

**Huron County
Comprehensive Land Use Plan
March 2017**

Huron County Board of Commissioners
Terry Boose
Joe Hintz
Skip Wilde



Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Huron County Demographics
Chapter 3	Economic Development
Chapter 4	Community Facilities, Services, and Quality of Life
Chapter 5	Land Use
Chapter 6	Natural Resources
Chapter 7	Transportation
Chapter 8	Utilities and Infrastructure
Chapter 9	Summary of Recommendations
	Maps

Chapter One

Introduction

What follows is a report originally developed in 2007 and was last revised in January 2017. The authors worked with numerous elected and appointed public officials in a process that involved information gathering, interviews, and policy decision making on a number of specific topics related to the future growth of Huron County. It is hoped that this comprehensive land use plan be utilized to manage future growth within Huron County so that cohesive patterns of development occur over the next thirty years.

A comprehensive land use plan is a planning tool for future growth or decline. In the case of Huron County it is hoped that the comprehensive land use plan be utilized to manage future growth. Most importantly, it can be used as a tool to address the constant change and evolution that occurs over a certain period of time in a community. Comprehensive land use plans are prepared to address compatibility issues between various uses of land, management and preservation of natural resources, identification and preservation of historically significant lands and structures, and adequate planning for infrastructure needs. In other instances, comprehensive plans are utilized to address issues related to schools, recreation, and housing.¹ Participants in the process should approach each of these issues by trying to ask the following three questions:

- What is to be **preserved**?
- What is to be **maintained**?
- And, What is to be **created**?²

In the case of Huron County the following issues were discussed:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Demographics; | • Natural resources; |
| • Economic development; | • Open space; |
| • Community facilities; | • Transportation; |
| • Services; | • Infrastructure; and |
| • Quality of life; | • Utilities. |
| • Present and future land use; | |

¹ Conglose, John B. Comprehensive Planning, CDFS-1269-99, Ohio State University Fact Sheet, Land Use Series Community Development, 700 Ackerman Road, Columbus, OH 43202-1578

The Land Use Planning Process for Huron County

The Huron County Commissioners established a Huron County Comprehensive Land Use Steering Committee in 2005. The contribution of the Steering Committee on shaping goals and recommendations, offering additional insights, reviewing and commenting upon the draft plan, chapter by chapter, was invaluable and irreplaceable.

The authors would like to thank the Board of Huron County Commissioners, along with village and township officials for working with us in the development of the plan, and for the opportunity to take part in this important project.

The members of the Steering Committee over the course of the development of the plan included the following, some of whom retired and were replaced during the process, and others who were added to provide additional expertise and new perspective:

2007 Huron County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Mike Adelman, Commissioner
Gary Bauer, Commissioner
Ralph Fegley, Commissioner
Jim Wiedenheft, Huron Co. Development Council
Joe Kovach, Huron County Engineer
B.J. Whitaker, County Auditor's office
Cary Brickner, Soil and Water Conservation District
Ed McConnoughey, Erie Basin RC&D
Bill Ommert, Huron County Emergency Management Agency
Carl Essex, Huron Co. Engineer's Office
Peg Baird, Fisher Titus Medical Center
Chris Raftery, Village of Monroeville
Russ Hetrick, SWCD
Robert Harris, New London Township

Lee Sparks, Norwalk Township
Michael Nottke, Lyme Township
Jerry Shoemaker, Village of Greenwich
Brian Humphress, City of Willard
Jeff Crosby, City of Bellevue
Dale Sheppard, City of Norwalk
Ken Knuth, Village of Monroeville
Fred Leber, Ridgefield Township
Patrick Cassidy, Village of New London
Shawn Tappel, Village of New London
Tim King, Collins, Erie County Planning Commission
Jack Jump, Huron County Health District
Roland Tkach, Huron County Treasurer/
Auditor
Tom Reese, Northern Ohio Regional Water

Huron County Comprehensive Land Use Revision (2015-2016)

The Huron County Commissioners approved a Resolution on June 16, 2015 to update the Land Use Plan. In this Resolution the Commissioners assigned this task to the Technical Review Committee to review and update the information displayed in the 2007 Land Use Plan. A technical review committee should reconvene five years after the approval date of the last revision to make corrections to this living document, as they see fit. The next review of the Land Use Plan should start in 2022.

2015 Technical Review Committee

Eric Cherry, Director of Environmental
Public Health
Gary Gillen, Engineering Manager
Lori Liles, P.C. Administrator

Jason Roblin, Huron County EMA
Chad Stang, P. C. Administrator
Mary Wilhelm, Deputy Auditor, Tax Map
Dept.

2015/2016 Contributions to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Carol Knapp, Director of Economic
Development
City of Norwalk
Village of Greenwich
Village of Monroeville
City of Willard
Village of New London
City of Bellevue

Village of Milan
Village of Wakeman
Village of Plymouth
Village of North Fairfield
Tom Reese, Northern Ohio Rural Water
Pete Welch, Huron County Director of
Operations

A Brief Profile of Huron County

Huron County is located in north central Ohio, within a rural area between the Cleveland and Toledo metropolitan areas. An area encompassing approximately 497 square miles was first designated as Huron County in 1815. The U.S. Government granted a half million acres of land from what was referred to as the Western Reserve to compensate those who had homes and properties burned out by British Troops during the American Revolutionary War. The area became known as the “Fire Sufferer’s Land” and later shortened to Firelands. The settlers who came to this area and were granted this land came from Connecticut. They fled from the towns of New Haven, New London, Ridgefield, Fairfield, Greenwich, and Norwalk. The settlers later named the communities in Huron County after these Connecticut towns.

The City of Norwalk is the county seat. With three cities, seven villages, and nineteen townships, the county has a variety of political subdivisions. While the county is primarily agricultural oriented, its population centers are home to numerous, sizeable industrial plants.

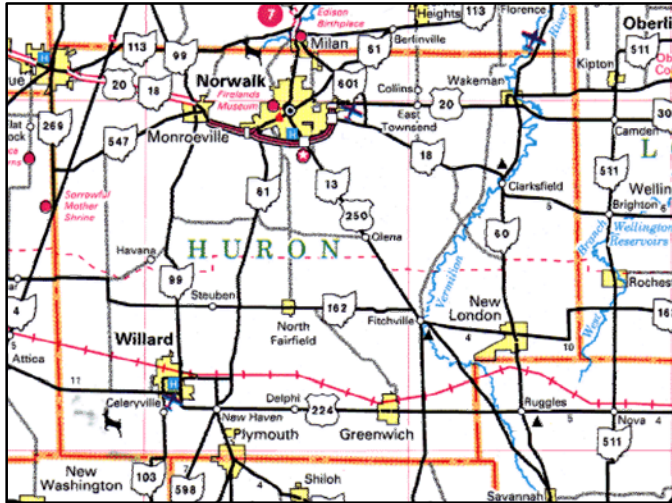
The railroad industry has played a major role in the growth and development of the county. Two national railroads operate major Midwest regional yard operations in the county. In Willard, where the community got its name from the founder of the B & O Railroad, there is a major east/west switching yard of the CSX Railroad. A major east/west switching yard of the Norfolk Southern Railroad is located in Bellevue.

Huron County is also on the southern fringe of the Lake Erie vacation area. The Cedar Point Amusement Park, a major destination point for travelers and tourists, is located fifteen miles north of Norwalk.

Agriculture still remains the king of the county economy, generating close to 70 million dollars into the Huron County economy annually. Most of the land in the county is in agricultural use, primarily growing the three main cash crops, which are corn, wheat and soybeans. Huron County continues to be one of the top counties in the state in terms of total farm income.

Chapter Two

Huron County Demographics



Huron County had 59,626 residents reported in the 2010 Census of Population. This was a 0.23 percent increase (139 more people) over the 2000 population of 56,487, and an 6.1 percent rise (3,386 people) over the 1990 population of 56,240.

Huron County's population density in 2010 was 120.9 persons per square mile, less than half the statewide average density of 282.3 persons per square mile, but a slight increase over the 2000 density of

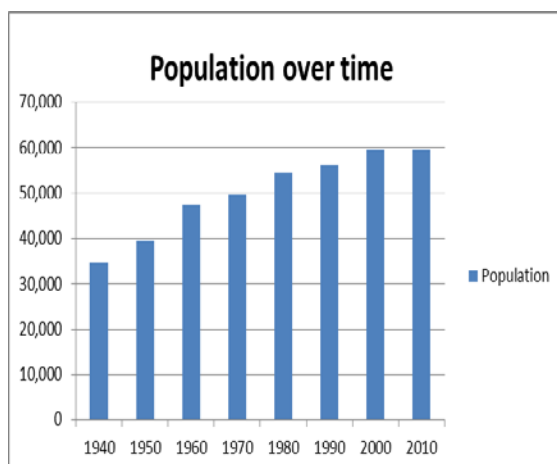
120.7 persons per square mile.

Historically, the county first recorded its population (6,675) in 1820. This doubled to 13,341 in 1830, slowly climbing to 32,330 in 1900. The population remained under 40,000 through the 1950 Census, when it was 39,353, then it took a significant jump to 47,326 in 1960. The increases were more marginal in the following decades, to 49,857 in 1970; 54,608 in 1980; 56,240 in 1990; 59,487 in 2000 and 59,626 in the most recent (2010) Census.

Table 1-1: Huron County Population

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	34,800	39,353	47,326	49,587	54,608	56,240	59,487	59,626
# Change		4,553	7,973	2,261	5,021	1,632	3,247	139
% Change		13.1	20.3	4.8	10.1	3.0	5.8	0.23

Source: U.S. Census of Population



Huron County has thus experienced continuous growth, with variation over time in the rate of growth. The 20 percent jump experienced in the “baby boom” 1950’s was followed by much slower growth in the following decade, and growth has slowed somewhat over the past twenty years.

To further analyze population changes

over the past three decades, one can review the components of change, as quantified in the following table:

Table 1-2: Components of Population Change, Huron County, 1980 to 2010

	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010
Births	9,041	9,045	13,681
Deaths	4,720	4,994	5,893

Table 1-3: Migration Estimates, Huron County

	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	2000-2010
Inmig	2,809	2,535	2,655	2,800	3,037	3,017	2,963	2,716	2,822	2,881	2,767
Outmig	2,567	2,618	2,669	2,588	2,664	2,649	2,872	2,907	2,946	2,805	3,678
Net	242	-83	-14	212	373	368	91	-191	-124	76	-911

Source: Ohio Department of Development

Combining the data from these two tables, it appears that births added 4,636; deaths added 899, in migration added 27,985, and out migration subtracted 30,963 from the county's total population.

Population by Age Cohort

The following table provides data on Huron County's population by age, for 2000 and 2010.

Table 1-4: Population by Age, 2000 and 2010

Age Cohort	Total Pop. 2000	Total Pop. 2010	% Change 2010	Male pop 2010	Female pop 2010
0-4	4,450	4,053	-8.9	2,052	2,001
5-9	4,720	4,176	-11.5	2,115	2,061
10-14	4,870	4,583	-5.8	2,355	2,228
15-19	4,320	4,337	+0.3	2,272	2,065
20-24	3,540	3,176	-10.2	1,591	1,585
25-29	3,850	3,431	-10.8	1,745	1,686
30-34	4,080	3,590	-12.0	1,765	1,825
35-39	4,560	3,749	-17.7	1,889	1,860
40-44	4,700	3,985	-15.2	1,966	2,019
45-49	4,200	4,488	+6.8	2,221	2,267
50-54	3,710	4,510	+21.5	2,218	2,292
55-59	2,830	4,043	+42.8	1,979	2,064
60-64	2,310	3,421	+48.0	1,704	1,717
65-69	2,080	2,482	+19.3	1,166	1,316
70-74	1,920	1,915	-0.2	904	1,011
75-79	1,510	1,512	+0.1	625	887
80-84	1,030	1,140	+10.6	464	676
85+	820	1,035	+26.2	340	695
Total	59,490	59,626	+1.4	29,371	30,255

Source: 2000, 2010 Census of Population, Ohio Department of Development

In general, Table 4 indicates increases for those aged 45 to 64, many of whom fall within the “Baby Boom” generation”, and decreases in immediately younger age cohorts from age 20 to 39. Also, the elderly age brackets from age 75 and beyond have increased.

Population by Jurisdiction

Table 1-5: Population by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Pop 2000	Pop 2010	% of County Total 2010	# Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010
Huron Co.	59,487	59,626	100.00	+139	+0.2
Municipalities					
Bellevue (pt)	3,841	3,673	6.1	-168	-4.3
Norwalk	16,238	17,012	28.5	+774	+4.7
Willard	6,806	6,236	10.4	+570	-8.3
Greenwich	1,525	1,476	2.4	-49	-3.2
Milan (pt)	420	363	0.6	-57	-13.5
Monroeville	1,433	1,400	2.3	-33	-2.3
New London	2,696	2,461	4.1	-235	-8.7
N. Fairfield	573	560	0.9	-13	-2.2
Plymouth (pt)	849	909	1.5	+60	+7.0
Wakeman	951	1,047	1.7	+66	+10.0
Townships					
Bronson	1,780	1,973	3.3	+193	+10.8
Clarksfield	1,518	1,625	2.7	+107	+7.0
Fairfield	711	1,218	2.0	+507	+71.3
Fitchville	1,012	1,056	1.7	+44	+4.3
Greenfield	1,442	1,374	2.3	-68	-4.7
Greenwich	954	1,044	1.7	+90	+9.4
Hartland	979	1,112	1.8	+133	+13.5
Lyme	968	853	1.4	-115	-11.8
New Haven	2,011	2,621	4.3	+610	+30.33
New London	744	807	1.3	+63	+8.4
Norwalk	3,265	3,591	6.0	+326	+9.9
Norwich	1,072	1,070	1.7	-2	-0.1
Peru	1,043	1,105	1.8	+62	+5.9
Richmond	1,111	1,102	1.8	-9	-0.8
Ridgefield	957	929	1.5	-28	-2.9
Ripley	943	1,024	3.3	+81	+8.5
Sherman	501	510	0.8	+9	+1.7
Townsend	1,567	1,623	2.7	+56	+3.5
Wakeman	1,577	1,684	2.8	+107	+6.7

Source: 2000 and 2010 Census of Population

Huron County is subdivided into nineteen Townships. It also encompasses two Cities (Norwalk and Willard) and a portion of a third City (Bellevue), as well as five Villages (New London, Greenwich, Monroeville, Wakeman, and North Fairfield) and portions of two more (Milan and Plymouth). The preceding Table 5 presents population by jurisdiction for 2000 and 2010. This helps establish where recent growth patterns have been most pronounced.

In absolute terms, the top gains in population took place in:

1. New Haven (610)
2. Willard (570)
3. Fairfield Township (507)
4. Norwalk Township. (326)
5. Bronson Township (193)

In terms of *percentage*, the five jurisdictions experiencing the highest proportion of population increase over the 2000's were these:

1. Norwalk City (+28.5%)
2. Willard City +10.4%)
3. Bellevue (+6.1%)
4. Norwalk Township (+6.0%)
5. New Haven Township (+4.3%)

Centers of population growth, and thus new residential development, appear to be New Haven Township, the second largest City (Willard), and Fairfield, Norwalk and Bronson Townships.

Race and Ethnicity

Table 1-6: Population by Race and Ethnicity, Huron County and Ohio

	# Huron Co. 2000	# Huron Co. 2010	% Huron County	% Ohio 2010
White	57,653	56,273	94.34	82.7
Black/African Am.	769	614	1.0	12.2
Am. Indian/Alaskan	658	237	0.4	0.2
Asian	203	195	0.3	1.7
Native Hawaiian/Pacific	22	0	0.0	0.0
Some other race	1,117	1,273	2.1	2.1
Hispanic or Latino	2,117	3,350	5.6	3.1

Source: 2000 and 2010 Census of Population

While Huron County is less diverse than Ohio in total, it is home to a significant Black population and a small mix of other racial backgrounds. The Hispanic/Latino population is most notable in that it has increased from 2,117 in the 2000 Census to 3,350 in the 2010 Census, an increase of 1,233, or 58.24 percent. Further, it is suspected that the 2010 totals have been exceeded considerably during the current decade. This trend follows national patterns in growth of this ethnic group, and this growth trend is projected to continue.

Households

Huron County was home to 25,166 households in 2010, an increase of 13.06 percent and 2,908 households from 22,258 in 2000. This increase in households (and thus the need for individual housing) expanded at a larger rate than the 0.23 percent increase in population over that same decade. Average household size decreased over the same period, from 2.64 persons per household in 2000 to 2.63 persons in 2010. Although it has decreased, this average household size of 2.63 still exceeds the state average of 2.57.

Increases of over 100 households in political subdivisions over the 2000's included 307 Fairfield Township, 610 in New Haven, 774 in Norwalk, 326 in Norwalk Township, and 193 in Bronson Township.

Table 1-7 Household by Type, Huron County

	# Huron 2000	# Huron 2010	% Huron 2010
Total Households	22,307	22,820	100%
Family Households (families)	16,225	16,141	70.7%
With own children under 18 years	8,095	7,140	31.3%
Married Couple Family	13,053	12,205	53.5%
With own children under 18 years	6,058	4,733	20.7%
Female householder, no husband present	2,316	2,776	12.2%
With own children under 18 years	1,519	1,737	7.6%
Nonfamily households	6,082	6,679	29.3%
Householder living alone	5,153	5,578	24.4%
Householder 65 years and over	2,159	2,292	10.1%
Households with individuals < 18 yrs.	8,686	7,992	35.0%
Households with individuals 65+ years	5,170	5,771	25.3%
Average Household Size	2.64	2.59	---
Average Family Size	3.11	3.05	---

Source: 2000 and 2010 Census of Population

Educational Attainment

Huron County is slightly behind the state in most educational arenas but significantly higher in high school graduates.

Table 1-8: Educational Attainment in Huron County

	# Huron County	% Huron County	% Ohio
Population 25 years +	39,481	100.0	100.0
Less than 9 th grade	1,759	4.7	3.2
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	4,830	12.2	7.8
High school graduate	19,468	49.3	34.2
Some college, no degree	7,511	19.0	20.5
Associate degree	2,788	7.1	8.2
Bachelor's degree	3,101	7.9	16.4
Graduate/prof. Degree	1,783	4.5	9.7
% HS grad or higher	---	88.0	89.0
% Bachelor degree or higher	---	13.1	26.1

Source: 2010 Census of Population

Population Projections

2014 Population projections reveal Sherman and Greenfield Townships unchanged while all other jurisdictions are projected to decline.

**Table 1-9: 2014 Projections by Local Jurisdiction
(based on 2010 population change)**

Municipality	2010	2014	%	Township	2010	2014	%
Bellevue (pt)	3,673	3,593	-0.5	Bronson	1,973	1,963	-0.1
Norwalk	17,013	16,898	-0.2	Clarksfield	1,625	1,607	-0.3
Willard	3,236	6,094	-0.5	Fairfield	658	639	-0.7
Greenwich	1,476	1,439	-0.6	Fitchville	1,056	1,033	-0.5
Milan (pt)	363	358	-0.3	Greenfield	1,374	1,372	0
Monroeville	1,400	1,377	-0.4	Greenwich	1,044	1,033	-0.2
New London	2,461	2,395	-0.6	Hartland	1,112	1,088	-0.5
N. Fairfield	560	542	-0.8	Lyme	853	842	-0.3
Plymouth (pt)	909	888	-0.5	New Haven	1,712	1,670	-0.6
Wakeman	1,047	1,038	-0.2	New London	867	789	-0.5
				Norwalk	3,590	3,513	-0.5
Huron Co.	59,626	58,714	-0.4	Norwich	1,070	1,056	-0.3
				Peru	1,105	1,086	-0.4
				Richmond	1,102	1,081	-0.5
				Ridgefield	929	927	-0.1
				Ripley	1,024	1,000	-0.6
				Sherman	510	511	0
				Townsend	1,623	1,602	-0.3
				Wakeman	2,731	2,676	-0.5

Table 1-10: County Population Projections

2020	2030	2040
58,740	56,950	55,500

Source: Projections based on 2010 Census data, and ODOD County-level population projections.

Chapter Three Economic Development



State and Regional Economic Development

Governor John Kasich created JobsOhio and dismantled the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) in February 2011. JobsOhio is a private, nonprofit corporation with the purpose of promoting economic development, job creation, job retention, job training and the recruitment of business to the State of Ohio. Ohio Revised Code Section 187.01 provides details of the creation and powers of JobsOhio.

The Ohio Department of Development's twelve economic development regions were redefined to six JobsOhio economic development regions. Huron County was part of the North Central region under ODOD. Huron County became a part of the 18-county Northeast Region serviced by TeamNEO which is based in Cleveland. The City of Bellevue is located in four counties (Huron, Erie, Sandusky, and Seneca) and was part of two JobsOhio economic development regions – the Northeast serviced by Team NEO and the Northwest serviced by the Regional Growth Partnership (RGP) based in Toledo. Bellevue's request to be in only one economic development region was granted by JobsOhio and the City joined the Northwest RGP region.

The Ohio Department of Development was renamed the Ohio Development Services Agency and provides some economic development functions in partnership with JobsOhio.

Local and Regional Economy

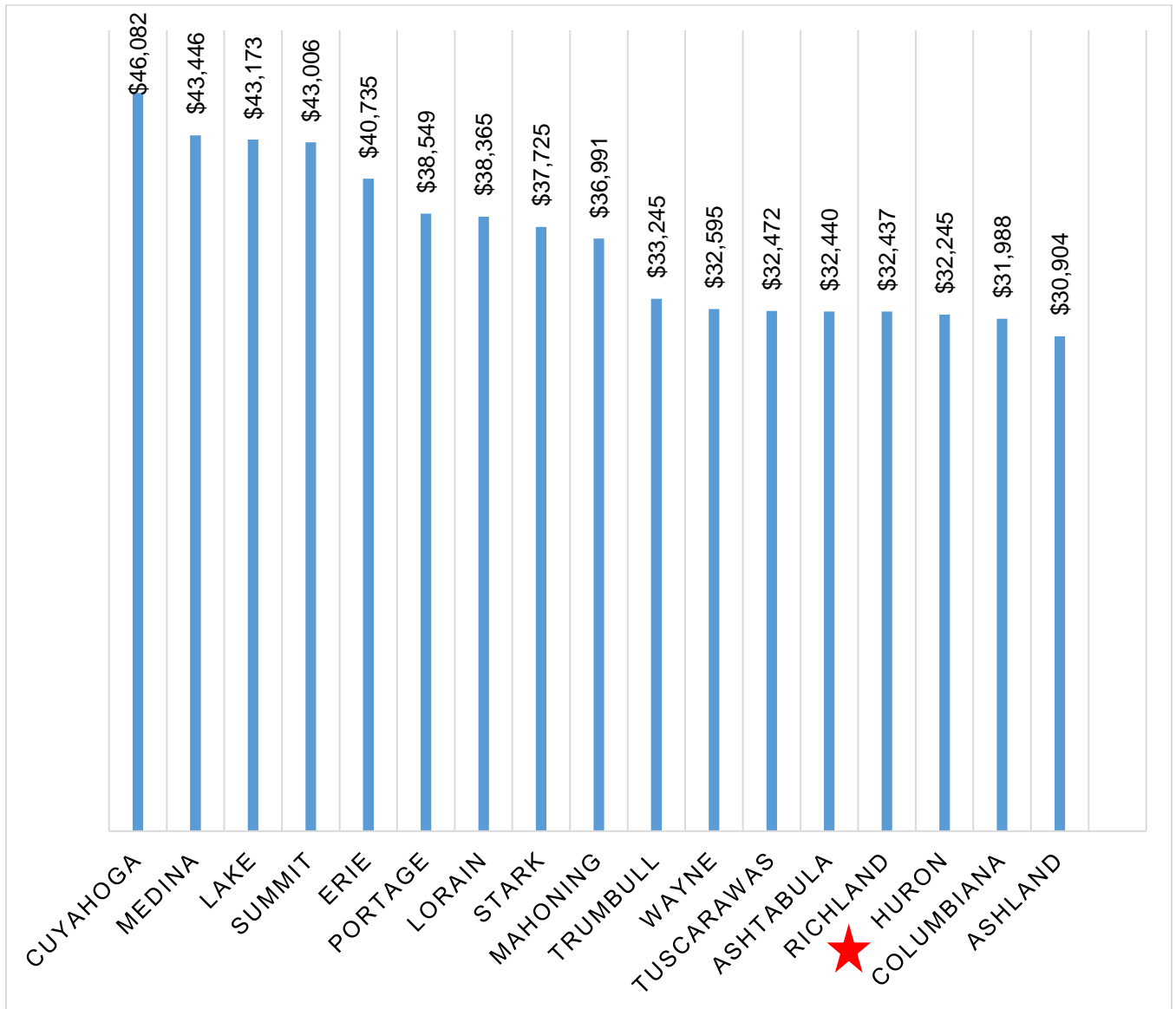
An analysis of the economies of the governmental entities within Huron County help to identify each community's economic strengths and weaknesses. A community's identified strengths can be capitalized on and identified weaknesses can be addressed by the community and turned into strengths.

Land use patterns and economic development are tied together in many ways. Businesses and manufacturers need land on which to build or expand their facilities. New facilities have specific infrastructure needs that local communities need to plan for and manage. Through careful planning, Huron County can prepare for future growth in a manner that does not impose a financial burden to the local government or residents.

Income Data – Huron County & the Northeast Region

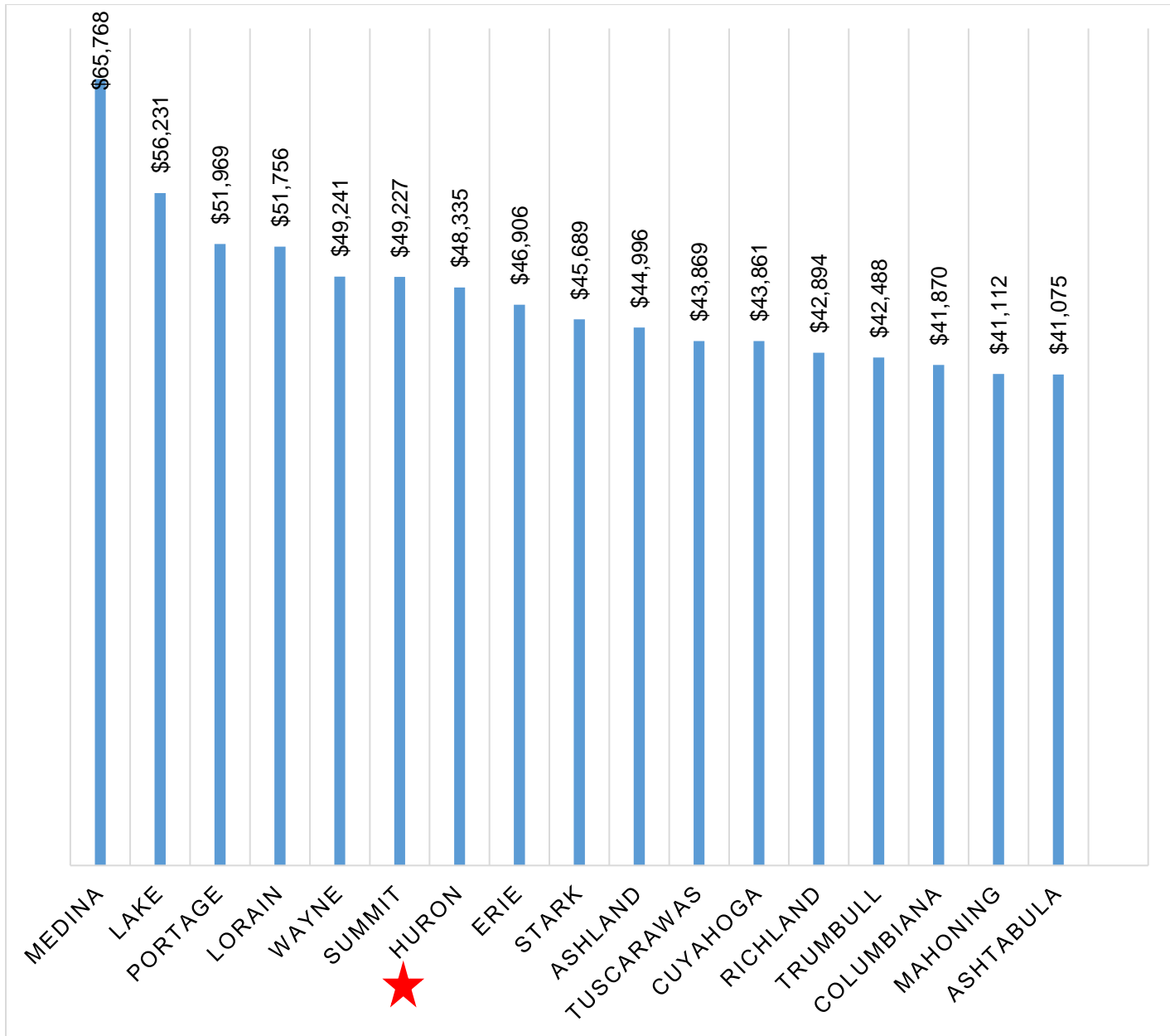
Huron County had a per capita income of \$32,245 in 2013. The following chart shows Huron County in comparison to the 18-county Northeast Region.

TEAM NEO/NORTH EAST REGION Per Capita Income Comparison by County



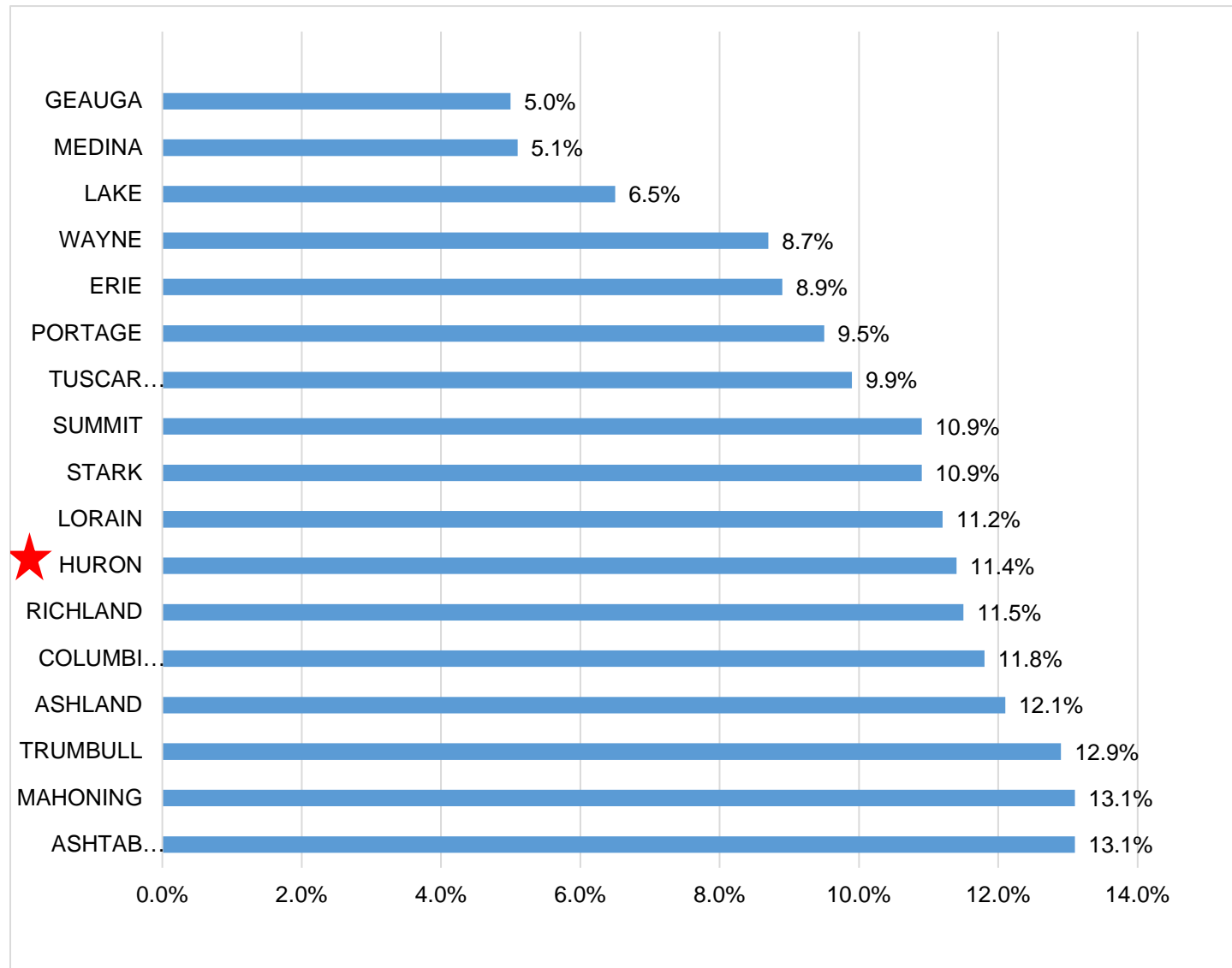
Huron County's median household income in 2013 was \$48,335. The following chart shows Huron County in comparison to our Northeast Region partners:

TEAM NEO/NORTH EAST REGION Median Household Income Comparison by County



11.4% of Huron County residents have income below the poverty level. The following chart shows Huron County in comparison to our Northeast Region partners:

TEAM NEO/NORTH EAST REGION Income Below Poverty Comparison by County



Employment, Wages, Industrial Sector – State, Region, and County

JobsOhio identified the driver industrial sectors in Ohio as:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Aerospace and Aviation
- Automotive
- Bio-Health
- Information Technology
- Shale Energy and Petrochemical
- Financial Services
- Food Processing
- Logistics and Distribution

Source: www.jobs-ohio.com

Team NEO's key industries are identified as:

- Aerospace and Aviation
- Automotive
- Biomedical/Medical Devices
- Food Processing
- Headquarters and Professional Services
- Instruments, Controls, and Electronics
- Metal Production and Fabrication
- Oil and Gas
- Polymers and Materials
- IT

Source: www.clevelandplusbusiness.com (Team NEO's website)

Huron County's business establishments, employment, and wages by sector for 2013 are identified as:

Industrial Sector	Number of Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wage
Private Sector	1,154	17,580	\$650,875,659	\$712
Goods Producing	249	7,697	\$352,441,625	\$881
Natural Resources & Mining	25	599	\$16,128,631	\$519
Construction	135	1,361	\$77,835,857	\$1,100
Manufacturing	90	5,737	\$258,423,135	\$866
Service Providing	904	9,883	\$298,434,036	\$581
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	286	3,449	\$111,680,047	\$623
Information	21	204	\$6,334,636	\$600
Financial Services	113	568	\$22,272,800	\$754
Professional & Business Services	136	771	\$27,068,967	\$675
Education & Health Services	110	2,654	\$100,868,623	\$731
Leisure & Hospitality	126	1,654	\$18,698,832	\$217
Other Services	112	584	\$11,495,892	\$378
Federal Government		136	\$6,670,800	\$943
State Government		73	\$3,624,465	\$955
Local Government		2,351	\$86,999,658	\$712
<i>Private Sector total includes Unclassified establishments not shown</i>				

Source: Huron County Profile

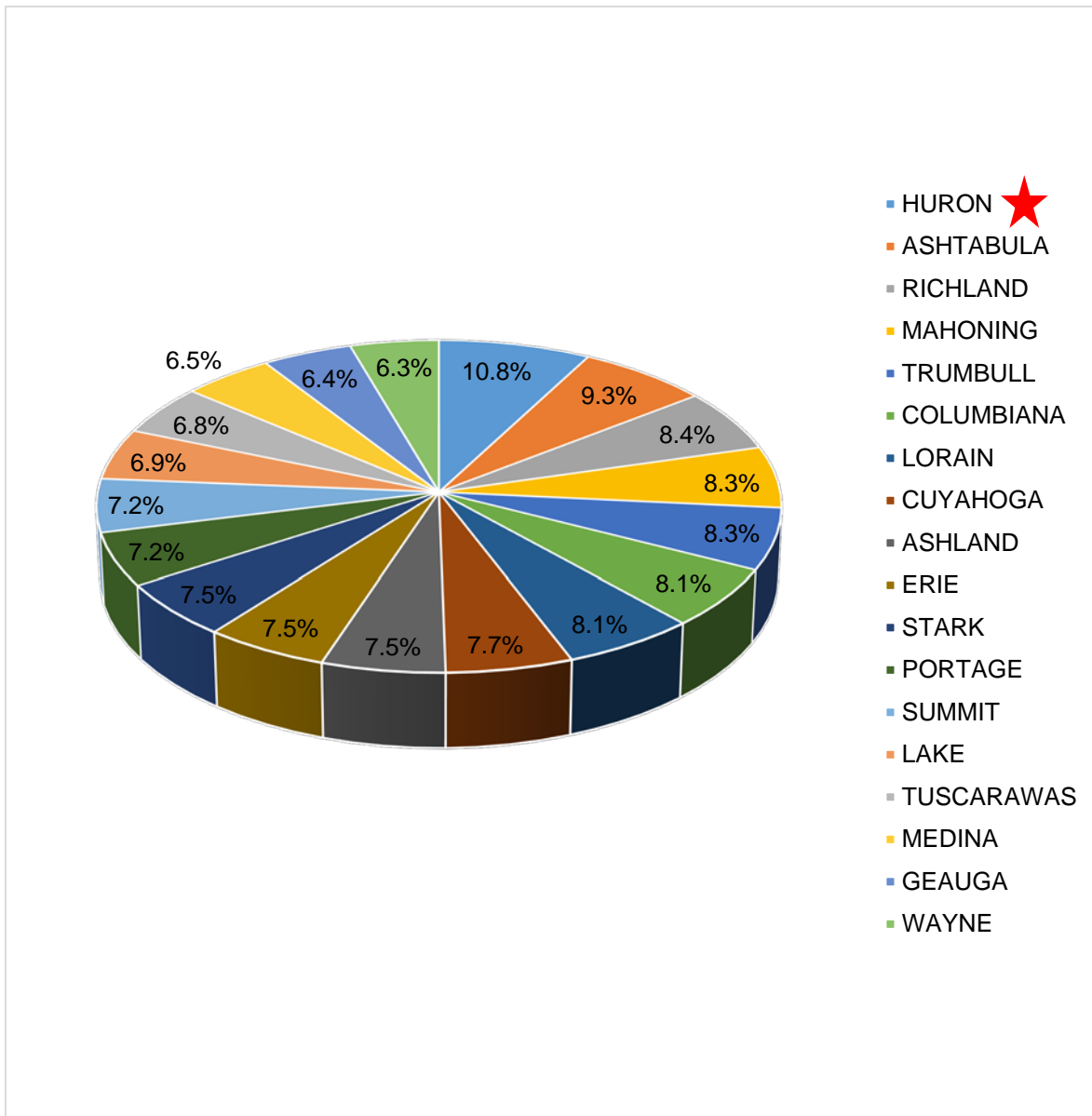
Huron County has 26,700 people in its civilian labor force. The county has experienced high unemployment rates for a number of years with a 10.8% unemployment rate at the time of this report. Huron County's average number of employees is 17,793. The average weekly wage in Huron County is \$700.

The following graphs and tables illustrate how Huron County compares to the other counties in the Northeast Economic Development Region.

TEAM NEO/NORTH EAST REGION Civilian Labor Force Comparison by County

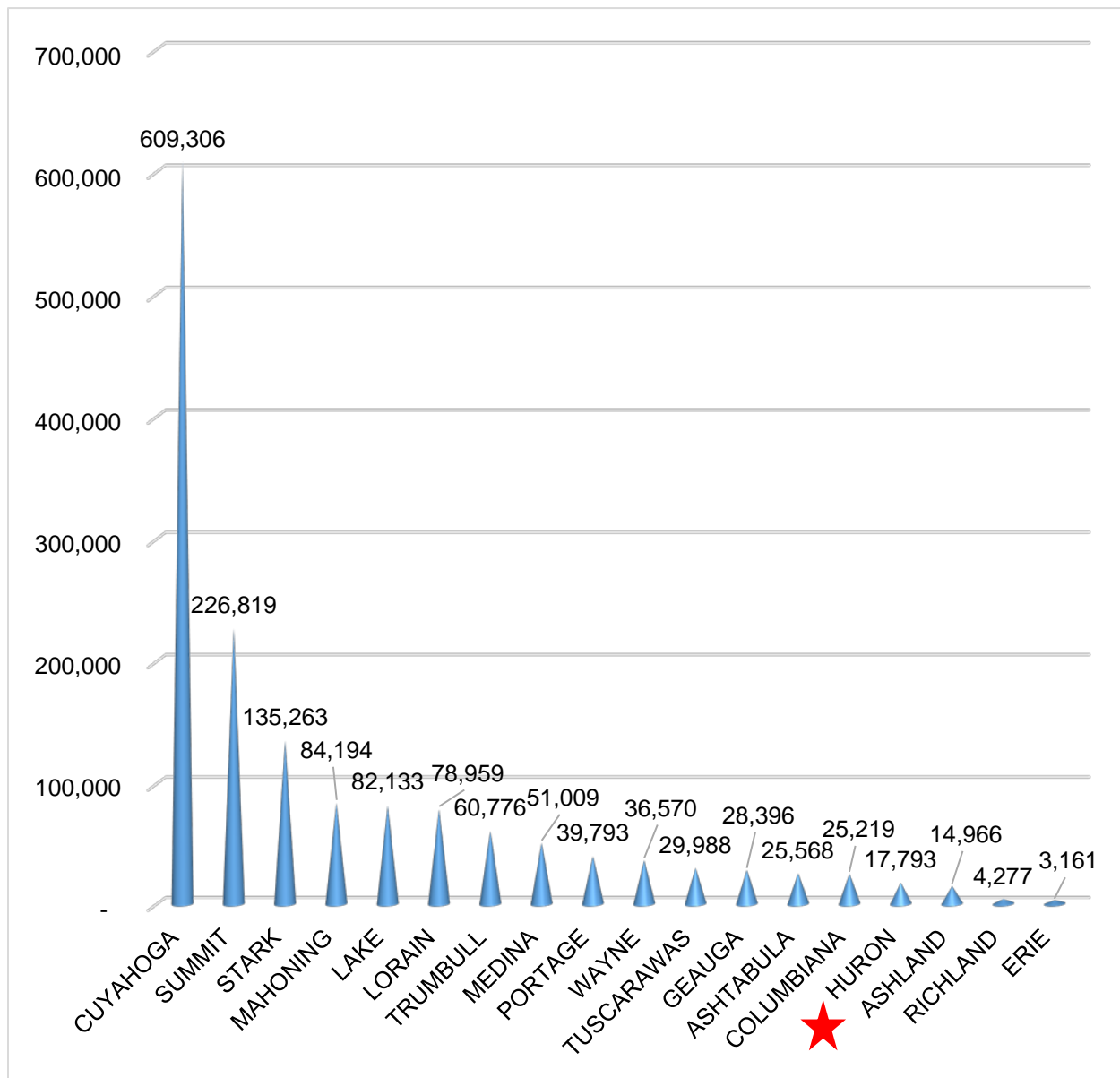
Cuyahoga	620,400
Summit	280,300
Stark	187,200
Lorain	155,400
Lake	128,000
Mahoning	110,200
Trumbull	99,300
Medina	95,100
Portage	90,600
Wayne	57,500
Richland	56,700
Columbiana	51,100
Geauga	49,400
Tuscarawas	47,200
Ashtabula	46,600
Erie	40,700
Huron	26,700
Ashland	26,500
Total	2,168,900

TEAM NEO/NORTH EAST REGION Unemployment Rates Comparison by County



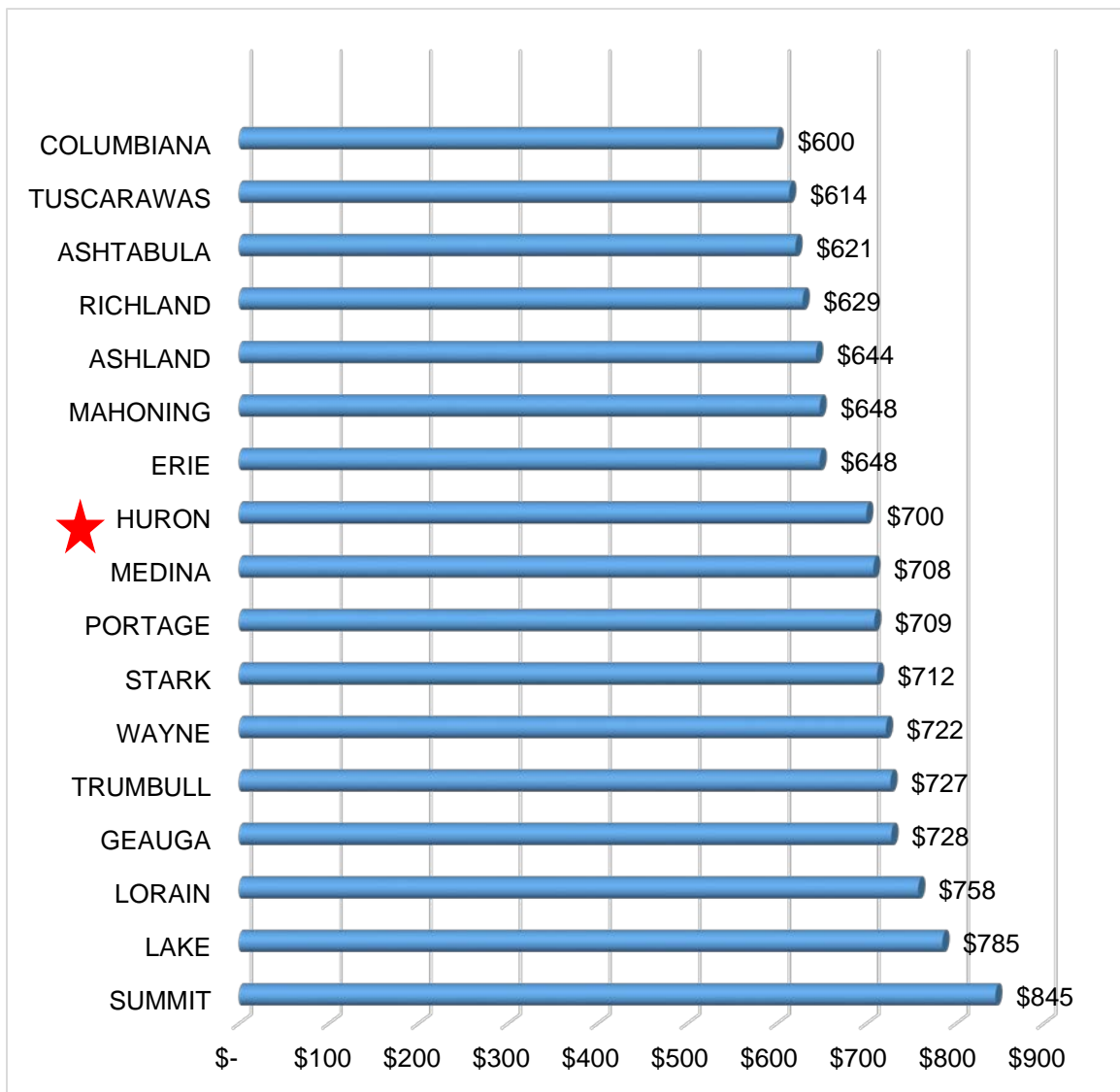
TEAM NEO/NORTH EAST REGION

Average Number of Employees Comparison by County



TEAM NEO/NORTH EAST REGION

Average Weekly Wages Comparison by County



TOP TWENTY EMPLOYERS IN HURON COUNTY

EMPLOYER	LOCATION	INDUSTRY SECTOR
Fisher Titus Medical Center	Norwalk	Hospital – Health Services
MTD Products/Midwest Industries	Willard	Manufacturing – Outdoor Equipment
R. R. Donnelley & Sons	Willard	Manufacturing – Printing
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Bellevue	Transportation – Railroad
Pepperidge Farm Incorporated	Willard	Manufacturing – Food Products
CSX Transportation	Willard	Transportation – Railroad
Huron County Government	Norwalk	Government
Venture Packaging/Berry Plastics	Monroeville	Manufacturing - Plastics
Norwalk City Schools	Norwalk	Education
R & L Carriers	Norwalk	Transportation – Trucking
Walmart	Norwalk	Retail
Oglesby Construction	Norwalk	Construction
Norwalk City	Norwalk	Government
Mercy Health Willard Hospital	Willard	Hospital – Health Services
New Horizons Baking Company	Norwalk	Manufacturing – Food Products
Norwalk Custom Order Furniture	Norwalk	Manufacturing – Furniture
Wilbert Plastic Services, Inc.	Bellevue	Manufacturing – Plastics
Windsor Mold (Autoplas)	Bellevue	Manufacturing - Automotive
Bunge North America	Bellevue	Manufacturing – Food Products
Janotta & Herner	Monroeville	Construction

POLICY STATEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Promote Huron County as a single location for development, understanding that communities and sites within the county may compete for a business, but that locating the business within the county is a “win” for all of the county.
2. Zoning should help guide industrial, commercial, and service businesses to appropriate and targeted locations based on their intensity of use, and impact on adjacent and nearby uses and infrastructure (water, sewer, roadway). Zoning is helpful in this regard in municipalities and in unincorporated areas. Encourage consistency in zoning throughout the county’s townships and municipalities wherever feasible, particularly within adjacent jurisdictions. Additionally, encourage townships to develop uniformity within their zoning codes.
3. Slow, steady growth is projected for the County. Over the next twenty years, the need for additional land for industrial development is likely. Such use should be guided to existing or future identified sites and industrial parks. County and local officials should also make

provision for the assembly of large sites, to be able to respond to larger prospective projects. Maintain a countywide database of prime locations (buildings, sites, and industrial parks) for industrial development, housed at the Huron County Development Council.

4. When industrial site needs cannot be satisfied by existing available buildings or sites within municipalities, land which is adjacent to or in close proximity to those municipalities should be given highest priority. A major reason is the availability or low development cost of infrastructure extensions, proximity to employment bases, and orderly growth considerations. Priority sites should also be located adjacent to or in close proximity to appropriate transportation routes (highway and rail), corridors, and intersections.
5. Provision of municipal services to new industrial sites as described in #4 above can be provided through annexation. Affected local jurisdictions (municipality and township) may pursue the creation of a Joint Economic Development District or Cooperative Economic Development Agreement.
6. Regardless of the pursuit of new business ventures, primary emphasis should be placed on the retention and expansion of existing businesses. Efforts should be made to accommodate expansions of businesses at their current sites whenever feasible.
7. Huron County is located at the fringe of the Lake Erie tourism region, which continues to grow in stature as a major destination. While Huron County's position may be considered secondary, its proximity to the lakefront counties and several destinations (such Summit Motorsports Park) help position it for a moderate level of tourism related development. Encourage tourism-related business that benefits from the county's rural, natural, and historic assets, but which does not exploit or denigrate those resources. Use the county's existing network of Chambers of Commerce and other business associations to promote tourism throughout the county.
8. Encourage and develop programs, services, and incentives that maintain Huron County's competitive advantages for business growth. These may include workforce development, financial incentives, adequate utilities, logistics for distribution of products, entrepreneurial development and counseling, and other assistance. One business amenity that is needed within the county is a facility to house business meetings ranging from small functions to larger (several hundred people) meetings.
9. Maintain an economy of scale in supporting and coordinating local efforts and development organizations with the countywide Huron County Development Council.
10. Support Huron County's agricultural sector, which is the primary land use in the county, by taking steps to preserve farmland and minimize its loss, and by seeking complementary businesses such as value added food processing and large scale farming operations if they conform to standards of health and environmental integrity.
11. Encourage the continuous improvement of information and communications technology to ensure that Huron County is a competitive location for technology-based business. Take steps to proactively position Huron County and its communities for emerging technologies.

12. Facilitate commercial and industrial development through maintenance of a business-friendly permitting and inspection process. Explore alternatives to the existing use of an outside commercial inspection and plan approval process (through Richland County), including initiation of a Huron County office, if such an office can be self-sustaining, or dedicated staff operating from another entity (i.e. Richland County, Erie County/Sandusky).
13. Preserve those features that set Huron County apart as a business location with a desirable quality of life. Such features include:
 - a. Open space and recreational opportunities
 - b. Leisure activities, including access to water, golf, walking trails, and other amenities.
 - c. Outstanding generalist and specialist health care facilities and professionals.
14. Huron County has organized a task force to look at problems and the future plans for building regulations for commercial development throughout the county. The plumbing is being handled by the State of Ohio. There have been no complaints regarding this service up to now. The task force is recommending no changes at the present time.

The commercial building, electrical and code compliance division is currently being handled by the Richland County Building Regulations Department in Mansfield. Expansions in job responsibilities have adversely affected the quality of work performed for Huron County resulting in many issues being raised by builders, contractors and various public officials from throughout the county. It is recommended by the task force that the County look at the option of creating its own Commercial Building Regulations department or contract with another county or organization that can provide these services. A local, county-wide commercial regulations department would allow for more control, accountability, and more efficient service to Huron County businesses and industries which will create a positive impact on economy development.

Chapter Four : Quality of Life

Community Facilities, Services and Quality of Life

Community facilities and services are crucial to maintaining the quality of life for all citizens of Huron County. The Community Facilities, Services and Quality of Life section of the Huron County Land use Plan provides a brief overview of some of the various facilities and services that are available throughout the county along with a list of policy statements that are intended to serve as a guideline to enhance the quality of life throughout the county. An overview of the education systems that serve Huron County, along with libraries, parks and recreation areas, and health care facilities is provided. Data was obtained from various sources including interviews with various public officials throughout the county, annual reports, U.S. Census data and various other data sets.

Education

All or part of eleven public schools districts, two joint vocational school districts and various private and parochial schools serve Huron County. Table 4-1 provides a list of the public school systems that serve the County.

Table 4-1: Public School Systems

School District	Area Served
Bellevue City Schools	Bellevue, Lyme Township, Sherman Township
Berlin Milan Schools	Milan, Norwalk, Norwalk Township
Buckeye Central Local School District	Parts of Richmond Township
Firelands Local School District	Parts of Wakeman Township
EHOVE Joint Vocational School District	Bellevue, Edison, Monroeville, New London, Norwalk, St. Paul, South Central, Western Reserve
Monroeville Local Schools	Monroeville, Norwalk, Bronson Twp., Lyme Twp., Norwalk Twp., Peru Twp., Ridgefield Twp.
New London Local School District	New London, Clarksfield Twp., Fairfield Twp., Fitchville Twp., Hartland Twp., New London Twp.
Norwalk City School District	Norwalk, Bronson Twp., Norwalk Twp.
Plymouth-Shiloh Local School District	Plymouth, New Haven Twp.
Pioneer Career and Technology Center	Plymouth-Shiloh, Willard
Seneca East Local School District	Norwich Twp., Richmond Twp., Sherman Twp.
South Central Local School District	Greenwich, North Fairfield, Fairfield Twp., Greenfield Twp., Greenwich Twp., Ripley Twp.
Wellington Exempted Village	Parts of Clarksfield Twp.
Western Reserve Local School District	Parts of Norwalk, Wakeman, Bronson Twp., Clarksfield Twp., Hartland Twp., Norwalk Twp., Townsend Twp., Wakeman Twp.
Willard City School District	Willard, Greenfield Twp., New Haven Twp., Norwich Twp., Richmond Twp.

Source: <http://www.ode.state.oh>

There are approximately 30 public school facilities located throughout the County. Between 2000 and 2007 Norwalk, New London, South Central and Western Reserve school districts constructed new facilities. Plymouth-Shiloh Local Schools and Willard City Schools have constructed new facilities within the past eight years.

Libraries

The citizens of Huron County are served by eight public libraries, five of which are full service public libraries and three that are considered branch libraries that are limited in the scope of services. The Willard library system is now a part of the Huron County Community Library along with the branch locations in Greenwich, North Fairfield and Wakeman. In November of 2015 the Willard library began an expansion. Bellevue Public Library recently completed a major expansion of its library as well.

Table 4-2: Public Libraries

Bellevue Public Library
Monroeville Public Library
New London Public Library
Norwalk Public Library
Huron County Community Library – Willard Location
Huron County Community Library – Greenwich Branch
Huron County Community Library – North Fairfield Branch
Huron County Community Library – Wakeman Branch

Source: The Ohio Public Library Information Network Website
<http://www.oplin.org>

The five full service libraries are facilities that were part of the Carnegie Free Public Library system that was initiated in the early part of the twentieth century. The three branch libraries are smaller facilities which are also newer. Norwalk Public Library purchased an adjacent storefront property, and long-term plans may include using the additional space to expand facilities and services.

Parks and Recreation Areas

There are an abundance of parks and recreation opportunities within the confines of Huron County. Most all of the communities operate and maintain park and recreation facilities. A complete inventory of park facilities is currently not available for Huron County but a number of significant public park facilities are listed in alphabetical order below in Table 4-III.

Table 4-3: Community and Regional parks in Huron County

Park	Community Location
Baines Athletic Field	Norwalk
Huron County Land Laboratory	Huron County (Norwalk Twp)
Mary Fate Park	Plymouth
McGuan Park	Norwalk
Memorial Lake Park	Norwalk
Mill Pond Park	Bellevue
Monroeville Community Park	Monroeville
New London Recreation Park	New London
New London Reservoir Park	New London
Reservoir Park	Greenwich
Whitney Park	Norwalk
Sofios Park	Norwalk
Willard City Park	Willard
Willard Marsh Wildlife Preserve	Celeryville area
Willard Reservoir	Willard
Veterans Memorial Park	Huron County (Norwalk)

Note: This is not a complete inventory of park and recreation sites within Huron County.

There have been previous efforts to create a county wide park district. The fledgling organization was created in 1995 and has identified several sites throughout the county that will be developed into passive recreational areas. Two such sites are the Veterans Memorial Park on Shady Lane which is a scenic park area with a walk way, fitness trail and memorials to county veterans located within the County government complex. A second park located on South Norwalk Road has been identified as the Huron County Park District Land Laboratory which is a scenic area of land that was donated to the county that is wooded, has a nature trail system and is utilized by various schools as an area to study science, biology and nature.

Hospitals

Citizens of Huron County have the benefit of being served by two general hospitals located within the county and a number of other hospitals located in close proximity to the county. Within an hour drive outside the county residents can take advantage of specialized healthcare services. Services at the Cleveland Clinic along with health care services in the Toledo and Columbus area are also available.

As Huron County's largest health care facility, Fisher-Titus Medical Center in Norwalk Serves Huron County and the region with the latest medical advancements providing the area's residents a full continuum of care that includes Fisher-Titus Memorial Hospital, a 99-bed acute care hospital; Norwalk Memorial Home, a 69-bed skilled nursing facility; The Carrage House of Fisher-Titus, a 48-unit assisted living facility; a Home Health Center and Outpatient Services. Fisher-Titus also has an "extensive network" of satellite facilities throughout the county to provide residents with convenient/local access to care in their own communities. Through clinical affiliations with the Cleveland Clinic and Akron Children's Hospital, Fisher-Titus is able to provide a variety of specialized services right here in Huron County.

Residents in the southern portion of the county can be served by Mercy Health –Willard Hospital in the city of Willard. This brand new facility that opened in 2012 is a 101,000 sq. ft. community hospital committed to providing excellent health care services to its patients and families. The hospital offers all private rooms to area residents who benefit from excellence in personalized inpatient, outpatient, and emergency care. As a member of Mercy Health, Mercy Health - Willard is linked to a comprehensive range of primary and critical care health services including Life Flight. Mercy Health is a not-for-profit health system in Northwest Ohio dedicated to improving the health of people in its communities with emphasis on its 150-year mission of caring for all in need.

The city of Bellevue is located in the northwestern part of Huron County. Bellevue has the distinction of being situated in four counties – Huron, Seneca, Sandusky, and Erie. The Bellevue Hospital is physically located within the Sandusky County portion of the City of Bellevue north of U.S. Route 20 and Township Road 302 at 1400 W. Main Street.

The Bellevue Hospital opened the doors of their new replacement facility on March 13, 2005. The hospital primarily serves the Bellevue and Clyde communities and areas to the west as far away as Fremont, Ohio. The Bellevue Hospital works cooperatively with the Huron county hospitals and healthcare organizations, including the Huron County Health Department. The hospital has 50 inpatient beds, 35 outpatient beds, 11 exam rooms and two trauma rooms.

Social Services

A full line of social services is provided by the various agencies both public and private that serve the county. Interviews and overviews of available resources indicate that access to these various services are more of a problem to the residents of the southern portion of the county than those to the north. This is typical to most rural less densely populated areas. This is due to the lack of personal transportation options for many of those that need served. Agency representatives continue to make available and explore other ways to make these services available to all residents of the county by bringing services to the public instead of the public having to travel to centrally located offices. Huron County Transit does offer county wide transportation for a minimal fee Monday through Friday 7:00 am to 6:30 pm.

Policy Statements and Recommendations

The following policy statements were developed and adopted by the steering committee that has overseen the development of this plan. They form the basis of the Community Facilities, Service and Quality of Life recommendations made within the plan.

27Public Facilities

1. Continue to develop public facilities that are based on a solid plan.
2. Ensure that all public facilities are easily accessible to all persons, placed in desirable locations, properly maintained and operated in a cost effective manner.
3. Enhance city and county parks, reservoirs, and other surface water. An Effort should be made to conduct a thorough inventory throughout the County.
4. Encourage Intergovernmental collaboration.
5. Facilitate the development of needed facilities, seeking a balance of public and private facilities, based on a needs assessment and inventory of current facilities.

Quality of Life

6. Promote Huron County as a place to live, work, shop, obtain services, and pursue leisure activities.
7. Include consideration of all residents in an effort to maintain and/or improve the quality of life in the county.
8. Preserve what truly is a peaceful quality of life.
9. Balance the effect that small town life and affordable land cost will continue to draw people to Huron County with the resulting increased demands on services.

Services

10. Consider outsourcing County services if it would be a relatively costs effective alternative that would maintain or increase the level of service.
11. Meet the service needs of planned expanded growth areas and industrial areas.
12. Provide the taxpayer with the best quality services at the lowest possible cost.
13. Maintain and/or improve the services provided to the residents of the county.
14. Any new county government facilities should be planned with accessibility to all Huron county citizens in mind.
15. Senior centers currently exist in Willard and Norwalk; Bellevue has its own organization that meets at the Bellevue Community Center. Due to changing demographics communities should be encouraged to expand existing and develop new services and facilities.
16. There is a need for meeting facilities that can be used by public and private Organizations for gatherings. Currently, facilities cannot adequately accommodate large gatherings of several hundred people.

Chapter Five

Present and Future Land Use

Present Land Use

Land use patterns described in general terms within Huron County are consistent with typical rural counties in the Midwestern part of the United States. There are cities, in the case of Huron County there are two and a portion of a third, and a number of villages within the county that are located along major highway corridors. Most residential, commercial and industrial development is located within these communities. The higher density development is located along the highway corridors within the communities. Scattered residential and some commercial development occurs along highway corridors between cities and villages while agriculture is the major land use in the outlying areas.

Huron County consists of 317,614 acres. According to the Ohio Department of Development, in 2014 12,228.14 acres of this total is urbanized or used for residential, commercial and industrial development. The vast majority, 224,965.99 acres are used for cropland. There is also a significantly large amount of acres that are considered open space, which includes wooded land, shrub or scrub areas, open water, non-forested wetlands. A breakdown of this acreage by various land use categories is provided below:

Table 5-1 Land Cover

Type of Cover	Acres (Percent)
Total	317,614.5 (100.0%)
Urban (open, impervious surfaces)	12,228.14 (3.85%)
Cropland	224,965.99 (70.83%)
Pasture	25,694.97 (8.09%)
Forest	51,898.13 (16.34%)
Open Water	2,382.11 (0.75%)
Wetlands (Wooded/Herbaceous)	444.66 (0.14%)

Source: ODOD, Office of Research

Residential

Residential development has maintained a steady pace of growth over the past ten years. This growth is primarily being influenced by the desire of many more people moving from surrounding urban areas outside of the county into the smaller communities in comparison that are located in Huron County. Residents of Huron County have been able to maintain an affordable life style in a rural setting with good school environments and reasonable housing costs. Huron County is also reasonably close to metropolitan areas which enable residents to enjoy the amenities of a more urban environment within as short as an hour in some cases from home. This is an attraction to those wanting to move into a more rural setting. As a result, almost every community within Huron County has experienced some increase in housing development over the past five to ten years. Just about every community has seen an expansion or renovation of education facilities due mainly because

of the aging and conditions of existing school facilities but also because of the influx of new students into community school systems.

The City of Norwalk appears to be experiencing the most significant increase of residential development with several new subdivisions under construction, one of which is a mixed use 600 plus unit housing development on the north west side of the city. This new subdivision is also in close proximity to the major U.S. 250 retail and service corridor. Every community in the County currently has an active subdivision. On average a total of 200 new housing units are being constructed within the cities and villages throughout the county over the past three years.

Housing development in the rural townships within the county presents another significant trend that is occurring in most rural areas of not only Ohio but most parts of the Midwest. That is the construction of large lot single-family homes that are in previously undeveloped and in most cases previously farmed areas. Although not occurring at as alarming of a pace in Huron County as in other parts of the state, there continues to be an average of 200 new homes constructed in this manner each year throughout the county according to Huron County Health District records. Taking the amount of acreage that is being converted from open space, forest or agricultural uses into consideration, there appears to be an alarming loss of more passive, pristine land uses at the expense of single family housing that is occurring in the rural areas of the county.

If you take into consideration the fact that each of these large lot single family homes are utilizing from 3 to 5 acres of land, the total amount of land taken from open space, forest and farm production is averaging approximately 300 to 500 acres each year. This is an alarming trend that will have significant impacts in the future of the county. It is perhaps the most significant trend that is impacting land use issues in the county.

Commercial

Huron County has historically been somewhat underserved in the retail, commercial, and professional services sectors. People living in the northern part of the county tend to travel to Sandusky for these needs while people living in the southern portion of the county travel to Ontario. Over the years, this trend has started to change with increasing investment in commercial, retail, and service establishment within the county. Most of this development has occurred along the major highway corridors, particularly in the Norwalk and Willard areas. Commercial development has occurred throughout the entire county but not to the extent as these two cities.

This trend is expected to continue since the retail and service market is far from saturated throughout Huron County. It is expected that opportunities for commercial and service-oriented real estate investment will continue. Shop local campaigns throughout the region encourage citizens to make their purchases from local businesses. Also, with fluctuating transportation costs, travelers are remaining closer to home in their quests for goods and services.

The commercial growth corridors have been identified as:

- US Route 250 in Norway, north from League Street to Milan. This area is expected to continue to be developed as property is marketed for commercial use. Roadway improvements have taken place to accommodate additional traffic.
- US Route 224 through Willard. This route has experienced significant growth over the years. The corridor has emerged as the commercial center for the southwestern portion of the county.
- US Route 20 between Bellevue and Monroeville. Although this corridor has not experienced the degree of commercial growth as the Route 250 and 224 corridors, it does offer potential commercial and service business development. This potential for development increased significantly due to upgrades to the State Route 4 and US Route 20 intersection and developed interchange of the Ohio Turnpike to the north. Seasonal Lake Erie traffic adds to this potential as well.
- Village corridors include US Route 224 through Greenwich, State Route 162 and 60 through New London, US Route 20 through Monroeville and Wakeman, and State Route 61 through Plymouth.

Industrial

The majority of the industrial development throughout Huron County has occurred within the corporation limits of the municipalities. Designated industrial parks and industrial zoning regulations within the three cities and seven villages of the county provide for industrial growth in these designated areas.

Industrial sites and buildings available in Huron County include:

- Bellevue – International Metal Hose Industrial Park: 41 acres
- Monroeville – Fort Monroe Industrial Park: 45 acres
- New London – White Industrial Park: 43 acres
- Norwalk –
 - Norwalk Commons - 1 building 7 acres
 - Firelands Industrial Park - 3 buildings 15 acres
 - Commerce Fields Industrial Park- 36 acres
 - Other - 4 buildings- 25.7 acres
- Willard –
 - Willard Business & Industry Campus-2 buildings 38 acres
 - Other - 2 buildings

To address the shrinking inventory of available buildings and sites throughout the State of Ohio, JobsOhio rolled out the Ohio InSites Certification Program in 2016. This program provides the opportunity for sites over 30 acres to become certified and significantly increases the marketability of the properties. Huron County opted into the program submitting five sites for possible certification. Two properties were submitted in Norwalk, two properties in Willard, and one property in Monroeville. These larger acreage sites have the potential to be developed into Industrial Parks by their respective communities. Private investors/developers continue to consider Industrial Park developments as well.

The Huron County Development Council (the county's designated economic development organization) maintains the state's database of available buildings and sites on behalf of Huron County communities.

Agricultural

Huron County is one of the leading counties in the state in terms of agricultural production and gross receipts from agricultural production. As was previously mentioned almost 80 percent of the land area is designated as agricultural. Most commercial and industrial development is occurring in the cities and villages throughout the county. This is creating minimal impact on the loss of farmland in the county. However, the major threat to the loss of farm land is the previously mentioned large lot single-family housing development that is occurring in the rural areas throughout the county.

More detail related to agricultural land use issues are provided in the Huron County Farm Land Preservation Plan.

Policy Statements and Recommendations

The following Policy Statements were established by the Huron County Land Use Task Force to address future land use issues in the County:

1. **Incorporate a process into land use planning that promises the highest and best use of any given site.** At this time the Huron County Planning Commission and the Huron County Soil and Water Conservation District are the two agencies that are involved in addressing land use issues on a countywide basis. Through membership most communities and interest groups are represented. The creation of a future land use map along with these policies will serve as another tool that can be used by these two organizations along with others to address this policy.
2. **Preserve prime areas for farming and protect existing farm lands where feasible..** The recommendations from Farm Land Preservation Plan designate prime areas of farm land to be preserved. If the current trends of commercial and industrial development occurring along highway corridors and within incorporated areas continues this policy statement can be accomplished to some degree. The issue of large lot single family home building in unincorporated areas will have negative impacts on preserving prime farmland throughout the county.
3. **Continue to emphasize wise land use throughout Huron County.** The old adage of Rome not being built in a day is also so true when it comes to developing a land use strategy for a county. The comprehensive land use planning process is one that takes a long-term commitment by not only elected and appointed officials but citizens of a community as well. Consistency of thought and decision-making must occur through time and also through various terms and appointments of elected and appointed positions of government. Hopefully this Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Huron County will serve as a tool for consistency and wise land use decision making into the future.
4. **Assist in the development of uniform township zoning throughout the county, where possible.** Fifteen of the nineteen townships within Huron County currently utilize zoning regulations as a land use tool. Unfortunately a lot of the development that is occurring in the county is located in several townships that are not zoned. Along with that issue there exist at times inconsistencies with development that is occurring within

these un-zoned townships and development that is occurring in the municipalities located nearby. There are not only inconsistencies with the fifteen township zoning resolutions but many are in need of being updated to current standards. These scenarios have created a lack of uniformity, which could lead to further land use conflicts into the future if not addressed. Elected and appointed officials from throughout Huron County should continue to explore various options to avoid these conflicts.

5. **Encourage strategies that promote infill and the use of land within and adjacent to municipalities, where services and infrastructure can be provided most efficiently.** There are a number of strategies that could be utilized to promote this type of development. Various incentives could be utilized as well. The County Planning Commission and the Huron County Development Council could be excellent conduits to facilitate these strategies.
6. **Encourage compatible land uses along planned commercial or business corridors.** In efforts to utilize the highest and best use of land along with minimizing conflict in traffic circulation, drainage, water and sewer utilization and basic community services. A pattern of land uses should be created as new development occurs along these corridors. When plans are proposed there should be mechanisms established throughout the county that can provide for a thorough review by not only building officials but fire and safety and transportation officials as well. While looking at various issues related to their respective authority officials should also look at minimizing the potential conflicts in land use patterns also. When reviewing development in this regard, there should be a smooth transition between single family and multi family development, commercial and industrial and all of the various land use types as to how they relate to each other. Conflicts should be minimized and amenities should be explored to eliminate any potential conflicts.
7. **Incorporate flexibility in the planning process, to allow for desired changes in future development patterns.** There should always be the ability to amend or appeal the decisions made by public officials that are made related to development patterns. There should also be the ability to make changes that will improve these patterns. A thorough review and amendment process will be an important piece of the implementation stage of this land use plan.
8. **Encourage the use of tools that aid coordination between adjacent jurisdictions in minimizing land use conflicts and promoting tax revenue sharing resulting from new development.** These tools could be incentives provided by the State of Ohio. Other tools such as development agreements between various political jurisdictions could also be utilized. Agreements related to water and sewer development is yet another example. While looking at these tools the Huron County Planning Commission and the Huron County Development Council can be excellent conduits to facilitate projects through the political process.

Chapter Six Natural Resources and Open Space



Huron County is endowed with a variety of natural features that are worth preserving. Most of the County's land area is characterized as rural. Indeed, as discussed later in this chapter, some 238,291 acres (out of 317,614 total) were devoted to farmland in 2014.

The online Huron County Profile available at the Ohio Department of Development website provides the following breakdown of land cover: This simple breakdown leaves no doubt as to the primarily agricultural nature of land use for the vast majority of Huron County's land. (This table is also discussed in Chapter 5, "Present and Future Land Use").

Table 6-1: Land Cover in Huron County¹

Type of Cover	Acres (Percent)
Total	317,614.5 (100.0%)
Urban (open, impervious surfaces)	12,228.14 (3.85%)
Cropland	224,965.99 (70.83%)
Pasture	25,694.97 (8.09%)
Forest	51,898.13 (16.34%)
Open Water	2,382.11 (0.75%)
Wetlands (Wooded/Herbaceous)	444.66 (0.14%)

Source: ODOD, Office of Research

Huron County has an abundance of natural resources that will continue to define and add immeasurable value to its landscape. The County's farmland includes over 51,000 acres of woodland, aside from natural habitats occurring along river corridors and other locations. A State-managed wildlife area is preserved by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to the south and west of Willard, providing further protection. However, the tension between preservation and development is always present, as family farms are sold, or acreage along road frontage is sold in five or ten acre lots to create an opportunity for new rural homeowners. The potential for rural development also increases with the availability of water, as new rural water lines are extended to serve new clients throughout the County.

Indeed, unchecked, unplanned development would present a threat to the continued stewardship of the county's natural resources. However, steps have been taken to monitor

¹ This information is intended to provide a "general impression" of the geographic makeup of the county.

and coordinate planned development, and to provide developers with critical information concerning their plans. This includes better provision of information, such as the Web Soil Survey² and a land data base and aerial photography accessible through the County Auditor's website. Further, in 2013 the County adopted new amendments to their subdivision regulations, providing developers and would-be homeowners with better environmental and other information about potential building sites, on which to make development decisions. This chapter's recommendations include support for the more focused coordination of information and decision making with regard to rural development.

The goals developed by the Steering Committee regarding natural resources are as follows:

1. Promote and support public access to resources.
2. Maintain as much green space and natural features as possible, as areas develop.
3. Strive to maintain, preserve, and improve all natural resources as well as the development of sites to allow for the enjoyment of these areas by its residents and visitors alike.
4. Be mindful that the county's natural resources can be used to develop its economic base.
5. Encourage the development of subdivisions with smaller lots, slowing the consumption of farmland. Without farmland preservation, Huron County stands to lose its rural character.
6. Allow for development while preserving and conserving agricultural lands and natural resources
7. Promote projects that convert brownfields and other environmentally altered property to productive use
8. Ensure an adequate and perpetual supply of water for existing and planned land uses throughout the county.

Related goals were developed under the heading of "community character", and they include the following:

1. Develop and maintain an open relationship between cities, villages, townships, and the county.
2. Maintain the rural quality of life within the county along with maintaining the historic character of its communities.
3. Maintain the small town, friendly character of Huron County.
4. Preserve the character of central business districts as centers of business, shopping, and entertainment.
5. Tie farmland preservation to subdivision development to help maintain the rural character of Huron County.

The Steering Committee wishes to ensure that the County's natural assets be protected and preserved, and that growth be encouraged when it takes place in a manner that minimizes negative impacts on those natural features. One aspect of such protection is farmland preservation. Also, while historic preservation involves the protection of man-made rather than natural assets, it is included in this chapter as another set of existing attributes that should not be lost to unmitigated growth.

² <http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov>

The chapter will begin with a discussion of its physical and natural characteristics, followed by a discussion of farmland preservation and historic preservation. A set of recommendations, with background information provided as appropriate, will conclude the chapter.

Huron County's Natural Features

Geology

Glacial action that transpired thousands if not millions of years ago – specifically, the Devonian period - have produced the modern day geology of Huron County. Over time, the Huron and Vermilion Rivers have produced some steep walled valleys and topographic relief.

Glaciers were responsible for leveling the land and hollowing out the Great Lakes. Glacial action in northern Ohio generally followed the lowlands and the rock debris deposited by the ice is called “till”.

Higher elevations in the county are found along its southern boundary. The county generally slopes downward to the north and the west. The highest point above sea level is where SR 13 crosses into Richland County, which stands at 1,174 feet above sea level.

Soils³

Most of the soils in Huron County are highly productive if drainage systems, erosion control measures, and other management practices are applied. Poor natural drainage is the main limitation in the less sloping parts of the County. Erosion is a hazard in the gently sloping to very steep areas. Farmers have been increasingly applying conservation tillage measures such as no till farming and installing sod waterways to control erosion of topsoil.

Huron County is in the Central Lowland Physiographic Province, which includes most of the glaciated parts of Ohio. The County is mainly in till plains, with a small portion of the northwest corner on lake plains.

Several glaciers formerly covered the County, with the resulting mantle of glaciated drift ranging from two feet or less to more than 150 feet in thickness. This is underlain by limestone in the northwest corner of the county and by shale or sandstone throughout the remainder of the county.

The northeastern part of the County, including Townsend, Wakeman, Hartland, and Clarksfield Townships, is an example of glacial deposits called ground moraines. Bennington, Cardington, and Condit are the major soils in ground moraines such as these.

³ The reader is encouraged to consult the [Soil Survey of Huron County](#) produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, for detailed information on soil types and characteristics pertaining to specific parcels and areas. Much of the information in this section is taken from that document.

The till plains in the southern end of the County are part of the Defiance End Moraine crossing the whole state, and the Fort Wayne End Moraine. The Defiance moraine occurs in the western part of the county, including northern Richmond Township and southern Norwich Township, and extending eastward. The Fort Wayne moraine is along the southern edge of the county, in New Haven, Ripley, and Greenwich Townships. Major soils include Bennington and Cardington.

Small rounded hills formed when ice and glacial debris was deposited, called kames, exist in Bronson, Fairfield, Greenfield, and Fitchville Townships. Chili soils are found on the kames.

Lake plains start south of Bellevue in Lyme Township, and continue southeasterly through Ridgefield and Norwalk Townships. Kibbie, Pewamo, and Tuscola are the dominant soils on lake plains.

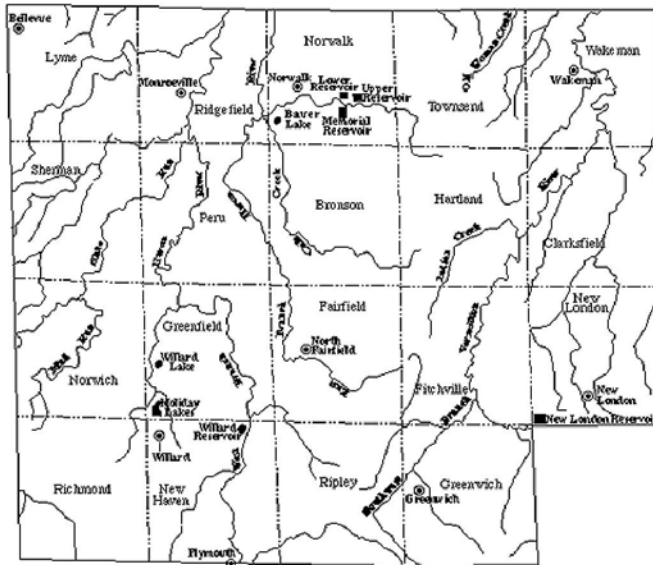
Sandy or gravelly beach ridges consisting of Chili, Oshtemo, Otisville, and Spinks soil types exist along U.S. Route 20 between Norwalk and Bellevue, State Route 61 north of Norwalk, and Sand Hill Road. The Willard Marsh, a glacial lake basin, exists in the southwestern part of the county. This basin, located in southeastern Richmond and southwestern New Haven Townships, consists mostly of Carlisle, Colwood, and Lenawee soils.

The rich, black, muck soil in the Celeryville area of southern Huron County is almost 80 percent organic matter. Green, leafy vegetables thrive in these fields. The specialized crops and the soil experience diseases, insects and weed growth uncommon to other areas of the state. Scientists overcome these challenges with new cultural practices and management techniques. Area growers use transplants to lengthen the growing season and improve stand uniformity over direct seeding. With as many as five crops grown on each acre in a single season, disease management can be challenging for growers.

It should be noted that, with the exception of the steep slopes experienced in the vicinity of the county's rivers and tributaries, topography does not present a deterrent to development in Huron County, which is relatively level to gently rolling. The county's soils present some hindrances in some areas, but with proper mitigation, most of the county's soils can be developed with residential or commercial structures, as well as agricultural uses. Farming practices and incentive programs have helped guide farmers toward practices that minimize erosion and improve water quality within the flow of runoff throughout the agricultural areas of the county. These include proper tiling and ditch maintenance, no till or minimum till farming, precision farming, and the development of buffer lands along riparian corridors and concentrated flows of the Huron and Vermilion River watersheds.

Watersheds

Principal surface water resources are the Huron and Vermilion Rivers. There are some small, isolated natural lakes, and several man-made reservoirs (including those providing drinking water for Bellevue, Norwalk, Willard, New London, Greenwich, and most recently, Monroeville).



Huron County falls mainly within two river watersheds, both of which drain northward to Lake Erie. The eastern third of the county is drained by the Vermilion River and its tributaries. The central and western parts, consisting of approximately two-thirds of the county, are drained by several tributaries of the Huron River. Additionally, the extreme southwest corner is drained by Honey Creek, which flows westward into the Sandusky River, and the southeastern corner of the county, east of New London, is drained by the Black River.

While the river valleys are often level, they are bounded by steep slopes, including some rock cliffs, and the level valley floors are generally the flood plain areas of the county.

Flooding problems are mitigated to a great extent because the County is located near the headwaters of the Vermilion and Huron Rivers, which carry much more water and force to the north as they approach Lake Erie. However, heavy rains in a short period of time in July 1969 produced severe flooding in Norwalk, Bellevue, and other communities. Recent years have also witnessed some significant flooding events, such as the flooding of Norwalk Creek in June 2006. The development of and improvements to up-ground reservoirs throughout the county, which can serve as large catch basins, have helped to a great extent in controlling water flow and flooding potential.

Watersheds are important to development decisions in that they define where runoff from any development site ultimately flows. The Huron and Vermilion Rivers are thus environmentally sensitive to development within their watersheds. The Huron County Soil and Water Conservation District has taken steps to minimize the effect of agricultural and related development on these watersheds through the past use of EPA "319" funds that provide support to area landowners who undertake approved "best management practices" such as septic system upgrades, chemical mixing pads, livestock exclusion from waterways through fencing and other means, and buffer strips between croplands and streams or rivers.

Other ongoing programs that are available to eligible landowners include the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which provides cost share funding for a variety of practices including grass filter strips, wetland restoration, field windbreaks, and riparian buffers and tree planting near watercourses; and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a voluntary conservation program in which producers receive financial and technical assistance to install and implement conservation practices on eligible agricultural land, following conservation plans approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District. Applications are received by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Ground Water



View of the Huron River dam in Monroeville

The depth to ground water and the quality and quantity of the water vary considerably throughout Huron County. Glacial deposits range from two to 150 feet or more in thickness. Available water supplies occur as reservoirs in coarse-grained lenses and stratified layers of sand and gravel.

A few areas can yield as much as 400 gallons per minute. Some of the highest yields in the county (100 to 400 gallons per minute) are produced in the cavernous limestone and dolomite in the extreme northwest corner of the county. Also, in general, the greatest amount of water has been found in wells drilled along a band extending from Norwalk to Willard, on the extreme western edge of the county, and just west of New London. However, in most areas, wells in the finer grained glacial deposits, underlain by shale or sandstone and shale, yield less than ten gallons per minute. The water from the wells in these areas may have relatively high levels of hardness, iron, and sulfates. In areas where the supply of ground water is inadequate, shallow wells, cisterns, and ponds provide additional water. Water throughout Huron County is frequently found to be sulfurous.

A groundwater pollution potential report for Huron County was prepared for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in 2011. Within that report, a ground water pollution potential map of the county was prepared using the DRASTIC mapping process. The DRASTIC system consists of two major elements: the designation of mappable units, termed “hydrogeologic settings”, and the use of a relative rating system for pollution potential. Huron County lies entirely within the Glaciated Central hydrogeological setting. A buried valley lies roughly just east of the Huron River and extends southwesterly from Norwalk. North of Norwalk, the valley can have maximum yields up to 500 gallons per minute, due to its fairly coarse, thick sand and gravel, but to the southwest, this material is mixed with finer-grained materials and the valleys seldom exceed 100 gpm.

The 2003 report noted that bedrock aquifers vary considerably across the County; in the far northwest corner, limestones and dolomites yield from 25 to 100 gpm. To the east and south, the shale becomes too thick and the ground water quality becomes marginal; the Ohio shale found there is a poor aquifer, commonly yielding less than 5 gpm. Poor aquifers are also found along the southern edge of the County. Wells are commonly drilled through this formation and into the underlying Berea sandstone where possible.

The ground water pollution potential mapping program optimizes the use of existing data to rank areas with respect to vulnerability to contamination. The ground water pollution potential map was prepared to assist planners, managers, and local officials in evaluating the potential for contamination from various sources of pollution. ⁴

⁴ The full pollution potential report can be found at

http://water.ohiodnr.gov/portals/soilwater/pdf/maps/groundwater%20pollution/GIS/Huron_PP_Report_wMap.pdf

Flood Plains



Flooding along Norwalk Creek near downtown Norwalk, June 2006

With several branches of the Huron and Vermilion Rivers' coursing through the county, there are numerous areas where flood plains prohibit development beyond agricultural use of land. Portions of Huron County have, unfortunately, been subjected to significant flooding and damage in recent years during periods of intense precipitation.

Flood plains serve several important functions in controlling floods and erosion, and can be viewed as natural extensions of waterways. Construction

in a flood plain reduces the flood plain's storage capacity. The next flood may then crest even higher and often inundate areas outside the historic floodplain. Flood plain maps have been developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Flood Insurance Program, to identify areas where 100-year floods are likely to occur. The 100-year flood plain refers to the area next to the waterway most likely to flood once within a one hundred year period. Regulations prohibit development in the floodways. The largest flood plains in Huron County are associated with the Huron and Vermilion Rivers, as well as some tributaries that flow into them (such as Norwalk Creek, which flows through the City of Norwalk, downstream from the city's reservoir).

Regulations addressing limitations on development in flood plains are adopted and enforced by Huron County for all unincorporated areas, and by each municipality within the County. Local governments are required to adopt flood plain regulations in order to be eligible for disaster relief from the Federal government. Recent experiences within the County have attested to the critical importance of this resource. It is recommended that local officials be aware of the location of 100 year floodplains within their jurisdictions, and consider adopting open space uses for these flood plains.⁵

Wetlands

Wetlands are a critical natural resource that functions in several ways that are beneficial to people and wildlife. The 48 contiguous states contained an estimated 103.3 million acres of wetlands in the mid-1980s. In general, they are areas where water covers the soil or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year.

Water saturation, which is influenced by hydrology, largely determines how the soil develops and the types of plant and animal communities living in and on the soil. Wetlands may support both aquatic and terrestrial species. The prolonged presence of water creates conditions that favor the growth of specially adapted plants and promotes the development of characteristic wetland (or hydric) soils. They can provide important fish and wildlife habitat.

⁵ For a local determination of flood plains, FEMA maps are available at: <http://msc.fema.gov/portal>

Also important, they function as a water filtration system, recycling nutrients and purifying the water. They can also absorb excess water and release it back into a watershed slowly, preventing flooding and minimizing flood damage. The value of wetlands has increased as development has resulted in more and more impervious surfaces.

Inland wetlands, such as those in Huron County, are most common on floodplains along rivers and streams, in isolated depressions surrounded by dry land, along the margins of lakes and ponds, and in other low-lying areas where the groundwater intercepts the soil surface or where precipitation sufficiently saturates the soil. These wetlands can include marshes and wet meadows, swamps, and wooded swamps.

There are numerous wetlands throughout Huron County, far too numerous in all regions of the County to summarize here. Information on wetland sites can be obtained from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the National Wetlands Inventory Maps. Wetlands are protected under federal law and development on wetlands is strictly limited. The major federal regulatory tool for this is Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, jointly administered by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers. Section 404 establishes a permit program to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including most wetlands. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (sharing an office with HSWCD in Huron County) has the lead responsibility for identifying wetlands on agricultural lands. EPA also offers a number of non-regulatory programs to supplement the 404 program, including a hotline: [WETLANDS- HOTLINE@EPAMAIL.EPA.GOV](mailto:WETLANDS-HOTLINE@EPAMAIL.EPA.GOV) to allow easy access to the EPA for information about wetlands.

The Huron Soil and Water Conservation District has developed an article to provide information on minimizing erosion and sedimentation problems encountered during the land development process. This article includes a list of “general principles for effective water management and erosion/sedimentation control”. The application of these principles and associated practices will be considered on their individual merits, subject to approval by the County Engineer and HSWCD. These principles are significant enough to be reprinted here for planning purposes, to provide effective erosion and sedimentation control: Identification by the developer at the preliminary planning phase of onsite and off-site areas vulnerable to erosion and sedimentation.

1. Obtaining and completing Notice of Intent application from the OEPA and NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System).⁶
2. Proposal by developer at preliminary engineering phase for control of erosion and sedimentation. Permanent as well as temporary methods of control should be noted.
3. Development of a construction sequence that minimizes disturbed areas and keeps them exposed for the shortest time possible.
4. Preservation of existing trees, shrubs, grasses, and other plant life is encouraged where possible. The existing vegetation may be useful in slowing runoff.

⁶ These can be found http://www.epa.ohio.gov/portals/35/documents/NOI_form2_fis.pdf

5. Protection of exposed critical areas with temporary vegetation and/or mulch during construction.
6. Provision of fast-growing grasses or sodding until more permanent seeding is established.
7. Installation and maintenance of permanent vegetation, including the use of sod and structures, as soon as possible to help control water and sediment damage.
8. Interception or diversion of runoff originating upgrade and away from the construction site so as to minimize the amount of flow over the construction site.
9. Installation and maintenance of sediment basins (debris or desilting basins and silt traps) to remove sediment from runoff waters from land undergoing construction.
10. Installation and maintenance of terraces, diversions, and grassed waterways as part of the water disposal system to further control water and sediment damage.
11. Construction, seeding, sodding, and protection with fabric material of drainage swales until vegetation is established.
12. New construction and drainage swales shall be seeded within three weeks after they are installed.
13. No driveway shall be constructed which will cause removal or lowering of a curb line, unless a catch basin is reconstructed nearby.

Sand and Gravel

Sand and gravel extraction operations have existed in limited capacity within Huron County. One such area that has produced sand and gravel is the Cole Valley area just southwest of Norwalk, where Valley Beach Park and neighboring uses exist today.

Climate

Climate in Huron County is varied over the course of the year. Winter precipitation results in a good accumulation of soil moisture by spring, minimizing droughtiness in most of the soils during the summer. Normal annual precipitation is adequate for crops.

Average winter temperature is 27 degrees F. and the average daily minimum temperature is 19 degrees. The lowest temperature on record is -25 degrees, recorded in Norwalk on April 5, 1963. In summer, the average temperature is 70 degrees and the average daily maximum temperature is 82 degrees. The highest recorded temperature (June 26, 1952) is 102 degrees.

Of total annual precipitation, nearly 22 inches, or about 60 percent, usually falls in April through September, and the growing season for most crops falls within this period. Thunderstorms occur on about 36 days each year; tornadoes and severe thunderstorms occur occasionally.

The average seasonal snowfall is about 30 inches. The greatest snow depth at any one time during the period of record was 30 inches. On the average, 23 days have at least one inch of snow on the ground, but the number of such days varies greatly from year to year.

The average relative humidity in mid-afternoon is about 60 percent. Humidity is higher at night, and the average at dawn is about 80 percent. The sun shines 65 percent of the time possible in the summer and 30 percent in winter. The prevailing wind is from the southwest, and average wind speed is highest (at 12 miles per hour) in the spring.

Preservation of Natural Areas



Huron River branch in Greenwich Township

acres has decreased over time as woods have been cleared for agricultural or other use.

Many areas with poorly drained soils and little growth potential have been maintained as woodlands. Additionally, while Huron County is not the location for any State parks, the State of Ohio acquired and preserved more than 1,500 acres of the Willard Marsh area for ecological and wildlife conservation. In 1964, Huron County had approximately 35,000 acres of woodlands, and nearly 7,400 of those acres were being

pastured. The number of woodland

Huron County is home to the 1,676-acre **Willard Marsh Wildlife Area**, located four miles southwest of Willard. Access is provided via Section Line Road, which intersects US 224 three miles west of Willard. This Wildlife area, owned by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, is very flat, with little natural drainage. Approximately two-thirds of the area is woodland, and the remainder is open land and brush land. Present management of the area includes annual maintenance of open areas and sharecropping agreements with local farmers to aid in controlling plant succession and to provide wildlife foods. Ditches were also constructed for waterfowl production.

Areas of Scenic and Natural Beauty

Many of Huron County's roadways provide a variety of views of the natural beauty that exists throughout the County. A trip along SR 61 between Norwalk and New Haven reveals a series of hills and valleys. Marshes, cliffs, river valleys, and wooded areas all exist within the County and many are accessible by road.

The **Huron County Park District** maintains the Shady Lane Park on the south side of Norwalk, adjacent to a number of County owned properties. This park includes a fitness trail, running track, and a summer concert series is often planned for this venue. The Park District also maintains a Nature Trail and Land Lab, often used for school programming, on the north side of South Norwalk Road, just west of the Christie Lane School. This facility includes a wheelchair accessible trail, hiking trails, a picnic area, a butterfly garden, and a pavilion that is available for rent.



Firelands Rails-to-Trials, Inc., in cooperation with several park districts, (in particular, with Lorain County Metroparks) is responsible for the development and maintenance of more than 15 miles of The North Coast Inland Trail as a stone trail across Huron County from Bellevue, Ohio to Wakeman, Ohio. FRTTI's portion connects, via the Bellevue City Bike Route, to the NCIT under the Sandusky County Park District in the west, and in the east shall connect, via an ODOT planned bike path from Wakeman to Green Road (whereat the Lorain County Bike Trail begins) to the Lorain

County Trail. The NCIT, in Huron County, also utilizes the Norwalk City Bike Route as well as the currently a-building Wakeman Village Bike Route. FRTTI is a non-profit, all volunteer organization located in Huron County.

Inclusive in the Huron County section of the NCIT are three major converted RR bridges, multiple creek crossings, a restored Monroeville Rail Road Station, numerous road intersections, dozens of comfort benches, several motor vehicle parking areas, the Don Morrow Park, the Ommert Historic Farm, the Saylor Family Park and a pending nature preserve that will be titled, "Pam's Preserve." FRTTI's portion of the North Coast Inland Trail is dedicated to recreational, non-motorized use by local and touring users.



View of the walking trail at Willard's reservoir

While access to the waterfront in the Holiday Lakes area, a private residential lake that serves some 435 homes for recreational purposes located north of Willard, is limited and private, most of Huron County's reservoirs have been designed with public access, use, and enjoyment in mind. Especially notable in this regard are the reservoirs in New London, Norwalk, Greenwich, and Willard, where park funding has been used to develop a variety of picnic areas, walking tracks, landscaping, and other amenities, including accommodations for fishing. Swimming is permitted in the New London reservoir. These reservoirs, located outside municipal areas or on the edge of a municipality, coupled with a number of municipal parks and park systems, provide public recreational space for all within the County, in lieu of a more elaborate system of County parks.

Prime Farmland



Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is the land that is best suited to food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It may be cultivated land, pasture, woodland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. It is used for food or fiber crops or is available for those crops. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are suitable for a well-managed soil to produce a sustained

high yield of crops in an economic manner. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal expenditure of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment.

About 297,600 acres in the Huron County Soil Survey area, or nearly 94 percent of the total acreage, met the soil requirements for prime farmland, in the 1994 Soil Survey of Huron County conducted by the U.S Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. Most of this acreage that is cultivated is used for corn or soybeans.

Because Huron County's most common use of land is for agriculture, it is important to include discussion of trends in this land use. The following is an updated description of the status of farming in Huron County by crop acreage.

Table 6-2: Huron County Crops and Acreage

Crop	2005	2010	2014
Wheat	22,100	20,700	13,900
Corn for grain	69,300	69,400	61,000
Soybeans	89,600	95,000	99,800
Hay	6,700	6,240	4,050

Source: Ohio Crop Data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service

Soybeans are by far the largest crop in terms of committed acreage. However, the acreage devoted to corn has grown in recent years. In 2012, Huron County ranked 11th out of Ohio's 88 counties for corn for grain, 19th in soybeans, 18th in wheat, and 46th in hay. Another important agricultural use of land is vegetable production on the valuable muck soils near Celeryville, south of Willard. Specialty crops, such as tomatoes, cabbage, sugar beets, and other vegetables, are grown on a relatively small acreage on the lake plains and beach ridges, including the muck soil in the Willard Marsh, located in the Celeryville area.

Livestock is another important component of agriculture in Huron County. In 2012, there were 15,877 cattle and calves, 3,400 milk cows, and 19,665 hogs and pigs. Huron County ranked 27th in cattle and calves, 29th in hogs and pigs, and 9th in broilers & meat type chickens out of 88 counties.

In terms of production value from agriculture, the following are the 2012 cash receipts from marketing of farm commodities, by commodity. Crops (particularly corn and soybeans) yield somewhat greater receipts than livestock, although livestock has become an important component in the County's overall agribusiness.

Table 6-3: 2012 Cash Receipts from Crops and Livestock

Commodity	2012 Cash Receipts	Commodity	2012 Cash Receipts
Corn	\$70,093,000	Milk	\$14,624,000
Soybeans	\$53,523,000	Cattle and Calves	\$8,402,000

Wheat	\$4,434,000	Hogs and Pigs	\$4,015,000
Vegetables	\$23,966,000	Poultry and Eggs	\$8,618,000
Nursery & Greenhouse	\$1,059,000	Sheep & Goats	\$169,000
Crop Totals	\$154,464,000	Livestock Totals	\$36,200,000

Source: Ohio Dept. of Agriculture, Annual report.

The actual use of farmland can be broken down by using data from the U.S. Census. The most recent Census data is from the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

In recent years, the total acreage devoted to farmland has increased, from an estimated 224,000 acres and 850 farms in 2005 to 238,291 acres and 865 farms in 2014. Acreage per farm has only increased slightly, from 264 acres in 2005 to 275 acres in 2014.

Huron County agribusiness made extensive use of federal programs that support good land and resource preservation practices. For example, from 2010 to 2014, Huron County farmers applied for and received \$423,941 from various farm programs from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Historic Preservation



The Octagon House in the Village of Monroeville

Huron County has a rich history dating to its association with the State of Connecticut and designation as a portion of the “Firelands”. The County, which originally also included the current Erie County, was authorized in 1809 and organized in 1815. Norwalk was made the county seat in 1818 and Erie County was created in 1838.

Many historically significant structures remain throughout Huron County. A number of them have been included in the National Register of Historic Properties, while undoubtedly, many have not been registered. The registry includes the following properties:

Table 6-4: Huron County Properties Listed on the National Register

Property	Location	Type of Property
Miller-Bissell Farmstead	SR 60, New London Township	Significant agriculture architecture
John Wright Mansion	SR 113, Bellevue, Lyme Twp.	Second Empire residence
Seth Brown House	Brown St., Monroeville	Greek Revival residence
John Hosford House	Sandusky St., Monroeville	Octagon shaped residence
Zion Episcopal Church	Ridge St., Monroeville	Residence
Huron County Courthouse and Jail	E. Main and Benedict, Norwalk	County facilities (jail not in use)
West Main Street District	Both sides of W. Main St., six blocks, Norwalk	Religious structures and residences of various styles (Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, etc.)
Phoenix Mills	E. of Steuben on Mill Rd.	Commercial building, sandstone
Macksville Tavern	Peru Hollow Road	Commercial building, Federal style
Mead-Zimmerman House	E of Greenwich on SR 13	Residence

Dunton House	Benedict Avenue, Norwalk	Late Victorian residence
Gregory House	1 E. Main St., New London	Commercial building
Hunts Corners	Sandhill Rd. and SR 547	District with 13 buildings: dwellings, religious, agricultural outbuildings
Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Depot	B&O RR jct., Willard	Privately owned, Gothic style RR depot
Dr. David De Forest Benedict House	80 Seminary St., Norwalk	Italianate style residence
Seth Brown House	29 Brown St., Monroeville	Greek Revival residence
Huron County Children's Home	190 Benedict Ave., Norwalk	Classic Revival Institutional Housing
Macksville Tavern a.k.a. Old Macksville Inn Antiques	Peru Hollow Rd., Peru	Significant Federal architecture
Norwalk Memorial Hospital a.k.a. Maple City Professional Building	269 W. Main St., Norwalk	Classical Revival architecture
Tremont House a.k.a. Egle Building	101-103 E. Main St., Bellevue	Greek Revival Architecture

Source: <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/oh/huron/state.html>

Listing a site in the National Register is one preservation tool. Others can include applying for communities to become Certified Communities, eligible for small grant programs, through OHPO's process, and obtaining tax credits for private entities that improve listed properties. If a property is determined to be sufficiently significant, the listing can accord the building or district certain recognition. Income-producing properties that are listed may be aided financially by federal tax incentives, such as a 20 percent investment tax credit for certified rehabilitation. Listed properties are given special consideration in the planning of federally funded projects, and section 3408.0 of the Ohio Building Code offers alternatives to code compliance for listed or eligible buildings regarding any proposed construction or repair. Finally, a listing is often a prerequisite for funding applications for rehabilitation work through various private, nonprofit organizations, such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Policy Statements and Recommendations

1. Practice Efficient Land Use Policies

While Huron County is largely rural, and may not need to address principles of sustainable development throughout the entire county, the principles associated with "new urbanism", which advocate development within and near established urbanized areas and activity centers, are worth considering when endeavoring to preserve and not encroach upon the county's natural resources and other sensitive areas.

The principles of New Urbanism are presented on the next page for application when a new development project is under consideration. The use of a Joint Economic Development District or Cooperative Economic Development Agreement, described in Chapter 8, offers another means of guiding development to unincorporated areas that are adjacent to and coordinated with urbanized municipal areas.

2. Follow Huron County's Subdivision Regulations:

In 2013, Huron County Commissioners approved the amended subdivision regulations bringing them in line with the State legislation in Amended Substitute Senate Bill 115.

The effect of these changes bring additional control and guidance to the development of lots that are five acres and larger. These lots were previously outside the purview of the review and analysis process, and these changes will provide more control over the conversion of undeveloped land and farmland to residential and other uses.

3. Follow Recommendations Presented in the Farmland Preservation Plan

The Huron County Farmland Preservation Plan was developed and the recommendations from that report, which are aligned with the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan and thus should be considered as the County continues to develop.



- In order to educate the county about farmland issues, it would be valuable to offer a **one-day seminar** to offer more in-depth information about topics related to farmland development. Suggested topics include principles of sound land use planning, an inventory of environmental criteria in the development of rural sites (many of which are listed in the next section), the status and pace of farmland conversion in Huron County, farmland preservation tools in use in similar counties, and available information resources and contact points on available programs in Huron County and related environmental issues.
- A **core of basic information**, including a clear how-to guide on all relevant and required planning and review processes (such as in the subdivision guidelines discussed previously), should be placed in the hands of prospective and actual purchasers of rural real estate. The information, in the form of a brochure or pamphlet, can be distributed by Realtors, lenders, county agencies, townships, libraries, and other locations.

The information should cover the issues and factors to be considered, such as soil, water, sewage systems, regulations and assessments, community features, and natural features and drainage. Also, it should clearly list the steps needed to make sure all these factors are considered adequately. The pamphlet should include a one or two-page flowchart summarizing steps to be taken when purchasing rural property.

The information can also include some eye-opening (to some) realities about rural living, such as rural roads and the prevalence of farm machinery, weather impacts, lengthy school bus trips, sewer and septic service, trash and recycling, property lines and fences, zoning, fire protection, nature, and impacts of farming (sights, smells, weed control).
- **Encourage infill development** whenever possible. Development should be encouraged where public utilities are already in place or easily accessible.
- **Promote clustering of development** where possible, in such a way that the use of buildable land is minimized, houses or other buildings are located closer together, and open space can then be maximized. A rural cluster development typically consists of residential subdivision lots grouped together on a portion of a property being subdivided

with the remaining area placed into a permanent preservation parcel. The purpose of rural cluster development regulations is to encourage the preservation of the rural and scenic quality of the landscape and farmland while allowing attractive low density clustered residential development. Cluster development may be permitted only when it is located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on agricultural land, surrounding farming operations, sensitive environmental features, and the intended use of the proposed preservation parcel(s) for the subdivision.

- Review and apply, as appropriate, available **farmland and resource preservation tools** and their applicability to Huron County. Existing and potential tools include:
 - **Purchase of Development Rights**, where the landowner sells a conservation easement to a government or conservation organization, and the agency pays the landowner the difference between the value of the land for agricultural purposes and its value for “highest and best use”.
 - **Transfer of Development Rights**, allowing landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel. The parcel where the rights originate is restricted with a permanent conservation easement, and the parcel owner where rights are transferred can build at a higher density than ordinarily permitted.
 - **Land trusts** are local, state, or regional nonprofit organizations directly involved in protecting land for its natural, recreational, scenic, historic, or productive value. Such trusts exist within north central Ohio, and they are prepared to purchase or accept donated land or conservation easements.
 - **Voluntary agricultural districts** can be formed within local zoning to provide limited protection from eminent domain, land use and building restrictions, and special assessments for utilities.
 - **CAUV** can be used as an incentive for farmland preservation, and recoupment penalties, equal to the difference between CAUV value and a low market value, are made for land taken out of production. Using a higher market price based on actual selling prices could help maintain farmland.
 - **Ohio Certified Forest Tax law**- is a tax incentive for forestland for 5 years at a time. Woods must be 10 or more contiguous acres and a minimum of 120 feet wide. The area must be approved by the state forester.
 - Finally, Ohio, like all states, has **right-to-farm legislation**, which helps strengthen the legal position of farmers when neighbors sue for private nuisance, and protects farmers from anti-nuisance ordinances and unreasonable controls on farming operations.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture, Office of Farmland Preservation, offers three programs that are designed to help preserve the State’s agricultural land.⁸ The **Agricultural**

⁸ More information on these programs is available at www.ohioagriculture.gov/farmland

Easement Purchase Program uses a portion of the State's Clean Ohio Fund to provide up to 75 percent of the points-based agricultural value of a farm's development rights. A payment cap has been set at \$2,000 per acre, with a maximum of \$500,000 per farm. All easement transactions are permanent. A two-tier ranking system is used to select the farms preserved in each funding round.

The **Agricultural Easement Donation Program** provides a perpetual easement and restrictions on agricultural land that remains even if the land is transferred to a new owner. Donations of easements are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Land must be enrolled in CAUV, and any liens or mortgages on the farm must be subordinated to the easement. There are also guidelines for accepting donated easements regarding minimum farm size, subdivision of the land, and number of housing units.

Finally, the **Ohio Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program** authorizes one or more landowners, of at least 500 acres of contiguous farmland, to request from the Boards of County Commissioners and Township Trustees to enroll into an ASA for a ten-year period. ASAs promote agricultural retention by creating special areas where agriculture is encouraged and protected. ASAs provide certain benefits to farmers, including protection from nonagricultural development, a critical mass of land to keep farming viable, and possible tax benefits for investing in new and real agricultural property.

Agriculture as a primary economic force, industry, and land use within Huron County should be supported by encouraging development of food processing and other agriculturally related businesses (such as biodiesel or ethanol processing plants). Agribusiness can be promoted through local tourism efforts, and the importance of Huron County agriculture should be publicized.

4. Follow established procedures for erosion and sedimentation control



Ditch improvements along Ridge Road south of Norwalk

changes in drainage areas and the volume and duration of water concentration caused by grading and related factors, reduction of water intake of soils from compaction by construction equipment, and prolonged exposure of unprotected sites to adverse weather. Other deleterious factors may include altering the ground water regime that may adversely

One significant impact of any development upon the environment is the erosion and sedimentation that results from altered patterns and pathways for storm drainage. Huron County and its Soil and Water Conservation District have taken steps to address this fact, and this comprehensive plan incorporates and supports their recommendations and procedures.

Typical problems encountered with new developments include a large increase of area exposed to soil erosion and runoff; increased volumes of runoff, soil movement, sediment and peak flows caused by removal of natural cover, increase in impervious surface areas,

affect drainage systems, slope stability, vegetation, and the establishment of new plants; exposing subsurface materials that are too rocky, too acid, or otherwise unfavorable for establishing vegetation; encroachment on floodplains and waterways; and poor scheduling of construction activities.

Four basic principles to provide a helpful framework for looking at stormwater plans were cited in an Ohio State University Extension document entitled “Stormwater and Your Community”. These principles include:

- **Control**, divided into source control and runoff control. Source control measures focus on pollution prevention through containment measures, spill prevention and cleanup, waste reduction, public education, and reduced use of fertilizers and pesticides. Runoff control measures focus on minimizing runoff from new developments, and siting infrastructure to discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Collection**, or capture and storage of runoff for more timely release through use of retention basins (holding stormwater until it infiltrates in the ground) and detention basins (designed to slow and hold stormwater before releasing it).
- **Conveyance**, through the use of systems to drain and direct the flow of runoff generated on a site. This is often accomplished with catch basins feeding into storm sewers, or through the use of vegetated depressions and swales.
- **Cleansing**, commonly accomplished through techniques that promote filtration and settling of pollutants and their natural processing by vegetation and soil. Filtering devices include engineered structures like sediment basins and porous pavement, but also include natural systems like stream buffers and vegetated filter strips. Ponds and constructed wetlands can also serve to clean water.

The “general principles for effective water management and erosion/sedimentation control” as presented by the Huron Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) and listed in this chapter suggest that these soil and water conservation practices should be applied in practical combinations to provide effective erosion and sedimentation control.

In addition to these principles and practices, it is noted that all subdivisions shall be reviewed by the County Engineer to see if control measures are needed to minimize water, erosion, and sediment problems. An erosion and sediment control plan shall be submitted for all subdivisions containing more than ten lots or having proposed street construction. Those with less than ten lots, which are a portion or phase of a larger proposed allotment, shall submit a tentative NPDES erosion and sediment control plan for the entire allotment. The County Engineer, upon recommendation from HSWCD, shall accept or suggest modifications of all erosion and sedimentation control plans.

Stormwater management can become more formalized. In Erie County, any person performing any non-farm, earth-disturbing activity that disturbs 20,000 square feet or more on five or more contiguous acres of land must file a Stormwater Management Plan and obtain a Stormwater Management Permit. For 20,000 square feet on less than five acres, a

Drainage Plan is required, as well as a Stormwater Management Permit. If less than 20,000 square feet will be disturbed, a Stormwater Management Permit will still need to be obtained. The County conducts plan checking and field inspections to assure completion of storm drainage facilities.

5. Incorporate environmental considerations in all development planning and review processes.

The Huron County Subdivision Regulations require more formalized and inclusive reviews and mitigation of environmental issues. It is recommended that the following factors, many of which are taken from the seminal publication, “Caring for the Land: Environmental Principles for Site Design and Review” (Bruce Hendler, 1977), also be considered.

- Avoid draining and building in freshwater wetlands to maintain their natural “sponge” action and thus the water table. This also preserves the wildlife habitat and recreational potential of these areas.
- Maintaining steeply sloping areas as open space will reduce risks. Proper planning retains major gullies and steep slopes in open space.
- Retention of vegetation helps control runoff, stabilizes slopes, and attracts wildlife. Trees provide a buffer along shores, fields, and other areas, and the less attractive “wind-clipped” trees on the edge of a wooded area or buffer effectively protect the rest of the trees. A buffer of trees or shrubs reduces noise and provides privacy, and vegetation can “dampen” the severity of the weather by protecting against wind, snowdrifts, and sunlight. A variety of vegetation along a flat terrain can reduce monotony and provide attractive “character” to a site.
- Valuable mineral deposits should be identified and reserved; the surface should be restored when extraction operations are complete.
- The identification of historic sites and buildings, and adopting legal measures to protect them, can accommodate development while preserving the County's historic, cultural, and architectural heritage.
- Significant building setbacks, away from roadways, offer such advantages as privacy, buffering from road noises, freedom to place the structure where it gets the most sun or looks best, helping assure filtration of contaminants from the roadway, providing safety for pedestrians and those in the structures, and making driving past the subdivision more pleasant.
- Building design considerations include the size of the building (does it complement the site by respecting the physical scale of the site or area, trees, and landform?), materials and design (harmonizing with surroundings), and planting and landscaping with species that are native to the region.

- Established footpaths, corridors parallel to existing transportation routes, and abandoned transportation rights-of-way (such as the North Coast Inland Trail) offer significant potential for recreational use such as hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing.
- Planning should incorporate consideration of the unique character of the landscape and the visual variety throughout the county.
- The approach to a community or the county should be considered a “gateway” that gives an impression of the area's unique character, develops a “sense of place”, and leads the traveler to positively anticipate arrival.
- Consider topography, or the “lay of the land”. Remember that southern slopes provide more sunlight and heat, and that development below the crest of a hill reduces its visibility to others, preserves the natural landform, increases the availability of a water supply, and higher land reduces the chance of problems with drainage and septic systems.
- Septic systems must be planned to avoid environmental barriers. Units located on proper soil and slope will permit effluent from septic systems to be purified enough to remove germs and odor. The septic system should be located sufficiently far from a water supply, and from any watercourse or standing body of water.
- Soil characteristics to consider include how wet or impervious they are (for best use of septic systems), suitability for stability in supporting buildings, and erosion potential.
- Permeable surfaces that absorb rainfall and other water are reduced as roofs, roads, and parking lots are developed. Properly designed drainage systems can reduce erosion and pollution potential. Development should avoid naturally occurring wet spots and flood plains.
- If the features surrounding a proposed site are primarily rural in character, then the development should reflect that character and not compete with it.

6. Incorporate recommendations of the Steering Committee

In the development of this Comprehensive Plan, the Steering Committee did not generate a series of recommendations specifically addressing natural resources and open space. However, during the discussion of related topics, a number of recommendations were produced that pertain to this topic. Some of them are repeated under other headings. The following is a summary of those recommendations:

- Improve the understanding and enforcement of existing regulations, such as septic system requirements, through the development of a single document for prospective property owners that provides a checklist of required regulatory and approval processes, complete with identifications of contact persons for each. Disseminate the document widely to ensure that it gets into the hands of those who need it.

- (Economic Development) Support Huron County's agricultural sector, which is the primary land use in the county, by taking steps to preserve farmland and minimize its loss, and by seeking complementary businesses such as value added food processing. Large scale farming operations must conform to standards of health and environmental integrity.
- (Utilities) Stormwater management should be addressed throughout the county by aggressively eliminating combined sewers, including provisions for retention in new subdivision regulations, enclosing highway ditches where feasible, and including stormwater standards within a county thoroughfare plan.
- When industrial site needs cannot be satisfied by existing available buildings or sites within municipalities, land which is adjacent to or in close proximity to those municipalities should be given highest priority. A major reason is the availability or low development cost of infrastructure extensions, proximity to employment bases, and orderly growth considerations. Priority sites should also be located adjacent to or in close proximity to appropriate transportation routes (highway and rail), corridors, and intersections.

Encourage infill housing that is developed on available vacant property within municipalities, where necessary infrastructure and roadway systems already exist. In cases where subdivisions are planned for unincorporated areas, encourage their development adjacent to or in close proximity to municipal areas, where utility extensions and roadways can be efficiently extended or modified to accommodate residential growth. Residential growth should be targeted wherever possible to areas in relatively close proximity to employment, shopping, and service centers.

- Further, funding should be sought where possible to conduct an inventory and prioritization of critical natural resources. Specifically, drainage infrastructure must be analyzed and prioritized because of the limited resources available to address flooding, stream blockage, and drainage issues throughout the county and its unincorporated areas.



Chapter Seven



U.S. Route 20 between Norwalk and Monroeville

Transportation

Huron County's transportation system is assisted by the presence of a number of U.S., State, and County highways, six distinct rail lines operated by four rail companies, and two general aviation airports. While these facilities provide significant resources for passenger and freight transportation throughout the county, there are a number of goals that are sought by County and local officials to improve transportation efficiency and safety. The overall transportation goals that have been developed by the comprehensive plan steering committee are as follows:

1. Work toward achieving an adequate, safe countywide transportation system that will take into account future growth.
2. Design for the efficient flow of traffic.
3. Identify, provide, and increase public transportation and transit where warranted by demand and need.
4. Make provisions for safe pedestrian and bicycle movement.
5. Maximize the usefulness of airports in Huron County, including consideration of the siting of a new airport if existing facilities cannot adequately respond to future needs.

The Steering Committee that has overseen the development of this plan identified several transportation-related strengths regarding Huron County – the presence of four railroads, proximity to health care and educational facilities, and nearby Interstate access to the northern portion of the County. Weaknesses included a lack of adequate highways, both north-south and, with the exception of US 20 between Bellevue and Norwalk, east-west as well; and for bypasses for through traffic in several communities. The Committee also cited some “proximity issues” resulting from the County being in neither a metropolitan nor a recognized fringe area. The County's airports also presented some limitations, especially regarding runway length and a subsequent inability to land certain corporate aircraft.

Transportation plays a major role in shaping land use patterns within a county, since accessibility to business inputs and markets, places of employment, points of sale for agricultural products, and shopping, health care, entertainment, and other destinations all guide locational decisions for businesses and residences. Thus transportation improvements should be designed and implemented with land use goals in mind.

Transportation planning requires coordination between a number of entities, including County officials (notably the County Engineer's office), Municipal and Township officials who preside over their jurisdictions' local roadway system, State officials (especially within the Ohio Department of Transportation, or ODOT), and providers of other coordinated transportation, such as airport officials and officials from the County's four railroads.

Existing Conditions



State Route 61, a mid-county north-south corridor

According to ODOT data, Huron County contains 69.80 miles of U.S. routes, 157.85 miles of State routes, 226.25 miles of County routes, 486.70 miles of Township roadways, and 164.4 miles of municipal roadways, for a total of 1,105 miles of roadways within its bounds. The State is responsible for the maintenance of the 227.65 total miles of U.S. and State highways, and the County, Townships, and Municipalities are responsible for their respective roadways.

Roadways are categorized by their *functional classification*. Roads are thus characterized as principal arterials, minor arterials, major collectors, minor collectors, or local roadways. Rural Principal Arterials are the major routes that serve corridor movements with substantial statewide or interstate travel and connect larger population areas (such as Mansfield with Sandusky). Minor Arterials connect cities, larger towns, and other major destinations, and are generally spaced at intervals so that all developed areas are within a reasonable distance of an arterial. Rural Arterials are characterized by high travel speeds and minimum interference.

Rural Collectors are primarily intra-county and serve more moderate travel speeds and distances than arterials. While major collectors provide service to the county seat and larger towns as well as such destinations as consolidated schools and parks, minor collectors generally collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within reasonable distance of a collector, as well as providing service to smaller communities and connecting locally important traffic generators within rural hinterlands. Rural Local Roads provide access to adjacent land and accommodate travel over relatively short distances.

The definitions and uses change somewhat for urban classifications. Urban Principal Arterials serve major activity centers, high volume corridors, and the longest trip demands, as well as interconnecting major rural corridors, and serving demand for intra-area travel, such as that between the central business district and outlying residential areas. Urban Minor Arterials augment the principal arterials and interconnect them, serving moderate-length trips and providing urban connections for rural collectors. Urban Collectors provide land access and traffic circulation in residential, commercial, and industrial areas, penetrating residential neighborhoods, and distributing trips between local streets and arterials. Urban

Locals provide direct access to adjacent land, and are not intended to carry any through traffic movement.

The County's highway and roadway systems are depicted below by type and functional class:

Table 7-1: Huron County Roadways by Jurisdiction and Functional Classification

Functional classification	US	State	County	Township	Municipal	Total
Rural Principal Arterial	45.3	12.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	57.4
Rural Minor Arterial	0.0	14.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.8
Rural Major Collector	0.0	90.7	12.4	1.0	1.0	105.1
Rural Minor Collector	0.0	1.1	63.4	2.5	0.0	67.0
Rural Local	0.0	0.0	128.7	441.1	34.2	604.0
Urban Principal Arterial	24.5	4.9	1.1	0.0	0.9	31.4
Urban Minor Arterial	0.0	10.1	0.5	0.0	5.3	15.9
Urban Major Collector	0.0	24.1	4.9	1.3	22.2	52.5
Urban Minor Collector	0.0	0.1	2.0	0.0	0.5	2.6
Urban Local	0.0	0.0	13.3	40.8	100.3	154.4
Total	69.8	157.9	226.3	486.7	164.4	1,105.1

Source: ODOT database

It is important to be able to measure and note the relative usage of Huron County's state and federal roadways. The most recent traffic counts conducted by ODOT are for 2012, and they distinguish semi truck traffic from passenger and light commercial traffic. Table 2 presents 2012 ODOT traffic counts at selected intersections along U.S. and State arterials in Huron County, and compares them with 2000 and 2006 data.

Table 7-2: 2006 Huron County Average 24-Hour Traffic Volume

Route	Intersection	Pass. & A Comm.	B and C Comm.	2006 Total Vehicles	2000 Total Vehicles	2012 Total Vehicles
SR4	Seneca County line	1880	360	2350	2450	2240
	US 20	2230	520	3220	3530	2750
	SR 113	3880	830	7390	5490	4710
SR 13	Richland County line	2940	510	3040	3020	3450
	US 224	2740	480	2770	2590	3220
SR 18	SR 601	3220	390	3760	4900	3610
	SR 60 S	3230	680	3820	3190	3910
US 20	Sandusky County line	13840	2630	19320	23540	16470
	E. Corp. Bellevue	6800	1290	11270	12240	8090
	SR 4	5390	1680	8230	11670	7070
	SR 547 Monroeville	7980	2490	13450	12530	10470
	SW Corp. Norwalk	4690	1580	7700	10380	6270
	Cleveland Rd.	5020	650	5730		5670
	SW Corp. Wakeman	4210	650	4210	6700	4860
SR 60	Ashland Co. line	2580	170	3160	3660	2750
	N. Corp. New London	2290	130	3160	3660	2420

	Intersection	Pass. , A	Commercial	2006 Total	2000 Total	2012 Total
	Main St. New London	2890	170	3450	4080	3060
	S. Corp. Wakeman	1550	60	1620	1950	1610
SR 61	Richland Co. line	6560	320	7580	8050	6880
	US 224	4300	250	4690	5320	4550
	SR 598	1690	150	1770	1620	1840
	SR 162	3380	300	3380	2950	3680
	SW Corp. Norwalk	4580	170	3970	3670	4750
	US 250 Norwalk	6490	180	8770	9350	6670
	NE Corp. Norwalk	3830	100	3800	4080	3930
	SR 601	3270	90	3280	3990	3360
SR 99	US 224 Willard	4500	250	5740	6010	4750
	N. Corp. Willard	4220	240	4180	5400	4460
	SR 162	1740	260	1930	2150	2000
	US 20 Monroeville	2580	480	3880	4130	3060
	N. Corp. Monroeville	2580	480	3880	4130	3060
SR 103	Crawford Co. Line	2380	170	2380	2310	2550
SR 103	SW Corp. Willard	3300	240	3080	3410	3540
	US 224	4930	70	5310	5980	5000
	Myrtle Ave.	4280	150	5180	5960	4430
	SR 598	2100	140	2480	4790	2240
SR 113	US 20 Bellevue	3120	450	3650	3860	3570
	SR 4	1570	230	1850	2020	1800
	SR 99	1670	190	1960	4790	1860
SR 162	SR 99	910	30	830	950	940
	SR 61	870	30	740	1010	900
	US 250	1980	70	2090	2220	2050
	w. Corp. New London	2930	140	3690	5500	3070
	Main St. New London	2430	120	2440	5140	2550
	C. 21	760	40	800	690	800
US 224	Seneca County line	2330	410	3700	4510	2740
	W. Corp. Willard	3670	480	5230	5640	4150
	SR 103	9450	600	10920	11120	10,050
	SR 61	2270	410	3190	4630	2680
	W. Corp. Greenwich	3120	390	4440	6150	3510
	SR 13	2420	450	3750	4580	2870
US 250	Erie Co. line	15270	1020	14890	15260	16,290
	N. Corp. Norwalk	13190	880	14890	15260	14,070
	Main St. Norwalk	10860	300	12660	12530	11,160
	US 20	7590	1050	8860	10310	8640
	SR 162	5350	1250	3370	8190	6600
	SR 13	4770	1120	6550	10430	5890

	Intersection	Pass. , A	Commercial	2006 Total	2000 Total	2012 Total
SR 269	Seneca Co. Line	1340	160	1100	1300	1500
	S. Corp. Bellevue	3430	440	3080	2970	3870
	N. Corp. Bellevue	4930	600	5190	3830	5530
SR 303	US 20	1450	130	1370	1520	1580
	SR 60	1050	90	940	1250	1140
SR 547	SR 4	980	10	1050	1140	990
	W. Corp. Monroeville	1450	110	1990	1920	1560
	SR 99 Monroeville	2700	80	3050	3220	2780
SR 598	Richland Co. line	1120	130	1110	1130	1250
	SR 61	3030	240	2550	3820	3270
SR 601	SR 18	1550	370	1960	1740	1920
	US 20	2730	400	2910	2760	3130
	SR 61	2410	350	2550	2530	2760

Source: ODOT database

ODOT has posted 2012 data on adjusted total thousands of daily vehicle miles traveled (kDVMT's). Within Huron County, the estimate is 1,139.53 kDVMT's, or 1,139,530 vehicle miles per day. This figure of 1,139.53 compares with the following estimates for surrounding counties: Erie: 3,253.82, Lorain: 6,727.29, Ashland: 1,808.03, Richland: 3,506.28, Crawford: 1,029.68, Seneca: 1,178.48, and Sandusky: 2,551.74. Of the estimated 1,139.53 kDVMT's, 401.28 (or a third, 35.2 percent) were found to be urban (within municipalities) travel.

It is no surprise that some of the county's heaviest traffic takes place on the county's only four-lane, limited access highway, U.S. Route 20, where over 16,000 vehicles crossed the Sandusky County line in the center of Bellevue, over 10,000 traveled through the center of Monroeville, and 6,270 vehicles were counted at the southwest corporation limits in Norwalk. The numbers for U.S. 20 decreased substantially east of Norwalk, indicating turning onto US 250 to the north or south, or traffic terminating in Norwalk.



U.S. 250 near Fitchville

U.S. 250, the primary north-south arterial through the county, sustained vehicle counts in excess of 11,000 vehicles within Norwalk. The count dropped to 6,600 further south, at S.R. 162 near Fitchville, then dropped to 5,890 at the split with Route 13 in Fitchville.

The third U.S. highway, Route 224, is an east-west highway linking the county with



U.S. 224 in downtown Greenwich

I- 71 (where it becomes Interstate 76) and Akron to the east, and Findlay and I-75 to the west. Traffic counts peak within the county in Willard, where 10,000 vehicles crossed S.R. 103 in Willard's commercial area. Outside the Willard area, counts are substantially lower, with 2,740 at the Seneca County line near Attica, 3,510 in Greenwich, and 2,870 at S.R. 13 east of Greenwich.

Other north-south corridors besides U.S. 250 include State Route 4, connecting U.S. 23 to the south, and Sandusky and vacation destinations to the north; S.R. 99, connecting Willard with Monroeville and northern destinations where it meets S.R. 4 in Erie County, and S.R. 60 connecting New London and Wakeman with Vermilion to the north and Ashland to the south. Counts on S.R. 4 are 1,880 at the Seneca County line to the south, and 2,230 at the intersection at U.S. 20. Counts on S.R. 99 reach 4,750 in Willard but are only 2,000 at S.R. 162 in the middle of the county. Finally, counts on S.R. 60 are 2,750 from Ashland County to New London, and only 1,610 at Wakeman's southern border. Thus, the greatest level of north-south traffic by far is supported by U.S. 250.

East-West travel is mostly supported by U.S. Routes 20 and 224, with mid-county travel (directly serving North Fairfield and New London) along S.R. 162 only reaching 940 vehicles at S.R. 99, 2,050 at U.S. 250, and 3,070 only reached at New London's western border. Other State Routes reported here serve largely as collectors, and do not serve as arterial corridors by themselves.

The U.S. Census provides additional information on how people travel in Huron County. As is typical for a rural county, nearly all travelers rely on their own car, truck, or van, with 24,473 of the 26,343 workers aged 16 and over citing those vehicles as their means of transportation to work. Just under ten percent (2,325) using a car, truck, or van, said they carpooled. Another 237 said they used public transportation to work, with 263 using a taxi service, and 580 claimed they walk to work.

Mean travel time to work was 21.7 minutes among Huron County commuters, which was about 1.4 minutes less than the Ohio state mean of 23.1 minutes and also under the national mean of 25.7 minutes. Table 3 helps describe local commuting patterns a little more closely, listing the fifteen most common counties where Huron County residents work, and the fifteen most common counties where employees working in Huron County live.

Table 7-3: Inter-County Commuting Patterns, 2006-2010

Counties Where Huron County Residents Work	Number	Counties Where Huron County Employees Live	Number
Huron	16,077	Huron	16,077
Erie	4,391	Erie	2,215
Lorain	1,655	Sandusky	1,197
Richland	960	Richland	1,160
Sandusky	890	Seneca	761
Cuyahoga	509	Lorain	469
Ashland	327	Crawford	461
Seneca	222	Ashland	383
Medina	180	Ottawa	118
Crawford	127	Cuyahoga	73
Montgomery	91	Summit	68
Lucas	82	Franklin	52
Summit	71	Mercer	36
Franklin	69	Medina	33
Wood / Greene	42	Hancock	28

Source: 2010 Census of Population

The strongest connections by far are with Erie County, a net importer of workers, and where 6,606 workers cross the Huron/Erie County line in either direction to go to work, followed by Lorain (2,124), Richland (2,120), Sandusky (2,087 total), and Seneca (983). Sandusky County's large number can be partially explained by the City of Bellevue's location with roughly half the City in each of the two counties. However, these commuting patterns help explain the large numbers of average daily vehicle counts along such roadways as U.S. 250 north of Norwalk, U.S. 20 to the west, and to a lesser extent, routes 598, 61, and 13 toward Richland County.

Safety

Known data can also help pinpoint areas where safety needs are most evident. The Ohio Department of Public Safety provides annual data on vehicle crashes, and the following table provides information on the number of crashes by township for the past three years.

Not surprisingly, townships near the larger urban centers appear to have the greatest concentration of crashes. The highest numbers are witnessed in Norwalk Township, which nearly surrounds the City of Norwalk, and the second highest incidence of crashes is in New Haven Township, which is adjacent to Willard. In 2014, the five most crash-prone townships, in order, were Norwalk, New Haven, Lyme, Ridgefield and Greenwich.

Table 7-4: Total Crashes by Township, 2012-2014

Township	2012 crashes			2013 crashes			2014 crashes		
	total	fatal	injury	total	fatal	injury	total	fatal	Injury
Bronson	37	0	8	32	0	6	35	0	7
Clarksfield	41	1	9	34	0	7	37	0	7
Fairfield	30	0	6	28	0	5	32	0	3
Fitchville	53	0	12	41	1	13	44	1	12
Greenfield	55	0	13	63	1	9	54	1	10
Greenwich	37	0	8	45	0	8	45	0	14
Hartland	20	0	6	27	0	7	18	0	6
Lyme	88	1	18	102	1	16	97	0	17
N. Haven	126	0	32	114	2	27	152	0	30
N. London	23	0	6	30	0	7	33	0	7
Norwalk	378	1	104	413	0	67	454	1	86
Norwich	21	0	5	27	0	7	19	1	2
Peru	25	0	7	16	0	4	38	0	11
Richmond	22	1	5	27	0	6	28	0	5
Ridgefield	54	0	8	52	1	7	51	0	15
Ripley	17	1	2	17	0	3	19	0	4
Sherman	13	0	7	29	0	3	22	1	7
Townsend	49	1	14	52	0	11	49	0	11
Wakeman	39	0	11	41	2	8	48	0	6
Unspecified Location	0	0	0	1	0	0	22	0	6
Total	1128	6	281	1191	8	221	1297	5	267

Source: Ohio Dept. of Public Safety

While Township data are not available for the 1990's, total crash data are available at a County level to review overall trends over time. The statistics indicate a decrease in total crashes, from 1,713 in 1995 and 1,759 in 2000 and 1,597 in 2005 to 1,297 in 2014. Fatal crashes have unfortunately held fairly steady, totaling 12 in 1995, 8 in 2000, 12 in 2005 and 5 in 2014. Injury crashes, on the other hand, have decreased over time, totaling 582 in 1995, 442 in 2000, and 400 in 2005, and 267 in 2014.

Larger Trends Impacting Transportation in Ohio

The Ohio Department of Transportation issued a planning document entitled "Access Ohio 2040". One chapter of that document discussed trends in demographics, economics, and travel patterns. Some of the trends cited in that report are worth consideration at the County level.

Within the planning document, Ohio's population grew by 1.6 percent between 2000 and 2010, with the greatest growth (over twenty percent) in metropolitan fringe counties, such as Delaware and Warren. Within this projection, Huron County's population was projected to decrease by 6.9 percent, consistent with the projection cited in Chapter 2 of this document.

The report points out that Ohio's population continues to grow and change. The median age of Ohioans continues to increase, up to 38.8 in 2010, compared to 36.4 in 2000 and 33.3 in 1990.

The overall trend to shrinking urban populations masks a potential shift in attitudes towards urban living. Looking closely at the downtowns of Ohio's larger cities reveals a counter-trend: many college-educated individuals are moving to urban centers in Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. At the same time, the percentage of college-educated individuals has increased in the same block groups. A similar comparison can be made for Columbus and Cincinnati. However, smaller mid-sized cities such as Akron, Toledo, and Dayton do not exhibit similar characteristics.

While a majority of work trips are made by driving alone, not all households have that option. For example, 8.1 percent of Ohio households do not own a vehicle, while 33.3 percent only own one vehicle. More than 80 percent of zero-car households are located in urban areas. These households have the benefit of increased choices in alternative modes of transportation. Many of the remaining 20 percent of households that do not own private vehicles in rural areas lack access to these alternative modes of transportation.

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Based upon the 2006-2010 statistics from the American Community Survey, Ohio's median household income is \$47,358. The counties with the highest median incomes are Delaware, Union, Warren, Geauga, and Medina counties. The lowest median incomes are generally located in southern and eastern Ohio. Areas with higher incomes tend to produce a greater volume of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Areas with lower median incomes have higher than average proportions of households with older residents and no private vehicles, both of which indicate a need for alternative modes of transportation.

Public Transportation in Huron County

Public transportation service for residents over age 60 is provided throughout Huron County by Senior Enrichment Services of Huron County. This agency operates a fleet of vans and other vehicles, supported in part with funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation. Curb to curb transportation to and from any point in Huron County is available on demand, but the rider must call to request the ride 24 hours in advance. The cost of a ride from anywhere within Huron County to anywhere within Huron County was \$3.00 in 2014. Transportation to and from medical appointments within 50 miles is also available to some medical facilities on certain days for \$8 round trip. Transportation is also available in Norwalk from three local taxicab businesses.



Huron County Airports

Huron County is home to two general aviation airports, the Norwalk-Huron County Airport located in Norwalk Township, south of U.S. Route 20, and just east of the City of Norwalk, and the Willard Airport, located in Willard just south of U.S. Route 224. While both airports help serve a base of business interests, private pilots and owners, and transient general air traffic, both also have limitations to the length of their runways, as well as the inability to easily expand those runways due to adjacent roadway alignments and neighboring land uses.

Norwalk-Huron County Airport



The Norwalk-Huron County airport is a public use, general aviation facility that was constructed in 1968. The airport is owned by Huron County, and is guided by a five-member Authority whose members are appointed by the County Commissioners. The airport is managed by NOFA, Inc., a contract management company.

The airport features a 4,209 by 75 foot, east-west runway, of which 3,969 feet are usable for landing and the full distance is available for takeoff. The airport is accessed by three designated taxiways, connecting the main ramp, runway, and business complex, and it has an FBO (fixed base operator) building with various amenities for pilots and passengers.

Hangars provide storage for three aircraft in Building A, eight aircraft apiece in Buildings B and C (T-hangars), and private storage in Building D. A business complex building stores an additional three aircraft. Water is supplied to the airport by Northern Ohio Rural Water, and sanitary sewerage is covered by an on-site septic tank. Power is provided with three-phase electricity from Ohio First Energy, and propane is supplied by a 150-gallon tank with service to the FBO Building and business complex.

The current fleet at the airport includes 22 based aircraft, of which 20 are single engine, one is multi-engine, and 1 is an ultralight. Projections in the current airport master plan call for that number to increase to as many as 38 based aircraft by the end of the planning period, 2026.

The airport's operations in 2005 included 3,648 local operations and 2,752 itinerant operations, for a total of 6,400 operations. The general aviation operations forecast conducted by the master plan's author projected this to increase to 5,415 local and 4,085 itinerant operations (9,500 total) in 2026. The plan noted that the proximity of Norwalk Raceway Park accounted for an increase in operations in season during racing events. This may become particularly true with the recent announcement of an expansion of the Raceway Park to fit its new role within the prestigious National Hot Rod Association.

The Airport Master Plan notes that current trends having a bearing on the development of the airport include the use of global positioning systems for navigation, the increasing use of charter/air taxi services, and the growing Very Light Jet aircraft market. Providing facilities for business jet aircraft increases the accessibility to small markets and cities by jet aircraft. The plan recommends that consideration should be given to lengthening the usable runway to 4,300 feet to accommodate future demand of B-II aircraft. This would require an overall length of the runway to be 4,968 feet with the existing displaced thresholds. Also recommended is a

partial parallel taxiway to provide access to the most active runway end or a full taxiway linking both runway ends to the apron and terminal areas. A subsequent phase of the report will examine the need for a second, crosswind runway.

Willard Airport



The Willard Airport is open to the public and is located just south of and parallel to the commercial corridor located along U.S. Route 224. The runway measures 4,028 by 65 feet, and the surface is asphalt in good condition. There are medium intensity edge lights. Fuel is available on site, provided by Willard Aviation.

There are 3 aircraft based on the field: 1 single engine airplanes and 2 single engine ultralights. The airport averages 52 airport operations per week, with 92 percent being transient general aviation and 7 percent being local general aviation (<1% military).

Wakeman Airport (Erie County)

A third airport, the Wakeman Airport, is located just northeast of Huron County along S.R. 60. The airport has available fuel, hangars, and tie downs. Its runway is 3,800 feet by 55 feet, with asphalt paving in excellent condition. There are 24 aircraft based at the airport, 22 single engine planes and 2 multi-engine aircraft. The airport averages 28 operations daily, with 99 percent being local general aviation, and 1 percent transient general aviation. There are no published instrument procedures for this airport.

Railroads



Huron County is served by six rail lines. The following is a description of those lines:

1. The northern tier of the county is served by a line owned and operated by the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad. This line serves agricultural and business needs along its route, including grain elevators (West Clarksfield, Hartland Station, and Monroeville). The route travels from the east in close proximity to S.R. 18, and runs through the center of Norwalk, Monroeville, and Bellevue.
2. A main line of the Norfolk Southern Railroad cuts diagonally through the very northwestern corner of the county in Bellevue. This line accesses a major rail yard facility in Bellevue, which extends northeast from the City into Erie county.
3. The southern tier of the County is served by a CSX line that extends south of New London, then through Greenwich and west to Willard, where CSX operates a large rail yard and major switching point.



4. Another CSX line traversing the south end of the County travels from the northeast through New London and Greenwich, in a southwesterly alignment into Richland County.

5. Wheeling and Lake Erie also operates a line that switches, by agreement, into the CSX line in New London, which it utilizes between New London and Greenwich

before traveling southwesterly to Plymouth on its own alignment.

6. A short line is operated by the Ashland Railway, extending north from Plymouth at the County line to Willard, connecting with the CSX yard in Willard.

The above lines can collectively provide rail access to Bellevue, Monroeville, Norwalk, Willard, Plymouth, Greenwich, and New London. Wakeman and North Fairfield have no rail access.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio lists 91 rail crossings in Huron County. Forty of these crossings involve the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway Co., thirty involve CSX Transportation, Inc., seven involve the Ashland Railway, and fourteen involve Norfolk Southern. Most of the ninety-one listed are at-grade. The County and its Emergency Management Agency have proactively pursued funding and approval for grade separations at key locations. Grade separations have been constructed on Townsend Avenue in Greenwich, on Old State Road in Greenwich Township, on Section Line 30 at the western end of the Willard CSX yard, on Biglow Parkway in New London, on S.R. 269 on the south side of Bellevue, and U.S. 250 north of U.S. 224.

In addition to the effort aimed at grade separations, the County and its Emergency Management Agency have obtained funding to install new lights and gates at some twenty priority crossings, with additional upgrades in the planning and construction stage. The Huron County Engineer's Office also now maintains a rumble strip program at dangerous intersections and railroad crossings. It is recommended that these efforts be continued, as rail crossing safety is a major concern throughout the County.

Existing Transportation Plans in Huron County

Huron County Comprehensive Plan

The most recent Comprehensive Plan for Huron County was developed in the 1970's. That plan listed the following goals for the transportation element: reduce the probability of accidents, reduce travel time and effort, reduce vehicle operating costs, maximize the rate of return on capital investments in the transportation system, minimize dislocation of people and disruption of the economy, and promote a better regional environment. These goals are still relevant today, although the priority projects as listed in that document have changed over time.

The plan found US 250 north of Norwalk to be the only highway segment where volume exceeded capacity. However, several areas where the volume to capacity ratio indicated a need for upgrading included segments of US 20 east of Norwalk, US 250 from Norwalk to

Fitchville, US 224 west of SR 13, SR 103 on both sides of Willard, SR 61 between Plymouth and New Haven, and SR 60 south of New London. Recognized major traffic generators within the county included the center of Norwalk, industries in southeast Willard, and the rail yards in Willard and Bellevue. It was also noted that recreational facilities such as Cedar Point generate traffic that must be handled by Huron County roads. Through traffic routes in the county include US 20, 224, and 250 and State Routes 4, 13, and 18; US 250 and SR 4 are especially important because of job opportunities and recreation facilities in Erie County (these linkages are still true today).

One guiding principle described in the plan is the benefit of separating heavy through traffic and significant areas of local traffic. Recommendations for the major arterials in Huron County included a limited access U.S. bypass around and to the south of Bellevue connecting SR 4 south of the railroads; purchase of additional right of way east of Norwalk for future expansion of US 20 to four traffic lanes, with a bypass recommended around the south side of Wakeman; Relocating US 224 as a limited access highway; extending the Norwalk US 20 bypass to the north and east side of Milan; and widening SR 13 to allow for two additional traffic lanes in the future. In addition, 24-foot pavement was recommended for all minor arterials, including SR 4, 18, 60, 61, and 99, as well as potentially Fitchville River Road, Peru-Olena Road, and SR 162.

Another recommendation was to consider a trucking terminal or transfer point within key industrial areas. Sites with both highway and rail access could provide an opportunity for “piggyback” or other methods of freight movement integration. While a Triple Crown facility has been developed north of Bellevue, some accommodation of intermodal transportation may still have value in other portions of the county, including Norwalk, should industry realize a return on such an investment.

Community-Level Planning

Some Huron County communities have completed their own comprehensive plans, while others have transportation planning priorities or capital improvements plans. The following is a summary of those plans and priorities, focusing on recommendations that have more countywide than local community significance.

Norwalk Comprehensive Plan

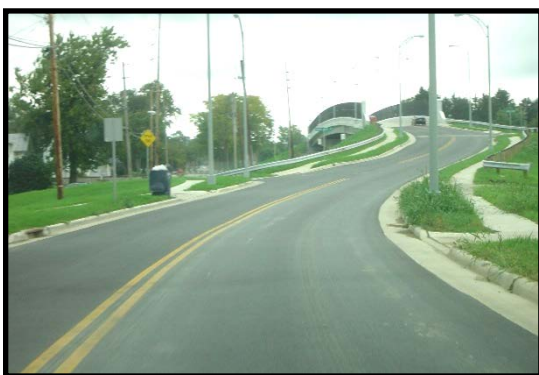
Norwalk's comprehensive plan was completed in 2006, and includes a chapter on transportation. The issue of “smooth and efficient flow of traffic” was covered by recommending better access management, especially on major thoroughfares, limiting driveway access and movements in specific areas.

Another recommendation concerns the development of improved truck routes. If it is assumed that a new US 250 bypass is unlikely, an alternative recommendation is to enhance existing routes, including Greenwich-Milan Townline Road (Done by County Engineers), as well as Old State Road to Main Street (Have not heard of this, although project slated for 2016, 2017 on Old State), with additional improvements to a route that would include Main Street, Akron Road, Schauss Avenue, and Ontario and Republic Streets (have not heard of this, but have approached ODOT twice to use this as a US 250 ALT Route).

Among the other recommendations developed by a steering committee and resource panel are

the construction of a series of uniform and distinctive “gateway” signs at major thoroughfares’ entrances to the city (US 250, SR61, Akron and Cleveland Roads)- ODOT’s Gateway Landscape Program (GLP) for funding this, ended in 2014. The extension of several streets to open up undeveloped land within and adjacent to the city, extending Industrial Parkway within the Firelands Industrial Park to Old State Road and SR 601 (which will open a new traffic route in the northeast portion of the city, especially for truck traffic), expanding a system of walking and bicycle trails within the city and linking them to the “Rails to Trails” system (Done 2015), support to the Norwalk-Huron County Airport planning efforts, building a stronger alliance with the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad in order to maximize local industrial use of that asset, developing industrial sites that can be accessed by rail, and increased partnering with providers to maximize the benefit of public transportation to residents and employees.

Bellevue Comprehensive Plan



The City of Bellevue also completed a 2005 comprehensive plan. A major recommendation concerned the development of a US 20 bypass, which has been a subject of planning studies in Bellevue for decades. Recommended strategies in the 2005 plan included striving to have the bypass, including two grade separations (west of 269 and on SR 4) listed in ODOT's planning priority list, and investing local funds in preliminary planning activities. Until such a bypass would become reality, it was recommended that the City and

Bellevue Development Corporation work to create a roadway system in the SR 269 south area *New road/rail grade separation at SR 269 in Bellevue* that may include an eastern extension of County Line Road to Prairie Road through the future industrial area. This would require developers and businesses locating in the area to construct driveways and roadways that provide a common access to SR 269 such that constructed, existing roads will fit into the “big picture”. Further, selected county and township roads in the area would be upgraded to meet truck standards.

Among the other Bellevue transportation recommendations were working toward rail grade separations in priority areas (a separation at SR 269 just south of the central business district was completed in mid-2006); coordination with the Bellevue School District to identify traffic problems; development of an alternative access route from the northeast industrial area to SR 4, working with Groton and Lyme Townships; preparation of a corridor and access management plan for US 20 East and West, and SR 269 North and South, and development of gateway designs and signage.

Other Huron County Community Transportation Plans and Priorities

The **City of Willard** has planned and carried out a widening of US Route 224 throughout the city to three lanes, allowing for turning movements that will not obstruct traffic flow. This helps alleviate a bottleneck along the US 224 corridor, which sees some 12,000 vehicles daily, of which 30 percent is truck traffic.

Another issue in Willard is the fate of the Willard Airport, which provides service for a minimal number of business flights, and which only offers tie-downs for aircraft. The

existing location will always have limitations because it is surrounded by other land uses, including commercial businesses along the US 224 corridor to the north. An assessment of its usefulness (to hobbyists and private owners, and uses including life flights, as well as business use) and development alternatives (including relocating the airport entirely) needs to be conducted.

The **Village of Monroeville's** comprehensive plan identified no major transportation improvements involving new or extended thoroughfares or arterials. However, transportation issues cited included heavy truck traffic on US 20, a lack of safe areas for pedestrian movement across US 20, a lack of a sufficient truck turning radius on SR 99 and SR 547, lack of a rail spur to serve the Monroeville Industrial park on US 20 on the west side of town, and a lack of cooperation by the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad.



The **Village of New London** has completed a significant transportation project with the opening of a newly aligned Biglow Parkway (pictured at left) and rail grade separation. This roadway offers direct access from SR 60 and 162 to some significant acreage of potential industrial property, including the area known as the “tile yard”.

Other communities did not list specific transportation projects with countywide implications.

Transportation plans and Priorities of the Huron County Engineer's Office

The Huron County Engineer's office is responsible for the maintenance of some 228 miles of the County Road system, and works with Townships to provide funding for the improvement of their roadways. Duties of the Engineer's office include maintenance and repair of those county roads, traffic control, safety improvements, mowing, and snow removal. The office also serves as the engineering advisor to the County's nineteen townships. While some roadway construction is completed every year, the amount of roadway improved diminishes with the limited revenue sources and rising cost of construction.

In addition to performing its duties in inspecting and evaluating the load carrying capacity of bridges, the Engineer's office has become instrumental in improving the County's bridges, which were typically constructed prior to the development of larger agricultural equipment with greater load requirements. The County has 389 bridges, and the Engineer has taken an active role in constructing new bridges in-house, forming bridge components in the Highway Garage year-round. An inventory sheet shows 25 small bridge and 25 large bridge projects in varying degrees of completion, as well as seven culvert projects. Bridges are largely constructed using Issue I and Gas Tax revenues; \$11 million in bridge construction has been completed over the past fifteen years.

The Engineer has identified drainage as a major issue that needs to be addressed in Huron County. A long-range storm water management plan is needed, and sources of revenue for drainage along the 400-mile roadway system need to be identified.

With regard to priority roadways, the Engineer notes that the maintenance of certain roadways, specifically Section Line 30, Old State Road, New State Road, Greenwich-Milan Town Line Road, and Town Line 12 provide secondary routes for truck and other traffic, in addition to State Route 162, which is maintained by ODOT.

Priority projects that should be undertaken in Huron County, in the view of the Engineer, include the rail-roadway grade separations on SR 13 and US 250 at the CSX line, which are in various stages of final planning and implementation, and improvements to Greenwich-Milan Town Line Road northeast of US 250, including two wide lanes and a significant berm, as well as raising the profile of the road, to serve its growing function as a Norwalk bypass alternative and direct route to such destinations as Norwalk Raceway Park, the Norwalk-Huron County Airport, and the Village of Milan.

Access Management

With an increase in use of a number of corridors, and with the continual addition of new driveways and roadways to access new housing and business, it is recommended that the county consider the adoption of an access management plan. Access management programs seek to limit and consolidate access along major roadways, adding to the safety and efficiency of roadways. The following are some important principles of access management that should be observed in transportation planning:

1. It is important to design and manage roadways according to the primary functions they are expected to serve.
2. Limit direct access to major roadways. Roadways that serve higher volumes of regional through traffic need more access control to preserve their function. Frequent and direct property access is more compatible with local and collector roadways.
3. Long, uniform spacing of intersections and signals on major roadways enhances the ability to coordinate signals and ensure continuous movement of traffic at the desired speed. Signals should be located to favor through movements.
4. Access connections too close to intersections can cause serious traffic conflicts. The functional area of intersections and interchanges (the area where motorists are responding to the intersection) should be preserved.
5. Limit the number of conflict points. Simplifying the driving task and minimizing the conflict points contributes to improved traffic operations and fewer collisions.
6. Conflict areas should be separated. Drivers need sufficient time to address one set of potential conflicts before facing another. The necessary spacing between conflict areas increase as travel speed increases, to provide adequate perception and reaction time.
7. Remove turning vehicles from through traffic lanes. Turning lanes allow drivers to decelerate gradually out of the through lane and wait in a protected area for an opportunity to complete a turn. This reduces the conflict between turning vehicles and through traffic.

8. Use non-traversable medians to manage left turn movements. Medians channel turning movements on major roadways to controlled locations, and can be especially effective in improving roadway safety.
9. Provide a supporting street or circulation system. A supporting network of local and collector streets can accommodate development as well as unified property access and circulation systems. Commercial strip development with separate driveways for each business forces even short trips onto arterial roadways, reducing safety and impeding mobility.

Huron County can encourage officials to carry out access management principles without adopting regulations. However, such formal implementation is an option. Townships of under 15,000 population may not adopt access management regulations if the county has adopted county regulations. Also, access management regulations do not apply to subdivisions that are subject to plat approval under Ohio Revised Code section 711.05 or 711.10, and they do apply to subdivisions subject to approval without a plat under section 711.131, where minor subdivisions or lot splits are subject to access management regulations. However, prior to approval of new subdivision regulations which will incorporate a procedure for a full review, Huron County does currently require a review of all such subdivisions by the Engineer and Soil and Water Conservation District.

Steps in the adoption of county access management regulations include a Resolution to Proceed, advisory committee appointment, preparation of the regulations by the County Engineer's office, adoption of the regulations by the Commissioners, and provisions for appeals and variances, permits and fees, and amendments. Currently, the adoption process for Huron County's new subdivision regulations is underway, and approval, adoption, and adherence to those regulations is recommended.

Policy Statements and Recommendations

The following policy statements were developed and adopted by the Steering Committee that has overseen the development of this plan. They form the basis of the transportation recommendations made within this plan.

1. Although Townline Rd. 12 is in good condition, there is need for another improved east-west roadway in the county. This can be alleviated with the improvement of US 224 to a four-lane highway and its realignment to bypass Willard. Although less costly alternatives may need to be considered in the short run, long-range planning should target the upgrade of US 224 to a four-lane, limited access highway throughout Huron County, with the four lane configuration reaching east to its intersection with I-71.
2. In order to provide proper long-range planning for roadway widening and expansion, current zoning and land use practices should incorporate mandated "super setbacks" along the US 250 and US 224 corridors, as well as along US 20 east of Norwalk. This will allow for easier land acquisition, clearance, and site preparation for future widening projects. Rights of way should be under site control, with easements. Ideally, US 250 should be of a four-lane configuration from US 224 to Erie County, where it is now four

lanes. A critical improvement is needed to reconfigure the turn and bridge at Fitchville. Additionally, in the short term, efforts should be expended to create sufficient shoulders along the two-lane Route 250. This may include converting ditches to culverts, but the safety factor associated with emergency needs to exit the travel lanes should be addressed as soon as possible.

3. Long-range planning should also continue to include consideration of a north-south bypass in Norwalk and an east-west bypass in Bellevue. The Norwalk bypass may include the aforementioned Greenwich-Milan Townline Road, with consideration to a northern extension to rejoin US 250. Several southerly alternatives for the Bellevue bypass have been described. Additionally, the aforementioned Willard US 224 bypass may be best aligned along Bullhead Road. In proposing bypass alignments, the upgrading of existing roadways should be considered where feasible.
4. In the shorter, term, Greenwich-Milan Townline Road has emerged as a de facto Norwalk bypass, and plans are underway to obtain ODOT funding to improve the road to safety standards and roadway width, 12 foot lanes and six foot graded shoulders. The portion of this roadway from US 250 north should become an extension of SR 601 and be marked as a bypass for Norwalk and direct route to Norwalk Raceway Park and other destinations to the east of Norwalk.
5. The intersection at US 224 and SR 13 should be improved to better accommodate truck traffic and turning movements. Other intersections and roadway segments requiring attention include: SR 103 south of Willard, the 99/547 intersection in Monroeville (to accommodate truck turns), US 250 and South Norwalk Road (where a right turn lane can be easily demarked along southbound US 250), and the roadway fronting the Western Reserve school complex (where a turn lane should be constructed for reasons of public safety).
6. Local officials must work within a regional context to carry the sufficient level of “weight” to be noticed and given attention in Columbus. This regional support may come from an emerging Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) being formed in Erie County. The potential for Huron County’s (or a portion of Huron County, such as the more northerly municipal areas of Norwalk, Monroeville, and Bellevue) inclusion within the MPO should be explored. Other regional affiliations may include working with the Toledo Port Authority. Further, Huron County should build a consortium with Ashland and Richland Counties for cases when a combined effort will assist in advocating for a mutually desired project.
7. Local officials should involve ODOT and its Ashland District Office in their planning efforts, in order to advocate for projects that have been deemed of high priority. Advocacy of projects with ODOT should be aggressive and consistent. Local officials should explore how to provide significant local matching funds to gain ODOT’s attention.
8. Increased rail traffic, particularly east-west traffic in southern Huron County through New London, Greenwich, and Willard, has presented increased challenges for north-



Grade crossing along SR 13 near Greenwich, slated for a Grade separation improvement.

south highway traffic. A grade separation has been completed along the newly constructed Biglow Parkway in New London, as well as Section Line 30 in Willard, and grade separations on SR 13 and US 250 north of US 224 are in the final planning and construction bidding stages, respectively. Additional safety improvements within the County include lights and gates on county roads. The County and its affected subdivisions, with the Emergency Management Agency serving as lead agency on such projects, should continue to advocate for and support these improvements, with a prioritization of need for crossing improvements, and the ultimate goal of lights and gates, if not grade separations, for every crossing.

9. Early stage planning is underway for high-speed passenger rail between Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. It is possible that the rail route will pass through southern Huron County. County officials should monitor the progress of this project and advocate for a regional stop within the county. Such a stop could serve both the Mansfield area to the south and Cedar Point/Erie County vacation and recreation destinations to the north, although it is recognized that a Huron County stop may be counter to planning goals of expeditious through rail traffic to population centers. It may be more realistic to locate a maintenance facility for the upgraded line in Huron County.
10. Huron County's airports should be promoted and more fully publicized as community and economic development tools and resources. Funding should be sought for needed upgrades to ensure that these facilities can optimally serve their customer base of businesses and individuals. The possible relocation of the Huron County Airport should be carefully studied, contingent upon the availability of Federal and State funding to make the project locally cost-effective.
11. Drainage is a significant issue throughout the county and should be addressed by a comprehensive, prioritized plan, in order to keep roadway surfaces safe during periods of high rainfall. Plans should call for a prioritized listing of areas that flood frequently, and clearing of drainage ways and streams in a manner that is environmentally acceptable. A portion of this planning includes analysis of the current effectiveness of older County ditches and tiles and prioritization of projects to best utilize scarce funding for drainage improvements.

Chapter Eight: Infrastructure and Utilities

Historically, the provision of water and wastewater services has been the task of a number of unconnected, largely municipal systems. Huron County's three cities and seven villages have independently developed their own methods for obtaining and storing raw water, treating it, and storing and distributing treated water that meets current health standards. Likewise, each of these entities has also developed a system for collecting and treating wastewater. Potentials exist for economies of scale by combining systems, and a regional water authority, Northern Ohio Rural Water, operating under the auspices of Chapter 6119 of the Ohio Revised Code, is installing rural water lines to bring potable water to customers in a number of the County's townships.



Huron County's utilities consist of a mix of local, mainly municipal, plants and distribution systems, with increased activity in unincorporated areas by regional water providers. The provision of drinking water and adequate wastewater treatment is a basic prerequisite for development, and thus the location and availability of these basic utilities is a fundamental determinant of land use and development. Also vital is the provision of energy throughout the county, and a number of electric distribution providers serve their portions of the county, as well as natural gas providers utilizing the Columbia Gas distribution system.

Of increased importance in this technology-oriented age is the capacity for Internet access, and the degree of such accessibility varies throughout the county. As new systems and platforms are developed and for the transmission of data and information, a number of new infrastructure factors have become important, such as the quality and capacity of telephone lines (including optic fiber), cable television that also supports telephone and Internet connections, wireless broadband providers and their geographic reach, and cellular reception. The ability to support and house these new technologies, and the readiness for technologies to come, has important land use and developmental implications, as technology- and information-based businesses require access to the "information highway" just as manufacturers seek access to Interstate highways.

The following list provides the goals that were developed by the Steering Committee.

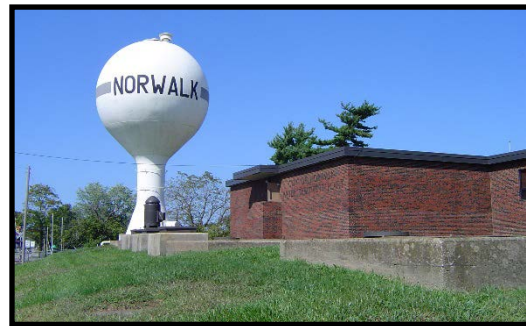
1. Evaluate the needs of county residents and businesses to ensure they are currently being met and will continue to be met as the county continues to grow.
2. Meet the needs of population growth while still addressing pollution control.
3. Encourage the properly designed and continued development and implementation of preventive maintenance practices to sustain the county's infrastructure, which in turn will allow it to operate in a cost effective manner.
4. Take steps to be able to provide water of adequate volume and pressure in areas designated for industrial or commercial growth. Target infrastructure to designated growth areas, and make leadership aware that utilities are the cornerstone of Huron County's growth.
5. Take steps to improve the reliability of power distribution throughout the county.
6. Develop a telecommunications infrastructure that provides desired broadband Internet and wireless communications accessibility.

Existing Conditions

It is important that the County and its municipalities be able to support the developmental needs of existing residential, business, and institutional entities within the County. Further, the capacity of existing infrastructure should be sufficient to accommodate planned and desired growth. A brief survey of the County's current systems can help shape a picture of the capacity of the County, viewed as a "system" of independent municipal, private, and regional providers, to accommodate balanced and desired growth, for indeed the availability of adequate levels of utilities (in terms of both the capacity of a system and access to the system through distribution lines to growth areas) will continue to be a primary determinant of new growth.

City of Norwalk

Water: Norwalk's drinking water supply originates from three reservoirs in the southeast corner of the city, drawing water from the east branch of Norwalk Creek. The water treatment plant is adjacent to the reservoir, and it has a capacity of 4.0 million gallons of treated water daily (MGD). This far exceeds the average daily use of 1.75 MGD and its peak use of 2.0 to 2.5 MGD. Recent improvements have included chemical storage upgrades. Treated water is stored in two elevated storage tanks: a 750,000-gallon tank on West Chestnut Street and a newer 500,000-gallon tank at the Norwalk reservoir.



Norwalk's Water Treatment Plant

Wastewater: Norwalk's wastewater treatment plant has a maximum capacity of 8.0 MGD, with an average daily flow of 3.0 to 3.5 MGD. Construction is underway to correct and improve upon some deficiencies at the "front end" of the process, including a new head works building and operations center, primary clarifiers, sludge storage tanks, and increasing the equalization basin to provide a buffer for storm flows. (Done 2008)

Distribution: The problems associated with combined storm and sanitary sewer lines are universal throughout Ohio's older communities, and Norwalk is no exception. Significant plans are underway to improve this system throughout the city and in several key locations, correcting inflow and infiltration problems.

Electricity: First Energy (Ohio Edison) **Local telephone:** Verizon **Cable:** Time-Warner

City of Bellevue

Water: Raw water for Bellevue is obtained from a system of five reservoirs that range from 70 million to 700 million gallons, with a combined capacity of a billion gallons. Two stand-by wells can augment the supply with some 500,000 gallons per day in drought conditions. Four of the reservoirs are within the city limits, and the largest is located five miles southeast of the treatment plant in Lyme Township. Water flows from two of the reservoirs to the other three through open ditches, and a recent study calls for the provision of a direct draw from each reservoir to the treatment plant. Bellevue is also contracted with Erie County to obtain up to 500,000 gallons per day from their system through a connection on SR 269 North.

Bellevue's water treatment plant, built in 1937 and upgraded a half-dozen times since then, has a capacity of 2.6 MGD, and typically treats 1.7 to 2.0 MGD. Bellevue has also completed an agreement with Erie County to purchase treated water from that entity.

Water is now stored in three elevated storage tanks: two with 500,000-gallon capacity, and one with 400,000 gallon capacity. Two of these tanks were constructed over the past year to equalize pressure throughout the city.

Wastewater: The City's wastewater treatment plant, constructed in 1969, is located in the northeast section of Bellevue, with a design flow of 2.0 MGD and an average daily flow of 1.1 MGD. The City has completed a \$7 million upgrade that includes a state-of-the-art treatment of bio solids, producing compost that can be used as a fertilizer that is made available to Bellevue residents.

Distribution: As Bellevue's water lines date back to the 1800's, a systematic plan has been designed for replacing aging waterlines, and new lines have been installed in the downtown area and along Center Street from the treatment plant to Southwest Street. Also have completed upgrades in the South West section of Town and Walnut St in the North East Section of town

Electricity: First Energy (Ohio Edison) **Local telephone:** Verizon **Cable:** Time-Warner

City of Willard

Water: Raw water is obtained from the west branch of the Huron River and stored in the City's reservoir located east of the City on State Route 61. The reservoir holds 2.3 billion gallons of water. The City's water treatment plant has a new design capacity of 3.2 MGD, with an average daily use of 1.14 to 1.2 MGD, with a maximum use of up to 1.7 MGD. The plant appears to be adequate for handling existing and projected demands.

Treated water is stored in two ground clearwells, each holding 750,000 gallons, and 2 elevated storage tanks holding a combined 800,000 gallons. These combined facilities hold two days' supply of water.

Wastewater: Willard's wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1993, and has a daily capacity of 4.5 MGD; average daily use is 2.3 MGD and peak use is 7.2 MGD. Normal peaks reach 3 MGD. Currently, wastewater is stored in a lagoon. The plant will be finishing an upgrade by the end of 2015. This will not change design flow, this upgrade was to replace major existing equipment.

Electricity: American Electric Power **Local telephone:** Frontier **Cable:** Time-Warner

Villages:***Village of New London:***

Water: The Village has an upground reservoir, which holds approximately 1.4 billion gallons of water. Additionally, the Village has a direct water line from the Rural Lorain Water Authority and sells them .55 MGD, in addition to selling up to .037 MGD to



Scene at the New London Reservoir

the Northern Ohio Rural Water. Daily capacity of the Village water treatment plant is 0.5 MGD, and average daily use is 0.28 MGD. Peak daily use is 0.4 MGD. Treated water is stored in a 250,000 gallon elevated storage tank. Village water lines provide water to all of surrounding New London Township as well as the Village.

Wastewater: The Village wastewater treatment plant has a daily capacity of 1.2 MGD, with an average daily use of 0.67MGD and a peak use of 1.2 MGD, approximately the capacity of the plant. Overflow is sent to an equalization basin. In 2013 the Village of New London received approximately \$6.7 million in funding through the USDA-RD for a Sanitary Sewer Overflow Elimination Project. The project started in December 2013 and is expected to be completed by June 2015.

Electricity: Firelands Electric Co-Op **Local telephone:** Verizon **Cable:** Time-Warner

Village of Monroeville:

Water: Monroeville utilizes a reservoir that was constructed in 2001, with a storage capacity of 75 million gallons. The village water treatment plant handles a capacity of 0.5 MGD, with a 2014 average and peak daily use of 154 and .336 MGD respectively. No plans exist to expand production capacity. Treated water is stored in two elevated tanks of 200,000 and 250,000 gallons respectively, and an additional 100,000 gallons is stored at the water treatment plant. Water lines are extended outside Village limits on a case-by-case basis, and aging water line replacement and looping of lines are addressed as needed and as funds are available.

Wastewater: The Village wastewater treatment plant was updated in 2013. Its designed daily capacity is 0.3 MGD, 2014 average daily use was .252 MGD, and peak daily flow was 1.866 MGD. The Village has been performing internal inspection of sanitary sewers in order to develop a plan for eliminating and reducing the infiltration/inflow problem. The Village has begun implementing sewer replacement projects based on the highest identified priorities.

Electricity: Municipal

Local telephone: Verizon **Cable:** Time-Warner

Village of Greenwich:

Water: The Village obtains its raw water from a village-owned well field capable of drawing one million gallons a day. Its water treatment plant has a daily capacity of 0.25 MGD, with an average daily use of .110MGD and a peak of .140 MGD. Greenwich has 100,000-gallon and 200,000-gallon elevated water tower. Capital outlay for the water distribution has been established for periodic replacement of Greenwich's aging system.

Wastewater: The Village wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 0.200 MGD and average daily use of .340 MGD, with peak use as high as .550 MGD. As with many rural Ohio villages, most of Greenwich's sewers are combined sanitary and storm sewers, presenting overflow problems that can exceed the design capacity of the wastewater treatment plant during storm flows. More than half of these CSO's have been eliminated with aggressive separation of storm and sewer. Established Control Plan recognized by the EPA includes more separation to follow from various financial supports through grants, loans and ratepayers.

Electricity: Greenwich owns the municipal distribution system. Electric power is received from American Electric Power transmission lines at 2,400 volts.

Local telephone: Frontier **Cable:** Time-Warner

Village of Wakeman:

Water: Water is purchased from Northern Ohio Rural Water, with a capacity of up to 250,000 gallons per day, an average daily use of 77,000 gallons, and a peak daily use of 95,000 gallons. The Village stores 100,000 gallons of treated water in an elevated storage tank. Water line replacements are undertaken when funds are available.

Wastewater: The village uses a wastewater system that combines individual septic systems with a centralized treatment plant. The capacity of the plant is .765 MGD, and average daily use is .070 MGD, with a peak daily use of .341 MGD. This relatively new system was installed in 1994.

Electricity: First Energy (Ohio Edison) **Local telephone:** Frontier
Cable: Time-Warner or North Coast Wireless Communication

Village of North Fairfield:

Water: North Fairfield obtains its drinking water from wells, and its treatment plant has a daily capacity of 0.45 MGD, with an average daily demand of 0.4 MGD and maximum demand of 0.65 MGD.

Wastewater: The Village relies upon individual septic systems on residents' lots for wastewater treatment.

Electricity: First Energy (Ohio Edison) **Local telephone:** Verizon **Cable:** Time-Warner

Village of Plymouth:

Water: The Village of Plymouth obtains treated water in sufficient quantity from the City of Willard. It has a daily capacity of 3.2 MGD and the average daily use of 1.284 MGD. The Village of Plymouth has 2 elevated water storage tanks, a 1964, 250,000 gallon tower on Riggs Street and a 2012, 100,000 gallon tower at the high school for a total of total possible capacity of 350,000 gallons.

Wastewater: The Village of Plymouth has a relatively new wastewater treatment plant built

in 2011 that has a total capacity of 2 million gallons a day. Plymouth retained one of its lagoons from the previous plant as an overflow but has 2 sludge ponds now. The average flow through the plant is .265 MGD with a maximum flow of .722 MGD. The lagoon has a maximum storage level of 16,291,144 gallons.

Electricity: Plymouth owns its poles and lines within the Municipality but is supplied power from American Electric Power and is an AMP member as well.

Local Telephone: Verizon **Cable:** Time Warner

Village of Milan:

Water: The Village of Milan provides water to its customers from an underground aquifer located southeast of town. The well field consists of four drilled wells approximately 150' deep; these wells pump water as needed through an aeration and filtration process. Chlorine and fluoride are added after the filtration process. The finished water is stored in an underground reservoir at the water plant and is pumped from there to a relatively new 500,000-gallon storage tank on State Rt. 601. The village has a daily water treatment capacity of 0.7 MGD, well above its average daily demand of 0.22 MGD. The Village undertakes an annual program where the most needed water line replacement projects are carried out with budgeted funds.

Wastewater: The Village has a wastewater treatment plant constructed in the 1980's, and the plant provides adequate flows for community needs. Daily capacity is 0.37 MGD, and a daily average flow of 0.2 MGD. There is no standing order or requirement to upgrade or alter Milan's existing processes and facilities.

Electricity: Municipal (AMP Ohio) **Local telephone:** Verizon **Cable:** Time-Warner

Northern Ohio Rural Water Huron County

A large and growing portion of unincorporated Huron County is served by Northern Ohio Rural Water (NORW), which is based on US Highway 20 in Townsend Township east of Norwalk. NORW was formed in 1988 as Erie Huron County Rural Water Authority under Chapter 6119 of the Ohio Revised Code. Since then, it has grown to encompass rural areas within Erie, Huron, Lorain, Sandusky, Seneca, Crawford and Richland Counties. NORW has the current capacity to serve Huron County residents with 3.3 million gallons of treated water daily, but is typically serving 0.8 million gallons per day, and that entity has set long term goals to serve the entire portion of rural Huron County with adequate water. Sources and amounts of water include City of Elyria (two million gallons per day), City of Lorain (minimum 250,000 gallons per day no maximum), Erie County (200,000 gallons per day), Rural Lorain County (100,000 gallons per day) and the Village of New London (100,000 gallons per day).

The NORW system provides water to over 11,500 service connections serving 31,000 residents, with over nine hundred miles of water mains, twelve pump stations, twelve water storage tanks with a combined capacity of 4.9 million gallons, and ten main line reducing valves stations. NORW supplies water to Huron County in 8 different locations.

The first and main location and service area is through a 12" water main on Hartland Center Road at the Erie County line. The water originates from a 16" main two miles north of the county line. And comes from a 750,000 gallons storage tank. The 12" main runs from the county line on Hartland Center Road to Zenobia Road. The same 12" main runs along SR 18 from Hartland Center Road to the City of Norwalk where it delivers a minimum of 150,000 gallons of water daily to the City of Norwalk. There is a booster pump station on this main that pumps water to the 200,000 and 400,000 gallon storage tanks in Hartland Township. The 12" main also supplies water to the Village of Wakeman and a 100,000 gallon storage tank in Fitchville.

The second location is a 6" main on SR 61 that supplies water to residents and businesses in northeastern Norwalk Township.

The third is a 6" main on Plank Road that supplies water to residents and businesses in the northern portion of Norwalk Township.

The fourth is a 6" main on Lovers Lane that supplies water to portions of Norwalk and Ridgefield Townships.

The fifth location is an 8" main on SR 224 that supplies water to residents and businesses in Greenwich and Ripley Townships.

The sixth location is a 6" connection with the Village of New London at the intersection of SR 60 and Cook Rd. that supplies water to Clarks field Township.

The seventh location is an 8" connection with Erie County at the intersection of SR 4 and SR 113 that supplies water to Lyme, Ridgefield, Peru, Norwich and Greenfield Townships. In 2015 this connection will also be supplied by the City of Willard's water through a connection on Niver Road.

NORW's water storage and distribution facilities within Huron County include a Master Meter Vaults in Wakeman and US 224, pump stations on Greenwich Milan Road and SR 13 and the following elevated tanks a 200,000 and 400,000 gallon tanks on Hartland Center Road near SR 18. A 100,000 gallon tank in Fitchville, and a 100,000 gallon tank in Holiday Lakes.

NORW purchased the Holiday Lakes water system in 2008 and was operating the 2 water plants that fed the system. The water was very hard and the water plants were in so bad shape they were beyond repair. We ran a water main from our SR 4 tank and installed a pump station in Havana and by April 1st 2009 NORW was filling the 100,000 gallon tank in Holiday Lakes with clean potable water from Lake Erie (Sandusky Water).

In general, the above described plans depict a developmental push toward the south and west from the initial base of Huron County's more northeasterly townships, where lines have existed in Norwalk, Townsend, Wakeman, Bronson, Hartland, Clarksfield and Fitchville Townships.

Efforts have been made in recent years to coordinate the growth of NORW with the expansion of the City of Norwalk. NORW has worked out a protocol for determining whether the municipal system of NORW will supply water to specific areas just beyond the city limits, where future growth and annexation may be likely. The goals are set forth in the Norwalk comprehensive plan.

Huron County Landfill

The Huron County Landfill ceased landfill operations in the late 1990's, but the site is still active as a transfer station. Currently, Huron County's waste haulers deliver solid waste to the county-owned transfer station where it is transported to the Erie County landfill located in Milan, Ohio. Previously, solid waste was transported to Ottawa (Allied Waste) & Richland (Rumpke) Counties. The Huron County Transfer Station manages an average of 36,000 tons of solid waste per year plan.

The landfill site is on Town Line Road (C-131) in Greenfield Township, one mile west of SR 61. Plans call for continuing the transfer station's operations at this location, because it is centrally located within the County and within equal proximity of the major markets of Norwalk and Willard. The landfill property extends to 269



Entrance to the Huron County Landfill

acres, of which only 17 acres were used for landfill operations. The remaining property served as a buffer to control land uses and development. Currently, the majority of the land is farmed by contract. The more southerly acreage is on environmentally sensitive lands near the West Branch of the Huron River, which is set aside as restored wetlands in a contract with the Ohio Department of Transportation.

In 2014, the transfer station received 36,260 tons of solid waste, of which 30,077 tons were "general" (a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial refuse, received from haulers and municipalities), 5,310 tons were hauled in directly from industrial users, and 872 tons were construction debris.

ased on the Huron County Solid Waste Management 2014 Annual District Report, Huron County residents and commercial businesses recycled/reduced 7,918.79 tons of recyclable material. Additionally, industrial or manufacturing faculties recycled 68,987 tons of material. The three largest products recycled in Huron County are paper, metal and cardboard.

Existing Utility and Infrastructure Plans in Huron County

The previous County-wide plan in the 1970's was "designed to provide a coordinated plan for the development or expansion of utilities throughout those portions of the county where concentrated development is to be directed in the years ahead", pulling a countywide study together with the plans for the individual cities, thus creating a regional utilities plan. The plan addressed several components of an overall utilities strategy: The findings of that plan are briefly summarized here to provide some historical context with which to frame future planning decisions.

Storm water was viewed as an urban and rural issue. In rural areas, natural drainage ways should be preserved, while urban areas should operate with separated storm and sanitary sewer systems (which was not always the practice in the 1970's). In the absence of costly separated systems, the plan recommended holding lagoons, where excess flows could be held and treated under controlled circumstances at under peak times. While the importance of the county's watersheds, particularly related to the Huron and Vermilion Rivers, was stated, it was also recommended that the river valleys should be preserved for open space and maintained for unimpeded stream flows. Any emerging urban pattern should preserve the natural contour and character of the land.

Sanitary Sewers were noted to be combined systems in most communities. Since this report was published, EPA mandates and orders have accelerated some communities' plans to separate their sewers and reduce inflow. It was noted that, generally speaking, only areas within municipal corporate boundaries were provided with sanitary sewer service. The plan cited a 1971 report that indicated that "none of the existing treatment plants in Huron County are providing adequate treatment of sewage." Fortunately, the level of treatment has improved in the intervening decades, additional users have been mandated to connect with the systems, and measurements of downstream pollutants have largely diminished. One issue that remains, however, is the inability of some county soils to provide adequate leaching for on-site rural septic systems. This unsuitability of soils will continue to deter development in many unincorporated portions of the county.

In terms of planning, the report projected that most future urban growth would take place in the Huron River watershed, and that communities developing wastewater treatment facilities in the southern portion of the county would be impacting those communities downstream, to the north. The plan conceptualized the construction of a number of strategically placed regional waste treatment plants that serve areas beyond specific municipal boundaries, with smaller plants serving growth area "subdistricts" installed in the more short term. The plan advocated for a more regional approach, where annexation would not be a prerequisite for a municipality's water or sewer service, and with compensating equalization of taxes to pay for services.

To date, the provision of sanitary sewers has remained largely within the province of the municipalities of Huron County, impacting land uses in that heavy users of sanitary sewer services are drawn to municipal areas or their urban fringes, where they can be affordably connected to existing systems.

Water service: The report noted that water resources were very limited in portions of the county, with a significant underground supply generally along SR 61 from the southern edge of the county north to the Erie County line, yielding a reported 60 to 200 gallons per minute. Milan, Greenwich, and North Fairfield draw their water supplies from wells. For the most part, however, the county's water is obtained by pumping it from the county's streams to upground reservoirs. The plan cited an Ohio Department of Natural Resources report that the Huron River should yield some 77 billion gallons per year, and the Vermilion River another 57 billion gallons. It was noted, however, that in 1968, more than 2.3 million gallons of water were hauled into some of the township areas and more than 63 percent of that was for domestic or residential usage. Despite this fact, the plan noted that "Future growth of Huron County is not expected to be restricted by a lack of water. If there are limitations to growth, it is more likely that this will result from the cost of piping water long distances. Therefore, the alternative is to control the location of intense development in order to keep the cost of servicing with water at a reasonable level." This recommendation holds today as well.

Additional regional upground reservoirs were proposed for Sherman Township (serving Bellevue) and in the vicinity of North Fairfield (to serve the mid section of the county), and it was suggested that the City of Norwalk should construct a low level dam on the East Branch of the Huron River to pipe additional water to their reservoirs. As with sanitary sewerage, some means or vehicle for water services that "transcend political boundaries" was suggested, through a "Huron County Water Authority". The plan did not foresee the emergence of a Northern Ohio Water Authority, which has arranged to purchase and obtain

water from such sources as Erie County and the City of Elyria (both with intakes on Lake Erie) and the Village of New London.

Other Topics: The plan discussed the potential for the **Huron County Landfill** to continue to collect and store 100 tons of waste daily. Since the plan's development, the Landfill has been closed and its site includes a recycling and transfer station; material is transported from this central Huron County site to landfills in nearby counties. The plan found no shortage of **electrical power** in the county, with generating capacity in excess of anticipated demands. The plan recommended concentrated land uses that allow for the most efficient, economical distribution and delivery of electricity and natural gas.

Norwalk Comprehensive Plan 2006

The 2006 comprehensive plan for the City of Norwalk included a chapter devoted to utilities and infrastructure. Among its recommendations were the following:

- Sites and facilities for new and expanding businesses should have access to suitable water and wastewater treatment capacity, as well as sufficient electric power and natural gas. Further, methods should be employed to ensure that the needs of City businesses, institutions, and residents are being met.
- Underground utility lines should be replaced as needed, including completion of the City's sewer separation program and the construction of new or expanded sewer trunk lines, with funds budgeted for such improvements and for operation and maintenance.
- Alternatives and policies regarding the financing of infrastructure improvements should be explored to assist desirable development. Methods could include Tax Increment Financing. In cases where development will occur outside the City limits, the City and Township should explore partnering through a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) or Cooperative Economic Development Agreement (CEDA) to share and distribute revenues.
 - Consider extending water and sewer service to the east, with potential line extensions along U.S. 20 to the north, S.R. 601 to the east, and S.R. 18 to the south.
- Continue to coordinate with the Northern Ohio Rural Water Authority, including use of the established protocol for serving areas near the City.
- Commit to achieve a connection with a raw or treated water provider on the Lake Erie grid. The ability to obtain water from Lake Erie can be a backup to the existing water supply from reservoirs. This connection can potentially be made by using the City-owned right-of-way along a former rail line running north from Norwalk to the Milan area. (Done with connection to NORW in 2010)

Bellevue Comprehensive Plan 2005

The 2005 Bellevue Comprehensive Plan included the following recommendations regarding utilities and infrastructure:

- With regard to **water**, the City will continue to implement the necessary improvements to replace aging waterlines, increase water capacity, improve water treatment, and meet new

regulations to provide residents with a safe and adequate water supply. Strategies include budgeting funds for replacement of water lines, scheduling improvements to meet future water quality standards, providing capacity for reservoirs #4 and #5 to tie directly into the water treatment plant, executing an agreement with Erie County to provide additional water, and ramping up efforts to supply Flat Rock, as well as Lyme and York Townships. (Note: Lyme Township is in northwest Huron County, and NORW intends to service a significant portion of the township in the near future). An agreement with Erie County is in place

- In the area of **wastewater**, the overall goal is to continue to maintain and upgrade the wastewater treatment plant and collection system as needed to provide adequate service. This includes investigating the purchase or option of land north of the existing plant for expansion, and providing a buffer of green space surrounding the WWTP to protect future land uses.
- The City has also set a goal regarding **fiber optics**, considered an economic development tool. The goals are for the City and Bellevue Development Corporation to study the need and potential for providing high-speed fiber, including meeting with other communities that have initiated such a project, surveying local business to determine needs, study best practices, and identify financing opportunities to support the installation of a fiber optics system.

The **City of Willard's** water policy is that they will extend lines outside the City limits when asked and when it is cost effective to do so. However, the City will not extend sanitary sewer lines without an annexation agreement. Plans call for development of two ground clearwells to hold another 750,000 gallons of treated water. Sewer separation remains a need in Willard, but it is not a top priority.

Village Plans for Infrastructure Improvements

Individual Villages have created some plans for further growth or improvement to their infrastructure. In **Monroeville**, the extension of water lines to areas outside the Village is considered on a case-by-case basis. The Village has considered extending water to the north on River Road and west on Route 20. The limited user base makes the cost of extending water lines to these areas cost prohibitive. The Village also works to loop dead-end lines to improve flow and pressure. Monroeville's sanitary sewer system is subject to considerable infiltration and inflow of storm water, and plans are underway to undertake the necessary sewer separation and other measures, coupled with capital improvements to the wastewater treatment plant, to lessen the overflow.

In **Greenwich**, an additional 200,000-gallon tank was erected in 2001 to hold treated water. Like most villages, Greenwich also has overflow problems because of the predominance of combined sewers; combined sewers are still being separated within the Village. Grant proposal for 2016 has been submitted for separation of Seminary Street in the Village. Water lines have been extended east of Greenwich to SR 13, and along New Street to Plymouth East and Greenwich-Milan Town Line Road. In 2015 the Village of Greenwich as opened a Class IV registered compost site. This site is located in the Greenwich Reservoir Park.

In **New London**, sewer separation is a large priority, with an EPA mandate to reduce infiltration and inflow. The Village intends to smoke test and videotape its systems, then derive cost estimates and a “storm sewer master plan” for financing and construction of improvements.

In 2013 the Village of New London received \$6,648,000.00 in funding from the USDA-RD. \$3,724,000.00 in loan funding and \$2,924,000.00 in grant funding. The goal of this project was to eliminate the Sanitary Sewer Overflow at the sewer plant. This was done by installing new sewer main through the Village along with new manholes. Many of the homes on South Main Street & First Street had to have the sewer lines relocated from the back of the properties to the front. The project started in December 2013 and is expected to be completed by June 2015.

Technology Infrastructure

In the twenty-first century, Broadband computer access to the Internet and cell telephone availability has become as important to some businesses and residents as such basic infrastructure items as water and sewer. Huron County is served by a number of Internet Service Providers and wireless telephone services. Most municipalities are also served by Time Warner for television cable connectivity, and Time Warner also offers cable Internet (“Roadrunner”) service as well as digital telephone service. DSL service is available in many areas from Verizon, and a number of local providers also offer dial-up, DSL, or wireless service.



Cell Tower near US RT 250

Public access to the Internet can be gained at several public library facilities throughout the county. However, users may have limitations imposed on them in order to serve everyone's needs.

While local wired telephone service throughout the county is provided by Frontier, there are a number of wireless cell phone services that can be received in the county. As technology continues to improve, there are very few notable areas within Huron County that receives inadequate service. It is still important to advocate for satisfactory reception throughout the county, for safety reasons as well as for business and personal use. There is also reason for local officials to advocate for toll-free calling throughout Huron County.

Local officials should also advocate for the proper placement and provision of telecommunications services throughout the county. For purposes of local planning, it is important to note that the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 defined the ability of local government to regulate telecommunications through zoning. While the Act forbids local government from using zoning to prohibit such uses as communications towers, it asserts the right of local governments to protect the public interest through zoning, by encouraging the co-location of transmission devices operated by competing companies on the same tower, for example. Counties must deal with requests to construct such towers in a timely and nondiscriminatory fashion. It is recommended that the county develop comprehensive policies to address future requests to construct such towers.

It may be advantageous to promote joint ventures with local governments. Some local governments have invited private telecommunications providers to bid on construction of towers to be shared with the local government for the installation of public safety communications, along with the private company's needs.

Coordinating Infrastructure Development with Orderly Growth

In general, this comprehensive plan encourages development patterns where most new growth and development occurs within or contiguous to existing cities and villages. When this tenet is followed, the cost of extending necessary infrastructure is minimized. As a corollary to this basic guideline, industrial site planning should concentrate on designated growth areas such as planned industrial parks, where multiple facilities, both existing and planned, can utilize a single sewer or water line extension. Huron County is served by a number of economic development practitioners and offices. Those entities and individuals should continue their existing practice of identifying and promoting established industrial sites and parks that can be marketed for intensive future investment and development, and coordinating the selection and focused marketing of such sites with municipal and county officials who can ensure adequate and cost-effective provision of infrastructure, as well as adequate sources of energy to accommodate industrial processes.

In areas where development is driving the need for water or wastewater treatment facilities in non-municipal areas, the County should encourage the use of alternative treatment technologies when such methods are cost-effective and functional. Such technologies worth possible consideration may include decentralized systems, land treatment, wastewater irrigation, and mound or wetland systems.

In cases where utility extensions should be made to such areas, all communities and utility providers should have in place a specified policy for determining the method by which such extensions are made. In such cases, when the proposed development is compatible with this Land Use Plan as well as any applicable local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan, utility service should be extended but limited to the generalized areas targeted for growth. This is important because the construction of utility extensions, as well as roadways, can often determine the direction and location of growth throughout the County, and will in turn determine future land use patterns. For example, the size and capacity of a water line can determine whether an area is suitable for industrial processes that require a significant water supply. However, it is also possible, if determined economically feasible, to upsize a water line in order to accommodate growth plans.

The construction of a large-capacity water line will not prepare a site or area for "urbanizing" growth unless it is accompanied by the provision of a means for wastewater collection. For example, development has been somewhat hindered in the vicinity of Summit Racing Equipment Motorsports Park (formerly Norwalk Raceway Park) in Norwalk Township because, although potable water is available, there is no sanitary sewer system in the area. It is proposed that the provision of sanitary sewer lines, coupled with possible upgrades to the water distribution system, will help spur further development and increase development options in this designated growth area.

It is important to analyze the potential impact and benefit of utility extension projects in rural areas such as Huron County. While it is true that rural water and sewer facilities generate private investment and public funds and increase the property tax base, it is also

true that the average urban facility, typically costing only about one-third more than the average rural facility, has been found to create about twice the number of permanent jobs, induce three times more private investment, leverage twice as much in public funds, and add three times more to the local property tax base, as reported in the USDA publication “Rural America” in winter 2002. In planning for such investments, local governments should project their likely benefits, including revenues through tap-ins and utility bill payments, as well as other measurable impacts such as jobs and payroll created, tax base increases, and, on the other end of the balance sheet, public costs to extend and maintain services the new service area.

Policy Statements and Recommendations

1. **The county has increased its access to a more substantial source of raw or treated water.** For example, NORWA currently obtains 80% of its water from Lake Erie. Contracts are also in place between NORWA and the cities of Norwalk and Willard, as well as the Village of New London.
2. **Options should be investigated in which larger municipal sources of water furnish treated water to nearby smaller developed areas and villages.** Cooperative efforts should result in the provision of water for all within the County. This recommendation has been identified in the past but has not been addressed. One potential area that could eventually be served by an outside entity is North Fairfield. Either NORWA, Norwalk, or Willard could provide water to this village’s customers, who currently obtain village water from shallow wells. Similarly, New London’s reservoir could supply Greenwich. Currently, the infrastructure exists to connect to these locations. An emergency connection from NORWA already exists for the Village of Greenwich. In such cases, the County could help facilitate such a project and help in finding funding or endorsing applications. Lowest-cost alternatives that are the most logistically feasible (such as when NORWA already has adequate lines within close proximity of a potential service area) should be recommended.
3. **Huron County water providers should work to collaborate and negotiate with Northern Ohio Regional Water Authority** in determining their respective service areas. Planned industrial growth areas must receive sufficient water, with hydrants, to provide for necessary fire flows, as well as to serve any anticipated manufacturing processes. Due to the extensive infrastructure countywide, NORWA currently has the ability to provide adequate water services for the above mentioned items, to a potential industry, by the time that the industry is built and ready to operate. Planning between water providers, as well as economic development, is still recommended to ensure a successful, timely process for new business.
4. **Another land use that may require additional infrastructure is rural recreational development.** Erie County has provided water and sewer service to a number of significant recreational facilities such as the new Kalahari resort and convention center. Huron County could be the site for growth resulting from the growing significance of the area as a tourism destination.
5. As smaller wastewater treatment plants become obsolete or fall under mandates, **communities should explore regional options with larger wastewater treatment plants** linking smaller communities.
6. **Alternative sewage treatment technologies should be promoted** in areas that exhibit special problems where there are documented health or environmental issues. Such alternatives as maintenance of septic systems, decentralized systems, and gray water

systems should be explored.

7. **Local officials should obtain input from industrial and commercial businesses regarding their energy utility (especially electrical) needs** and whether current and projected needs are being met. This information could be obtained through the retention and expansion program undertaken by HCDC. Data on business needs in areas where needs or projections are not being met should be communicated to the relevant utility provider, with provision for continued communication until needs can be met. Similarly, utility companies should inform local governments of planned improvements. A special need is for industrial parks to be in communication and coordinated with electricity and other utility (natural gas, broadband) suppliers to ensure that the needs of current and potential future users will be met in a manner that makes Huron County competitive as a business location.
8. **All areas of Huron County should be served by adequate cellular telephone service**, and providers should be informed of any area in the county where service is inadequate. Currently, there are very few areas that are inadequate but improvement is still needed in some areas.
9. **All areas of Huron County should be served by a level of Internet service that corresponds to the needs of the specific land use for that area.** For example, designated industrial growth areas should be able to obtain adequate broadband service, through T-1 lines, cable service, DSL, wireless, or other means. Key target areas should also be developed that have wireless capabilities as well. Many areas within the county have no broadband capacity. However, many agricultural concerns have turned to satellite service for GPS and other needs, rather than broadband.
10. The **Huron County Transfer Station** should continue to maximize its ability to handle recyclables of all types.
11. Industrial sites, parks, and planned growth areas should be planned and located in **designated growth areas** that can be served by adequate infrastructure.
12. **Stormwater management should be addressed throughout the county** by aggressively eliminating combined sewers, including provisions for retention and other mitigation measures in new subdivision regulations, enclosing highway ditches where feasible, and including stormwater standards within a county thoroughfare plan.

Tax Sharing Provisions: JEDDs and CEDAs

Ohio law provides for the facilitation of cooperative economic development projects between a municipality and one or more adjacent Townships. One option is a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD). A Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) is an arrangement in [Ohio](#) where one or more [municipalities](#) and a [township](#) agree to work together to develop township land for commercial or industrial purposes.

The benefits to the municipality are:

- Income tax revenues increase.
- Infrastructure utilities typically increase, thereby increasing tax revenue.
- Economic issues between townships and cities or villages are solved in a cooperative manner.

The benefits to the township are:

- It does not lose prime development land
- It can still collect property taxes as well as a portion of the income tax collected
- It normally receives water from the municipality, which it may not otherwise have

To create a JEDD, the municipality and township work together to create a contract. This contract specifies details such as how taxes are levied and shared, annexation prohibitions, and water rates. The communities then vote on the agreement. The issue must pass in each community for the JEDD to be approved.

Ohio Revised Code Section 715.69 through 715.90 govern JEDDs and provide detailed information on the creation and governing of JEDDs.

Another economic development tool is the **Cooperative Economic Development Agreement, or CEDA**. Cooperative economic development agreements (CEDA's) were established for the purpose of facilitating cooperation between and among local governments to promote economic development or providing appropriate public services to further growth in a local community

The primary parties to an agreement are municipal and township governments. The county may be a party to an agreement. County participation, however, requires both a resolution of the board and the separate approval of each municipality and township that are parties to the agreement. The State of Ohio or any other entity may also become a party to the agreement with the separate approval of each municipality and township that are parties to the agreement. These agreements may be entered into for any length of time and may be amended or extended at any time.

Ohio Revised Code Section 201.07 provides detailed information on the creation and governing of CEDAs.

Chapter Nine Executive Summary

It is hoped that the Huron County, Ohio Comprehensive Land Use Plan becomes a working document that has significant impact on how growth and development is managed by Huron County officials and the local jurisdictional representatives within the county boundaries.

Implementation of this report will be the responsibility of the Huron County Commissioners and the designated agencies that serve county residents. Local jurisdictions are encouraged to work with the commissioners, the Huron County Planning Commission and others to manage a consistent pattern of growth as development and redevelopment occurs throughout the county.

Use of the Plan

The utilization of the Huron County, Ohio Comprehensive Land Use Plan can occur in many ways. First and foremost is the influence it is hoped to have on future land use decisions throughout the county. As the Huron County Planning Commission and other agencies that may become involved in making land use decisions and recommendations get involved in reviewing future development proposals, it is hoped that development proposals are looked at with the following criteria in mind:

- Is the proposed development consistent with the policies and recommendations within this document?
- Is the proposed development consistent with land use patterns throughout the county?
- Is the proposed development committing land to the best use possible?

It is also recommended that when elected and appointed public officials within Huron County make future decisions on investments and development of public utilities, decisions are made that are consistent with the policies and recommendations included in this land use plan. It is also hoped that when officials throughout the county revise existing or create new land use regulations this land use plan is taken into consideration throughout the decision making process.

Updates

The last Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Huron County was completed in 2007. A lot has changed since then. It is hoped that this plan will be revisited every five years to measure the impact growth and development is having on the citizens of Huron County. Goals and policy statements should also be revisited, and revised if necessary, or new ones established based on relevancy to current conditions. The Huron County Commissioners should reconvene a task force every five years to report back on whether or not each element of this plan is relevant or revisions need to occur.

Policy Statements and Recommendations

What follows is a compilation of the Goals, Policy Statements and Recommendations that the Huron County Comprehensive Land Use Planning Task Force recommended throughout the Plan. This information is categorized by each subject area that was reviewed.

Economic Development

1.	Promote Huron County as a single location for development, understanding that communities and sites within the county may compete for a business, but that locating the business within the county is a “win” for all of the county.
2.	Zoning should help guide industrial, commercial, and service businesses to appropriate and targeted locations based on their intensity of use, and impact on adjacent and nearby uses and infrastructure (water, sewer, roadway). Zoning is helpful in this regard in municipalities and in unincorporated areas. Encourage consistency in zoning throughout the county’s townships and municipalities wherever feasible, particularly within adjacent jurisdictions. Additionally, encourage townships to develop uniformity within their zoning codes.
3.	Slow, steady growth is projected for the County. Over the next twenty years, the need for additional land for industrial development is likely. Such use should be guided to existing or future identified sites and industrial parks. County and local officials should also make provision for the assembly of large sites, to be able to respond to larger prospective projects. Maintain a countywide database of prime locations (buildings, sites, and industrial parks) for industrial development, housed at the Huron County Development Council.
4.	When industrial site needs cannot be satisfied by existing available buildings or sites within municipalities, land which is adjacent to or in close proximity to those municipalities should be given highest priority. A major reason is the availability or low development cost of infrastructure extensions, proximity to employment bases, and orderly growth considerations. Priority sites should also be located adjacent to or in close proximity to appropriate transportation routes (highway and rail), corridors, and intersections.
5.	Provision of municipal services to new industrial sites as described in #4 above can be provided through annexation. Affected local jurisdictions (municipality and township) <i>may</i> pursue the creation of a Joint Economic Development District or Cooperative Economic Development Agreement.
6.	Regardless of the pursuit of new business ventures, primary emphasis should be placed on the retention and expansion of existing businesses. Efforts should be made to accommodate expansions of businesses at their current sites whenever feasible.
7.	Huron County is located at the fringe of the Lake Erie tourism region, which continues to grow in stature as a major destination. While Huron County’s position may be considered secondary, its proximity to the lakefront counties and several destinations (such as Summit Motorsports Park) help position it for a moderate level of tourism related development. Encourage tourism-related business that benefits from the county’s rural, natural, and historic assets, but which does not exploit or denigrate those resources. Use the county’s existing network of Chambers of Commerce and other business associations to promote tourism throughout the county.

8.	Encourage and develop programs, services, and incentives that maintain Huron County's competitive advantages for business growth. These may include workforce development, financial incentives, adequate utilities, logistics for distribution of products, entrepreneurial development and counseling, and other assistance. One business amenity that is needed within the county is a facility to house business meetings ranging from small functions to larger (several hundred people) meetings.
9.	Maintain an economy of scale in supporting and coordinating local efforts and development organizations with the countywide Huron County Development Council.
10.	Support Huron County's agricultural sector, which is the primary land use in the county, by taking steps to preserve farmland and minimize its loss, and by seeking complementary businesses such as value added food processing and large scale farming operations if they conform to standards of health and environmental integrity.
11.	Encourage the continuous improvement of information and communications technology to ensure that Huron County is a competitive location for technology-based business. Takes steps to proactively position Huron County and its communities for emerging technologies.
12.	Facilitate commercial and industrial development through maintenance of a business-friendly permitting and inspection process. Explore alternatives to the existing use of an outside commercial inspection and plan approval process (through Richland County), including initiation of a Huron County office, if such an office can be self-sustaining, or dedicated staff operating from another entity (i.e. Richland County, Erie County/Sandusky).
13.	<p>Preserve those features that set Huron County apart as a business location with a desirable quality of life. Such features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Open space and recreational opportunities b. Leisure activities, including access to water, golf, walking trails, and other amenities. c. Outstanding generalist and specialist health care facilities and professionals.

Public Facilities

14.	Continue to develop public facilities that are based on a solid plan.
15.	Ensure that all public facilities are easily accessible to all persons, placed in desirable location, properly maintained and operated in a cost effective manner.
16.	Enhance city and county parks, reservoirs, and other surface water. An Effort should be made to conduct a thorough inventory throughout the County
17.	Encourage Intergovernmental collaboration.
18.	Facilitate the development of needed facilities, seeking a balance of public and private facilities, based on a needs assessment and inventory of current facilities.

Quality of Life

19.	Promote Huron County as a place to live, work, shop, obtain services, and pursue leisure activities.
20.	Include consideration of all residents in an effort to maintain and/or improve the quality of life in the county.
21.	Preserve what truly is a peaceful quality of life.
22.	Balance the effect that small town life and affordable land costs will continue to draw people to Huron County with the resulting increased demands on services.

Services

23.	Consider outsourcing county services if it would be cost effective and maintain or increase the level of service.
24.	Meet the service needs of planned expanded growth areas and industrial areas.
25.	Provide the taxpayer with the best quality services at the lowest possible cost.
26.	Maintain and/or improve the services provided to the residents of the county.
27.	Any new county government facilities should be planned with accessibility by all Huron county citizens in mind.
28.	Senior centers currently exist in Willard and Norwalk; Bellevue has its own organization that meets at the Bellevue Community Center. Plans call for a new Norwalk facility to be sited on Benedict Ave. Due to changing demographics communities should be encouraged to expand existing and develop new senior services and facilities.
29.	There is a need for meeting facilities that can be used by public and private organizations for gatherings. Currently, facilities cannot adequately accommodate larger gatherings of several hundred people.

Future Land Use

30.	Incorporate a process into land use planning that promises the highest and best use of any given site. At this time the Huron County Planning Commission and the Huron County Soil and Water Conservation District are the two agencies that are perhaps most involved in addressing land use issues on a county wide basis. Through membership most communities and interest groups are represented. The creation of a future land use map along with these policies will serve as another tool that can be used by these two organizations along with others to address this policy.
31.	Preserve prime areas for farming and protect existing farmlands where feasible. The recommendations from the Farm Land Preservation plan designate prime areas of farmland to be preserved. If the current trends of commercial and industrial development occurring along highway corridors and within incorporated areas continues this policy statement can be accomplished to some degree. The issue of large lot single family home building in unincorporated areas will have negative impacts on preserving prime farmland throughout the county, and should be considered carefully.
32.	Emphasize wise land use throughout Huron County. The comprehensive land use planning process is one that takes a long-term commitment by not only elected and appointed officials but citizens of a community as well. Consistency of thought and decision-making must occur through time and also through various terms and appointments of elected and appointed positions of government. Hopefully this Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Huron County will serve as a tool for consistency and wise land use decision making into the future.
33.	Assist in the development of uniform township zoning throughout the county, where possible. Fifteen of the nineteen townships within the county utilize zoning regulations as a land tool. Planning Commission helps to address some of the development occurring in several townships that are unzoned, along with inconsistencies in zoning.
34.	Encourage strategies that promote infill and the use of land within and adjacent to municipalities, where services and infrastructure can be provided most efficiently. There are a number of strategies, described within the plan that could be utilized to promote this type of development. Various incentives could be utilized as well. The County Planning Commission and the Huron County Development Council could be excellent conduits to facilitate these strategies
35.	Incorporate flexibility in the planning process, to allow for desired changes in future development patterns. There should always be the ability to amend or appeal the decisions made by public officials related to development patterns. There should also be the ability to make changes that will improve these patterns. A thorough review and amendment process will be an important piece of the implementation stage of this land use plan.

36.	Encourage compatible land uses along planned commercial or business corridors, in efforts to promote the highest and best use of the land while minimizing conflict in traffic circulation, drainage, water and sewer utilization, and basic community services. A pattern of land uses should be created as new development occurs along these corridors. When plans are proposed there should be mechanisms established throughout the county to provide for a thorough review by not only building officials but fire, safety, and transportation officials as well. While looking at various issues related to their respective authority, officials should also look at minimizing the potential conflicts in land use patterns. When reviewing development in this regard, there should be a smooth transition between single family and multifamily development, commercial and industrial and all of the various land use types as to how they relate to each other. Conflicts should be minimized and solutions should be explored to eliminate any potential conflicts.
37.	Encourage the use of tools that aid coordination between adjacent jurisdictions in minimizing land use conflicts and promoting tax revenue sharing resulting from new development. These tools could be incentives provided by the State of Ohio. Other tools such as development agreements between various political jurisdictions could also be utilized. Agreements related to water and sewer development are yet another example. While looking at these tools the Huron County Planning Commission and the Huron County Development Council can be excellent conduits to facilitate projects through the political process.

Natural Resources

38.	Practice efficient land use policies. While Huron County is largely rural, and may not need to address principles of sustainable development throughout the entire county, the principles associated with “new urbanism”, which advocate development within and near established urbanized areas and activity centers, are worth considering when endeavoring to preserve and not encroach upon the county’s natural resources and other sensitive areas. The use of a Joint Economic Development District or Cooperative Economic Development Agreement, described in Chapter 8, offers another means of guiding development to unincorporated areas that are adjacent to and coordinated with urbanized municipal areas.
39.	Follow established procedures within the Huron County Subdivision Regulations & the Farmland Preservation Plan to preserve our natural resources.
40.	Incorporate environmental considerations in all development planning and review processes. It is recommended that a number of environmental factors, many of which are taken from the seminal publication, “Caring for the Land: Environmental Principles for Site Design and Review” (Bruce Hendler, 1977), also be considered. Those factors, which should be considered when a new development project is being considered or planned, are listed in the Natural Resources chapter, and should be consulted.

41. Follow established procedures for erosion and sedimentation control
- One significant impact of any development upon the environment is the erosion and sedimentation that results from altered patterns and pathways for storm drainage. Typical problems encountered with new developments include a large increase of area exposed to soil erosion and runoff; increased volumes of runoff, soil movement, sediment and peak flows caused by removal of natural cover, increase in impervious surface areas, changes in drainage areas and the volume and duration of water concentration caused by grading and related factors, reduction of water intake of soils from compaction by construction equipment, and prolonged exposure of unprotected sites to adverse weather.
- The “general principles for effective water management and erosion/sedimentation control” should be applied in practical combinations to provide effective erosion and sedimentation control. In addition to these principles and practices, all subdivisions shall be reviewed by the County Engineer to see if control measures are needed to minimize water, erosion, and sediment problems. An erosion and sediment control plan shall be submitted for all subdivisions containing more than ten lots or having proposed street construction. Those with less than ten lots, which are a portion or phase of a larger proposed allotment, shall submit a tentative NPDES erosion and sediment control plan for the entire allotment. The County Engineer, upon recommendation from HSWCD, shall accept or suggest modifications of all erosion and sedimentation control plans.

Transportation

42. Although Townline Rd. 12 is in good condition, there is need for another improved east-west roadway in the county. This lack of east-west mobility can be alleviated with the improvement of US 224 to a four-lane highway and its realignment to bypass Willard. Although less costly alternatives may need to be considered in the short run, long-range planning should target the upgrade of US 224 to a four-lane, limited access highway throughout Huron County, with the four lane configuration reaching east to its intersection with I-71.
43. In order to provide proper long-range planning for roadway widening and expansion, current zoning and land use practices should incorporate mandated “super setbacks” along the US 250 and US 224 corridors, as well as along US 20 east of Norwalk. This will allow for easier land acquisition, clearance, and site preparation for future widening projects. Rights of way should be under site control, with easements. Ideally, US 250 should be of a four-lane configuration from US 224 to Erie County, where it is now four lanes. Additionally, in the short term, sufficient shoulders should be constructed along the two-lane Route 250. This may include converting ditches to culverts, but the safety factor associated with emergency needs to exit the travel lanes should be met as soon as possible.
44. Long-range planning should also continue to include consideration of a north-south bypass in Norwalk and an east-west bypass in Bellevue. The Norwalk bypass may include the aforementioned Greenwich-Milan Townline Road, with consideration to a northern extension to rejoin US 250. Several southerly alternatives for the Bellevue bypass have been proposed. In proposing bypass alignments, the upgrading of existing roadways should be considered where feasible

45.	Local officials must work within a regional context to maximize political clout. This regional support may come from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of Erie County. The potential for Huron County's (or a portion of the County as the more northerly municipal areas of Norwalk, Monroeville, and Bellevue) inclusion within the MPO should be explored. Other regional affiliations may include working with the Toledo Port Authority. Further, Huron County should build a consortium with Ashland and Richland Counties for cases when a combined effort will assist in advocating for a mutually desired project.
46.	Local officials should involve ODOT and its Ashland District Office in their planning efforts, in order to advocate for priority projects. Advocacy of projects with ODOT should be aggressive and consistent. Local officials should explore how to provide significant local matching funds to gain ODOT's attention.
47.	The County and its effected subdivisions, with Emergency Management Agency serving as the lead agency on such projects, should continue to advocate for and support these improvements, with a prioritization of need for crossing improvements, and the ultimate goal of lights and gates, if not grade separations for every crossing.
48.	Early stage planning is underway for high speed passenger rail between Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati. It is possible that the rail route will pass through southern Huron County. County officials should monitor the progress of this project and advocate for a regional stop within the county. It may be more realistic to locate a maintenance facility for the upgraded line in Huron County

Infrastructure and Utilities

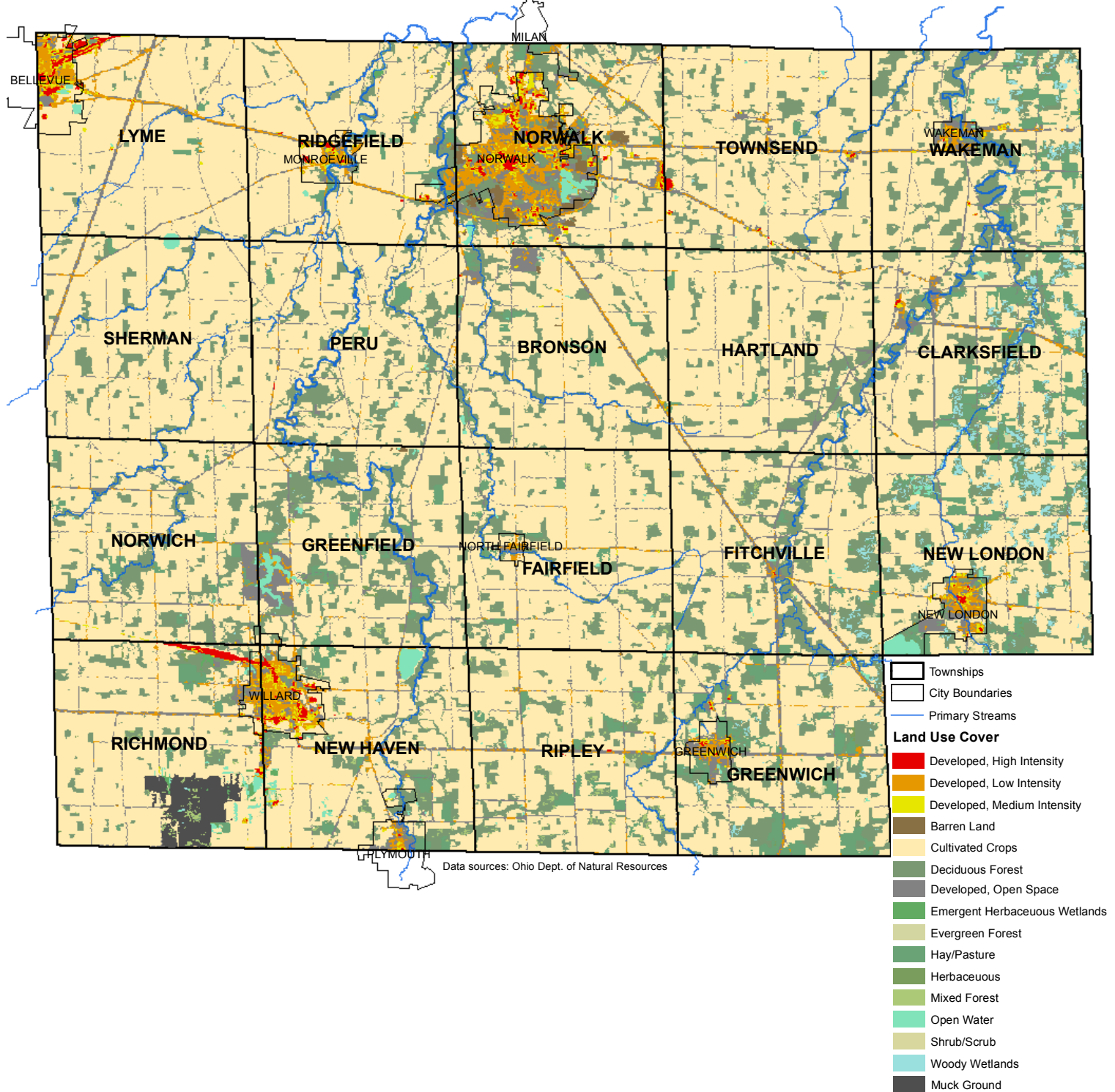
49.	<p>Options should be investigated in which larger municipal sources of water furnish treated water to nearby smaller developed areas and villages. Cooperative efforts should result in the provision of water for all within the County. For example, Willard has furnished water to the village of Plymouth for many years, and New London extended distribution lines to every household in New London Township. Willard and New London have significant water capacity, and can furnish water either directly or indirectly by providing water to NORW. Indeed, New London is now providing water to NORW for distribution in nearby unincorporated areas.</p> <p>One potential area that could eventually be served by an outside entity is North Fairfield. Either NORWA, Norwalk, or Willard could provide water to this village's customers, who currently obtain village water from shallow wells. Similarly, New London's reservoir could supply Greenwich. In such cases, the County could help facilitate such a project and help in finding funding or endorsing applications. Lowest-cost alternatives that are the most logistically feasible (such as when NORW already has adequate lines within close proximity of a potential service area) should be recommended.</p>
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50.	The creation of one or more water districts may become a feasible option for the provision of water to developing areas outside but within close proximity to current municipal borders. A Willard water supply district could provide water to growth areas in nearby townships, and Willard has provided water to nearby areas where residences have inadequate water. As noted previously, New London has constructed water lines for all of New London Township. Further expansion into adjacent developed land can help guide land use if it is carefully planned, with larger capacity lines targeted to state highway corridors and sites where industrial and commercial development is desired.
51.	Huron County water providers should work to collaborate and negotiate with Northern Ohio Regional Water Authority in determining their respective service areas. This process of collaboration has been carried out between the City of Norwalk and NORW. Regardless of the outcome of such planning, care should be taken to ensure that designated growth areas would be served with adequate water (for drinking and fire protection) volume and pressure for the type of land use envisioned for that specific area. Planned industrial growth areas must receive sufficient water, with hydrants, to provide for necessary fire flows, as well as to serve any anticipated manufacturing processes.
52.	Another land use that may require additional infrastructure is rural recreational development. Erie County has provided water and sewer service to a number of significant recreational facilities such as the Kalahari resort and convention center. Huron County could be the site for growth resulting from the growing significance of the area as a tourism destination
53.	As smaller wastewater treatment plants become more obsolete or fall under mandates, communities should explore regional options with large wastewater treatment plants linking smaller communities.
54.	Alternative sewage treatment technologies should be promoted in areas that exhibit special problems where there are documented health or environmental issues. Such alternatives as maintenance of septic systems, decentralized systems, and gray water systems should be explored.
55.	Local officials should obtain input from industrial and commercial businesses regarding their energy utility (especially electrical) needs and whether current and projected needs are being met. This information could be obtained through the retention and expansion program undertaken by HCDC. Data on business needs in areas where needs or projections are not being met should be communicated to the relevant utility provider, with provision for continued communication until needs can be met. Similarly, utility companies should inform local governments of planned improvements. A special need is for industrial parks to be in communication and coordinated with electricity and other utility (natural gas, broadband) suppliers to ensure that the needs of current and potential future users will be met in a manner that makes Huron County competitive as a business location
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	wireless, or other means. Key target areas should also be developed that have wireless capabilities as well. Many areas within the county do not have broadband capacity. However, many agricultural concerns have turned to satellite service for GPS and other needs, rather than broadband.
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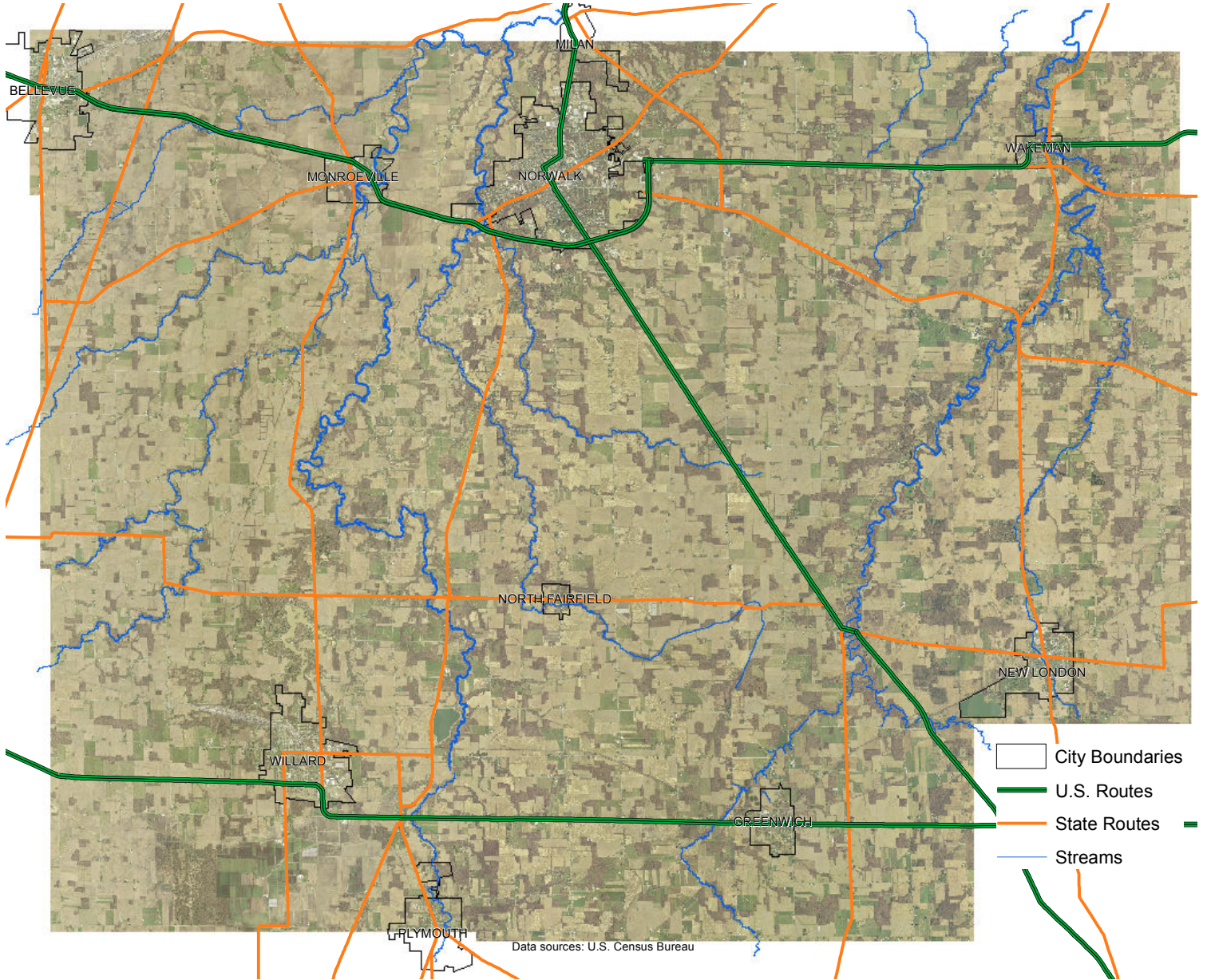
Huron County

Land Cover Use



Huron County

Road Network



Huron County School Districts

