

PLAN

BLAN



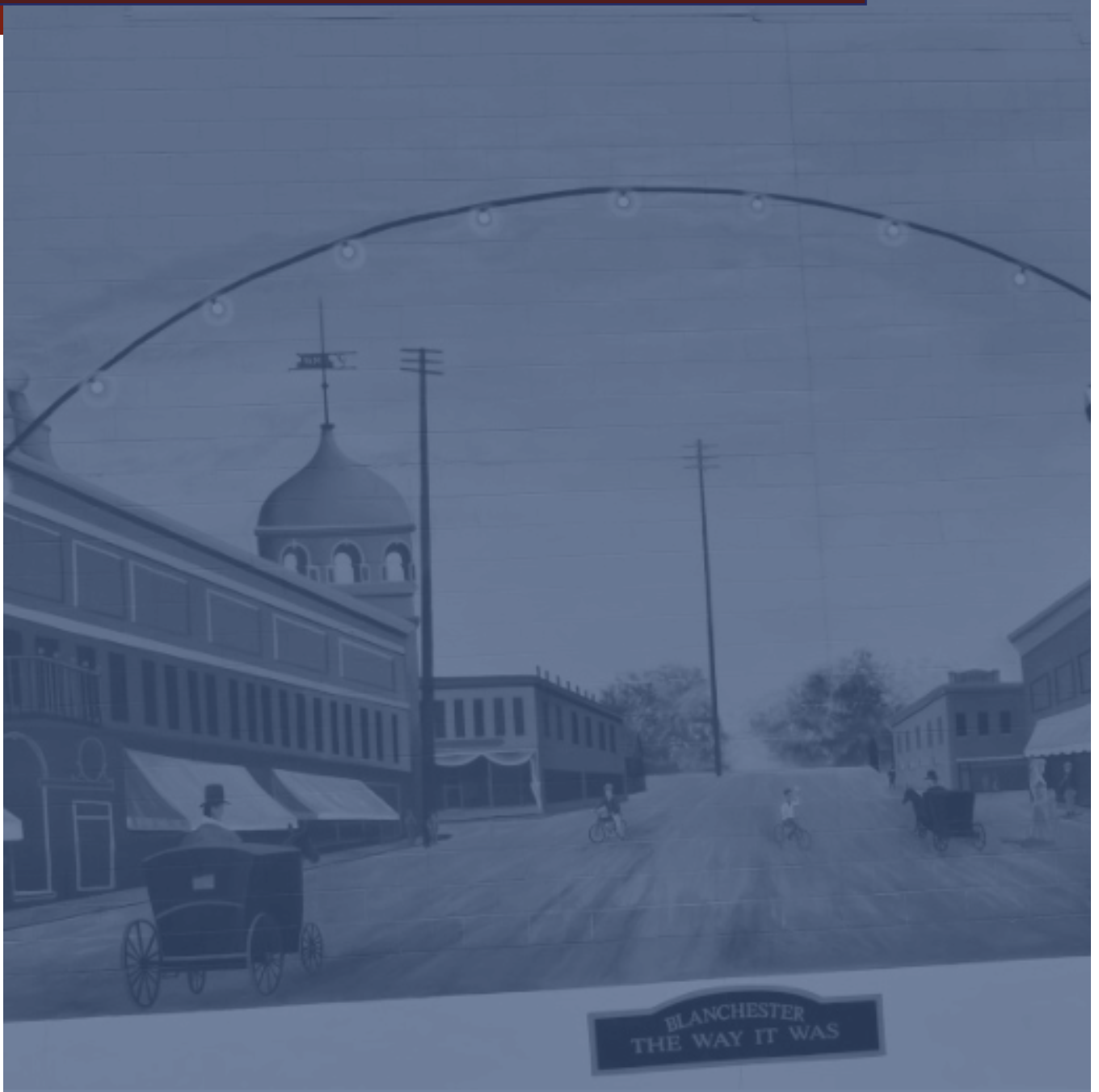
*This document is dedicated to all
current and future residents of the
Village of Blancheſter.*



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INTRODUCTION



PURPOSE



This document serves to guide the Village of Blanchester in future actions and decision making to achieve short and long term goals.

Acknowledgements

Numerous individuals provided knowledge, assistance and insight throughout the process of developing PLAN BLAN including Village leaders, stakeholders, and residents. Specific contributions are greatly appreciated and listed below:

Chris Hermann, AICP - MKSK

Village of Blanchester

John Carman - Mayor

Harry Brumbaugh - Council Member

Chad Hollon III - Council Member

Richard Simpson - Council Member

Gary Bauer - Council Member

Reilly Hopkins - Council Member

Don Gephart - Council Member

Ram Reddy - Utility Director

Paul Casteel - Park Board Member

Tom Lee - Park Board Director/Business Owner

Darrell Kingsland - Business Owner/Community Member

Tony Falgner - Business Owner/Community Member

Dwayne Dearth - Business Owner/Community Member

Gavin Christopher Lee Colebank - Blanchester High School Student

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Clinton County Regional Planning Commission

Taylor Stuckert, AICP - Executive Director

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The Ohio State University Fall 2020 Graduate Studio Class

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

How To Read The Plan

1

Introduction

The introduction chapter provides the purpose, methodology, and summary of the plan. The following section gives a brief overview of the existing conditions of the Village.

2

Topic Areas

Each topic area identifies one main goal, provides an assessment of current conditions of the Village related to that topic, and lists objectives and strategies that serve as recommendations in order to achieve that goal.

3

Implementation

The implementation table consists of a summary of all objectives listed throughout the plan that should serve as a quick reference guide for Village leadership to guide in future decision making.

4

Conclusion

The conclusion will summarize the preparation process and key takeaways of the plan.

5

Appendix

Further details on community outreach, research, and other sources used in plan creation will be provided in the appendix.

Methodology

1

Site Observation

Several site visits were made in order to become familiar with the Village, the layout, and sense of place. This was helpful to identify initial opportunities for improvement and get a better idea of community needs.

2

Community Outreach

A survey was conducted in order to gain insight from Village residents to better understand what type of investments they want to see for their community. A steering committee of Village leaders was also established to guide the plan.

3

Data Collection

Independent research, community outreach and the survey results created a strong foundation as a basis for our goals, objectives, and strategies for implementation. This also helped to form our SWOON analyses (strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, opportunities, needs).

4

Goal Identification

A main goal for each topic area was established based off of initial observations, public input, and research. These goals informed the objectives for each topic area so that strategy implementation should be a step towards achieving each goal.

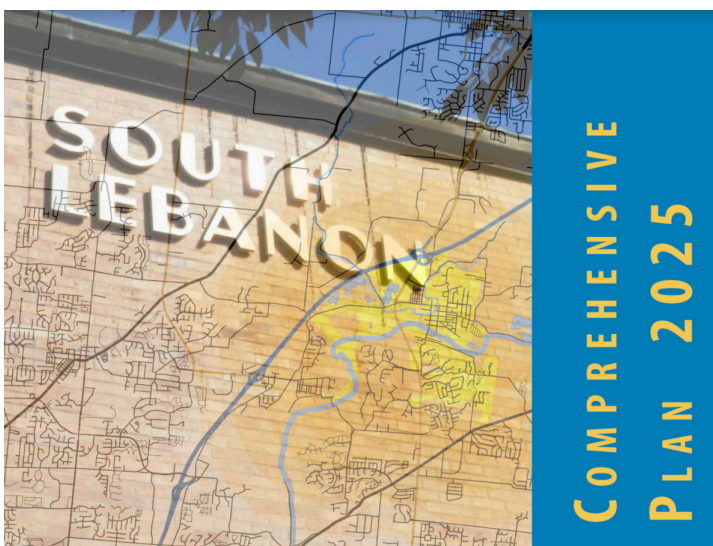
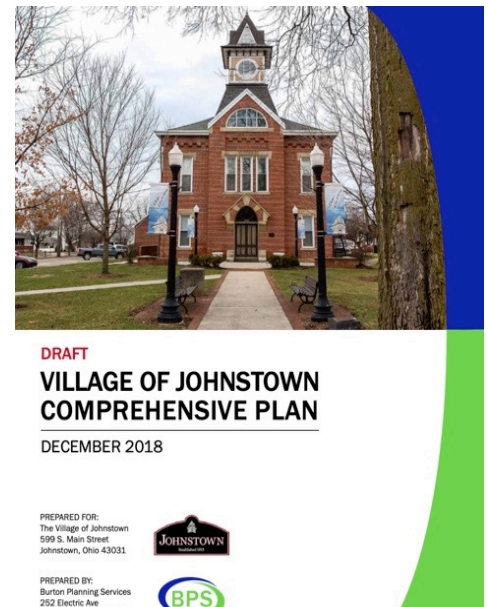
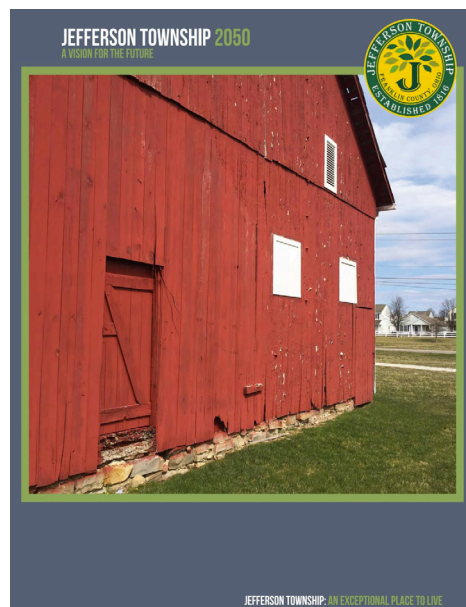
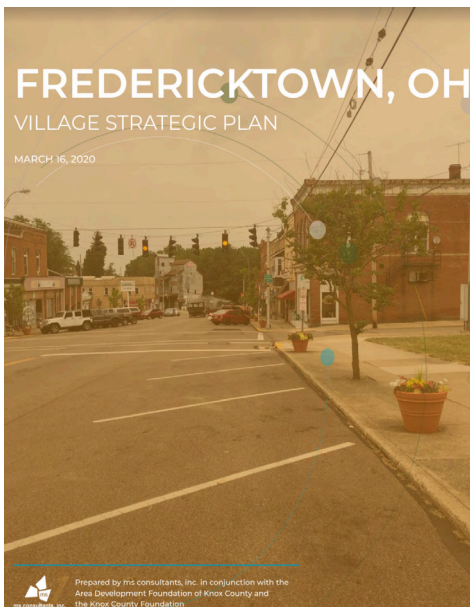
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Plan Preparation

Using the information gathered and goal identification, a plan was prepared that outlines the current conditions and recommendations for each topic area to assist the Village in evaluating the effectiveness of future proposals.

Case Studies

Each student conducted a case study for a community that had similar characteristics to the Village. Throughout the document, the comprehensive plans below were used to inform some of the recommendations made for Blanchester. See appendix for details.





Executive Summary

PLAN BLAN is designed to document existing conditions of Blanchester as of 2020, report areas of growth opportunities based on community input, and offer suggestions for implementation to be used by current and future decision-makers. An assessment of Existing Conditions brags Blanchester's charming qualities: the community is patriotic, supportive of local schools, and home to many residents who self-report that the Village is a pleasant place to live. An Existing Conditions assessment also found the following growth opportunities: opportunity for greater racial diversity, more active spaces (e.g. parks, green spaces, etc.), and further development to support Blanchester's steady population growth, which is inching toward city-status year by year.

Delving into specific sections, PLAN BLAN focuses on the following areas: 1) Community Image; 2) Land Use; 3) Economic Development; 4) Infrastructure; and 5) Mobility. Each section describes the existing conditions of Blanchester as pertaining to the area of focus, then makes recommendations based on community-input, stakeholder-input, and best practice. In each of these, the sections explore growth opportunities at length and recommend goals of implementation guided by a rough time range (short-, mid-, or long-term), potential partners, and funding options.

Vision

Statement

Blanchester is a small town with a rich history and a strong sense of pride. To enhance the quality of life for all residents, community development will be conducted in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable way. The future of Blanchester will focus on preserving community character while accommodating for growth.

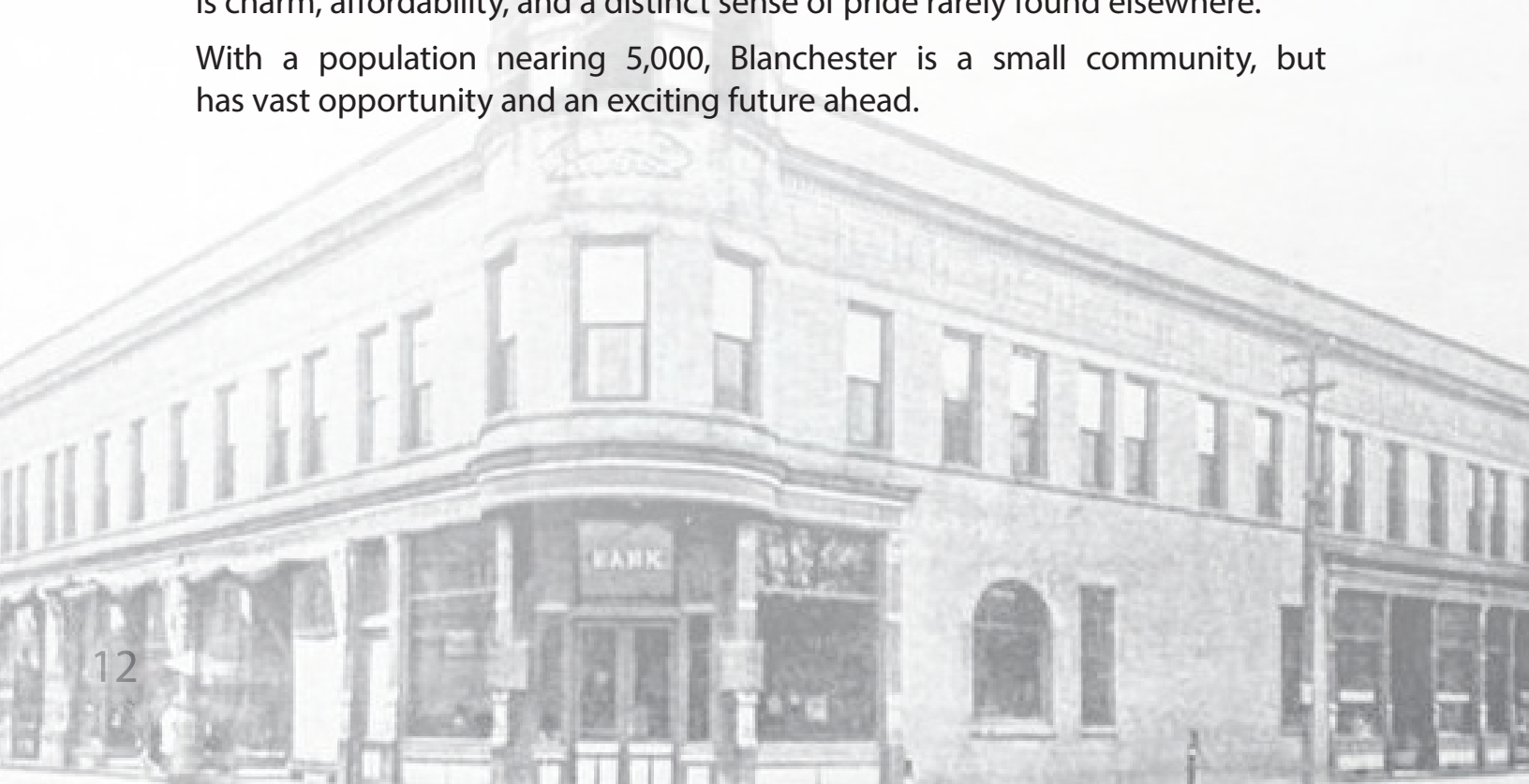
History

Blanchester's history dates back to 1832 when it was founded by and named for John and Joseph Blancett. One of the many unique features of the community is the name itself, as there is only one Blanchester in the world. Blanchester was once a stop for several primary train routes and there is evidence of the tracks that influence the present day layout of the Village. A street grid encapsulates the Downtown and spans outwards into the residential areas of the community.

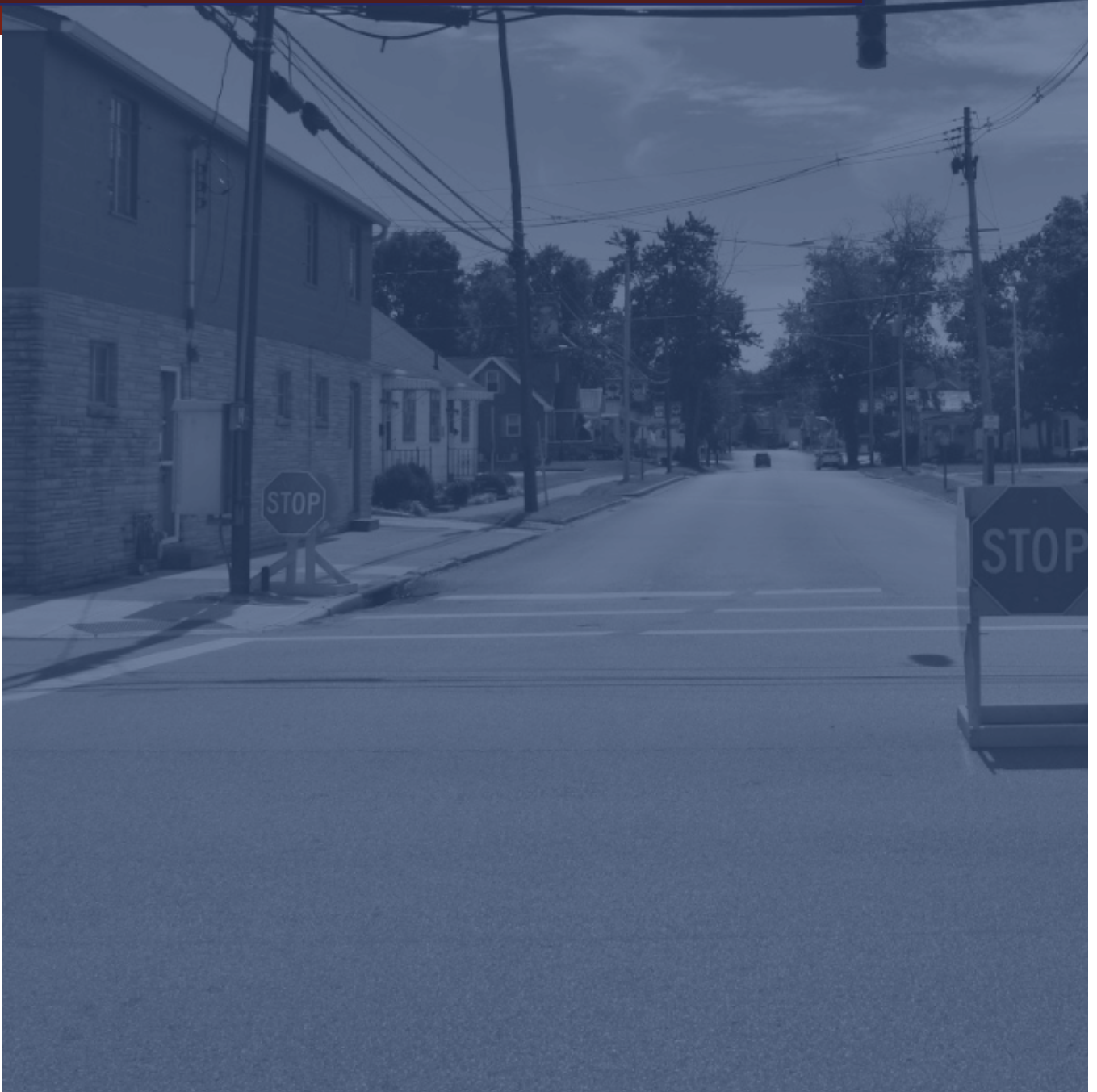
Downtown Blanchester has suffered throughout the last century from several different fires. They have lost historic places such as a building once known as Bindley Block. Constructed by John Bindley in 1896, Bindley Block originally housed the Merchants and Farmers Bank on the first floor, and the Bindley Hotel was on the second level. Over the years, the building would be home to a variety of businesses that served as the heartbeat of the Downtown. While this was a hard hit for the community, residents are still hopeful for the opportunities this presents to rebuild the Village center.

There are still long standing places in the community such as the famous Blanchester Showplace Cinemas. This theatre is known for being the cheapest first run movie theatre in America. This translates to the rest of the community and reasons why people are drawn to Blanchester. There is charm, affordability, and a distinct sense of pride rarely found elsewhere.

With a population nearing 5,000, Blanchester is a small community, but has vast opportunity and an exciting future ahead.



Existing Conditions



Demographics

Introduction

The Village of Blanchester can be found in the southwestern portion of Clinton County, and extends partially into Warren County. It was founded in the 1830s and takes its name from the surveyors. Blanchester has a population of 4,262 and looks to continue growing into the future, eventually reaching city status. Due to the economic recession and various hazards that occurred in the last 20 years, Blanchester has been in decline in some respects, but still continues to grow despite these obstacles. This section is to show Blanchester as it currently is, while also showing how Blanchester could grow over the potential lifespan of this plan.

Population Growth

Over the past 90 years, in strict terms of population, Blanchester has seen growth. Over the past 10 years, according to the American Community Survey of the United States Census, the population has increased by about 0.4% (4243-4262). While this growth is not excessive, this plan predicts steady population growth over its lifespan. According to Ohio law (Ohio Revised Code §703.011), a Village becomes a city after reaching 5,000 residents. If continued on the same track, then Blanchester would become a city very slowly, giving the Village ample time to prepare.

Population Makeup

The population makeup is somewhat traditional for what you would expect from a small rural Village in Ohio. In 2010, the Caucasian/White demographic made up 97.8% of the population, while African American population was at 0.4%. The Native American population makes up 0.3% of the population, with Asian Americans also at 0.3%. The Hispanic population is 0.4%, and those who list their ethnicity as Other make up 0.8%. In most cases, compared with the state and Clinton County, Blanchester is less racially diverse, due to the fact that the majority of residents are White.

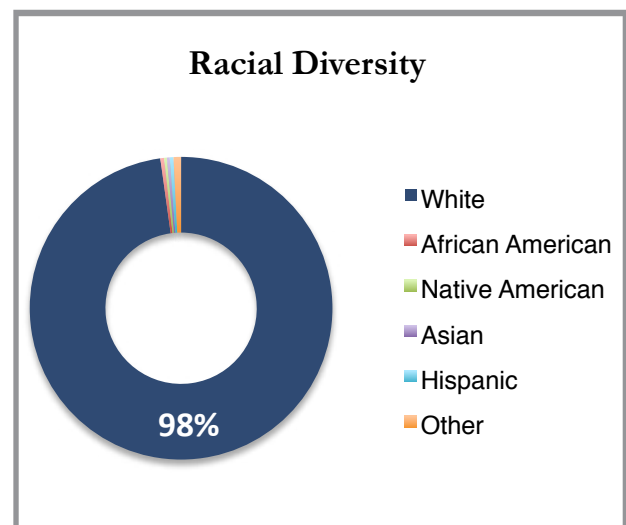


Figure 1

Demographics

One major factor in helping develop the economy is the education attainment of the residents. A higher level of educational attainment is a sign that jobs of a higher skill may move into the region. Most Blanchester residents have completed a high school education or higher.

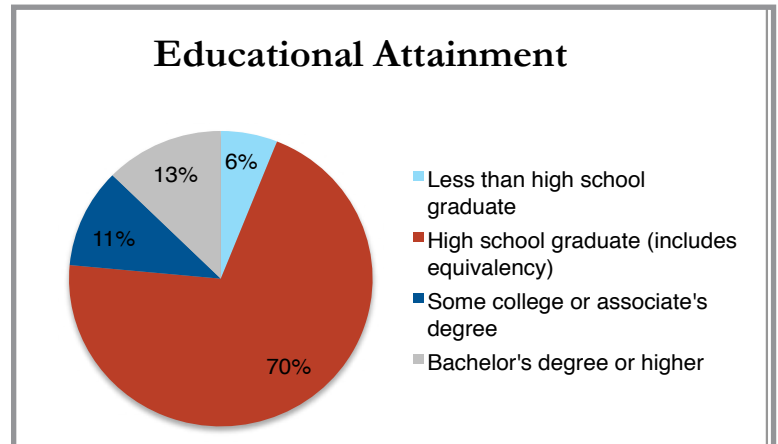


Figure 2

The population, as of the 2010 census, female residents make up 52.9% of the population, while males make up 47.1%. This changed from the 2000 census, when females made up 53.7% and males made up 46.3%. The average age of the state of Ohio is 39.6 years old, while Clinton County's current median age is 35. Blanchester is slightly lower than the State's average, but higher than the county's at 39.5. Based on the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission's Age-Friendly Action Plan, the percentage of residents in Clinton County who will be over 65 will increase, so steps must be taken to prepare for this shift.

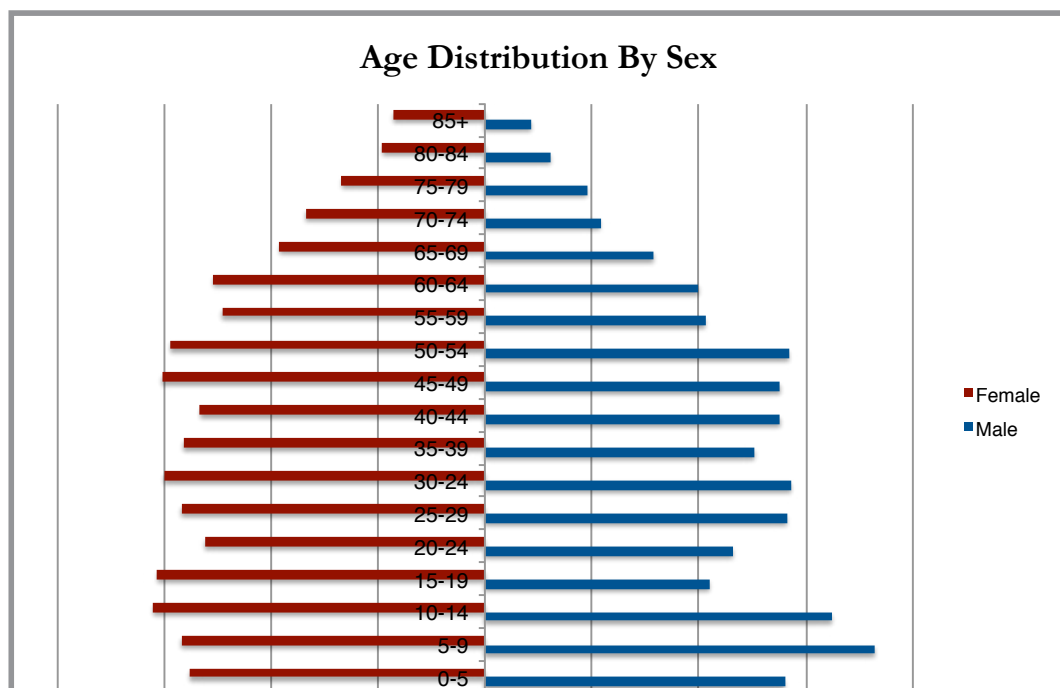


Figure 3

Demographics

As seen in Figure 4, the average median household income for Blanchester is lower than the national, state, and county average. The majority of Blanchester residents currently travel outside of the Village for work, shopping, and recreation. From the community survey that was conducted, it was found that mobility was the main interest of investment for the residents. Continued travel in and out of the Village will be made easier by improvements in mobility, and also infrastructure, which was the second topic of concern.

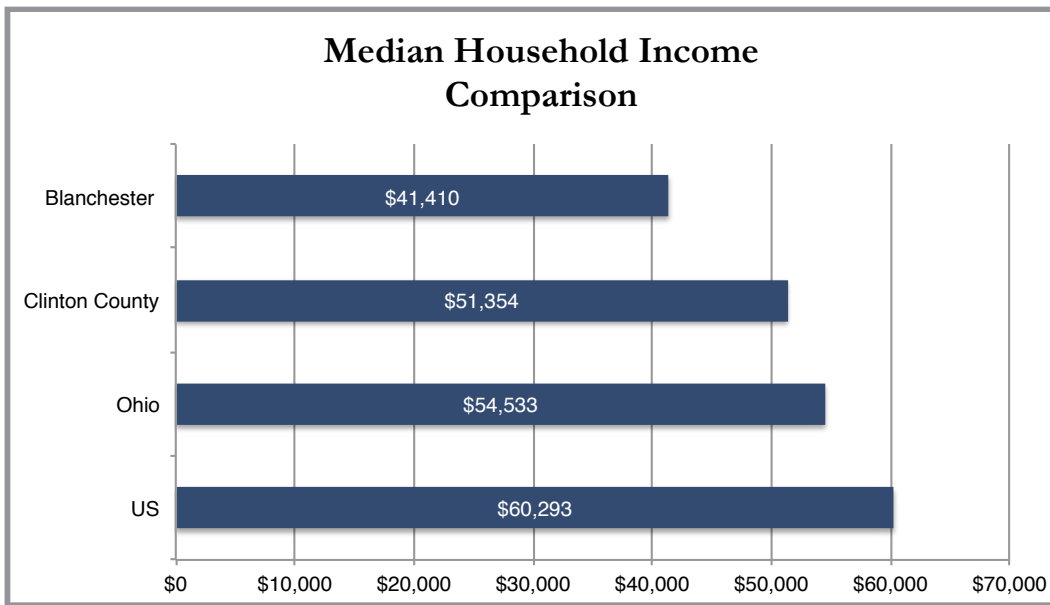


Figure 4

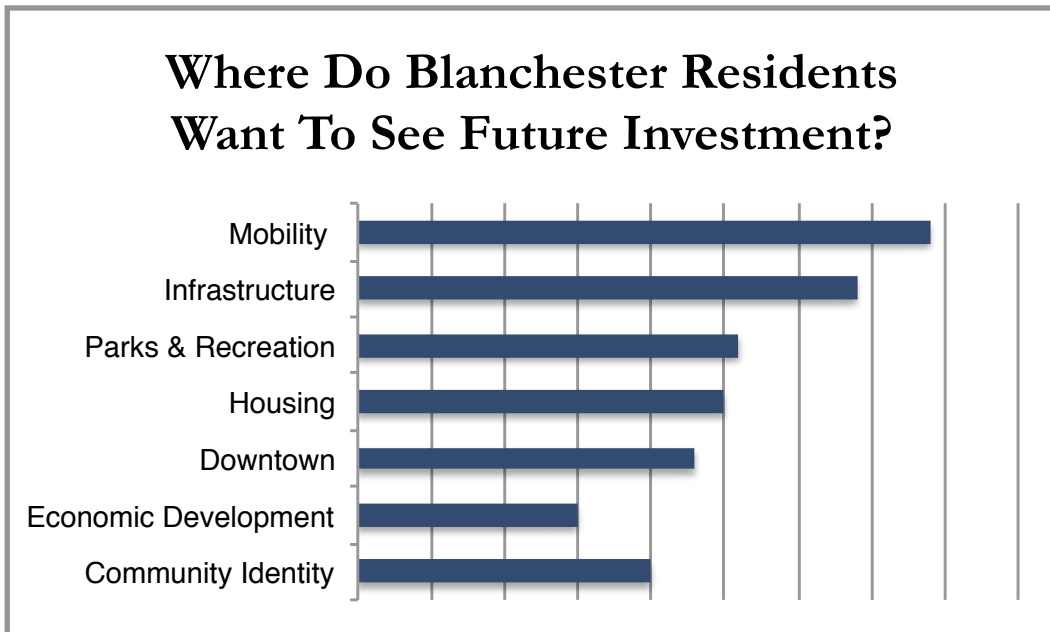


Figure 5

Existing Conditions

Parks & Recreation

Blanchester has 4 parks: Veteran's Memorial Park, the Police Station Park, Dewey's Park, and the Blanchester State Rest Stop. There also exist other areas that help fulfill the need for green space and public space in Blanchester. The local middle school and high school both have parks, but they are limited in use when school is not in session. In terms of the active and passive space available in these parks, there is an overabundance of passive space but not enough active space.

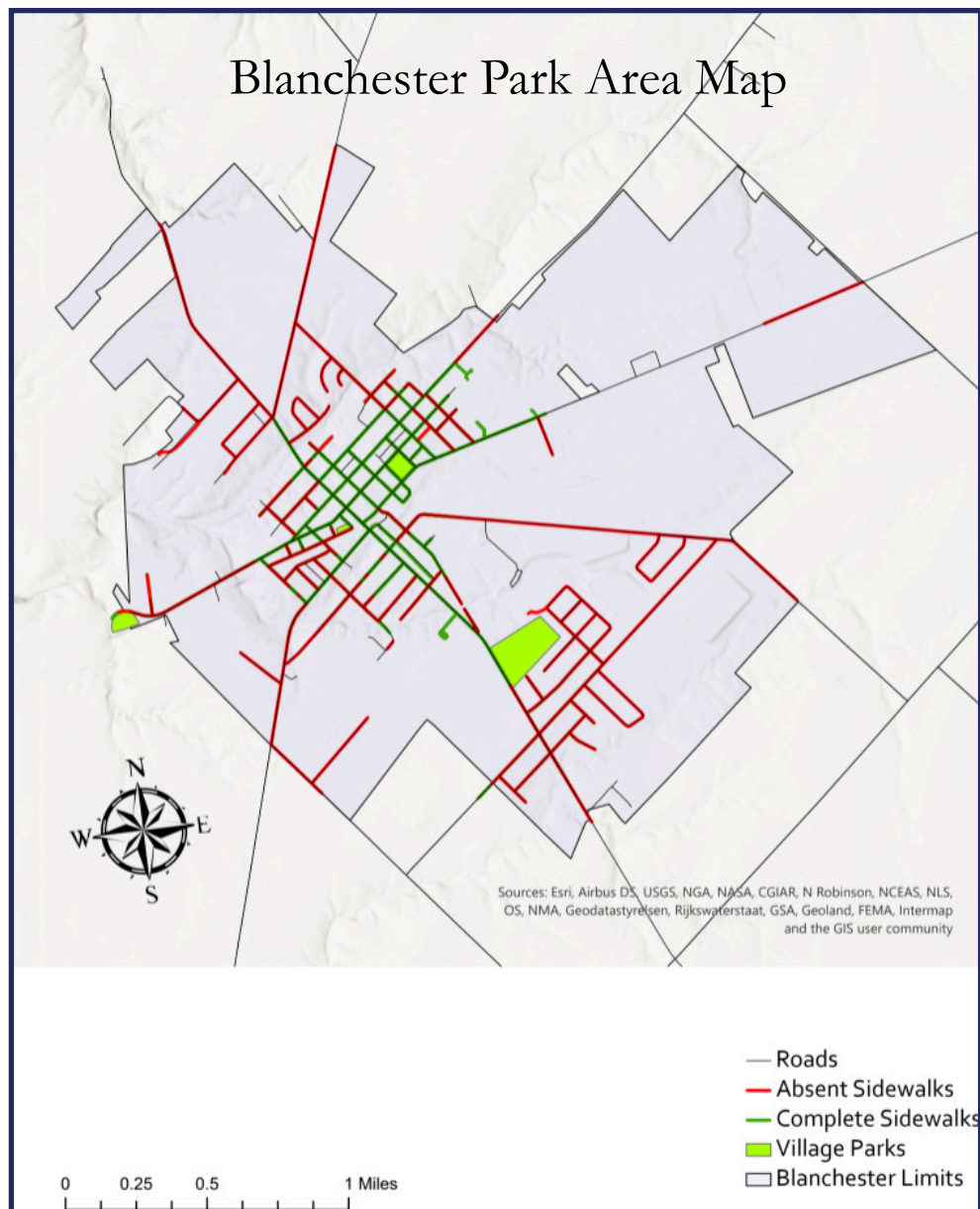


Figure 6

Existing Conditions

Agriculture

Blanchester is a typical rural Ohio community in that it is surrounded by farmland. When one travels to Blanchester, you would pass farm after farm, with fields of corn and soybeans. Farming has historically been part of town celebrations, as steering committee members recounted a soybean festival which used to be a large event for the Village.

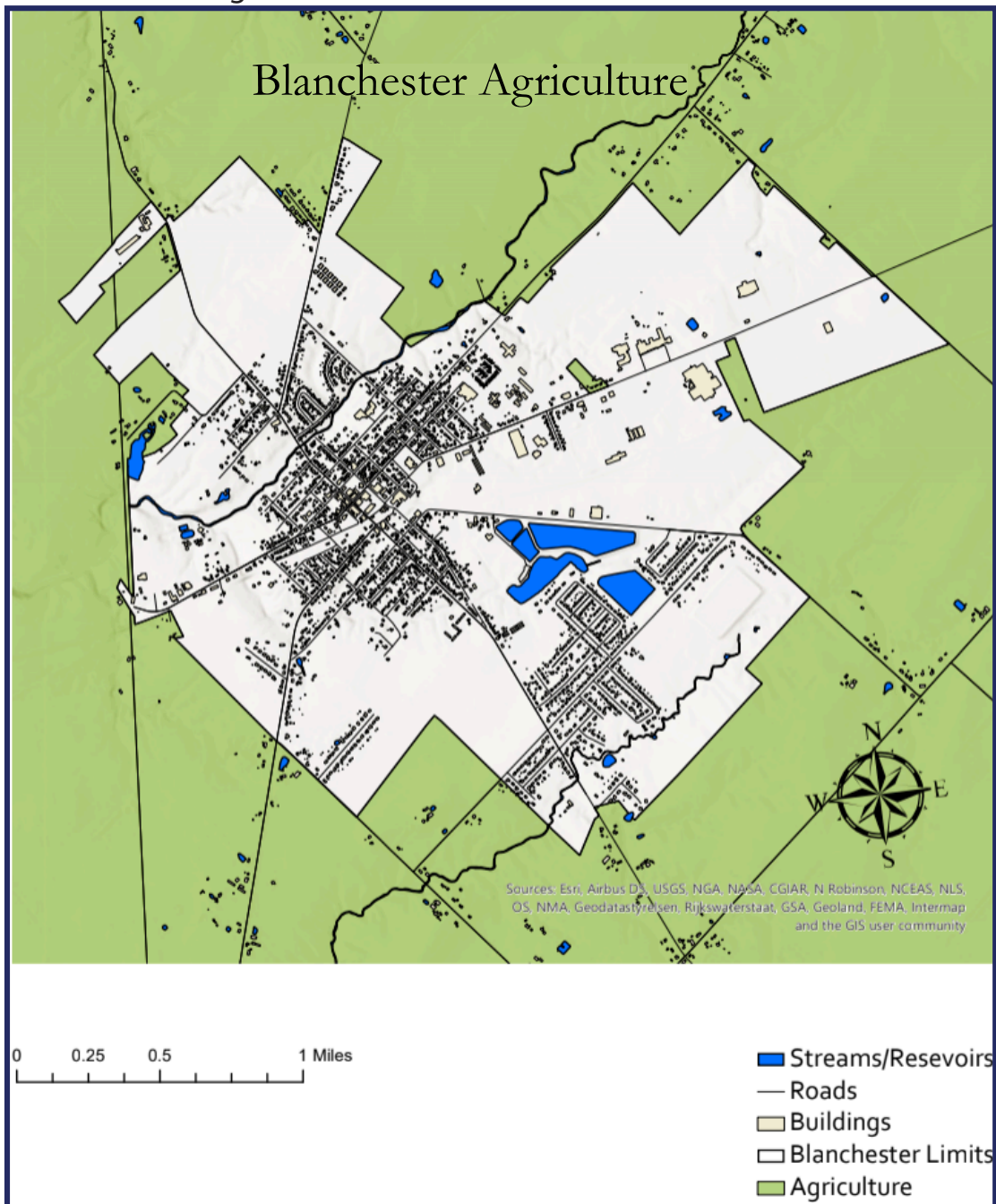


Figure 7

Existing Conditions

Economic Development

One of the major themes of this plan will be how to develop the economy within Blanchester. This is due to the loss of business due to the proximity to Wilmington as well as the economic recession of 2008 and 2019-2020. According to our numbers, 70% of the population of Blanchester have made home there, but work in another location. Most people who work outside of Blanchester have an average commute time of 31.6 minutes. One major missed opportunity in Blanchester is that they do not have any type of income tax, which makes it difficult to perform necessary projects due to lack of funding. This has also led to some of the infrastructure challenges that will be brought up later in this document.

The major industries in Blanchester include manufacturing at 22.5%, with healthcare being the second most prominent at 10.1%. In terms of other industries, the next most prevalent include accommodations and food services, transportation and warehousing, construction and retail trade.

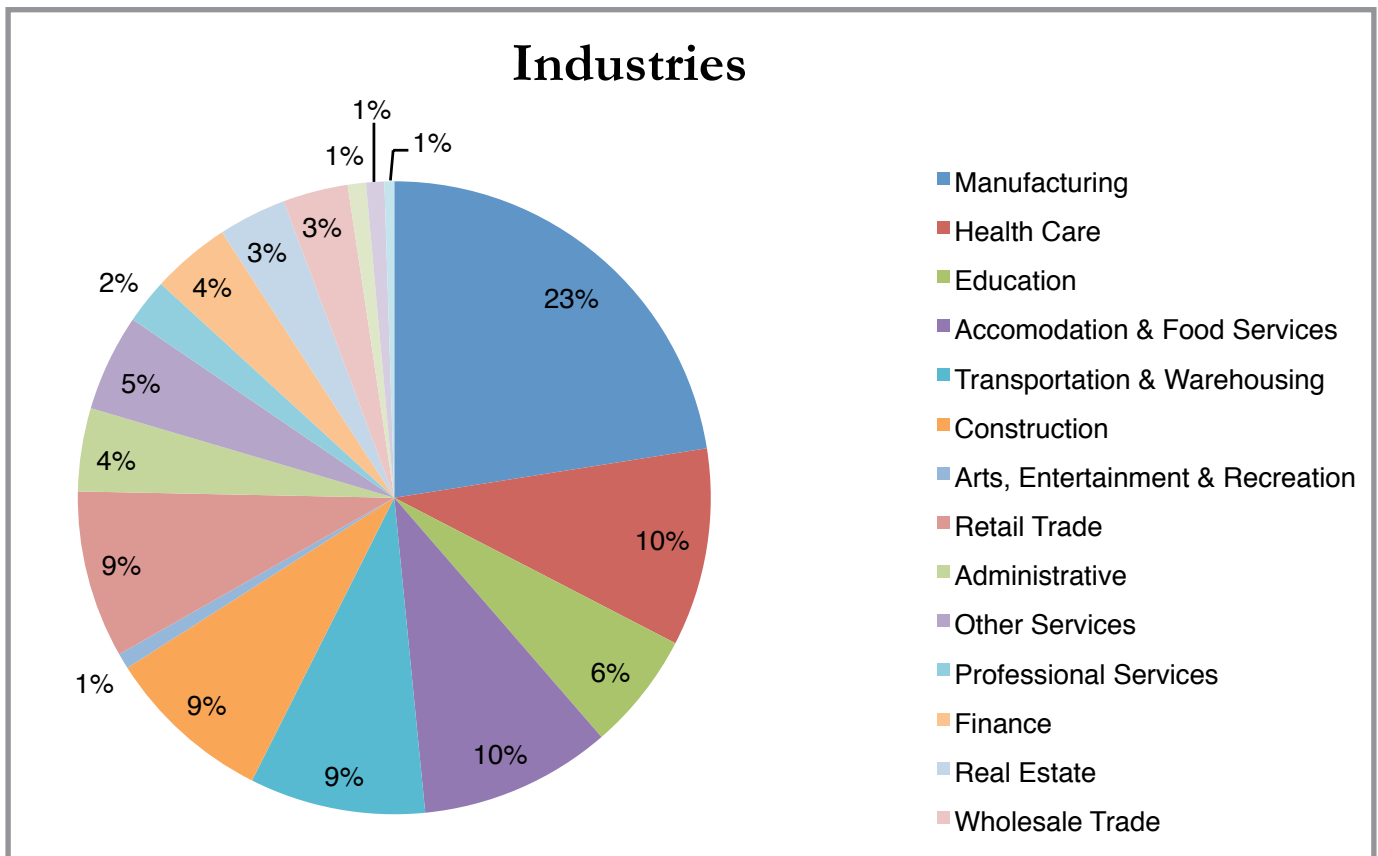


Figure 8

Existing Conditions

Infrastructure

A major infrastructure issue in Blanchester involves sidewalks and mobility. Due in part to the aging population of Blanchester, the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission prepared a study about the status of sidewalks in both Wilmington and Blanchester. In Blanchester, it was found that within the observation area, 21.1 miles of roadside area were recorded. Of those 21.1 miles, only 8.7 had sidewalks, meaning that almost 60% of the area lacked sidewalks. Recent observations also indicate that many of the existing sidewalks were inadequate, either too narrow, uneven or deteriorated. As a result, residents with baby strollers, scooters or wheelchairs have a difficult time using the existing sidewalks.

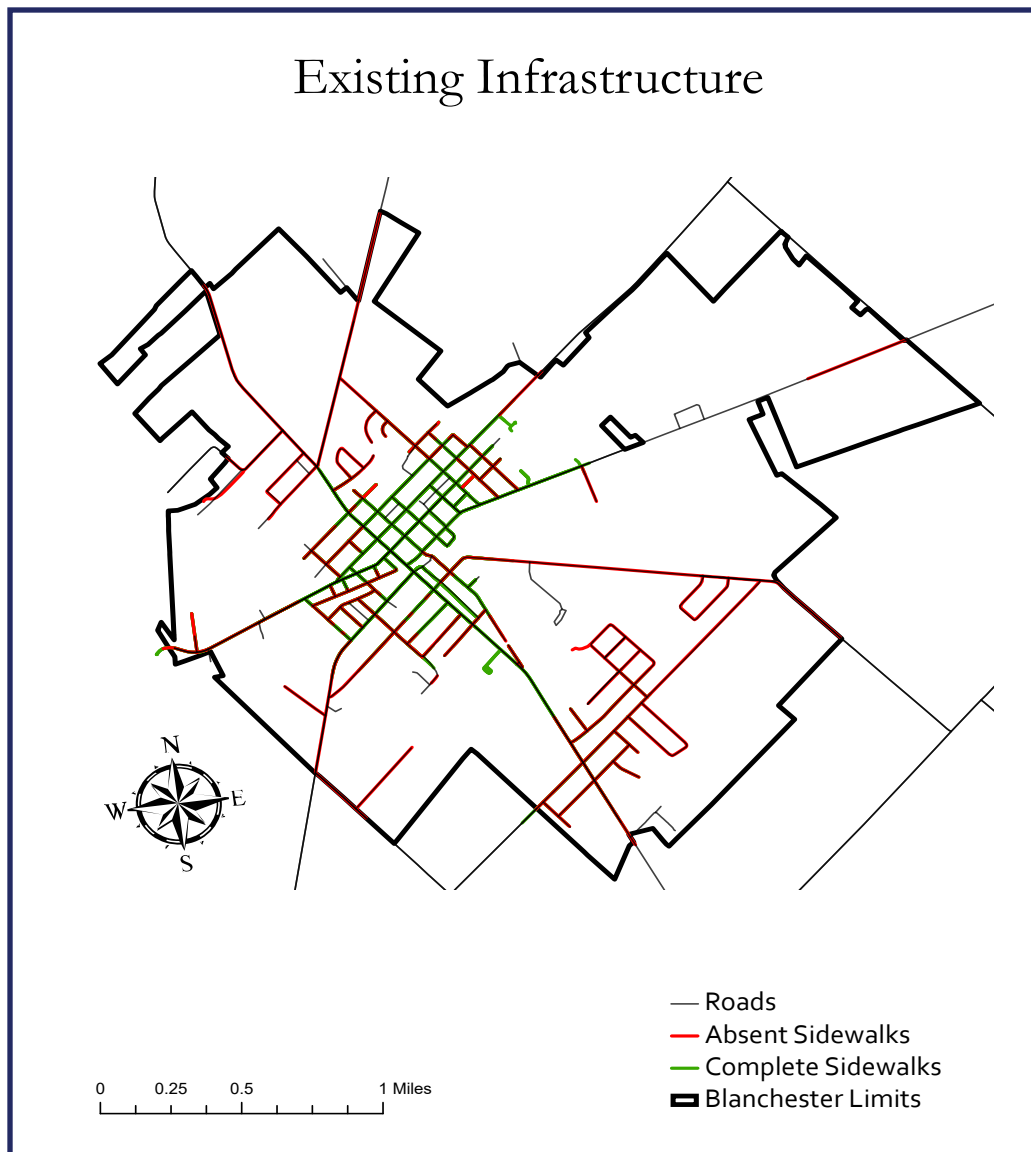


Figure 9

Existing Conditions

Community Character

Over the years, the amount of community events has fallen in the Village of Blanchester. There are three major parades in the Village, and most coincide with the theme of patriotism. The theme of patriotism is prevalent in the community, as on light poles and utility poles you can see banners honoring the Village's deceased veterans. The Fourth of July as well as Memorial Day both have large parades. The local high school's Homecoming is another popular event. As is tradition with most rural towns, local high school sporting events, as well as youth sporting events bring in small crowds. The Village also hosts several holiday events, such as the Boo Bash and the Breakfast with Santa.



Community Image



GOAL:

Represent current-day Blanchester in regards to Branding, Wayfinding, and Community Events as well as propose recommendations for a stronger visual & experience of Blanchester moving forward.

Assessment

Introduction

The Village of Blanchester is endeared by many residents as a pleasant place to live. Defining characteristics of the Village include 'Welcome to Blanchester' signs, a blue Wildcats water tower, and over 300 Veteran banners that line the road near Veterans Memorial Park. Despite these strong elements, other parts of Blanchester could use some revitalization to address declining conditions. The purpose of this section of the Plan is to examine the current brand of Blanchester in image and events, and recommend new visuals as well as community events to create a holistic experience of Blanchester that is in line with what the community desires to be.

Existing Conditions

Gateways and Signage

The Village of Blanchester has multiple points of entry with gateways at the east and south entrance. Both signs read, "Welcome to the Village of Blanchester, Established 1832." The signs are blue in color, as many branded aspects of Blanchester are, and quaint in design, embodying the "small town" charm of the Village. Aside from the welcome signs, the water tower is a branded representation of Blanchester. The water tower reads, "Blanchester welcomes you," on one side and, "Blanchester, home of the wildcats," on the other. Since a large aspect of Blanchester's community is the school district and school spirit, it's fitting for the school mascot to represent Blanchester as a whole.



Assessment

Blanchester is known for being the first in the area to honor Veterans through banners. These veteran banners can be seen hanging near the Veteran Memorial Park, and each banner features a veteran's name, photo, and service detail. Started by The Blanchester American Legion Auxiliary Marion Post 179, the Village of Blanchester put up 240 banners honoring local Veterans in 2015. Now, there are more than 300 banners up total. Not only are these banners a permanent aspect of Blanchester, but nearby towns and Villages have followed suit as well. Susan Jacobs, the woman who spearheaded the banner project, works with other towns to put up new banners as well as helps maintain the banners in Blanchester. Due to weathering, the banners need to be replaced periodically, and the upkeep has been a team effort. Generous donations by the Blanchester Fraternal Order of Eagles #2222 has helped support maintenance costs over the years.



School Spirit

A unifying aspect of Blanchester is the Blanchester Schools. The Blanchester Wildcats are a source of immense pride for the community. Sports at all ages draw residents of Blanchester together to support the students. These include high school football games and basketball games as well as little league and junior high games. Even outside of the world of sports, residents of Blanchester are proud to support students in extracurriculars such as the performing arts. When asked in a survey: "Do you have a favorite spot in Blanchester and why?", many Blanchester residents responded that the schools were a favorite spot because of the associated sense of community. While many iconic landmarks of Blanchester's Downtown have changed or left throughout the years, the Blanchester Schools remain a beloved landmark and anchor institution which serves a functional and communal purpose.

Assessment



Community Events

Community Image goes beyond physical elements such as the gateway signs, water tower, uses of Blanchester blue, Wildcats logo, and veteran banners. Blanchester is also defined by a strong sense of community. Some key community events include car shows, the fishing derby, and annual parades. The three most significant parades are the Fourth of July Parade, Memorial Day parade, and Homecoming parade. In addition to these, holiday festivities are also opportunities for residents to come together and uphold traditions. Christmas Breakfast with Santa has been an event for the last 17 years, featuring pictures with Santa and a meal supplied through canned goods donations. Blanchester's Boo Bash has also been an annual event for the last 17 years, celebrating Halloween. As for Christmas, a long-standing tradition was started by Jim Johnson, a retired teacher. Every year, businesses donate money to provide Christmas Dinner for the community and the entire program is run through volunteers. The Easter Egg Hunt happens every year, and in 2019, a new tradition called Fall Fest kicked off with the hopes of continuing in 2021 (the event for 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19).

The local businesses play a highly supportive role in the community. Even with setbacks related to COVID-19 and other difficulties leading up to this pandemic year, businesses have been doing the best they can. The financial support and rallying spirit of Blanchester's businesses can be felt throughout the community. Churches in the area play a significant role as well. Active and involved churches have led to services such as the food pantry which covers not only the Blanchester school district but also Martinsville and Clarksville. One local church, Blanchester Church of Christ, hosts a community blood drive, food distribution, and family activities such as supporting little league baseball games on their field. Another local church, Blanchester Church of the Nazarene, runs a ministry program called "Exchange" which holds regular social support programs such as NA/AA Meetings. In addition to churches, the Blanchester Parks & Recreation Board plays an active role in the community, having recently installed a playground by the municipal building and new facilities at Veteran's Park. While Blanchester has seen decline in recent years, many dedicated members of the community, businesses, associations and churches are hard at work to keep the pride of Blanchester going.

Assessment

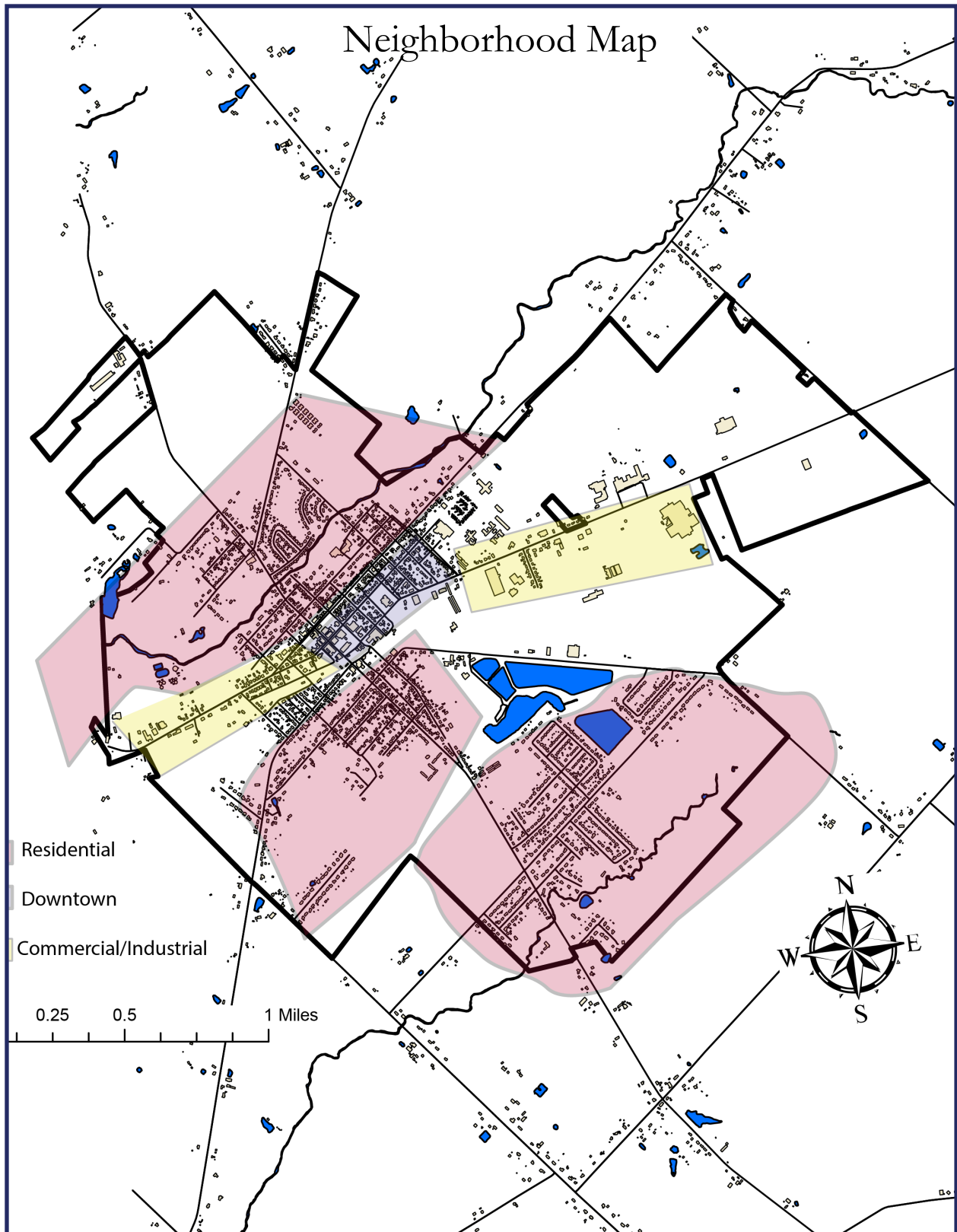


Figure 10

Assessment

Future Vision

Branding

While the general theme of blue hues and the Wildcat mascot are repeated visuals throughout Blanchester, a Brand Guideline may be helpful for creating a more consistent experience for residents and guests alike. There are two main options for pursuing a Brand Guideline: 1) hiring a design firm to create a brand and branded materials; or 2) creating a guideline in-house using existing brand elements.

Key elements of a Brand Guideline include a logo, font, brand colors, taglines, and rules of tones of speech. While not each element is strictly needed for an effective Brand Guideline, the general principle is that the document provides enough rules and details on usages of these elements that residents and visitors are able to experience a consistent image and experience of Blanchester. In contrast, the current day Gateway Signs and the Blanchester website use different fonts and colors for “Blanchester.” A consolidated image of Blanchester in logo, font, and color, would provide the public an instant association between visuals and Blanchester. Not only would a stronger sense of branding help create stronger recognition, but also, clear branding boosts a sense of pride. Inconsistency is a mark of up-and-coming efforts, whereas a strong brand communicates establishment.



Assessment

“A Great Place to Live”

According to the Blanchester Survey, many residents affirm that day-to-day life in Blanchester is enjoyable. While many would like to see the Village grow and flourish in the Downtown and commercial areas, much of Blanchester is residential and the residential aspect of Blanchester is a point of pride for many. Many responders to the survey listed that their favorite place in Blanchester was home. This response may indicate that the community needs more public spaces to gather, such as more restaurants, but this response also communicates satisfaction in the neighborhoods. In towns where neighborhood and housing satisfaction is low, residents would not readily report that home is a preferred place to spend leisurely time. In order for Blanchester to thrive, continued investment in all aspects of Blanchester is important: Downtown, commercial, and residential.

In-House Branding Option

If pursuing the fiscally conservative option of in-house branding, our recommendation is capitalizing on existing imagery.

Inspired by the Gateway Signage, we have provided a potential logo for Blanchester. If adopted, this logo would be used wherever a visual representation of Blanchester is needed. This includes the website, social media accounts, official documents, letterheads, as well as future signage. While pursuing an in-house option is less costly in comparison to hiring out a design firm's service, a shift in branding should be approved by the official budget before decisions are made because replacing logos and colors on printed materials adds cost. However, digital branding may be updated at little to no cost.



Assessment

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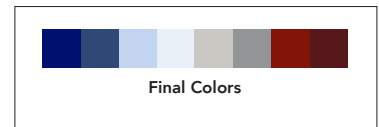
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8



To the left are the initial logo ideas digitally translated from the sketches. Below is the enlarged logo chosen to best represent the Village that pays homage to the welcome sign. Additionally, there is a brand tool kit for the colors used in this document that can also be used for future in-house graphic designs for Blanchester.



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Assessment

World's Only Blanchester

Blanchester brags that it is the only Blanchester in the world, and not many other Villages can claim such a title! Since this is a unique facet of Blanchester, it has the potential to fuel a deeper sense of pride amongst residents. While economic development is a primary way to incentivize investment within the community, changing Blanchester more and more into a town where people come to stay instead of merely pass through, a stronger community image can move Blanchester in a direction of growth as well. Promoting unique aspects of Blanchester will not only improve morale for current residents, but also help attract future residents and businesses to invest in the community.

Social Calendar for Community Events

Word-of-mouth seems to be the most popular way events are promoted in Blanchester. This is understandable given that many events are annual and have been for many years. Some events are promoted on Facebook, but events are scattered between a variety of hosting groups and not all key events are represented online. For example, in the steering committee meeting, stakeholders of the meeting shared details about annual traditions that are not listed online. While this is not a barrier to existing residents, consolidating information of all key events to an online social calendar may be a growth opportunity to improve the experience for those new to Blanchester, visitors, or future residents. The Blanchester website (<https://www.blanVillage.com/>) would be an ideal place for this social calendar to exist. This webpage may then link to a Facebook page with all events (it is important that all or most key events are listed). Ideally, the social calendar would include descriptions of the events so newcomers can understand the significance of each event as well as what is expected of individuals such as costume requirements or canned goods for entry.

Conclusion

Blanchester is beloved as a “small town with a big heart.” The current image of Blanchester is defined by some varied branding elements as well as long-standing traditions and annual events. The best parts of the current community image should be expanded upon and further promoted. Capitalizing on current day successes include maintaining key visual markers such as veteran banners, rallying behind Blanchester schools, promoting community events, continuing to invest in residential areas as advancements in commercial areas grow, and consolidating information online to promote a unified community image (e.g. a social calendar and a consistent brand).

Assessment

SWOON

Strengths

Blanchester's sense of community is maintained by the community through annual events and traditions. The schools, businesses, churches, and various organizations relentlessly invest into the community.

Weaknesses

Branding for Blanchester is not unified, as demonstrated by varying logos and fonts for "Blanchester" (e.g. the logo on gateway signs and the logo on the Village's website). While many community events are treasured by the community, information on events are difficult to find.

Obstacles

Consolidating the brand experience as well as a list of key events require consensus as well as a team to tackle these goals as projects.

Opportunities

With some effort, Blanchester has high potential to present itself to the world as a unique and charming place to live and invest business efforts.

Needs

Blanchester needs dedicated individuals who will mediate between stakeholders to make decisions and see those decisions carried out.

Recommendations

The following recommendations identify outcomes toward which to measure progress concerning Community Image and suggests key action steps or interventions that can be taken to aid in achieving the desired outcomes.

Objectives

The following objectives identify specific outcomes or measurable, condition-level indicators that depict the community's progress toward a stronger Community Image. Outcomes are mostly quantitative and represented by trend lines, targets, or thresholds. The following lists several outcomes that can be used in measuring progress:

C.I.1: Create A Brand Guideline

Demonstrate a consistent brand that visually represents Blanchester holistically.

- Create a Brand Guideline, whether it is through hiring a design firm or creating a team in-house to take on the challenge of creating a Brand Guideline.
- Publish the Brand Guideline as a public resource on Blanchester's official website.
- Implement the design guideline, replacing outdated brand elements (e.g. signage, printed documents, website, social media) and enforcing future branded materials to adhere to the recommendations within the Brand Guideline.

C.I.2: Promote Blanchester as Unique

Demonstrate successful promotion of Blanchester, highlighting rare and valuable aspects of Blanchester, with the intention of attracting future residents and new businesses.

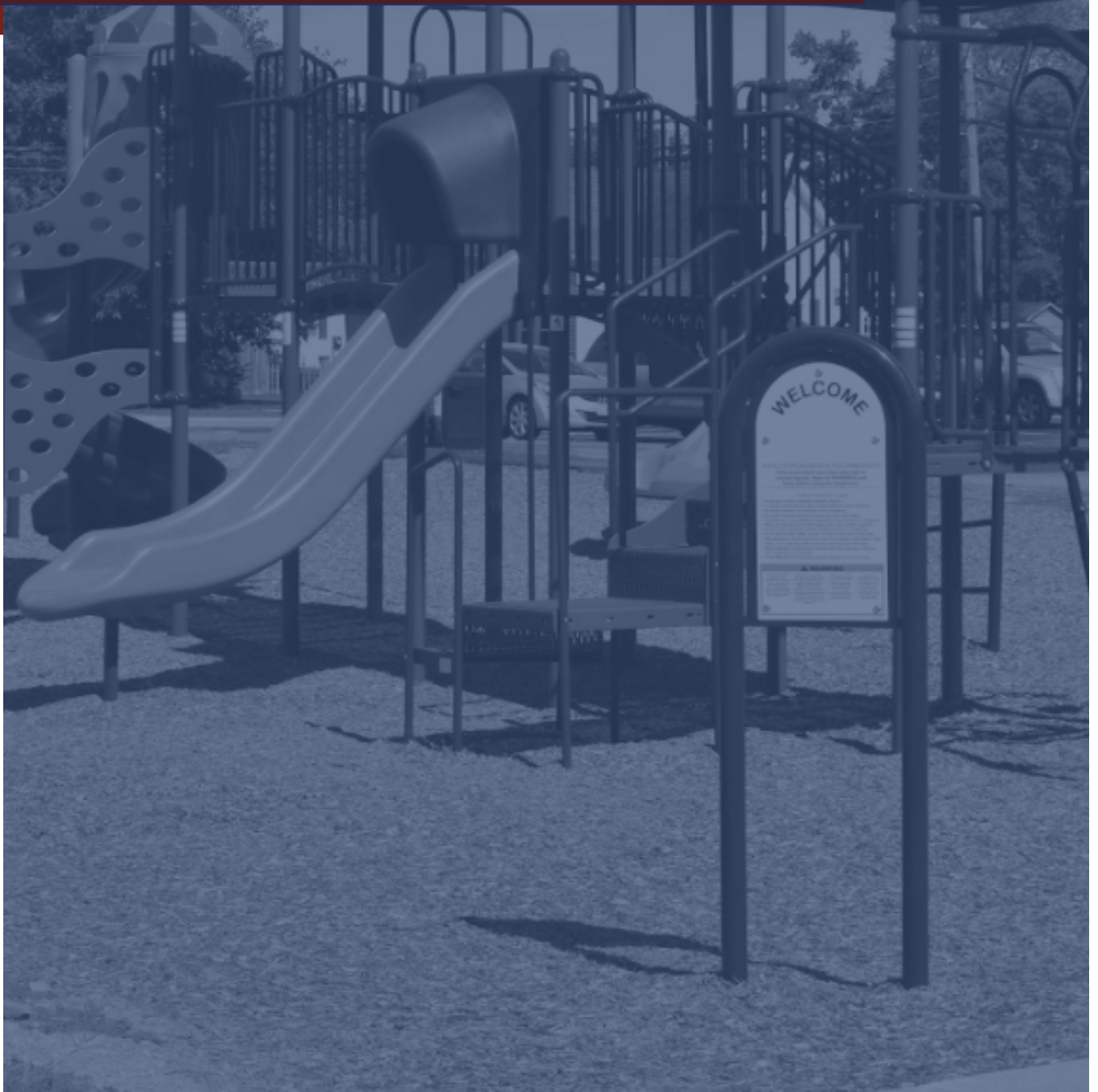
- Promote distinguishing aspects of Blanchester on the official website and social media platforms (e.g. the Village of Blanchester is the world's only Blanchester).
- Coin a Village tagline or motto that embodies the spirit of Blanchester by holding a public forum or taking a public survey in which all residents can participate (to be used on the website, social media, and other visitor touch points).

C.I.3: Publish an Online Social Calendar

Demonstrate that Blanchester's spirit of community is alive and well by compiling an official list of key community events. This list should showcase long-standing traditions and annual events in a compelling, yet inclusive way.

- Compile key community events as well as accompanying details.
- Create a calendar within Blanchester's official website and/or a Facebook page with all events listed in one place.

Land Use



GOAL:

Enhance current development to influence future growth opportunities, strengthen community character through building standards, and establish housing diversity with accessibility for parks and recreation to improve residents' quality of life.

Assessment

Introduction

The Village of Blanchester has been met with changes in growth and prosperity. The once thriving Village was a mixed-use compact town composed of all the necessary land uses. Today, it incorporates suburban neighborhoods dispersed throughout the Village, reliant on the automobile. With a promising future ahead, the Village intends to focus on employment and revenue generating land uses, while balancing the existing land uses with future growth. The purpose of this section is to understand the history of existing land uses and their form and to recommend changes and additions to those uses and forms as the Village expands and the population grows, all while keeping the rich history and pride of the community alive.

Existing and Future Conditions

Existing Land Use

The Village of Blanchester has a wide spread of agricultural land use across the Village for farming and to take care of animals. However towards the center of the community, the Village is occupied by medium density residential and commercial land uses. Blanchester provides a wealth of open/park space that is dedicated to a Veterans Memorial Park, police station park, and Dewey's Park. This community provides an abundance of rural areas within the Blanchester boundaries that offers development opportunities. Therefore, as Blanchester sees an increase in residential growth in the near future, its goals are to preserve the density in the historic district while providing amenities across the community to make life easier and more pleasant for residents and visitors.

Form

The physical form of Blanchester can be described by the way buildings are placed on lots and the size of lots, as well as, the relationship between buildings, streets, and sidewalks. The Downtown area of Blanchester along Main Street and Broadway Street contains buildings using a large portion of the lot, buildings that are close to the street and sidewalks, parking that is placed behind buildings that are placed close together, and buildings that have different architectural styles. Areas outside of the Downtown area described above consist of buildings on large lots taking up a small portion of the lot, parking lots in front of buildings that are farther from the street and sidewalks, buildings that are farther apart, and buildings of similar architectural style.



Assessment

The community survey indicates the community enjoys and wants to maintain the character of Downtown Blanchester. Downtown Blanchester has a unique form that includes a variety of architectural styles and mix of uses. Focusing on form first over use first in this area can support the existing form, while also establishing a clear community vision for the area. Place-making, urban design, economic development/redevelopment, and pedestrian mobility are all aspects of concentration and encouragement when form is focused on first over use.

Annexation

Annexation is the process of incorporating existing land within the boundaries of a community. Blanchester is currently in the planning process of annexing approximately 92-acres of land on the east side of the Village. The proposed land that is being annexed is split up into two parcels that surrounds residential property. In addition, Blanchester is on the verge of declaring as a city, where existing and future annexation offers growth to obtain that status. Much of the land surrounding Blanchester is comprised of agricultural and residential uses, which benefits the annexation process. One thing to consider and make note of is utilities will need to expand to annexed areas, and this comes at a cost to the Village.

What is Form-Based Code?

Form-based code is a regulatory zoning tool that focuses on the placement, bulk, and overall appearance of buildings/structures.

What does Form-Based Code regulate?

Form-based code can regulate building heights, lot widths, parking, and architecture. It guides building height with height minimums and maximums to create a uniform building horizon. Minimum and maximum lot widths are regulated to produce a desired scale for an area. Regulating parking through parking minimums and shared parking can reduce unnecessary parking lots and establish an area as pedestrian-oriented. Regulations can be created through building standards, public space standards, and sometimes architectural standards.

What are advantages of implementing Form-Based Code?

Form-based code is visual. It creates a clear vision for an area that can easily be visualized. It can also be user-friendly and create ease when reviewing building and site plans. Clear building and site standards defined by the code set a list of standards that developers can easily identify and follow and that reviewers can easily check-off when reviewing building and site plans.

Assessment

Future Land Use

The future land use map demonstrates how growth in Blanchester should occur according to land use. The land use categories provide a description of allowable uses in each of the indicated areas, as well as recommendations to include in the Blanchester zoning code. Themes from each of these categories include balancing different modes of transportation, continuity and cohesiveness of character and form, promoting safety, and maintaining the Village aesthetic and pride of Blanchester. The land use categories are as follows:

Commercial Center

Due to the proximity to major highways and location in Blanchester, the “Commercial Center” should mimic a “shopping district”. This area should include a combination of retailers, restaurants, local shops, service providers, and a few key activity producers, such as a bowling alley. The uses in this area should not take away from the vibrancy of Downtown but rather be a supporting addition to Blanchester. Commercial and retail uses should locate in this area if they are too large to locate in the Historic Core Mixed-Use area. However, buildings and structures should blend well with the form of buildings and structures located in the “Industrial District”. A balance between modes of transportation should be made by integrating sidewalks, crosswalks, street lights, traffic calming devices, bike racks, and parking lots. To accommodate future growth in Blanchester, this area has the ability to expand to the East.

Community Commercial

The uses in areas identified as “Community Commercial” should include a combination of small- and medium- sized retail, commercial, and office uses. Examples of such uses include small grocers, coffee shops, small eateries, local shops, professional offices, and small service stores, such as beauty salons. This area should provide commercial and retail services to residents residing in the surrounding neighborhoods, eliminating their need to drive across the Village to purchase similar goods and services. These areas should also incorporate sidewalks, crosswalks, streetlights, bike racks, and minimal parking spaces to balance different forms of mobility. Due to the proximity of these areas to residential areas, buffering for light and noise should be a priority.



Assessment

Historic Core Residential

Areas identified as “Historic Core Residential” are comprised of existing neighborhoods in Blanchester. This land use designation should support existing neighborhoods, while guiding potential development/redevelopment. Development and redevelopment in these areas should be consistent with the existing form and architectural style of the area. Infrastructure upgrades and code enforcement should be the main focus in these areas. Infrastructure upgrades include addition or repair of sidewalks, connections to existing and future amenities, street lighting, street signs, and neighborhood signs. Repairs and maintenance should also be of focus in these areas to maintain the Village aesthetic and pride. For example, volunteer groups could be created to perform maintenance and repairs to buildings whose owner is unable to perform them. Grants for fixing the exterior of buildings and neighborhood competitions for best curb appeal, best decor, best garden etc. could be utilized to promote the Village aesthetic and pride.

Historic Core Mixed-Use

The “Historic Core Mixed-Use” area is the original town of Blanchester. It consists of existing residential and commercial uses. Development and redevelopment in this area should celebrate and preserve the area and support the current mix of uses. New development and redevelopment should maintain the original scale and form of the area. Redevelopment of existing buildings in the Downtown area can include mixing of uses, such as commercial on the first-level and residential on the second-level, and transitioning residential buildings into low-impact commercial/retail uses, such as offices or local shops. The Downtown area should be the main hub of activity, supporting people shopping and spending time in the area. Parking should be minimal and set in the rear of buildings, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. Sidewalks, streetlights, street trees, planters, and Village branding should all be incorporated into this area, aiding to a pedestrian-friendly environment.

as Blanchester continues to grow.

Assessment

Mixed-Use Residential

The “Mixed-Use Residential” area should provide a seamless transition from the “Historic Core Mixed-Use” area all the way to the “Commercial Center”. It should incorporate low- and medium- density residential uses with pockets of low- and medium- density commercial uses. Commercial uses in this area should consist of shops, eateries, offices, and low-impact services. Similar to the other residential areas, pedestrian connections, street lights, signage, parks and open space, and utility connections should be included.

Parks and Open Space

The areas identified as “Parks and Open Space” consist of community parks, neighborhood parks, school facilities, and additional recreation areas the community utilizes. Two additional areas of interest for future parks and open space are included as well, which consist of the area northwest of the middle and high schools and the area southeast of the municipal building. Both of these areas should have multiple modes and points of accessibility and supply the community with parks and recreation opportunities that fit their needs and desires.

Village Neighborhood Residential

“Village Neighborhood Residential” areas should supply Blanchester with a variety of housing types and options. These areas should permit a mix of low- and medium- density residential uses and incorporate varying sized lots. The scale of single family residences should blend with the scale of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. The character between the residential areas should remain consistent, integrating pedestrian connections, street lights, signage, parks and open space requirements, utility connections, and the preservation of natural resources, such as wooded areas, wetlands, and creeks. Roadways in these areas should stray away from cul-de-sac type roadways and connect with each other, as well as connect to existing roadways. These areas should support a mix of residents who are of different ages and family structures, while maintaining the Village character, aesthetic, and pride.

Assessment

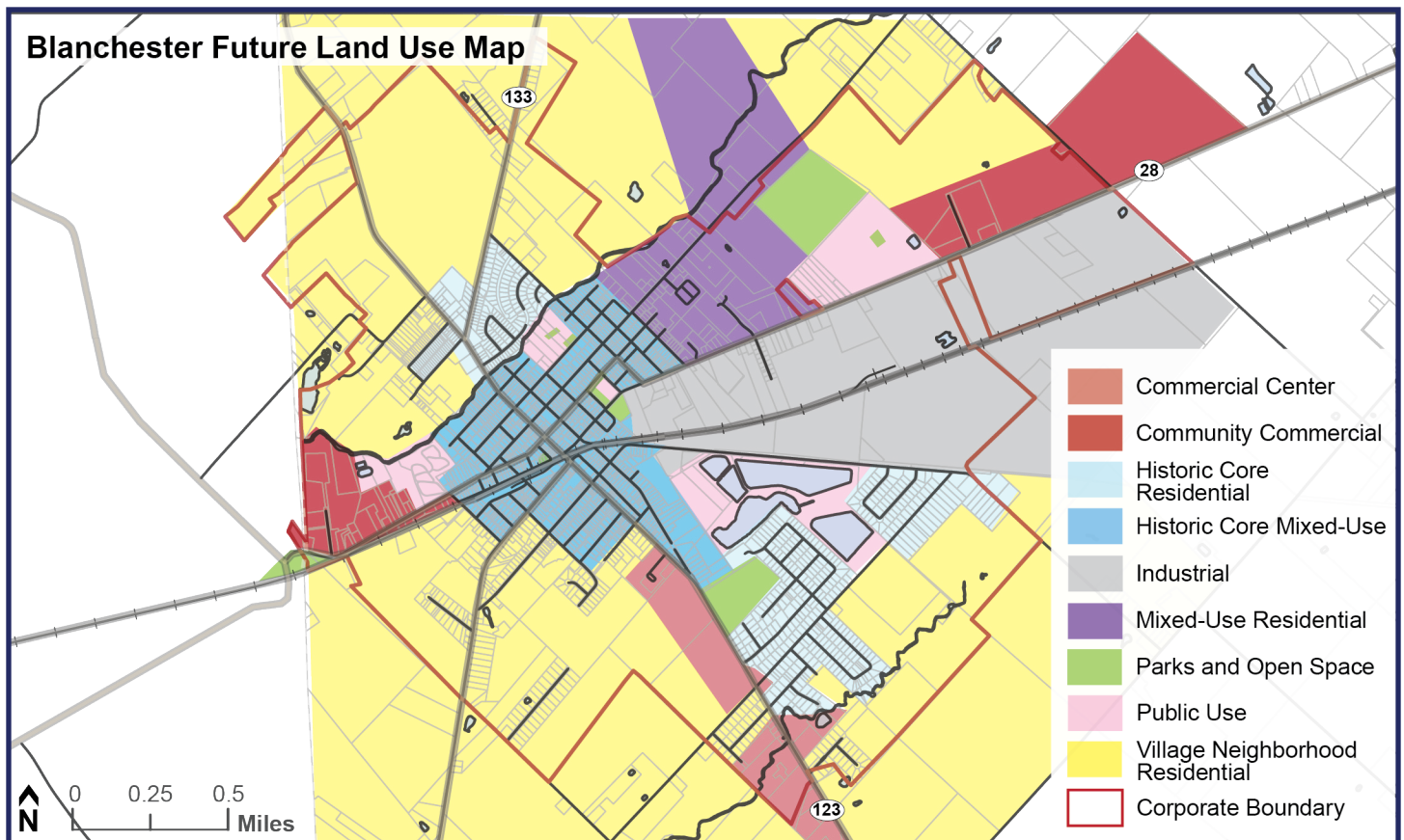


Figure 11

This map proposes future land use districts for the Village.

Assessment

Housing

Blanchester currently has over 1700 units either being occupied or rented. In regard to occupied housing, over a 1000 units are owned and over 500 are rented. Below, you can see how Blanchester's median housing value has increased over the years and you can see the comparison towards Clinton County along with the State of Ohio. In addition, Blanchester has a sense of pride when it comes to property maintenance and housing upkeep. There is a strong foundation of housing that are well maintained throughout the community.

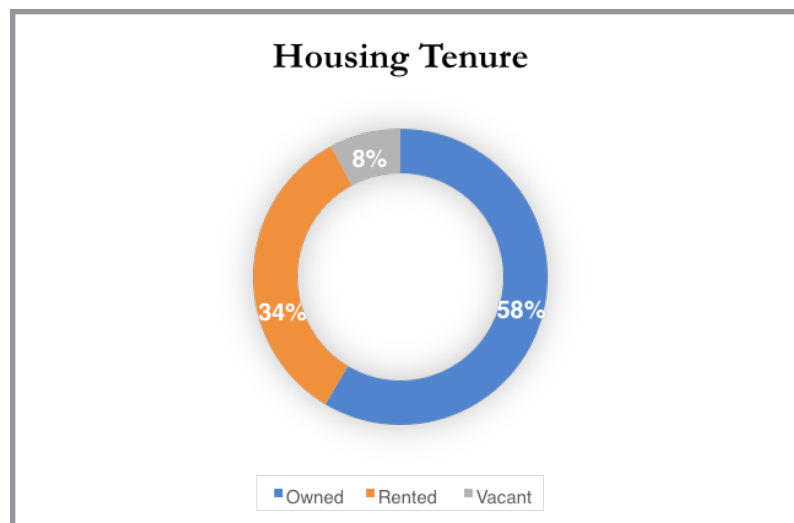


Figure 12

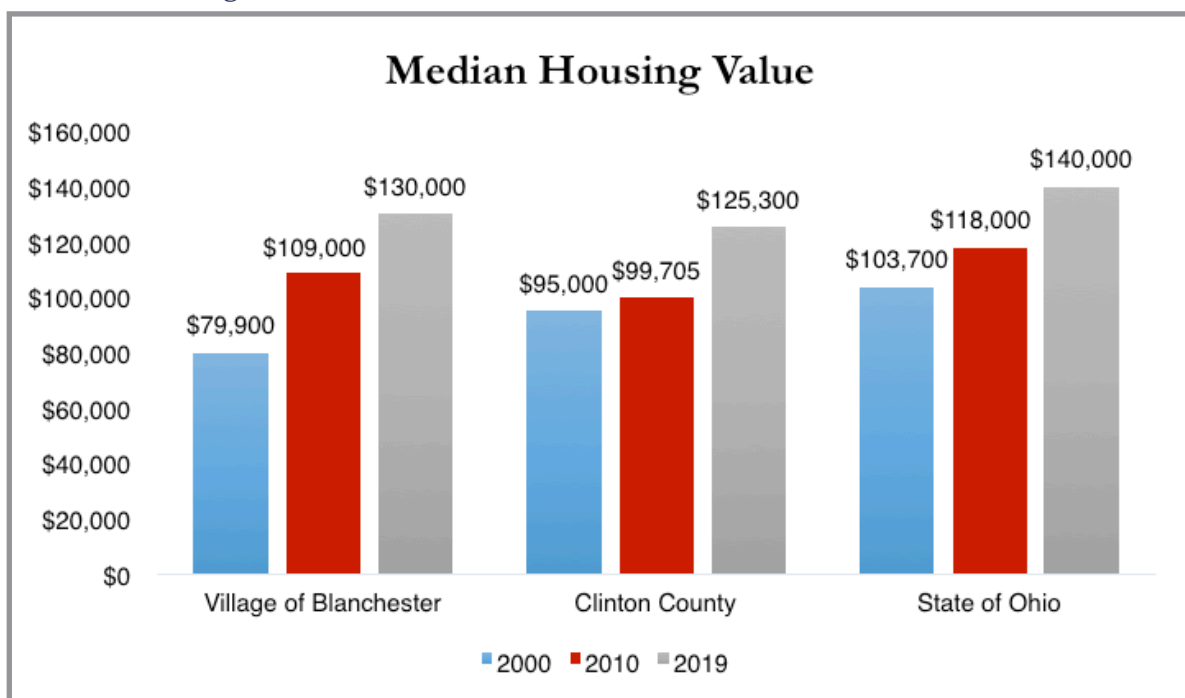


Figure 13

Assessment

Parks and Recreation

Public Parks and Open Space

Currently, the Village has four public parks, a park at the Elementary School and Middle School, and a few other open spaces the community uses, such as the reservoir and the area by the fire station. The four public parks account for 25.2 acres of park space, while the two parks at the schools can account for roughly 0.8 acres of park space. The parks at the two schools are limited in use when the schools are not in-session. Many of these parks and open spaces are considered favorite spots to residents in Blanchester.




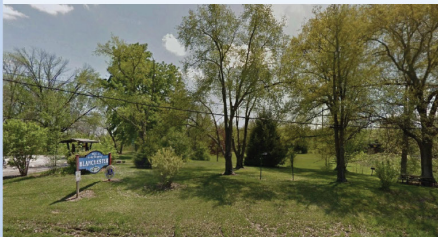
Veterans Memorial Park 919 S. Broadway St.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community Park- 18.8 acres- 89% active; 11% passive- 4 Baseball fields, Shelter Houses, Playground, 0.3 mile walking path, outdoor gym equipment, Veterans memorial	Dewey's Park 122 Wall St.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Neighborhood Park- 0.9 acres- 100% passive- Shelter, minimal green space, mostly paved parking
Police Station Park 318 E. Main St.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Neighborhood Park- 2.9 acres- 7% active; 93% passive- playground, basketball court, open space	Rest Stop Park 753 W. Main St.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Neighborhood Park- 2.9 acres- 100% passive- open green space, picnic tables

Figure 14

Assessment

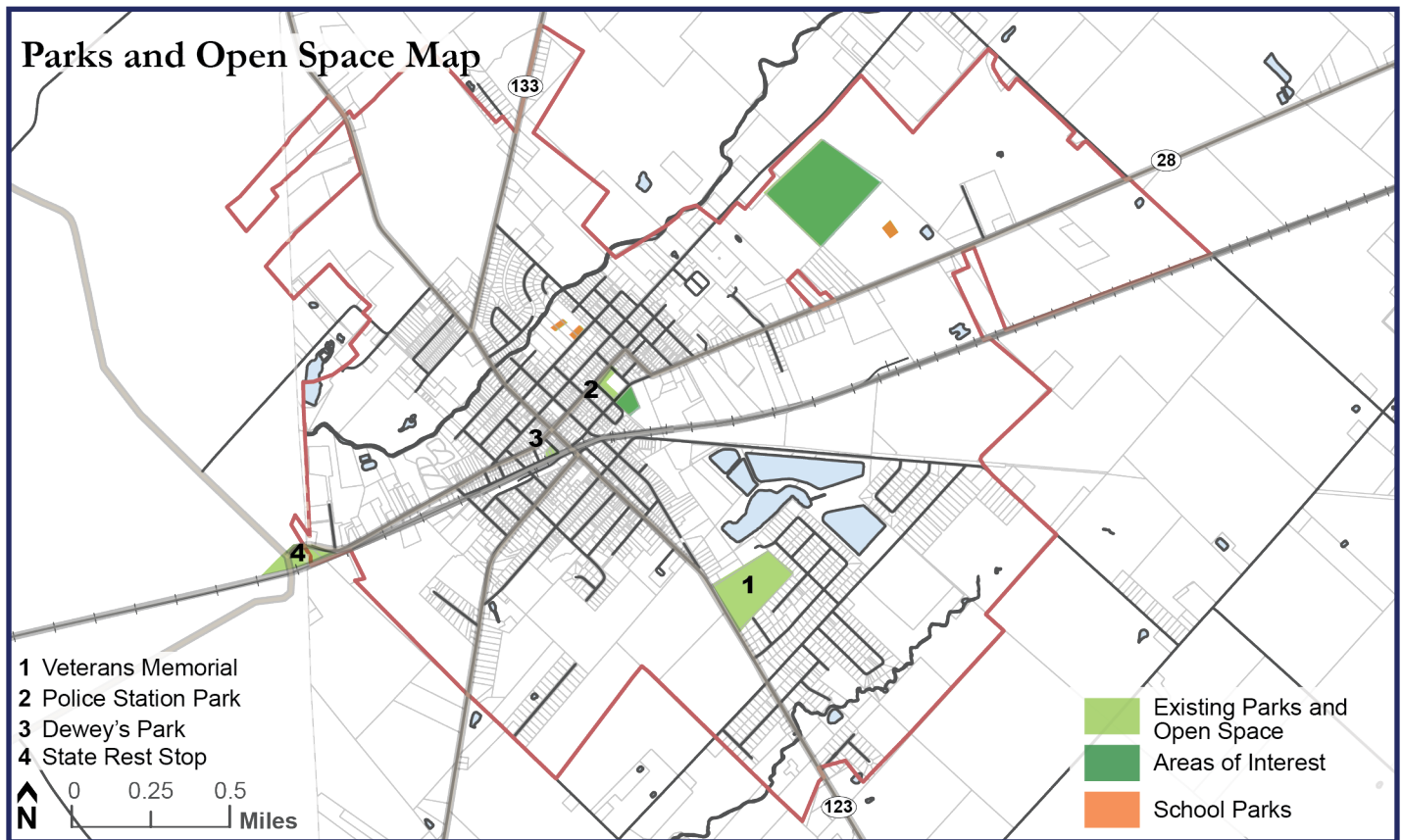


Figure 14

This map shows the existing and proposed parks and open spaces for the Village.

Assessment

Adequacy of Parks

The adequacy of a park can include its size, location, amenities, safety, and overall community satisfaction. Responses from the community survey indicate additional park and recreation opportunities and amenities are desired. For the scope of this plan however, the adequacy of parks will be analyzed based on size.

National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards will be used as a baseline to assess the current total acreage, passive acreage, and active acreage of parkland in Blanchester. Figure 14 shows Blanchester is below the total parkland standard and the passive standard but ranks higher than the active standard.

	Total Park Acreage (per 1,000 residents)	Passive¹ Acreage (per 1,000 residents)	Active² Acreage (per 1,000 residents)
NRPA Standard	10 acres	7.5 acres	2.5 acres
Blanchester	6.1 acres	1.9 acres	4.2 acres

Figure 15

¹Passive parks are parks that have little to no structured activities. They usually include walking or multi-use paths, benches, or picnic shelters.

²Active parks are parks that have facilities, courses, fields, or play equipment.

The passive standard of park space can be expanded with the addition of strategically placed green ways in Blanchester. These green ways can not only increase the passive acreage of parkland but also be utilized as an interconnection between active park spaces, increasing accessibility. While the active acreage of parkland is currently above the NRPA standard, it can easily fall below the standard as the population of Blanchester increases. To counteract this, the Blanchester zoning code can require developers to either dedicate parkland and/or open space in new residential neighborhoods or pay park development fees that will facilitate one or a combination of the acquisition, development, and/or improvement of community and neighborhood parks.

Assessment

Proximity of Parks to Residents

Being able to access parks in Blanchester is just as important as park adequacy. According to the Clinton County Parks and Open Space Plan of 2016, 80% of the residents living in Blanchester were within a 5-minute walk to a park; however, 63% of the streets in Blanchester remained without a sidewalk. Properly maintained sidewalks, bike paths, shared lanes, and green ways are all necessary to provide access to parks and recreation opportunities. Creating multiple modes of accessibility can also support a range of users of parks and recreation opportunities. For example, younger generations may choose to bike or skateboard to these areas, while older populations or populations with children may choose to walk. Future improvements to sidewalk infrastructure and mobility will be essential in maintaining and creating accessibility to parks and recreation spaces (see Infrastructure and Mobility chapters for further analysis).



Conclusion

Over recent years, Blanchester has been in a declining state in regard to having an abundance of vacant and undeveloped land within the boundaries of the Village. The Village is seeking city status that aims to incorporate annexed land into the community to support residential growth. In addition, Blanchester has existing infrastructure such as vacant buildings and land that it could use to build up the surrounding environment for community needs. Included in the built environment, parks and recreation contributes to the natural health of the community. Implementing structured parks, open space, and maintenance standards to construct a healthy environment. Furthermore, restructuring the zoning code to apply towards existing and future development that will accommodate for community needs as it sees economic growth increase.



Assessment

SWOON

Strengths

Downtown Blanchester has a unique form that lends itself to establishing Blanchester's identity. Property values are high throughout the community which makes the Village become more desirable as it seeks city status. Current active park spaces are sufficient for the Village's size.

Weaknesses

Current land uses are not meeting the demand of the community. There is a shortage of other housing alternatives in the community. Current amenities, such as parks are not easily accessible to the community.

Obstacles

Costs of expanding utilities could discourage annexation and future growth. The current budget for Blanchester leaves little room for updating, maintaining, and creating parks, which will be essential in a growing community.

Opportunities

Zoning tools can create a clear community vision for Downtown Blanchester, while also supporting and enhancing its existing form and use. Downtown has a fixed number of vacant buildings that could be restored for residential units. New paths and green ways can be improved upon and created to make accessing current parks easier, while also increasing the amount of passive parks.

Needs

The zoning code should align with recommended land use classifications. The zoning code needs to align with the goal of park creation, i.e. new parks and/or open space must be made available in annexed areas where more residential units/properties will be created.

Objectives

L.U.1: Utilize Form-based Code as a tool to maintain and support the character of Downtown Blanchester

- Partner with the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission to incorporate Form-Based Code into the Blanchester zoning text.

L.U.2: Balance existing land uses with future land uses

- Support and enhance existing neighborhoods through infrastructure upgrades, code enforcement, and repair and maintenance programs.
- Blend character and form of land uses through standards.

L.U.3: Increase the housing availability and alternatives

- Allow more residential developments in commercial areas.
- Create opportunities for housing in the Historic District from vacant buildings.

L.U.4: Manage efficient development through annexation

- Manage future annexations to provide efficient housing and commercial structures.
- Ensure annexed land has adequate public services for use.

L.U.5: Align the zoning code with the goals for housing and building standards

- Redevelop the zoning code to make it fit existing and future conditions.
- Adopt architectural standards for housing developments.



Objectives

L.U.6: Create and update pathways to existing and future parks to ensure ease of access

- Improve sidewalk infrastructure and expand sidewalks in existing neighborhoods
- Create other ways of accessing parks and recreation opportunities, such as multi-use paths or bike paths

L.U.7: Construct green ways to provide additional open space and connection

- Laying out a plan for constructed green ways goes beyond the scope of this plan. Therefore, it is recommended a Blanchester Parks and Recreation Plan be developed, so green ways can be skillfully located.
- The Village of Blanchester should work with the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission to develop a parks and recreation plan for Blanchester.

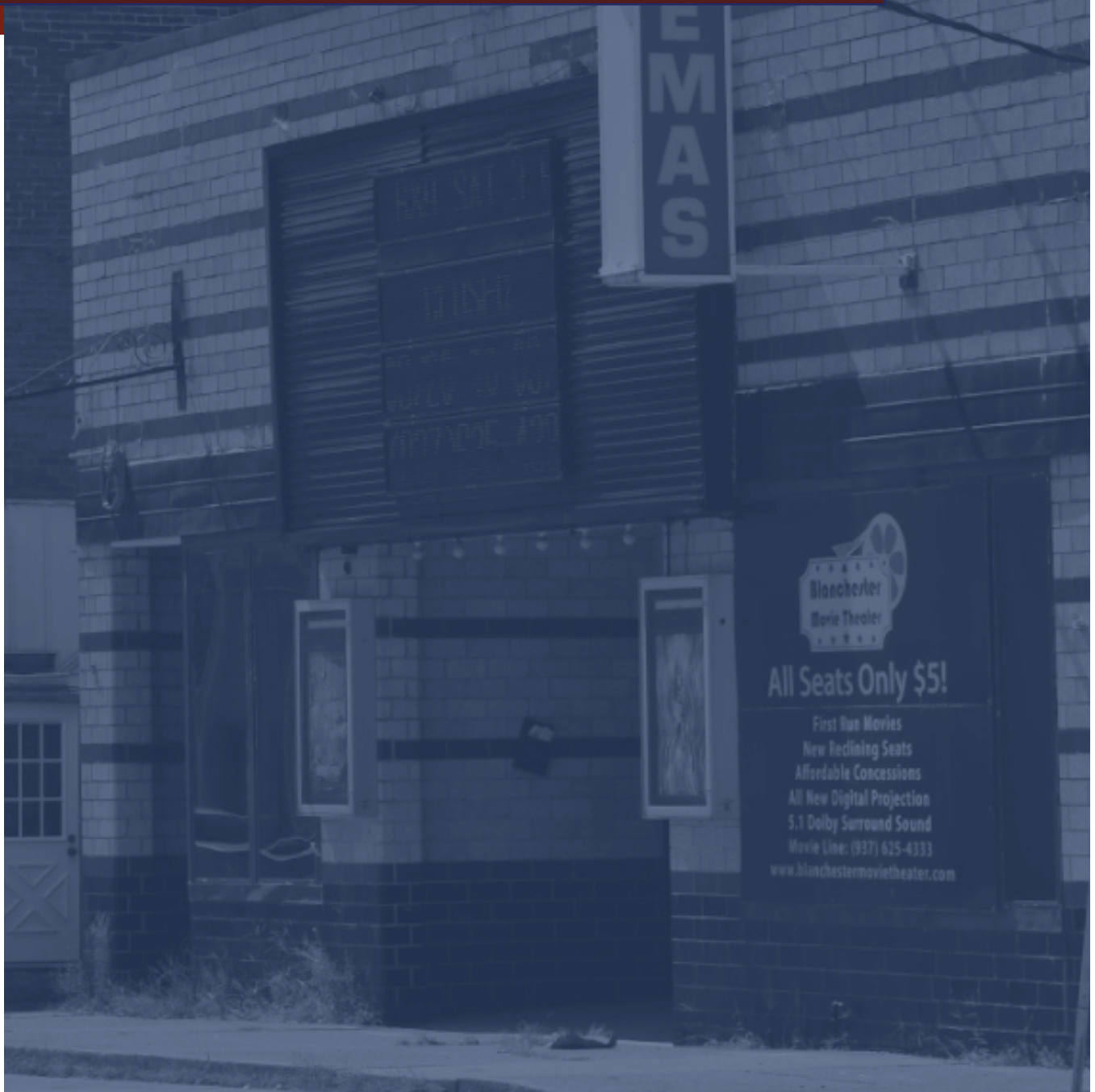
L.U.8: Identify community needs and desires as they pertain to parks and open space

- This objective is crucial in supplying the community with leisure activities that will support them. Further analysis should be done in the form of a Blanchester Parks and Recreation Plan to meet the needs and desires of the community.
- The Village of Blanchester should work with the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission to develop a parks and recreation plan for Blanchester.

L.U.9: Align the zoning code with the goal(s) for parks and recreation

- Re-develop the zoning code to include parkland dedication in newly developed residential neighborhoods and/or require developers pay a park development fee as part of new residential developments

Economic Development



GOAL:

Position Blanchester as a resilient, collaborative community that leverages its existing assets to create a supportive environment for a wide range of local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Assessment

Introduction

Blanchester's future success relies greatly on its ability to create and maintain sustainable economic development. This is the number one priority for local government officials and residents. Like other communities of similar size and context, the Village faces challenges related to growth, a lack of overall amenities, and reliable sources of income. Blanchester must capitalize on existing assets and seek greater industry diversity to overcome shifting economic trends that threaten to leave small, rural communities behind. By both fostering regional collaboration and investing in aspects like education and local enterprise, Blanchester can increase opportunities for its residents.

Existing and Future Conditions

Workforce

The working population in Blanchester is younger when compared to the working population in Clinton County and Ohio. The younger working population (16 - 24 years) is much higher in Blanchester than Clinton County and Ohio; whereas, the 45 - 54 year old age group has been below Clinton County and Ohio. The 25 to 44 year old age group has declined, risen, and declined again since 2010 (Figure 17). On average, this age group is similar to Clinton County and Ohio. The 55 year old and older working population also matches with the 55 year old and older age groups in Clinton County and Ohio.

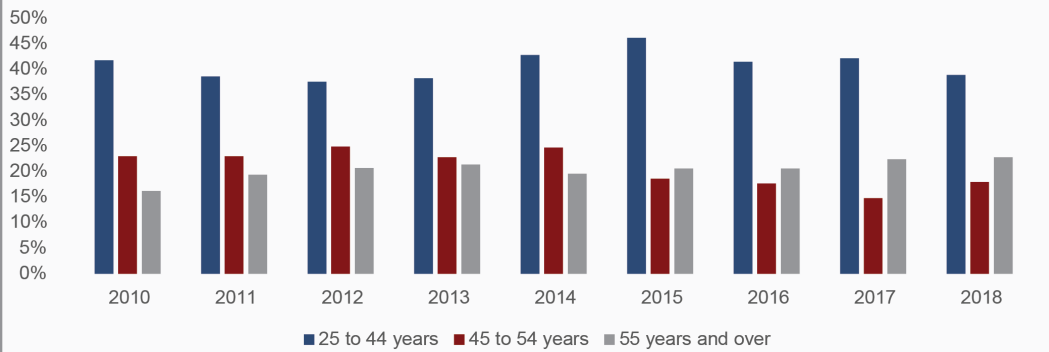
A larger younger working population indicates there will be more jobs needed, as the older working population retires and exits the workforce. Blanchester should plan ahead to ensure the right mix of jobs and industry exist so that the younger population have a reason to stay in the Village after graduation.

Figure 16 Average Percentage of Workers 16 Years and Over (2010-2018)

Age	Blanchester	Clinton County	Ohio
16 to 19 years	6.0%	4.5%	4.0%
20 to 24 years	11.9%	9.2%	9.5%
25 to 44 years	40.9%	40.8%	41.4%
45 to 54 years	20.8%	24.3%	23.4%
55 years and over	20.4%	21.3%	21.7%

Assessment

Figure 17 Workforce by Age Group (25 - 44; 45 - 54; 55 and over)



Employment

The employment rate —or the proportion of the working age population who are employed— in Blanchester has been declining since 2012, when it was at a peak of 59.4%. Comparatively, Clinton County and Ohio have a similar “u-shaped” trend and have been on the rise since 2014. In 2018, Blanchester was employing only 57.3% of its working age population compared to 58.9% in Clinton County and 59.5% in Ohio (Figure 18).

On the other hand, the unemployment rate in Blanchester has consistently been below the unemployment rate in both Clinton County and Ohio, indicating there is a low percentage of people in the labor force who are actively searching for work (Figure 19). Clinton County and Ohio follow a similar “bell-shaped” trend, contrasting the shape of their employment rate for the years 2010-2018. The unemployment rate for Blanchester in 2018 was 3.8%; whereas, it was 6.1% in Clinton County and 5.8% in Ohio.

Figure 18 Employment Rate

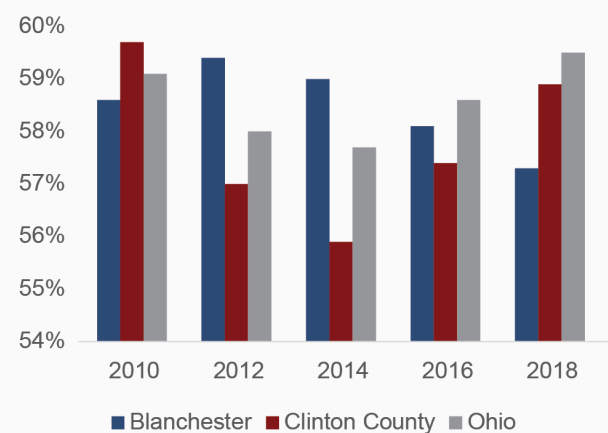
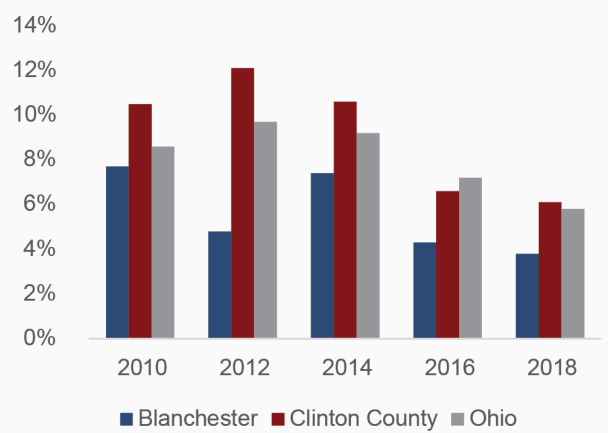


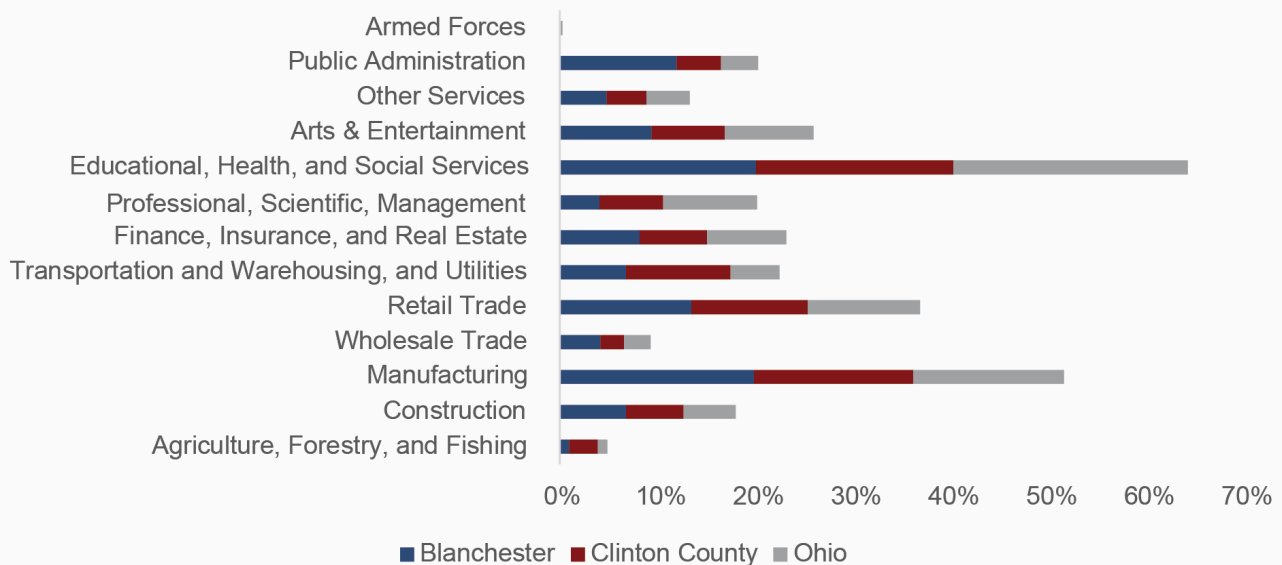
Figure 19 Unemployment Rate



Assessment

The industries in Blanchester with the highest percentage of employment include “education, health, and social services” 20.1%, “manufacturing” 19.9%, “retail trade” 13.5%, and “public administration” 12% (Figure 20). American Showa Inc. is one of the largest employers in Blanchester, distributing auto body parts in the manufacturing industry. “Education, health, and social services” and “manufacturing” employ the largest number of workers in Clinton County and Ohio as well. Uniquely, the “transportation and warehousing, and utilities” industry in Clinton County also employs a large number of workers (10.7%). The Wilmington Airpark likely accounts for the large number of workers in that industry. This can be expected to continue to see future growth as Amazon continues to ramp up their operations at the Airpark. Additionally, Blanchester has a larger portion of workers in the “public administration” industry (12%) and a slightly larger portion in the “construction” industry (6.8%) when compared to Clinton County and Ohio (4.5%;3.8% and 5.9%;5.3%, respectively).

Figure 20 Employment by Industry (2018)



Assessment

Income

Median household income in Blanchester has consistently been below Ohio and Clinton County. Median household income in Blanchester peaked in 2014 at \$43,324; whereas, in Clinton County, it dipped in 2014 (Figure 21). In 2018, median household income sits at \$41,410 in Blanchester, which is an increase since 2016.

When comparing education with median earnings for 2018, Blanchester workers made more than Clinton County and Ohio workers in all categories of educational attainment, except for the “some college or Associates degree” category (Figure 22). Clinton County leads in this category at \$35,990. Most notably, Blanchester workers who have a Bachelor’s degree or are a high school graduate/equivalent are making \$59,444 and \$40,532, respectively. These workers in Blanchester are earning more compared to workers with the same education level in Clinton County and Ohio, who are earning \$47,281; \$52,656 and \$33,005; \$30,708, respectively.

Figure 21 Median Household Income

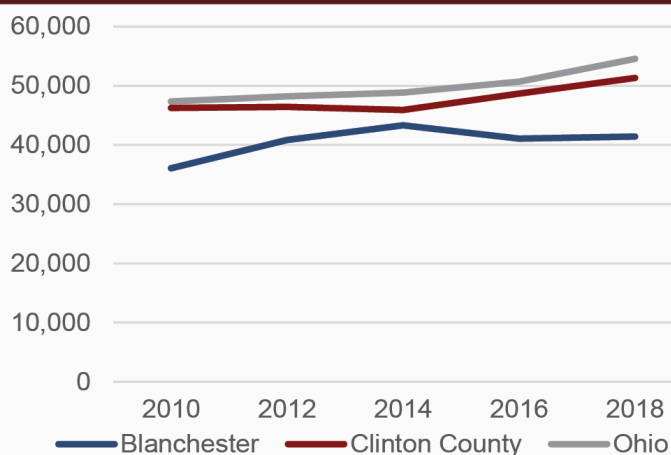
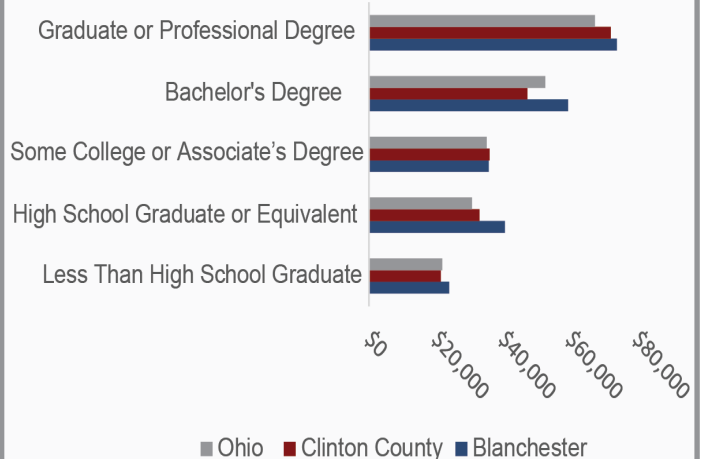


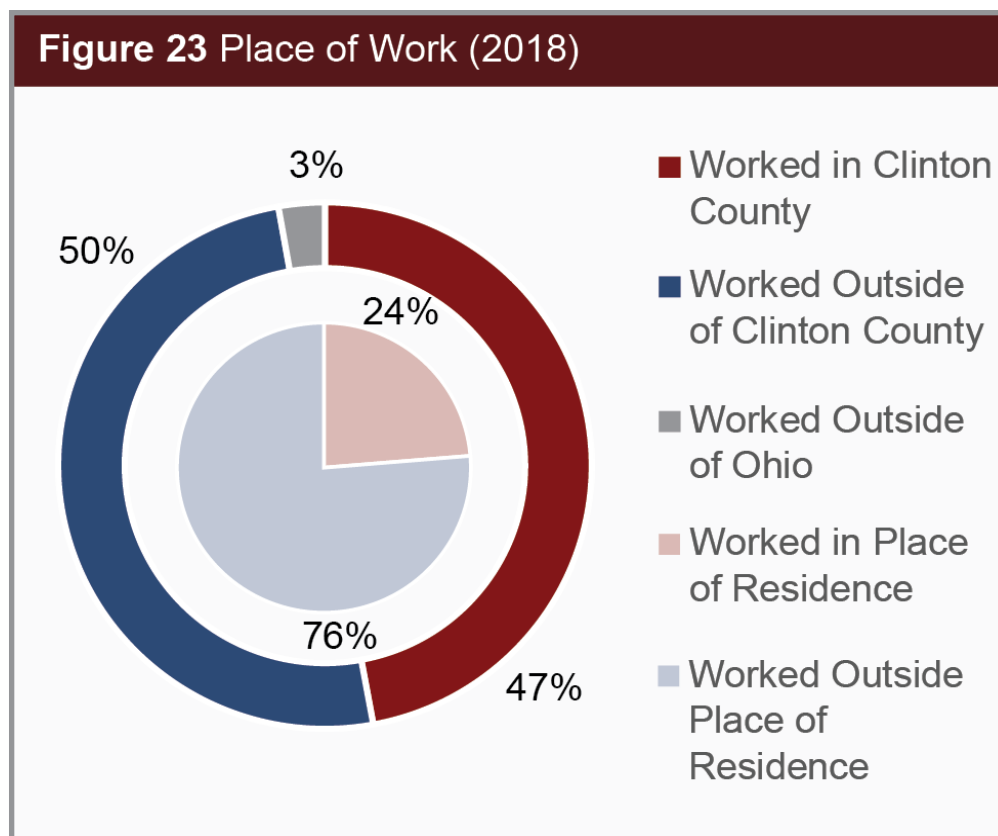
Figure 22 Median Earnings by Educational Attainment (2018)



Assessment

Workplace

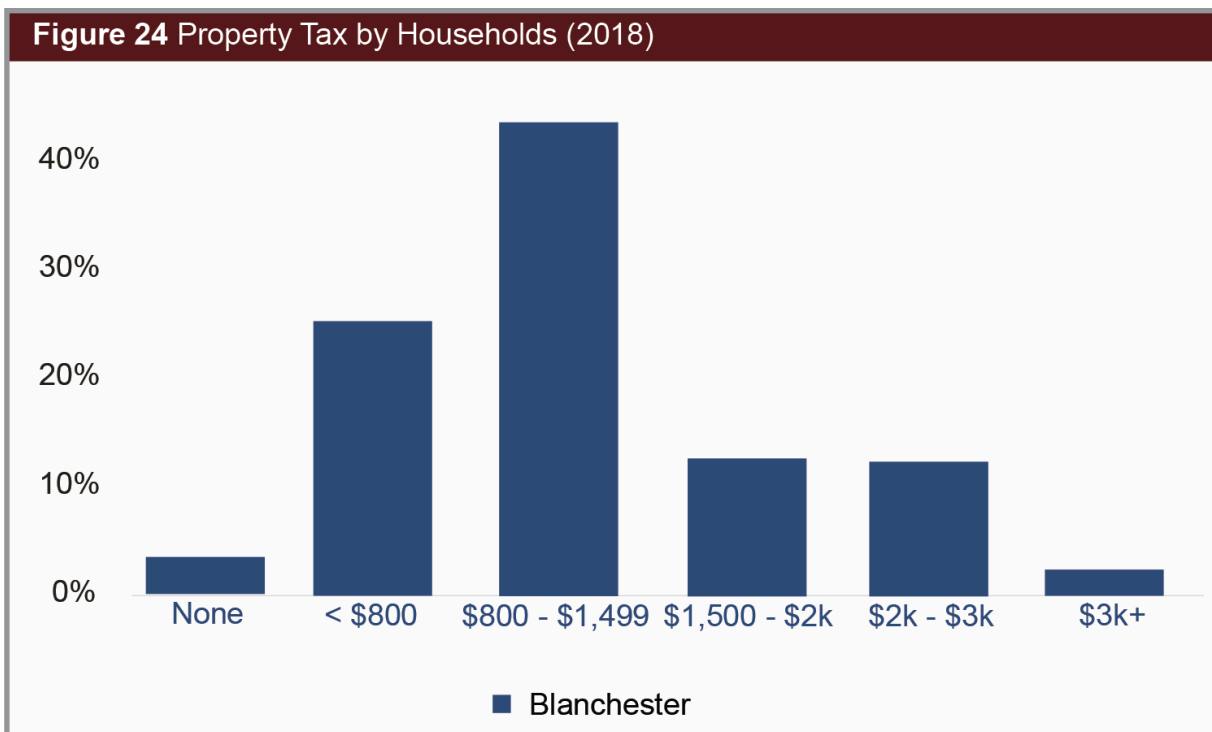
The workforce living in Blanchester primarily works outside of Clinton County, about 50% compared to 47% working in Clinton County and 3% working outside of Ohio (Figure 23). Comparatively, there is a large portion of workers who work in Blanchester but live elsewhere and a large portion of workers who live in Blanchester but work elsewhere. The portion of workers who live and work in Blanchester is very small compared to the inflow and outflow of workers in Blanchester. About 76% of workers who live in Blanchester work outside of Blanchester, and about 24% of workers live and work in Blanchester (Figure 23). The large portion of workers who work outside of Blanchester have an average commute time of 31 minutes. Significant effort should be made to ensure that residents have attractive employment opportunities here in Blanchester and that money remains local.



Assessment

Village Revenue

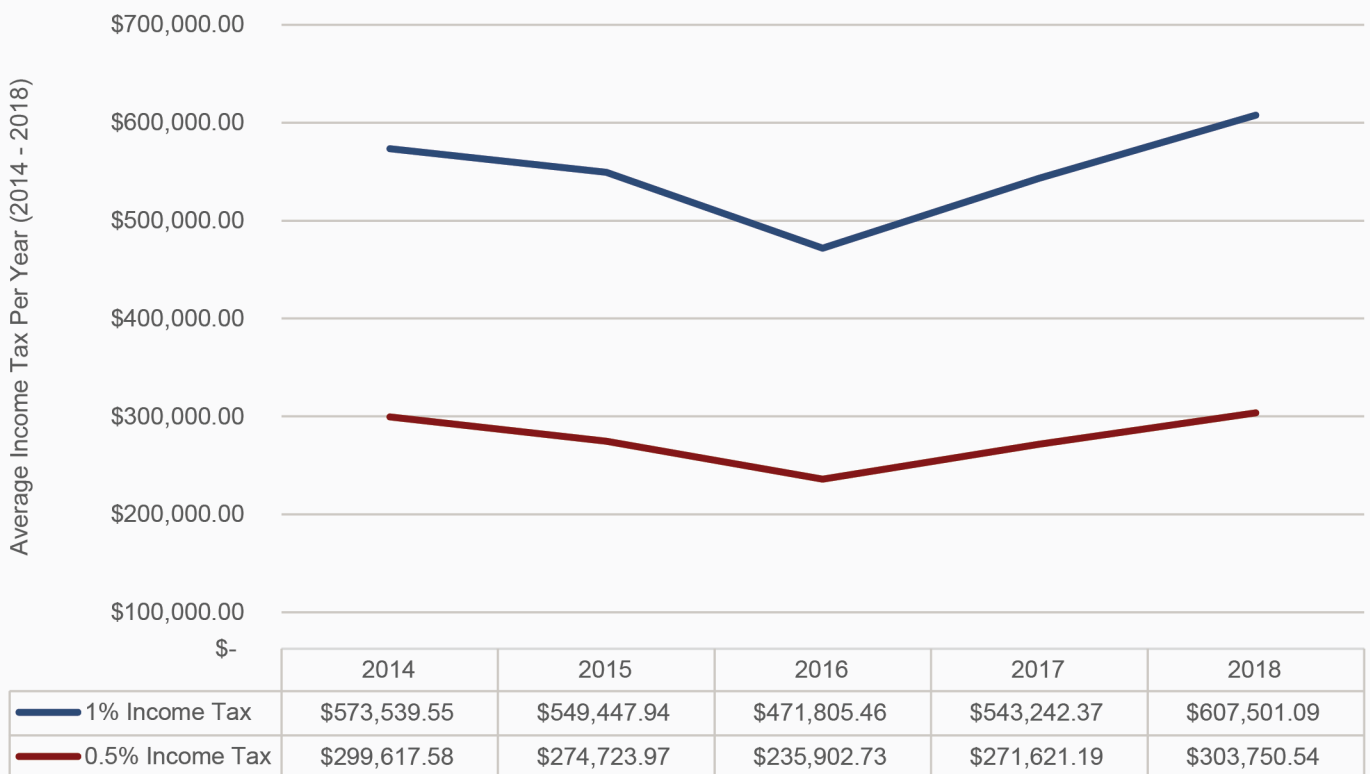
One source of existing Village revenue includes property taxes. In 2018, the largest share of households (about 44%) paid between \$800 - \$1,499 in property taxes. The second largest share, about 25%, paid less than \$800 in property taxes (Figure 24). The current stream of revenue in Blanchester does not support the amount of reliable revenue Blanchester requires to fund programming for investment.



Assessment

While property tax makes up a large portion of revenue for many communities, most communities rely on income tax from people working in their communities to support investments. Figure 25 shows a comparison of a 1% and 0.5% projected income tax for Blanchester in the years 2014 to 2018. With the revenue from a 1% or 0.5% income tax, investments could be made for sidewalk improvements, parks and recreation opportunities, utility expansion for growth, or revitalization efforts for the Downtown. Many of the amenities, services, events, improvements, and investments presented in the community survey will need additional funding to be fulfilled.

Figure 25 Comparison of a 1% and 0.5% Projected Income Tax in Blanchester (2014-2018)





Assessment

SWOON

Strengths

Blanchester's Downtown serves as a key existing asset for future development opportunities. The Village has low unemployment compared to the county and state. Blanchester has a strong workforce that has kept up with the county and state.

Weaknesses

While Blanchester experiences low unemployment, poverty still persists. The Village has a demand for amenities such as retail and dining that is not being met. Many residents who live in Blanchester are not working in Blanchester.

Obstacles

The Village does not have much capacity to address the economic development challenges that exist.

Opportunities

Residents have a strong desire to support local business and opportunities for growth within the community. Blanchester is a viable location for those looking to experience small town feel but still be close to larger cities like Dayton or Cincinnati. Bringing in new investment and business into Blanchester can provide more funding for the school through property tax.

Needs

In order for Blanchester to take the next step, the Village requires a reliable stream of revenue to fund programming.

Objectives

E.D.1: Foster a culture of collaboration within the Village of Blanchester

Both the citizens and leadership of Blanchester envision a future where the Village is prosperous and self-sufficient. In order to transform vision into action, the Village will need some help along the way. Currently, the local government does not have the resources or capacity to undertake this critical task alone. Blanchester should seek to strengthen its existing relationships with the Clinton County Port Authority and Clinton County Regional Planning Commission. These partner organizations can serve as an extension of Blanchester staff and help provide better access to state and federal resources that can be used toward economic development initiatives. The key to establishing this culture is to make sure that a representative from the Village regularly attends all standing meetings hosted by the County agencies. This ensures regular contact, but also demonstrates the Village's level of commitment to the partners. Pursuing this objective first makes accomplishing the rest of the economic development strategies much more feasible.

- Establish alignment around common goals for the Village and the County.
- Be regularly engaged in all county meetings and events.
- Develop specific requests on how the county agencies can better support Blanchester's economic development efforts.



Objectives

E.D.2: Leverage existing assets

Residents of Blanchester view the Downtown as one of the Village's most important assets and a key foundation for local economic success. This is unsurprising since many citizens have fond memories of when the Downtown served as the main hub of activity for the Village. Local officials should pursue strategies that will direct investment into the Downtown once more. A walkable, vibrant Downtown Blanchester will serve as an attractive amenity for its residents and visitors alike. The Village can refer to a number of case studies that detail how similar communities from across the country were successful in revitalizing their Downtowns.

- Take inventory of the buildings within the Downtown. Note which ones are contributing from a historical standpoint. Also record buildings that are vacant or underutilized.
- Investigate a potential Main Street program or Historic District for the Downtown to protect local assets and qualify for additional sources of revenue.
- Direct redevelopment efforts and future investment into the Downtown through infill rather than sprawling outward.

Economic Development Toolbox Spotlight

Revolving Loan Funds

Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) are a common access to capital tool to help grow small businesses. A key characteristic is that these sources of funds are self replenishing. RLFs provide local businesses a flexible source of capital with favorable interest rates. A business's payment of the loan then goes back into the original pool of funds and can be used to make future loans. RLF loans can vary in amount and are typically used for operating capital, land acquisition, and storefront renovation.

Application to Blanchester

The Clinton County Port Authority was the lead agent for a revolving loan fund program worth \$1.3 million dollars. Revolving loan funds can be another tool that can be used to help support small business development in Blanchester.

Objectives

E.D.3: Support local businesses

One of the primary takeaways from the public engagement phase is that the residents of Blanchester have a strong desire to patronize local businesses and support their neighbors. In the right situation, Blanchester can help address their lack of retail and dining options from within by directing their attention to local entrepreneurs that are looking to start their own restaurant or store. Focusing on small, local business is a much more resilient option than prioritizing big-box retail. Many of the survey respondents indicated a preference for places unique to Blanchester rather than chain fast food or big box stores that can be found anywhere. The Village should look to find ways to serve as the intermediary between those looking to start their own businesses and local entities that can provide access to capital.

- Provide redevelopment incentives and a simplified regulation process to local businesses that choose to invest in Blanchester.
- Establish a storefront renovation program for businesses located in the Downtown.
- Investigate ways the Village can better support their local entrepreneurs with incubation or site selection.

Economic Development Toolbox Spotlight

Storefront Renovation Program

Storefront renovation programs are an important business development tool that aims to create vibrant and economically viable destinations. These types of programs assist local businesses by providing funding to design or repair commercial signage or building facades. Cities of all sizes operate storefront renovation programs to enhance their neighborhood retail nodes. They can be a particular useful when coupled with existing historical preservation efforts. Successful applicants receive a combination of grant funds and low or zero interest loans depending on the program.

Application to Blanchester

Blanchester's renewed emphasis on historical preservation would stand to benefit from a structured storefront renovation program. The Village can turn to other rural communities to better understand the intricacies of operating one. While it is focused more on residential than commercial uses, the Knox County Landmarks Foundation's Reinvesting in Historic Homes Update Program (ReHHUP) provides a good example of how similar communities can structure a property renovation program. ReHHUP consists of a one third grant, one third loan, and one third owner contribution for properties located in targeted historic areas of Mount Vernon, OH.

E.D.4: Attract Targeted Industries

The Village should continue to build on its economic strengths in industries such as manufacturing and educational / healthcare services while also looking for new opportunities. Amazon's growing influence at the Wilmington Airpark should also put logistics on Blanchester's radar. Any business retention and expansion strategy should be fully integrated with the Village's workforce development efforts. The Village should look to coordinate with the local school district and vocational program to a pipeline into these types of careers. This helps prove to prospective businesses that the necessary talent pool already exists here in Blanchester.

- Prioritize industries that demonstrate growth and provide steady income.
- Interview students to ascertain the type of industries that would keep them in Blanchester after graduation.
- Continue to prioritize the success of Blanchester Local Schools.
- Encourage regular interaction between major employers, nonprofit leaders, and the local school district to strengthen job readiness and facilitate potential internship opportunities.

Objectives

E.D.5: Implement 1% Income Tax

In order for Blanchester to move forward with any initiative related to economic development, leadership needs requisite funding to turn ideas into action. Ohio law allows for local municipalities to levy an income tax up to 1% without having it become a ballot issue. Messaging and transparency will be key in achieving buy in from constituents. A tax increase can serve as a critical first step in enacting real investment within the Village.

- Gauge the viability of an income tax increase with Blanchester residents.
- Launch education and marketing campaign to convince residents that it is a worthwhile endeavor.
- Conduct further public outreach to determine priority areas of investment.
- Ensure accountability and transparency through a tool like an online dashboard so citizens can easily see how their tax dollars are being used.

Economic Development Toolbox Spotlight

Community Reinvestment Acts

Ohio's Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program is a common real estate property tax abatement program used to spur redevelopment in places that have typically not seen high levels of investment. Areas identified for CRA by local municipalities are then reviewed by the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) for final approval. CRA is an economic development tool known for its overall flexibility since it can be applied to both residential or commercial properties.

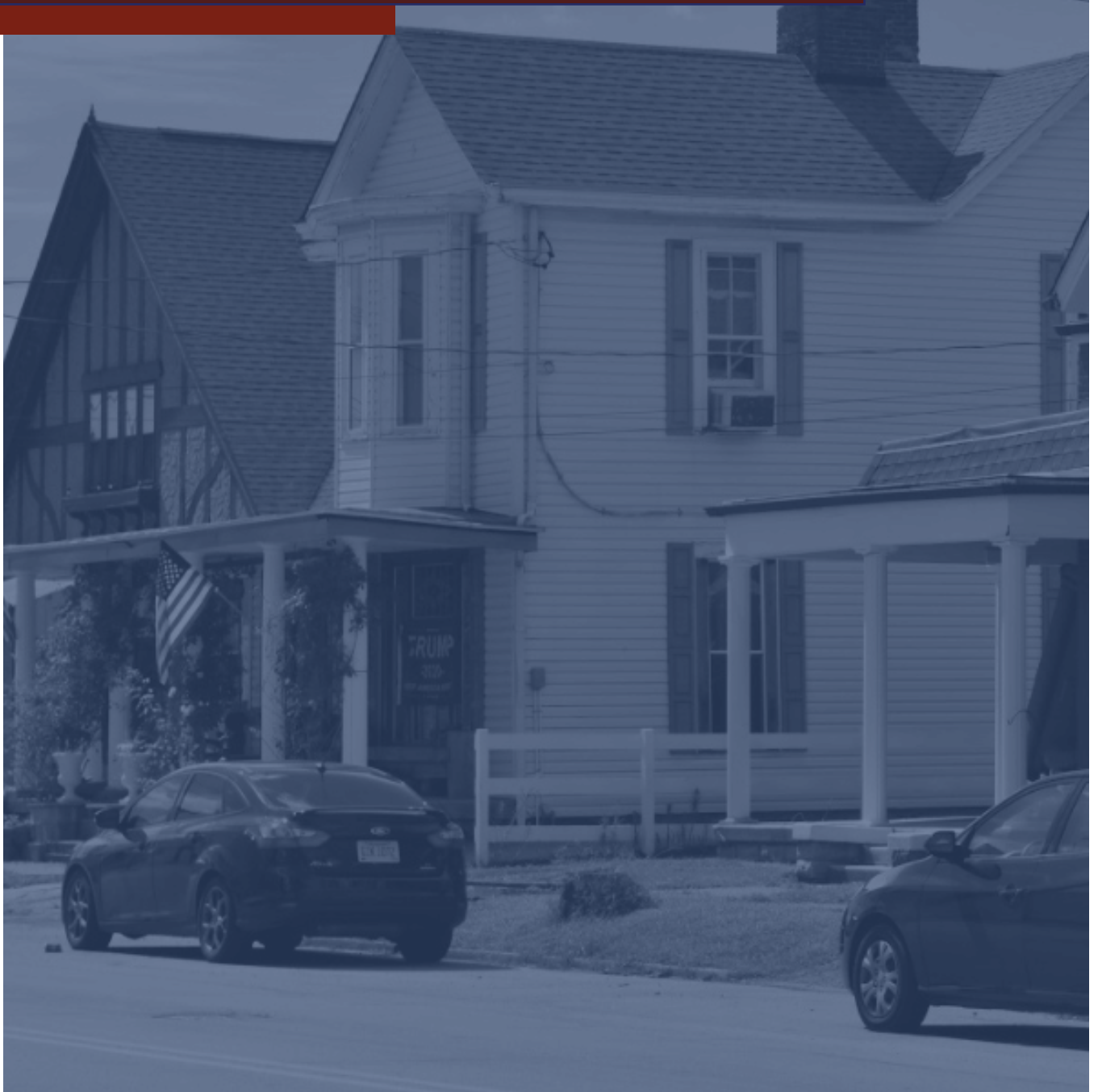
Application to Blanchester

Establishing a CRA program for Blanchester is not as complicated as other economic development tools such as tax increment financing or Opportunity Zones. CRA has been implemented since the late 1960s and is one of the most common incentives offered by ODSA. Blanchester can consult with the Port Authority or other benchmark communities to help initiate their own CRA program. Blanchester's Downtown is a prime location to designate as a CRA.

Objectives



Infrastructure



GOAL:

The mission/goal of the Board of Trustee of Public Affairs (BPA) and the Village is to enhance life by strengthening access to utilities and public services to meet existing demand and accommodate future residential, commercial, and industrial development, in a financially responsible manner.

Assessment

Introduction

The Village/BPA currently provides its own drinking water, sanitary , and electric utility services. Drinking water is provided by the newly built water treatment plant located on the Village's east side. In recent years, the water distribution system has gone through major upgrades, and the Village continues to work on updating aging water lines. Similarly, the sewer system has gone through several improvements and expansions to its treatment plant and collection systems that involve ongoing upgrades to underground sewer lines to accommodate current needs and future growth. Blanchester is also working to modernize its electric infrastructure with higher primary voltage to support the community's current needs and the future growth. Blanchester provides a variety of community services while seeking to obtain city status shortly. In addition, the Village/BPA officials recognizes the importance of having an adequate and healthy infrastructure to provide utility and other services to the added growth of annexed land and the community growing within itself, and to attract new businesses. The mission of the Village/BPA officials is to continually plan and commit to implementing projects, program, and processes that promote sustainability and meet the needs and challenges of the future in a manner that is financially responsible and cost effective to our rate payers and citizens.

Existing and Future Conditions

Community Services

Blanchester provides comprehensive public services that offer a wide range of community support. Public entities that are available in the community are Blanchester Public Library, Police Department, Marion Township Fire, United States Post Office, and the Restor Medical Center.





Assessment

Education

Blanchester, like many other Villages in Ohio, has its own local school district. The school district has four schools within the corporate boundary. They are as follows: Blanchester High School, Blanchester Middle School, Blanchester Intermediate School, and Putman Elementary. Blanchester high school opened up in 2002, along with Putman Elementary School. In 2002, two other schools in the school district were shut down, Jefferson Elementary and Main Street Middle. Blanchester High School is the only high school currently in the Blanchester Local Schools. The enrollment total for the 2018-2019 school year was 412 students with a student to teacher ratio of 1:18. While the new schools are only about 18 years old, there have been shortcomings regarding sustainable practices to keep many teachers and jobs through 2020, especially in wake of the pandemic. The school district has taken strides to create a more sustainable future by signing off a green energy project that will save roughly about \$200,000 to \$450,000 in 25 years. The Blanchester School District participates in Open Enrollment; Blanchester's location presents opportunities for a large enrollment into the school district due to its proximity to significant state routes like Route 123 and Route 68.

Electric

Blanchester is one of the 2 000 nationwide public power communities that serves about 50 million people, and locally it is one of the 86 communities in the State of Ohio that owns its own electric utility which means that it is a community owned, locally controlled, and not-for-profit entity of the Village. Blanchester's electric utility is guided and administered by the Trustees of BPA who are locally elected officials and runs like a business without using any tax funding from the Village's tax payers. In-fact, for decades, the Village's locally owned utility has not only provided quality electric service to its ratepayers but also had been supporting the Village's general fund budget about 50% financially and through in-kind services. The Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) is a not-for-profit organization and has 61 member communities including Blanchester. IMPA is the wholesale power provider of Blanchester and works with the community to serve the Village with a low-cost, reliable, and environmentally-responsible power supply. . IMPA average rates per customer seem to hover around 9.8 cents per kWh, while most companies in Ohio approach 12.3 cents per kWh. The BPA serves all residents and businesses within its service territory.

Assessment

Green Energy

IMPA maintains a diverse power supply portfolio that includes solar power and power purchase contracts of solar power and wind energy. The Agency also works with each of its member communities to build solar parks across the Midwest. In addition to the Village's green energy through IMPA, Blanchester approved a project that would help the school district pursue solar on its own.

Company	Utility
Indiana Municipal Power Agency	Electricity
Duke Energy	Natural Gas
Frontier	Telephone
DirecTV	Cable Television
Spectrum	Internet Service
Village of Blanchester	Sewage & Water

Figure 26

As a municipally-owned entity, Blanchester's electric utility is invested in the community and focuses on providing excellent customer service and improving the local quality of life. Blanchester's Board of Public Affairs is proud to be a member of IMPA, which have built over 30 solar facilities in more than 20 communities in the Midwest, resulting in over 100 megawatts of solar energy in its power supply portfolio. Together, IMPA and the BPA ensure that Blanchester is a part of the push for renewable/green energy in the US.

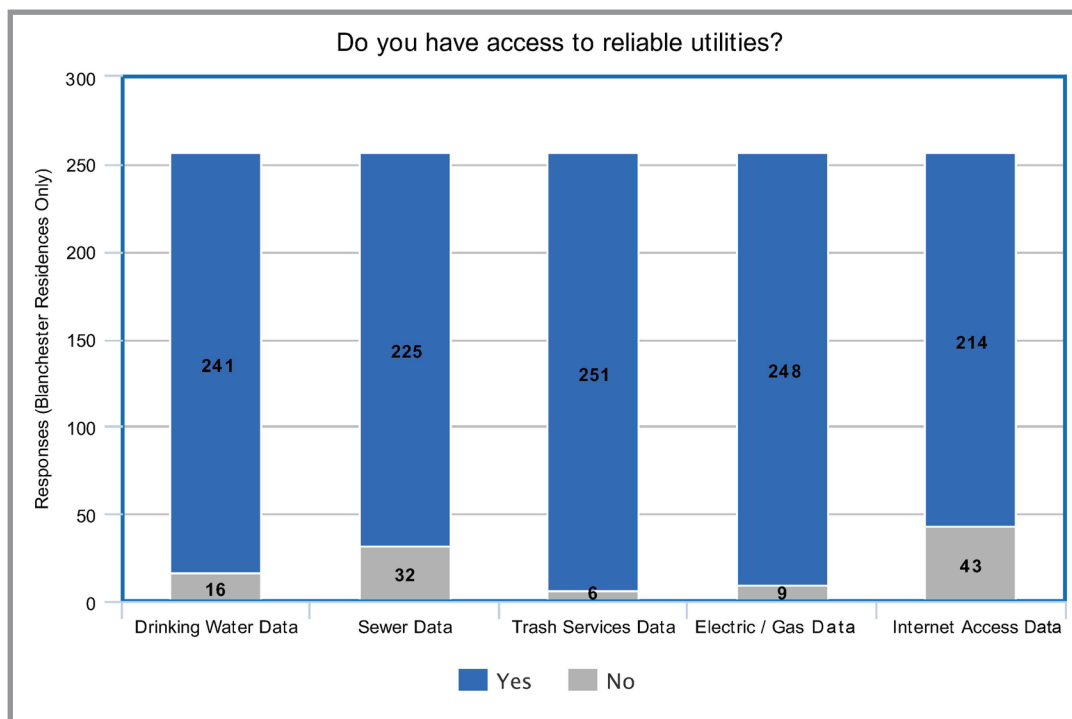


Figure 27

Response information acquired from community survey for this plan.



Assessment

Drinking Water

Blanchester's BPA operates a community public water system that serves approximately 4,500 people with about 1750 service connections.

The water system obtains water from three different intakes such as the Whitaker Run, Stonelick Creek, and West Fork (Westboro) which is located east of the Little Miami River watershed. This surface water is then stored in six up-ground reservoirs and a catch basin, and two reservoirs in between the dams at Westboro with a total storage capacity of 252 million gallons. This stored water is enough to supply purified water for about 19 months at the current level of usage which is about 375,000 gallons on the average per day. Blanchester recently built a state of the Art water treatment plant with a capacity to produce one (1) million gallons of treated/purified water per day. Also, this plant is designed to expand its capacity to produce 2 million gallons per day in a cost-effective way for the future growth when needed. This plant draws the stored water from the reservoirs mentioned above to purify and pump it into the distribution system to serve our residents. Currently, we are using only about 40% of this plant capacity.

The water distribution system has three elevated water tanks and two clear wells with a total storage capacity of 965,000 gallons of treated/purified water which is enough to supply to our residents and other water users for about two and half (2.5) days in case of an emergency at the current rate of usage. Also, we have three (3) interconnections in different locations around the Village with Western Water Company Water System to purchase the water from them in the case of emergency to help our water system. The water distribution system has two (2) pressure zones and about 28 miles of underground pipes ranging from 4 inch to 16 inches diameter comprising of various types of material. High pressure service area was created using a booster pumpstation on St. Rt. 28 and with a new elevated water tank built in 2008 with a capacity to store 250,000 gallons to help commercial and industrial customers on eastside of the Village. Currently, the Village uses only a third of this new tank capacity to meet the current water demand in the area and to reduce water age, and increase the water quality.

Assessment

The system currently has 204 fire hydrants to provide fire protection and also for the system flushing purposes.

We had a system study in 2008 to develop and prioritize a list of recommended improvements to allow the system to stay in compliance with the everchanging EPA regulations/requirements, and to meet the current needs and to accommodate the future growth of the community. As a result, we have completed several projects in recent years with the help of grants and low or no interest loans to make upgrades and improvements to the system, and continued to work on more as the funding available in a financially responsible manner.



Above are the three water intakes for the Village of Blanchester; these three pictures also include EMZs and CMZs. EMZ - Emergency Management Zone. CMZ - Corridor Management Zone

Assessment

Wastewater

The Blanchester's BPA operates the sewer department which collects, treats, and manages wastewater protecting the environment and public health by returning clean water to local creeks and streams. Its service area encompasses about 25+ square miles and serves about 1700 rate payer base consisting of residential, commercial, and industrial customers. The sewer treatment plant has a capacity to treat 1 million gallons of sewage/wastewater per day and currently we are using only about 50% of its capacity. In recent years, we have made major Capital Improvements through several projects to

the collection system and treatment plant to stay in compliance with the EPA everchanging regulations and requirements, and to meet current needs and also to add additional capacity for the future growth and development. These upgrade and improvements were accomplished using various funding resources such as American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA), OPWC, CDBG, OWDA in the form of grants and some loans at low or no interest (zero percent) rates, and continued to work on more as the funding is available and

in a financially responsible manner. The vision of the Village/BPA is to enhance the quality of life for Blanchester residents by providing excellent electric, water, and wastewater services, and other public services to serve the needs our citizens at the best possible value. Also, to provide exceptional customer service to the community, delivered in a manner that is financially responsible, transparent, and cost effective to all of our ratepayers and residents.

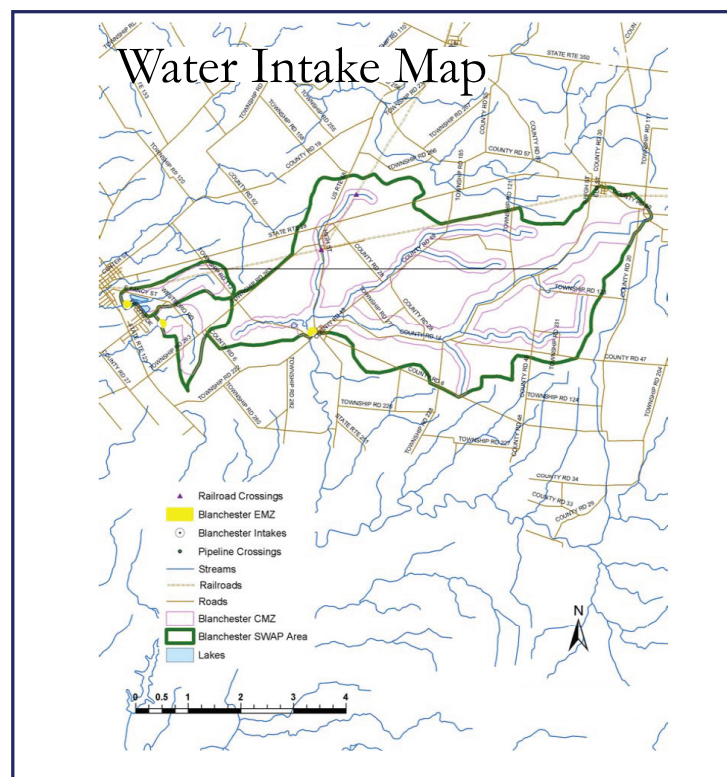


Figure 28

Assessment

Broadband

The Broadband map for Blanchester shows a 10 Mbps internet download speed and an upload speed of 1 megabit per second. This is great for small businesses with few employees; as the Village approaches a higher population. Clinton county, of which Blanchester is located in, identifies that about 91 percent of the county households have access to 10 Mbps download speed and 1 Mbps upload speed. While the broadband map in this plan identifies the majority of Blanchester has access to this type of speed, as Blanchester annexes land in the future, it needs to create a plan to keep the broadband coverage sustainable throughout the community. It is important to note that in the final survey

data, it showed that while the broadband map shows coverage virtually everywhere in the Village it does not translate to those who live in the Village. The pie chart to the right references the broadband access, from the community survey conducted in Blanchester.

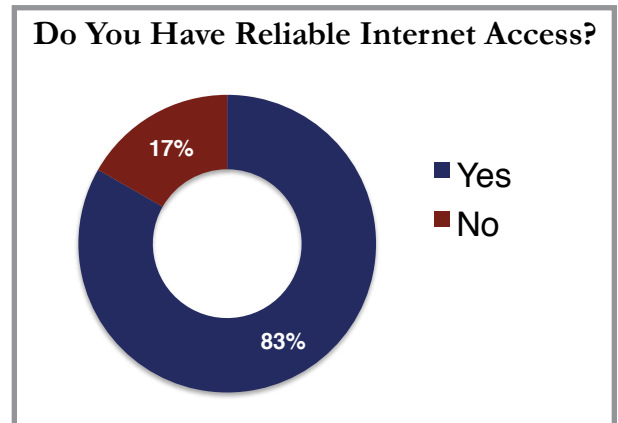


Figure 29

Blanchester Internet Service

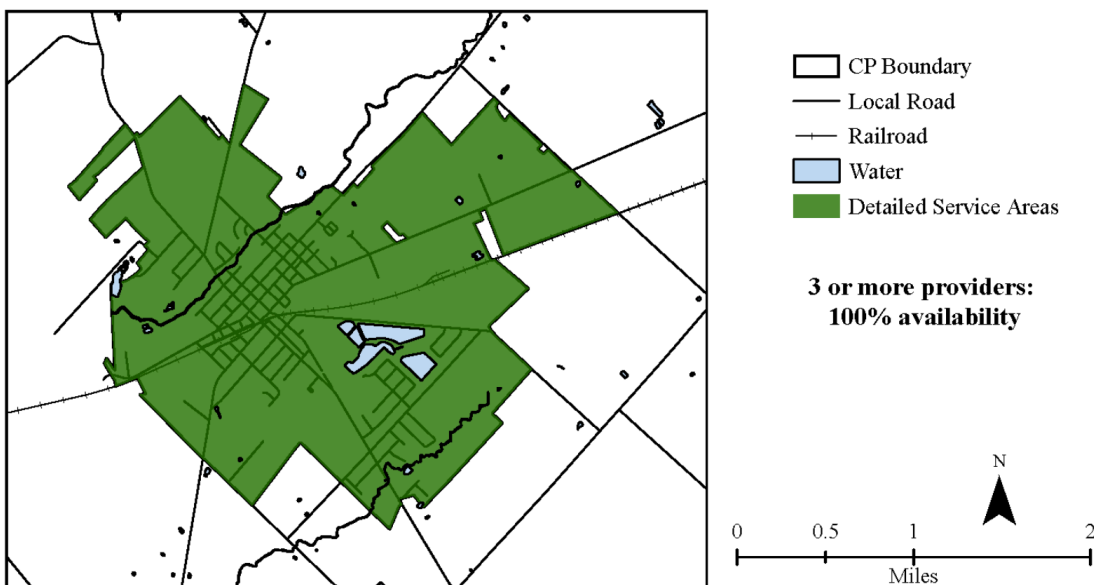


Figure 30

Assessment

Conclusion

Public services are intended to provide support to the community while creating a standard of living for residents. While economic development will be an important priority, it is imperative for Blanchester to provide ready to use utilities to support local businesses. Blanchester has a strong foundation with existing infrastructure and has the capability to serve current and future growth, and will continue to update existing system and add additional capacities with its long-term plans in a cost-effective way as the funds available.



Objectives

SWOON

Strengths

Blanchester's Water treatment plant is new and provides an excellent foundation for drinking water infrastructure.

Weaknesses

Blanchester's electric system is in working condition, but improvements to aged infrastructure will improve reliability in the community. The Blanchester Board of Public Affairs is working with its wholesale power provider on infrastructure improvement projects to do just that.

Though, major upgrades are done to electric, water and sewer infrastructure in recent years, the Village/BPA has to continue to work on rest of the aging utility infrastructure.

Obstacles

With Blanchester's investment in the water treatment plant and distribution system and sewer treatment plant and collection system, the Village will be in a financial hold on infrastructure for next few years and may slow down on pursuing major projects.

Opportunities

There is a unique opportunity for the Village of Blanchester to create more green energy by leveraging its relationship with its energy provider, Indiana Municipal Power Agency. Also, the Village/BPA has opportunities to seek the funding in the form of grants from Federal, State, and local funding agencies to continue working on improvements to water and sewer infrastructure in upcoming years.

Needs

The electric system needs upgrade to higher primary voltage to modernize the system to bring it to the industry standards to better serve the existing needs and future growth in an efficient manner.

The water system needs continued upgrades to rest of the undersized aging underground water mains.

Sanitary lines that are deteriorating throughout the years in parts of the village need improvement to better serve the existing needs and the future development.

I.1: Re-equip existing sanitation infrastructure

- Construct local tax initiatives to revitalize existing infrastructure surrounding the current sanitation system and other infrastructure.

I.2: Continue working on system improvements by identifying and prioritizing Capital Improvement Projects for example:

- Continue to replace old and undersized water mains.
- Continue to replace aged sanitary sewer mains.
- Continue to replace old electric and water meters with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI).
- Continue the process of integrating AMI System with the new VIP Cloud Billing System to better serve the ratepayers in an efficient manner.

I.3: Diversify existing and future infrastructure that will foster unique opportunities for growth

- Continue working with IMPA to improve the local electric system to further sustainable development throughout the Village of Blanchester.

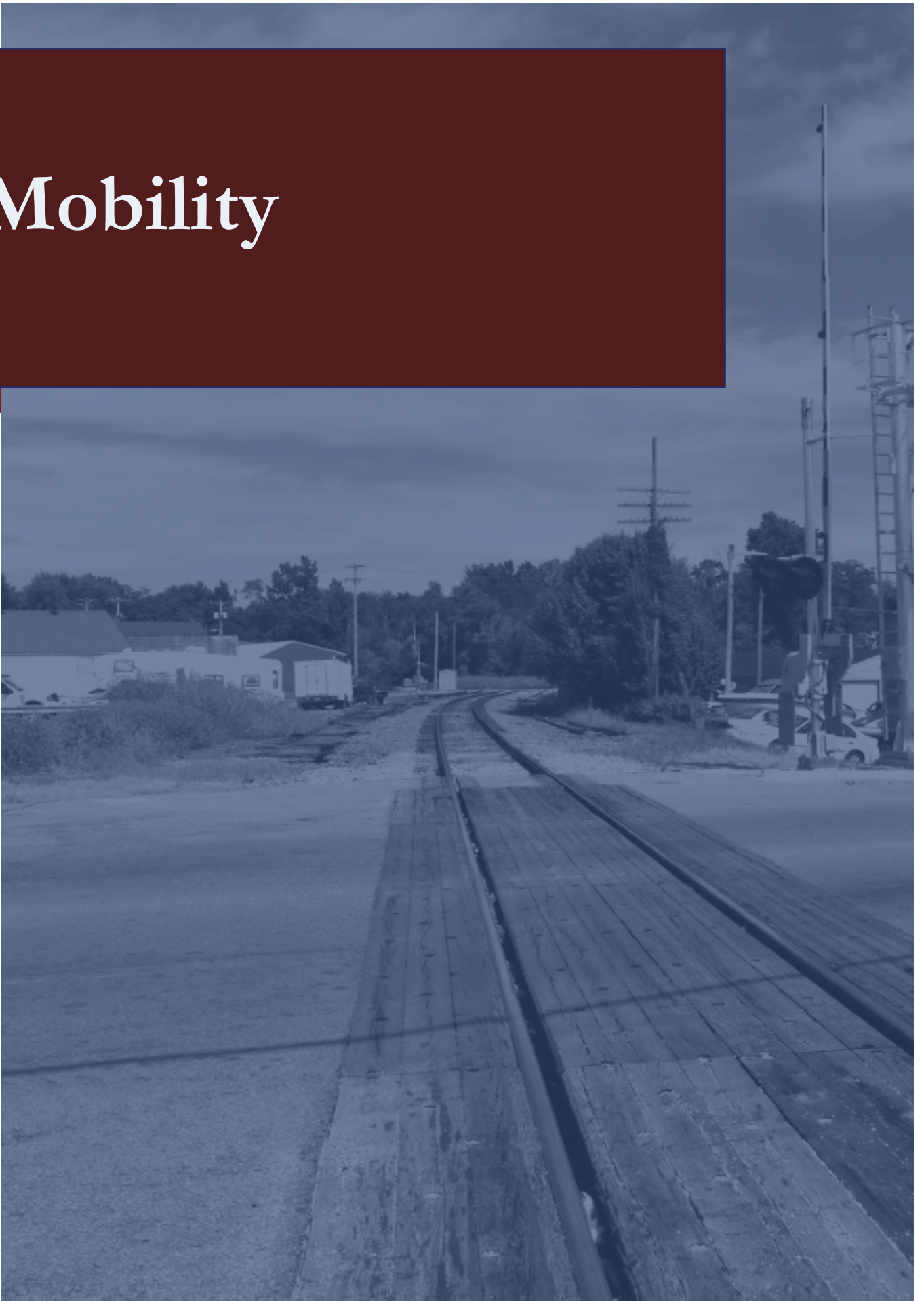
I.4: Strengthen existing community services for residents

- Utilize different types of civic buildings to maximize existing infrastructure to provide more public services

I.5: Expand green power opportunities in the Village

- Partner with IMPA to establish a solar park in the community of Blanchester.

Mobility



GOAL:

Establish a safe and efficient transportation network that connects residents to major destinations in and outside the Village of Blanchester.

Assessment

Introduction

Transportation and the safe, efficient movement of people and goods are critical components for facilitating economic growth in a community. Smaller, rural communities such as Blanchester were founded long before automobile travel became the dominant form of transportation that we see today. Rather, street grids were laid out at a human-scale, and pedestrian traffic was prioritized. However, recent planning trends are shifting back to favor more walkable environments that cater to a wider variety of transportation options. This chapter explores potential projects that may enhance Blanchester's overall connectivity.

Existing Conditions

The Village of Blanchester's location allows for convenient access to the Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus metro areas. The Village is well connected to various state routes and has close proximity to Interstate 71. Residents are primarily dependent on private automobile transportation. This is also reflected in its more recent development patterns that place greater emphasis on parking lots.

Commute Patterns

Blanchester's commute patterns are largely reflective of both Clinton County and Ohio. Private automobile travel is the preferred transportation mode for all three geographies. Blanchester currently has no public transportation options but has the highest percentage of people walking to work. The Village has the lowest rate of those who work from home. Blanchester features the highest mean travel time to work at 31.2 minutes, which is five minutes longer than the mean for Clinton County.

Figure 31 Commuting Patterns (2018 ACS 5-year Estimates)

	Blanchester	Clinton County	Ohio
Workers 16 years and over	1,725	18,874	5,442,764
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	82.5%	83.5%	83.2%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	8.7%	8.0%	7.8%
Public transportation	0.0%	0.4%	1.6%
Walked	4.2%	3.1%	2.2%
Other means	1.7%	1.7%	1.2%
Worked at home	2.9%	3.4%	4.0%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	31.2	26	23.5

Assessment

Sidewalks

The existing sidewalk network provides the foundation for a vibrant, walkable community. As noted in the 2019 Sidewalk Prioritization Plan, Blanchester has several gaps in its sidewalk network. It was observed that the existing conditions in 2019 had 8.7 miles of sidewalk and 12.4 miles without a sidewalk. A primary conclusion was that 58.8% of Blanchester lacked proper sidewalk access. While much of Downtown Blanchester has existing sidewalks, coverage starts to drop off in the farther out neighborhoods. Other notable areas that lack sidewalks included the route to Veterans Park and the southwest area near McDonald's and United Dairy Farmers. The Sidewalk Prioritization Plan recommends the municipality identify the following factors: pedestrian attractors, mobility, and social aspects. Much of the existing sidewalk network is in disrepair and/or does not meet ADA Accessibility Guidelines.

Blanchester, OH Existing Conditions 2019
Within Observation Area

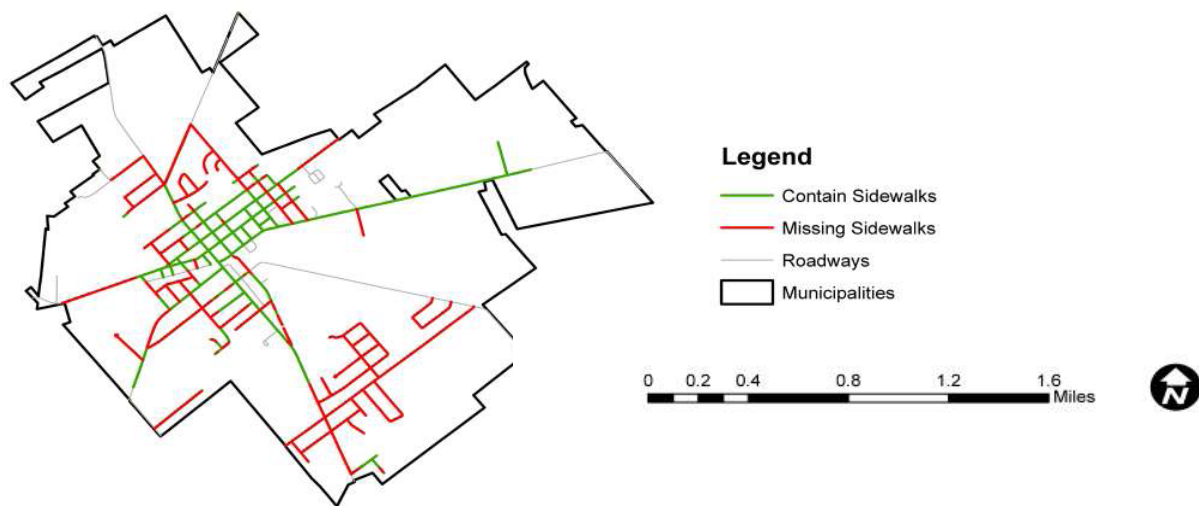


Figure 32 The 2019 Wilmington-Blanchester Sidewalk Prioritization Plan provides detailed insights and recommendations for Blanchester's network.

Assessment

Walkshed Map

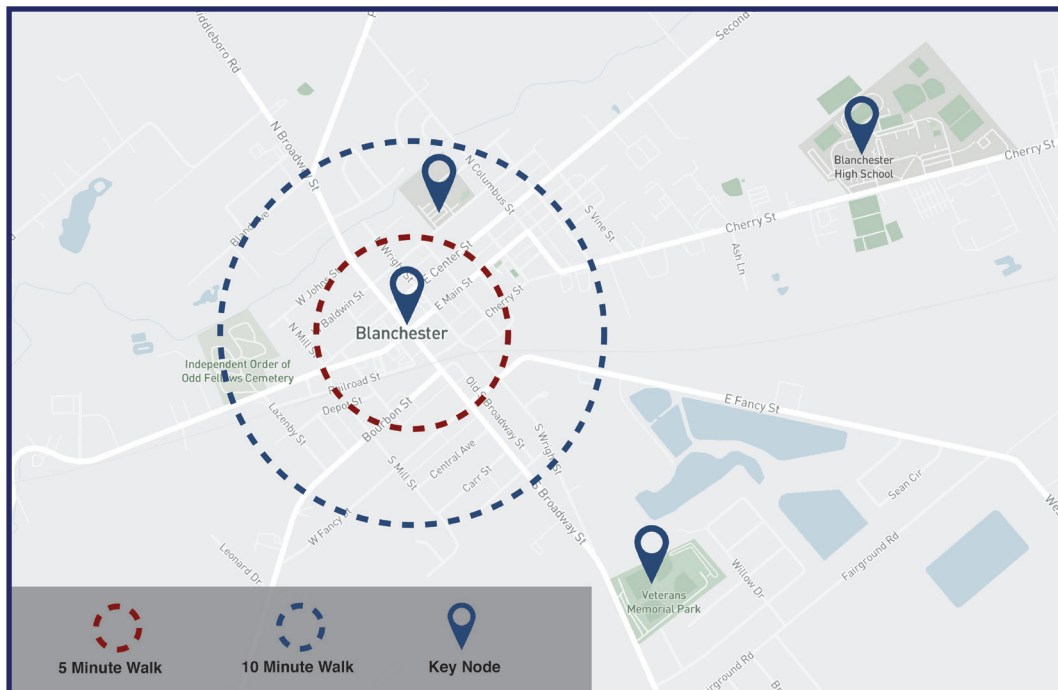


Figure 33

Blanchester's existing street grid within the Downtown area serves as a reminder of when the central business district served as the community's main pulse of activity for the community. Because of this more compact development pattern, individuals can make their way through most of the Downtown within a five-minute walking radius. This is a significant asset that may not be present in newer communities developed to be more auto-dependent. However, the conditions in particular portions of Blanchester's sidewalk network are in poor shape or missing altogether. This can present challenges to the aging population, individuals with disabilities, and families with strollers.

Assessment

Street Classification

As a municipality, it is essential to plan for roads to be classified to establish a hierarchy for designation and evaluation of the local road network. ODOT traffic count data from 2019 identifies two road classifications for Blanchester: collectors and local roads, with the expectation of Main Street and State Route 123 being defined as a Secondary Arterial road in the near future.

Secondary Arterial carry a flow of traffic between rural communities and more dense communities while also having a flow between the dense Downtown of a rural community and its outskirts. North & South Broadway also seem to fill this role as it carries a flow of traffic from Downtown Blanchester. Collector roads are intended as the first link between local roads for land access and higher functioning traffic moving roads of the thoroughfare network. Some notable routes that fit into this category are Cherry Street, Middleboro Road, East Fancy Street. Local roads that are not considered to have the amount of traffic movement that the other two categories have, but they do provide access for land use along with them. These roads, unlike the other two, often do not warrant upgrading and connecting to other thoroughfares. Some notable routes that fit into this category are Baldwin Street and South Wright Street.

These classifications can give a starting point to the discussion to identify which roads are primary and secondary for funding and creating new infrastructure.

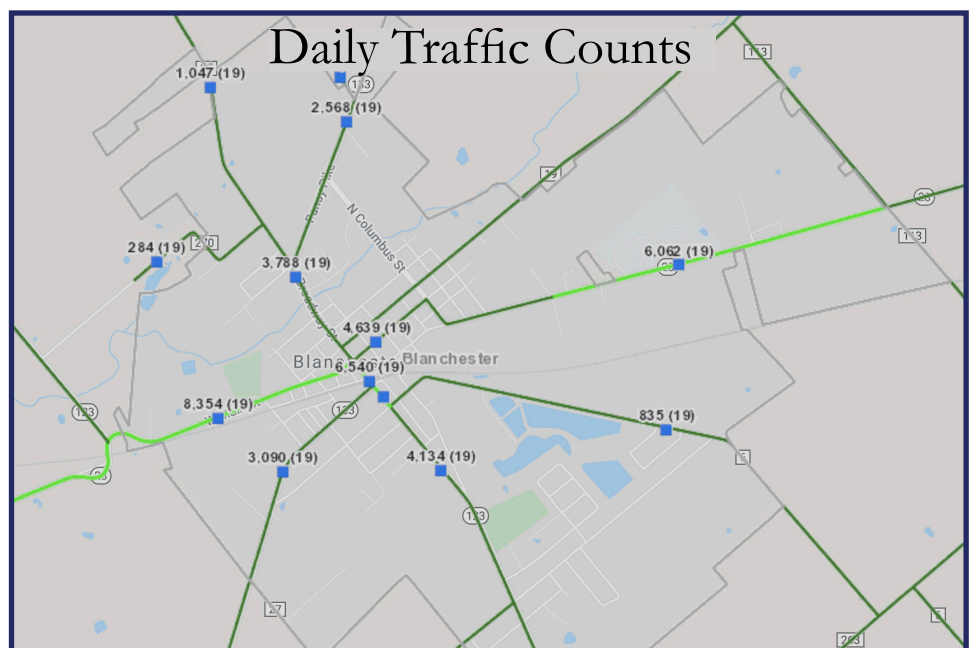


Figure 34 ODOT's Traffic Monitoring Management System (TMMS) tracks the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) to help inform street hierarchy.

Assessment

Road Safety

Blanchester's proximity to major highways and its use as a throughway presents several impacts on safety. With roughly 7,540 in annual average daily traffic counts coming through the Downtown, it is essential to understand crash data surrounding the main intersection in Downtown Blanchester where Main Street meets State Routes 123 and 133. The data from 2019 shows clear evidence that this intersection needs to be reworked to lessen congestion and ultimately create a safer Downtown street corridor. Another notable spot from the map is the North Columbus Street and Main Street intersection. This intersection seems to have several accidents as vehicles turn. The final and last intersection with a high crash rate would be the intersection of Central Avenue and South Broadway Street (State Route 123).

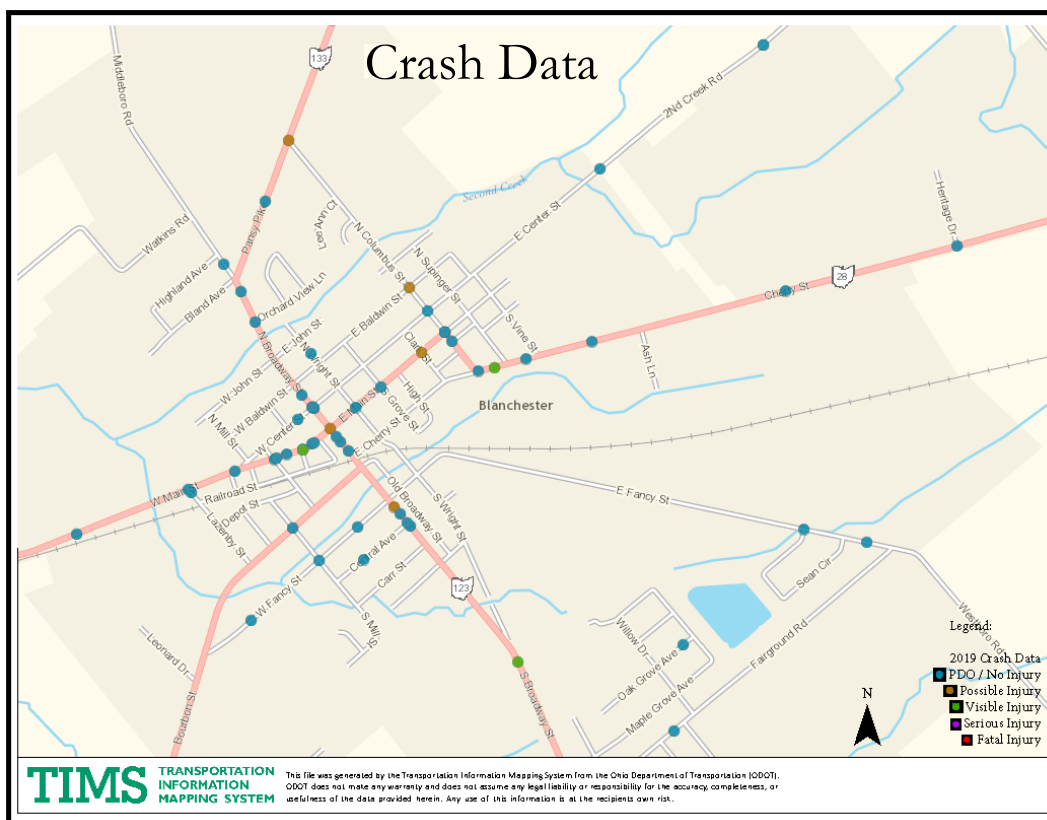


Figure 35

2019 Crash Data provided by TIMS



Assessment

SWOON

Strengths

Blanchester has convenient access to main transportation corridors.

Weaknesses

The Downtown intersections are prone to vehicular accidents, and the sidewalks are in various states of disrepair.

Obstacles

The Village is limited in its resources to pursue significant transportation improvements.

Opportunities

Blanchester is not too far from the existing Ohio to Erie trailhead location at Morrow.

Needs

Blanchester needs to accommodate more alternate forms of transportation outside of private vehicle travel.

Objectives

M.1: Incorporate Complete Street planning principles in Blanchester's Downtown

A vision for a more vibrant Downtown relies heavily on creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. The complete Street design focuses on creating a safer streetscape that supports mobility for all users and modes. Pursuing these types of streetscape treatments also can have a profound impact on economic development. Walkable, tree-lined streets with comfortable sidewalks and slow-moving traffic are a winning combination for any Downtown environment.

- Identify traffic calming treatments such as curb extensions that may be compatible with Downtown Blanchester's existing street network.
- Pursue temporary, tactical urbanism techniques to test new streetscape treatments.
- Conduct a targeted traffic study to inform traffic signalization that ensures steady vehicle flow without compromising pedestrian safety.

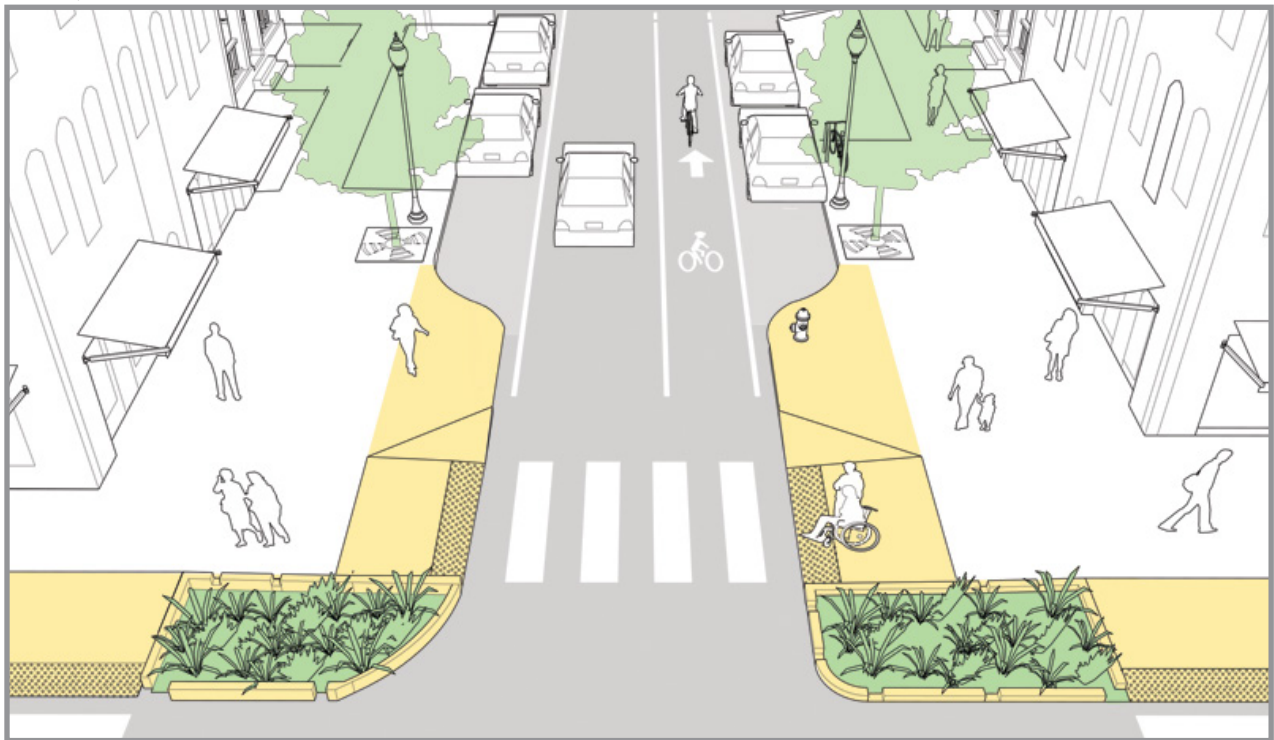


Image source: NACTO https://nacto.org/wp-content/themes/sink_nacto/views/design-guides/retrofit/urban-street-design-guide/images/gateway/gateway.png

Curb extensions are a popular infrastructure enhancement since it shortens the distance pedestrians have to make when crossing the street.

Objectives

Mobility Toolbox Spotlight

Traffic Calming

Curb bump-outs or extensions calm vehicular traffic by physically narrowing a street. This also improves walkability by creating shorter distances for pedestrians crossing the street. Constructing bump-outs can provide additional space for street furniture, plantings, and street trees. These extensions are especially compatible where there is existing street parking. It is important to note that bump-outs can be accomplished through street paint and do not have to be resource-intensive. Adding bump-outs on Main St. and Broadway can help provide a safer, more aesthetic environment for all modes of transportation.



Rendering of Downtown Blanchester's main intersection of Main Street and Broadway Street with enhanced curb extensions

Objectives



Image source: City of Lakewood, OH <http://www.onelakewood.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/sloane.jpg>

Successful curb extensions can be as simple as a new coat of paint.



Image source: Canton Repository <https://www.cantonrep.com/news/20191107/massillon-streetscape-end-in-sight>

Objectives

M.2: Enhance neighborhood connectivity

The Village's existing neighborhood street network is an asset that should be built upon. Blanchester transitions nicely from the Downtown into the surrounding neighborhoods from a density aspect. However, not all neighborhoods have adequate sidewalks that allow residents to access the necessary amenities. Other areas do not have sidewalk access at all. The Village should look to implement the recommendations set out in the 2019 Sidewalk Prioritization Plan. Additionally, any new residential developments should require the developer to install sidewalks or multi-use paths.

- Ensure that residential neighborhoods are connected to critical nodes of activity and amenities.
- Address the missing gaps within the sidewalk network.
- Identify quiet, low-traffic residential streets that could lend themselves to a potential neighborhood greenway for cyclists and pedestrians.

Mobility Toolbox Spotlight

NOACA Street Supplies Program

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency's (NOACA) Street Supplies Program allows local communities to test out new streetscape designs in a flexible, inexpensive way. Materials available for rent include paint, tape, cones, signs, bike racks, colorful street furniture, and planters. These temporary projects allow for local jurisdictions to collect valuable community input and evaluate the proposed design.

NOACA's Street Supplies Program is popular with municipalities looking to test out safer traffic patterns



Image source: NOACA <https://www.noaca.org/Home/ShowPublishedImage/6036/636902687736330000>

Objectives

M.3: Pursue projects that will provide greater regional connectivity

Blanchester should continue to explore ways to enhance regional connectivity for their residents. One way to accomplish this is through the implementation of a robust trail system. While this helps to increase transportation options in the Village, bike trail systems have numerous other benefits related to public health and economic development. Other smaller communities such as the Village of Yellow Springs, view their trail connections as a critical tool for tourism. The recommended option for Blanchester is to pursue a route that connects to the Ohio to Erie Trail. This regional trail has a nearby trailhead located in Morrow, which is only 10 miles away. By connecting to this existing trail that runs from Cincinnati all the way to Cleveland, Blanchester would provide an extremely valuable amenity to its residents.

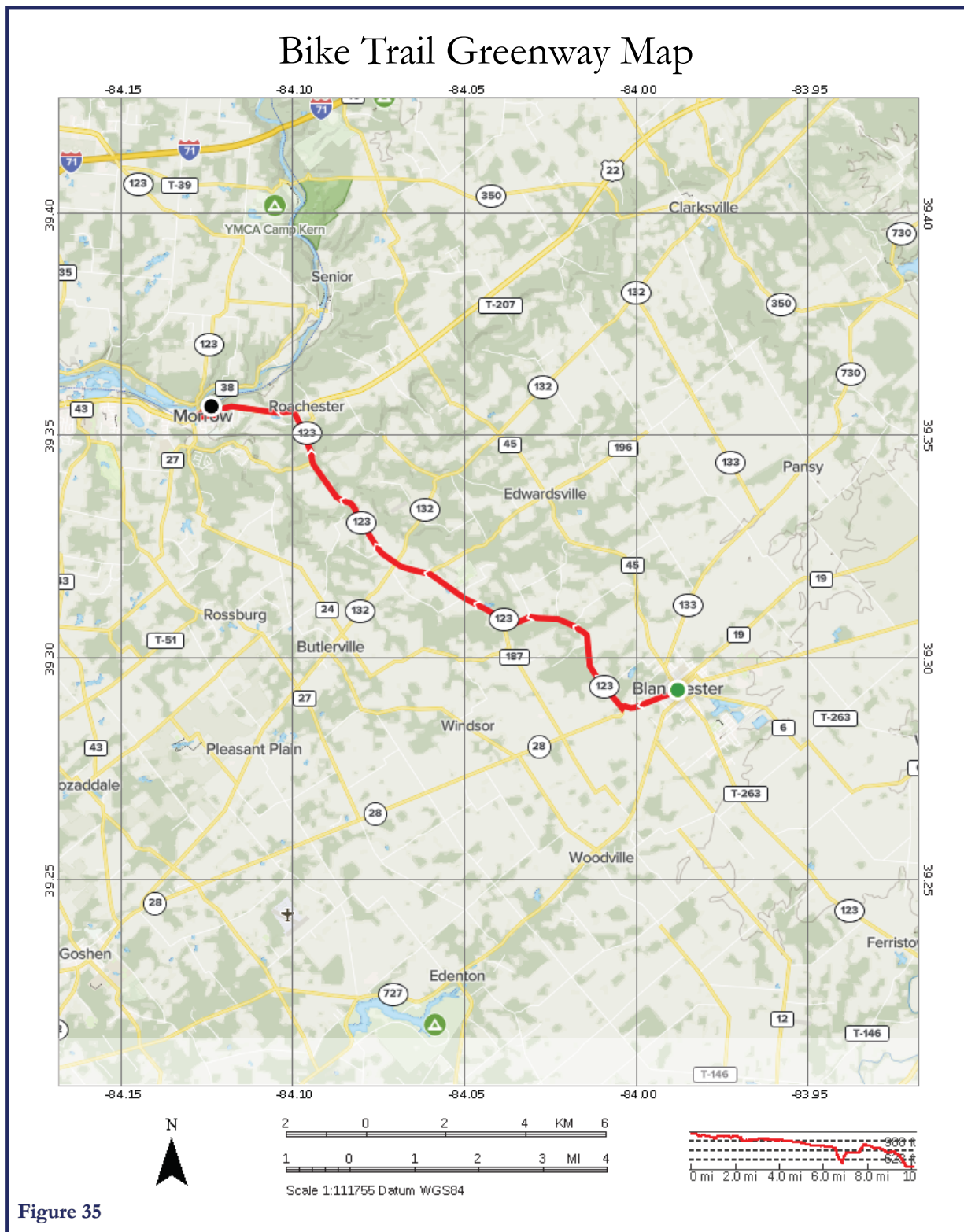
- Identify potential trail routes such as State Route 123.
- Conduct targeted analysis on routes and engage local stakeholders.
- Secure funding from different resources such as ODOT.
- Coordinate with local jurisdictions to pursue trail construction.

Mobility Toolbox Spotlight

Neighborhood Greenways

Neighborhood Greenways are designated streets that prioritize the movement of pedestrians and cyclists. These types of streets are selected based on their low volume of vehicular traffic and slow speed limits and can be enhanced by other forms of infrastructure. Greenways result in safer environments and greater connectivity for residents. While Neighborhood Greenways are commonly associated with cities in the Pacific Northwest like Seattle or Portland, they have gained traction in communities all across the country. A more local example of greenway implementation can be found in Columbus's Clintonville neighborhood. The Clintonville Neighborhood Greenway seeks to encourage greater connectivity to nearby amenities and local schools.

Objectives



Potential bike trail connection that would link Blanchester to the Ohio to Erie Trail trailhead in Morrow.

Conclusion

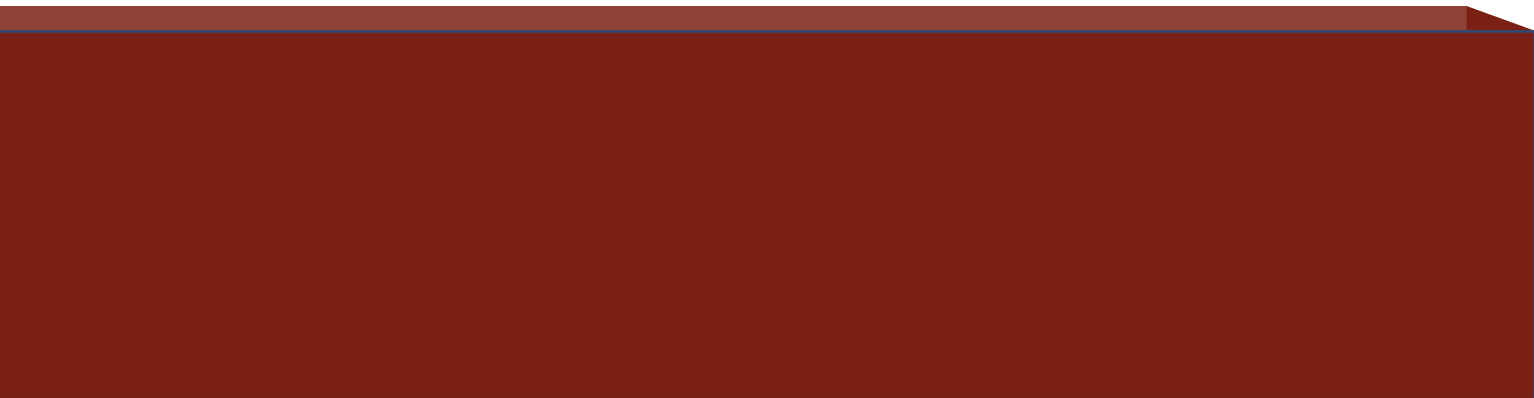


PLAN BLAN is intended as a snapshot of existing conditions as well as a compass to support future growth. Stakeholders and residents alike came together to offer insight into current day successes, weaknesses, and vision for the future. Over 300 people responded to the Blanchester Survey, demonstrating unusually high engagement for a community of this size. While Blanchester may be a small community, the sense of community fostered by residents and the collective will of those striving toward positive changes are strong. As one survey responder put it, "It's a small town with a big heart." But it may not stay small forever. According to the census, Blanchester is growing. With this being the case, the Blan Plan is a vision for how Blanchester can best support this growth. The goal is to keep the best parts great, improve what must be improved, and invest into the future by planning for it.

Implementation Table

Community Image

Goal	Strategy	
Demonstrate a consistent brand that visually represents Blanchester holistically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Brand Guideline, whether it is through hiring a design firm or creating a team in-house to take on the challenge of creating a Brand Guideline. • Publish the Brand Guideline as a public resource on Blanchester's official website. • Implement the design guideline, replacing outdated brand elements (e.g. signage, printed documents, website, social media) and enforcing future branded materials to adhere to the recommendations within the Brand Guideline. 	
Demonstrate successful promotion of Blanchester, highlighting rare and valuable aspects of Blanchester, with the intention of attracting future residents and new businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote distinguishing aspects of Blanchester on the official website and social media platforms (e.g. the Village of Blanchester is the world's only Blanchester). • Coin a Village tagline or motto that embodies the spirit of Blanchester by holding a public forum or taking a public survey in which all residents can participate (to be used on the website, social media, and other visitor touchpoints). 	
Demonstrate that Blanchester's spirit of community is alive and well by compiling an official list of key community events. This list should showcase long-standing traditions and annual events in a compelling, yet inclusive way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile key community events as well as accompanying details. • Create a calendar within Blanchester's official website and/or a Facebook page with all events listed in one place. 	



	Timeline	Partners	Funding Option(s)
	Short	Village Council Members Design Firm (optional)	Village Resources
	Short	Village Council Members Blanchester Residents	Village Resources
	Short	Village Council Members Community Associations Businesses Churches Other Community Organizations	Village Resources

Land Use

Goal	Strategy	
Utilize Form-based Code as a tool to maintain and support the character of Downtown Blanchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission to incorporate Form-Based Code into the Blanchester zoning text. 	
Balance existing land uses with future land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and enhance existing neighborhoods through infrastructure upgrades, code enforcement, and repair and maintenance programs Blend character and form of land uses through standards 	
Increase the housing availability and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow more residential developments in commercial areas Create more opportunities for housing in the Historic District from vacant buildings 	
Manage efficient development through annexation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage future annexations to provide efficient housing and commercial structures Ensure annexed land has adequate public services for use 	
Align the zoning code with the goals for housing and building standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelop the zoning code to make it fit existing and future conditions Adopt architectural standards for housing developments 	
Create and update pathways to existing and future parks to ensure ease of access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve sidewalk infrastructure and expand sidewalks in existing neighborhoods Create other ways of accessing parks and recreation opportunities, such as multi-use paths or bike paths 	
Construct green ways to provide additional open space and connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Blanchester Parks and Recreation Plan to skillfully layout green ways. 	
Identify community needs and desires as they pertain to parks and open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This objective is crucial in supplying the community with leisure activities that will support them. Further analysis should be done in the form of a Blanchester Parks and Recreation Plan to meet the needs and desires of the community. The Village of Blanchester should work with the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission to develop a parks and recreation plan for Blanchester. 	
Align the zoning code with the goal(s) for parks and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-develop the zoning code to include parkland dedication in newly developed residential neighborhoods and/or require developers pay a park development fee as part of new residential developments 	

	Timeline	Partners	Funding Option(s)
	Short	Village Council; Clinton County Regional Planning Commission; Property Owners	CCRPC or Village Resources
	Ongoing	Clinton County Regional Planning Commission; Property Owners	Community Development Block Grants; Village Resources; Developer Contributions
	Medium	Developers, Residents, Business Owners	Low Income Housing Tax Credits
	Short	Village Council; Public Utilities Director; Board of Public Affairs, Developers	Property Tax
	Medium	Village Council; Clinton County Regional Planning Commission; Zoning Inspector	RPC or Village Resources
	Medium	Public Utilities; Parks Department	Recreational Trails Program (ODNR Grant); Transportation Alternatives Program (ODOT Grant)
	Long	Parks Department; Clinton County Regional Planning Commission	NatureWorks (ODNR Grant); Land and Water Conservation Fund (ODNR Grant); RPC
	Short-Medium	Clinton County Regional Planning Commission	CCRPC or Village Resources
	Short	Village Council; Clinton County Regional Planning Commission; Parks Department	CCRPC or Village Resources

Economic Development

Goal	Strategy	
Foster a culture of collaboration with- in the Village of Blanchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish alignment around common goals for the Village and the County. Be regularly engaged in all county meetings and events. Develop specific requests on how the county agencies can better support Blanchester's economic development efforts. 	
Leverage existing assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take inventory of the buildings within the Downtown. Note which ones are contributing from a historical standpoint. Also record buildings that are vacant or underutilized. Investigate a potential Main Street program or Historic District for the Downtown to protect local assets and qualify for additional sources of revenue. Direct redevelopment efforts and future investment into the Downtown through infill rather than sprawling outward. 	
Support Local Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide redevelopment incentives and a simplified regulation process to local businesses that choose to invest in Blanchester. Establish a storefront renovation program for businesses located in the Downtown. Investigate ways the Village can better support their local entrepreneurs with incubation or site selection. 	
Attract Targeted Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize industries that demonstrate growth and provide steady income. Interview students to ascertain the type of industries that would keep them in Blanchester after graduation. Continue to prioritize the success of Blanchester Local Schools. Encourage regular interaction between major employers, the local school district, and post secondary education institutions to strengthen job readiness and facilitate potential internship opportunities. 	
Implement 1% Income Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gauge the viability of an income tax increase with Blanchester residents. Launch education and marketing campaign to convince residents that it is a worthwhile endeavor. Conduct further public outreach to determine priority areas of investment. Ensure accountability and transparency through a tool like an online dashboard so citizens can easily see how their tax dollars are being used. 	

	Timeline	Partners	Funding Option(s)
	Short	CCRPC, CCPA, WCC Chamber	Village Resources
	Medium	Blanchester, CCRPC, CCPA, Energize Clinton County, Heritage Ohio, WCC Chamber	Ohio Historic Tax Credit Program ODSA Community Development Program
	Medium	CCRPC, CCPA, WCC Chamber, Energize Clinton County	Community Reinvestment Areas, Revolving Loan Fund, Community Development Block Grant
	Medium	CCPA, CCRPC, Blanchester Local Schools, Wilmington College, Laurel Oaks Career Campus	Economic Development Loan, Public Infrastructure Grant Program, Bond Finance
	Medium	CCPA, CCRPC	Village Resources

Infrastructure

Goal	Strategy	
Re-equip existing sanitation infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct local tax initiatives to revitalize existing infrastructure surrounding the current sanitation system and other infrastructure. 	
Continue working on system improvements by identifying and prioritizing Capital Improvement Projects for example:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to replace old and undersized water mains. Continue to replace aged sanitary sewer mains. Continue to replace old electric and water meters with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). Continue the process of integrating AMI System with the new VIP Cloud Billing System to better serve the ratepayers in an efficient manner. 	
Diversify existing and future infrastructure that will foster unique opportunities for growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working with IMPA to improve the local electric system to further sustainable development throughout the Village of Blanchester. 	
Strengthen existing community services for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize different types of civic buildings to maximize existing infrastructure to provide more public services 	
Expand green power opportunities in the Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with IMPA to establish a solar park in the community of Blanchester. 	

Mobility

Goal	Strategy	
Incorporate Complete Street planning principles in Blanchester's Downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify traffic calming treatments such as curb extensions that may be compatible with Downtown Blanchester's existing street network. Pursue temporary, tactical urbanism techniques to test new streetscape treatments. Conduct a targeted traffic study to inform traffic signalization that ensures steady vehicle flow without compromising pedestrian safety. 	
Enhance neighborhood connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that residential neighborhoods are connected to critical nodes of activity and amenities. Address the missing gaps within the sidewalk network. Identify quiet, low-traffic residential streets that could lend themselves to a potential neighborhood greenway for cyclists and pedestrians. 	
Pursue projects that will provide greater regional connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential trail routes such as State Route 123. Conduct targeted analysis on routes and engage local stakeholders. Secure funding from different resources such as ODOT. Coordinate with local jurisdictions to pursue trail construction. 	

	Timeline	Partners	Funding Option(s)
	Medium	Village Council; Utility Department	Income Tax
	Long	Clinton County Regional Planning Commission, Village Council; Utility Department	Income Tax
	Medium	Community Service Providers, Village Council, Residents	Community Connect Grant
	Short	Village Council; Public Utilities Director, Dayton Solar, IMPA	State Energy Program Grant
	Timeline	Partners	Funding Option(s)
	Short	CCRPC, ODOT, USDA	ODOT Small City Program, Community Development Block Grant, ODSA Community Development Program
	Medium	CCRPC	ODOT Safe Routes to School Program ODOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
	Long	Blanchester, Clinton CCRPC, Warren County, Ohio Rails-to-Trails, Ohio Bikeways	ODOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Appendix

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What type of events, services, or amenities would you like to see?

Answered: 242 Skipped: 60

RESPONSES (242) **WORD CLOUD** TAGS (0)

Cloud View List View

Search responses



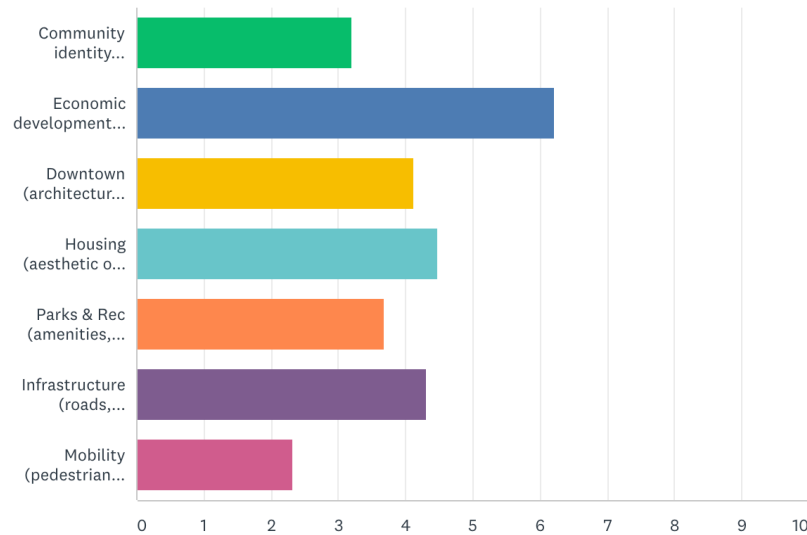
Customize

sit restaurant teens **Blanchester** Christmas parades Recreation **big** stuff
gym also **places** eat children coffee shop type **small** gathering
entertainment youth center fun new diversity **businesses**
4th July **need** fall festival **families** food options **things** local
stores houses **park** dining **town** sidewalks **Festivals**
something **shopping** Bring back **restaurants**
food choices **community** holiday **Better** great
events different **places** programming **see** use **nice**
buildings **kids** love see **options** New business **school**
Variety stores **food** antique **variety** restaurants another
concerts enjoy **community** events Downtown **etc** older
Recreation center classes **pool** club maybe clean **activities** many
people look family friendly



What is important to you about Blanchester? (rank 1-7, 1 being most important and 7 being least important)

Answered: 299 Skipped: 3

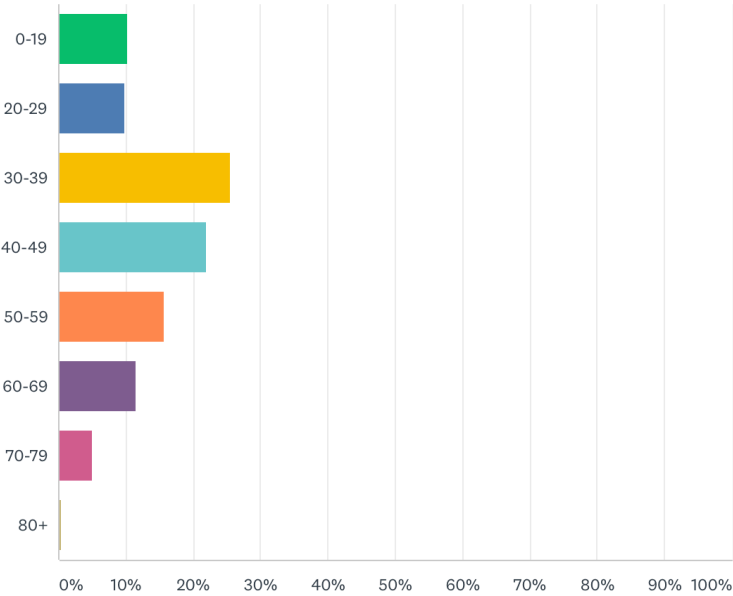


	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
Community identity (signs/banners, history, events, etc.)	6.91% 19	8.00% 22	11.64% 32	16.00% 44	13.09% 36	17.45% 48	26.91% 74	275	3.20
Economic development (local businesses, employment opportunities, etc.)	63.70% 172	15.19% 41	10.37% 28	4.07% 11	3.70% 10	1.48% 4	1.48% 4	270	6.21
Downtown (architecture, landmarks, entertainment, etc.)	7.19% 20	18.71% 52	16.91% 47	18.71% 52	17.63% 49	16.55% 46	4.32% 12	278	4.12
Housing (aesthetic of houses, affordability, property maintenance, etc.)	9.64% 27	23.93% 67	19.29% 54	16.43% 46	17.14% 48	8.57% 24	5.00% 14	280	4.47
Parks & Rec (amenities, programming, etc.)	3.20% 9	11.39% 32	16.01% 45	19.57% 55	24.56% 69	20.28% 57	4.98% 14	281	3.68
Infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.)	10.73% 31	18.69% 54	21.45% 62	15.92% 46	12.11% 35	14.53% 42	6.57% 19	289	4.30
Mobility (pedestrian trails, bike lanes, public transit, etc.)	2.72% 8	4.42% 13	5.10% 15	9.86% 29	12.93% 38	19.05% 56	45.92% 135	294	2.33



What’s your age range?

Answered: 295 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ 0-19	10.17%	30
▼ 20-29	9.83%	29
▼ 30-39	25.42%	75
▼ 40-49	22.03%	65
▼ 50-59	15.59%	46
▼ 60-69	11.53%	34
▼ 70-79	5.08%	15
▼ 80+	0.34%	1
TOTAL	295	

Q10

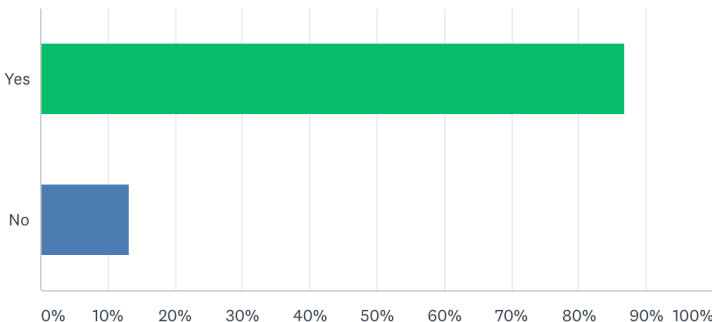


Customize

Save as ▼

Do you live in Blanchester?

Answered: 294 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	86.73% 255
No	13.27% 39
TOTAL	294

Is there anything else you would like us to know about Blanchester?

Answered: 152 Skipped: 144

RESPONSES (152) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0)

Cloud View

List View

Search responses

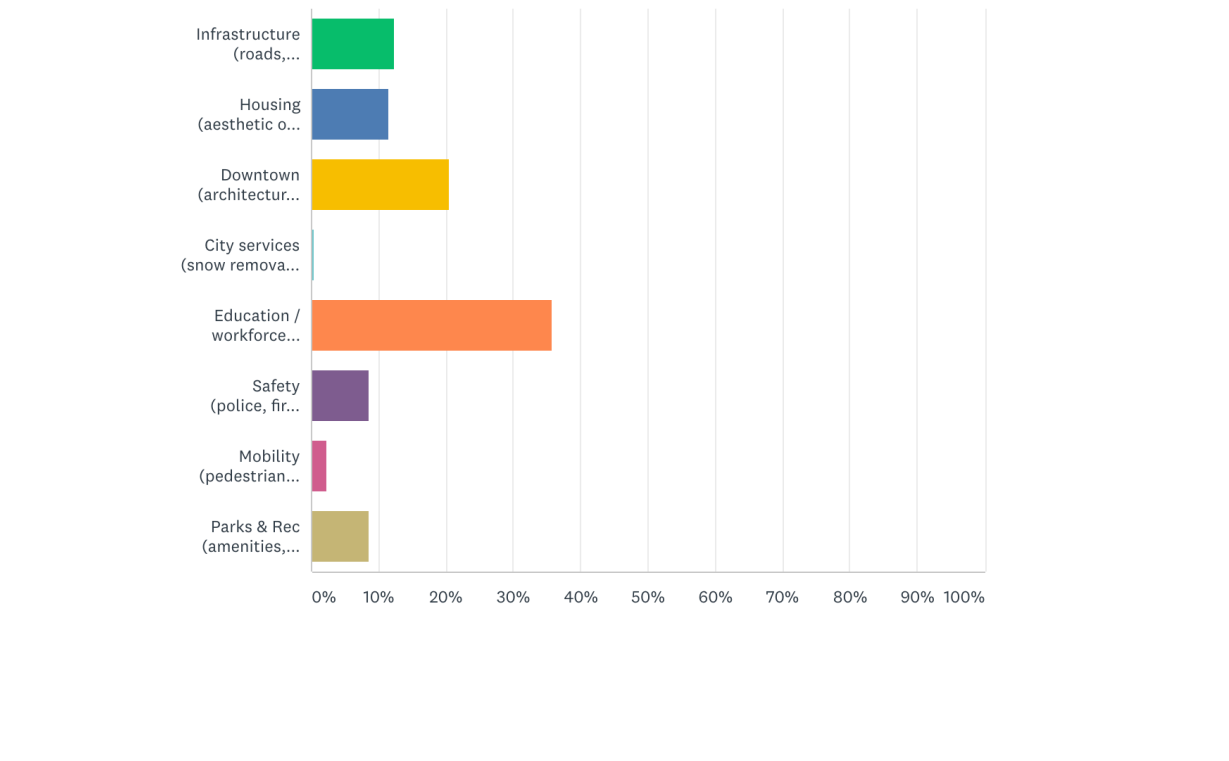


Customize

lot potential us pricing used go yard take pay want really love see area
leave work small town new businesses love school district
village small town big schools City live small
community years businesses place need
opportunities town need help Blanchester support
people think BPA lot good electric great town big heart
look people want nice place live s feel see charges also family way thing
grow police restaurants something make options little town

Where would you most like to see improvements or future investments made in Blanchester? (choose one)

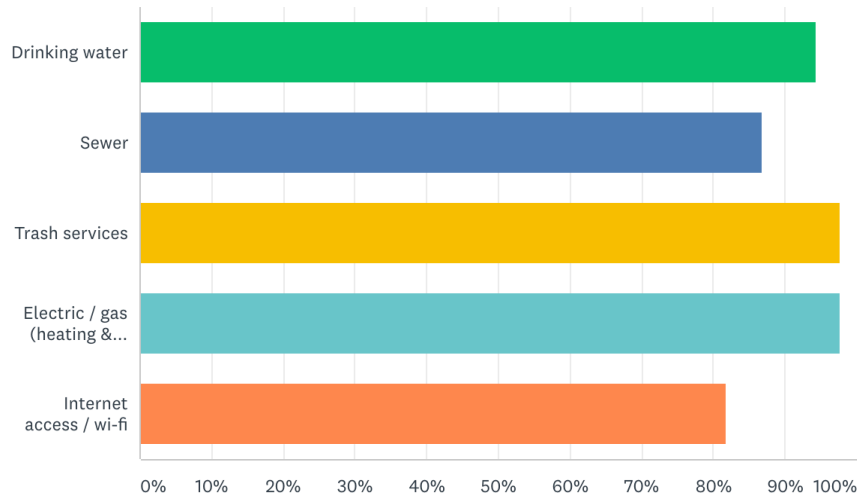
Answered: 302 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.)	12.25%	37
▼ Housing (aesthetic of houses, affordability, property maintenance, etc.)	11.59%	35
▼ Downtown (architecture, landmarks, entertainment, etc.)	20.53%	62
▼ City services (snow removal, landscaping, street sweeping, etc.)	0.33%	1
▼ Education / workforce (school systems, vocational programs, etc.)	35.76%	108
▼ Safety (police, fire, EMS, etc.)	8.61%	26
▼ Mobility (pedestrian trails, bike lanes, public transit, etc.)	2.32%	7
▼ Parks & Rec (amenities, programming, etc.)	8.61%	26
TOTAL	302	

Do you have access to reliable utilities? (check all that apply)

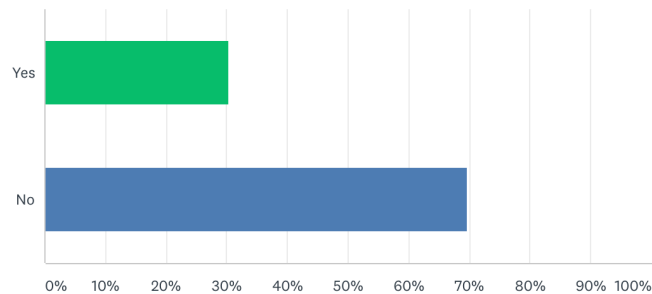
Answered: 296 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Drinking water	94.26%	279
▼ Sewer	86.82%	257
▼ Trash services	97.64%	289
▼ Electric / gas (heating & cooling)	97.64%	289
▼ Internet access / wi-fi	81.76%	242
Total Respondents: 296		

Do you work in Blanchester?

Answered: 301 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	30.23%	91
▼ No	69.77%	210
TOTAL		301

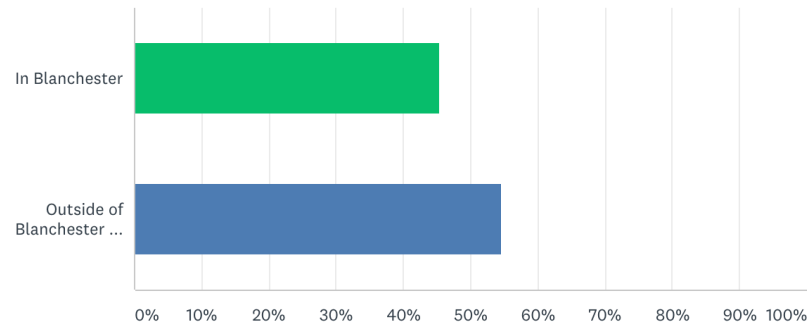
Q5

Customize

Save as ▾

Where do you do your primary shopping?

Answered: 302 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
<div>▼ In Blanchester</div>	45.36% 137
<div>▼ Outside of Blanchester (if you do most of your shopping outside of Blanchester, what town do you travel to shop and why?)</div>	Responses 54.64% 165
TOTAL	302

Q6

Save as ▾

Do you have a favorite spot in Blanchester and why?

Answered: 203 Skipped: 99

RESPONSES (203) **WORD CLOUD** TAGS (0)

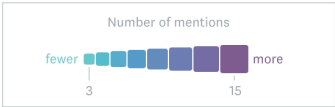
Cloud View

List View

Search responses

Customize

great friends kids children store BDK Legion Field many sports much
town everything people Movie theater high school
Veterans Memorial park Kroger clean s used go Library park
area Blanchester really school see place hang love
kids play Home new favorite spot n good playground
community house Red Zone enjoy nice spot food run field walking



Jefferson Township Case Study

The Jefferson Township 2050: A Vision for the Future plan serves as a good example for what a comprehensive plan for the Village of Blanchester might look like. The plan begins with a table of contents that highlights the main subjects of the plan including sustainability, infrastructure, and public safety. These headings dive into deeper details in their subsections that relate well to the areas of improvement in the Village of Blanchester such as resilience, roads, and neighborhood safety.

The introduction to the plan outlines the purpose, method, and significant topics considered while creating the plan. There are pages dedicated to the community's core values and explanations on why planning is important, which shows community involvement and hope for the future of the Township. Detailed accounts of the current conditions, growth forecasting, and notes about the previous comprehensive plan were also included in this section.

Preservation, resilience, and land management were all covered in the sustainability chapter. The plan touched on annexation and open space acquisition, as well as aging in place, which are three major areas of concern for the Blanchester community. The next chapter talked about infrastructure which is also a priority for the Blanchester plan, as the infrastructure in the village needs attention. For example, we noted the poor conditions of the sidewalks during our site visit. Multimodal transportation, corridor beautification, and park facilities were described in this section as well. Which again, are items that need improvement in Blanchester as well. The final section of the Jefferson plan, before the Acknowledgements, was public safety. Here, they talked a lot about their police and fire efforts, in addition to a neighborhood watch. This section

included a graphic of the types of crimes and their frequencies, which is definitely something to be included in the Blanchester plan. This would showcase the main safety concerns in the village and provide support for why things like increased traffic safety enforcement and addiction resources may be helpful recommendations for Blanchester.

Overall, the layout of the Jefferson Plan was impressive and well organized. The main goals and objectives were highlighted for easy referral, and further details were offered on the pages to follow. The document was easy to navigate and understand, while also having high quality visual design.

Not only was the majority of the content in this plan similar to the current conditions and needs of the Village of Blanchester, but I also appreciate how the document was structured and would like to see something similar emulated for Blanchester. The plan made for Blanchester should be easily read and accessible for the planner and the resident alike.

Every community is different, so the content of the Blanchester Plan mainly lies in the feedback we get from the community and our observations. However, the organization of this plan and the visioning behind it were the most beneficial to me in regards to translating my findings into a plan for Blanchester. I like the fact that this was a vision for 2050. Typically, comprehensive plans are made up of short and long term goals for the next 10 or so years. There is a lot of work to be done in Blanchester with limited resources available. That being said, I think a 2050 vision or something similar would work best for a Blanchester comprehensive plan so the community has more time to achieve the goals and objectives laid out in the plan we create.

Additionally, I liked how each section was full of details and visuals for each objective, but there was also an overview and summary of the goals and objectives for each section. Comprehensive plans are lengthy documents and it is helpful to include summary pages for quick reference.

Similarly to most other communities or planning agencies that create planning documents, feedback from residents and other community stakeholders is used in making recommendations for the plan. Jefferson Township conducted 15 public meetings over the course of the three year planning process for the 2050 plan. While a series of public community meetings would be effective for the Village of Blanchester, the current global pandemic prohibits us from conducting large in person events. One solution would be a survey either by mail, through social media, or both. We could also have a public meeting on Facebook live that would be recorded and posted to Facebook and possibly the village website. This would allow for public comment during and after the meeting for those who can be present at the time of the meeting, or any time thereafter.

The Jefferson Township plan was designed well overall. However, I would have liked to see some type of conclusion section that summarized the document altogether. As previously mentioned, these documents are not normally read from cover to cover. That being said, having those summary pages and a conclusion section would be helpful for someone who is looking for the key takeaways and findings of the document.

At the end of the document was a general message for the Board of Trustees, but there were no direct quotes or interviews included in the plan. I think that if an appendix were to be included there would be room to add details of the public meetings that were conducted, but that was not a

chapter included in this document. While it can be assumed that the feedback was incorporated into many of the goals and suggestions, there were no direct quotes included. For our plan, I think that would be a significant piece to include, as community interest is important to support the approval, acceptance, and implementation of a plan.

As far as my interests for the plan, Bindley Block and the surrounding downtown area has so much potential and the opportunity to plan for that space is exciting. On the other hand, I think it is a huge obstacle being that there are clear financial limitations for the Village of Blanchester, and I would like the challenge in finding some solutions to the monetary setbacks of planning. Nevertheless, I have never experienced rural planning before and I look forward to the whole process and I am eager to learn more about small town plans.

Source: jefferson township 2050

<https://www.jeffersontownship.org/Portals/0/Documents/Comp%20Plan/Jefferson%20Township%202050%20-%20Comprehensive%20Plan%20-%20Web1.pdf?ver=2020-02-03-105627-133>

Village of Johnstown Comprehensive Plan: Summary

The Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Johnstown was prepared by Burton Planning Services (BPS) in 2018. This plan was created to be used in conjunction with the 2012 Johnstown Strategic Plan and 2006 Johnstown Strategic Plan to act as a toolbox for decision makers, providing an overview of the city from a more systematic perspective (Burton et al., 2018). The document presents information within the framework of three main parts: existing conditions, recommendations, and an interactive website (Burton et al., 2018; Village of Johnstown Comprehensive Plan 2018).

Burton Planning Services worked with the village manager, assistant village manager, zoning inspector, and clerk of council to gain insight into the village and its needs (Burton et al., 2018). These insights were used to create eight goals for the village, each goal centered on a specific element assessed by SWOT—that is: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (Burton et al., 2018). The document starts off with an introduction, history of the village, and population details before delving into the eight goals/elements: 1) the built environment; 2) housing; 3) economic development; 4) transportation; 5) community services and utilities; 6) education; 7) parks and recreation; and 8) natural environment (Burton et al., 2018). Each section includes an Introduction, Existing and Future Conditions,

Conclusion, and SWOT Analysis. The layout of the Comprehensive Plan includes photos, aerial views, charts, timelines, and visual figures to aid the text.

Several ideas from the Johnstown Comprehensive Plan may be appropriate to apply to the plan for Blanchester. For example, the Johnstown plan starts off the document with an Introduction explaining the purpose and structure of the plan so even a layman reader (or someone in a new decision-making role) is able to navigate it with ease. Then the document begins by laying a foundation of cultivating a sense of pride in Johnstown. While this plan specifically achieves this by bragging Johnstown's unique contributions to Ohio's history, we should convey unique aspects of Blanchester toward the beginning of the document so readers can engage the rest of the material through a positive framework. In addition to this, the overall breakdown and organization of the document, especially achieved through SWOT Analysis and specific recommendations for each section, are probably worth implementing into our document as well.

Aside from a clear priority on understandability in terms of the plan's organizational elements and layout, many of the ideas proposed for the village center on growth and progress. The Comprehensive Plan gives a detailed snapshot of current trends, paints a vision for the future, and provides actionable steps to move from the current to the future. Within the built environment, the goal is to promote "compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods" that are "attractive, unique, authentic, and special" (Burton et al., 2018, p. 25). The economic development and housing sections

echo a similar sentiment of capitalizing on Johnstown's uniqueness and charm to leverage investment into the community. This strategy paired with that of connecting residents and business owners with community services & resources are paths proposed for fostering growth. The village of Johnstown seems to be growing already, and the Comprehensive Plan acts to document this growth as well as offers guidance to grow in smart, intentional ways.

While the Johnstown plan represents current trends and growth opportunities well, it would have been beneficial to list out a game plan or priorities between the eight goals more clearly. While the document lists out all the action items within the Implementation Strategy section of the plan and specifies whether the timeframe for each action item should be "Immediate," "Short-Term," "Mid-Term," or "Long-Term" (Burton et al., 2018, p. 81-87), delving into greater detail on why these recommendations are being made would be helpful for future decision-makers. With so many items falling into the same timeframe bucket of "Immediate," it may be hard to know what to prioritize amongst these Immediate action items. Having the rationale as to *why* may empower decision-makers to make informed calls when deciding where to start.

In a similar vein, the document did not focus very much on stakeholders or what residents of the village value. If interviews, surveys, or other forms of research were conducted to create the plan, none are explicitly referenced. In part, this may be due to the nature of this plan building upon existing strategic plans. Still, including methodology and representing the mindset

of key stakeholders may have been good to include so that readers of the document would be able to clearly understand where information, opinions, and recommendations are coming from. BPS promotes an interactive website as a deliverable in addition to the comprehensive plan (Burton et al., 2018) and while this gives community members the opportunity to weigh in on the plan, it is unclear what is intended to come of the feedback. More transparency on how stakeholders and residents contributed to plan—as well as how feedback from community members will shape next steps—would have been valuable additions.

Gleaning the Johnstown Comprehensive Plan for elements which could be included in the Blanchester plan, a lot of strengths are within the realm of organization. For Blanchester, it may be good to distill goals for the future to a manageable number of elements and evaluate each using the same benchmark, in a similar fashion to how the Johnstown plan used SWOT Analysis. A key difference is that Blanchester is experiencing decline, whereas Johnstown was experiencing growth during the time of publication. Still, painting a positive vision for the future seems applicable. For the Blanchester plan, it feels important to identify and stress aspects of the community that unify the village—whether it's historical, cultural events, a certain set of values, etc. Learning from the shortcomings of the Johnstown plan, we should be clear about where these ideas about Blanchester come from and give rationale when setting goals for the future, especially when making recommendations for timelines and prioritization between goals.

Moving forward, I am most passionate about the built environment and population of Blanchester. Our site visitation and conversation with Mayor John Carman left an impression on me that Blanchester needs a strong vision for a path forward in unity—both within terms of physical space and a sense of community. I believe that decisions regarding key spaces would help achieve this, because increasing a sense of togetherness and pride for Blanchester may help motivate residents to invest deeper into the community which in turn would help the village become more of a destination spot rather than a place that people merely pass through. I noticed in the ‘Message from the Mayor’ on Blanchester’s website that Mayor John Carman places a high value on the spirit of teamwork (COUNCIL: Village-blanchester2 2017). I hope this will carry forth into our project together, and I would like to involve other key stakeholders as well as we create a comprehensive plan for the village of Blanchester. On a practical note, I would be willing to help as much as needed for the visual presentation of our plan since I come from a design background. Overall, I feel passionate about creating a plan that the mayor, key stakeholders, and residents can be proud of—a plan that inspires investment.

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➤ Reasons for choosing Plain City

- Recently updated plan (2018)
- Similar economic pressure being faced/proximity (Columbus)
- Similar Population (4200<->4400)

➤ Design

- Plan split in 4 major sections
 - Context
 - Foundation
 - Guidance
 - Recommendations
 - Context and Foundation could have been fused together as Community Character

➤ Context

- Describes why the original plan from 2003 needed to be updated
 - Failing infrastructure (water plant)
 - Incoming Development Pressure (Columbus)
 - Planning for Rising Population
 - Residents wanted more businesses/ amenities
- Introduction
 - Describes the plan area
 - Introduces other information about prior planning efforts

➤ Foundation

- Community profile and existing conditions
- History given back to 1818
- Gives info on recent growth and the current demographics
- Parks and rec were older and needed updating/more options

- Floodplain
- Agriculture
- Community events and schools were also described
- As well as streets and infrastructure

➤ Guidance

- This section describes how the community outreach was done as well as how the community wanted development to occur
- Outreach
 - Survey
 - Focus Groups
 - Public Meetings
 - Steering Committee
- Priorities
 - Maintain small town feel
 - Agricultural heritage
 - Vision for uptown
 - More dining
 - Parks and Rec
 - The Big Darby
 - Connectivity
 - Housing Affordability
 - Economic Development
 - Growth
- 9 Major Planning Principle Used
 - Maintain the character of the community
 - Interconnected open space creation

- Support neighborhoods and housing needs
- Promote economic development
- Connect the community
- Reinvigorate uptown
- Preserve the environment
- Strategically leverage infrastructure
- Coordinate regionally and collaborate locally

➤ Recommendations

○ Strategies

- Preserving Character
 - Design Guidelines
 - Rural Heritage Preservation
- Manage and Focus Growth
 - Zoning+ Zoning Guidelines
 - Conservation Development
 - 161 Overlay District
- Foster Economic Growth
 - Development strategy
 - Employer attraction
- Reinvigorate Uptown
 - Target investment
 - Placemaking
- Historic Preservation

Case Study: South Lebanon Comprehensive Plan 2025

Introduction

The place I chose for a case study for the Blanchester Comprehensive plan was South Lebanon. South Lebanon is comparable to Blanchester in size, community character, and threats. South Lebanon's comprehensive plan was created for similar reasons the Blanchester plan is being created for. The suburbs of Cincinnati were creating a threat for South Lebanon in terms of community character and growth, and the village needed an updated land use plan to inform how the city was going to grow but maintain its identity. These similarities are the reason South Lebanon is a relative case study for the Blanchester comprehensive plan.

Summary and Layout of South Lebanon Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan for the Village of South Lebanon included sections on an introduction and background, community identity, future land uses, trails and pedestrian connections, parks and recreation, Historic South Lebanon, Rivers Crossing, Former Siemens Property, and Implementation. The intro and background section includes information on the purpose of a comp. plan, the planning process, how to read a comp. plan, the vision and guiding principles of the plan, the history of South Lebanon, and South Lebanon's regional context. The community identity section focused on branding opportunities and character of the Village in future developments with a focus on traditional neighborhood design.

The future land use section was the second largest section of the plan, and it mainly focused on creating areas for businesses that would bring jobs and revenue to the village. This section also focused on creating/maintaining mixed-use areas in the Village and neighborhood developments. The trails and pedestrian connections section identified the regional trail connection as an economic development opportunity, so developing the trail network and creating businesses that would bring visitors from the trail to town was recommended. Additionally, local pedestrian networks needed improvements. The parks and recreation section identified upgrading neighborhood parks, locating space for parks with recreational facilities, and programming of community events and activities as issues and opportunities to focus on.

The section for Historic South Lebanon focused on revitalizing the historic downtown area and paying attention to floodplain hazards. Neighborhood commercial areas, a conversation district, connection to the river, and activities connected to the Little Miami Scenic Trail were all recommendations for this section. The Rivers Crossing section focused on an area of town that was recommended for future development. The future development was recommended as a mixed-use, pedestrian friendly, topographically integrated area. The former Siemen's property was another area noted for development, which included a business/industrial park on one portion and either commercial or residential on the other portion.

The implementation section provided a chart on plan goals, objectives, recommendations, priority, potential partners, funding opportunities, next steps, and time frames. This section also provided information on how to read the implementation

section. Each section in the plan was broken down by an introduction and background on the section, issues and opportunities, and goals and objectives. Included last was the appendix, which provided concept maps and plan results from the design charrette.

Key Takeaways from South Lebanon Comprehensive Plan

The key takeaways include a strong community identity throughout the entire village, employment and revenue generating land uses, clear traditional neighborhood design maintained in future developments, regional and local bike/pedestrian connections, and preservation and reinvestment of the Historic South Lebanon area.

The focus on community identity and branding throughout the village should be maintained through aspects, such as gateways or future development designs. The small town, traditional neighborhood design should be clear. Areas should be made for new businesses to locate in South Lebanon to bring in revenue and create more jobs. New residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments should follow architectural design guidelines that follow the small town neighborhood essence. Regional bike trails and local pedestrian networks should be improved and used as a tool for economic development, which will bring in visitors and aid wayfinding. Finally, Historic South Lebanon is an area of the village that should be preserved and reinvested in to bring in visitors and maintain the character of South Lebanon.

Components of the Case Study Plan that Should Be Emulated and Applied

The South Lebanon Comprehensive plan includes concepts and approaches that are relevant to the comprehensive plan we are creating for the Village of Blanchester.

Those concepts include the focus on community identity, focusing on certain areas for improvement and/or economic development, the pedestrian connections, and streetscaping. Both South Lebanon and Blanchester have a small town character that residents are proud of. The focus on community identity was a major focus for the South Lebanon comp. plan, and it informed other parts of the plan. This is something that the Blanchester plan could utilize to bring pride back into the community. Focusing on certain areas for development or improvement was another aspect that South Lebanon used in their plan that the Blanchester plan can mimic. Focusing on areas of improvement and economic development identifies where the community has the best opportunity for investment, growth, and potential revenue. Creating pedestrian connections throughout the village can produce a feeling of unity for the residents in the village. It shows residents and visitors they are welcome in all parts of the community. Streetscaping can add to this by creating an inviting and safe route for people to travel. All of these concepts can be applied to the Blanchester plan to realize the plan/community vision.

Areas of Improvement for South Lebanon's Comprehensive Plan While the South Lebanon Comprehensive Plan was executed proficiently, there were parts of the plan where improvements and additions should have been made. Motor vehicle transportation was an area mostly left out of the plan. Pedestrian and bike improvements and connections were included in the plan, but motor vehicle traffic was not included in that conversation. While traffic concerns/issues could be small at the

time the plan was created, many traffic problems could occur once the plan is realized. There are several areas of the plan that call for a sizeable amount of development, but there was little discussion on how new traffic would affect the current traffic situation. This is something that the Blanchester plan needs to include or at least acknowledge.

The parks and recreation section of the plan was lacking. There were few action items for this section, and I was left wondering how this part of the plan would be realized or if it even had a clear direction. A better approach to this section would have been to include a recommendation on creating a parks and recreation master plan. This could provide readers and residents assurance that this section wasn't being brushed over, but that more work needed to be done to provide a clear direction on how parks and recreation would be improved/expanded in South Lebanon.

Ideas for Outreach in Blanchester

The South Lebanon Comprehensive Plan used a steering committee, stakeholder interviews, and a design charrette to identify concepts for the plan and areas to focus on.

The steering committee will be a useful form of outreach for the village of Blanchester.

The people on the committee can provide the planning team with connections to the greater community. Utilizing social media and surveys will also be a useful form of outreach. Without the threat of Covid, community events and local places generating a lot of foot traffic would have been good places to communicate with the community too.

Areas of Focus for the Blanchester Plan

Some of the areas of the Blanchester plan that I would like to focus on are the

economic development portion, community identity/branding, parks and programming, and creating the planning document, graphics, and renderings of future developments/streetscapes. I would be satisfied working on any portion of the planning document though.

Conclusion

The similar characteristics and community identity of South Lebanon to Blanchester make South Lebanon a relative place to use as a case study. The contents of South Lebanon's plan and reasons for its creation have similarities to the reasons and potential contents to Blanchester's comprehensive plan, which will aide in its creation. The focus on community identity, areas of development and growth, pedestrian connections, and streetscaping are aspects that can be pulled from South Lebanon's plan and applied to Blanchester's plan. While South Lebanon provides quality content for the Blanchester plan, there are other aspects the Blanchester plan should include that the South Lebanon plan either missed or is different between the two villages.

Running head: VILLAGE OF GRANVILLE.

Village of Granville

Kenneth Ganter

The Ohio State University



VILLAGE OF GRANVILLE

Comprehensive Plan Summary

The Village of Granville constructed their first Comprehensive Plan in the year of 1998. They then proceeded to update that plan in the year of 2001. Recently, the Village Council and Township Trustees updated the plan in 2012 where they were able to add elements that would continue to preserve and strengthen the community. The goals for this comprehensive update was to enhance property values, improve State Routes 37/161, and address the tax base expansion. The Village of Granville wanted this update to be a vision of what Granville can be and how they would address current planning issues. As far as the layout for the comprehensive plan, provided below are the components that went into the update.

Layout/Contents

- | | |
|---|--|
| o Core values of good planning in Granville | o Maintaining Rural Character |
| o Purpose of this Comprehensive Plan | o Enhancing Mobility |
| o Planning Area | o Expanding Housing Opportunities |
| o Planning Process | o Preserving Small Town Character |
| o History of the Granville Community | o Strengthening Tax Base |
| o Demographic Information | o Community Strategy and Participation |
| o Residential Housing | o Policy & Strategy Recommendations |
| o Future Land Uses | o Economic Development |

Ideas/Approaches for Blanchester Plan

As we move forward in the planning process, I think we should approach this comprehensive plan with a hard emphasis on infrastructure. I think when we are visioning Blanchester in the future, we see a village coming back to life with a potential to have a vibrant

VILLAGE OF GRANVILLE

entertaining atmosphere. Blanchester has foundation in place in regard to the schools, green space, and village pride. In order for Blanchester to thrive, there has to be infrastructure in place such as adequate sidewalks, utilities, broadband, and roads. Thus, making the village more accessible and easier to move around within the Village, especially when they are on the cusp of becoming a city. Then, we would implement an economic development plan that would bring businesses and revenue to the village.

Key Takeaways from Granville's Plan

The Village of Granville prioritizes preserving the character of the community, implementing sustainability, and having an emphasis of enhancing the appearance of the area. In the plan, they break down every element to provide an overall understanding of what they think Granville could look like in the future. The plan also gives a great analysis on background information such as history, demographics, and stakeholders. Granville's plan is all about how to improve the village from a housing, aesthetics, and accessibility point of view. Whereas the Village of Blanchester Comprehensive Plan priority will be more focused on infrastructure, economic development, and zoning.

Outreach In Villages/Rural Areas

One idea to have successful outreach in villages or rural areas is to set up a marketing booth at the most active location in the village. In this case for Blanchester, Kroger could be considered a space with the most pedestrian traffic on a daily basis. Another idea is to construct a survey and post it on and in every advertisement outlet (Facebook, newspaper, flyers, etc.). Another outreach that could be utilized is using dot maps to show what parts the public likes and does not like through the web.

Areas Of Plan To Be Improved Or Left Out

VILLAGE OF GRANVILLE

An area of Granville's plan that can be improved is including some of the illustrative maps they made into the document. They have all of their graphic maps online and not in the document itself. This will allow readers to see data from a graphic standpoint so that it will make it easier to comprehend what the plan is trying to convey. An area that has been left out from the plan is the appendix and cover page. These two items are important to represent the document and its full entirety of Granville's branding.

Areas Of Plan We Should Emulate

The Village of Granville's Comprehensive Plan is set up very well and is thorough with their analysis of planning issues and visions. What I liked about the plan is that it is very straightforward and informative on the village overall. As a first-time reader, I knew what the sections were and the information the plan was trying to illustrate. One thing that the plan needed was an appendix page that showed where you could find information you were looking for instead of scrolling through the whole document. One thing that I think we should add to our comprehensive plan for Blanchester is to add the different service departments (police, fire). I think showing these departments are important because of how they might affect Blanchester's budget.

Interviews/Quotes

During my research, I was able to talk to Steven Smedley, an Assistant Village Planner for the Village of Granville. Steven was able to provide a lot of helpful information regarding Granville's Comprehensive Plan. He explained how the Comprehensive Plan 2012 Update was about sustainability, collaboration, and preservation for the village. Steven then shared that the village is thinking about doing another update coming up soon to tackle planning issues such as development pressure, population growth, and economic development. The Village of Granville

VILLAGE OF GRANVILLE

is experiencing development pressure from the City of Columbus where more and more developers are looking to develop single family housing. The City of New Albany has been annexing a lot of land near Granville making it hard to grow the area as a whole. Steven also mentioned that Granville is not looking to become a city. Most of the residents like how quaint the village is and how they are not looking to spend any more of their budget on resources such as police or government staff. However, with Denison University being located in Granville it makes it hard for the village to not become a city. The total population is already over city status, but University students do not count towards the overall population for the village.

Components I'm Passionate About

Some components of the Comprehensive plan for Blanchester that I would like to focus on is transportation, infrastructure, and housing. I provided three components because I think these issues are so important and interesting wherever they are. As far as me working on a specific topic, I am willing to work on any topic our project team needs help with.

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Leo Brandon

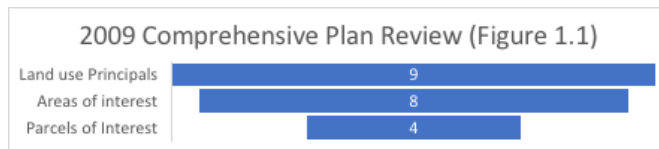
Comprehensive Plan Studio

Introduction:

Yellow Springs is a small village about 30 minutes outside Dayton and a 15-minute drive from Wright Paterson Airforce Base. Yellow Springs thrives as an oasis for older individuals, with the median age being 51.4 and 28 percent of the population currently older than the age of 65. (Yellow Springs Comprehensive Plan 2020) The community has seen a shift in the people it has attracted. According to the 2000 census in comparison to the 2010 census, there was a decline in the number of persons; however, household numbers have continued to increase. Between the years 2010 to 2020, both numbers have risen to number 3610 persons and 1756 households, respectively. (Yellow Springs Comprehensive Plan 2020) The village has had two comprehensive plans, one that was finalized in May of 2009 and one that is in the process of being finalized. As part of this case stud, there will be a comparison of the 2009 plan to what the current plan is.

2009 YS Comprehensive Plan Review:

The 2009 Comprehensive plan is broken into eight general subsections that fall within the guiding principles. Essentially the way it is written is shown in figure 1.1. Nine land use principals guide eight broad areas of interest to the planning community. These general areas of interest are then exemplified in 4 parcels of interest.



General guiding values to the funnel of policy are laid out separately. These values work to drive the policies in figure 1.1 but are not limited to those policies identified in the comprehensive plan. Land Use Principles include nine different sections which drive the areas of interest that the village is going to focus on over the next years. The timeline for these policies was not set to be done by a particular time. With the general guiding principle of wanting to continue to be a small community, it seems that many of these areas and parcels of interest would continue until the village cap of 5000 is hit. As said in the introduction, the population has been increasing by a small amount, so it is not assumed that the village will hit 5000 in the next ten years. An example of how this guiding value is achieved is through land use principles: 5, 6, 8. Principle five is to promote mixed-use developments that not only provide residential but commercial and retail space. This would create less housing than generic housing projects and would allow for the housing population to not be saturated. Principle 6 and 8 identify ways to preserve green space green and to limit the ability of the developers to build outside of preexisting infrastructure. This is an excellent way to eliminate the possibility of unwanted sprawl and to eliminate the amount of work the village has to do for each project. The other guiding values used in this plan that I did a deep dive into for the purpose relating back to Blanchester are having a healthy downtown and healthy business districts. These values are something that Blanchester could adapt to in its comprehensive plan. The way these values are achieved is through land-use principles 1, 3 5, 9. Land use principle 1 describes sustaining practices that create suitable environments for the retention of business and industry; this principle is used for the creation of particular interest in

parcel one, which is the corridor business district; this principal also outlines a way to be sustainable but building with the intent of not abandoning property through the downtown corridor. Land use practice 3 is to create an urban environment in a rural area; the principle is used to identify a eat work play mentality for the village. This is something that Blanchester needs to adapt as it faces the uphill battle of only having a property tax in the village. Yellow Springs uses this land-use policy to collect income, property, and levies throughout the village. The key to this policy is ownership; the more ownership a constituent has, the more willing they are to provide levy funds and tax funds.

The Good & Bad of the Plan:

The Yellow Springs comprehensive plan goes in-depth, laying a foundation of working values for the village. It also gives identity to those who live in the town and provides unity in common beliefs and lifestyle. It does a great job of specific targeting. Another good thing about this plan is its use of being detailed but not too detailed orientated. When looking to critique something, it didn't come from the 2009 comprehensive plan itself; it came from the new plan, which is only open on website form for public viewing. The original plan isn't as clear and while it looks like a 21st-century view, it is unclear what the pathway to the particular interest parcels, which the original document did an excellent job of laying out. The second document focuses more on the theoretical concept of planning for the village than a document laying out methods in which one would prepare for the village. As a continued critique, it is unsustainable to believe that a village can attract a considerable tax base while at the same time limiting the number of people who live in the village limit. This problem is seen throughout the two documents, and while both documents mention affordable housing as well, they also create an unwinnable argument when discussing the supply and demand of the housing in the local limits. While this is

something present in the comprehensive plan for YS, it doesn't seem like it would be a problem for Blanchester. From what has been discussed in public hearings for the village of Blanchester, it seems like growth and annexation are two of the most important topics which differ from the Yellow Springs small-town mentality.

Yellow Springs Plan as a plan for Blanchester:

The Yellow Springs plan has many land use principles that I think are a good fit for that of Blanchester; the main land use principles which is summarized in the section above are created through the values of a healthy downtown and green space creation and maintained. The values create land-use policies that would help Blanchester create density and continue with green space. The important part about this comprehensive plan to take away and adapt to Blanchester is the valuing of a healthy community. Moving through the Yellow Springs comprehensive plan, there is a section on historic preservation; while this value isn't used for new builds; it is used as a way to identify land use policy's that not only keep landmark buildings in downtown but implements codes to enforce proper management of those buildings. As mentioned previously, there is also the "Play, Live, Work" mentality established in Yellow Springs, which helps them pass levies and tax increases without much push back from the constituents.

Conclusion:

While the 2009 comprehensive plan doesn't outline a sustainable future for the village, the new drafted plan does. It seems to go off the college of Antioch's program to be the first college in the United States running on a zero-carbon footprint. This has inspired me to want to help with that section of the Blanchester Comprehensive plan. The plan that Antioch and Yellow Springs worked on together created a one-megawatt solar panel field along with a geothermal

field to both offset the cost of electricity and to make less of a carbon footprint. When the mayor of Blanchester showed interest in sustainable development, this triggered my mind to want to help create this part of the comprehensive plan. As I continued through the Yellow Springs document, I also noted several different ways they have built a creation of pride or ownership by the constituents to the comprehensive plan, and I would love to help craft the writing and outreach needed to give this flair the Blanchester Comprehensive plan. Yellow Springs and Blanchester are many different villages; one is wanting to stay in a village while the other is wanting to become a city. Both seem to have similar roadways and high access that makes them prime spots for development to the single-family unit. Both villages want to create a healthy and thriving downtown and economy, the policy uses that Yellow Springs has set out, I believe Blanchester could fall in line with and create a comprehensive plan that fits the village's needs.

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CRP 6910

Professor Gibson

9/14/2020

Case Study: Village of Fredericktown Strategic Plan

Fredericktown is a small village located in northwest Knox County. Their newly adopted strategic plan serves as a roadmap that will guide growth and development over the next five to ten years. The plan was commissioned by the Area Foundation of Knox County and funded by the Knox County Foundation. It was one component in a planning process that also included the Villages of Centerburg, Danville, Fredericktown, and Gambier. MS Consultants, a planning firm based in Columbus, Ohio completed the process in March 2020.

The Village of Fredericktown was selected as a case study due to its similarities to the Village of Blanchester. Both are small communities in counties that are largely rural. Fredericktown's layout is very similar with a downtown core at the center that eventually transitions from dense housing to larger parcels. Both villages are also well served by major transportation routes. Blanchester and Fredericktown will need to be cognizant of the impending growth pressures from the nearby metro areas (Cincinnati and Columbus, respectively). Because of these similarities, the recommendations found in the Fredericktown Strategic Plan can serve as a blueprint as we start the comprehensive planning process for Blanchester.



The Fredericktown Village Strategic Plan generally falls into six major subject areas: Land Use & Zoning, Economic Development, Community Character, Historic Preservation, Mobility

& Infrastructure, and Quality of Life and Place. The plan is intended to guide decision-making in the community as it relates to zoning, land use, and development. The community engagement process worked with Fredericktown's residents, businesses, employees, and local officials to help inform the process. It included two large scale public meetings and five stakeholder committee meetings. This input was coupled with existing conditions research and analysis of best practices to create the final plan objectives.

The public engagement process was designed to be inclusive and comprehensive so that the authentic voice of Fredericktown could be heard. The framework was spearheaded by a steering committee comprised of local leaders that reflected the makeup and aspirations of the village. Activities included a community workshop, stakeholder interviews, a community survey, and online engagement. The planning team leveraged existing community events like the village's annual "Christmas in July" event. Having organized public open houses for planning initiatives in the past, I know how difficult it can be to get the right people in the room. It would be interesting to see if the planning team deemed their initiatives a success or not. A potential reason for low online participation for the survey could be tied to issues related to the digital divide. All of this is important to consider as we plan our own engagement strategy around a potential steering committee and Facebook survey.

The results in the engagement offered insights on the community's priorities and concerns. Residents cited the local school district, convenient location, rural character, and recreational amenities as assets for the village. On the other hand, residents identified lack of retail and entertainment amenities, fiscal management, and poor property maintenance as their primary

concerns. Fredericktown's findings seem to be in line with our preliminary understanding of the Village of Blanchester, and probably could be applied to many rural villages of this size. Mayor Carmen highlighted the issues of some residents not keeping up the appearances of their yards during our interview. Lack of amenities in the downtown was a recurring theme based on the quick conversations that were conducted during our initial site visit.

The Land Use & Development section mentions the need to prepare for outlying development. This was not the priority strategy identified by the planning team. They instead focused on vacant and underutilized parcels. While this is still applicable to our approach to Blanchester, it would have been more beneficial if they had picked downtown revitalization or outlying development as the priority. Potential sites were identified that could best accommodate a variety of future uses spanning from manufacturing to office. Criteria for these areas included proximity to existing infrastructure and utilities, ease of construction, and flexible zoning. Tools such as mixed use or planned area development (PUD) zoning were suggested as ways to ensure maximum flexibility for the village. Fredericktown's strategy is applicable for Blanchester since they too have identified potential sites for annexation.

Fredericktown has 25 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with the vast majority of them located in the downtown. These designations allow the village to pursue various funding opportunities at the state and national level. This funding can help preserve important structures that add to the overall sense of place found in the village. Similarly to Fredericktown, Blanchester also has a number of buildings that have historical significance.

While the Bindley Block was tragically lost, other older buildings still remain. If they too can merit historical status, it can open up additional resources to aid in the downtown revitalization.

The priority strategy listed for the Housing & Neighborhoods section is to diversify the housing stock. The plan cites shifting demographics and the need to stay current with market demand. This is especially important as the village anticipates growth from the Columbus region. In a similar fashion, Blanchester wants to be a destination for those expanding outward from Cincinnati. By offering more options outside of owner-occupied single family housing units, both villages can be more attractive to a wider range of prospective residents. It is important to note that another strategy in this section mentioned the need to preserve the small town identity of Fredericktown's residential neighborhood. This can often become a point of contention as you balance preservation with inevitable growth. However, there are methods available to help accomplish both goals.

The implementation section hosts a list of potential funding sources that could be used to help take the plan from vision to reality. It includes grant programs at both the state and federal level, as well as economic development tools. We have already discussed that a database of grants and other funding opportunities needs to be included in our own comprehensive plan. The list found in the Fredericktown Strategic Plan can help serve as a starting point as we compile grants that Blanchester might be eligible for. The implementation matrix displays the various strategies that were mentioned throughout the plan along with level of priority, timeline, entities that would be involved, and funding sources. This serves as a good example that the studio can follow for arguably the most important part of a plan.

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