

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.. 2 | LAND USE | TRANSPORTATION | QUALITY OF LIFE | APPENDIX |
| THANKS..... 3 | POLICY..... 25 | POLICY..... 48 | POLICY..... 76 | FUTURE LAND USE MAPS |
| PROCESS..... 4 | ZONING DISTRICTS..... 26 | ROADS & STREETS..... 49 | DOWNTOWN BLUFFTON..... 77 | INTRODUCTION..... 101 |
| PUBLIC INPUT..... 5 | COMPATIBLE USES..... 27 | FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION..... 50 | COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION.... 78 | UNION / JEFFERSON..... 102 |
| | PUBLIC PARTICIPATION..... 28 | BRIDGES..... 51 | PARKS & RECREATION..... 79 | ZANESVILLE..... 103 |
| | LOCAL LAWS AND STANDARDS..... 29 | RAILROAD OVERPASS / UNDERPASS... 52 | LOCAL BUSINESSES..... 80 | OSSIAN NORTH..... 104 |
| CERTIFICATION..... 6-13 | PERMITTING AND PLAN REVIEW..... 30 | POTENTIAL COUNTY AND | HOUSING..... 81 | OSSIAN SOUTH..... 105 |
| | STRUCTURAL REGULATIONS..... 31 | STATE ROAD PROJECTS..... 53 | ENTERTAINMENT..... 82 | UNIONDALE..... 106 |
| VISION 2035 | AGRICULTURE..... 32 | RIGHTS-OF-WAY PLAN..... 54 | HISTORY..... 83 | ROCK CREEK / LANCASTER..... 107 |
| JURISDICTION..... 14 | CONSERVATION..... 33 | BLUFFTON TRAFFIC PLAN..... 55 | YOUTH RETENTION..... 84 | MARKLE..... 108 |
| PURPOSE..... 15 | INDUSTRIAL..... 34 | OSSIAN TRAFFIC PLAN..... 56 | TOURISM & MARKETING..... 85 | TOCSIN..... 109 |
| AMENDMENT..... 16 | BUSINESS..... 35 | COUNTY TRAFFIC PLAN..... 57 | EDUCATION..... 86 | CRAIGVILLE..... 110 |
| CONSIDERATION..... 17 | URBAN RESIDENTIAL..... 36 | ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION..... 58 | ENVIRONMENT..... 87 | BLUFFTON NORTH..... 111 |
| DEFINITIONS..... 18 | RURAL RESIDENTIAL..... 37 | TRAILS..... 59 | REGIONALISM..... 88 | BLUFFTON NORTH MIDDLE..... 112 |
| | ENERGY..... 38 | POKA-BACHE TRAIL..... 60 | SUBSTANCE ABUSE & | BLUFFTON MIDDLE..... 113 |
| | SOLAR ENERGY..... 39 | SIDEWALKS..... 61 | MENTAL HEALTH..... 89 | BLUFFTON SOUTH MIDDLE..... 114 |
| OUR COMMUNITY | PUBLIC BUILDINGS..... 40 | BLUEWAYS..... 62 | AESTHETICS..... 90 | BLUFFTON SOUTH..... 115 |
| CALL TO ACTION..... 19 | OTHER..... 41 | IMPLEMENTATION..... 63 | IMPLEMENTATION..... 91 | LIBERTY / HARRISON..... 116 |
| MEASURING SUCCESS..... 20 | IMPLEMENTATION..... 42 | INFRASTRUCTURE | NATURAL DISASTER | VERA CRUZ..... 117 |
| HISTORY..... 21 | PROJECT FUNDING | POLICY..... 64 | POLICY..... 92 | LIBERTY CENTER..... 118 |
| STATISTICS..... 22 | POLICY..... 43 | SEWER..... 65 | FLOODING..... 93 | PONETO..... 119 |
| STATISTICS MAPS..... 23 | GRANT WRITING..... 44 | REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT..... 66 | WIND..... 94 | JACKSON / CHESTER..... 120 |
| SWOT ANALYSIS..... 24 | PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS..... 45 | ON-SITE SYSTEMS..... 67 | OTHER..... 95 | CHESTER / NOTTINGHAM..... 121 |
| | PHILANTHROPY..... 46 | WATER..... 68 | IMPLEMENTATION..... 96 | NOTES..... 122 |
| | IMPLEMENTATION..... 47 | ELECTRIC..... 69 | MARKLE COORDINATION..... 97 | |
| | | STORMWATER..... 70 | ADDITIONAL PLANS..... 98 | |
| | | NATURAL GAS / PIPELINES..... 71 | CONCLUSION..... 99 | |
| | | COMMUNICATIONS..... 72 | | |
| | | TRASH & RECYCLING..... 73 | | |
| | | GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS..... 74 | | |
| | | IMPLEMENTATION..... 75 | | |



THANKS

The Wells County Area Plan Commission would like to sincerely thank each person who played a role in the creation of the Wells County Vision 2035! A special thanks to the survey respondents, steering committee members, and citizens who became engaged in the planning process through attending meetings and taking the time to discuss their thoughts on the future of Wells County! Due to your dedication to this plan and to this community the Wells County Vision 2035 will be an impactful plan that will steer Wells County's future for years to come.



PROCESS

The Wells County Area Plan Commission found the current Wells County Comprehensive Plan 2014 - 2024 was needing updated and commissioned the process to start the update process in early 2020. The Wells County Area Plan Commission commissioned the Plan Commission staff and a comprehensive plan steering committee to start the process. From there, the idea of the Wells County Vision 2035 plan was born. The staff and steering committee created a community survey to kick off the process of defining what would be part of the new plan. Following the initial survey, four additional surveys were completed focusing on our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, land use, priorities, and as well as quality of life. Multiple meetings with key stakeholders were also held throughout this process. Public meetings were held to highlight the new plan and take public comment at multiple meetings in 2020 through 2022. The Public Hearing was held on September 1, 2022, to kick-start the adoption process by the participating legislative bodies. Then a second public hearing was held on November 3, 2022, to move forward an amendment for the participating legislative bodies to adopt.



PUBLIC INPUT

The Wells County Area Plan Commission and the Wells County Vision 2035 Steering Committee held meetings to help craft the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan on the following dates:

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| January 2, 2020 | Area Plan Commission / Steering Committee | March 4, 2021 | Area Plan Commission |
| January 16, 2020 | Steering Committee | April 1, 2021 | Area Plan Commission |
| January 30, 2020 | Steering Committee | May 6, 2021 | Area Plan Commission |
| February 6, 2020 | Area Plan Commission | June 3, 2021 | Area Plan Commission |
| February 24, 2020 | Steering Committee | July 1, 2021 | Area Plan Commission |
| March 5, 2020 | Area Plan Commission | September 9, 2021 | Area Plan Commission |
| May 7, 2020 | Area Plan Commission | November 4, 2021 | Area Plan Commission |
| August 6, 2020 | Area Plan Commission | December 2, 2021 | Area Plan Commission |
| September 10, 2020 | Area Plan Commission | January 6, 2022 | Area Plan Commission |
| October 1, 2020 | Area Plan Commission | March 3, 2022 | Area Plan Commission |
| November 5, 2020 | Area Plan Commission | April 7, 2022 | Area Plan Commission |
| December 3, 2020 | Area Plan Commission | May 5, 2022 | Area Plan Commission |
| January 7, 2021 | Area Plan Commission | June 2, 2022 | Area Plan Commission |
| February 4, 2021 | Area Plan Commission | July 7, 2022 | Area Plan Commission |
| | | September 1, 2022 | Area Plan Commission |
| | | November 3, 2022 | Area Plan Commission - Amendment |

The Wells County Area Plan Commission released the following online public surveys to help craft the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive:

1. Wells County Vision 2020 Community Survey
2. Wells County Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Public Survey
3. Wells County Quality of Life Projects Survey
4. Wells County Vision 2035 Survey



- The full plans were available for review prior to the public hearings in compliance with IC 36-7-4-507 (2).
- The Wells County Area Plan Commission gave notice in accordance with IC 5-3-1 for a public hearing on August 4, 2022 in accordance with IC 36-7-4-507 (1) and (2).
- The Wells County Area Plan Commission gave notice in accordance with IC 5-3-1 for a public hearing to hear an amendment on November 4, 2022 in accordance with IC 36-7-4-507 (1) and (2).

Wherefore, based upon the recommendation of the Wells County Area Plan Commission and upon the motion of Tim Bohr, duly seconded by Bill Horan, the Wells County Comprehensive Plan is hereby recommended for approval by a vote of 9 in favor and 1 opposed.

Print:
Harry Baumgartner, Jr
Tyson Brooks
Jarrold Hahn
Bill Horan
Josh Hunt
Kiera Lance
Jerome Markley
Tim Bohr
Becky Stone-Smith
Melissa Woodworth
John Schuhmacher - ABSENT

Signature:
Harry Baumgartner, Jr
Tim Bohr
J. Mill
Bill Horan
Josh Hunt
Kiera Lance
Jerome Markley
Tim Bohr
Becky Stone-Smith
M. Woodworth

Vote:
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed

Recommended for approval on this 3rd day of November, 2022



NOW THEREFORE, by resolution, the Commissioners of Wells County approve the Wells County Vision 2035 by a majority vote.

Resolution Date:

November 21, 2022

Effective Date:

January 19, 2023

Resolution Number:

2022-11

Print:

B. Clarke
M. V. Vanover
J. Stringer

Signature:

[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]

Vote:

in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed

Attest:

Lisa McCormick
Wells County Auditor - Print

[Signature]
Signature



CERTIFICATION

BLUFFTON

NOW THEREFORE, by resolution, the Common Council of the City of Bluffton approves the Wells County Vision 2035 by a majority vote.

Resolution Date:

January 17, 2023

Effective Date:

January 18, 2023

Resolution Number:

2023-02

Print:

Josh Hunt
Chandler Gerber
Rock Elwell
Scott Mentzer
Janella Stronczek

Signature:

Josh Hunt
Chandler Gerber
Rock Elwell
Scott Mentzer
Absent

Vote:

in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed

Attest:

Tamara D Runyon
Clerk-Treasurer - Print

TAMARA D RUNYON
Signature



NOW THEREFORE, by resolution, the Council of the Town of Ossian approves the Wells County Vision 2035 by a majority vote.

Resolution Date:

December 12, 2022

Effective Date:

January 15, 2023

Resolution Number:

2022-12-2

Print:

Dennis Ealing
Brad Pursley
JOSHUA W. BRUNLEY
Jason House
Jeff Kemper

Signature:

Dennis Ealing
Brad Pursley
Absent
Absent

Vote:

in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed

Attest:

Angie Ealing
Clerk-Treasurer - Print

Angie Ealing
Signature



NOW THEREFORE, by resolution, the Council of the Town of Zanesville approves the Wells County Vision 2035 by a majority vote.

Resolution Date:

November 15, 2022

Effective Date:

January 18, 2023

Resolution Number:

2022-04

Print:

JOHN SCHUMACHER
BARBARA O'CONNOR
Jack L. Blackstien

Signature:

John Schumacher
Barbara O'Connor
Jack L. Blackstien

Vote:

in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed

Attest:

Julie Christian
Clerk-Treasurer - Print

Julie Christian
Signature



NOW THEREFORE, by resolution, the Council of the Town of Uniondale approves the Wells County Vision 2035 by a majority vote.

Resolution Date:

December 13, 2022

Effective Date:

January 18, 2023

Resolution Number:

2022-12

Print:

ERIN KREIGH
Geoffrey Lance
VACANT

Signature:

Erin S. Pres Town Council
Geoffrey Lance

Vote:

in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed

Attest:

Shazice Bowen
Clerk-Treasurer - Print

Shazice Bowen C/T
Signature



NOW THEREFORE, by resolution, the Council of the Town of Vera Cruz approves the Wells County Vision 2035 by a majority vote.

Resolution Date:

11/15, 2022

Effective Date:

January 18, 2023

Resolution Number:

2022-TC-8

Print:

Sheila Flotow
MALLIKA Grover
Kevin Rippe

Signature:

Sheila Flotow
Mallika Grover
Kevin Rippe

Vote:

in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed

Attest:

Jackie Alford Jackie Alford
Clerk-Treasurer - Print

Jackie Alford, clerk
Signature



NOW THEREFORE, by resolution, the Council of the Town of Poneto approves the Wells County Vision 2035 by a majority vote.

Resolution Date:

January 9, 2023

Effective Date:

January 18, 2023

Resolution Number:

2023-1

Print:

Becky Smith
Linda Ogle
Vacant

Signature:

Becky Smith
Linda Ogle

Vote:

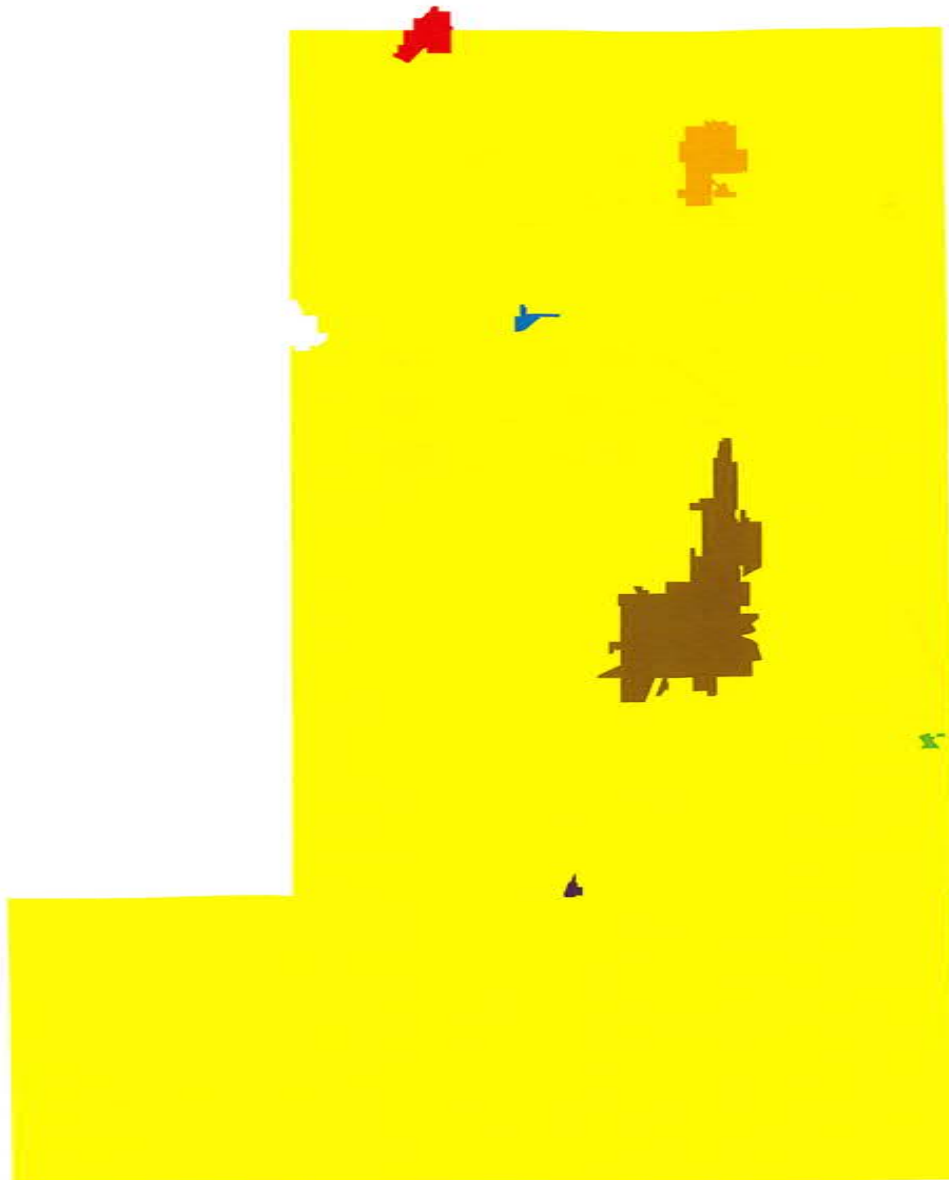
in favor opposed
 in favor opposed
 in favor opposed

Attest:

Lou Ann Reinhard
Clerk-Treasurer—Print

Lou Ann Reinhard
Signature





Map may be updated as annexations occur.

The jurisdiction of the Wells County Vision 2035 applies to the following areas.

- To all non-incorporated land in Wells County, IN.
- To all of the incorporated land within the City of Bluffton.
- To all of the incorporated land within the Town of Ossian.
- To all of the incorporated land within the Town of Zanesville.
- To all of the incorporated land within the Town of Uniondale.
- To all of the incorporated land within the Town of Vera Cruz.
- To all of the incorporated land within the Town of Poneto.

MAP LEGEND:

JURISDICTION

WELLS COUNTY

CITY OF BLUFFTON

TOWN OF OSSIEN

TOWN OF ZANESVILLE

TOWN OF UNIONDALE

TOWN OF VERA CRUZ

TOWN OF PONETO

COLOR

YELLOW

BROWN

ORANGE

RED

BLUE

GREEN

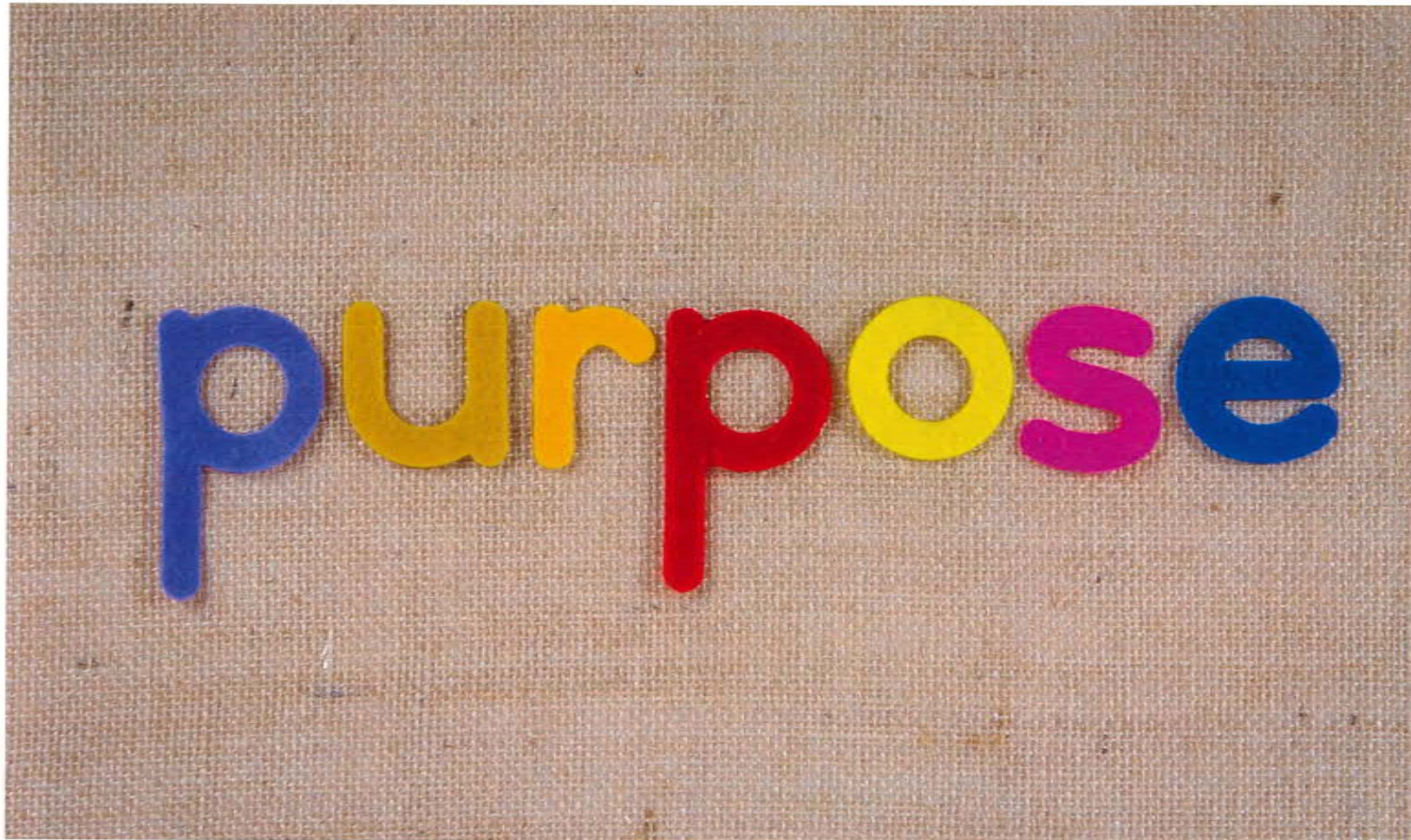
PURPLE

Note 1: The jurisdiction map is showing current municipal boundaries. If annexation occurs, this map is subject to change.

Note 2: The Wells County Vision 2035 plan does not include any of the incorporated land within the Town of Markle.



The purpose of Wells County Vision 2035 is to promote public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, and the general welfare; and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development within the jurisdiction of this plan (IC 36-7-4-501). Wells County Vision 2035 is an update of the 2014 Wells County Comprehensive Plan.

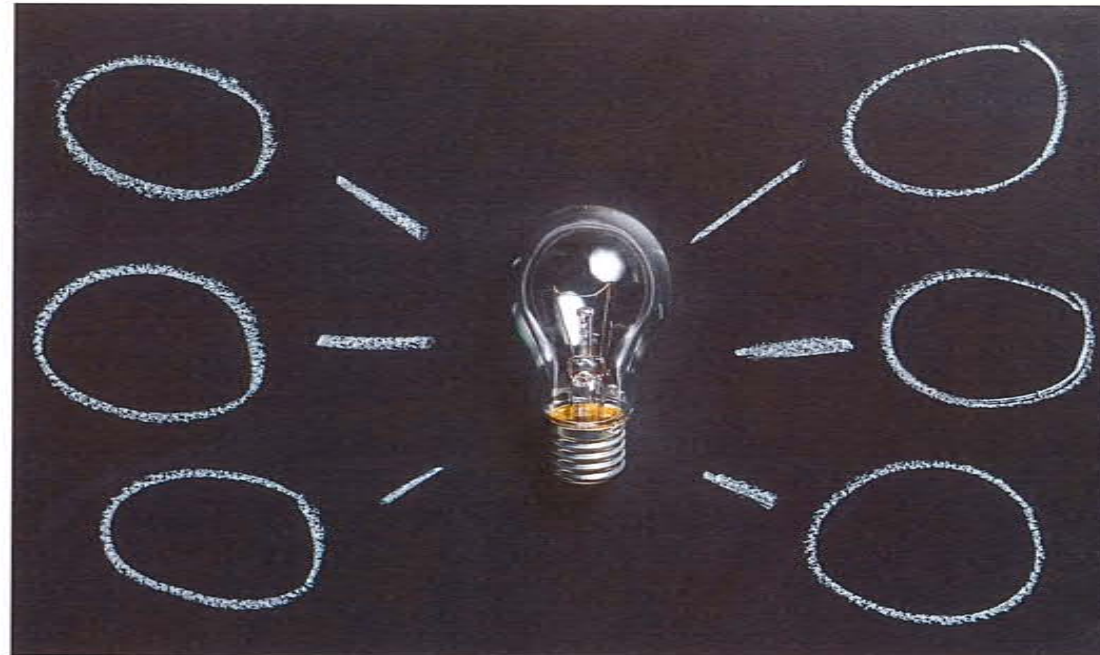


Wells County Vision 2035 shall be amended only in conformance with the requirements listed in Indiana Code 36-7-4-500 series. Wells County Vision 2035 is an amendment of the 2014 Wells County Comprehensive Plan.



Each government entity within the territorial jurisdiction of Wells County Vision 2035 shall give consideration to the general policy and pattern of development set out in the Comprehensive Plan (IC 36-7-504).

- Consideration should be given to the Comprehensive Plan during the authorization, acceptance, or construction of water mains, sewers, connections, facilities, or utilities.
- Consideration should be given to the Comprehensive Plan during the authorization, construction, alteration, or abandonment of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, or public utilities.
- Consideration should be given to the Comprehensive Plan during the adoption, amendment, or repeal of zoning ordinances; including zone maps and PUD district ordinances (as defined in IC 36-7-4-1503), subdivision control ordinances, historic preservation ordinances, and other land use ordinances.



Community - All jurisdictions that participate in the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

Affected Jurisdiction - The municipality, town(s), or county for which the statement affects.

We - All jurisdictions that participate in the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.



Wells County Vision 2035 is to be an actively used document. A significant amount of time and energy has been put into making sure that it creates a clear path forward for our community. Its broad range of topics, goals, and aspirations should be a part of our community's conversations for years to come. Let's work together to create a community that is cherished by our citizens and lauded by visitors.



How will our community measure the success of the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan includes multiple action items to be considered during plan's time frame. One of the following steps should be done for each action point within the timeline of the plan:

- Determine that the action item should be enacted.
- Determine that the action item should be enacted but will take more time than allotted in this plan.
- Determine that the action item will be replaced with an alternative option that has been deemed to be better.
- Determine that the action item should not be enacted.



Wells County has a rich history that should be celebrated. In many cases, our history has been ignored or forgotten. Part of Wells County Vision 2035 is to help promote the pieces of our past that should be celebrated and to help us learn and grow from past mistakes. Our history comes from structures, businesses, families, and good old stories. When one shares a piece of history with someone, it helps people understand why things are the way they are. It also helps people feel like they are connected within our community. Here is a short, non-exhaustive list of our history that we should celebrate in our community.

1. Parlor City
2. William Wells
3. Charles Deam
4. Everett Scott
5. Historic buildings
6. State park
7. Wells County Courthouse
8. Piano industry
9. Iris farming
10. Street Fair
11. Interurban Railroad
12. Trenton oil field
13. J. Edward Roush Reservoir
14. Five Points School
15. Historic dams and gravel pits in the Wabash River
16. Iron truss bridges



Current Population Estimates*

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Wells County (Total) | 28,180 |
| Wells County (unincorporated areas) | 13,510 |
| Bluffton | 10,308 |
| Ossian | 3,266 |
| Zanesville | 580 |
| Uniondale | 271 |
| Poento | 173 |
| Vera Cruz | 72 |

Population Age Estimates*

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Persons under 5 years | 6.2% |
| Persons 5 to 18 years | 24.6% |
| Persons 19 to 64 years | 50.6% |
| Persons 65 years and over | 18.6% |

Housing*

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Housing units | 11,969 |
| Owner-occupied housing unit rate | 78.9% |
| Median value of owner-occupied housing units | \$127,600 |
| Median selected monthly owner costs - with mortgage | \$982 |
| Median selected monthly owner costs - without mortgage | \$375 |
| Median gross rent | \$702 |

Families*

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Households | 10,888 |
| Persons per household | 2.52 |

Education*

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| High school graduate or higher | 92.2% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 18.2% |

Employment*

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Labor force percentage | 65.6% |
| Mean travel time to work | 22.9 minutes |
| Median household Income | \$59,237 |
| Per capita income | \$28,663 |
| Persons in poverty | 7.4% |
| Total employers | 635 |
| Total employment | 10,790 |
| Total annual payroll | \$423,327,000 |

Geography*

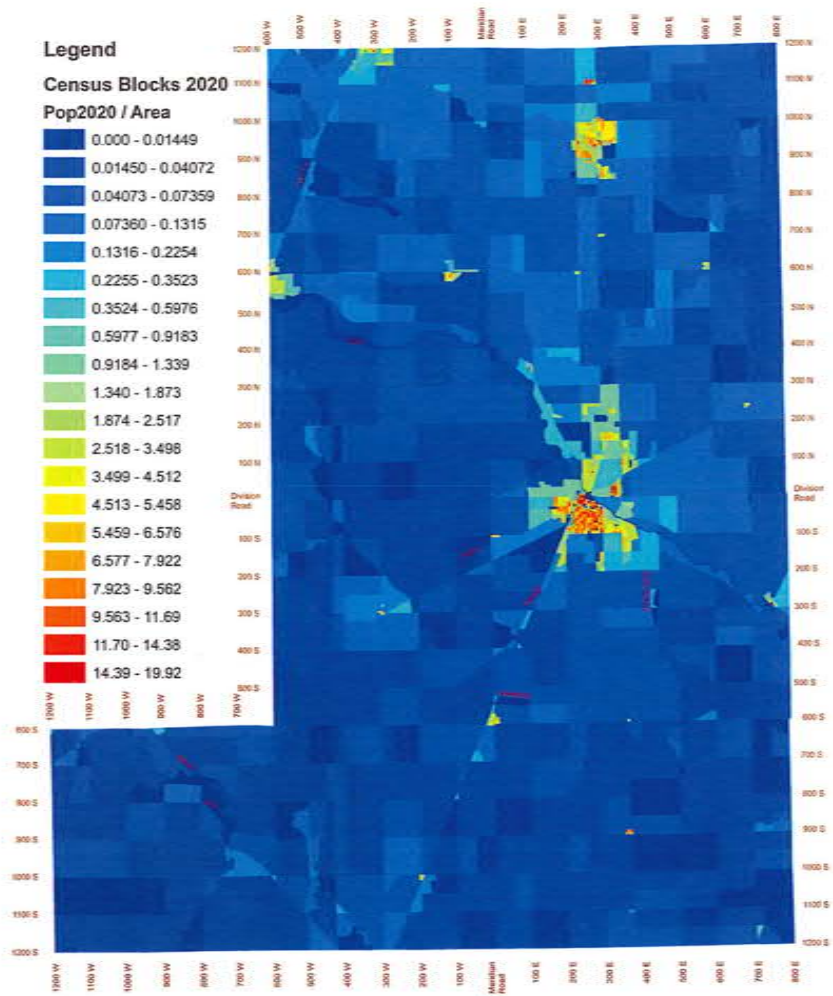
| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Population per square mile | 75.1 |
| Land area in square miles | 368.09 |

* 2020 United States Census data is for Wells County

United States[®]
Census
Bureau

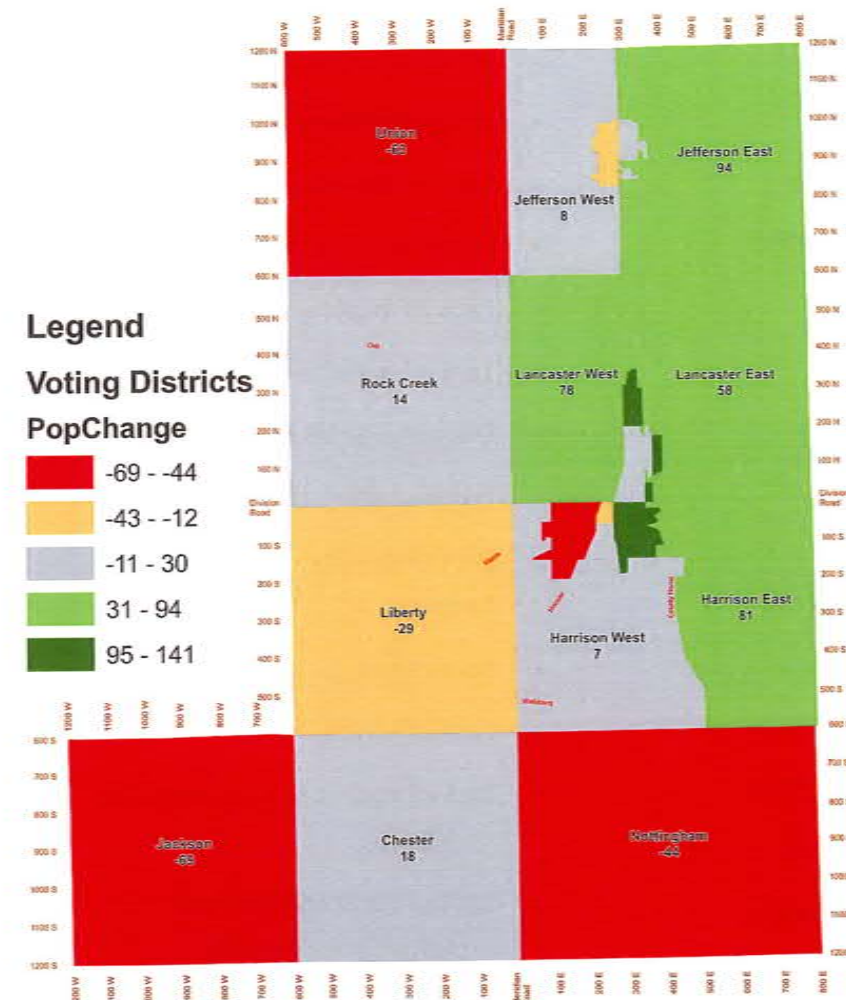


The population density (per acre) of Wells County based on the 2020 US Census Block data - Data shown by block group



Map may be updated based on results of the 2030 US Census.

The population change of Wells County based on the 2010 & 2020 US Census Block data - Data shown by voting district



Map may be updated based on results of the 2030 US Census and changes to annexation and voting districts.



Strengths

- Parks Department
- Shop local
- Sense of community
- People coming together
- Small businesses
- Recent growth
- Downtown Bluffton revitalization
- Local schools
- Caring for one another
- Great community
- Families
- Small town atmosphere
- Ouabache State Park
- Having good local police and sheriff's departments

Weaknesses

- Nothing for kids to do
- Drug addiction / mental health
- Lack of diversity
- Need more local businesses
- Lack of local restaurants
- Lack of entertainment options
- Divisions among people
- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Lack of quality, affordable housing
- Small town
- Lack of vision
- Lack of four-lane access to Ft. Wayne
- Lack of rural cellular and broadband accessibility

Opportunities

- Local school systems
- Trails and future trail connectivity
- Ouabache State Park
- Local parks
- Quality jobs
- Distance to Fort Wayne
- Quality local businesses
- Wabash and Salamonie Rivers
- Growing community
- Community energy
- Rural agricultural community

Threats

- Drugs
- Lack of housing options
- Lack of high paying jobs
- Concerns of changing to a different type of community
- Lack of community pride
- Sense that people are uninviting
- Complacency
- Junk / trash issues



78% of SWOT Analysis respondents say that our community's future is very positive to somewhat positive!



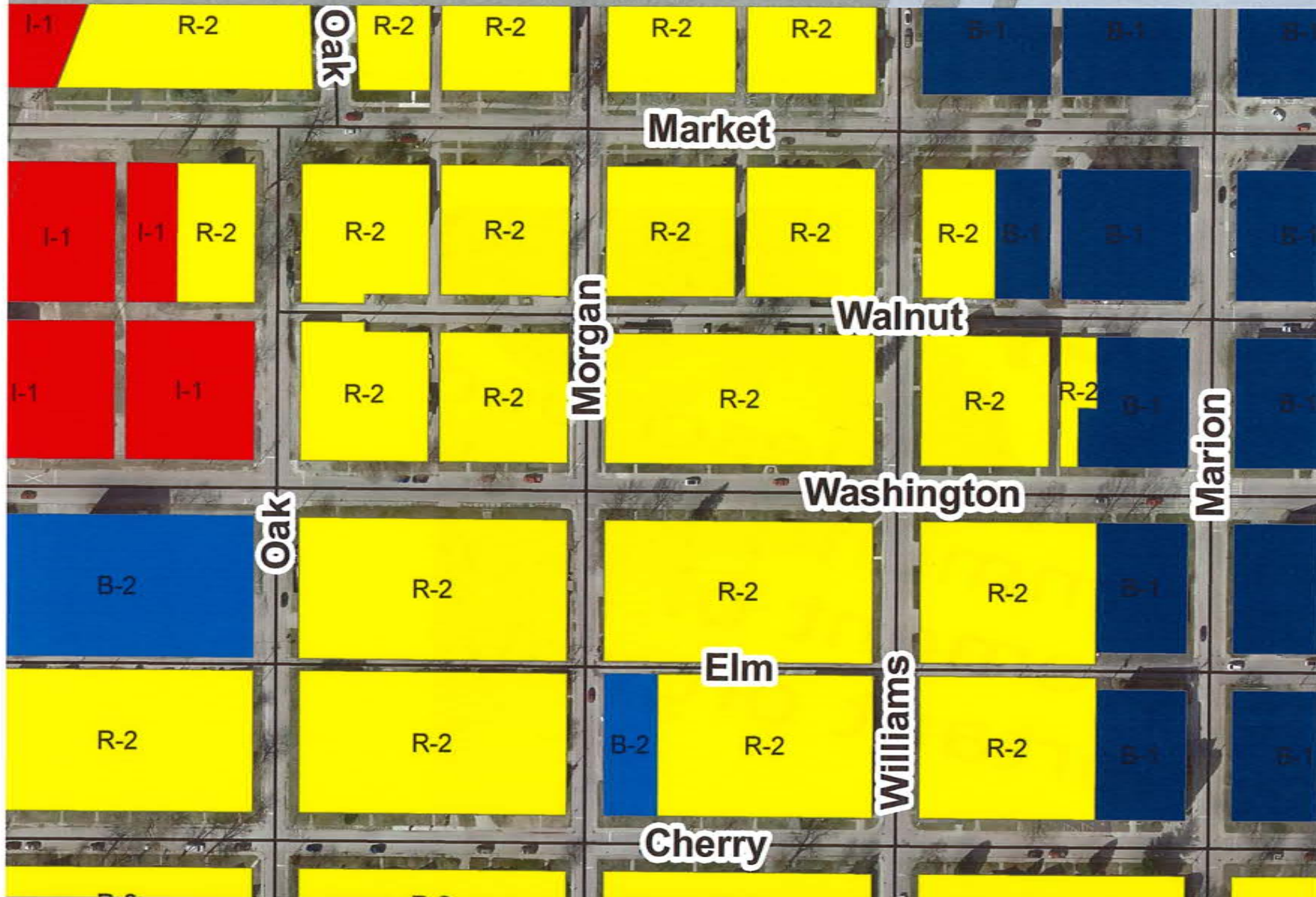
Hereby, this is the official Wells County Land Use Policy.

- The sections listed in this chapter and their associated “Items to Consider When Making Decisions” should be paid reasonable regard to in the process of making any land use decisions.
- Land use decisions should pay reasonable regard toward considering the current conditions and the character of current structures and uses.
- Land use decisions should pay reasonable regard toward the most desirable use for each section of the community.
- Land use decisions should pay reasonable regard toward the conservation of property values for each section of the community.
- Land use decisions should pay reasonable regard toward responsible development and growth for each section of the community.



LAND USE

ZONING DISTRICTS



Zoning Districts are the tools that designate what types of land use can go in a given part of the community. Below is a list of the zoning districts used in Wells County. Proposed zoning maps are included in this plan. The official zoning map is available at www.wellscountygis.org.

- Agricultural
- A-1 "Agricultural Intensive"
- P-1 "Power Plant Overlay District"
- Rural Residential
- A-R "Agricultural Residential"
- S-1 "Suburban Residential"
- Urban Residential
- R-1 "Single Family Residential"
- R-2 "Two-Family Residential"
- R-3 "Multi-Family Residential"
- M-1 "Manufactured Home Community"
- M-2 "Manufactured Home Subdivision"
- Business
- B-1 "Central Business District"
- B-2 "Service Business"
- B-3 "General Business"
- Industrial
- I-1 "Light Industrial"
- I-2 "Heavy Industrial"
- L-1 "Landfill Overlay District"
- P-1 "Power Plant Overlay District"
- Other
- C-1 "Conservation"
- PUD "Planned Unit Development"



Wells County Land Use Compatibility Spectrum

PUD "Planned Unit Development" *

* Compatibility depending on permitted Uses



C-1 "Conservation"

Compatible Uses are the types of land uses that should be located near one another. In smaller towns, this is not always practical. The desire would be to follow the Wells County Land Use Compatibility Spectrum when considering zoning map changes or amendments to the permitted uses within each district. Any newly proposed zoning district should require an update to the Wells County Land Use Compatibility Spectrum so there is clear guidance regarding its land use decisions.

User Notes:

- Land use categories that touch each other are most compatible.
- Land uses listed in each category are all compatible with each other.
- Less compatible land uses are further apart on the spectrum.
- C-1 "Conservation" is compatible with any land-use category.
- PUD "Planned Unit Development" is compatible with land use categories based on what land uses the PUD district includes. For example, if it includes urban residential and business uses, it would fit in with that portion of the spectrum.
- Each land use category has a corresponding connection to its need for access to a public sewer.
- In general, our community wishes to be considered a pro-growth community when making land use decisions.
- In certain situations, historic legal non-conforming land uses should be used favorably as precedent when a request to rezone said property is being considered that would make it a legal conforming land use.
- The Wells County Land Use Compatibility Spectrum may be revised if new zoning districts area established.





PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Review public notice options to improve the public's ability to participate in land use decisions in our community.
- Review the uses of websites and social media to improve the public's ability to participate in land use decisions in our community.
- Review ordinances and procedures to verify that they are as clear and concise as possible.
- Look at ways to expand youth's involvement in community decision making.
- Promote simpler government and make access to government buildings easier.
- Work to create a positive and consistent government atmosphere.
- Look at ways to expand public knowledge of petitions and public projects.





Local Laws and Standards

deal primarily with what can be done on a given property. When reviewing local laws and standards, it is important to view them from both sides of the spectrum: from the perspective of the neighbor and that of the developer. It is from a balance of both perspectives that quality local laws and standards come.

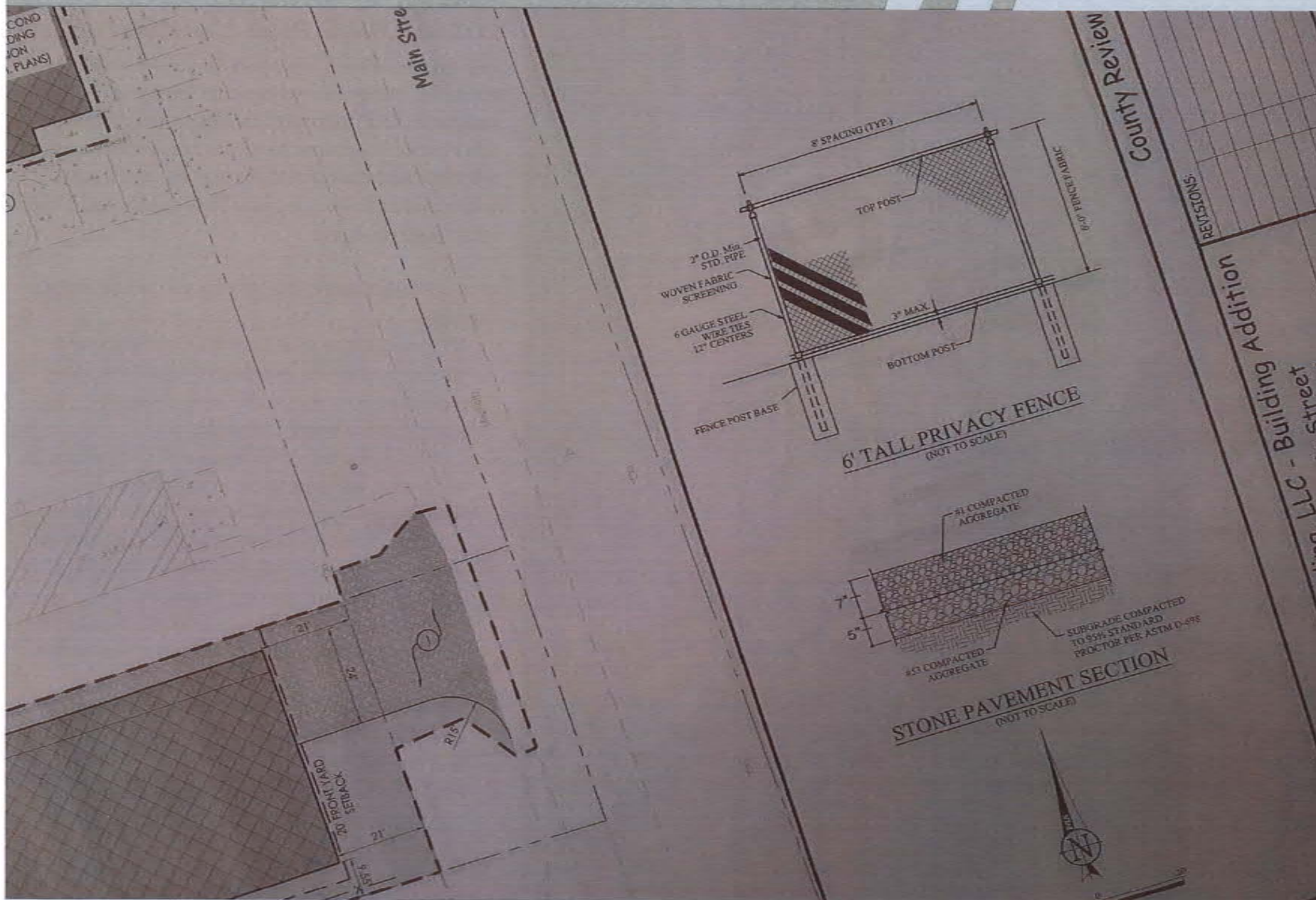
Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Continuously review local laws and standards, should be done to avoid undue burdens. This should be done especially where regular variances are being approved.
- Continuously review local laws and standards to verify they are maximizing the desired development potential for the affected zoning districts, allowing for both the highest and best use for the property as well as being compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Review the local laws and standards regarding home-based businesses to help remove undue burdens for our local entrepreneurs.
- Strive for a consistent and timely enforcement and review regarding compliance with local laws and standards.
- Find a balance with the goal of reducing regulation and resilient improvements.

standards

A body or organization that dict
standard. Standard as an adject
standards institution; that sta
For example, AN
tion issu





Permitting and Plan Review

are some of the most integral parts of a project's life cycle. This is both true from the perspective of the developer, local government, general public, and opposition.

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Continuously review permitting processes to help improve the process for all parties.
- Work to improve the Wells County GIS data to make sure we are providing the best information available for our community to make informed development decisions.
- Continuously review of timelines and paperwork to make sure it is clear and contributes to the desired result for all parties.
- Review local laws and standards to make sure they are consistent with potential changes to permitting and plan review.
- Participate in the Permitting Excellence Coalition.
- Prepare permitting and plan review related process maps to give petitioners and interested parties a clear view of what to expect.





Structural Regulations deal with how something is built. Structural regulations are of growing importance in Wells County including both building inspection services and unsafe building enforcement.

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look into adopting an unsafe building ordinance.
- Look into adopting an ordinance regarding building codes.
- Look into providing building inspection services with the possibility of creating a one-stop, county-wide service being part of that discussion.
- Look into the possibility of creating a historic preservation standard for buildings located in areas listed in the historic register or designated on the historic register.





Agriculture 77% of the ground in Wells County is considered tillable acreage. 92.5% of our community is currently zoned A-1 "Agricultural Intensive."

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Our community values its agricultural background and its preservation.
- Regular review of our Confined Feeding Operation (CFO) regulations is important to verify we are striking the right balance of row crop farming, animal husbandry, and rural residential land uses.
- Promote new technologies to reduce odor emissions from CFO developments.
- Keep up to date on state requirements regarding CFOs and water rights.
- Develop agricultural assets; such as the expansion of localized food products, local wineries & breweries, agritourism opportunities, farm to fork restaurants, and farmers' markets. These types of food opportunities are in growing demand and will help tie more people to our local agriculture community with assistance from all jurisdictions
- Review and stay up to date with state regulations regarding oil and gas exploration and review the need for potential local land use regulations.





Conservation Woods, waterways, and natural open space make up 8% of our community's land use. 0.6% of our community is currently zoned C-1 "Conservation."

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Preservation and expansion of open space should be a land use priority for our community.
- Our community has come to enjoy the benefits of having large sections of preserved areas.
- Hunting, fishing, mushroom hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, and kayaking make up a large portion of our outdoor recreational experiences. These are enhanced by the presence of natural woods and preserved open spaces.
- Preservation of woods and open space in areas that regularly flood is a great way to avoid costly losses of property or life.
- A high value should be placed in the Ouabache State Park, J. Edward Roush Reservoir properties, and areas owned by private groups, such as Acres, Inc., that contribute to long-term environmental preservation.
- Rezone storm drainage facilities, nature preserves, floodplain properties, flowage easements, and cemeteries to conservation.
- Create a County Parks Department to help fund and manage trails & conservation.
- Expand C-1 zoning to protect open spaces.





Industrial 1.6% of our community is currently zoned I-1 “Light Industrial” or I-2 “Heavy Industrial.” Items to Consider When Making Decisions

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look at ways to use TIF (Tax Increment Financing) and other financing packages to help grow and expand our existing industrial facilities, attract new industrial facilities, and improve our infrastructure in these areas.
- Look at ways to use TIF to provide for the quality of life amenities that potential facilities and employees would like to see in the community, provide training and attraction assistance to our workforce, and look at ways to help provide quality housing in our community.
- Review and rezone properties that are located in TIF districts to allow for the best use of the district.
- Review and rezone properties in and around major road improvements and industrial parks to allow for the best use of those properties.
- Look at ways to discourage heavy industrial uses outside of existing industrially zoned areas.
- Review whether or not certain heavy industrial uses should require special exceptions or overlay districts before development plan approval.
- Review future and existing land use impacts on wellhead protection areas.
- Look into options to further define industrial uses by creating 3 industrial zoning districts.



Business 0.35% of our community is currently zoned B-1 “Central Business District,” B-2 “Service Business,” or B-3 “General Business.”

Items to Consider When Making Decisions
Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Review our commercial corridors and its zoning classifications to allow for the highest and best use for those areas based on higher road classifications.
- Develop our downtown “central business districts” into commercial destinations within our community.
- Review the ability to mix urban residential and commercial land uses.
- Create a business friendly atmosphere to help retain, develop, and grow businesses in our community.
- Create entrepreneurship opportunities and training to help develop and grow our business opportunities.
- Look into creating shared business spaces to help startup businesses obtain the needed amenities and services that they need to thrive in our community.
- Review the existing B-1, B-2, and B-3 zoning districts to verify that they are still serving their intended goals.
- Look into a way to integrate business zoning into agricultural areas in certain situations.





Urban Residential 2.63% of our community is currently zoned R-1 “Single Family Residential,” R-2 “Two-Family Residential,” or R-3 “Multi-Family Residential.”

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Urban land use decisions should be made in a way to better address the housing shortage issues within our community.
- Review the possibility of combining urban residential zoning classifications.
- Review the compatibility of urban residential zoning classifications.
- Look at ways to locate residential and commercial land uses on the same property by further determining what uses are compatible with each other.
- Work on the implementation of the findings of the Wells County Housing Assessment & Growth Strategy.
- Work with the regional sewer districts to help develop infill lots in our small urban towns as sewer connections become available.
- Look into creative ways to bring a wider variety of housing price points into our community.
- Find housing options that answer the needs of our local industry.





Rural Residential 2.09% of our community is currently zoned A-R “Agricultural Residential,” or S-1 “Suburban Residential.”

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Decisions regarding rural residential should be made in a way to better address the housing shortage issues within our community.
- Look at ways to grow rural residential development options that do not cause long term issues with septic systems failure and other public services.
- Look at ways to service clusters of rural housing that have known septic issues with public sewer services.
- Review rural residential development standards and patterns to verify that they are not causing unnecessary loss of farm ground or conservation areas.
- Focus rural development in areas with existing public sewer access and improve mapping.
- Allow for unincorporated small towns to grow by providing access to public sewer services.
- Work to improve rural housing options in the southern Wells County area.
- Once sewer services are available in our unincorporated small towns, it can be possible to rezone properties to allow for more urban style residential development.





Energy in Wells County provides the backbone of our modern way of life.

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

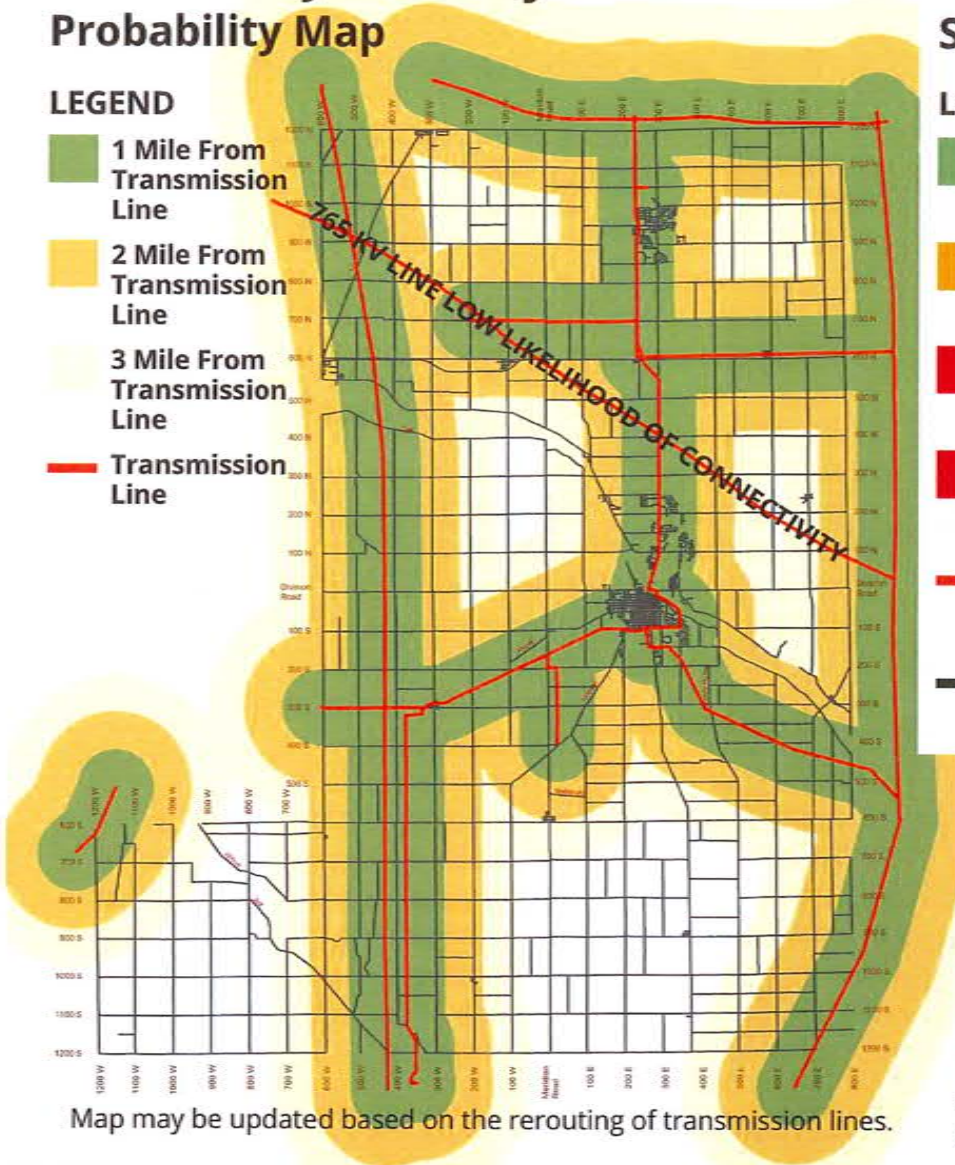
- Currently there is a lack of public support for utility scale wind.
- Our community should be aware of the risks involved with the potential loss of local control regarding utility scale wind projects that have been discussed recently at the Indiana State House.
- While public services like substations are permitted in all zoning districts, they should be focused in agricultural, commercial, or industrial zoned areas.
- Play an active role in making sure that our community has the needed energy capacity to continue to grow.
- A balance between private property rights, what is best for the area, financial opportunities, and neighboring landowner's interests should be found while discussing energy development in our community.
- See solar energy information on the following page.



Wells County Solar Project Probability Map

LEGEND

- 1 Mile From Transmission Line
- 2 Mile From Transmission Line
- 3 Mile From Transmission Line
- Transmission Line

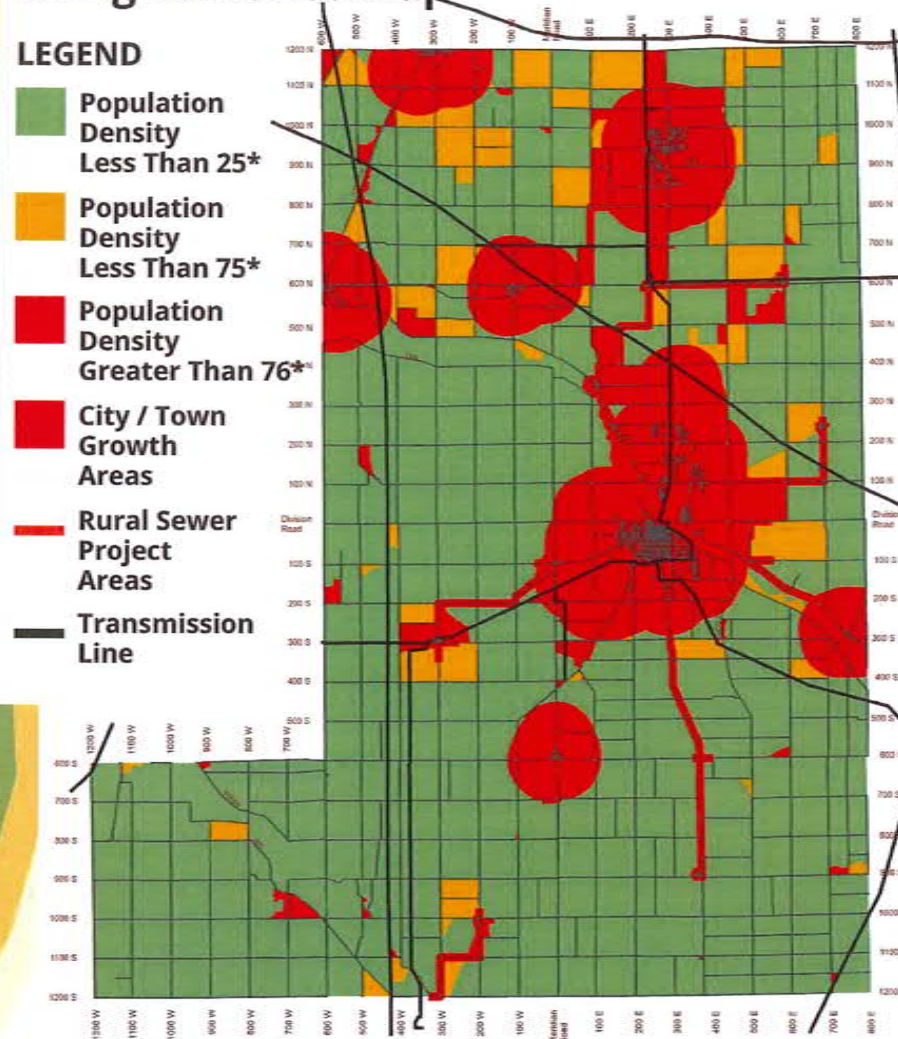


Map may be updated based on the rerouting of transmission lines.

Wells County Solar Project Siting Guidance Map

LEGEND

- Population Density Less Than 25*
- Population Density Less Than 75*
- Population Density Greater Than 76*
- City / Town Growth Areas
- Rural Sewer Project Areas
- Transmission Line



*People per square mile based on US Census 2020 block data.
Map may be updated based on project updates and census 2030 data.

Solar Energy

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Currently there is public support for the development of residential scale solar, whether ground mounted or roof mounted.
- Currently there is public support for the development of business or industrial scale solar, whether ground mounted or roof mounted.
- Currently there is a lack of public support for utility scale solar farms.
- A balance between private property rights, what is best for the area, financial opportunities, and neighboring landowner's interests should be found while discussing solar energy development in our community.
- Work should be done with local electric providers to provide a clear pathway for their customers to install and benefit from residential and commercial scale solar projects
- The Solar Project Probability Map shows where an utility scale solar project is more likely to be planned based on proximity to transmission lines. The Solar Siting Guidance Map shows areas where and utility scale solar project is more desirable based on community growth patterns, community projects, and population density.
- Be aware of the risks involved with the potential loss of local control regarding utility scale solar projects that has been discussed recently at the Indiana State House.





Public Buildings

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- These land uses are permitted uses in every zoning district. However, they are normally more compatible with commercial and industrial zoning districts.
- Look at zoning these public uses to a commercial zoning classification.
- Analyze its existing public buildings and spaces to help meet the needs of the jurisdiction and the general public.
- Preservation efforts should be completed to make sure that the Wells County Courthouse is being properly maintained so that we can continue to benefit from its significant historic value for our community.



Other

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Religious institutions are permitted in all zoning districts; however, they are more compatible with business zoned areas.
- Medical facilities should be focused in business zoned areas.
- Ag chemical facilities should be located in agricultural areas away from rural residential areas whenever possible.
- Ag businesses may be more compatible with business areas than with agricultural land use areas.
- Communication facilities should be located in areas that will not detract from future developments, but they need to be located strategically to help reduce service gaps and improve service speeds.
- Amend the ordinance to take into account the new state preemptions on cell towers.



Land use implementation and priorities.

| <u>PRIORITY</u> | <u>ITEM</u> | <u>IMPLEMENTATION NOTES</u> |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 1 | Improve Public Awareness..... | Look at cost effective and engaging ways to tell the general public about projects and petitions, possibly including the need of establishing a marketing budget for each community. |
| 2 | Farm Ground Preservation..... | Review ordinances and policies, and establish a plan to meet this goal. |
| 3 | Environmental Conservation..... | Look at the establishment of a County Parks Department and partnering with INDNR, UWRBC, and nature conservancies to meet this goal. |
| 4 | Proper Zoning Compared to Land Use..... | Continue to rezone our community to better match existing land uses. |
| 5 | Housing Opportunities..... | Work with Economic Development and other state and regional partners to help attract housing opportunities within Wells County. |
| 6 | Building Codes / Unsafe Buildings..... | Establish consistent countywide building inspection and unsafe building enforcement. |
| 7 | Zoning Regulations / Procedures..... | Consistently review zoning regulations and procedures to make sure that they are creating the desired results for the community. |
| 8 | Solar Projects..... | Prepare for and plan how to regulate, permit, and review potential solar projects. |
| 9 | Expanding Industrial & Commercial Growth... | Work with Economic Development and other state and regional partners to help attract industrial and commercial growth within Wells County. |
| 10 | Septic System Issues..... | Work with the Health Department, Regional Sewer District, general public, and the the county, city, and towns to help reduce failing septic systems and promote proper maintenance and installation. |
| 11 | Government Building Space & Upkeep..... | Work to maintain existing government properties so that they continue to meet the needs of Wells County's citizens. Take precautions to make sure that the historic county courthouse gets proper maintenance and repairs. |



Hereby, this is the official Wells County Project Funding Policy.

The sections listed in this chapter and their associated "Items to Consider When Making Decisions" should be paid reasonable regard to when making any type of Project Funding decision or associated decisions that may affect the future ability to accomplish project funding. All forms of project funding shall be considered in any such project.



Policy

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Grant Writing

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Many Transportation, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, and Natural Disaster section projects are expensive; and our community only has limited funds to complete their maintenance and new project activities in a given year.
- Strive to make local tax funds go as far as possible and to benefit as many people as possible.
- All jurisdictions and community organizations should look into working together to procure grant writing services to help attract additional funding to our community's projects.
- Work toward actively pursuing projects in preparations for future funding opportunities versus waiting until the opportunity is here to develop a project.
- Use grants to leverage public-private partnerships to help philanthropic projects become successful.

Public-Private Partnerships

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look at ways to combine public and private funding sources to help improve our community's ability to complete projects; especially in the quality of life, housing affordability, and economic development type projects and programs.
- Work with local not-for-profits to help promote the development of potential public-private partnerships.
- Public-private partnerships provide a key opportunity for community growth and gains in assessed value that will help maintain lower taxes and fees long term.
- Leverage these partnerships with grants and philanthropic efforts especially when involving quality of life projects and programs.



PPP

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP





Philanthropy

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Promote philanthropic type quality of life projects within their jurisdictions to help continue community improvements.
- Continue to support local not-for-profits to put forward projects and programs that can be supported through philanthropy at local and regional levels.
- Use philanthropy when warranted as the private portion of a public-private partnership along with grants, especially for quality of life projects and programming.

Project Funding implementation and priorities.

| <u>PRIORITY</u> | <u>ITEM</u> | <u>IMPLEMENTATION NOTES</u> |
|-----------------|--|---|
| 1 | Fiscal Management..... | Each jurisdiction should work to create a plan for the tax funds that are available to them and work to engage in activities to increase their reach through grants, public private partnerships, and philanthropy to bring a positive return on investment to the taxpayers. |
| 2 | Maintain Competitive Taxes & Fees..... | Each jurisdiction should work to maintain low taxes and fees in comparison with our peers by working on ways to stretch the reach of existing funds and leverage projects that will create an increase in assessed value while providing the best level of service for our citizens. |
| 3 | Increase Public Engagement in Project Funding Discussions..... | Look at ways to increase interaction with the general public to help put together the plan for use of tax money and how to increase its effectiveness in getting the desired results. |
| 4 | Hire a Grant Writer..... | Each jurisdiction should hire or contract a grant writer to help gain access to local, regional, state, and federal grants to help bring more funding into our community. |
| 5 | Increase Ways to Give Toward Community Projects..... | Each jurisdiction should work to improve the connection between community projects and potential financial and in-kind donors to continue to grow our community's assets. |
| 6 | Increase Community Projects to Support..... | Each jurisdiction should work to create partnerships between private individuals and not-for-profits in our area to keep project ideas in the forefront of discussion. We should always be working on current projects, while formulating plans for what is next. It is in our best interest to have potential projects ready when opportunities arise. |



Hereby, this is the official Wells County Transportation Policy.

The sections listed in this chapter and their associated "Items to Consider When Making Decisions" should be paid reasonable regard to when making any type of transportation decision or associated decisions that may affect the future ability to accomplish transportation projects. All forms of transportation shall be considered in any such project.





Roads and Streets

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look into developing a master road plan.
- Look at finding ways to maximize our local existing road and street funding to maintain a sustainable taxing climate that does not put an undue burden on the taxpayers.
- Only use eminent domain to develop road and street projects in very extreme cases.
- Residential streets should be designed to incorporate pedestrian and bike friendly pathways and crossings
- Complete a road safety audit to determine proper standards for our community's roads by learning from our current issues and successes.
- Work on improving roadways in our smaller incorporated towns.



**Wells County Road Map
Functional Classification Map
(Use current adopted classification map for reference)**

Legend

— Other Roads

Functional_Class

— Classification Removed

— Rural Interstate

— Rural Major Collector

- - - Rural Major Collector (NEW)

— Rural Minor Arterial

— Rural Minor Collector

- - - Rural Minor Collector (NEW)

— Rural Other Principal Arterial

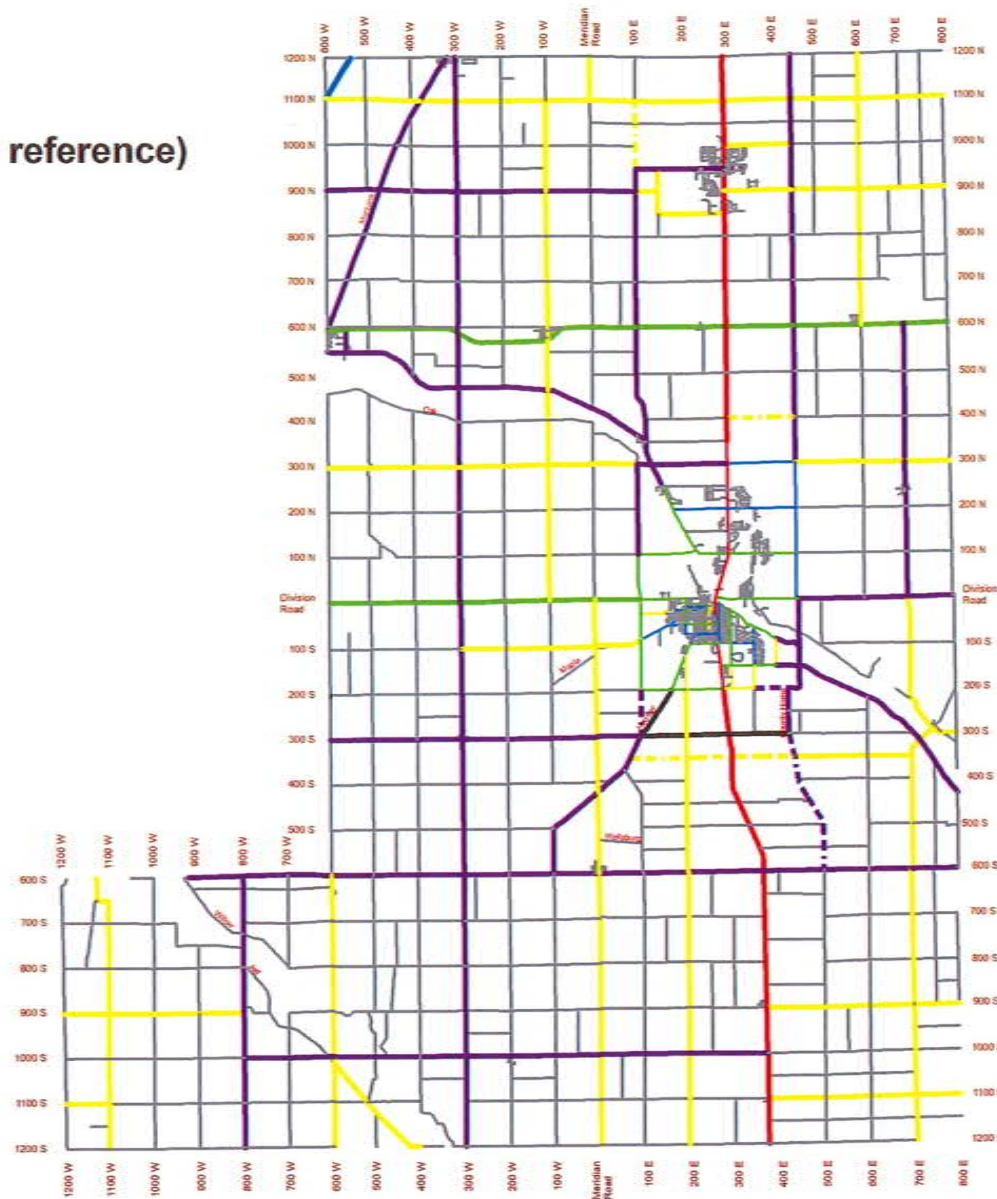
— Urban Major Collector

— Urban Minor Arterial

— Urban Minor Collector

— Urban Other Principal Arterial

Map may be updated based on results of updates to the functional classification map.

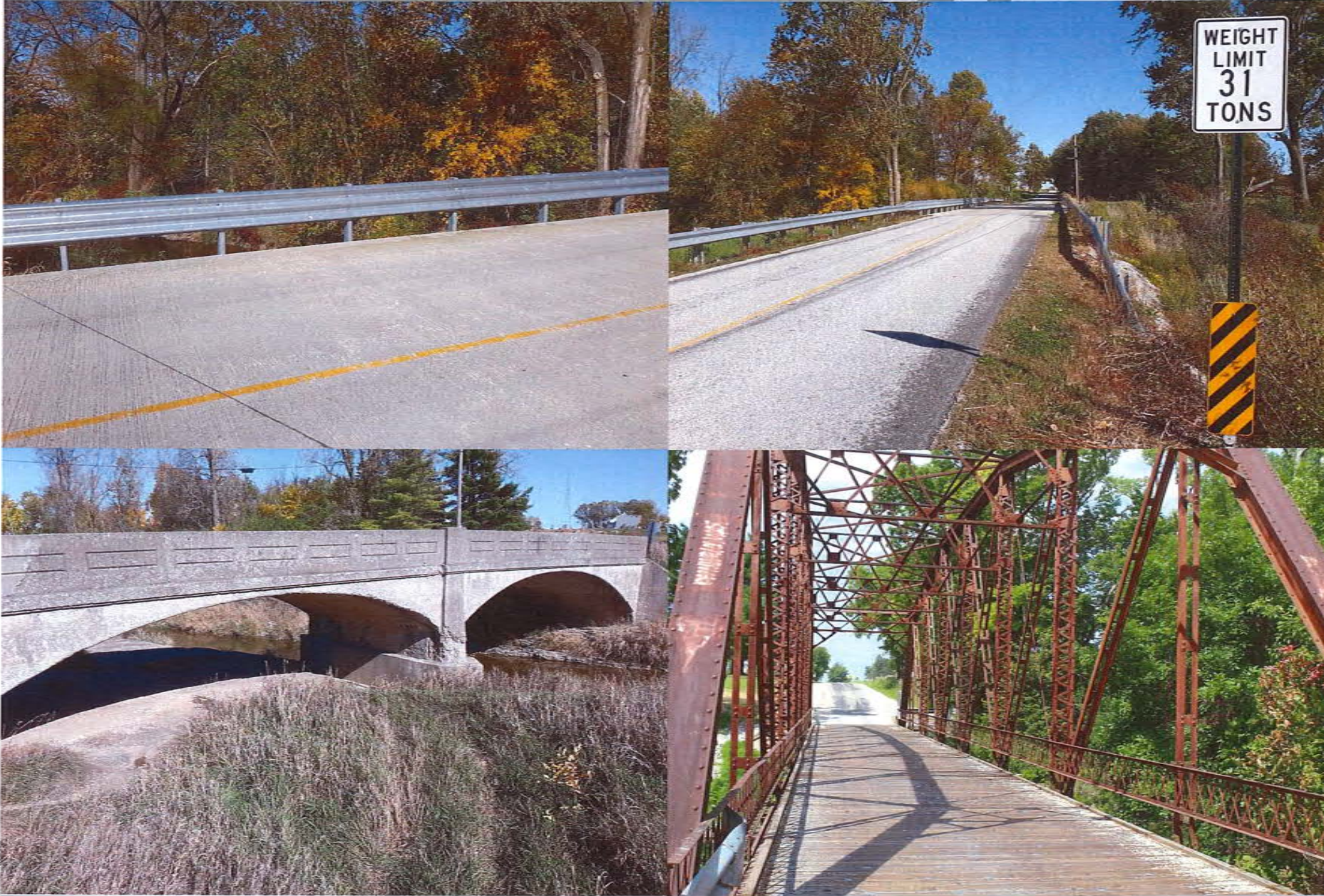


Functional Classification

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- The Wells County Roadway Functional Classification Map does change from time to time, and this plan will incorporate the current version of the map at all times.
- The Wells County Roadway Functional Classification Map is a map showing roadways usage based on their traffic counts and regional significance.
- The purpose of this map is to help focus development styles, funding, and improvement styles to better match the existing and future usage of each roadway.



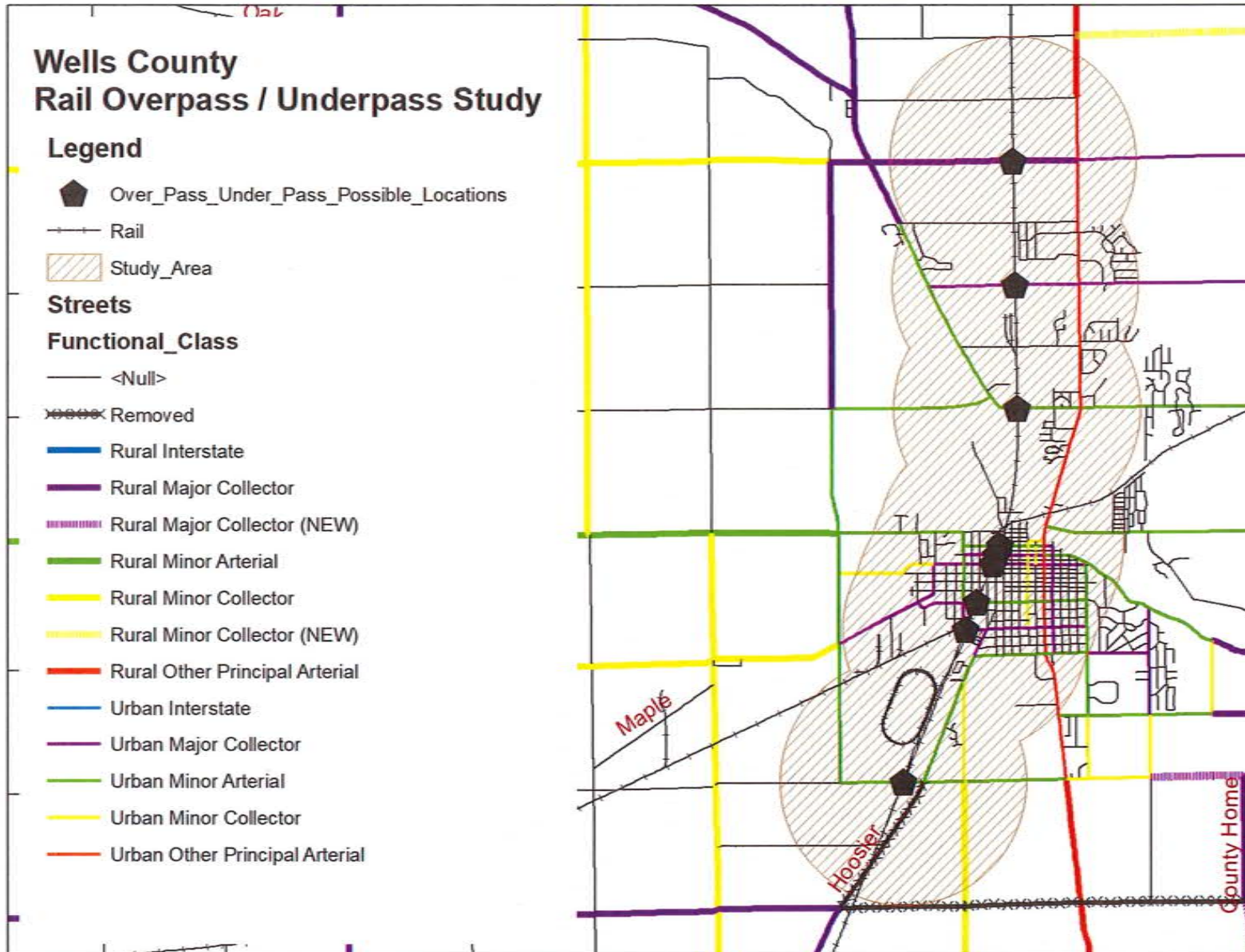


Bridges

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Complete regular updates to the Bridge Asset Management Plan and complete the required National Bridge Inspection reports. Then act both preventatively and reactively to help improve our community's bridge inventory.
- Complete regular small structure reviews to help our community act both preventatively and reactively to help improve our community's bridges.
- Complete a review of the bridges over the Wabash and Salamonie Rivers regarding limitations due to traffic patterns, construction closures, and natural disasters. This could include potential new infrastructure that is developed as the result of these reviews.





Railroad Overpass or Underpass

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look at creating one (1) or two (2) grade separations locations between our higher functional classification roadways in the Bluffton area to avoid issues with railroad operations and construction closures of some major roadways.
- The map shows possible areas for discussion with the idea of studying location impacts in terms of costs of construction and acquisition as well as potential savings to industry, traffic, and community / emergency services.
- Consideration could also be made for an overpass / underpass in the Ossian area.

Potential County and State Road Projects

Legend

Four Lane Hwy to Interstate Options

- SR1 TO I469
- SR116 TO I69
- SR124 TO I69
- SR224 TO I69

Potential County Road Projects

Status

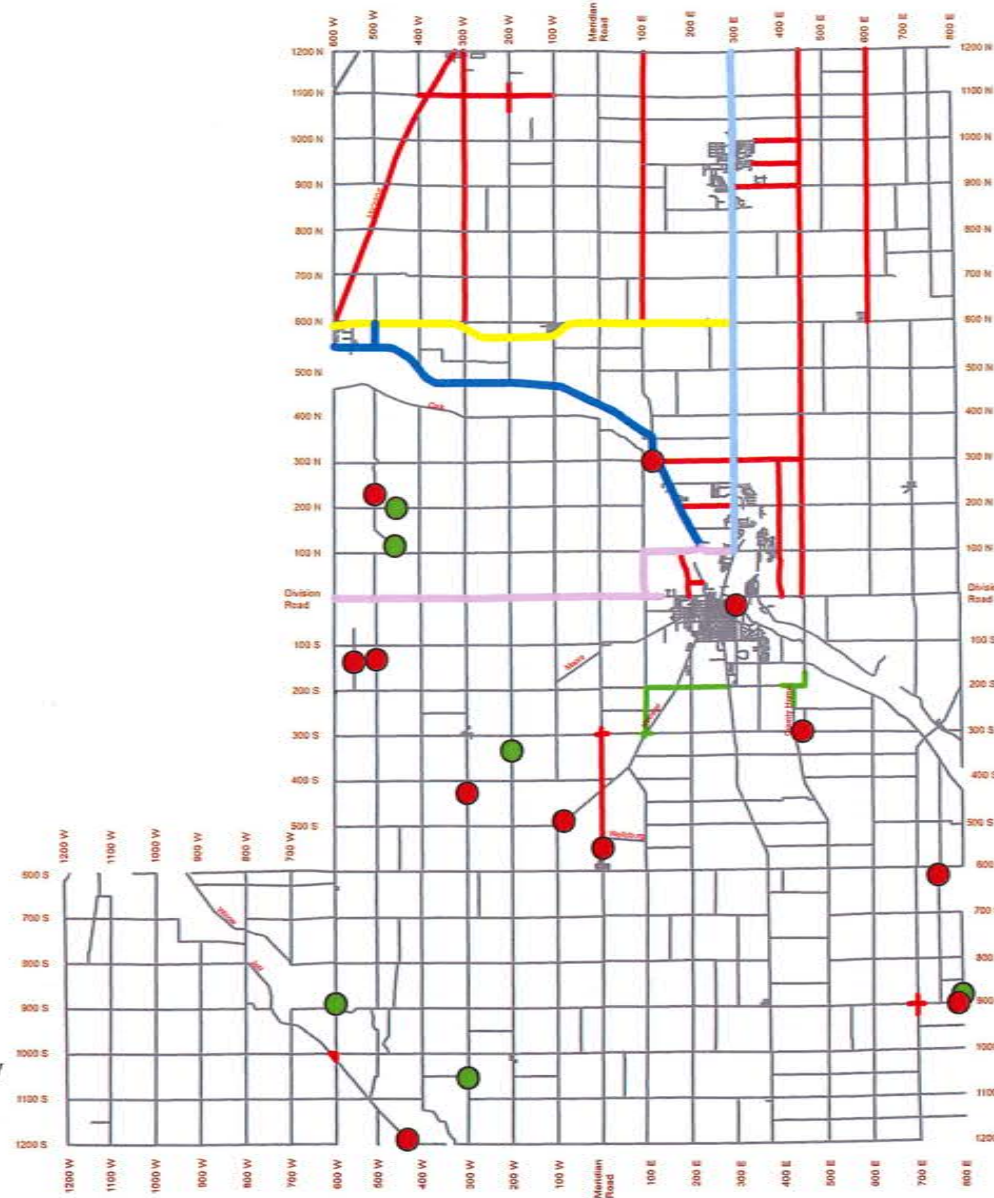
- Funded
- N/A
- Not Funded

Potential Bridge Projects

Status

- Funded
- Not Funded

- A project is listed as not funded if it has been prioritized by county leadership but has yet to move through the design and funding process.
- Map may be updated based on addition or removal of potential road and bridge projects.



Potential County and State Road Projects

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- A project is considered funded if it has been approved for state or federal funds but has not been constructed.
- The county, state, and other affected jurisdictions should work together to review, grade, and potentially develop projects listed as “not funded.”
- Many of these projects would take longer than 2035 to be fully seen into fruition.
- This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of potential projects.
- Work together to develop plans to address higher than normal commuter traffic counts on the following county roads on the north side of the county: 300 W, 100 E, 450 E, 600 E, and Marzane Road.
- A prioritization of efforts should be taken to develop options and complete the goal of connecting Bluffton and Ossian with a four lane highway to an interstate and Fort Wayne.
- Work together to develop options to address capacity concerns along the north SR1 corridor.
- Efforts should be taken to protect the Four Lane Highway to Interstate Options’ Corridors.





Rights-of-way

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look into developing a master rights-of-way plan.
- Continue to review and adjust our Roadway Functional Classification Map.
- Work toward the further implementation of a rural rights-of-way strategy, including getting rights-of-way during parcel splits and other parcel activities from all parcels involved.
- Verify that all participating jurisdictions have formalized rights-of-way standards.

| Rural Rights-of-way Dimensions | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Road Category | Rights-of-way (FT) |
| Rural Minor Collectors | 60 |
| Rural Major Collectors | 80 |
| Rural Minor Arterial | 80 |
| Rural Other Principal Arterial | 100+ |
| All Other Roads | 60 |

- Create a clear path for rights-of-way vacating.





Bluffton Traffic

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look into developing plans for a secondary north-south corridor to potentially connect SR 124 to CR 300 N (Jackson St.) on the east side of SR 1.
- Look into completing the truck bypass on the west side of SR 1, including improvements to CR 200 S.
- Look into developing a second exit location on Harvest Rd.
- The City of Bluffton has developed the Master Parking and Streetscape Plan for downtown Bluffton. They should actively pursue the recommendations made within these plans.
- Develop a master proposed street map to help develop further connectivity standards in and around the City of Bluffton in conjunction with the Wells County Future Roads and Bridge Projects map.
- Review bridge crossings over the Wabash River to see if an additional crossing with lessened flood closure risks would be necessary.





Ossian Traffic

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look into making improvements to Industrial Parkway.
- Look into making improvements to Davis Road / 1000 N.
- Look into developing an extension of Mill Street to CR 450 E.
- Look into making improvements to Wood Creek Drive between Jefferson Street and Ironwood Lane.
- Develop a master proposed street map to help develop further connectivity standards in and around Ossian.





Wells County Traffic

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look into completing the truck bypass on the west side of SR 1 including improvements to CR 200 S.
- Look into completing improvements to assist traffic flow in and around Bluffton and Ossian.
- Work toward improving stone roads to chip seal when the roadway receives 100% support of those property owners on that road mile.
- Possible consideration toward using road reclamation to fix chip seal roads to make them safer.
- Focus on improving higher functional classification roads to asphalt roadways with wider lane widths.
- Review bridge crossings over the Wabash River to see if an additional crossing with lessened flood closure risks would be necessary.





Alternative Transportation

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look into ways to expand public transportation options.
- Look into ways to attract for-profit public transportation options to our community.
- Further evaluate the value of having alternative transportation rental services in our community.
- Look into creating mapped and signed rural bike routes throughout the community.
- Look into creating a master trail plan for the entire community.
- Work toward developing trail construction standards for our community.
- Focus on making trail connections where existing "cow paths" exist to help improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in our community.
- Focus on connecting existing sidewalk and trail segments together to make a seamless sidewalk and trail network.

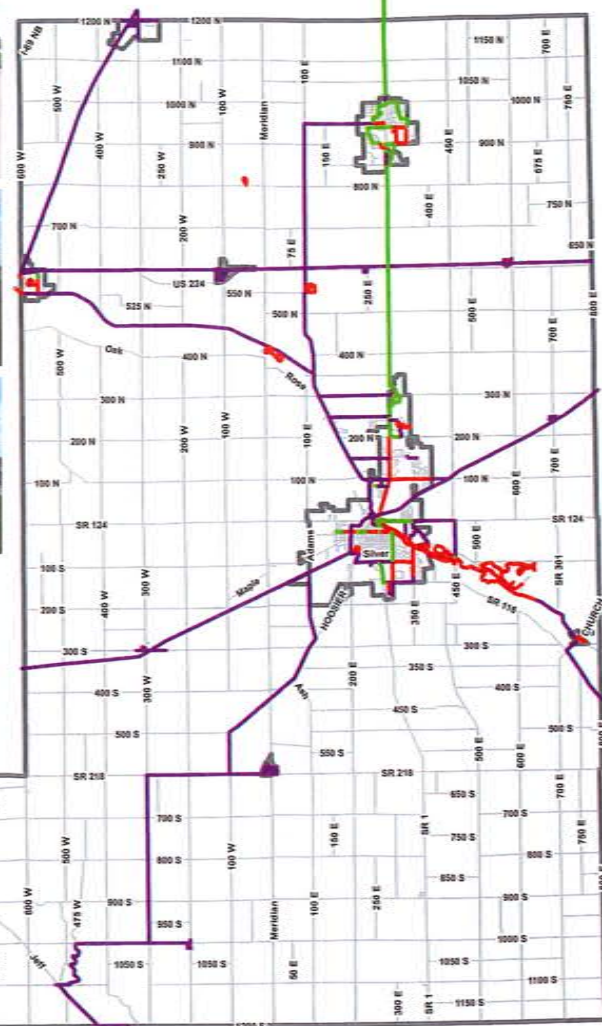




WELLS COUNTY TRAILS

Proposed and Existing Trails Map

Created: July 2019 Revised: May 2022



Legend

Trails Priority

- Complete
- High Priority
- Moderate Priority

Map may be updated based on results of updates to the official proposed and existing Wells County Trails Map.

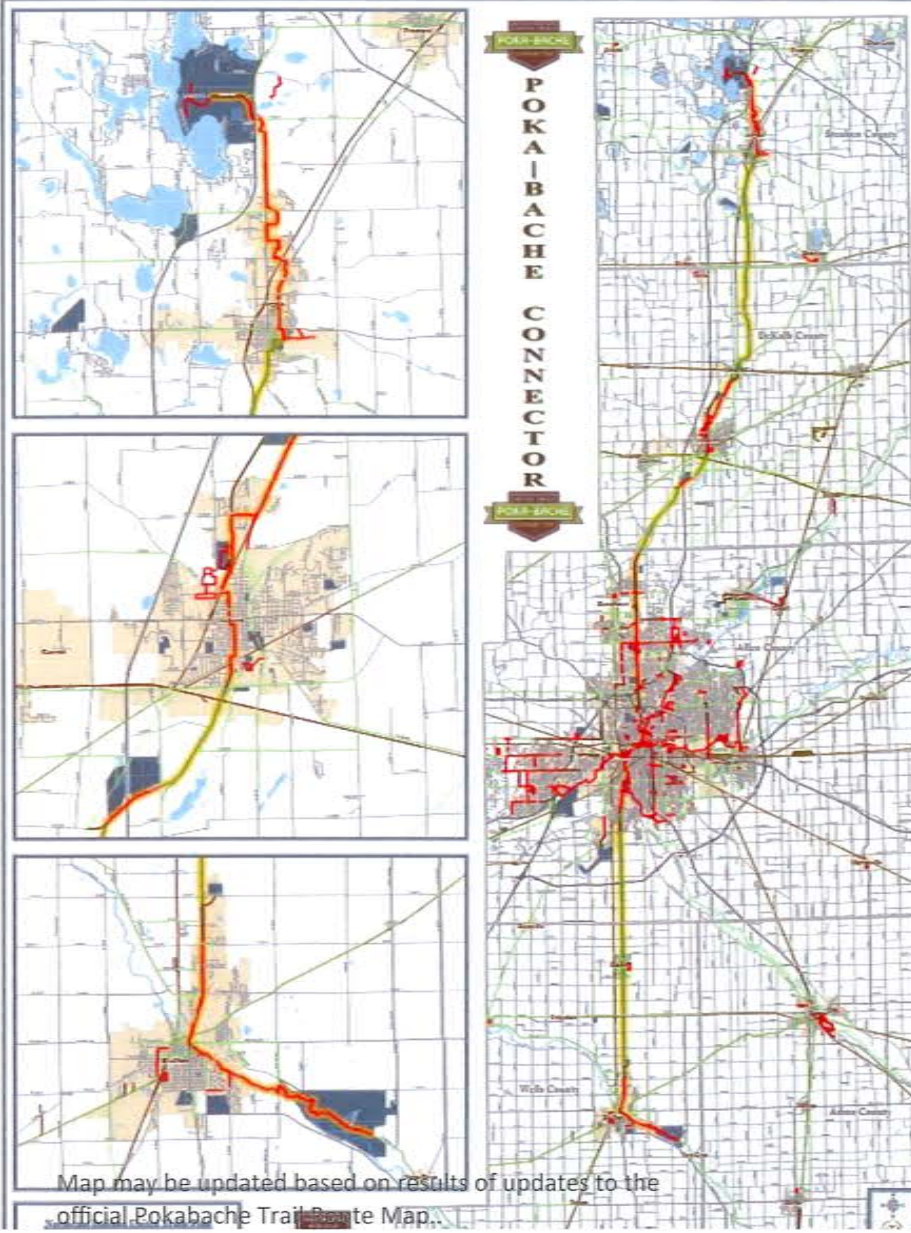


Trails

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Marketing and creating a familiarity with the Wells County Trails organization should be a priority.
- Work toward supporting Wells County Trails' visions and goals.
- Make trails an infrastructure and quality of life priority.
- Develop a county parks department to maintain trails in our small towns and unincorporated areas in our community with the possibility of cross collaboration with our existing park departments.
- Make trail development in our community a budgetary priority.
- Look into creating a master trail plan for the entire community.
- Work toward developing trail construction standards for our community.
- Focus on making trail connections where existing "cow paths" exist to help improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in our community.
- Focus on connecting existing sidewalk and trail segments together to make a seamless sidewalk and trail network.
- Look into designating road biking routes in the county.





Poka-Bache Trail

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- A growing effort is to be made to share the value of the Poka-Bache Trail to our community and our region.
- Make it a priority to develop the Poka-Bache Trail between the existing pieces.
- Development focus should be consistent with the goals of the State of Indiana, NIRCC (Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council), Wells County Trails, Poka-Bache Coalition, and other regional and local project partners.
- Support the creation of the Poka-Bache Coalition to help move the project along.
- Support the development of an regional and local economic impact analysis for the Poka-Bache trail.
- Work with landowners along the proposed route to help promote the value of the trail to the community as a whole.





Sidewalks

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Make sidewalk improvements a more substantial budgetary priority.
- Focus on making sidewalk connections where “cow paths” exist to help improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in our community.
- Focus on connecting existing sidewalk and trail segments together to make a seamless sidewalk and trail network.





Blueways

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Work toward creating safe and clean waterways for the general public to enjoy.
- Work toward developing additional canoe and kayak accesses on our blueways. The goal is to create as many 2 to 4 hour trips along our blueways that begin and end at specifically designed and maintained launch sites.
- Look into developing waterfront attractions that would help to increase interaction with our rivers and streams.
- Promote events that help introduce new users to our blueways.
- Consistent signage and safety information should be made available at all launch sites.
- Support of the Wells County Trails, Bluffton Parks Department, and Bluffton Kayaking and Hiking Club should be a priority regarding their efforts to increase the use of our blueways.



Transportation implementation and priorities.

| <u>PRIORITY</u> | <u>ITEM</u> | <u>IMPLEMENTATION NOTES</u> |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 1 | Transportation Master Plan..... | Each jurisdiction should work toward developing a Local Road Safety Plan and a publication of targeted future road projects. |
| 2 | Road Maintenance..... | Each jurisdiction should prioritize road maintenance in a way that helps improve the quality of our existing transportation infrastructure for years to come. |
| 3 | SR 1 Capacity..... | Each affected jurisdiction should participate with INDOT and other key stakeholders in the process reviewing options and improving the capacity of SR 1. |
| 4 | Railroad Overpass / Underpass..... | Each affected jurisdiction should participate toward developing unobstructed crossings at key locations over or under the rail line to help with traffic and emergency services. |
| 5 | Bridge and Culvert Maintenance..... | Each affected jurisdiction should prioritize road maintenance in a way that helps improve the quality of our existing transportation infrastructure for years to come. |
| 6 | Sidewalk Maintenance..... | Each jurisdiction should prioritize sidewalk maintenance in a way that helps improve safe pedestrian pathways between residential areas and key destinations. They should also work to expand the options of public-private partnerships to help obtain this goal. |
| 7 | Bicycle Routes..... | Each jurisdiction should prioritize bicycle routes within their community and help promote and designate them. |
| 8 | Trail Connectivity..... | Each jurisdiction should prioritize trail connectivity within their community between residential areas and key destinations. This would include connectivity between jurisdictions. |
| 9 | Accessibility of Wabash & Salamonie Rivers..... | Each affected jurisdiction should prioritize river accessibility to further develop our blueway trail network in our region and promote greater usage of the rivers. |
| 10 | Pokabache Trail Project..... | Each affected jurisdiction should prioritize the development of the Pokabache Trail and the efforts of the Pokabache Coalition to create this unique regional trail asset. |



Hereby, this is the official Wells County Infrastructure Policy.

The sections listed in this chapter and their associated "Items to Consider When Making Decisions" should be paid reasonable regard to when making any type of infrastructure decision or associated decisions that may affect the future ability to accomplish infrastructure projects.



Sewer

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look at developing a long-term sewer utility plan.
- Look at ways to extend public sewer services to concentrations of rural residences with known septic issues.
- Work to remove stormwater infiltration issues from public sewer systems.
- Better utilize the newly improved Uniondale and Poneto sewer systems to help promote residential growth in and around their jurisdictions.
- Look at increasing capacity to allow for future growth.
- Bluffton will be working toward systematic pipe cleaning to allow for improved capacity.
- Bluffton will continue to improve their wastewater treatment plant for operational and capacity improvements.

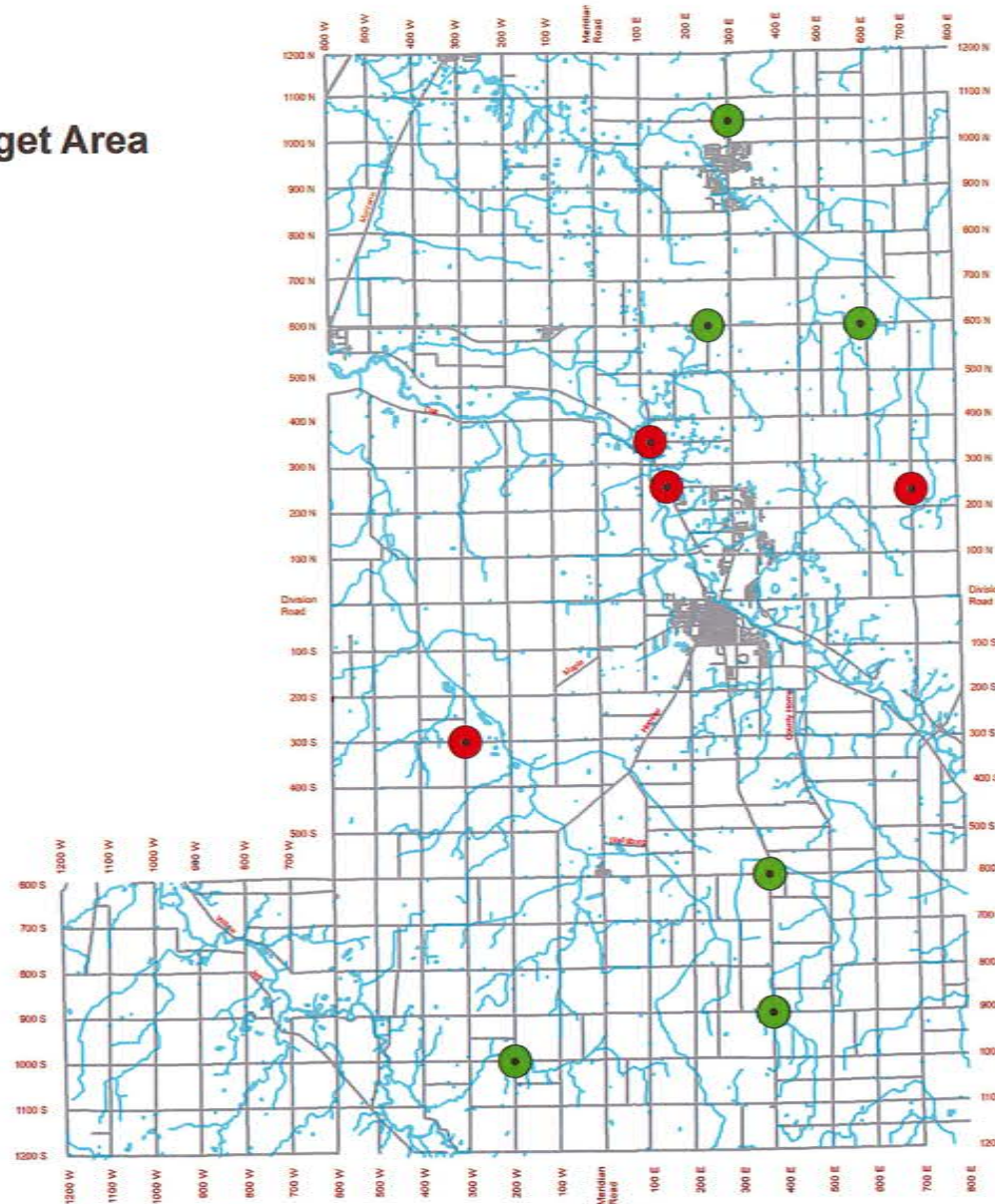


Legend

Wells County Regional Sewer District Target Area

Ranking

- Future
- In Progress
- Water
- Streets



Regional Sewer District

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Efforts should be put together to create a rural sewer and septic elimination plan for the county.
- Look at ways to extend public sewer services to concentrations of rural residences with known septic issues.
- Work toward helping the regional sewer district serve public sewer to rural residences with known septic issues, including but not limited to studies and project construction.
- Regional Sewer District is constructing sewer connections to Liberty Center and Murray / Timber Ridge and surrounding residences.
- Continued efforts should be made to provide public sewer to areas listed as future on the map. Connections could be through the regional sewer district or done directly through local jurisdictions.
- Additional areas may be added to this list as prioritization, issues, and financing options become known over time.
- Look at ways to concentrate or incentivize development along rural sewer line routes.





On-Site Systems

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Education opportunities should be developed to help teach rural homeowners about proper maintenance and operating procedures for on-site systems.
- Septic systems should be viewed as temporary sewage treatment options and consider alternative sites on the property and proximity to future public sewer projects.
- Look at ways to extend public sewer services to concentrations of rural residences with known septic issues.
- Work toward helping the regional sewer district serve public sewer to rural residences with known septic issues.
- Continue the conversation regarding what options the community should take to best keep on-site systems from failing and causing pollution concerns.





Water

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Should look at developing a long-term water utility plan.
- Options to expand municipal water services in rural areas already served by public sewer should be looked into.
- Bluffton will complete the water treatment plan and new waterlines, improving service and reliability to their water system.
- Bluffton will work toward systematically replacing their approximately 66 miles of water mains to reduce water main breaks and other issues relating to aging water mains.
- Bluffton may consider water service in areas that are currently unincorporated.





Electric

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look at developing a long-term electric utility plan.
- Work toward improving capacity and reliability of our electric grid to help improve service to existing users and be prepared for future users.
- Finish improvements to the City of Bluffton's North Main Street and Decker Drive substations.
- Since Bluffton cannot easily expand their territory in the future, they should focus more on making their system more resilient and improve capacity for areas that they do currently serve to allow for growth.
- Work with private electric providers to verify that we continue to have enough capacity for future development.
- Work with private electric providers to help promote their goals to mesh with our community's goals.
- Better understand service areas and the process of changing and adjusting these areas as our community grows.





Stormwater

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look at developing a long-term stormwater utility plan.
- Look into whether or not to develop stormwater fees to help fund critical stormwater related projects.
- Actively work to fix public sewer stormwater infiltration issues.
- Bluffton is expecting to become an MS4 community and will begin the process to verify proper stormwater and sanitary sewer separation.
- Bluffton is implementing organizational changes to allow them to focus more on the current stormwater collection system and its management.
- Promote regional detention basins whenever possible to preserve development land and to simplify project approval processes.
- Review new project's impacts on aging or inadequate stormwater infrastructure.
- Work toward addressing farm sized drainage infrastructure when it becomes part of urban development that needs greater levels of service.





Natural Gas and Pipelines

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Work with natural gas providers to make sure we have adequate infrastructure and capacity to handle growth in our community.
- Work on becoming more aware of the limitations that pipelines cause in development of transportation, infrastructure, quality of life, and private development projects so we can plan on how to work around them and still achieve our goals.
- Work toward better understanding our risk and promoting public awareness in regard to the many pipelines that run through our community.





Communications

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Promote improvements to provide better access to cellular communications and broadband internet to our citizens.
- Work with fiber companies and rural electric providers to expand fiber infrastructure to our rural areas of the county.
- Work to provide quality high speed internet as an economic development incentive for people who want to live, work, and have their kids go to school here.
- Be prepared to work with companies as newer technology comes out so that we, as a community, can benefit and give adequate guidance on its deployment.





Trash & Recycling

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Work to provide affordable and reliable trash pickup.
- Work to provide affordable and reliable recycling pickup to constituents.
- Improve the promotion and usage of the Recycling Center.
- Improve and expand community clean-up days and junk removal projects.
- Work to improve the appeal of the community through the reduction of exterior stored junk and debris.





Government Buildings

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look at ways to combine government buildings to make services more efficient.
- Structural reviews of the county courthouse should be done to verify adequate maintenance is being done to preserve the historic structure.
- For the purposes of maintaining and constructing government buildings, all other existing funding sources should be utilized prior to creating new forms of taxes such as cumulative capital development funds.
- Review possible locations and funding sources for either a renovation of the City of Bluffton's existing fire station or new fire station.
- Work toward a new Wells County highway garage.
- Renovate the current police and fire building location for the City of Bluffton Police Department.
- Work toward space concerns and renovation needs in the Ossian Town Hall and its secondary location.
- Work toward space concerns and renovation needs in the Bluffton City Hall and secondary locations.

Infrastructure implementation and priorities.

| <u>PRIORITY</u> | <u>ITEM</u> | <u>IMPLEMENTATION NOTES</u> |
|-----------------|--|---|
| 1 | Sewage Capacity & Service Areas..... | Each jurisdiction should plan ahead and work to improve their capacity of sewer treatment and collection while working to extend sewer services to new areas directly or in concert with the regional sewer district. Work on maintaining affordable rates. |
| 2 | Utility Master Plan..... | Each jurisdiction should complete a master plan for utilities. |
| 3 | High Speed Internet & Cellular Capacity..... | Each jurisdiction should work with providers to improve access to cellular and internet capacity within their jurisdictions. |
| 4 | Utility Affordability..... | Each jurisdiction should balance quality of service and affordability. |
| 5 | Water Capacity & Service Areas..... | Each jurisdiction should plan ahead on work to improve its capacity of water treatment and distribution. Work on maintaining affordable rates. |
| 6 | Septic System Education & Maintenance..... | Affected jurisdictions should work to educate the general public in regards to septic systems and their maintenance. |
| 7 | Electric Capacity & Service Areas..... | Each jurisdiction should plan ahead and work to improve the maintenance and capacity of electric service within its jurisdiction. Work on maintaining affordable rates. |
| 8 | Storm Sewer Capacity & Quality..... | Each jurisdiction should plan ahead and work to improve its capacity and quality of storm sewer treatment and distribution. As well as maintaining affordable rates. |
| 9 | Gas Pipelines & Service Areas..... | Each jurisdiction should plan ahead and work to improve the capacity of natural gas services in its area, better understand pipeline safety, and improve service areas, while maintaining affordable rates. |
| 10 | Trash & Recycling..... | Each jurisdiction should work to provide affordable and dependable access to trash and recycling services and promote exterior stored junk reduction. |
| 11 | Government Buildings..... | Each jurisdiction should study and assess its building space needs and address them in a way that maintains affordable tax rates while providing adequate services. |



Hereby, this is the official Wells County Quality of Life Policy.

The sections listed in this chapter and their associated "Items to Consider When Making Decisions" should be paid reasonable regard to when making any type of quality of life decision or associated decisions that may affect the future ability to accomplish quality of life projects.





Downtown Bluffton

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- A concerted effort should be made to better familiarize people in our community with the Bluffton NOW! organization and its vision and goals along with other community efforts to revitalize downtown Bluffton.
- The City of Bluffton and Bluffton NOW! should partner to consider the following items:
 - Develop a Master Parking and Streetscape Plan.
 - Update downtown Strategic Investment Guide.
 - Develop a public WIFI system in downtown.
 - Transform alleys and other spaces throughout downtown should be improved to promote a more pedestrian friendly downtown.
 - Create a co-working / co-op space should be developed in downtown Bluffton.
 - Work toward positioning downtown Bluffton into a destination.
 - Work on improving infrastructure in downtown Bluffton.
 - Work on creating a plan for maintenance and construction of buildings in downtown Bluffton that maintains the historic character of the area.
 - Maintain the quality of landscaping.
 - Develop murals and community art.
 - Continuation of the successful Community Reinvestment Program (CRP).





Community Revitalization

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Downtown Ossian should consider developing a public WIFI system.
- A concerted effort should be made to better familiarize people in our community with the Ossian Revitalization organization and its vision and goals along with other community efforts to revitalize our community.
- There should be a priority to help our smaller jurisdictions such as Zanesville, Uniondale, Vera Cruz, and Poneto grow along with several other non-incorporated areas such as Craigville, Liberty Center, Murray, Keystone, and Petroleum.
- Support the ability to apply for grant funding to meet our community's needs including the possibility of hiring a community grant writer.
- Support applying for grants when local tax funds are being used to act as the financial match for the project.
- Look at making all of our downtowns into destinations.





Parks and Recreation

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Continue to work toward creating quality parks and recreational opportunities throughout the community.
- Work toward establishing a county-wide parks department that works in conjunction with existing parks departments.
- Work on creating parks and recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.
- Uniondale should work to make Improvements and do necessary maintenance of the Uniondale playground and Veteran's Park.
- Work toward completing the items listed in existing community parks plans.





Local Businesses

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Shop local efforts should be of the utmost importance to the efforts of all our jurisdictions in our community as well as our community organizations.
- Programming to support locally owned businesses should be greatly emphasized by all our jurisdictions in our community as well as our community organizations.
- Support local business retention and expansion.
- Support the efforts of the Wells County Chamber of Commerce and other entities that focus on improving our local business climate.
- Look at creating a business incubator program.
- Create a positive local business atmosphere.





Housing

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Develop strategies to help provide a diverse portfolio of housing options to better address the housing shortage issues within our community.
- The 2017 Wells County Housing Assessment & Growth Strategy should be better publicized and followed to help improve our housing options.
- Whenever possible, housing affordability should not be accomplished with the use of local tax funds.
- Make it a priority to help provide adequate affordable housing for all people in our community.
- Form a housing taskforce that can make recommendations to decision makers on how to make quality housing more attainable.





Entertainment

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Support the recruitment of businesses and individuals that will bring new entertainment options to our community.
- Work to increase art and cultural improvements throughout our community.
- Look at ways to bring in entertainment options through business attraction efforts.
- Make better use entertainment options to help attract and retain our community's youth.





History

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Work to increase the awareness of the Wells County Historic Society and Wells County Historic Museum.
- Focus on making our history a significant part of our attention when making decisions.
- Utilize our historic structures, landmarks, and written history to promote tourism in our community.
- Put together rules to promote proper maintenance, Improvements, and new construction within historic designated areas.



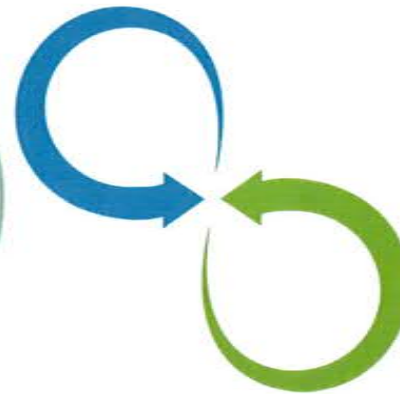


Youth Retention

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Actively work toward making our community more attractive to our youth and young adults.
- Always look at ways to involve our youth and young adults voices in the decision making process.
- Create an attractive financial atmosphere for our youth.
- Work on creating housing options that are both affordable and attractive to our youth.





Tourism and Marketing

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Increase marketing efforts informing our citizens and neighbors about what is going on in our community.
- Work on creating a focus on tourism for our community.
- Work towards establishing a tourism office in our community.
- Support the efforts of the Wells County Economic Development office in their launching of a tourism program, community marketing strategies, and community branding efforts.
- Look to Utilize our regional partners to improve our tourism and marketing capabilities.
- Find unique ways of promoting our #wonderingwellscounty and www.visitwellscounty.com tourism and marketing assets and projects.



Education

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Promote college and trades classes to be made available in our community.
- Increase the promotion of our local schools to help attract families to our community.
- Promote opportunities to help train our local employees so that they can earn more money and provide highly sought after skills for our local employers.





Environment

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Make it a priority to clean up our rivers and streams.
- Make it a priority to promote the public interaction with our rivers and streams.
- Work to expand our nature preserves and community open space.
- Increase local clean-up days to promote junk and pollutant removal before it affects our environment.
- Work to improve river recreation options to increase awareness of the value of clean water and debris removal in our rivers.





Regionalism is an important part of our community's ability to develop a long-lasting quality of life for our citizens. Our ability to develop and utilize regional assets will create a lasting benefit to our community.

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Continue to grow and expand our positive relationships with our regional partners.
- Do a more earnest job of explaining the benefits that come from working with our regional partners.
- Promote local participation in regional projects and planning.
- Better promotion of documents and information that are produced by our regional partners including how they directly benefit our community.
- Look at ways to work together with regional partners to promote tourism in our community.
- Look at ways to work together with regional partners to promote regional quality of life projects such as trails.





Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Support the use of tax funding to help combat mental health and substance abuse in our community.
- Support local organizations that are making direct impact in the fight against substance abuse.
- Support local organizations that are making direct impact on improving our community's mental health.





Aesthetics

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Look at ways to better live up to the Parlor City name and promote community pride in the way we maintain our properties.
- Work to increase private interest in improving our community's appeal.
- Look at ways to help improve our existing structures to make them usable for years to come.
- Look at ways to remove structures that are beyond repair.
- Look at improving processes to fight junk accumulation on properties in both proactive and reactive ways.
- Promote community service projects that help improve our community's aesthetics.
- Improve recycling programs in our community.



Quality of Life implementation and priorities.

| <u>PRIORITY</u> | <u>ITEM</u> | <u>IMPLEMENTATION NOTES</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Small Town Revitalization..... | We should focus on developing a plan to redevelop and grow our small towns. |
| 2 | Local Businesses..... | We should work together to create a pro-local business atmosphere in our community. |
| 3 | Downtown Bluffton..... | We should continue the existing efforts to further develop downtown Bluffton into a community destination. |
| 4 | Park and Recreation..... | We should work to provide a variety of park and recreation opportunities throughout our community. |
| 5 | Housing Affordability..... | We should work on developing tools to create affordable housing options. |
| 6 | Entertainment..... | We should continue to grow efforts that bring in quality entertainment. |
| 7 | Youth Retention..... | We should continue to work with our youth to make our community a desirable landing point for them as they transfer from a student to joining the workforce. |
| 8 | Education..... | We should maintain a high standard for education in our community and increase opportunities for trade classes and secondary education. |
| 9 | Substance Abuse..... | We should work with employers, not-for-profits, local government, and service providers to help people work through substance abuse issues and obtain housing and work. |
| 10 | Tourism/Marketing..... | We should finalize the development of a tourism organization for our county. |
| 11 | Environment..... | We should work to be good stewards of our environment and engage more people with our environmental opportunities. |
| 12 | Our History..... | We should work to use our history to attract people to our community. |
| 13 | Community Aesthetics..... | We should work to improve the aesthetics of our community in a way that increases community pride, development opportunity, and property values. |
| 14 | Regionalism..... | We should work with our neighbors to develop partnerships in a way that will allow us to accomplish more than we could as one community. |



Hereby, this is the official Wells County Natural Disaster Policy.

The sections listed in this chapter and their associated "Items to Consider When Making Decisions" should be paid reasonable regard to when making any type of natural disaster decisions or associated decisions that may affect the future ability to accomplish natural disaster related projects.

Policy

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Flooding

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- In extreme situations, when loss of life and property risks are very high due to flooding, all jurisdictions should consider buyout projects can to reduce long-term issues.
- Look into increasing requirements regarding the development in a floodplain.
- Consider in extreme situations, permanent road barriers could be installed to avoid people driving through flooded roadways.
- Work towards not levying additional taxes to help reduce flooding risks.
- Assist in maintaining Wells County, Bluffton, Ossian, Vera Cruz, and Zanesville's community rating system designation along with looking at ways to improve their ranking.
- Review bridge crossings over the Wabash River to see if an additional crossing with lessened flood closure risks would be necessary.
- Continue to track, photograph, and analyze flooding events to get a better idea on local trends and types of damages being seen.





Wind

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Continue to track, photograph, and analyze wind events to get a better idea on local trends and types of damages being seen.
- Work to make our structures and infrastructure more resilient to damage from high wind.
- Create, review, and practice our response plans for high wind events.
- Create avenues for people to assist in the cleanup efforts when wind events occur.





Other Types of Natural Disasters

Items all jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Be aware of the existing emergency response plans or create them to help our community be as disaster resilient as possible.
- Make sure that we are prepared for drought and familiar with the programs that can help us recover from losses caused by it.
- Work to verify that our infrastructure is in the best condition possible to withstand events that can cause widespread power outages.
- Work to reduce the potential risks of chemical spills by creating response plans and holding practice events at various locations throughout our community.
- To become a more resilient community, we must work to address the burdens that pandemics cause on our local population and businesses.

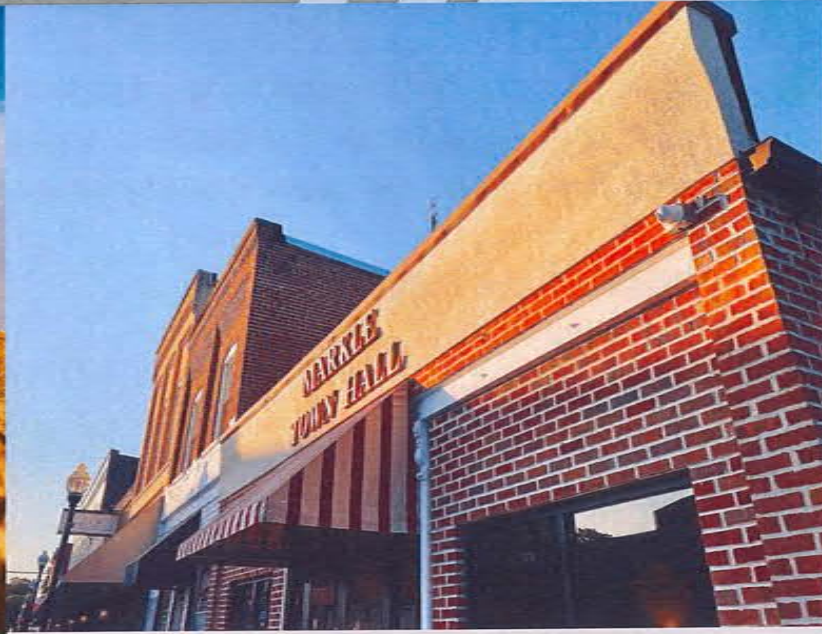


Natural Disaster implementation and priorities.

| <u>PRIORITY</u> | <u>ITEM</u> | <u>IMPLEMENTATION NOTES</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Flooding..... | We should work toward minimizing potential damages to property and life caused by flooding by enforcing our ordinances, looking at buyouts for key trouble properties, and preparing for different flooding scenarios to promote readiness. |
| 2 | Wind..... | We should work to create better buildings and infrastructure that can withstand high wind events and work on preparing different high wind scenarios to promote readiness. |
| 3 | Disaster Preparedness..... | We should focus on improving our preparedness level for natural disasters and educate the public on how the response plan works. We should work to accomplish the goals set forth in our existing emergency plans. |
| 4 | Drought..... | We should work to reduce the negative impacts of drought on our community. |
| 5 | Illness..... | We should work to help our community members and businesses succeed during wide-spread illness outbreaks to help our community be as resilient as possible. |
| 6 | Chemical Spills..... | We should prepare for all types of chemical spill situations and improve our communication response to the general public in the event of a chemical spill. |
| 7 | Power Outages..... | We should work with our electric providers to make sure we are taking every measure to do proper maintenance and improvements to help reduce the risk of long-term power outages, prepare for all types of situations, and notify the public how the process works. |



MARKLE COORDINATION



Markle Coordination

Items all affected jurisdictions should consider when making decisions:

- Continued growth of residential areas to the east and northeast of town by adding infrastructure with money provided by our Housing TIF, a combined effort between the town of Markle and Northern Wells School Corporation.
- Continued growth of commercial areas to the north and northeast of town.
- Continued growth of the park system to potentially attach our parks and paths to those of the surrounding community.
- Improvements to our infrastructure system to accommodate growth.
- Continued growth within our industrial/commercial areas with continued efforts from our economic development groups.
- Development of launch sites and the kayak river trail from Bluffton to Markle.
- Focus on wider lane widths along SR 116 from Markle to Bluffton due to increased truck traffic.
- Consider increasing sewer capacity to accommodate future development and connections to the regional sewer district.
- Work to improve high speed internet options.
- Work to develop Markle's downtown business areas.
- Develop a master plan.



ADDITIONAL PLANS

The Wells County Vision 2035 plan calls for additional planning to be done by the following participating communities. The Wells County Vision 2035 plan is to act as the baseline for these discussions. It is the goal for each community to complete the following plans to help fully meet the needs of each jurisdiction covered by the Wells County Vision 2035 plan.

Wells County

County-wide Broadband Master Plan
Rural Sewer and Septic Elimination Plan
Master Road and Functional Class Plan
SR 1 Capacity Improvement Plan

City of Bluffton

Community Master Plan
Utility Master Plan

Town of Ossian

Community Master Plan
Utility Master Plan

Town of Zanesville

Community Master Plan

Town of Uniondale

Community Master Plan

Town of Vera Cruz

Community Master Plan

Town of Poneto

Community Master Plan

Town of Markle

Community Master Plan



Additional Plans

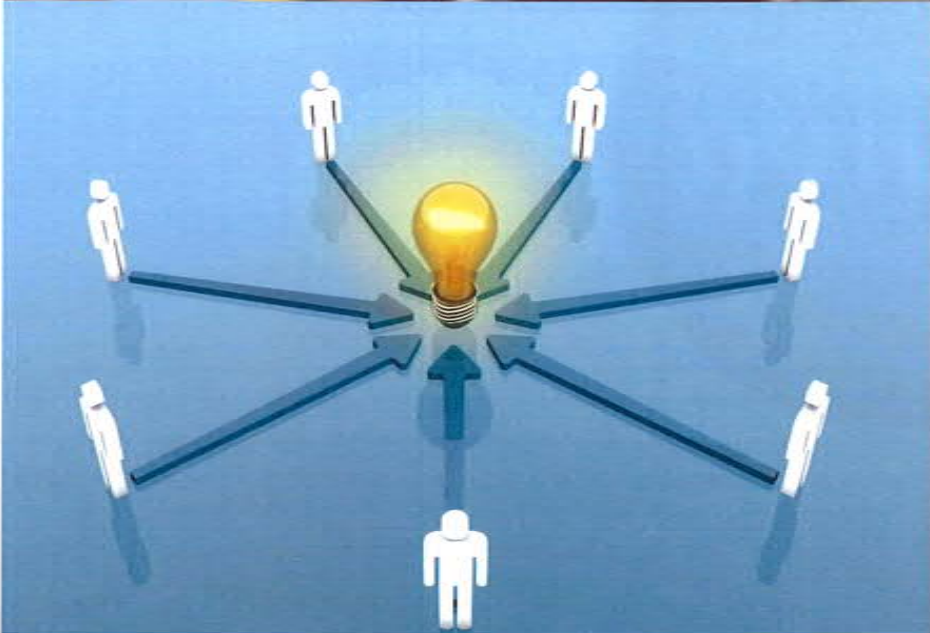


CONCLUSION



Conclusion:

The Wells County Area Plan Commission wants to thank everyone for participating in the creation of the Wells County Vision 2035 plan. This plan is to act as a guidance tool to help move our community toward our goals and aspirations in the best way possible. This plan will be successful if each jurisdiction attempts to address the “items to consider” within its jurisdiction. Addressing an “item to consider” can mean we successfully implemented the item, we are in the process of implementing the item, or we have looked at the item and found that we cannot implement it at this time.



CREDITS

Photos and artwork for the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan have been provided by the Wells County Area Plan Commission and Canva Design For Everyone - Professional.

Text for the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan has been provided by the Wells County Area Plan Commission.



Appendix: Future Land Use Maps - Introduction

The future land use maps are tied to statements made in the Land Use chapter of the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The maps show a visualization of the of desired land use classification for all parts of our community. The land use categories shown in the maps match the land use categories shown in the Wells County Land Use Compatibility Spectrum located on page 26 of this plan. These maps are to be used as a guidance tool when making decisions in regards to changing a property's zoning classifications within our community. These maps were created using the existing zoning maps, existing future land use maps, current land uses, and desired outcomes for growth.



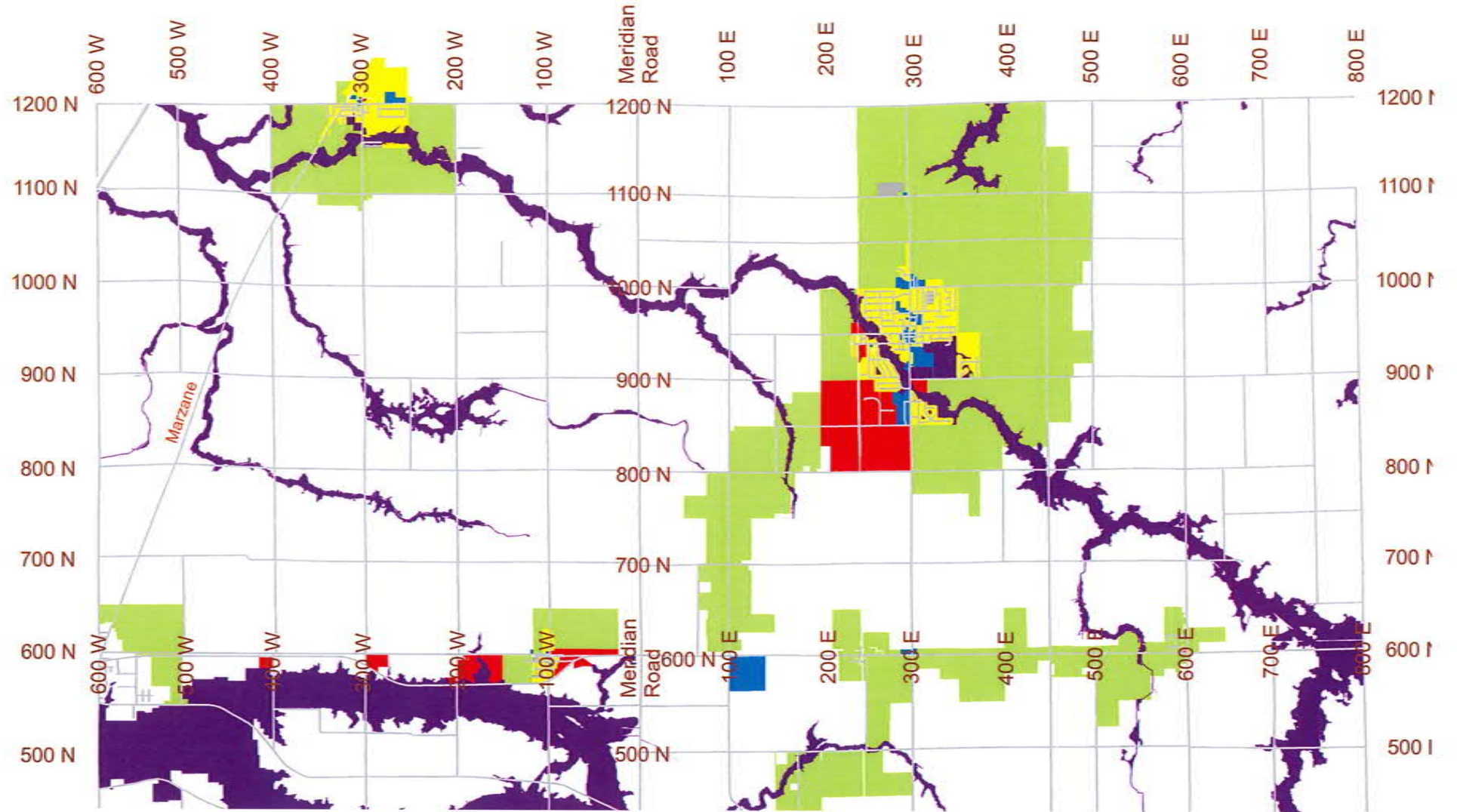
Union and Jefferson Townships Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



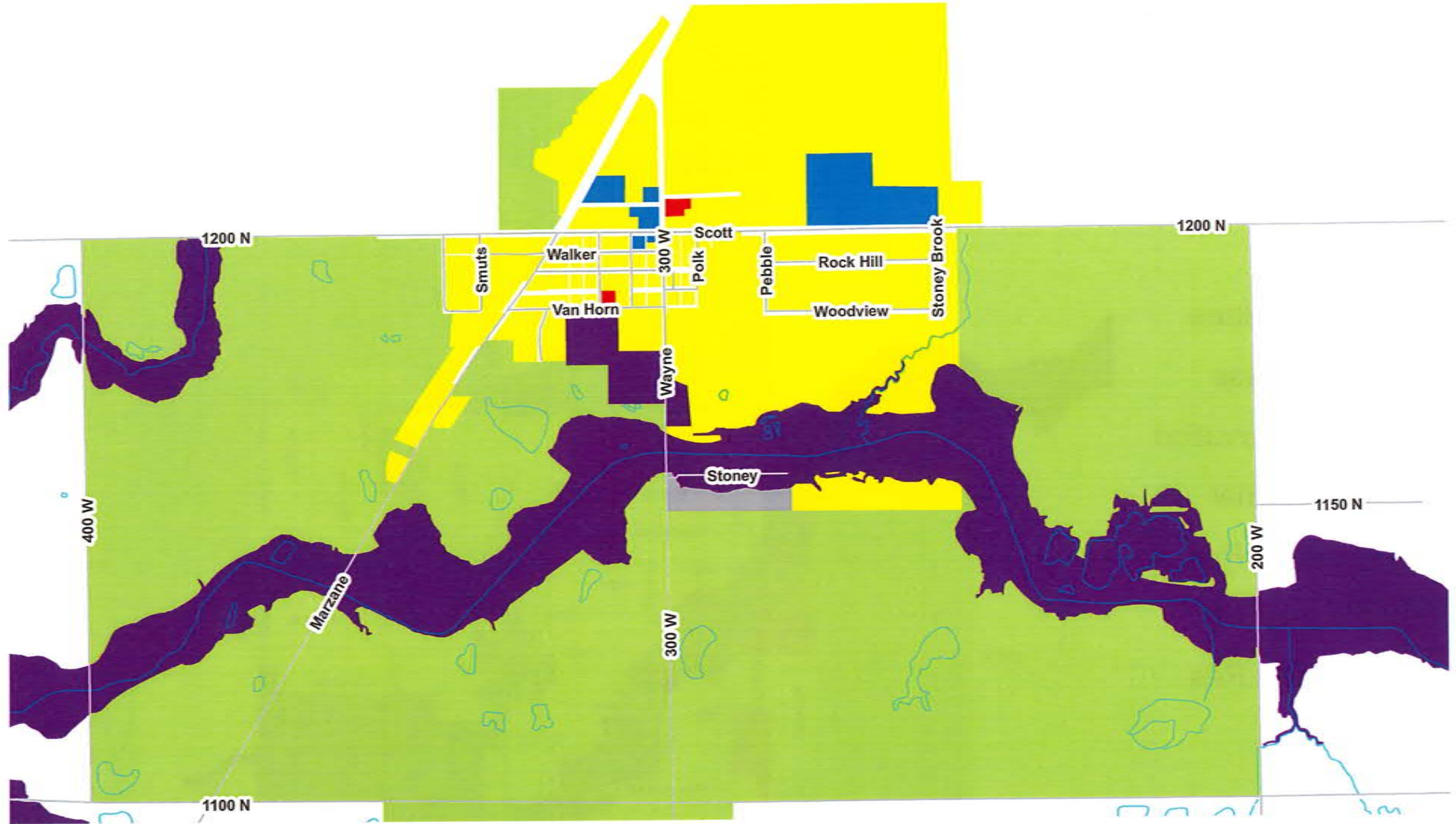
Town of Zanesville
Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



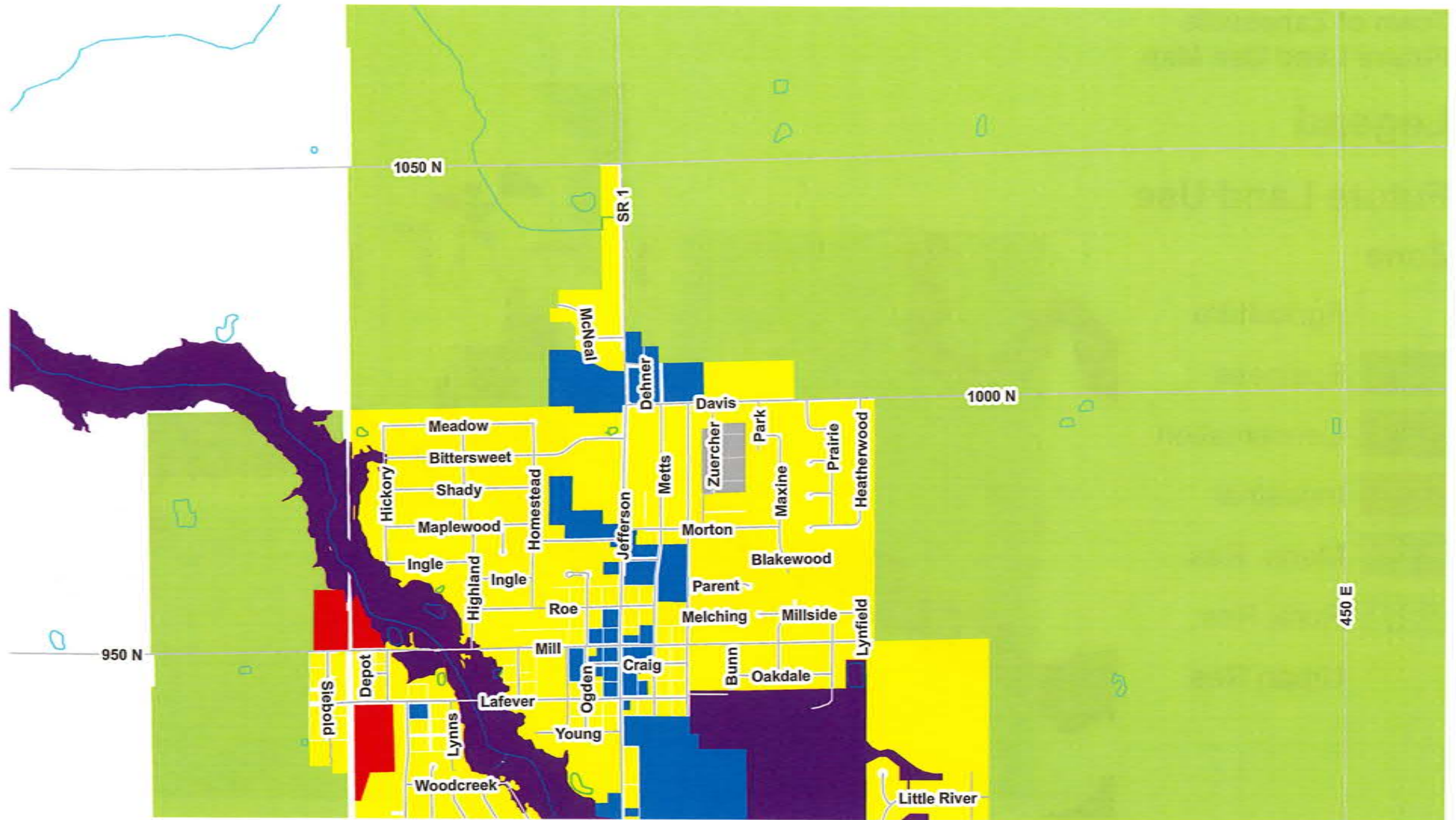
Town of Ossian North Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



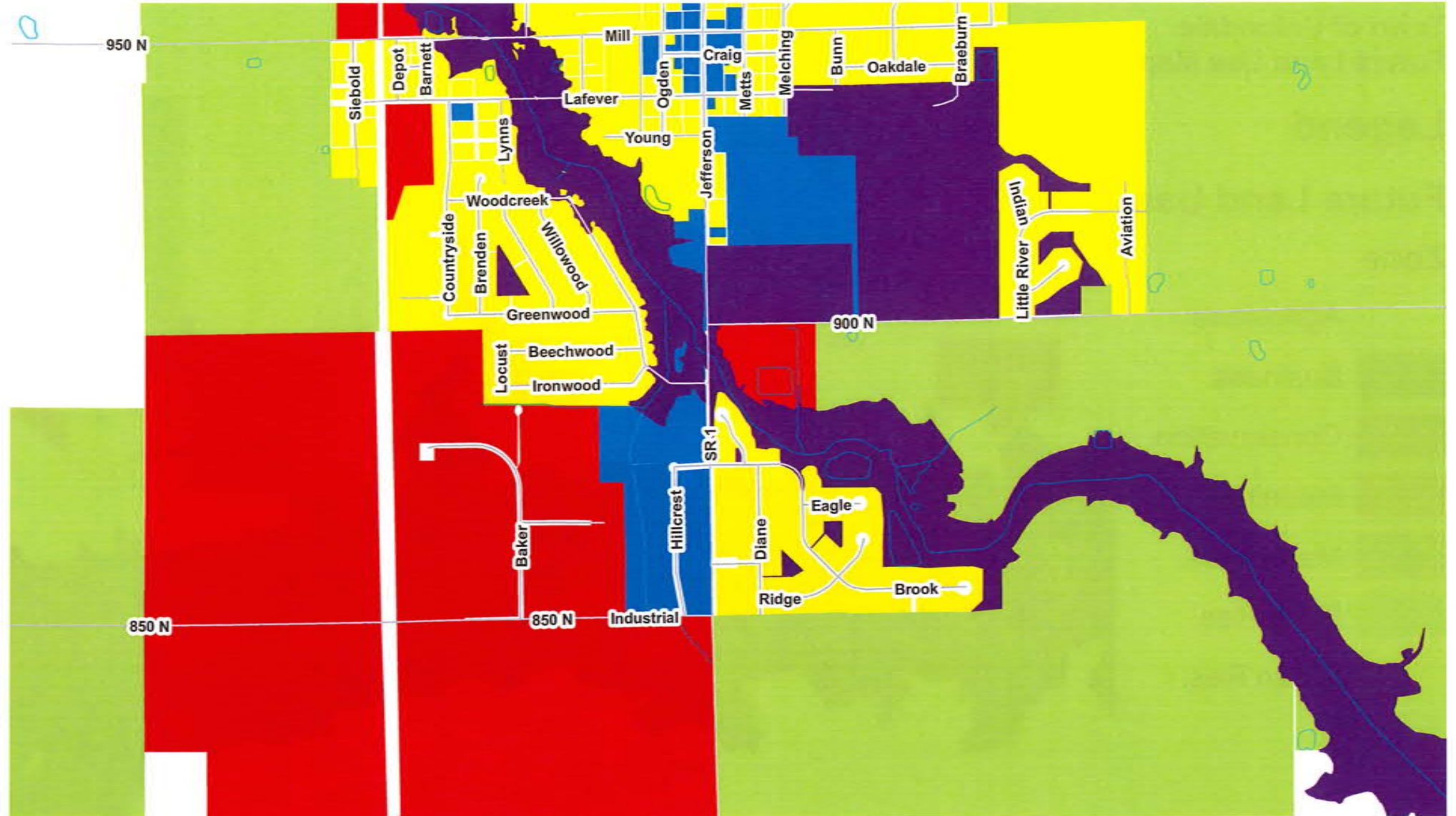
Town of Ossian South Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



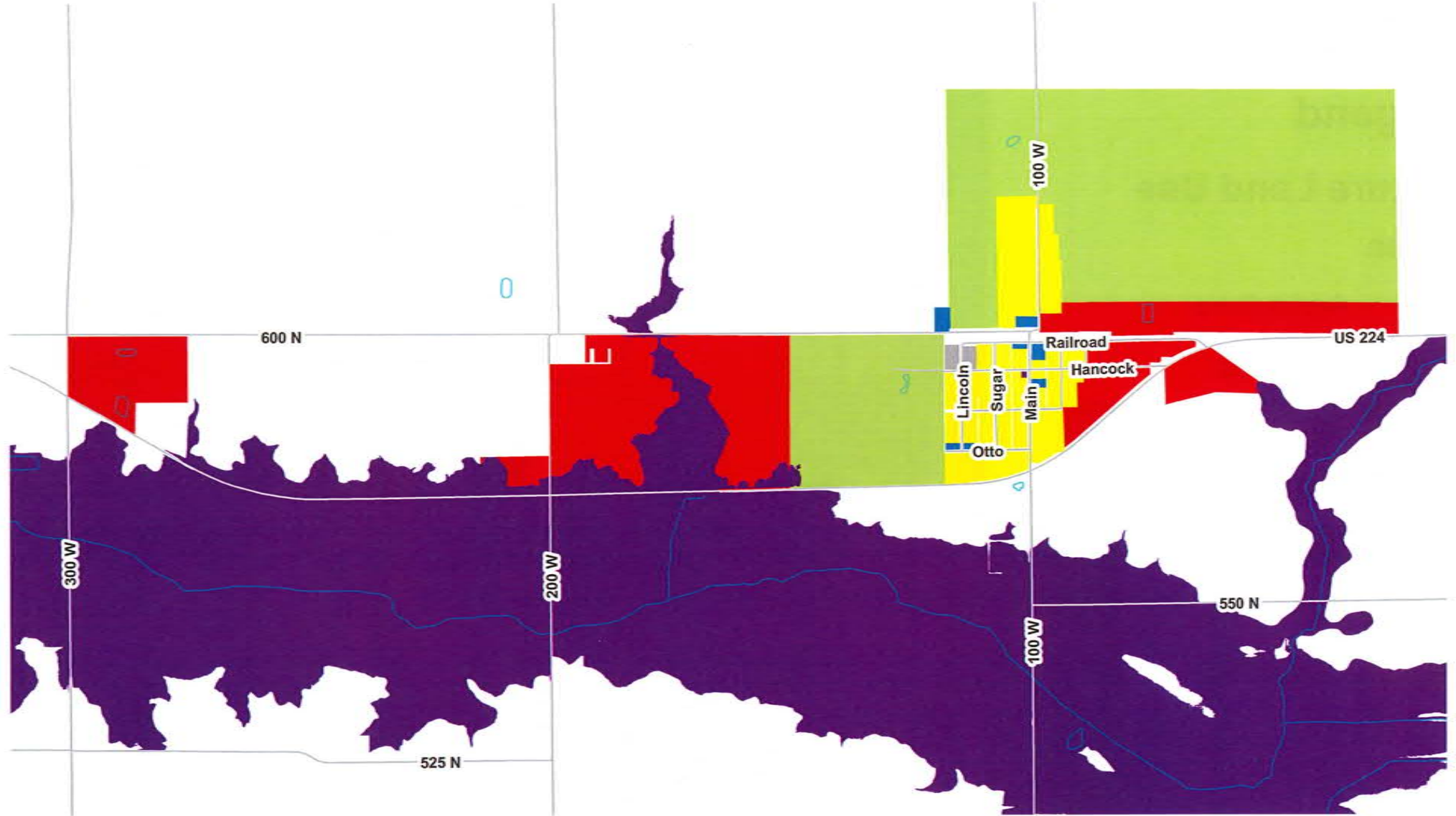
Town of Uniondale Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



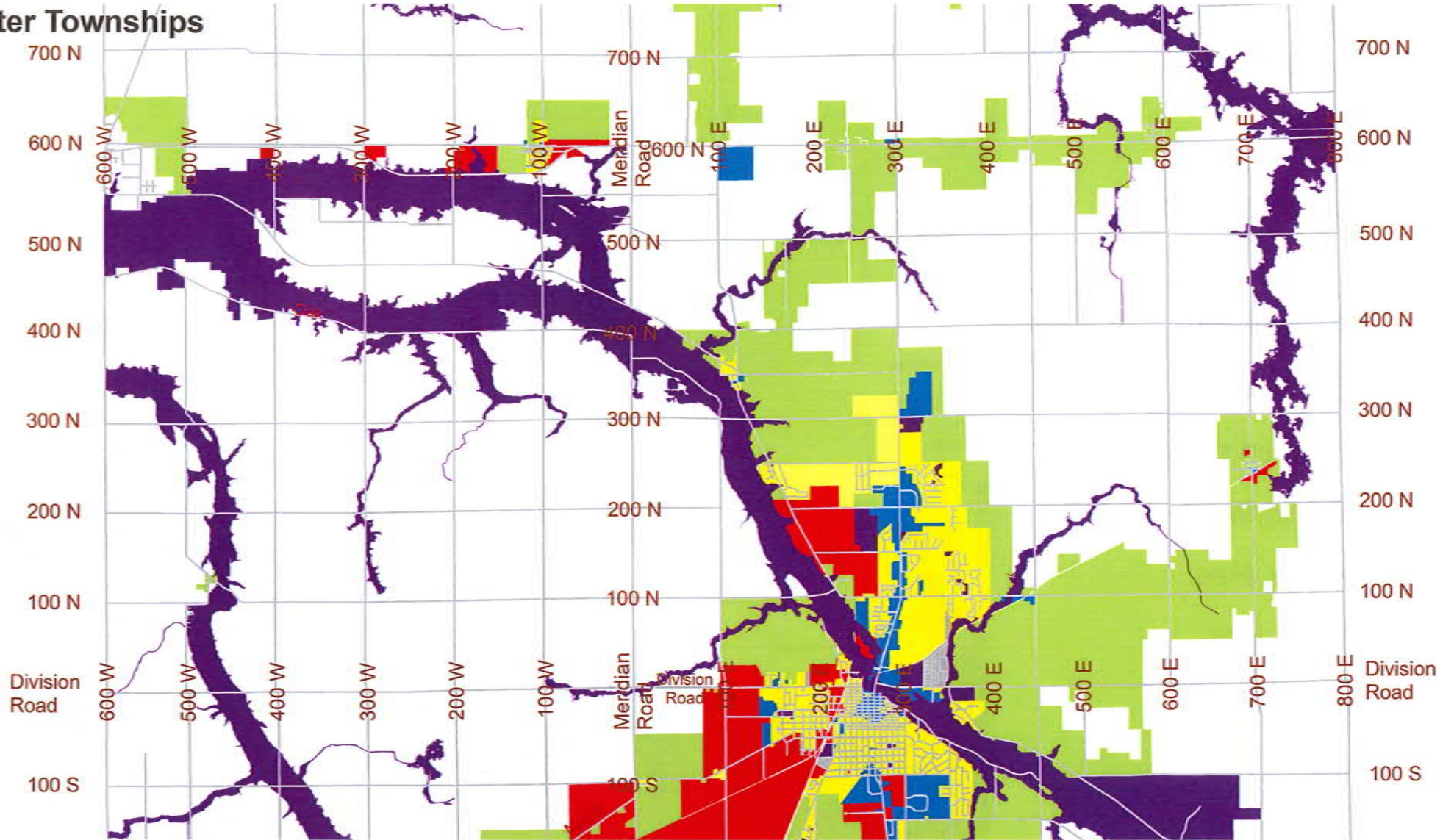
Rock Creek and Lancaster Townships Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



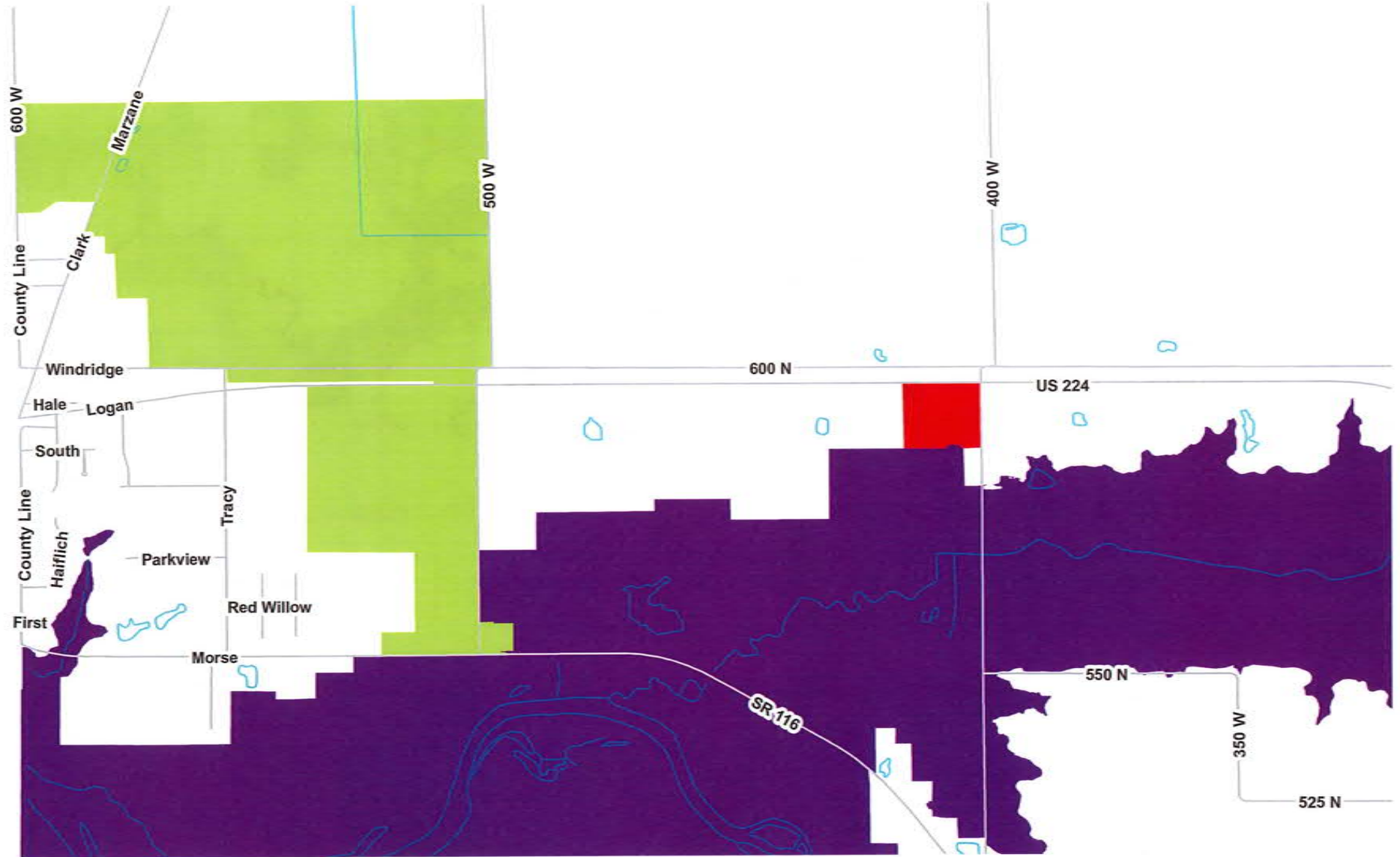
Town of Markle Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



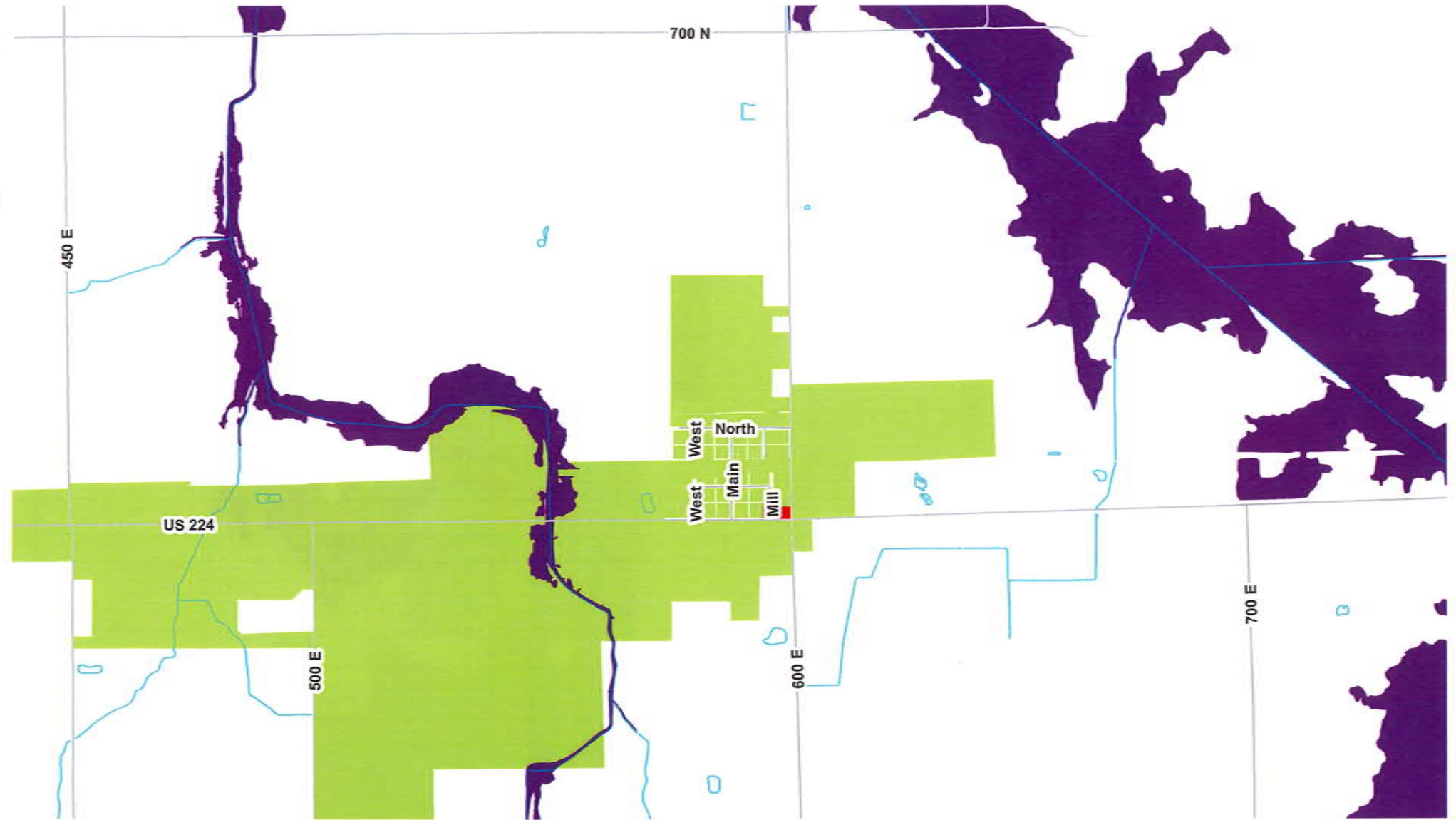
Tocsin Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



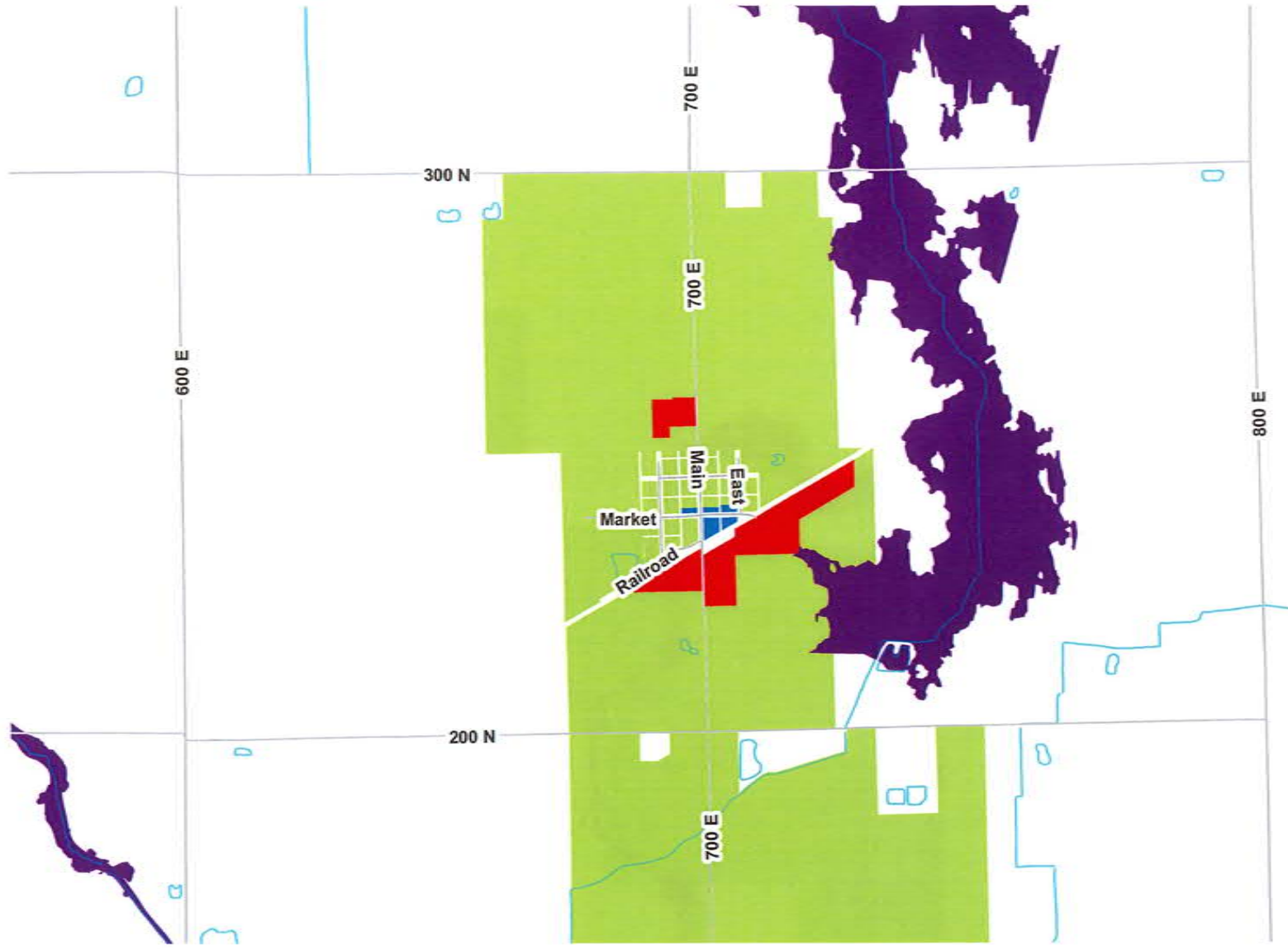
Craigville Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



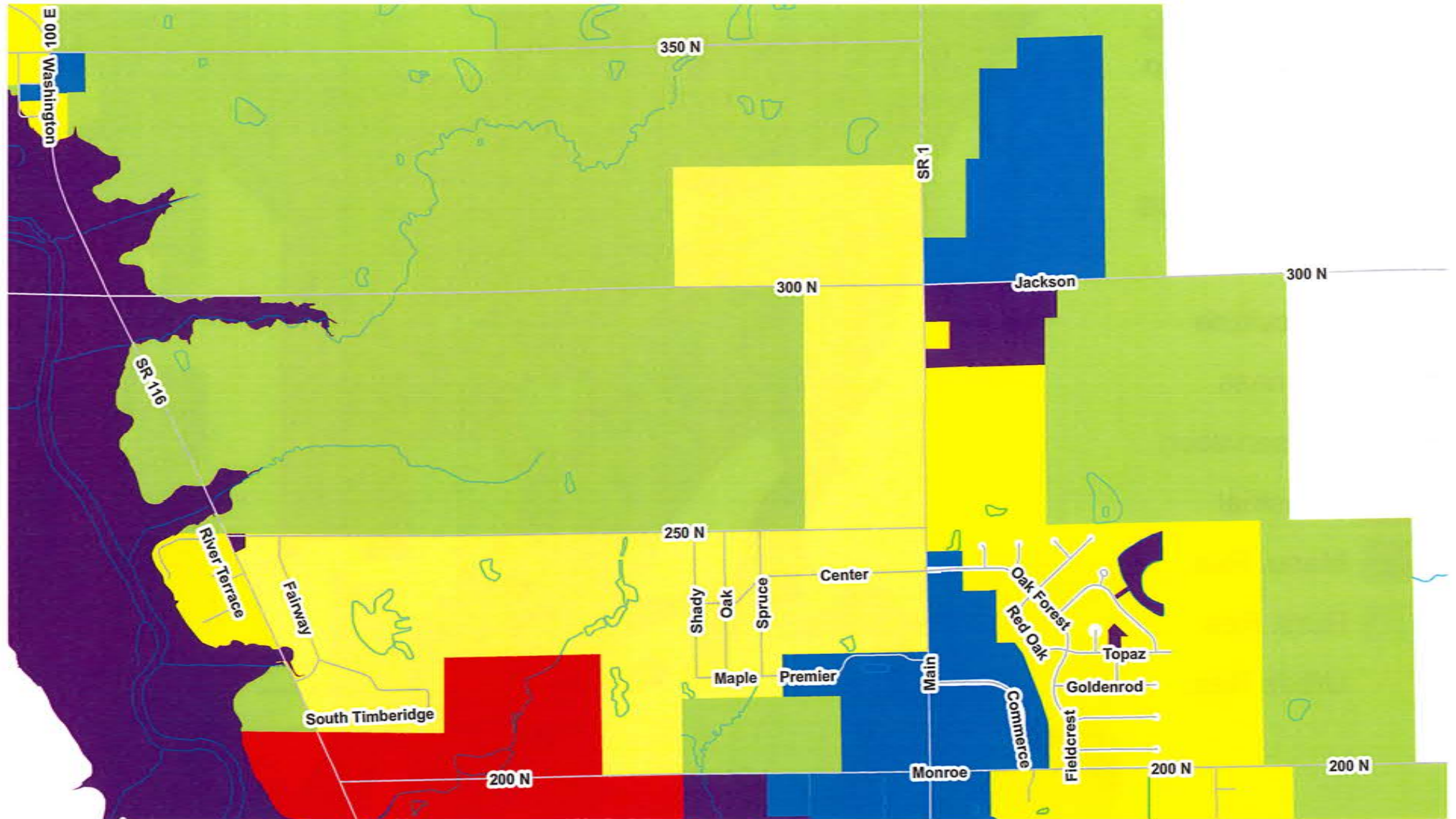
Bluffton North Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



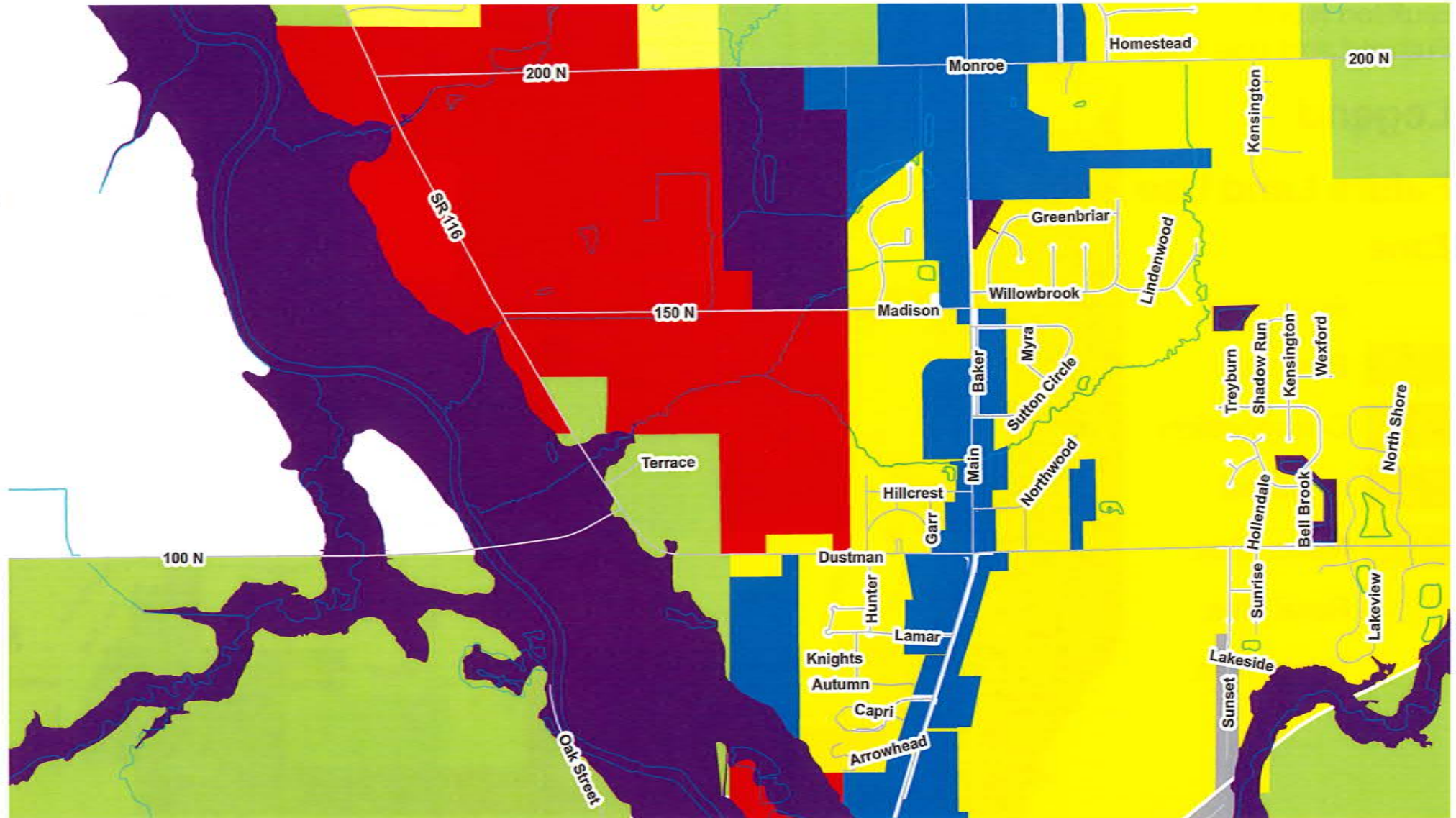
Bluffton North Middle Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



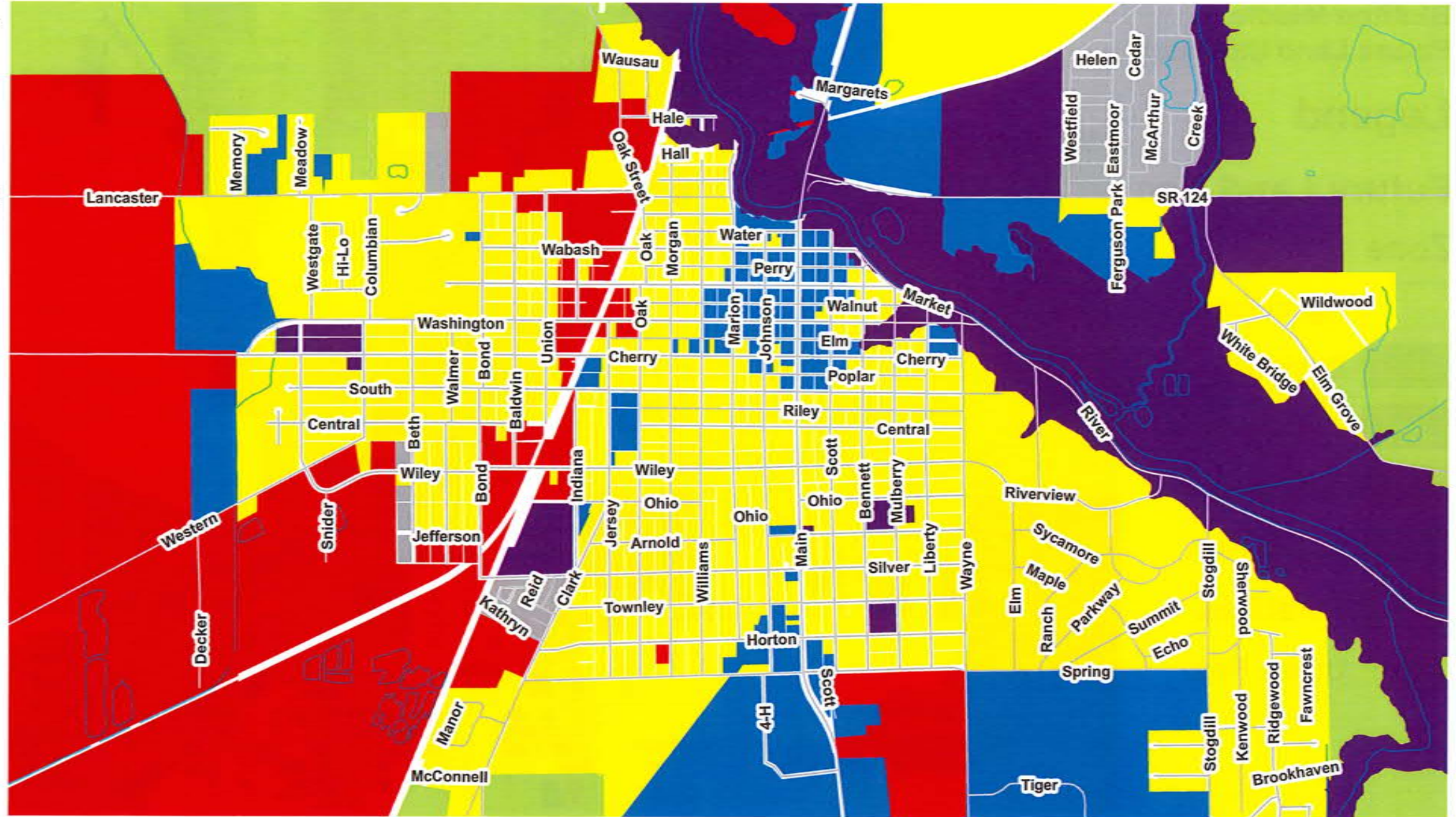
Bluffton South Middle Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



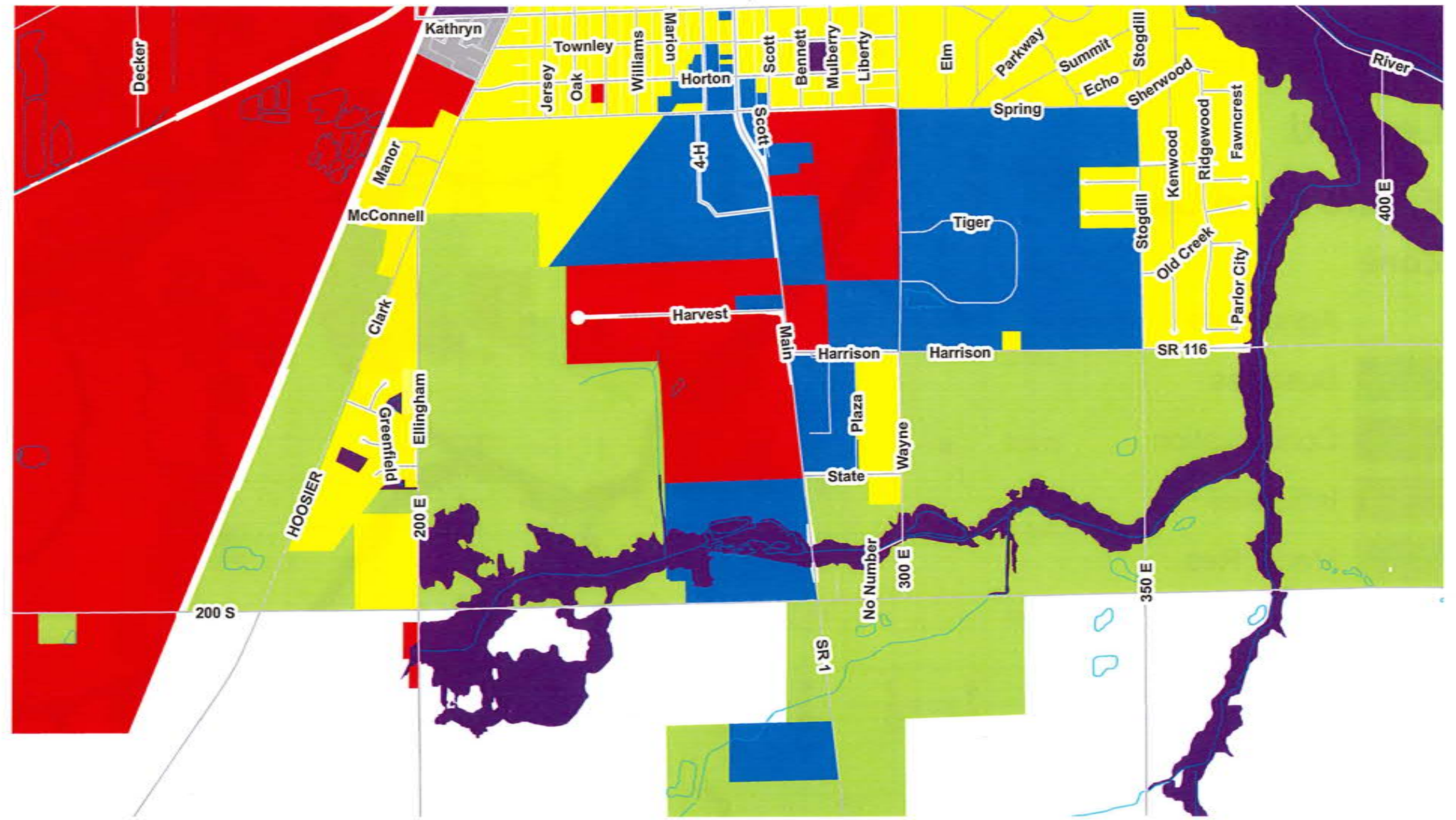
Bluffton South Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



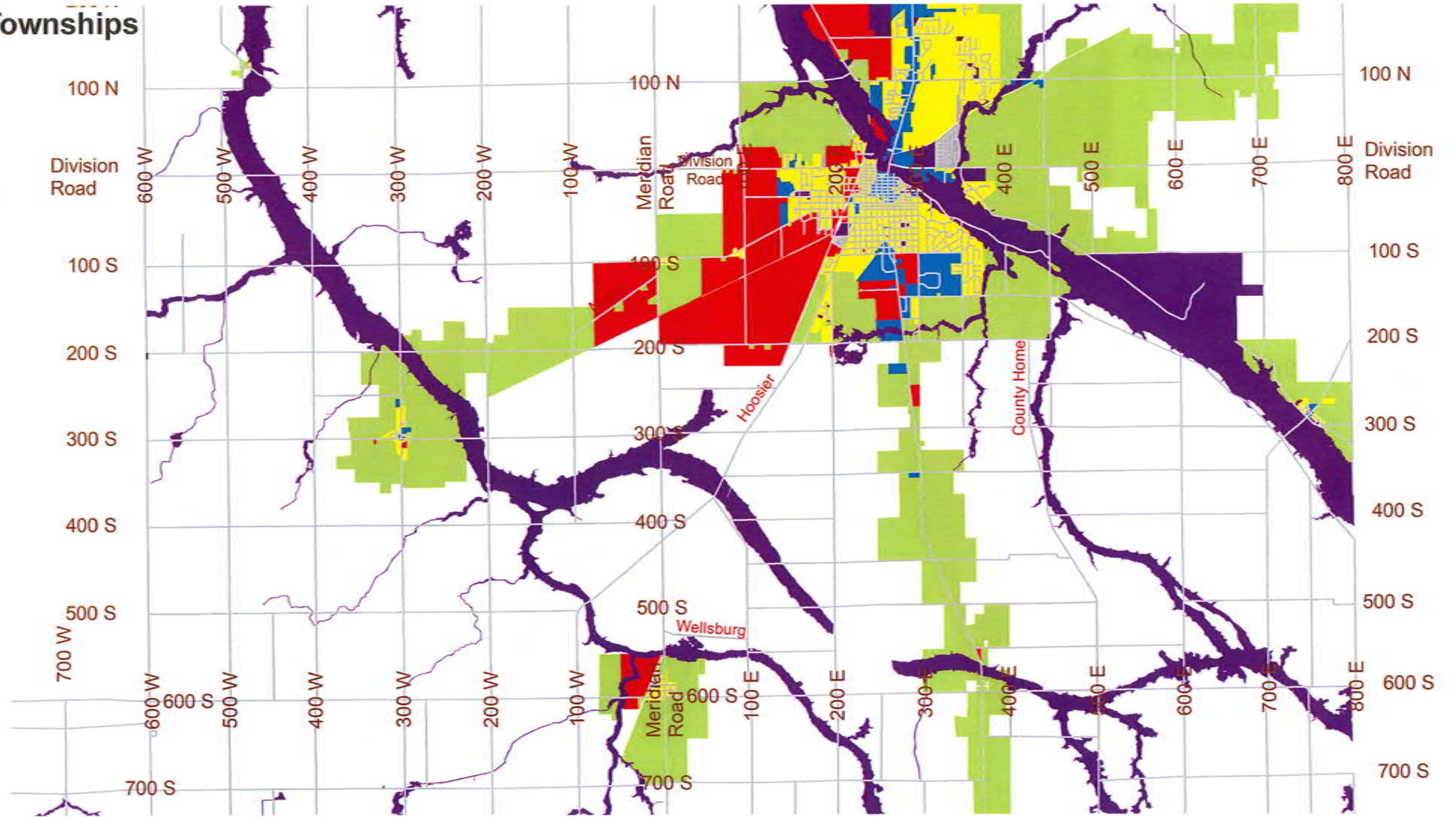
Liberty and Harrison Townships Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.




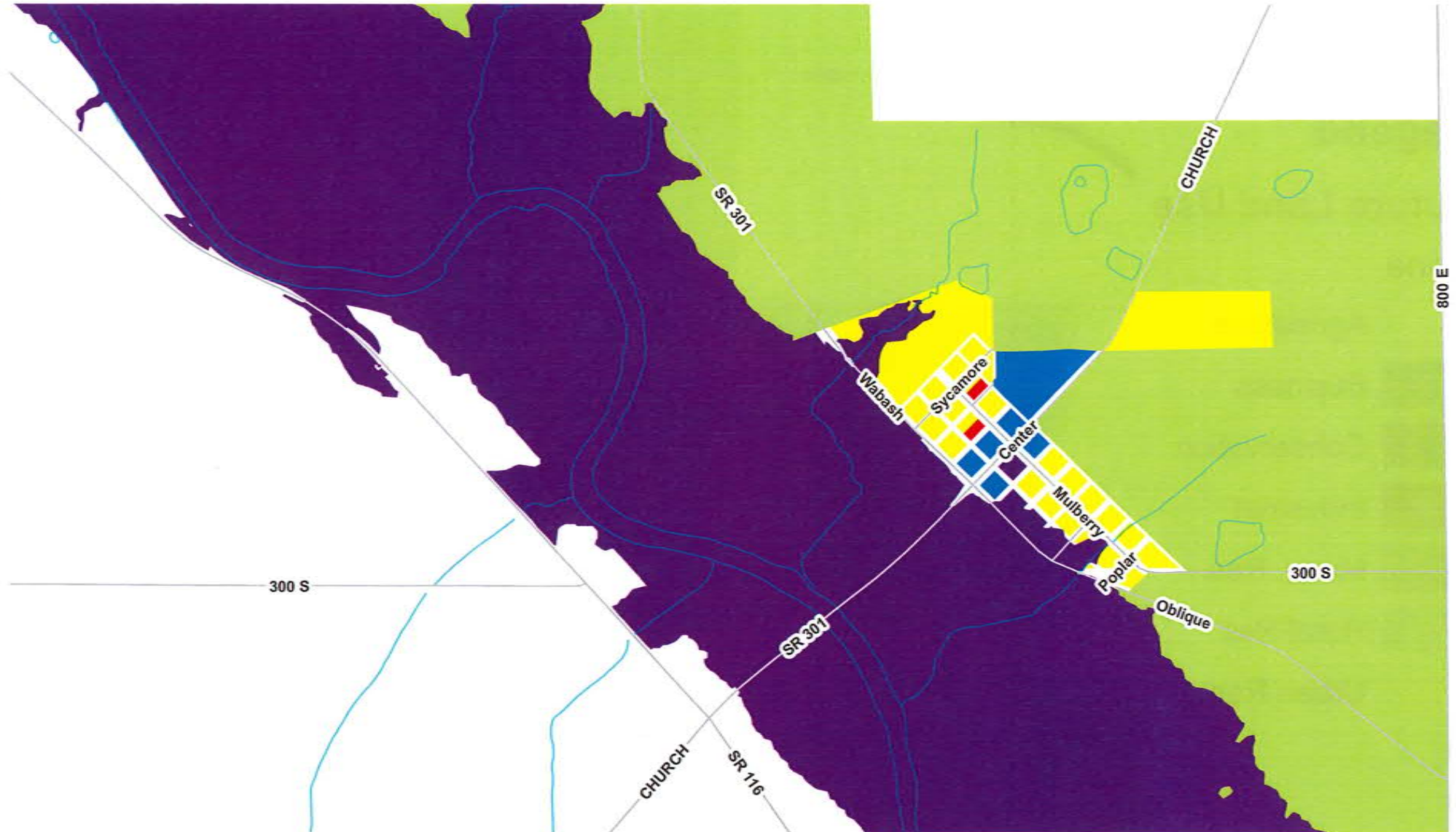
Town of Vera Cruz
Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



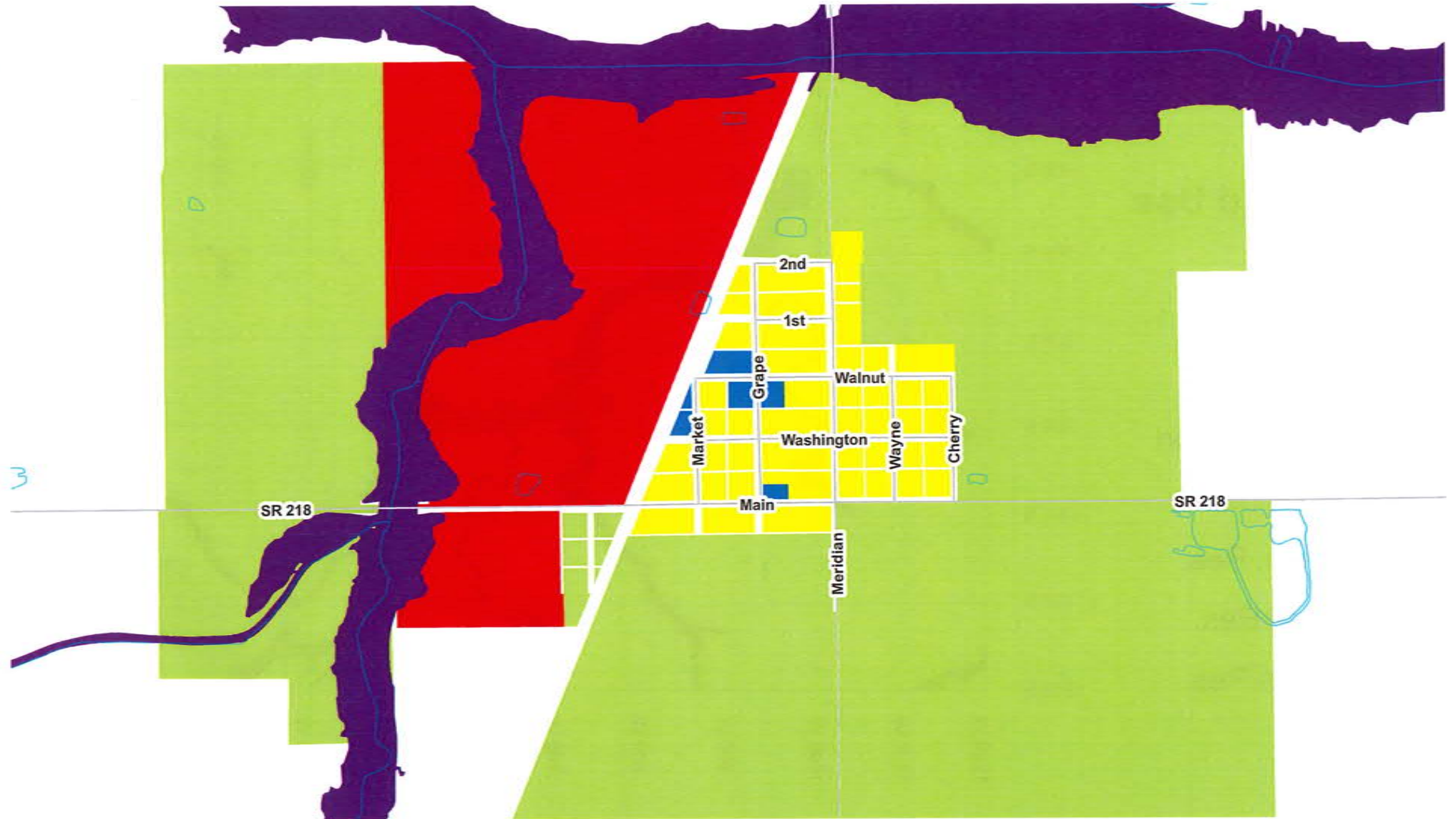
Town of Poneto Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



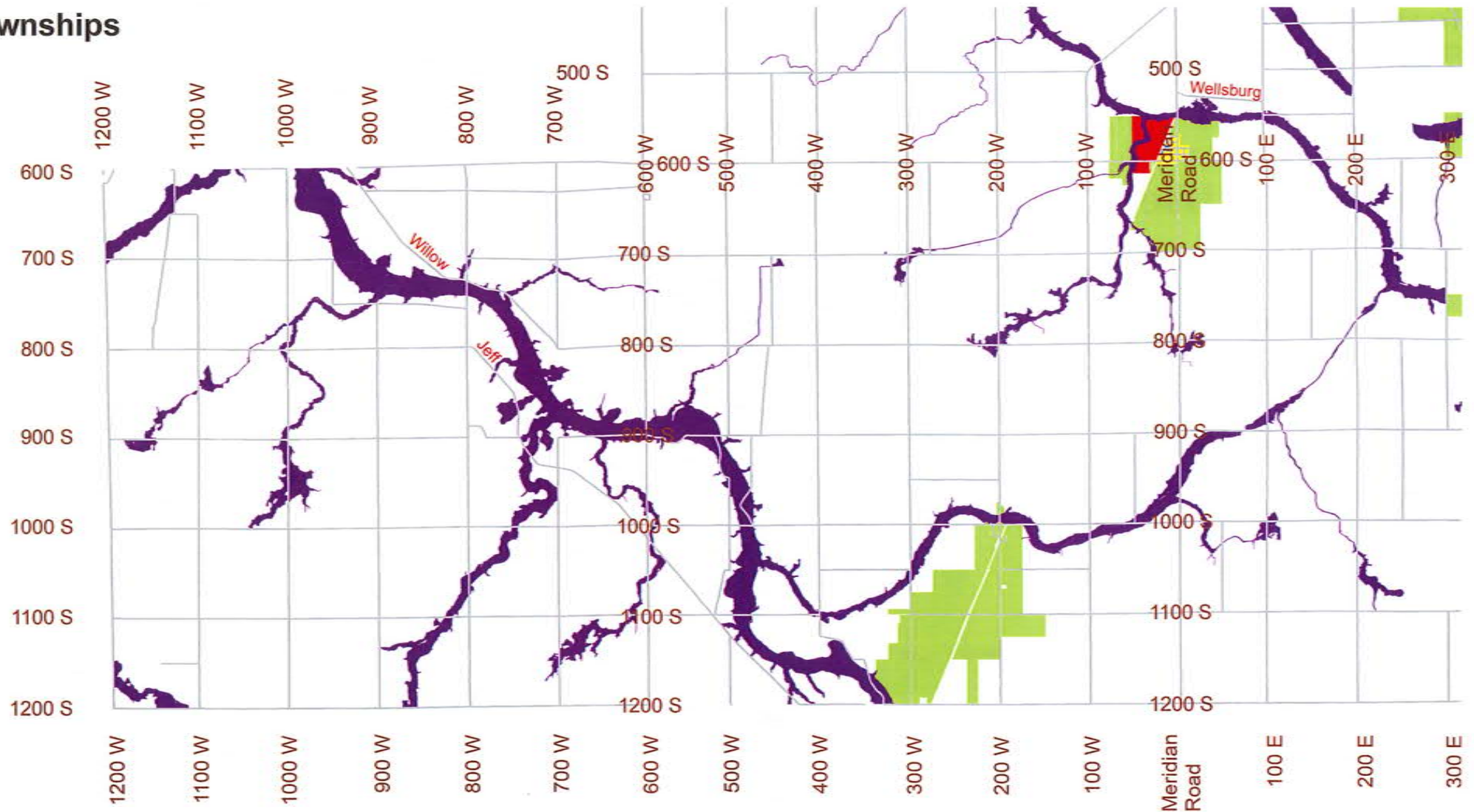
Jackson and Chester Townships Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.



Chester and Nottingham Townships Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

Zone

-  Agriculture
-  Business
-  Conservation
-  Industrial
-  Manu. Res.
-  Rural Res.
-  Urban Res.

