

SECTION 3

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The first step in creating a plan is finding out what a community is like today, also called its current conditions.

We gathered information from published sources such as the U.S. Census and from face-to-face interviews with community members.

After assessing the current physical conditions, we conducted a large-scale public input meeting. Over 70 attendees told us what they like about Madison and Truro Townships and what they want to see changed. The data, interviews and public input results set the strategic direction for the plan, providing the basis for the plan's forward-looking recommendations.

People and Housing, p. 35

People and Housing provides information on the planning area's population, age distribution, housing and businesses. The information is the first look into the community, providing a high-level overview.

Current Conditions maps, p. 37

The Land Use and Transportation portion of the Current Conditions section describes and shows the current land uses, zoning, bus routes, sidewalk locations, bikeways and paths, and community facilities in the planning area. This is the second level of research, showing the community's current conditions in greater detail.

Public Meeting Results, p. 47

The public meeting results provide an in-depth review of what the community thinks about various community aspects such as land uses, parks and recreation, and the transportation network.

Gathering community opinion helps form the strategic vision for the future, and in turn the specific recommendations detailed in *Section 4, Recommendations*.



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: A higher percentage of housing is occupied by families in the planning area compared to Franklin County—76 percent compared to 60 percent. In addition, a higher percentage of women are the head of household in the planning area compared to Franklin County. The average household size in the planning area, 2.77 persons per household, is also higher than in Franklin County.

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

Race: The planning area's racial make-up differs from Franklin County, with a higher percentage of whites and a lower percentage of 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: MORPC estimates. 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

Residential Development

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.

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

The Marwick Estates subdivision south of Winchester Pike was primarily constructed in the 1950s.

The majority of the subdivisions making up Blacklick Estates were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. However, two subdivisions in Blacklick Estates 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 owner- and renter-occupied percentages are similar.



The majority of housing consists of single-family, suburban homes

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.

Affordability: Comparing median household income to median home value, Blacklick Estates is more affordable than Franklin County as a whole.

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

CURRENT CONDITIONS MAPS



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

Current Land Use map, p. 38

Shows how land within the planning area is currently being used

Current Zoning map, p. 39

Shows existing zoning districts, which determine the range of permitted land uses

Roads and Transit map, p. 40

Shows major roads and bus routes connecting people to destinations

Sidewalks map, p. 41

Shows locations of existing sidewalks connecting pedestrians to schools and businesses

Bikeways and paths map, p. 42

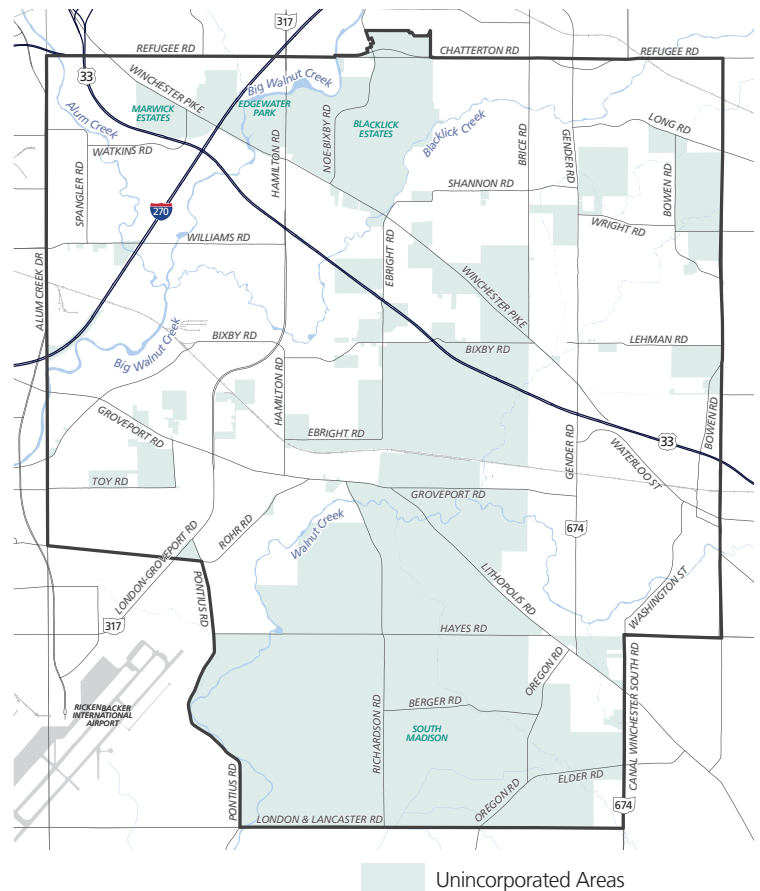
Shows existing and proposed locations of bike-ways and paths for recreation and commuting

Community Facilities map, p. 43

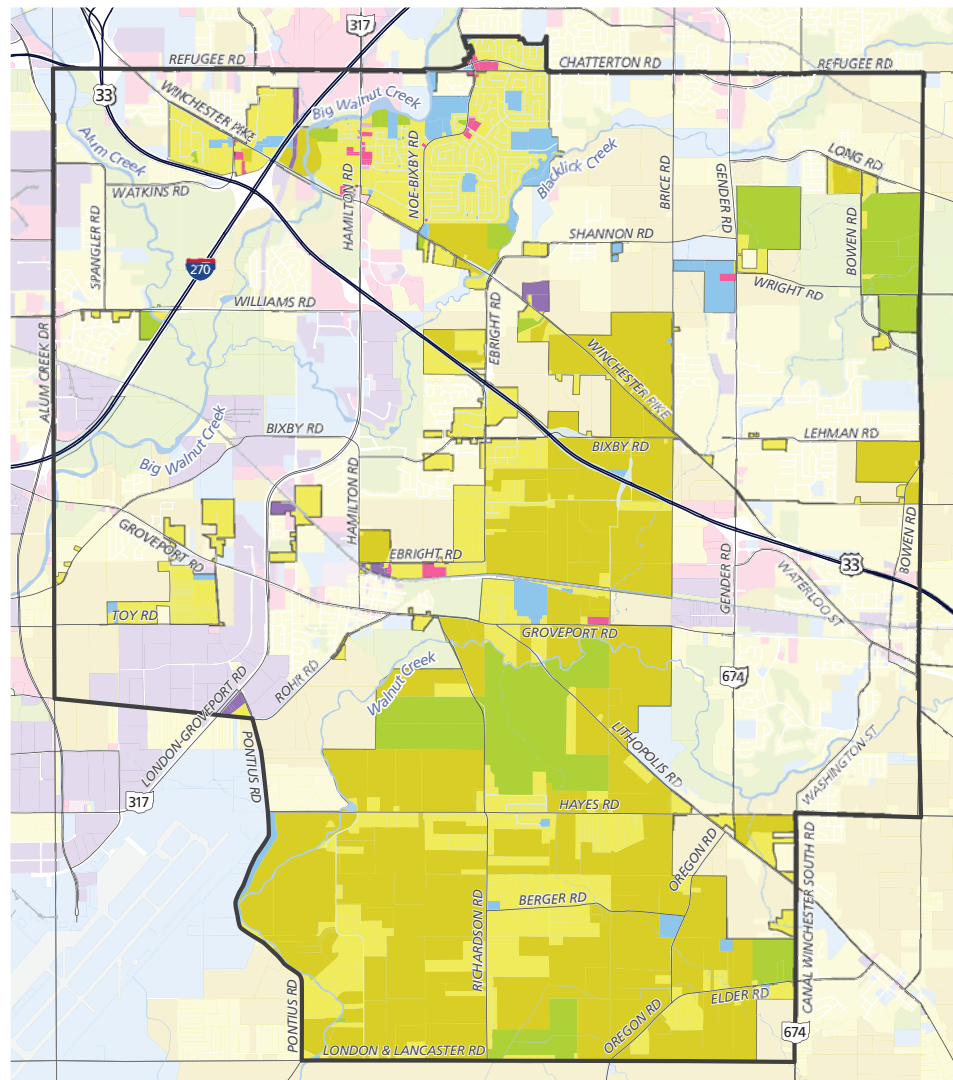
Shows places residents rely on for community services that enhance the quality of life

Township identity map, p. 45

Shows the areas and corridors that help to define the community



Current Land Use



CURRENT LAND USE

Understanding and considering existing land uses ensures that future land use recommendations are compatible with existing development.

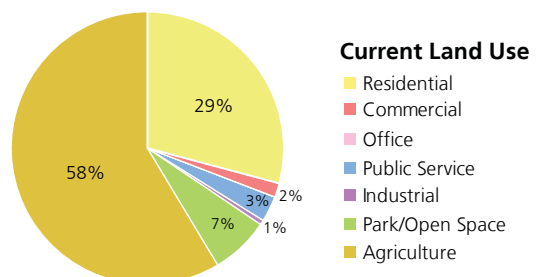
The map above shows current land uses in the planning area. Agriculture is the most common land use, followed by residential uses.

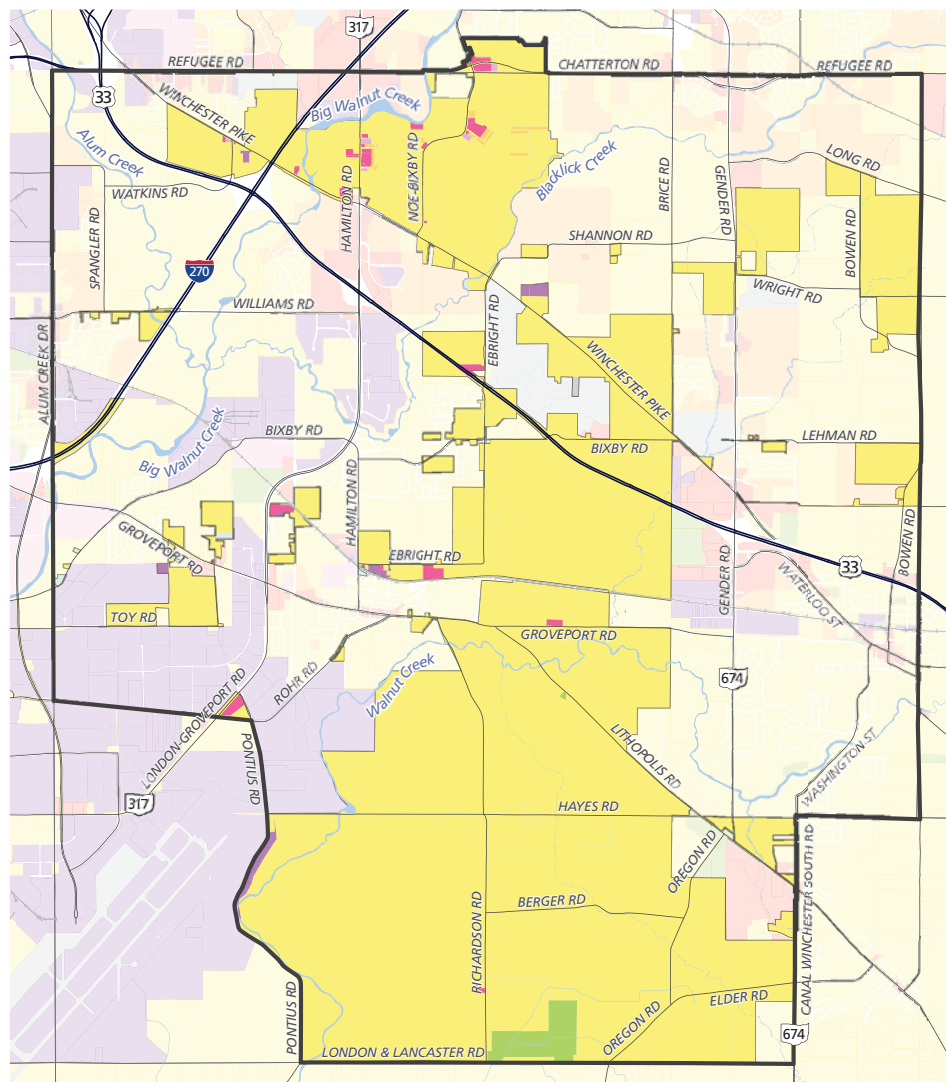
Parks and open space make up 7 percent of the planning area. This number will increase to 12 percent when Walnut Woods Metro Park opens.

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

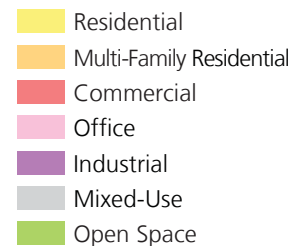
common types of businesses are restaurants, bars and retail uses.

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





Current Zoning



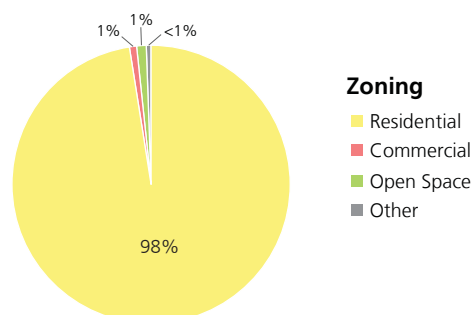
A property's zoning classification determines the range of uses permitted on that property.

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.

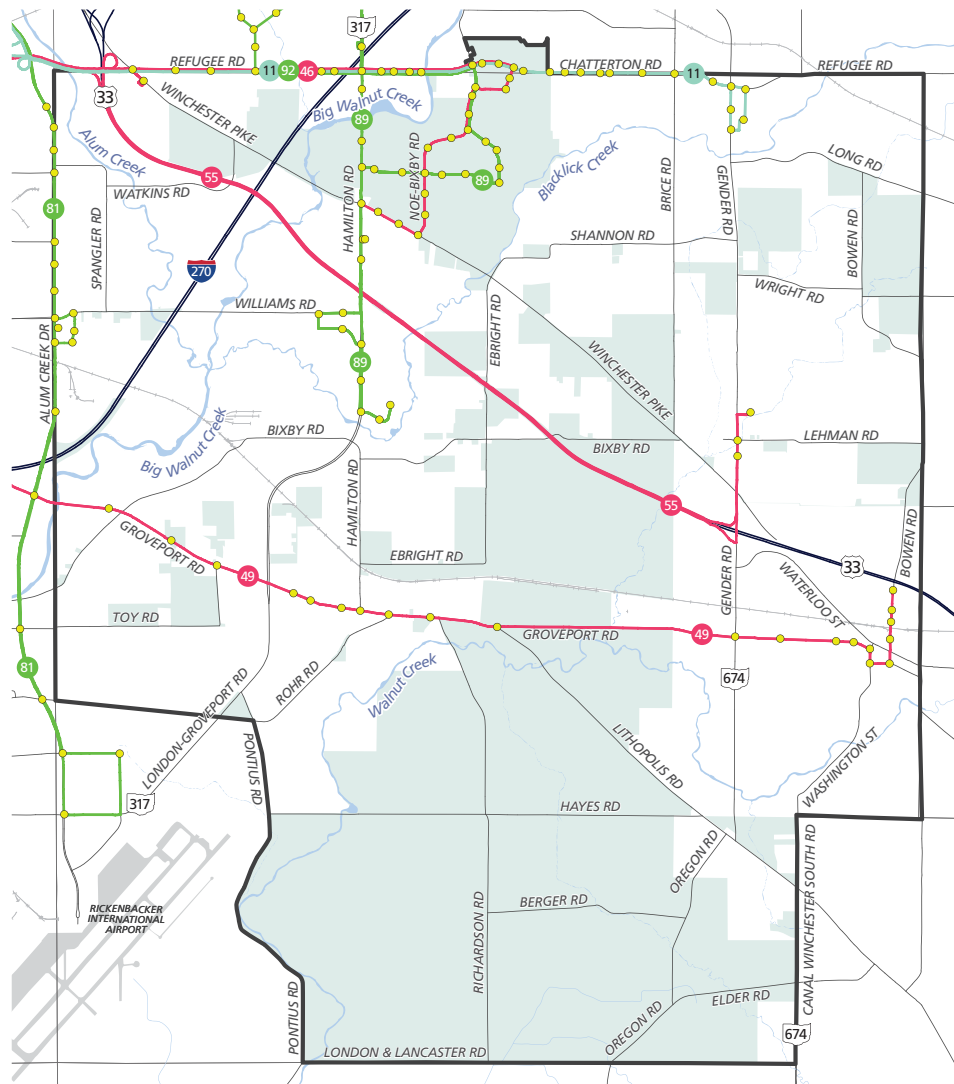
Generalized zoning maps allow us to quickly see the range of uses permitted in a given area. The generalized zoning map groups individual zoning classifications into general categories such as residential, commercial and industrial.

The vast majority of the planning area's 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.

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

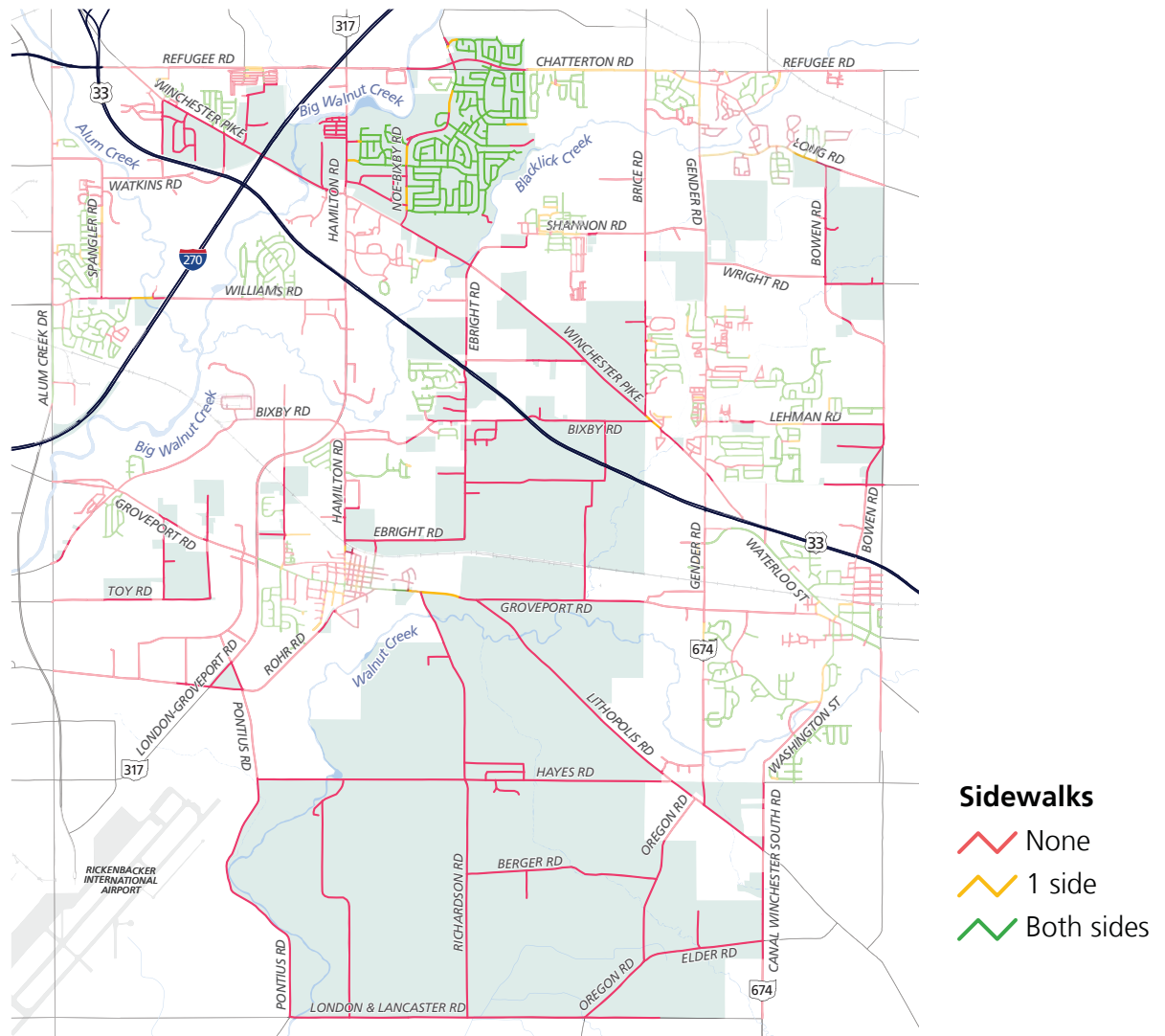
Hamilton Road forms the western edge of the Blacklick Estates neighborhood. Hamilton Road connects Rickenbacker International Airport and Groveport with Whitehall and Gahanna. Gender Road runs from U.S. Route 33 in Canal Winchester south through Lithopolis.

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, a widening of 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

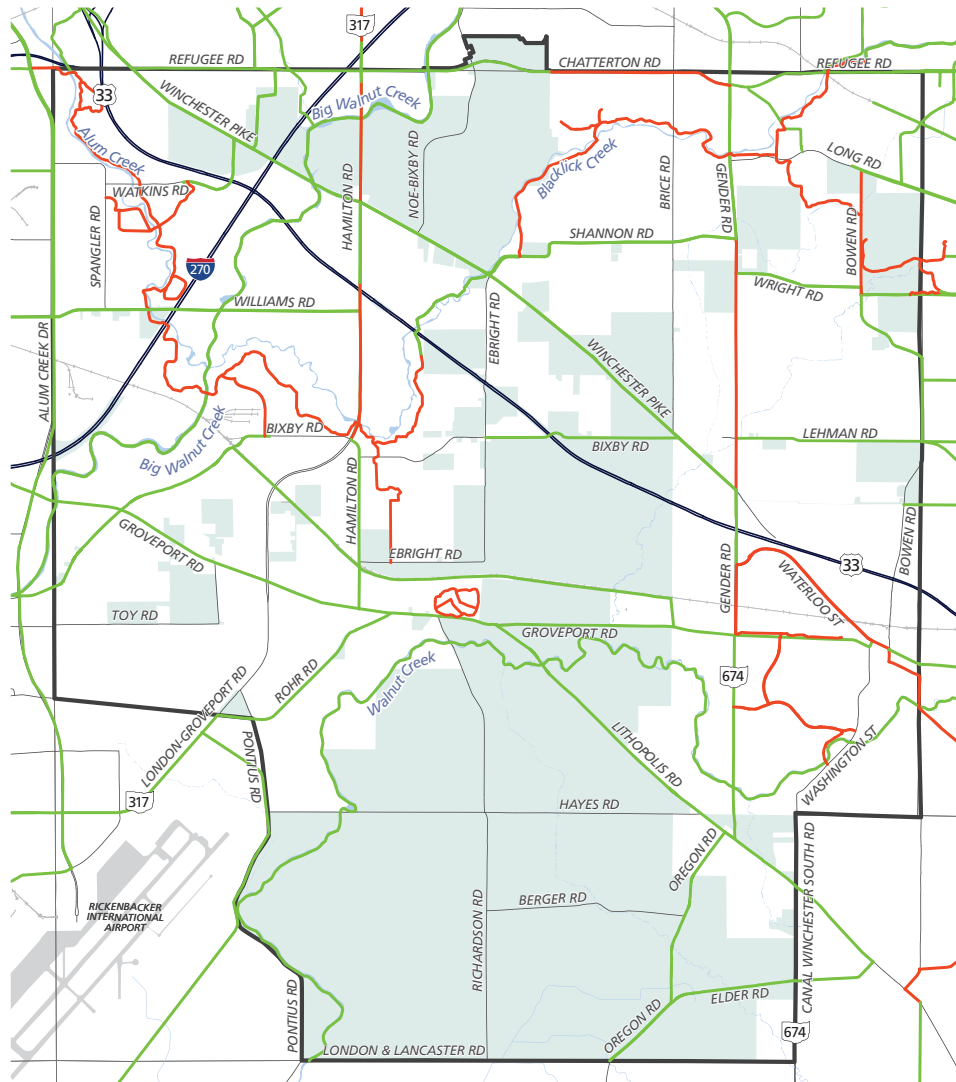
Sidewalks connect neighborhood residents to destinations, children to schools, provide opportunities for physical activity and serve as an alternative mode of transportation.

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

Bikeways

-  Proposed
-  Existing



BIKEWAYS AND PATHS

Bikeways and Paths

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

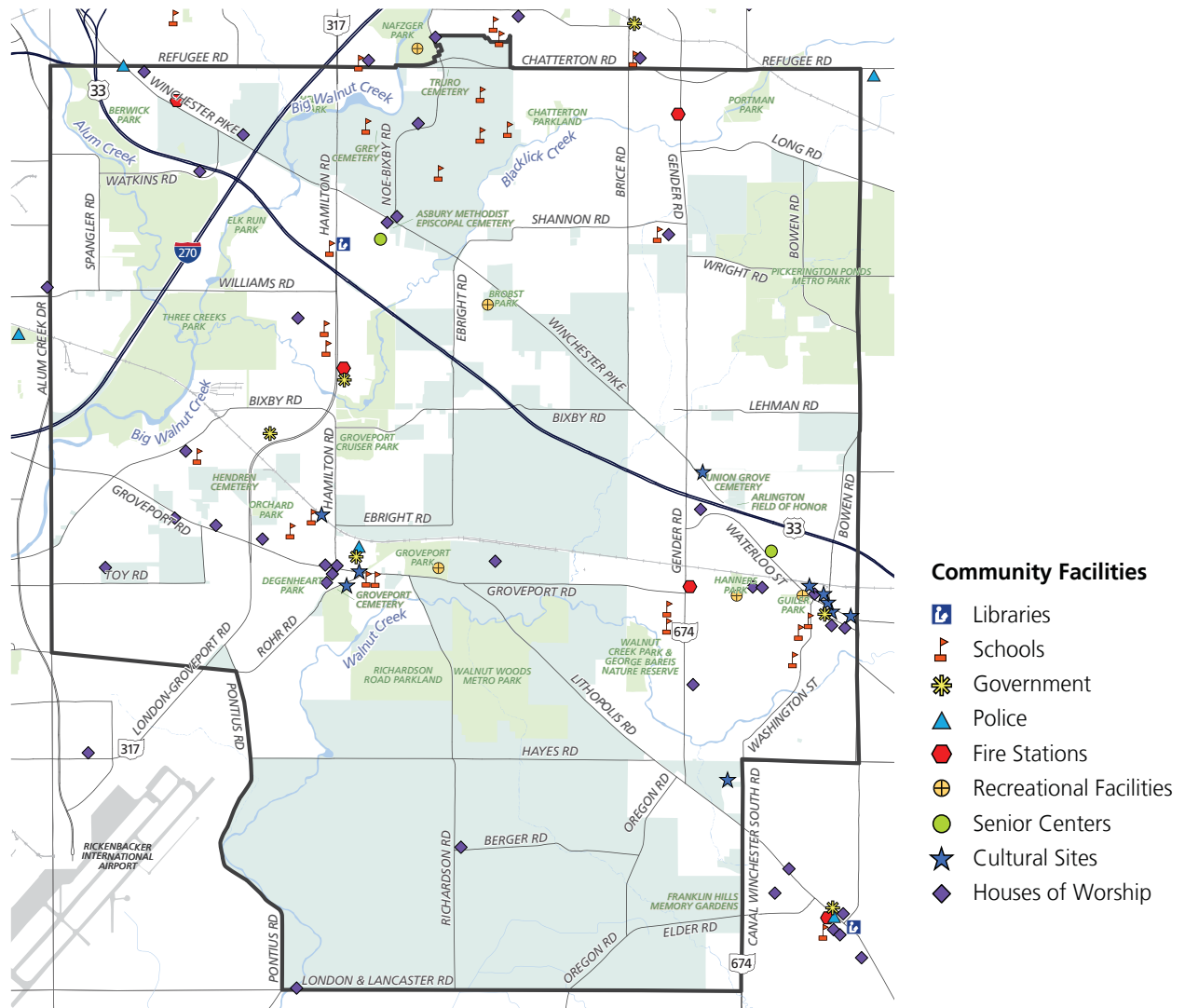
The longest lengths of connected trails are found along Alum Creek and Blacklick Creek, south of U.S. Route 33.

Ongoing 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.



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.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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

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 and 7.

These schools were built in the 1960s and 1970s. In spring 2010, Groveport-Madison completed a master facilities plan. The plan recommends building five new elementary schools, two new middle schools and a new high school. All new schools would be on existing sites except for two elementary schools.

The Ohio School Facilities Commission approved the master facilities plan however funding is not currently available for implementation.

Safety Services

Fire: Both the Madison Township and Truro Township Fire Departments 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.

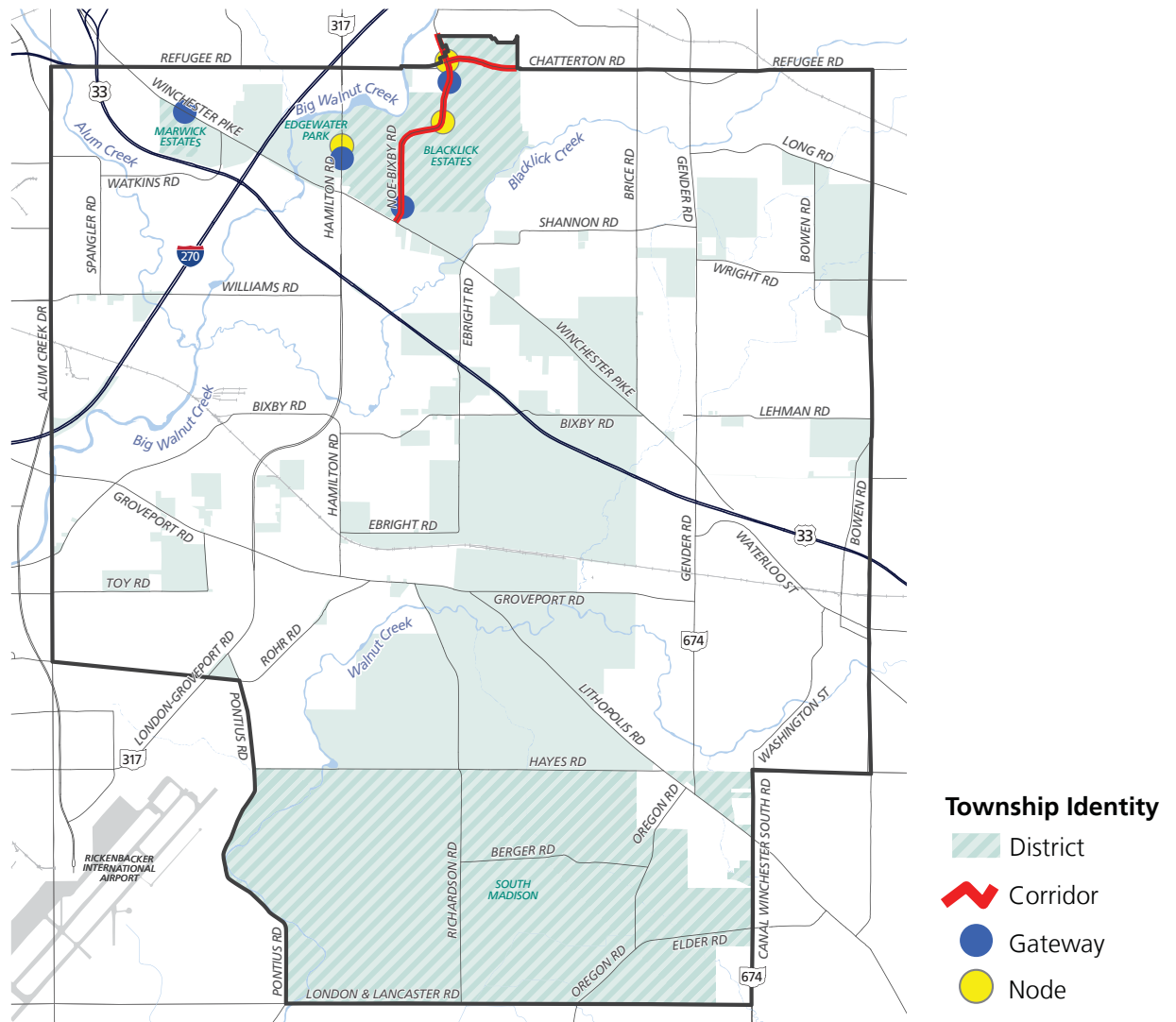
Columbus Metropolitan Library: The Southeast Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library is located at 3980 South Hamilton Road, in the city of Columbus. The location opened in 2000, providing meeting room space and computers. The library is not easily accessible to planning area residents.

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.



Four elementary schools and one middle school operate 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 northernmost 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. 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 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

PUBLIC MEETING RESULTS



Public meetings allow community members to provide input on their community's future. For the purposes of the Blacklick-Madison Area Plan, the future includes how land is used, how buildings look and how people get around.

First public meeting

We held the first of four Blacklick-Madison Area Plan public meetings on September 27, 2010 at Asbury United Methodist Church South, 4760 Winchester Pike.

Over 70 residents, property owners, business representatives and other interested individuals attended the meeting.

Gathering input

After a brief presentation by the project team, meeting attendees were assigned to one of four groups according to where they live: Blacklick Estates, Edgewater Park/Marwick Estates, Central Madison and South Madison.

We conducted the following three exercises to gather detailed feedback from participants.

1. Feedback form: Each attendee filled out a form, composed of two types of questions: questions to answer on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree and

open-ended questions asking attendees to indicate their general likes and dislikes about the community.

2. Group discussion: Within the small groups, attendees discussed their likes and dislikes. Participants then grouped their comments according to topic area, to see which likes and dislikes were most common.
3. Favorite places maps: For the final exercise, attendees placed green and red dots on a map to indicate their top three favorite and least favorite places.

Those unable to attend the public meeting could complete an online survey. The survey questions mirrored those on the public meeting feedback form.

Using the results

We used the results from this meeting and the online survey to establish a community vision for the future. After understanding what people like and what they want changed, we developed policies and actions to achieve that vision.

You can see the public meeting results on the following pages. In addition to the graphs, we also listed written and oral comments provided by attendees.



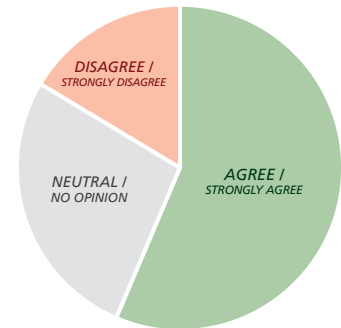
LAND USE: RESIDENTIAL

In general

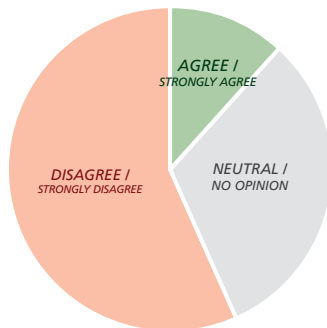
Respondents report a sufficient range of housing options and do not want more residential development. They want to see all or most farmland preserved.

If residential development occurs, respondents prefer single-family homes over condos, townhomes and apartments.

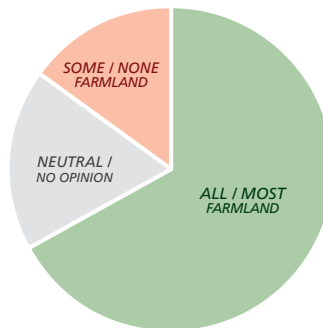
The only exception was found in Blacklick Estates. Respondents here are dissatisfied with the available housing options, do not want to see more homes built and have no opinion about preserving farmland. If development does occur they want a mix of single-family homes, condos and townhomes.



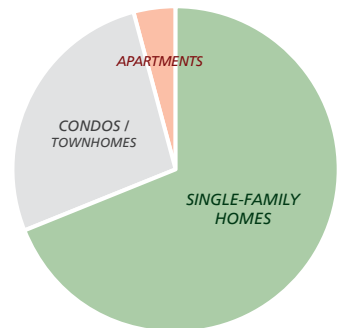
There are enough housing options available in my neighborhood to allow me to remain as I get older



I want to see more houses built in my general area



How much farmland should be preserved in the planning area?



If residential development occurs, what type of housing would you like to see in your area



LAND USE: COMMERCIAL

In general

Respondents report that a consistent visual appearance is important in commercial areas. Overall, respondents are satisfied with the number and variety of businesses.

By area

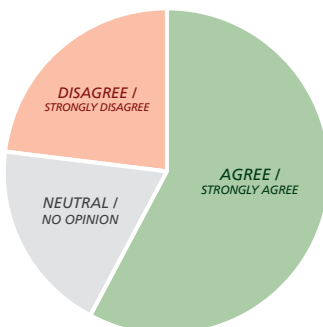
Edgewater Park / Marwick Estates: Half of respondents are dissatisfied with how commercial properties look.

Blacklick Estates: Most respondents are dissatisfied with the number and variety of businesses nearby. The appearance of commercial proper-

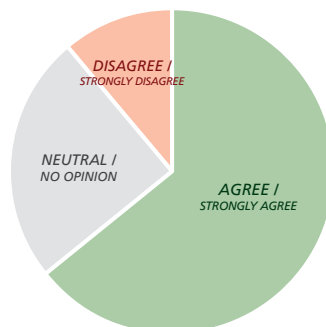
ties on Chatterton, Noe-Bixby and Hamilton Roads also dissatisfies respondents.

Central Madison: Most respondents visit commercial areas in Columbus, Groveport or Canal Winchester.

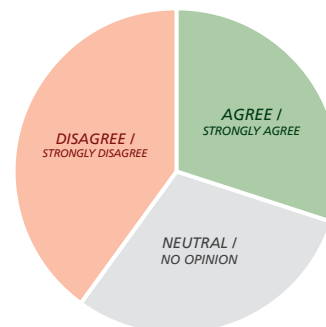
South Madison: Respondents visit commercial areas in Groveport and Canal Winchester. They do not want to see new commercial uses built.



The number and variety of nearby businesses meet my needs



It's important to have a consistent appearance such as welcome signs, decorative street lights and building design in commercial areas



Commercial properties nearby look nice



PARKS AND NATURE

In general

Respondents overwhelmingly believe that clean streams, wooded areas and natural areas are important to the community.

Respondents believe there are enough parks and recreational facilities. They also feel that parks and playgrounds are well maintained.

The one exception is Blacklick Estates where respondents believe there are not enough natural areas or recreational opportunities. Playgrounds and ball fields on school properties serve as recreational facilities.

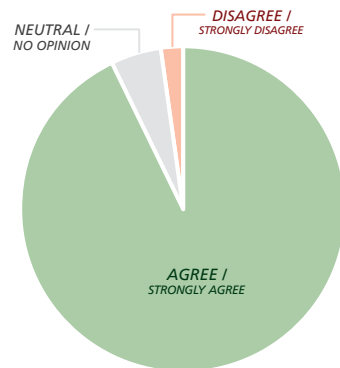
By area

Edgewater Park / Marwick Estates: The majority of respondents visit parks less than once a month.

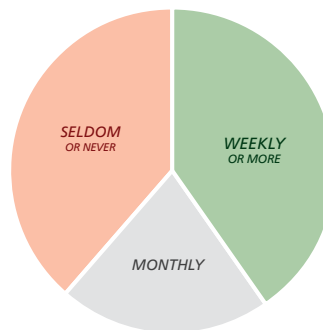
Blacklick Estates: Most respondents visit parks monthly.

Central Madison: The majority of respondents visit parks monthly.

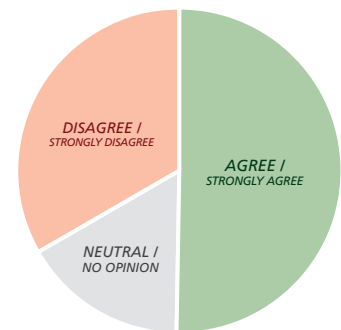
South Madison: Respondents visit parks on a weekly basis.



Having clean streams, wooded areas and natural areas is important to me



How often do you/your family visit parks?



There are enough parks, playgrounds, ball fields and other places to play in my neighborhood



City of Newton, MA

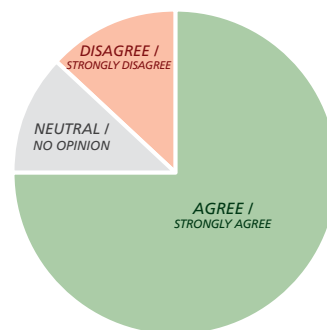
COMMUNITY

In general

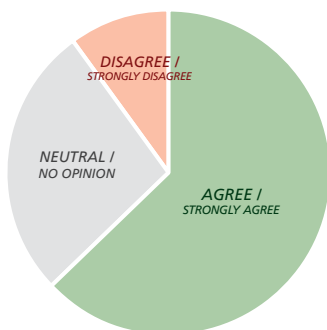
Respondents report a strong desire to stay in their neighborhoods as they grow older.

Most would like to see a consistent neighborhood appearance such as entrance signs, streetlights and street signs. The only exception was in South Madison where respondents had no opinion about having a consistent look throughout the area.

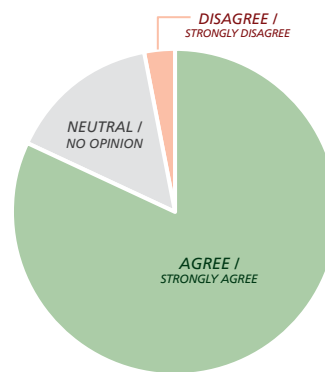
Respondents desire access to fresh, locally grown food.



Staying in my neighborhood is important to me/my family as we get older



Having a consistent neighborhood look/feel such as neighborhood entrance signs, decorative street lights and uniform street signs is important to me



Consuming fresh, locally-grown food is important to me/my family



TRANSPORTATION: WALKING

In general

Respondents report that walking around their neighborhoods is easy, whether there are sidewalks or not. Walking to commercial areas is difficult due to a lack of sidewalks.

By area

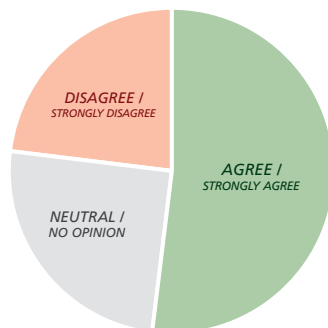
Edgewater Park / Marwick Estates: A lack of sidewalks, heavy vehicle traffic and high vehicle speeds along Hamilton Road and Winchester Pike make walking to commercial areas difficult and dangerous.

Blacklick Estates: Gaps in sidewalks along Noe-Bixby, Chatterton, and Hamilton Roads make

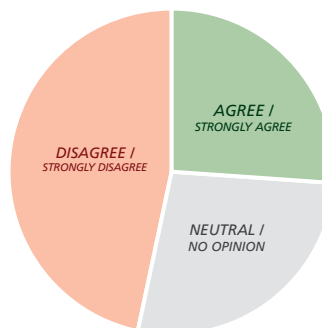
walking through commercial areas difficult and unsafe. Sidewalks along residential streets make walking safer.

Central Madison: Walking along residential streets is easy despite a lack of sidewalks. Walking to commercial areas is impractical due to long distances and a lack of sidewalks. A lack of sidewalks also makes walking along major roads difficult.

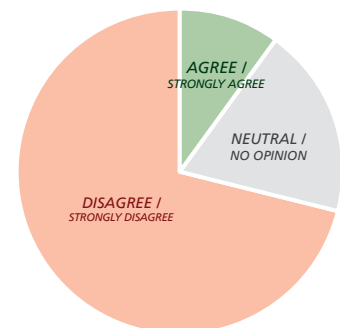
South Madison: Respondents had no opinion about the safety of walking on area roads.



It is easy and safe to walk around my neighborhood



I can easily walk to commercial areas near my neighborhood



It is easy and safe to walk along main roads



completestreets.org



TRANSPORTATION: BICYCLING

In general

Riding a bicycle to commercial areas is generally difficult.

While responses were mixed, many expressed a desire for better connections to bicycle trails. Several trails pass through the planning area, but a lack of connections force bicyclists to travel long distances via busy main roads to access the trails.

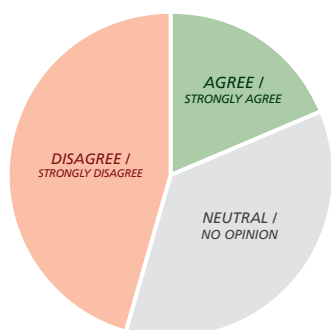
Blacklick Estates: A lack of bicycle trail connections to the Blacklick Creek Trail frustrates respondents. More than one-third of respondents find it difficult to reach trails.

Central Madison: Respondents find it easy to access nearby bicycle trails.

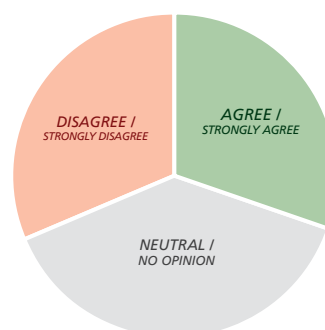
South Madison: Most respondents had no opinion regarding bicycle access to commercial areas and trails.

By area

Edgewater Park / Marwick Estates: Respondents desire a connection to the nearby Alum Creek Trail.



It is easy to ride a bicycle to commercial areas



It is easy to get to bicycle trails



TRANSPORTATION: TRANSIT

In general

Most respondents had no opinion regarding bus routes and bus stops.

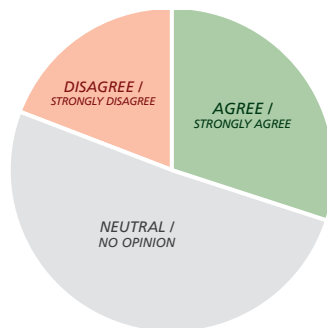
By area

Edgewater Park / Marwick Estates: Respondents report that sufficient bus routes serve the area. The majority stated that bus stop improvements would not increase their ridership.

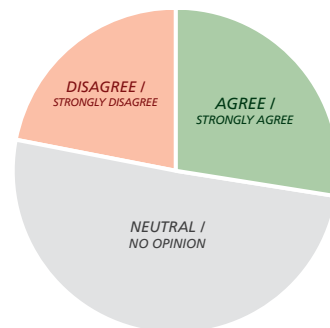
Blacklick Estates: Sufficient bus routes serve the neighborhood. Respondents report that bus stop improvements would increase ridership.

Central Madison: Respondents report a lack of transit routes. They had no opinion on whether bus stop upgrades would increase ridership.

South Madison: No bus routes serve the area. Respondents had no opinion of whether there are enough routes.



There are enough bus routes in my area to get where I need to go



Bus-stop upgrades (benches, shelters, etc.) would increase my use of buses



TRANSPORTATION: CAR

In general

Respondents report easy access to main roads throughout the planning area.

The table below lists roads with the most reported speeding. Respondents desire improvements at major intersections.

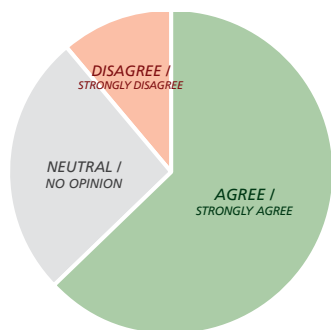
By area

Edgewater Park / Marwick Estates: The intersection of Winchester Pike and Watkins Road has heavy traffic and poor visibility. Residents desire a traffic light to improve safety. Respondents report that roads in Edgewater Park need to be repaved.

Blacklick Estates: Respondents report the need for turn lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian signals at the Chatterton and Noe-Bixby Roads intersection.

Central Madison: Respondents report dissatisfaction with access to major roads. Bixby, Rager and Sims Roads need to be repaved. Bixby Road needs to be realigned with Brice Road at Winchester Pike.

South Madison: Respondents believe a four-way stop is needed at Hayes and Richardson Roads. Respondents feel that Gender and Oregon Roads need to be realigned at Lithopolis Road.



Speeding is a problem in my neighborhood

Top speeding concerns:

- Harbor Boulevard
- Noe-Bixby Road
- Fullerton Drive
- Winchester Pike
- Chatterton Road
- Hamilton Road
- Richardson Road
- Ebright Road
- Bixby Road
- Bixford Avenue

