



Produced by:



150 South Front Street
FSL Suite 10
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Tel. 614-462-3094
Fax 614-462-7155
www.franklincountyohio.gov/edp

Blacklick-Madison Area Plan

Project manager
Benjamin Weiner

Project team
Matthew Brown
Louis Clayton
Devin Keithley
Anna Thomas
Chelsea Weber

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Land use planning helps improve communities by empowering residents to collectively envision their future.

The planning process involves identifying current conditions for an area, creating a vision for the future and developing ways to achieve that future.

About the Blacklick-Madison Area Plan

The Blacklick-Madison Area Plan focuses on the unincorporated territory within the planning area boundaries outlined below, outside of municipal jurisdictions. The planning process is divided into four phases: information gathering, creating a vision, developing policies and writing the plan.

Current Conditions Report

This Current Conditions Report is a product of the information-gathering phase. The project team analyzed published data and conducted stakeholder interviews to develop the report's contents.

Planning Area Boundaries

The planning area is located in southeastern Franklin County approximately five miles from downtown Columbus. The planning area includes all of Madison Township, except the areas south of Rohr Road and west of Pontius

Road, plus the portion of Truro Township south of Refugee Road.

The unincorporated area is approximately 20 square miles or 12,839 acres.

Next steps

The project team uses the Current Conditions Report's results as a basis for the remainder of the planning process.

Following this analysis, we will conduct an initial public meeting to gather further input on Madison and Truro Townships' current state.

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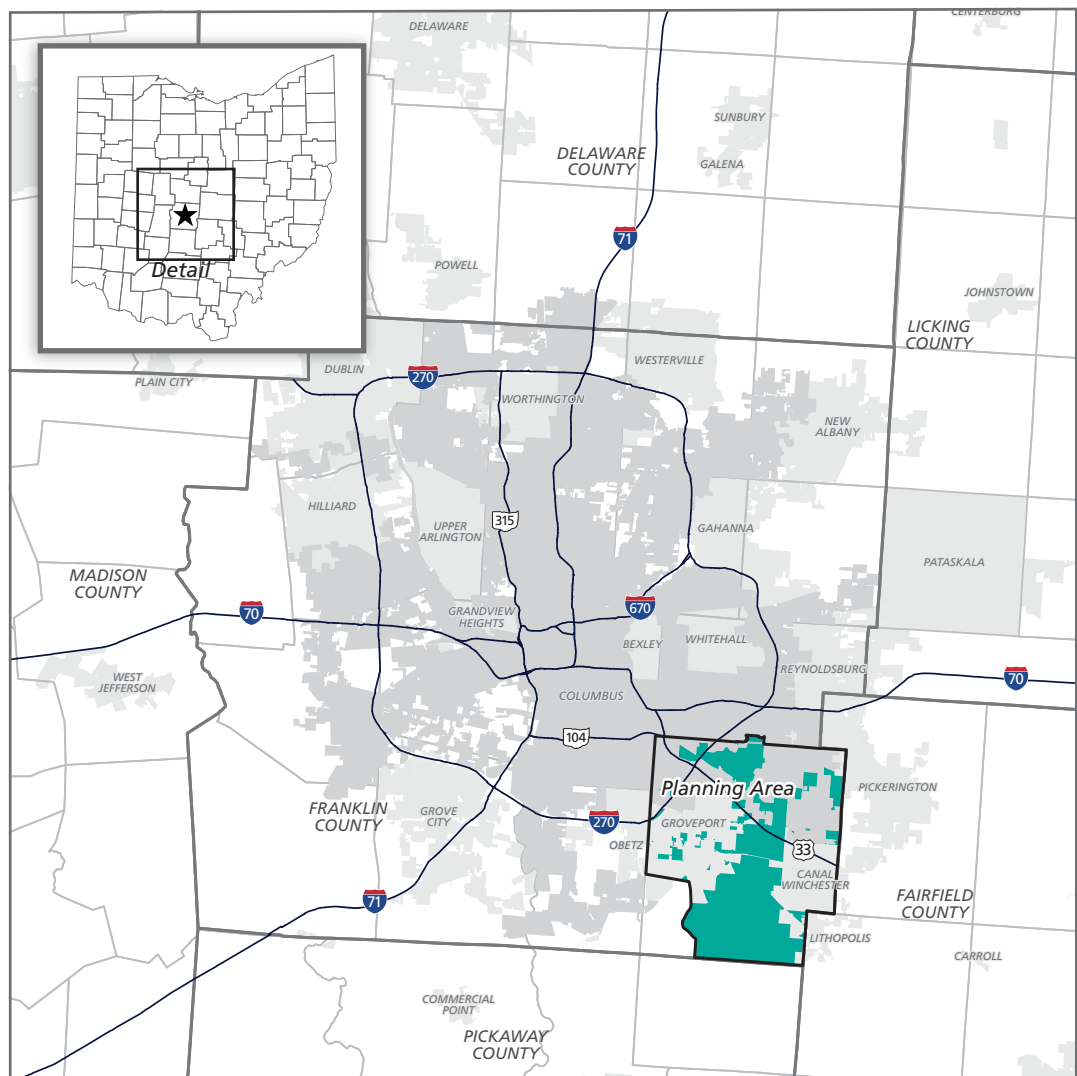
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PLANNING AREA



The planning area is bordered by multiple jurisdictions in three counties

PEOPLE AND HOUSING



PEOPLE

Population: The population in the planning area was 13,105 residents in 2000. Projections from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission show a population growth of 9.7 percent from 2000 to 2030, compared to a 25 percent projected county-wide increase. The table at right shows projected population change, as well as growth of housing, in the planning area.

Population density: The population density for the planning area is 651 people per square mile, lower than Franklin County's overall density of 1,983 people per square mile. This means the planning area's population is more dispersed than the county's population as a whole.

Households: The planning area contains 4,736 total households. There is a higher percentage of family households in the planning area than in Franklin County—76 percent compared to 60 percent. Average household size in the planning area, 2.77 persons per household, is higher than in Franklin County, the state and the nation.

Age: Minors and middle-aged people make up a larger percentage of the population than in Franklin County as a whole. The high percentage of family households likely contributes to this age distribution.

Race: The planning area's racial make-up differs from Franklin County as a whole, with a higher percentage of whites and a lower percentage of all other races.

POPULATION AND HOUSING UNITS

	Population	Housing Units
2000	13,771	4,992
2010	13,893	5,029
2030	15,100	6,130
% Change	9.7%	22.8%

Sources: Estimates, MORPC Figures include portions of Madison and Truro Townships outside the planning area

DEMOGRAPHICS

	Planning Area		Franklin County	
Race	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	11,586	88.4%	795,660	74.4%
Black	916	7.0%	189,652	17.7%
Asian	124	0.9%	32,652	3.1%
Latino	173	1.3%	24,279	2.3%
Other	306	2.3%	26,735	2.5%
Age				
Under 18	3,548	27.1%	268,321	25.1%
18 to 24	1,126	8.6%	125,290	11.7%
25 to 44	4,067	31.0%	256,064	33.3%
45 to 64	3,178	24.3%	214,997	20.1%
65 & Over	1,186	9.0%	104,306	9.8%
Total	13,105		1,068,978	

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

HOUSING

Subdivision Development

Reviewing years of development allows one to see how growth has progressed over time, with development moving further away from urban centers. The following subdivisions account for the majority of housing in the planning area.

Twilight Farms subdivision along Courtright Road was constructed in the late 1920s.

Edgewater Park subdivision west of Hamilton Road was developed in the 1950s.

The majority of the subdivisions making up Blacklick Estates were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. However, two subdivisions in the area were developed in the 1990s.

Occupancy

The occupancy rate for the planning area, 95.7 percent, is higher than Franklin County's 93.2 percent. The planning area has a lower proportion of vacant housing when compared to Franklin County.

Housing Types

Single-family homes make up the majority of housing, however apartment buildings exist in Blacklick Estates.

Owning vs. Renting: The following table shows the proportion of owner- and renter-occupied housing units by geographic area. Despite the difference in housing density between Blacklick Estates and the remainder of the planning area, the proportions are similar.

OWNER- & RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS

	Blacklick Estates*		Remainder of Planning Area	
Owner-occupied	2,590	77.8%	1,107	78.7%
Renter-occupied	740	22.2%	299	21.3%
Total	3,330		1,406	

Source: 2000 U.S. Census *Census-designated place

Housing Units: In 2000 the planning area contained 4,948 housing units. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission projections predict an increase of 23 percent from 2000 to 2030.

Women as Head of Household: Planning area households have 20 percent reported as female head of household, which is very high compared to the county, state and national percentages.

Affordability: Comparing median household income to median home value, Blacklick Estates is more affordable than the rest of the county.

EMPLOYMENT

Jobs in Madison Township: Data from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission shows that 3,632 people work in Madison Township.

Madison Township Residents: According to the 2000 Census, most residents work in these industries:

- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Healthcare/Social Assistance
- Finance/Insurance
- Transportation/Warehousing

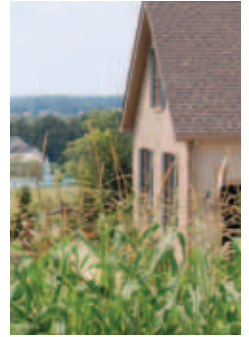
Primary Business Locations

- Noe-Bixby Road and Chatterton Road
- Noe-Bixby Road and Sedalia Drive
- Hamilton Road near Harbor Boulevard and Reinbeau Drive
- Pockets along major roads



Single-family homes in a suburban setting make up the majority of housing

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION



Maps on the following pages show spatial data about our planning area:

Current Land Use map, p. 8

Current Zoning map, p. 9

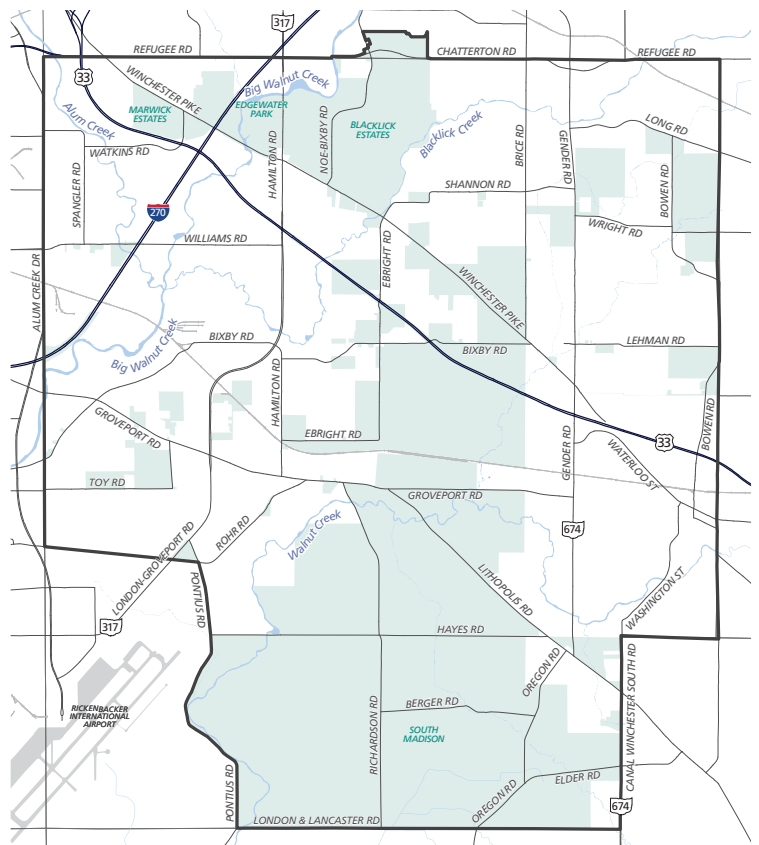
Roads and Transit map, p. 10

Sidewalks map, p. 11

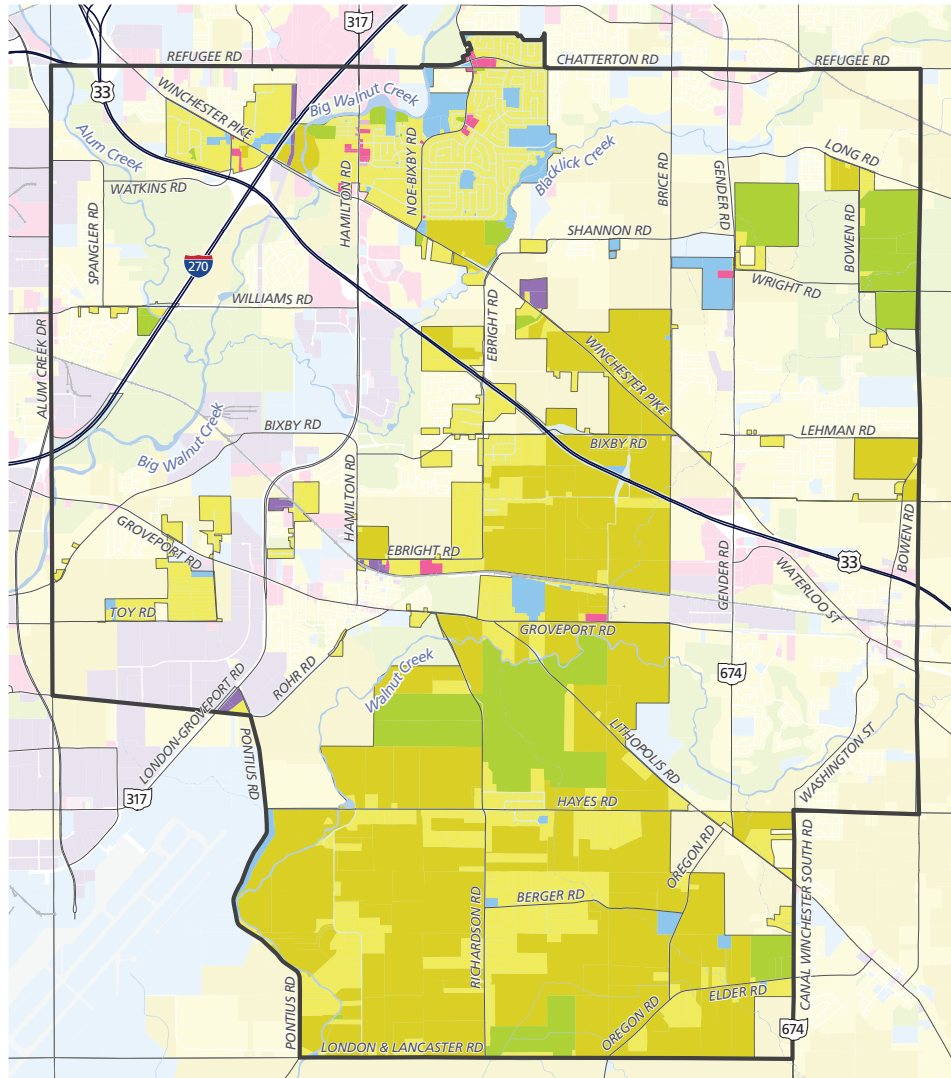
Bikeways and paths map, p. 12

Community Facilities map, p. 13

Township identity map, p. 15



Unincorporated Areas



Current Land Use

- Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Public Service
- Industrial
- Park/Open Space
- Agriculture

CURRENT LAND USE

During the project's next phase, community visioning, a future land use map will be developed. When developing a future land use map, it is important to understand existing land uses. This helps ensure future land use recommendations are compatible with existing development.

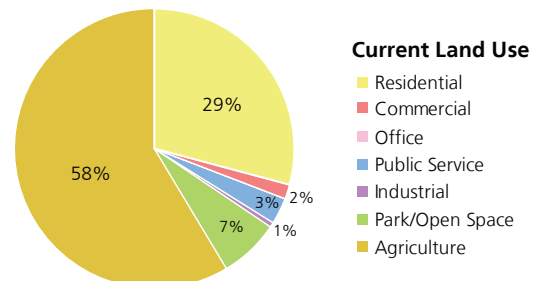
The map above shows current land uses in the planning area. Agriculture is the most common land use, followed by residential uses.

Parks and open space make up 7 percent of the planning area. This number will increase to 12 percent when Walnut Woods Metro Park opens.

Business activity takes place throughout the planning area with concentrations along Hamilton Road, at the Noe-Bixby Road and

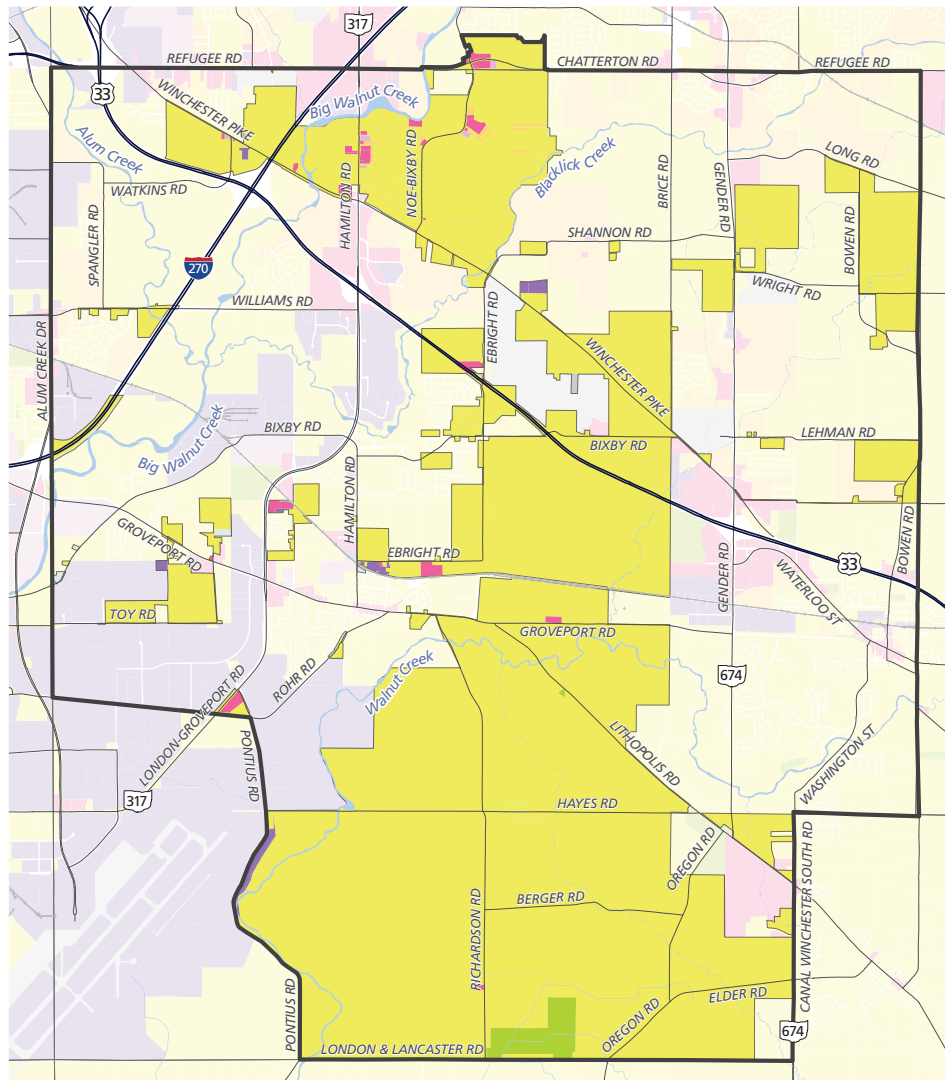
Chatterton Road intersection and at the Noe-Bixby Road and Sedalia Drive intersection. The most common types of businesses are restaurants, bars and retail uses.

Schools and religious uses occupy most of the remaining land in the planning area.



Current Land Use

- Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Public Service
- Industrial
- Park/Open Space
- Agriculture

**Current Zoning**

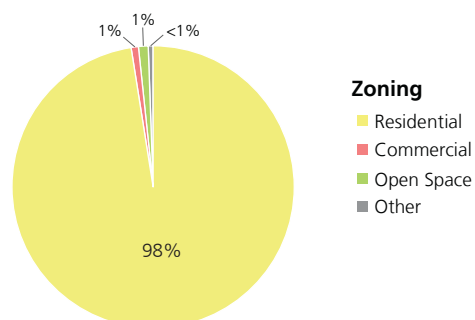
- Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Industrial
- Mixed-Use
- Open Space

A property's zoning classification determines the types of land uses permitted on that property.

The community must consider existing zoning and currently permitted uses when making recommendations for future land uses. This helps to ensure that land use recommendations are compatible with currently permitted uses.

Generalized zoning maps allow us to quickly see which uses are permitted in a given area. The generalized zoning map above groups individual zoning classifications into general categories such as residential, commercial and industrial.

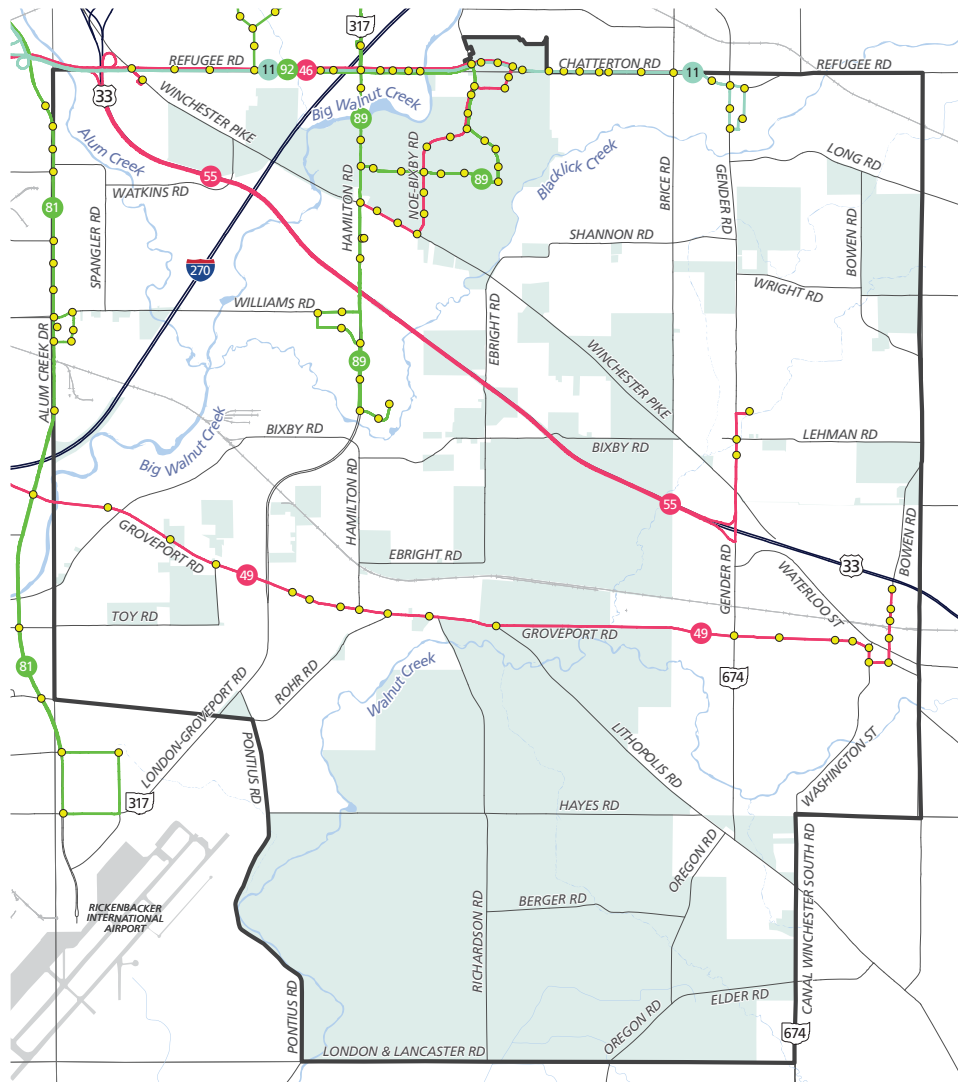
The vast majority of land is zoned for single-family residential and agricultural uses. The remaining portion is primarily zoned for commercial uses.



CURRENT ZONING

COTA Bus Routes

-  Local
-  Crosstown
-  Express
-  Bus Stops



ROADS AND TRANSIT

Highways, Road and Streets

The planning area has easy access to major highways.

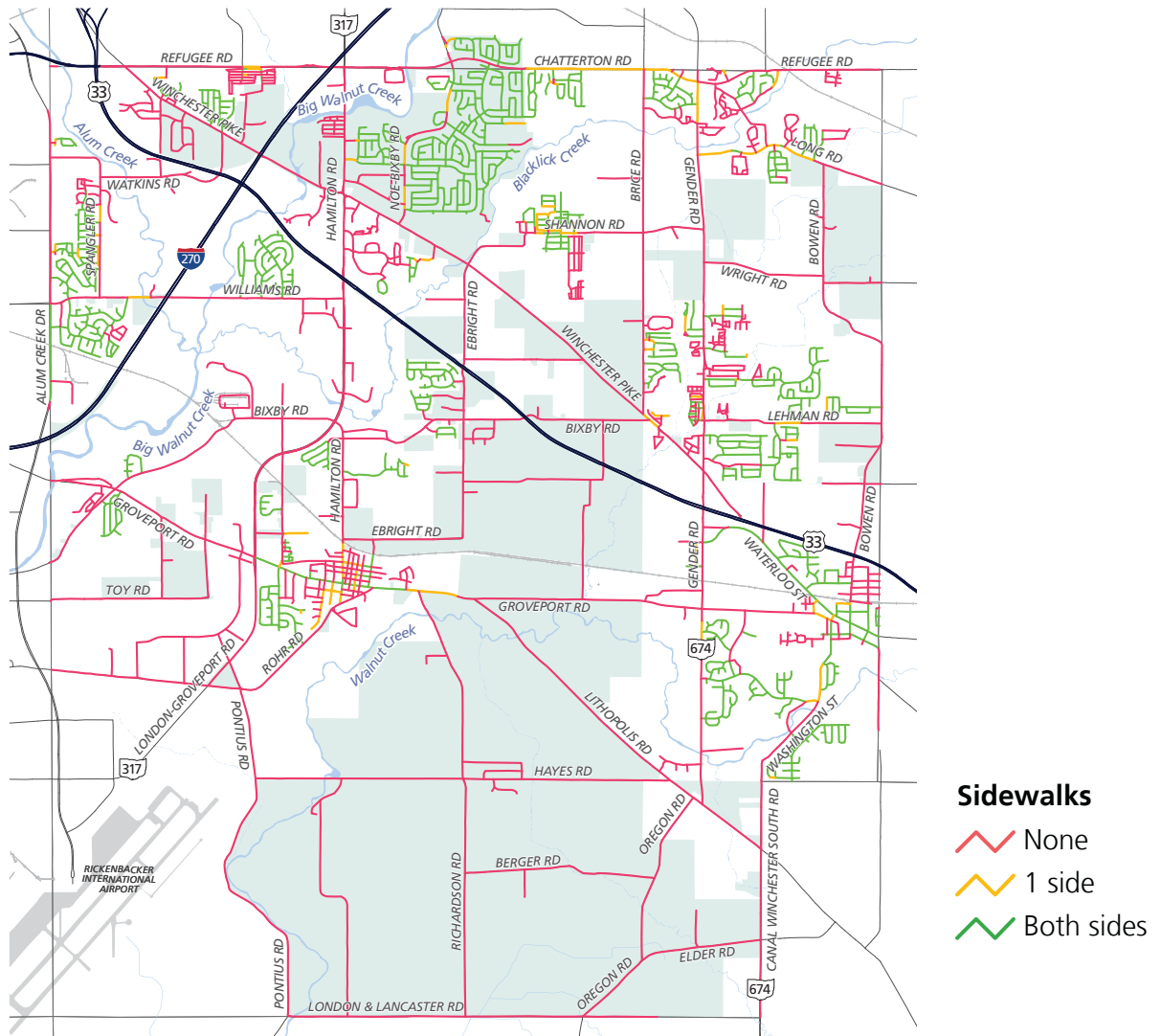
Interstate 270 curves through the northwest part of the planning area, with an interchange at U.S. Route 33. U.S. Route 33 is a busy semi-limited-access highway that runs northwest to southeast across the planning area.

Hamilton Road, designated as State Route 317, forms the western edge of the Blacklick Estates neighborhood. Hamilton Road connects Rickenbacker International Airport and Groveport with Whitehall and Gahanna. Gender Road, designated as State Route 674, runs

from U.S. Route 33 in Canal Winchester south through Lithopolis.

Other major roads in the planning area include Noe-Bixby Road, Chatterton Road, Groveport Road, Lithopolis Road and Winchester Pike.

Future road improvement projects include a new interchange at Bixby Road and U.S. Route 33, widening Bixby Road, intersection improvements at Noe-Bixby Road and Chatterton Road, and bridge improvements on Richardson Road at Walnut Creek.



Transit

Buses provide transportation for a range of people: those who choose not to drive, those without a vehicle and those unable to drive. The Central Ohio Transit Authority provides bus service to the planning area.

Blacklick Estates is served by an Express route and a Crosstown route. Additional Express routes operate along U.S. Route 33 and Groveport Road through the center of the planning area.

Nearby Park and Ride locations include Refugee Road near Eastland Mall and Gender Road north of Winchester Pike.

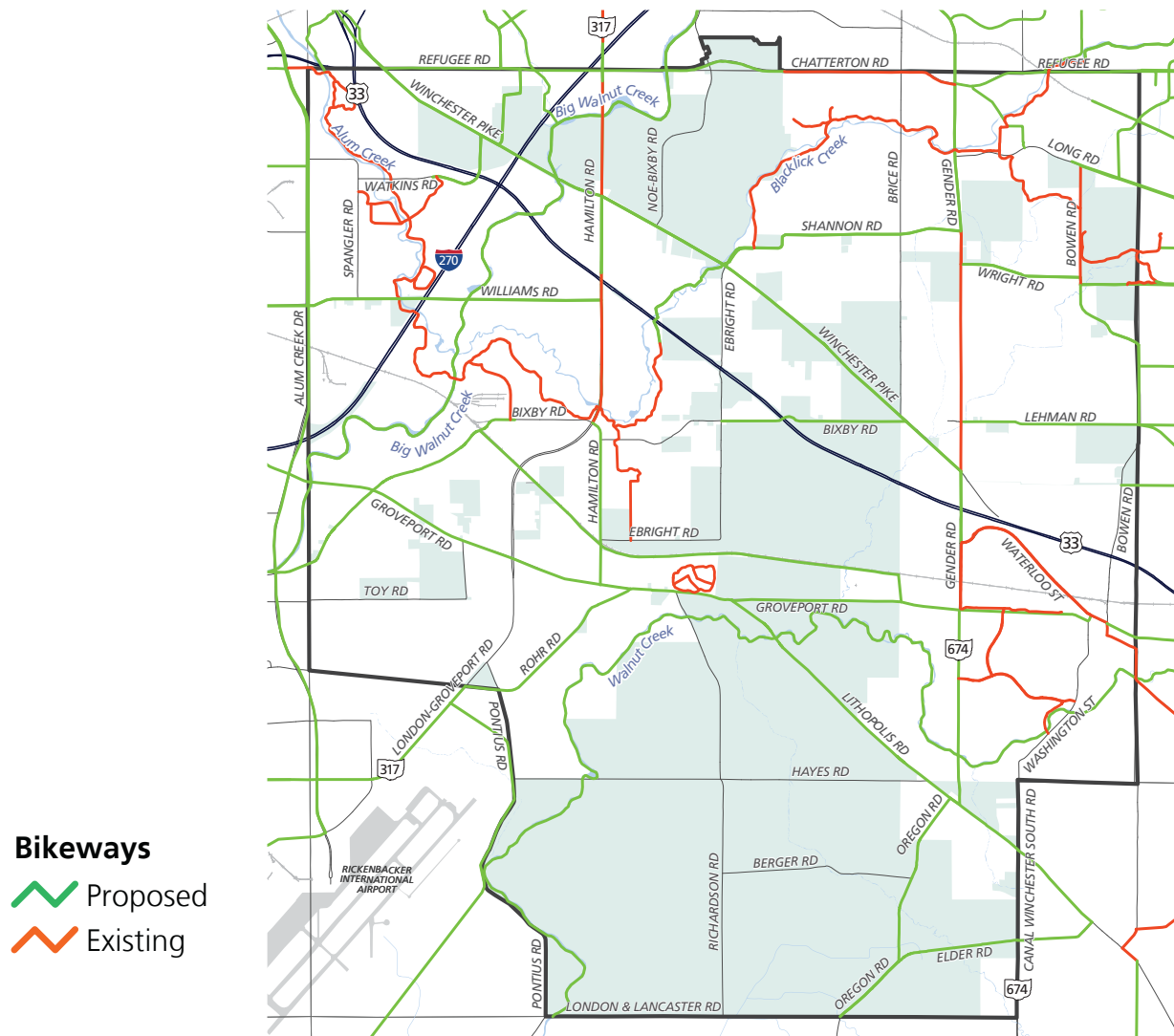
Bus stops are located in Blacklick Estates along Noe-Bixby Road, Hamilton Road, Refugee Road, Chatterton Road, Sedalia Drive and Harbour Boulevard.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks connect neighborhood residents to destinations, children to schools, provide opportunities for physical activity and serve as an alternative mode of transportation.

The sidewalk map shows streets that have sidewalks, and those that do not. The Blacklick Estates neighborhood has sidewalks throughout. Other neighborhoods lack sidewalks.

SIDEWALKS



BIKEWAYS AND PATHS

Gaps in sidewalks exist along Noe-Bixby Road. The roads with the greatest need for sidewalks include Refugee Road, Chatterton Road and Hamilton Road. Sidewalks allow residents to access businesses, parks and other destinations.

Bikeways and Paths

This map shows the location of existing and planned bikeways in the planning area.

The longest lengths of connected trails are found along Alum Creek and Blacklick Creek, south of U.S. Route 33.

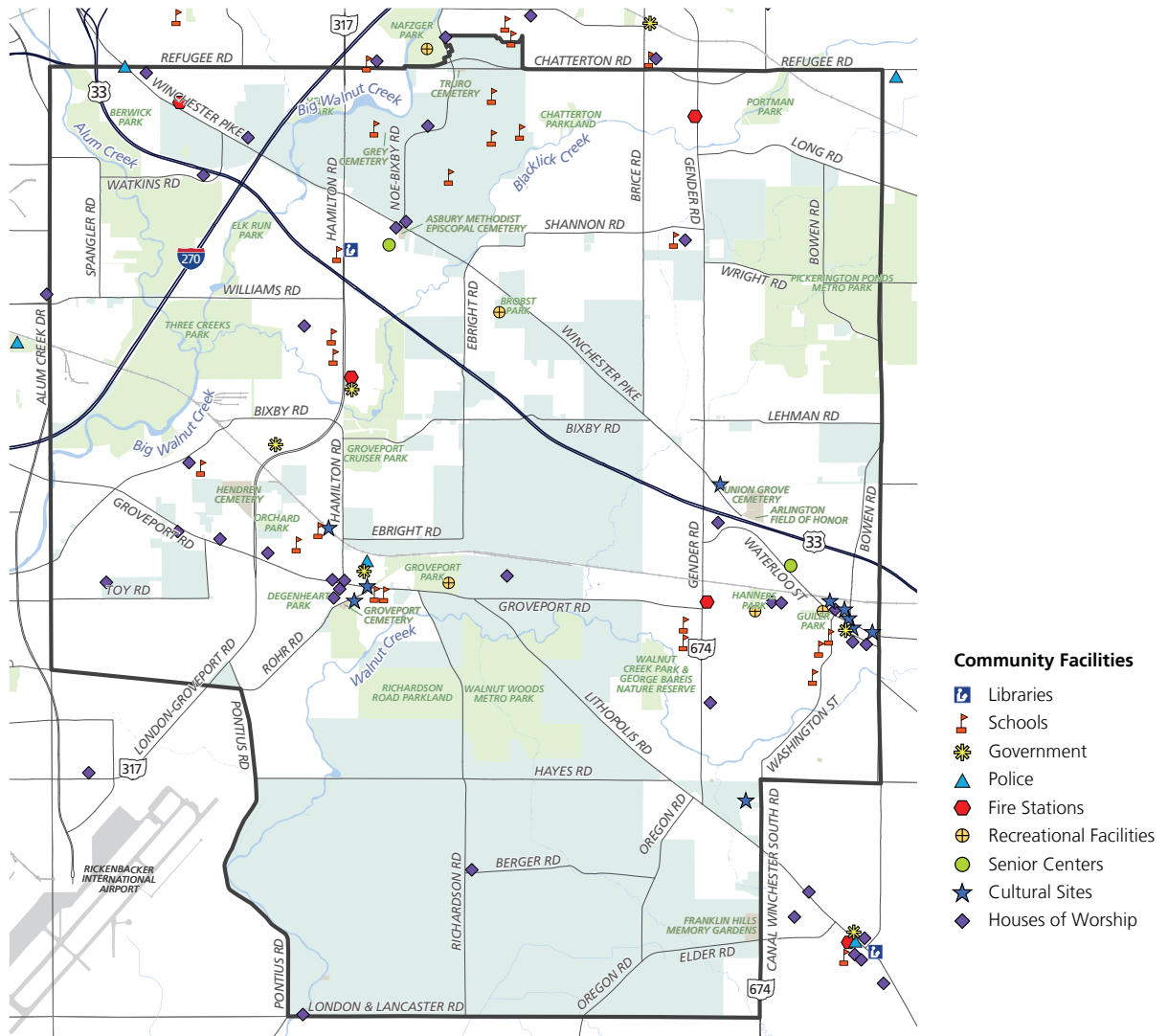
Current bikeway construction along Blacklick Creek will connect two trail sections. Blacklick

Estates' residents cannot easily access the Blacklick Creek trail.

Proposed bikeway types include shared roadway lanes, bicycle lanes along roadway shoulders, and separate bicycle paths.

Rail

No passenger rail lines serve the planning area, however the planning area has a freight rail line operated by the Indiana and Ohio Railway. The line runs east-west across the planning area with four at-grade crossings: Henderson Road, Hamilton Road, Front Street and Rager Road. All crossings have pavement markings, warning lights and gates.



Parks and Recreation Facilities

Large amounts of parkland exist in the planning area. Pickerington Ponds Metro Park and Three Creeks Park account for the majority of parkland. The new Walnut Woods Metro Park will add 576 acres of parkland.

Madison Township owns and operates the Robert M. Brobst Park on Winchester Pike. Facilities at the park include ball fields, basketball courts, play areas and a shelter house.

Other recreational facilities located nearby include Helsel Park and Nafzger Park in Columbus, Hanners Park and Guiler Park in Canal Winchester and Groveport's Recreation and Aquatic Centers.

No parks exist in the Blacklick Estates neighborhood. Residents use school athletic fields and play areas as recreational facilities.

Recreational facilities give residents the opportunity to be physically active.

Schools

Four school districts serve the planning area: Canal Winchester, Groveport-Madison, Pickerington and Teays Valley. However, the vast majority of the planning area is in the Groveport-Madison school district.

The planning area contains five Groveport-Madison schools, all located in Blacklick Estates.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Elementary Schools: Asbury, Dunloe, Madison, and Sedalia Elementary Schools have a combined enrollment of 1,475 students. They each provide schooling for grades K–5.

One middle school, Groveport-Madison North, is located in the planning area. It has an enrollment of 450 students and provides schooling for grades 6–7.

These schools were built in the 1960s and 1970s. In spring 2010, Groveport-Madison created a master facilities plan. The recommendation of the master facilities plan is to build five new elementary schools, two new middle schools and a new high school. The new schools would all be on existing sites except for two elementary schools.

The Ohio School Facilities Commission has approved the master facilities plan and the school district will receive funding in 2011.

Safety Services

Fire: The Madison Township Fire Department and the Truro Township Fire Department provide fire fighting and emergency medical service to the planning area. Mutual aid agreements exist between the townships and the city of Columbus allowing each to receive additional help when needed.

Madison Township operates two fire stations located on Firehouse Lane and Gender Road.

Truro Township also operates two fire stations located on East Main Street and East Livingston Avenue, both in the city of Reynoldsburg.

Police: Madison Township provides police services to the Madison Township portion of the planning area. The Madison Township Police Department is located on Madison Lane.

The Franklin County Sheriff's Office provides police services to the entire planning area.

Other Community Facilities

Madison Township Community Center: Located on Madison Lane, the center is used for official township business and can be rented for private events.

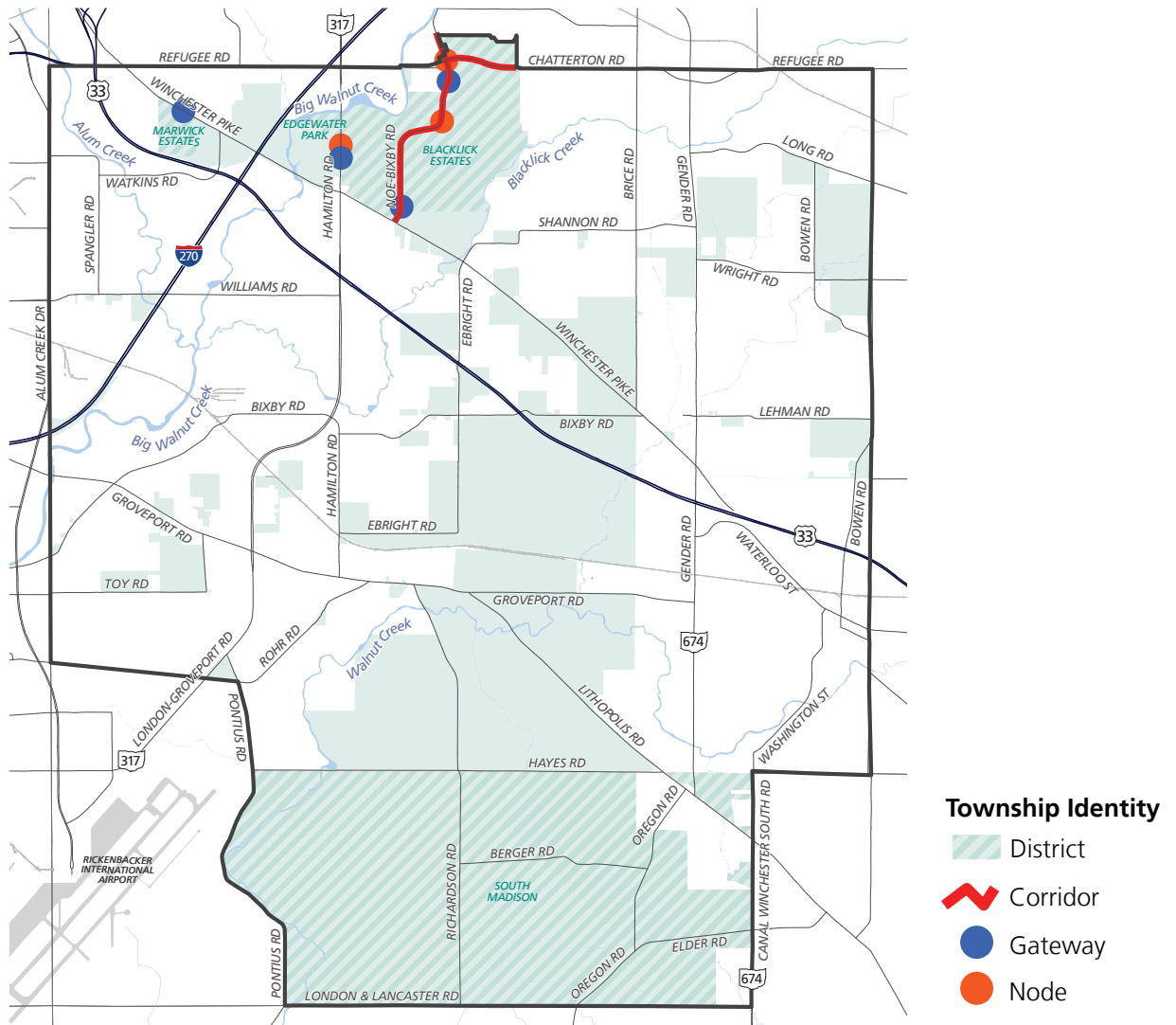
Columbus Metropolitan Library: The Southeast Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library is located at 3980 South Hamilton Road, in the city of Columbus. The location opened in 2000, providing meeting room space and computers. The library is not easily accessible to planning area residents.

Postal Service: No post offices are located in the planning area. Nearby locations include MacSway Avenue off Hamilton Road and Brice Road near Chatterton Road.

Medical Service: No medical facilities are located in the planning area. Nearby medical facilities include the Diley Ridge Medical Center in Fairfield County, Sedalia Medical Center in Groveport and an urgent care on Hamilton Road.



There are four elementary schools and one middle school in the planning area



The Township Identity map shows distinct areas that help form a community's identity including gateways, corridors, nodes and districts.

Gateways

Gateways are major entry points to the community and offer a community's first impression to newcomers. The planning area has four gateways, as shown on the map above. The locations are key entry points into the Blacklick Estates and Marwick Estates neighborhoods. Existing gateways lack distinguishing features such as welcome signs and landscaping that inform travelers when they enter an area.

Corridors

Corridors also convey a community's image. Corridors are lengths of roadways that have similar characteristics and business activity.

Noe-Bixby Road: Located in the northern part of the planning area Noe-Bixby Road runs north-south. Businesses are located at main intersections.

Chatterton Road: Also located in the northern-most part of the planning area, Chatterton Road runs east-west. Land uses along the corridor include apartments, restaurants and other businesses.

**TOWNSHIP
IDENTITY**

Nodes

Nodes are locations that attract large numbers of people and may include shopping areas, town squares or other community gathering spots.

Noe-Bixby Road and Chatterton Road: The Refugee Center shopping center at the intersection includes 10 retail and restaurant spaces. The center is 90 percent occupied. Additional commercial uses are located around the intersection. A vacant commercial building is at the intersection's northeast corner.

Noe-Bixby Road and Sedalia Drive: Near the intersection are a number of businesses including an insurance agency, restaurant, grocery store and a retail store. A vacant property exists at the intersection's northeast corner.

Hamilton Road between Harbor Blvd and Reinbeau Drive: Businesses in this area include a child day care, gas station, car wash and driving academy. A large commercial property at this location remains mostly undeveloped.

Districts

Areas with uniform characteristics are known as districts. Districts in the planning area include Blacklick Estates, Marwick Estates, Edgewater Park and the area south of Hayes Road.

Blacklick Estates: Approximately 70 percent of the planning area's population lives in the district. The district includes residential, commercial, religious and school uses. While

residential streets have sidewalks, gaps in sidewalks exist along major roads. Neighborhood residents can access the regional bikeway trail along Blacklick Creek with difficulty. Public water and sewer are provided.

Marwick Estates: Located in the northwest part of the planning area, the residential neighborhood developed in the 1950s and 1960s. The neighborhood is exclusively residential in nature with no sidewalks. Property sizes are approximately one-half acre and houses use on-site well and septic systems. The small lot sizes do not adequately support on-site septic systems.

Edgewater Park: Located just west of the Blacklick Estates neighborhood, Edgewater Park developed in the 1950s. Many property owners combined small lots to create larger properties however many small lots still exist. Lot sizes do not adequately support on-site well and septic systems.

South Madison: The area south of Hayes Road is residential and agricultural with most land devoted to farming. The area has large amounts of floodplain and poorly drained soils that require special consideration for development. These same conditions result in productive farmland. The area lacks public water and sewer, limiting development potential for intense land uses. No bikeways exist in the area but proposed locations include along Walnut Creek, Oregon Road, Elder Road and Pontius Road.



Nodes are social gathering places where the community comes to shop, dine, and meet

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS



The project team held interviews with township stakeholders, which we generally defined as people having an interest in the planning area's future. The interviews provide a preliminary understanding of people's likes and dislikes. We interviewed residents, business owners, government agencies, environmental groups, developers and others.

Through the interviews, we developed a list of potential issues to address during the planning process. Following our large-scale public meetings, the list will be expanded and refined.

Below is a summary of these issues, divided into five categories: development, transportation, recreation, the environment and community-related.

Development

Land use: A sufficient range of commercial uses appears to exist within the planning area or nearby. However, many interviewed would like to see more family-oriented commercial

establishments and improvements to building appearances.

Additional input may lead to future land use or development recommendations.

Site development: Interviewees expressed concern regarding a vacant apartment building and vacant commercial properties. These vacant buildings and properties are in highly visible locations. An area's image is negatively affected by vacant properties.

Public input can lead to future land use recommendations and updated development standards to help reduce the impact of vacant properties.

Property maintenance: Those interviewed expressed concern with property upkeep, including general appearance, lawns and trash. The unkempt nature of rental housing was the biggest concern.

Recommendations for improving property appearances are possible following public input.

Transportation

Lack of sidewalks: Commercial areas along Chatterton Road, Noe-Bixby Road and Hamilton Road lack continuous sidewalks for pedestrians.

Public input can lead to the creation of a sidewalk prioritization map.

Traffic congestion: Traffic congestion causes problems for motorists entering onto Chatterton Road from commercial properties and side streets. Planned intersection improvements at Noe-Bixby Road and Chatterton Road should address the problem.

Road maintenance: Development in surrounding areas has increased traffic on township and county roads that were not built to handle high numbers of vehicles.

Public input can lead to the creation of a road improvement prioritization map.

U.S. Route 33: Mentioned frequently, the proposed interchange at U.S. Route 33 and Bixby Road is a concern and opportunity. The interchange would increase traffic on existing township and county roads but could lead to new commercial development.

Additional public input can lead to land use and road improvement recommendations.

Recreation

Lack of facilities: Blacklick Estates has no dedicated recreational facilities. Residents rely on school athletic fields and play areas for recreation.

Further public input may lead to recommendations for facilities in Blacklick Estates.

Public parks: Residents are happy with abundant park space in the planning area.

The plan can include recommendations for direct connections to bikeways that lead to parks.

Environment

Failing septic systems: Edgewater Park, Bixford Estates and other subdivisions have large

numbers of failing septic systems. Failing systems cause untreated sewage to pollute drinking water and streams.

Following public input the plan can include recommendations to prevent and limit the number of failing septic systems.

Clean streams: Many interviewed want to keep streams clean and healthy. Concerns exist regarding illegal dumping near streams and trash and leaves being placed in storm sewers that enter streams. The planning area has large amounts of floodplain that if left undeveloped will help keep streams healthy.

Public input can help develop recommendations for protecting streams.

Community-related

Community identity: Planning area residents do not identify with Truro and Madison Townships. Creating an identity for commercial and residential areas helps build pride in the community.

Ideas for building community identity can be explored during public meetings.

Crime: A major concern raised by those interviewed was the amount of crime occurring in the Blacklick Estates area.

Crime is outside the scope of a land use plan. However, some recommendations, including revised development standards and street lighting, may increase neighborhood safety.

Summary and next steps

Following additional public input, the list of current issues will be finalized. A preliminary vision for the community's future will be identified based on what residents want to see changed or remain the same. The project team and working committee will then develop ideas to help the community reach its vision.

Public input is necessary during each phase of the planning process.

The project team thanks those interviewed for their willingness to participate in the Blacklick-Madison Area Plan.

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The project team thanks the following individuals and groups for input, technical advice and assistance overall with the Blacklick-Madison Area Plan Current Conditions Report:

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Economic Development and Planning Department
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