp, Hancock County, OH
Economic Development Agreements:	<p>Cooperative Economic Development Agreements (CEDA): CEDAs are authorized under ORC 701.07 and enables municipalities and townships to enter into agreements governing development activities in designated areas. CEDAs are not taxing authorities like JEDDs, and no income taxes are levied.</p> <p>Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD): A JEDD is an entity formed by contract to create funds for the advancing growth and economic development, typically through the levy an income tax. They are formed through a process of public hearings and public input. JEDDs allow a municipality to expand its tax base without annexing township territory and can produce the additional funds necessary for a township to serve growing commercial areas by receiving a share of income taxes levied in the zone or district. (Joint Economic Development Zones are no longer permitted to be formed.)</p>	Mixed Use Industrial / Planned Business Park	Canton, Canton Twp, OH Medina, York Twp, OH Violet Township and Canal Winchester, OH Springfield Twp, Hamilton County, OH Sycamore Twp, Hamilton County, OH Dayton / Miami Twp, OH
Economic Development Programs	<p>Provides economic and community development-related incentives and financial assistance to individuals, businesses and organizations to create and retain employment opportunities. Some of the most utilized economic development agencies / programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) through Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission and ODOG - Ottawa County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) through OCIC - Workforce Training Grant - Jobs Grants through Jobs Ohio - Jobs and Commerce Division - ODOT - Tax Increment Financing - SBA 7a and 504 Loan Programs - USDA-RD (B/I and REDLG Programs) 	Agriculture Commercial Industrial / Planned Business Park Mixed Use	N / A
Energy Special Improvement District (SIDs) and Property Assessed Clean Energy Financing	<p>Political subdivisions are authorized under ORC to create special energy improvement districts that offer property owners financing to install photovoltaic (PV) or solar-thermal systems on real property. Energy SIDs can also be formed as districts including noncontiguous property.</p> <p>Property Assessed Clean Energy financing can be used to establish funding for the improvements in an Energy SID. Rather than pay the projects' costs up front or as repayment of a loan, PACE allows property owners to pay the costs over time as special assessments due with their property tax bills.</p>	All Future Land Use Areas	Toledo Lucas County Port Authority Columbus Regional Energy SID
Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program	The Ohio EZ Program provides real property tax incentives for industrial-related businesses that expand or relocate. To secure benefits, businesses must apply to the local community, with final approval from the county commissioners. All of Ottawa County is located in Zone 146.	Agricultural Commercial Industrial / Planned Business Park	N / A
Environmental Overlay Districts and/ or Protection Tools	Overlay districts that are used to buffer, enhance, preserve or protect certain environmental or natural amenities or resources.	Agriculture Rural Residential & Conservation Industrial / Planned Business Park Mixed Use	Bath Twp.

Tool	Summary	Future Land Use Area	Best Practice Examples
Floodplain Overlay District	The purpose of Floodplain Overlay Districts is to reduce the potential for property damage and hazards to life caused by flooding. The regulations implement additional protections deemed locally-important and ensure consistency with the National Flood Insurance Program. Develops standards for locations of development and some additional standards for building integrity methods, and materials used for construction, and utilities standards.	All Future Land Uses	Springfield, OH Pittsburgh, PA Nashville, TN Loudoun County, VA
H2Ohio Programs	<p>The H2Ohio program is a State program that combines resources from the Ohio EPA, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), and the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA). The following projects can be funded through H2Ohio:</p> <p>H2Ohio Healthy Rivers Liveries Grant: Up to \$10,000 in grant money offered to canoe/kayak liveries registered with ODNR to address long-standing cleanup needs in rivers and streams.</p> <p>H2Ohio Wetland Grant Program: Provides up to 100% project funding for natural-infrastructure that focus on nutrient reduction and water quality improvements. Matching dollars are not required. Minimum \$50,000 with no cost cap on projects. The program can also cover indirect costs. 2-year maximum for project timeline. Funding is available to cities, villages, counties, townships, special districts such as park districts, joint recreation boards, or conservancy districts, as well as jointly-sponsored projects between political subdivisions and non-profit organizations.</p>	Rural Residential & Conservation Parks and Preserves	Martin's Run Wetland and Stream Restoration Project, Lorain, OH
Scenic / Visual Overlay Districts and Protection	<p>Protects and minimizes areas from visual and aesthetic pollution. Main tools are:</p> <p>Scenic Protection Overlay District: Creates an overlay district applied to highly utilized corridors. Design standards and regulations apply to uses that designate a permit or review process, also applies to disturbance or construction of certain sizes and time periods.</p> <p>Model Billboard Ordinance: Strengthens and clarifies city's and county's authority to regulate outdoor advertising. Can stand-alone or be incorporated in to local code. Contains permitted, prohibited, and exempted uses along with permit for off-site billboards. Contains design standards.</p> <p>Steep Slope Overlay District: Sets standards for how much of the property is required to be protected for new development based on the hill grade. Development approved on permit basis.</p> <p>Stormwater Management Overlay District: A stormwater management overlay is to protect existing properties and water quality by controlling water runoff from developed areas; to protect the environmental integrity of the existing wetlands; to preserve the water quality of wellhead protection areas, and to provide minimum design standards for storm water management facilities.</p> <p>Stream, Floodplain and Wetland Protection: Model Ordinance for the Establishment of Riparian & Wetland Setbacks. Provides stream and wetland setback regulations.</p> <p>Tree and Woodland Protection: Uses tree permits for removal, and necessitates a plan for tree preservation and management that accounts for design, protection during construction of new residences.</p> <p>Undermined Area Overlay District: Undermined Area Overlay District regulations are intended to reduce the risk of property damage and life that may be caused by developing over underground mines.</p>	All Future Land Uses	<p>Pittsburgh, PA Scenic Missouri Philipstown, NY Redmond, WA</p> <p>www.scenic.org</p> <p>Chagrin Falls, OH Cincinnati, OH Bath Twp, OH</p> <p>Anderson Twp, OH CRWP Hamilton County, OH Geauga County, OH Pittsburgh, PA</p> <p>CRWP TMACOG Licking County, OH Hudson, OH</p> <p>Olmsted Falls, OH Dublin, OH Brecksville, OH</p> <p>Pittsburgh, PA</p>

Tool	Summary	Future Land Use Area	Best Practice Examples
Lucas County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank)	The Land Bank is a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to reduce property blight by strategically acquiring properties and return them to productive use. The Land Bank is governed by a Board of five directors, including the county treasurer and two of the three county commissioners.	All Future Land Use Areas	Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Property Maintenance and Vacant Property Registration Resolutions	Property maintenance ordinances ensure that properties remain in a safe, sanitary and attractive condition. These regulations can be locally defined, but the primary goal is to minimize nuisances and issues that create a blighting effect in the community.	All Future Land Use Areas	Berea, OH International Property Maintenance Code
Special Improvement Districts (SIDs)	Authorized under ORC 1710, SID is a tool created within the boundaries of any one municipal corporation, any one township, or any combination of contiguous municipal corporations and townships for the purpose of developing and implementing plans for public improvements and public services that benefit the district.	Industrial / Planned Business Park Mixed Use	Lancaster, OH
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	A TIF is an economic development tool available to local governments to finance public infrastructure attributed to a community development-based projects. In certain circumstances, TIFs can be used for residential rehabilitation projects. The incremental and increased property tax revenue generated in the TIF district from the improvements is used to retiring the debt.	Pickerington, OH	Pickerington, OH
Transportation Improvement District (TID)	TIDs were created to promote intergovernmental and public-private cooperation by coordinating resources in transportation projects. Proposed projects are considered based on their ability to address at least one of the following needs: Economic Development, Safety, Preservation, or Capacity.	All Future Land Use Areas	TIDS are located throughout Ohio and managed by ODOT with county support.
Transportation and Connectivity Advancement Programs	<p>Provides grant funding for projects that promote and advance active mobility infrastructure. These programs are:</p> <p>Capital Improvement Program: These are the predominant sources of local funds. Local communities can set aside line items in the capital improvement budget for the construction of bicycle facilities.</p> <p>Developer Dedications: Developer dedications require the developer to construct bicycling facilities as a condition for enabling a project to occur, with a Development Agreement (DA) is usually negotiated with the landowners prior to the project proceeding.</p> <p>ODOT Systemic Safety Programs: Provides grant funding for projects that promote safety and mobility infrastructure</p>	All Future Land Use Areas	See ODOT's website for program specifics.
Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Programs	<p>Clean Trails Fund: Provides 75% match funds to local governments, park and joint recreation districts, conservancy districts, soil and water conservation districts, and non-profit organizations for community projects that will acquire trail corridors, build and improve trail infrastructure including regional trail systems, links to statewide trails, preservation of natural corridors and connections from urban areas to recreational areas.</p> <p>Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): Provides up to 50% reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.</p> <p>NatureWorks: Provides up to 75% reimbursement assistance for local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) to for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.</p> <p>Recreational Trails Program: Provides eligible entities with up to 80% grant funding for the development and improvement of non-motorized and motorized trails. Projects include the creation and maintenance of trails and trail support facilities, improved access for people with disabilities and education about trail safety and the environment.</p>	See ODNR's website for list of past grant awards.	See ODNR's website for list of past grant awards.

