

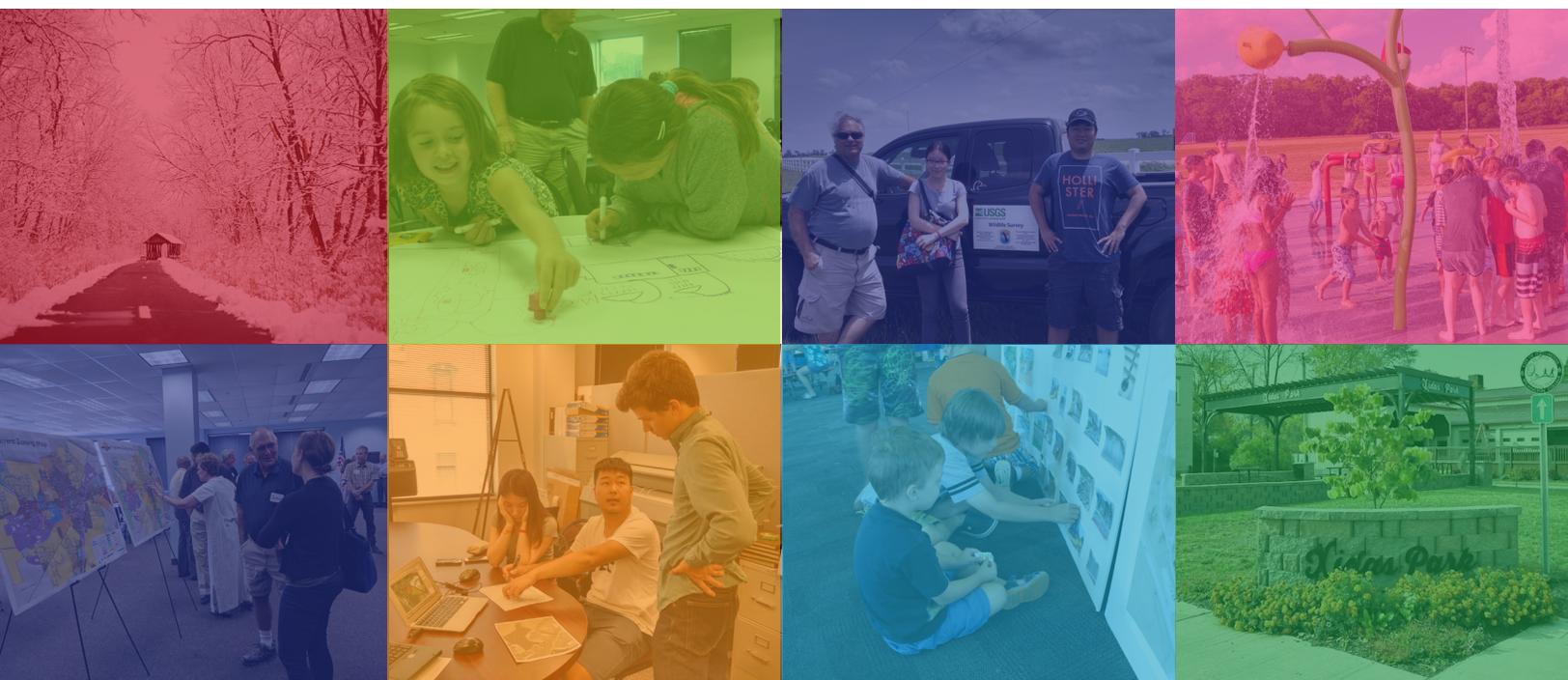


# CCRPC

CLINTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## Progress Report

2019



# Who we are

## **Executive Director**

Taylor Stuckert, AICP

## **Associate Director**

Stephen Crouch

## **Executive Committee**

Dwayne Dearth, Chair

Michelle Morrison, Vice Chair

John Cohmer, Vice Chair

Robert Thobaben, Secretary

John Branstrator, Treasurer

## **Planning Commissioners**

Dauna Armstrong, County

Bruce Beam, County

Ryan Bowman, County

Jon Branstrator, County

Ruth Brindle, City of Wilmington

John Carman, Village of Blanchester

John Cohmer, Village of New Vienna

Dwayne Dearth, County

Brook Edwards, County

Dean Hawk, Village of Sabina

Robert Johnson, Village of Port William

Michelle Morrison, County

James Myers, County

Matt Purkey, City of Wilmington

Damien Snyder, County

Donald Spurling, Village of Midland

Kerry Steed, County

Robert Thobaben, Village of Clarksville

Rick Walker, Village of Martinsville

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## Message from the Executive Director

Through nearly 50 years of leading planning efforts in Clinton County, the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission is truly living up to its slogan “Communities Working Together.” With commissioners representing every municipal jurisdiction and most townships, the CCRPC is the most diversely-represented board of Clinton County citizens.

This unique makeup of the RPC has enabled it to have a strong, direct connection with the needs of Clinton Countians as they relate to the physical, social, and economic development of the County. We are able to do this not only through the representation of the commissioners serving on the RPC, but also because of our direct participation in many different boards, organizations, and efforts throughout the County.

The role of the CCRPC is more important now than it has ever been since its founding. Clinton County has gone through immense changes in the last decade and is currently faced with many questions about where it will go in the future, and there is no singular, clear answer about what is the “best” direction going forward.

Following the loss of our largest employer in 2008, we have observed significant growth with several other employers and a return to a more diverse and resilient local economy in part due to the efforts of many agencies, including the CCRPC. The CCRPC continues to have an active role in Clinton County’s economic development efforts and is continuously working to maintain the positive momentum observed in recent years.

Also following 2008, residential development grounded to a halt due the local economic crisis as well as the national mortgage crisis and housing recession. As residential development rebounds, Clinton County has been given an opportunity to learn from past experiences, public preferences, and develop a more tested strategy for how and where it would like to see development occur.

Finally, the CCRPC has been working hard to ensure that quality of life is a topic at the forefront of future development in Clinton County. Already we have completed plans related to parks, trails, pedestrian safety, being age-friendly, and are actively engaged with education and workforce development needs throughout the county. For Clinton County to continue its success, quality of life issues need to be factored into all future development opportunities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Stuckert'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

**Taylor Stuckert, AICP**

Executive Director

Clinton County Regional Planning Commission

# Mission and History

## **Mission**

The Clinton County Regional Planning Commission strives to be an agent of regional cooperation and a guardian for the future and efficient utilization of resources. Serving Clinton County for nearly 50 years, the Commission is the most diverse in the County and charged with the “physical, social and economic development” of the Clinton County area.

## **Founding and Role**

Founded in 1970, the CCRPC has been comprised of citizens and elected officials. This Commission is tasked with preparing plans on long range programming; promoting understanding of and recommending administrative and regulatory measures to implement plans; contracting if needed to facilitate planning activities; reviewing, evaluating and making comments on amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning amendments; providing planning assistance to other units of local government; and, administering the County Subdivision Regulations.

## **Membership**

Our Commission is composed of 20 voting Planning Commissioners representing the County, City and Villages- along with many Ex Officio Members representing businesses, community groups, environmental organizations, and civic associations. Since the CCRPC is uniquely structured to support planning efforts across political boundaries, it serves as an important leadership forum for development and planning issues that face the entire County.

Per Resolution 12-1148 (2012), terms and appointments to the Commission are managed by jurisdictions. Appointment allocation is as follows:

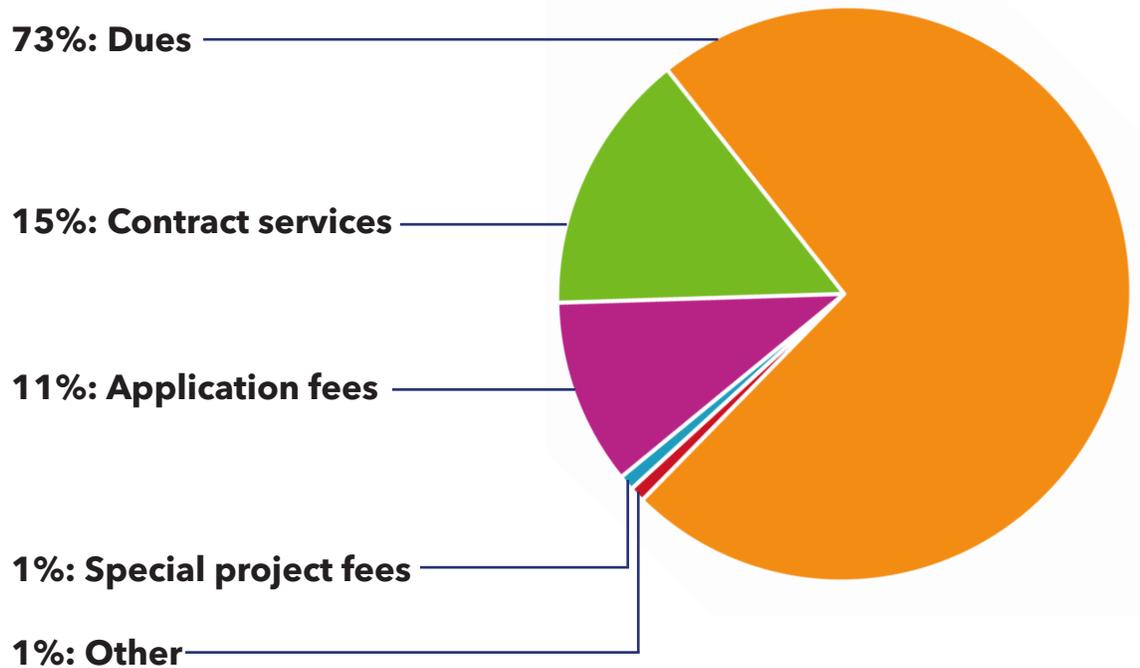
County: 11 appointees

Wilmington: 2 appointees

Villages: 1 appointee each (7 total)

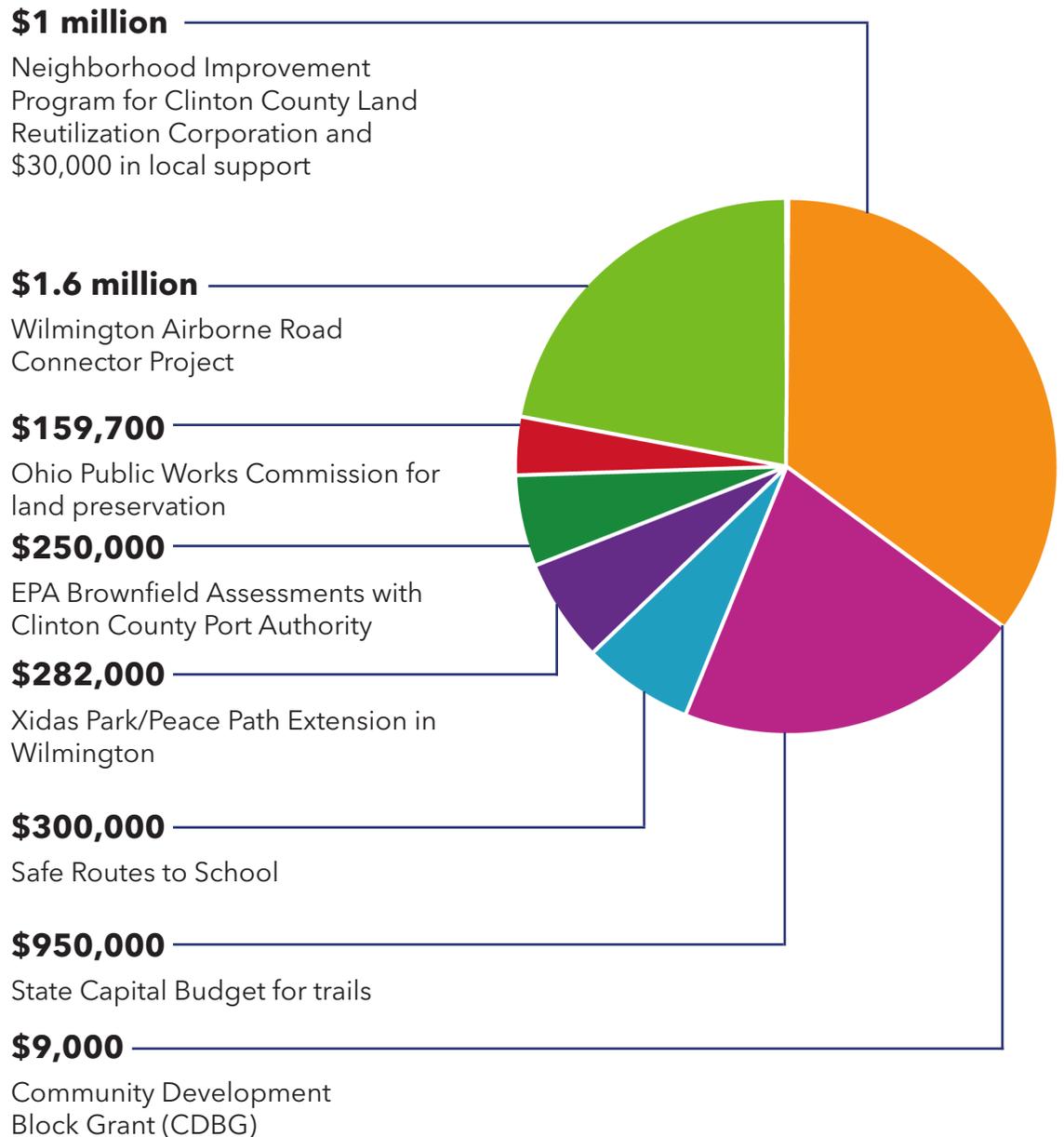
## 2015-2018 Financials

**Average Annual Revenue 2015-2018:  
\$143,538**



## 2015-2018 At a Glance

### Total grants: \$4,550,700



## 2015-2018 At a Glance

### **Total plans: 8**

- 2018 Age-Friendly Clinton County Findings Report
- 2017 Green, Marion, and Jefferson Township Future Land Use Plans
- 2017 Downtown Wilmington Pedestrian Improvement Plan
- 2016-17 Clinton County Parks Master Plan
- 2016-17 Midland Beautification Plan
- 2015 Wilmington Comprehensive Plan
- 2015 Union Township-Wilmington Future Land Use Plan
- 2015 Wilson, Wayne, Richland Township Future Land Use Plan

### **Total applications: 146**

- 22 site plan reviews
- 95 minor subdivisions
- 5 major subdivisions/replats
- 13 variances for access management
- 6 zoning recommendations
- 5 planned unit developments (PUD)

## 2015-2018 At a Glance

### **Additional projects**

- 9 classes of Clinton Community Fellows, 36 fellows total
- Clinton County Economic Network Alliance  
*(with Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce)*
- Wilmington Zoning Update
- Midland Zoning Update
- Lytle Creek Study
- Wilmington Residential Tax Abatement Program
- Buy Local First campaign  
*(with Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce)*
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) assistance
- Natureworks grant assistance

# Clinton County Land Bank

## Background

The Clinton County Land Reutilization Corporation (“Land Bank”) was established in 2016 with a mission to clean up vacant, blighted properties throughout Clinton County and return them to productive use. The Land Bank is managed by the CCRPC with oversight from a 5-person board of directors.

The Land Bank has received \$1 million from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency’s Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) to address the issue of vacant and abandoned properties affecting neighborhoods throughout the County.

To learn more and to see where we are working, visit our website at: [www.clintoncountylandbank.com](http://www.clintoncountylandbank.com).

## 2019 Update

- **39 blighted residential properties demolished and 43 acquired** in Wilmington, Blanchester, Sabina, New Vienna, Clarksville, Martinsville, Midland, and Lumberton.

**326 Fancy St., Blanchester**



**8331 U.S. 68, Wilmington**



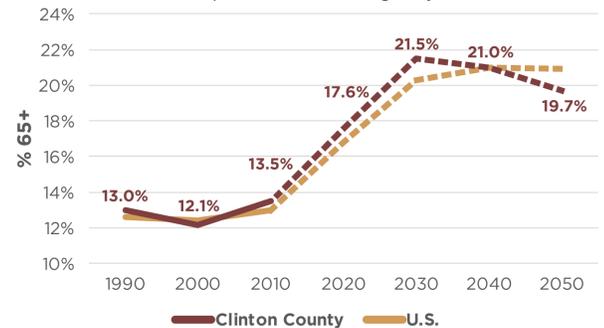
# Age-Friendly Clinton County

## Background

By 2030, one in five people in Clinton County will be age 65 and older. This is a 37% increase between 2010 and 2030. Since an aging population requires communities to adapt, Age-Friendly Clinton County (AFCC) was recognized by AARP and the World Health Organization on September 5th, 2018. AFCC is governed by an advisory board, led by the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission, and partnered with AARP. The Findings Report synthesized more than 500 older adults through surveys, focus groups, workshops, and listening sessions.

## Projections of Population Age 65+ in Clinton County

Source: Ohio Development Services Agency



## Key Findings

- **Housing concerns**
  - There is a shortage of housing options that are affordable and accessible for lower and middle income older adults
  - Retired residents living in small villages spend too much on housing costs
- **Transportation concerns**
  - 68% of older adults in Clinton County live in areas without affordable public transportation
  - Transportation services for out-of-county medical appointments are extremely limited
- **Social isolation concerns**
  - Over half of older adults in Clinton County do not get enough social interaction
- **Health concerns**
  - In Clinton County alone, 21% of grandparents have assumed the primary caretaker role for their grandchildren
  - The rate of cognitive impairment, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease will continue to rise in coming years

# Downtown Wilmington Pedestrian Improvement Plan

## Reason for the plan

The number of businesses and residents located downtown is growing, along with the number of cyclists in the community. With such growth comes the possibility of more pedestrian accidents. We already knew that downtown had the highest concentration of accidents in Wilmington and we also had the interest in discovering best practices that could be applied to the rest of the County.

We partnered with Mainstreet Wilmington to create a first-ever pedestrian plan for Wilmington. We relied on community input, local law enforcement, and the Ohio Department of Transportation to collect data and synthesize our findings.

## Our key findings

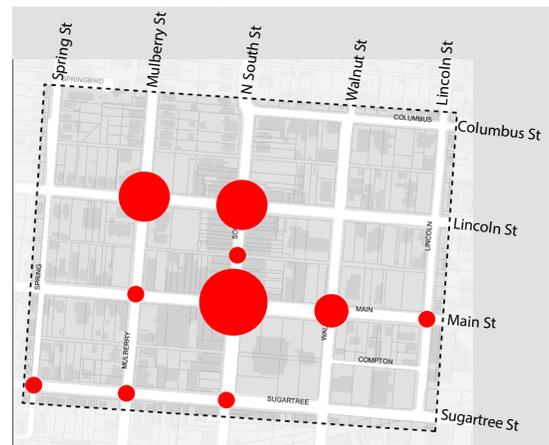
- **Wilmington has higher accident rates than surrounding communities** (*Washington Court House, Xenia, and Lebanon.*)
- People do not feel safe walking downtown at night, especially along the Sugartree street corridor. While many attributed it to the lack of street lighting, it is more likely connected to vacancy.
- **Cyclists consist of 42% of all pedestrian accidents.** This is important to consider as trail development continues in the County.
- **The intersection of South and Main is Wilmington’s most dangerous intersection.** The study identifies the following as potential causes:
  - Length of crosswalks
  - One-way street
  - High traffic volume
  - Width of road

## Our key recommendations

- Prioritize traffic calming on Main and South streets
- Invest in crosswalks and bumpouts
- Beautification and infill on Sugartree St.
- Introduce reverse-angle parking north of Court House

## Downtown pedestrian accidents

Source: ODOT 2003-2015

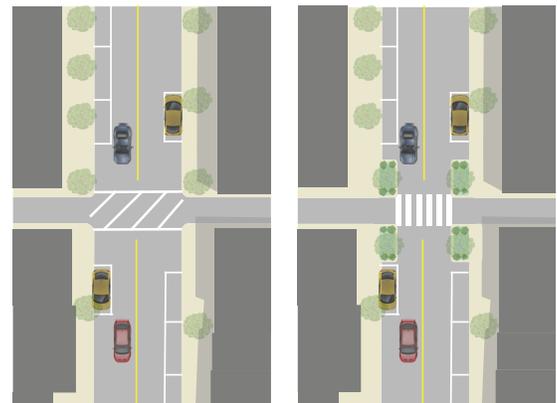


\*Dots are proportionate to number of accidents

## South St. bumpout proposal

Before

After



# Clinton County Parks and Open Space Plan

## Mission

Before this plan, Clinton County had never taken a detailed inventory of its parks. Without it, there was limited ways of knowing if the park systems were adequate for serving the community.

We specifically studied access, quality, quantity, and funding of parks in the county. Through this process we found that the conditions varied dramatically between the villages, townships, and Wilmington.

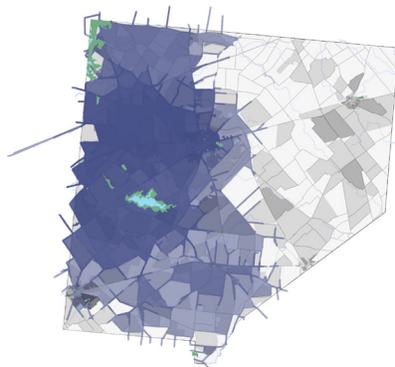
## Discoveries

- Lack of amenities is the largest barrier to using parks
- 52% of Wilmington residents are not within a five-minute walk to a park due to lack of sidewalks
- Nearly all villages need financial issues addressed
- Townships in the eastern half of the county have poor access to Clinton County Park District parks
- Lack of appropriate active park amenities in the non-urban areas lead county residents to use Wilmington parks
- Paved trails are one of the most in-demand amenities

## Key Recommendations

- Wilmington and Blanchester should focus on small-scale park development
- Adopt a County Joint Recreation District to fund parks equitably
- Develop park amenities that residents desire
- Focus on sidewalk infrastructure to improve access

## Ten-mile service area for parks in Clinton County



## Sidewalks in Blanchester



# Clinton Community Fellows

## Nine years of young talent

The Clinton Community Fellows Program is a ten-week fellowship program that provides young leaders in Clinton County, Ohio the opportunity to develop valuable skills and experience in a rural, small-city environment. The program recruits and matches young, locally-connected talent with local businesses that have an expressed interest in implementing innovative business development strategies and providing professional opportunities to the fellows. Between 2010 and 2018, generous donors to the program have funded 36 fellows, 89 community projects, and more than 14,000 hours of service.

*"In Clinton County, Ohio, young people have organized to tackle the brain drain, creating a fellowship program that matches local businesses with college students home for the summer."*

—President Barack Obama

**ON THE STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE OF RURAL AMERICA, 2016**



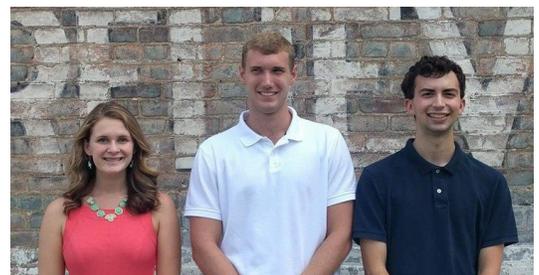
### Fellows Class of 2015

Left to right: Tevin Amburgy, Vanessa Bellman, and Kyle Weddington.



### Fellows Class of 2016

Left to right: Carly Pritchard, Levi Luttrell, and Nick Ratliff.



### Fellows Class of 2017

Left to right: Mallory Homan, Hayden Knisley, and Megan Borton.



### Fellows Class of 2018

Left to right: Sydni McGee, Bethany Brausch, Alison Dooley, and Ty Snarr.



# Wilmington Zoning Update

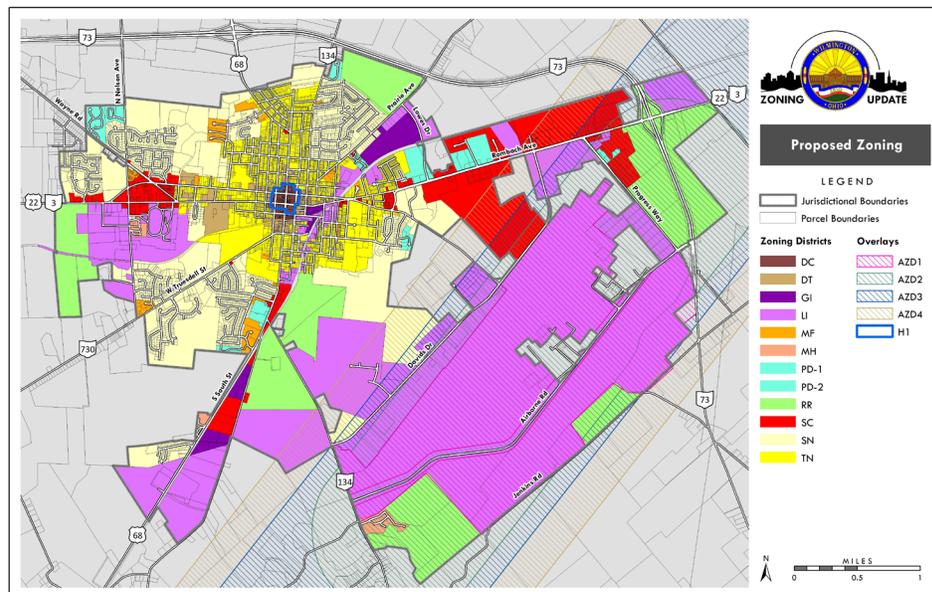
## Background

A process to update the Wilmington Zoning Code was initiated in September 2017 by the CCRPC on behalf of the City of Wilmington. The CCRPC partnered with the Warren County Regional Planning Commission on facilitating the process by forming a Zoning Task Force, providing recommendations for changes to the existing Code, and drafting the new code.

The update was the first overhaul to the City zoning in several decades. The project was initiated to address concerns in the existing Code mostly caused by many years of piecemeal changes and neglect. This led to many issues such as the lack of development flexibility, outdated parking requirements, deficient and unconstitutional signage regulations, and no consideration of community character in the zoning process.



## Updated Wilmington Zoning Map



# 2017 Village of Midland Beautification Plan

## Reason for the plan

Beautification plans create an inventory of the assets, history, and conditions of a place to imagine strategies to enhance its attractiveness. The goal of the 2017 Village of Midland Beautification Plan is to inform decision making, preserve land and historic buildings, and improve upon village facade and overall attractiveness.

## Recommendations

- Continued trash removal and purchase of trash receptacles
- Continued park improvements
- Preserve remaining historic buildings
- Adopt on-street parking
- Plant street trees and install street lamps
- Establish village gateway with a welcome sign

## High St. beautification proposal

*Before*



*After*



## Proposed Midland welcome sign

Proposed Sign:



## Xidas Park and Luther Warren Peace Path Trail Connector

In 2016, the CCRPC assisted the City of Wilmington and its Parks and Recreation Department with the implementation of the Luther Warren Peace Path extension to South Street and the completion of Xidas Park. The park is dedicated to former Wilmington businessman Jim Xidas, and is at the site of the his establishment, the Manhattan Lounge, at the corner of Sugartree and S. South Street in downtown Wilmington.

The project was funded by state capital funds and was the result of several years of planning and is an extension of the Luther Warren Peace Path, which had previously terminated at Mulberry Street.

The park features a pergola installed by Champion Bridge Company, Thompson Construction and Thirey Cabinet Makers, new landscaping designed and planted by the Clinton County Master Gardener Volunteers led by Dori Sabino, and a mason seating wall provided by Laurel Oaks.

### Luther Warren Peace Path



### Xidas Park



## Economic Network Alliance

The CCRPC partners with the Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce to host a monthly Economic Network Alliance meeting. Each meeting features a speaker that highlights unique programs, organizations, and issues in our community, as well as an opportunity for businesses to meet and connect with each other.

### Network Alliance Presentation by Age-Friendly Clinton County



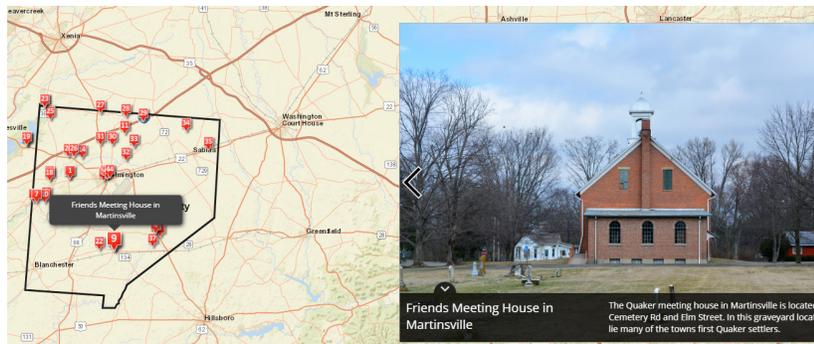
## Underground Railroad Mapping

In 2017, the CCRPC started the first attempt at developing a storymap of all the Underground Railroad sites in Clinton County. Working with local historian Christine Hadley-Snyder and with research from local historian, and CCRPC commissioner, Ruth Brindle, the CCRPC was able to start documenting many of the known sites in the County.

The storymap includes brief histories on the sites as well as photographs where their structures are still in existence. With the site published, individuals researchers will have a more accessible and interactive way of understanding this unique part of Clinton County history that is directly tied to our Quaker heritage.

The interactive map can be found on the CCRPC's website.

### Interactive Map of Underground Railroads



## Clinton County Recreation Center

Starting in 2017, the CCRPC has been involved in a public-private partnership to develop a feasibility study to look at the potential for a new recreation and wellness study in Clinton County. The study is focused on understanding the design and financial scope of such a facility.

Outreach from the study included focus groups with citizens and high school students from county high schools, interviews with area employers, and an online survey, which generated nearly 900 responses. The feasibility study will be completed in Spring of 2019

**Recreation Center Rendering**



## Japan Society

Clinton County's response to the economic crisis in 2008 and the work of the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission and Energize Clinton County have attracted attention far outside of Clinton County.

This past year, Executive Director, Taylor Stuckert was invited to participate in the "Resilient and Vibrant Communities in the US and Japan" program led by the Japan Society in New York City. The program has involved hosting various Japanese local leaders working in rural communities in Clinton County, as well as a visit to Japan from the American partners.

In the Fall of 2018, the CCRPC was represented along with representatives from Nebraska, West Virginia and New York in Japan. The trip included visits to several rural areas throughout Japan as well as a panel presentation at Ehime University and a forum in Tokyo hosted at University of the Sacred Heart with the U.S. Embassy present.

**Taylor Stuckert in Tokyo, Japan**



**Ehime University Students and Professors**



## 2015 Wilmington Comprehensive Plan

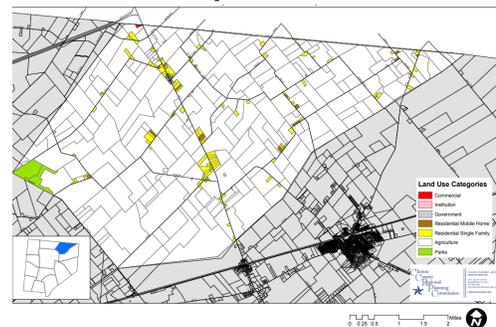
In 2015, the CCRPC embarked on adopting a comprehensive plan update for the City of Wilmington—its first since 1978. The 1978 plan was the first comprehensive plan that the City adopted following the closure of the Clinton County Strategic Air Command Base in 1971. Similar to the closure of the base, the loss of DHL in 2008 marked a major shift in the trajectory for Wilmington. The plan update was an important opportunity to document this moment in time and to capture what the community envisioned going forward. In addition to capturing this important moment, the plan allowed the community to focus its perspective on the future, and have a renewed sense of importance in providing more frequent and regular updates to its comprehensive plan.



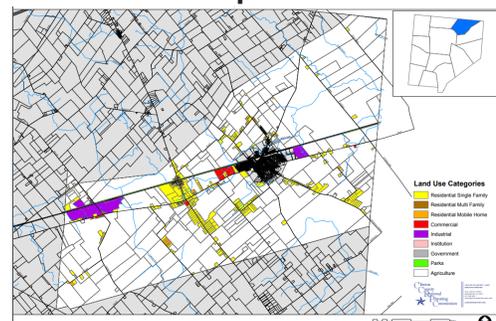
## Future Land Use Maps

The CCRPC works closely with other county agencies in managing and updating the Clinton County Zoning Resolution. As part of this process, the CCRPC began going Township to Township to have discussions with each jurisdiction about its vision for future development and land use. As the zoning code evolves, and the County prepares for an update to its Comprehensive Plan, this process of regularly discussing future land use will help inform planning, zoning, and land use decisions county-wide.

**Wilson Township Future Land Use**



**Richland Township Future Land Use**



## Ahresty Road Project

Following the 2015 Wilmington Comprehensive Plan, the CCRPC began working with the City of Wilmington on implementing some of the plan recommendations, starting with the Ahresty Road Project. For over 20 years Ahresty had operated with hundreds of employees at its location at US 68 South with a private rail crossing. This crossing had caused several issues for the operation of the facility and had been the cause of several traffic and rail safety issues. Working with ODOT and the City of Wilmington, the CCRPC helped to secure \$1.6 million in grant dollars to build a public crossing with rail crossing lights and devices in support of Ahresty's expansion to nearly 1,000 employees. In addition to the immediate support it provides Ahresty, the new road opened up dozens of acres of new industrial land in the area and was the first phase of an eventual connector road to Airborne Road, which will support continued growth at the Wilmington Air Park.

### Wilson Township Future Land Use



## Brownfield Project

Working with the Clinton County Port Authority, the CCRPC assisted in the acquisition and implementation of an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. The \$200,000 provided brownfield assessments to 6 properties, each with varying levels of brownfield concerns. By supporting the study of a small, former shooting range with brownfield concerns, the program has enabled the CCPA to position 250 acres for new development at the Wilmington Air Park. In addition, the grant assisted the Clinton County Land Bank in the assessment of blighted industrial sites that the land bank is actively pursuing for clean up.

### Backside of Brownfield Site on 42 Sugartree St.



## Thank you to our partners and affiliates

Clinton County Port Authority  
Clinton County Trails Coalition  
Clinton County Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Clinton County History Center  
Downtown Wilmington Community Improvement Corporation  
Energize Clinton County  
Main Street Wilmington  
University of Cincinnati School of Planning  
Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce  
Wilmington Community Improvement Corporation





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