



Vision for Violet

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR THE FUTURE



2022 Comprehensive Plan

VISION FOR VIOLET

2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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VIOLET TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OHIO

RESOLUTION No. 2023-0222-06

To Adopt 2022 Violet Township Comprehensive Plan –Vision for Violet

WHEREAS, a Steering Committee comprised of residents of our community, township staff, along with MS Consultants worked to develop the 2022 Violet Township Comprehensive Plan titled “Vision for Violet, A Comprehensive Guide for the Future”;

WHEREAS, the Violet Township Zoning Commission conducted a public hearing on January 17, 2023 and recommended approval of the Plan with modifications; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing before the Board of Trustees has been duly noticed and conducted on February 22, 2023 for consideration of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan titled “Vision for Violet, A Comprehensive Guide to the Future” pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF VIOLET TOWNSHIP, FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OHIO, THAT:

Section 1. The Board of Trustees hereby adopts the recommendation of the Violet Township Zoning Commission for the 2022 Violet Township Comprehensive Plan with additional modifications listed below and reflected in the attached version of “Vision for Violet, a Comprehensive Guide for the Future”

- a. On the future land use map, to designate the parcel adjacent to the west side of Huntington Hills subdivision and the parcel adjacent to the north side of Hampton Ridge subdivision as “Mixed Use” instead of “Residential”.


Section 2. The Board finds and determines that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the passage of this Resolution were taken in open meetings of this Board, and that all deliberations of this Board that resulted in formal actions were taken in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements, including but not limited to, Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22, except as otherwise permitted thereby.

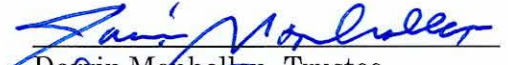
Motion for adoption made by Trustee Sanders. Seconded by Trustee Dunlap.
this 22nd day of February, 2023.


YES: 3

NO: 0


ABSTENTIONS: 0


Terry J. Dunlap, Sr., Trustee


Darin Monhollen, Trustee


Lori Sanders, Trustee

This Resolution represents a complete and accurate statement as to the actions taken by the Board of Trustees.

Attest: 
James Brink, Assistant Fiscal Officer

VISION FOR VIOLET

2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VIOLET TOWNSHIP VISION STATEMENT

Violet Township is a well-rounded, diverse community with a mix of incomes, activities and residential opportunities.

In order to achieve this vision, Violet Township will...

- Encourage excellent educational facilities, appropriate residential choices and activities for senior citizens, and access to good medical facilities.
- Steward and maintain its existing housing and infrastructure. The Township's desirability as a residential community will increase because of its greenspace, parks, recreational trails and recreational facilities.
- Promote efficient public transportation systems that support appropriate uses and sidewalks and trails that connect residential neighborhoods with other neighborhoods and community activity centers.
- Attract light logistics and manufacturing and commercial development by using its planning and zoning tools, including planned districts, to create commercial and industrial development that benefits the community's residents and acquiring the best available high-technology infrastructure.
- Seek to maintain its rural character by featuring attractive and useful open spaces, and preserving the Township's natural and historic features, to the extent that is consistent with other goals.
- Retain its existing Township structure by developing effective working relationships with all governments and public agencies in the region, to the extent that is consistent with other goals.

VISION FOR VIOLET

2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Plan Overview

INTRODUCTION

Violet Township is a thriving community located in southeast central Ohio, just outside the City of Columbus. Its geographic position, natural amenities, and high standard of living make it an extremely attractive place to live. Violet Township has experienced a high rate of growth in recent years, with a population increase of almost 9% from 2010 to 2020.

Violet's previous Land Use and Transportation Plan from 2005 was due for an update, given its recent growth. In 2022, Violet began the process of creating a new Comprehensive Plan that would conceive and articulate a vision for the community's future. The planning process was spearheaded by a citizen steering committee, and incorporated feedback from the general public, as well as demographic and economic data, stakeholder interviews, and national trends and best practices. This new plan establishes objectives on a range of topics including land use, transportation, housing, parks and recreation, conservation, and economic development. Strategies and policies to help achieve these goals were developed through the planning process and are laid out in Chapter 5.

Comprehensive Plans

Vision for Violet is a comprehensive plan for Violet Township. A comprehensive plan is a document that is legally adopted by the Board of Township Trustees, and will serve as a decision-making guide for present and future decision-makers. The plan includes a variety of data regarding demographics and other existing conditions meant to provide background and context for informed decision-making. The plan aspires to be a true reflection of how the community sees itself and the directions in which it will change in the years to come.

Vision for Violet Steering Committee

An eleven-member steering committee was convened, made up of residents of Violet Township. Five steering committee meetings were held over the course of the planning process, in which steering committee members gave feedback on surveys and activities for the general public, and provided input on the recommendations of the plan after public input was received.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

A good comprehensive plan involves input from the entire community. This gives the plan greater authenticity in its vision and provides a more realistic path towards achieving its objectives. Vision for Violet incorporated feedback from a wide sampling of residents, institutions, local government officials, employees, and visitors. The process was guided by a steering committee comprised of Township residents, and was a highly collaborative effort, pulling in feedback from the committee, public engagement, Township staff, and national best practices.



WHAT

Vision for Violet is a roadmap for the future.

The comprehensive plan is a process to create and articulate a vision for the community's future. The plan will guide decision-making, set objectives, and develop policies around a range of topics including, but not limited to: housing, transportation, parks and recreation, conservation, and economic development.



WHY

A plan manages growth, change, and preservation.

The Township's most recent comprehensive plan, adopted in 2005, has limited relevancy to address present and emerging opportunities, challenges, and regional trends; including Central Ohio growth projections. The new plan will help ensure that members of the community have a say in what the future Violet Township will look like.



HOW

The community, guided by expert analysis, creates future objectives.

Existing conditions are explored through the lens of national best practices and regional trends in land use, development, and conservation. The data is combined with input from the community - residents, landowners, community organizations, government, and business leaders - to establish long-term objectives.

Plan Overview

Project Timeline

Vision for Violet officially kicked off in April of 2021, and consisted of five phases, which wrapped up by the end of 2022. The five phases were:

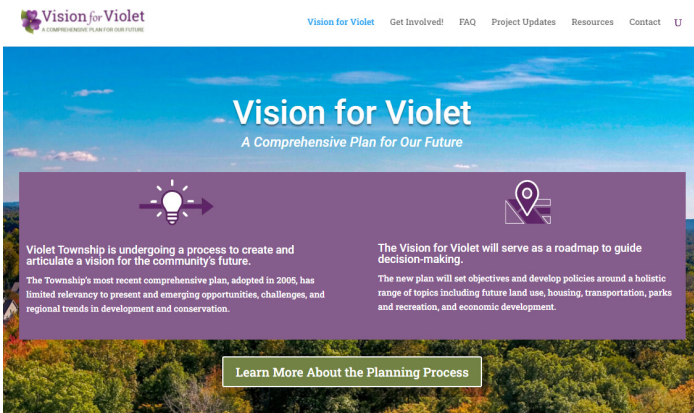
- Preparation
- Strategic Analysis
- Engagement
- Idea Generation
- Finalization

Stakeholder Interviews

Individual and small-group interviews were held with community leaders from various organizations and governmental agencies within Violet Township. The stakeholders were chosen to provide feedback based upon their expertise and unique perspectives on Violet Township. The stakeholder interviews were held over two days on July 15th, 2021, and July 28th, 2021.

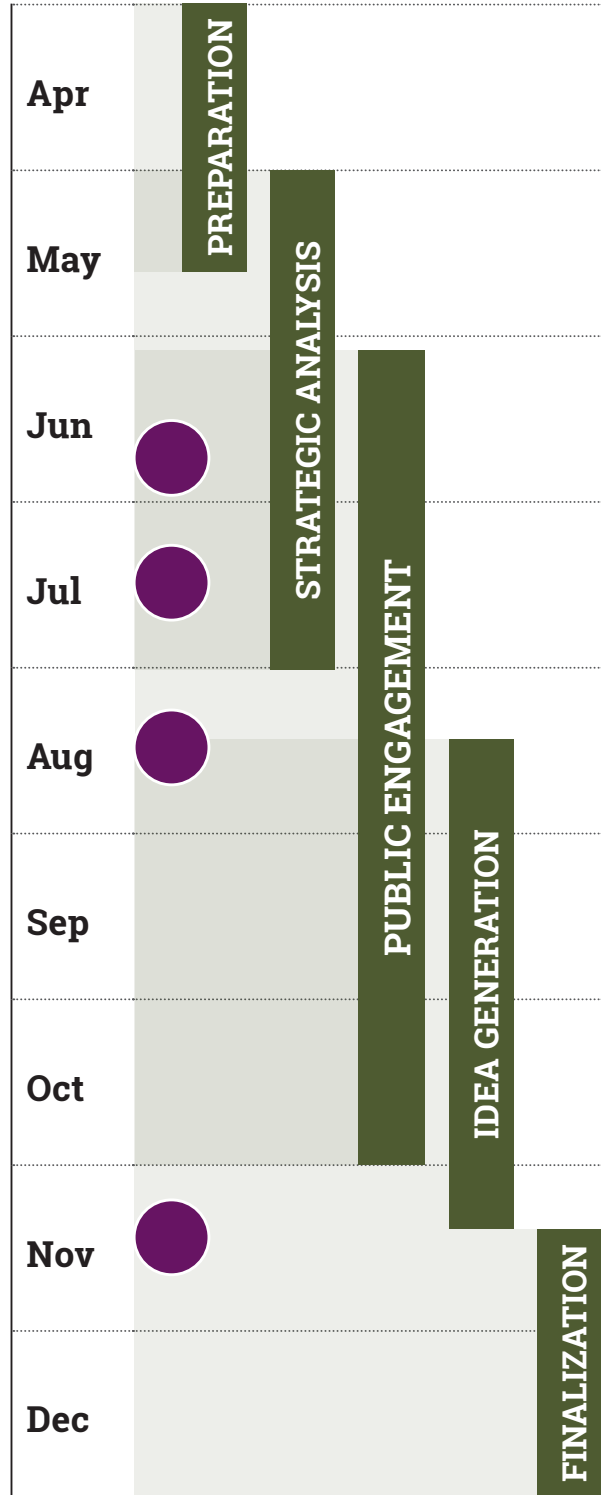
Plan Website


A plan website, <http://visionforviolet.com>, was launched in order to provide the public with general information and updates regarding the planning process, including information on in-person events. Residents were also able to provide feedback on the plan by completing the community survey, the visual survey, and mapping activity.



WHEN

2021



 *Indicates in-person engagement opportunity

Surveys and Activities

The public participated in three activities to develop the plan. Figure 1 shows public engagement events with examples of the activity boards. The three activities are described below:

- The community survey was a written survey that asked Violet Township residents what they love about the community and what they would like to see in the community in the future.
- A visual preference survey gauged the type of development that residents would like to see in certain areas.
- A mapping exercise asked which areas of the Township residents would like to see retained or re-imagined.

All three activities were available on the plan website, as well as at in-person planning pop-ups, and were distributed at key locations throughout the community.

Once the plan goals had been identified, a community workshop was held on October 7th, 2021 at the Violet Township Administrative Office in order for the public to provide feedback on the plan goals. The goals were further refined after receiving the feedback from Violet Township residents, and the goals within this plan represent this collaborative process.

In-person planning pop-ups were held at the following dates and locations:

- Combustion Brewery – Thursday, July 15th, 2021
- Pickerington Farmer’s Market – Thursday, July 26th, 2021
- Pickerington Public Library Summer Reading Celebration at The Wigwam Event Center – Saturday, August 14th 2021

Figure 1 - Planning Pop-up Events



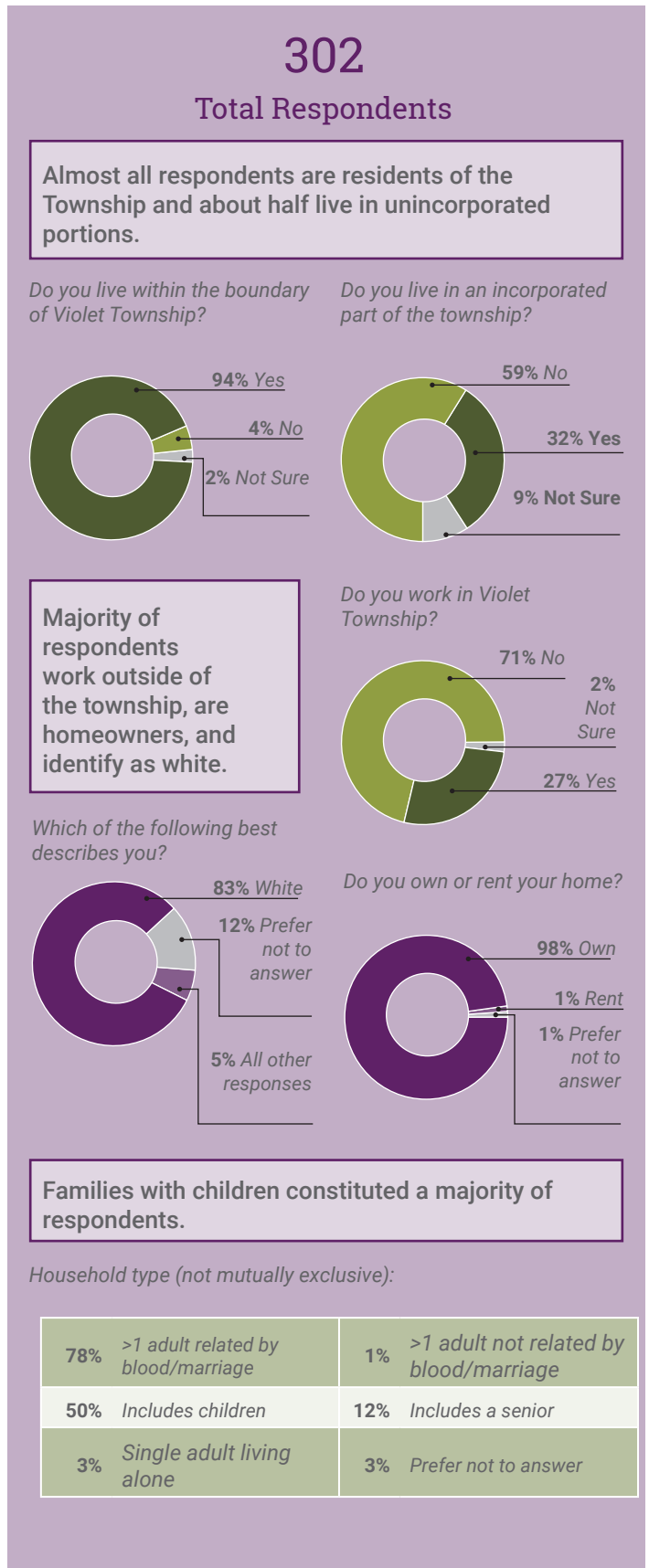
Each planning pop-up featured a mapping exercise (the same as completed by the steering committee) and a visual preference activity. Participants could also complete the survey, provide general comments, and learn about the project website.

Plan Overview

The community survey was available to the public from May 12th to August 31st, 2021. During this time, 302 residents completed the survey. Compared to the Township’s overall population, survey takers were disproportionately white, middle-aged, and wealthy. This means that the results reflect some, but not all, interests of the Township’s residents. The breakdown of survey respondents can be seen in Figure 2.

Surveys and activities did not scientifically sample the population, nor should they be represented as such. The value of community engagement is not just the collection of data, but also the value of face-to-face interaction with the community and educating residents about local government and the planning process. The survey results should be placed in appropriate context within the greater realm of the planning process as a whole.

Figure 2 - Profile of Survey Respondents



EXISTING CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW

Violet Township is comprised of 41.7 square miles in northwest Fairfield County. It is approximately 12 miles from downtown Columbus, and 9 miles from the county seat of Lancaster. The cities of Reynoldsburg, Pickerington, Canal Winchester are all partially located within the Township. Violet Township has a thriving community of around 45,000 residents, and is a vibrant area of both suburban and rural makeup. Data in this section was primarily derived from the 2019 American Community Survey. This section addresses existing conditions in Violet Township by examining demographics, economics, community character, and assets.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

In 2019, Violet Township’s population was estimated to be 43,768 residents, up from 38,572 in 2010. Much of the population is concentrated in the more suburban, incorporated parts of the township. Figure 3 provides a demographic overview of the community.

As part of the growth trend in central Ohio, Violet Township’s population is projected to grow by approximately 8% by 2030 according to data provided by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). Given the location of Violet Township within central Ohio, it is reasonable to expect the population to meet or exceed that rate of growth.

Households

Family households make up 81% of households in Violet Township, with 69% being a married-couple family. Over one third (35%) of households include

one or more persons 60 years or older and just 18% of households in the Township are single people living alone.

Education

Approximately 48% of Violet Township adults have at least Bachelor’s degree, which is higher than Fairfield County and the state of Ohio, both approximately 29%.

Violet Township is primarily served by the Pickerington and Canal Winchester school districts with small areas also being served by Reynoldsburg, Bloom-Carroll, and Liberty Union-Thurston schools. About a third of Violet residents are under the age of 18 and enrolled in some form of nursery school, preschool or primary school.

Employment

Health care and related fields represent the largest share of employment in the Township, with 14% of residents being employed under those sectors, followed by retail trade (13%), educational services (11%). Finance and insurance (8%), and public administration (8%) are also significant portions of employment in Violet Township.

Income

The median household income in Violet Township is \$101,506, which is substantially more than Fairfield County (\$71,469) and the state of Ohio (\$58,642).

Figure 3 - Demographic Information



Population
43,768



Median Income
\$101,506



Median Age
38.2



Population Increase
8% by 2030



Bachelor's or Higher
45.2%



Median Home Value
\$254,266

Source: 2019 American Community Survey

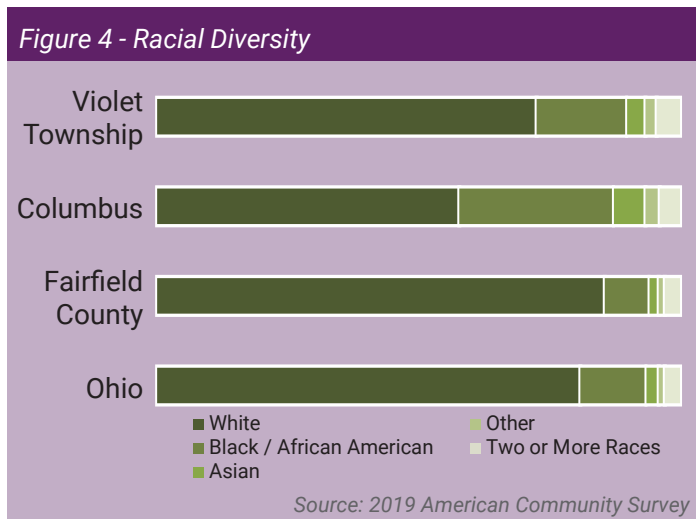
Existing Conditions

Age

Violet Township has a median age of 38.2 years, which is younger than the median age of both Fairfield County (39.6 years) and the state of Ohio (39.6 years). The median age in Violet Township has increased by one year since 2010, which mirrors national trends.

Race

In 2019, 72% of Township residents identified as white alone, compared to 84% in 2010. In 2019, 17% of Township residents identified as Black/African American, 4% as Asian, 0.1% as Native American, 2% as some other race, and 5% as two or more races. Violet Township is more racially diverse than Fairfield County and Ohio as a whole, but not as diverse as the City of Columbus (Figure 4). As the population increases, it can be expected that the diversity of the Township will continue to increase as well.



Housing

Violet Township is largely comprised of single-family detached housing, which make up 81.6% of the housing units within the entire Township. The percentage within the unincorporated areas would likely be even higher. The Township has a home ownership rate of 86%, compared to 74% in Fairfield County and 66% in the state of Ohio. The median home value in 2019 was \$254,266, which is higher than both Fairfield County (\$213,143), and the state of Ohio (\$157,241), but when compared to the median income, is relatively affordable for the region.

EXISTING ZONING

Violet Township's zoning code was initially adopted in 1960 and has since been revised periodically. The existing zoning of a parcel does not necessarily align with the current or future land use on that property. The zoning code does place define the type of development allowed in each zone. Figure 6 shows the current zoning map for the Township. Zoning classifications include residential (R), commercial (C), service districts (S), manufacturing (M), and planned developments.

Planned Developments (PDs)

The majority of new subdivisions within Violet Township in recent years have been Planned Developments, or PDs, which can also be known in some areas as Planned Unit Developments or Planned Residential Developments. PDs have their own unique development text in the zoning code. This allows for greater flexibility and a variety of housing types, a more useful pattern of open space, communal areas, and other amenities. Heron Crossing and Winding Creek are two examples of subdivisions in Violet Township that were developed as PDs.

Figure 5 - Planned Development Examples

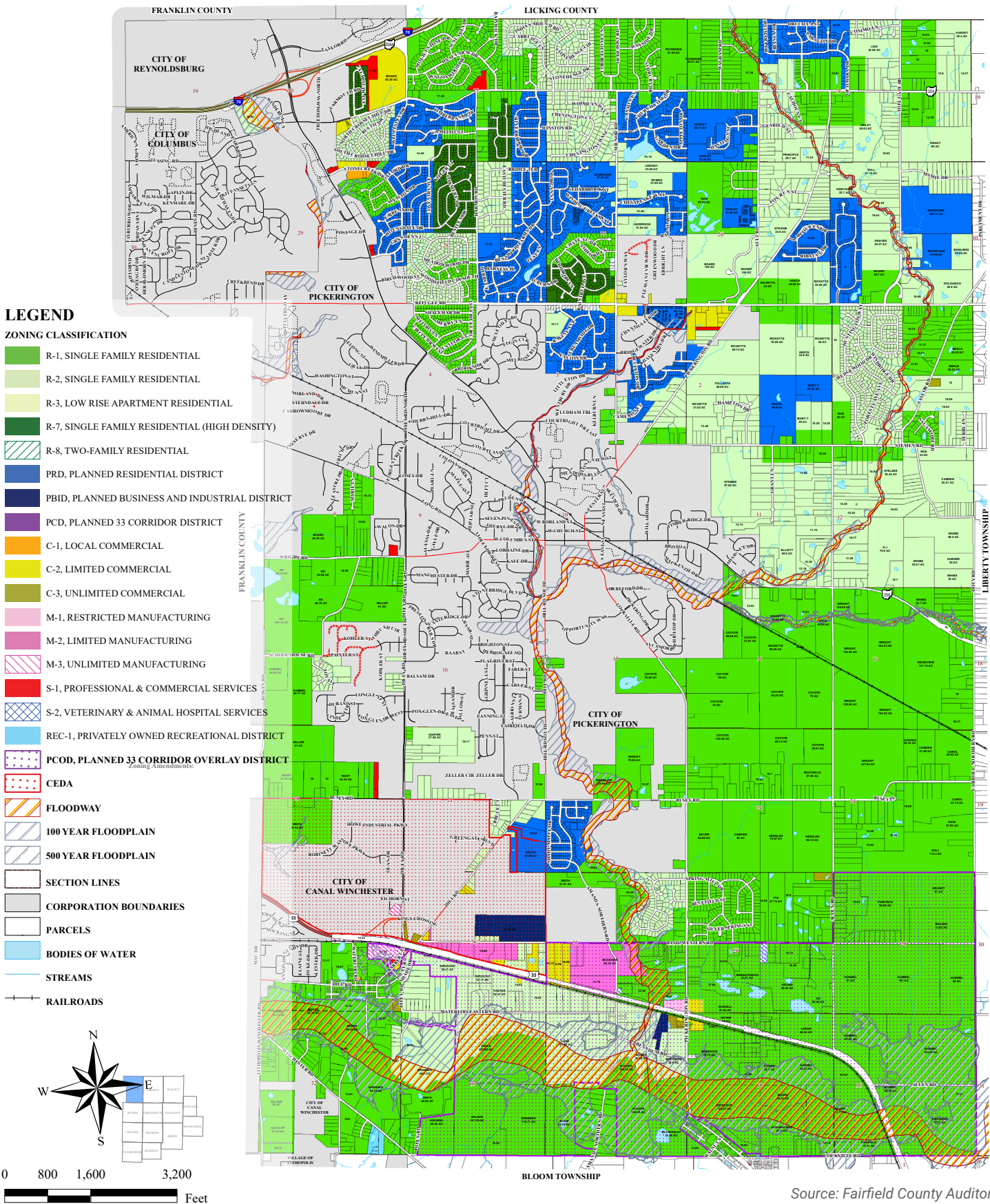


Image: M/I Homes Heron Crossing



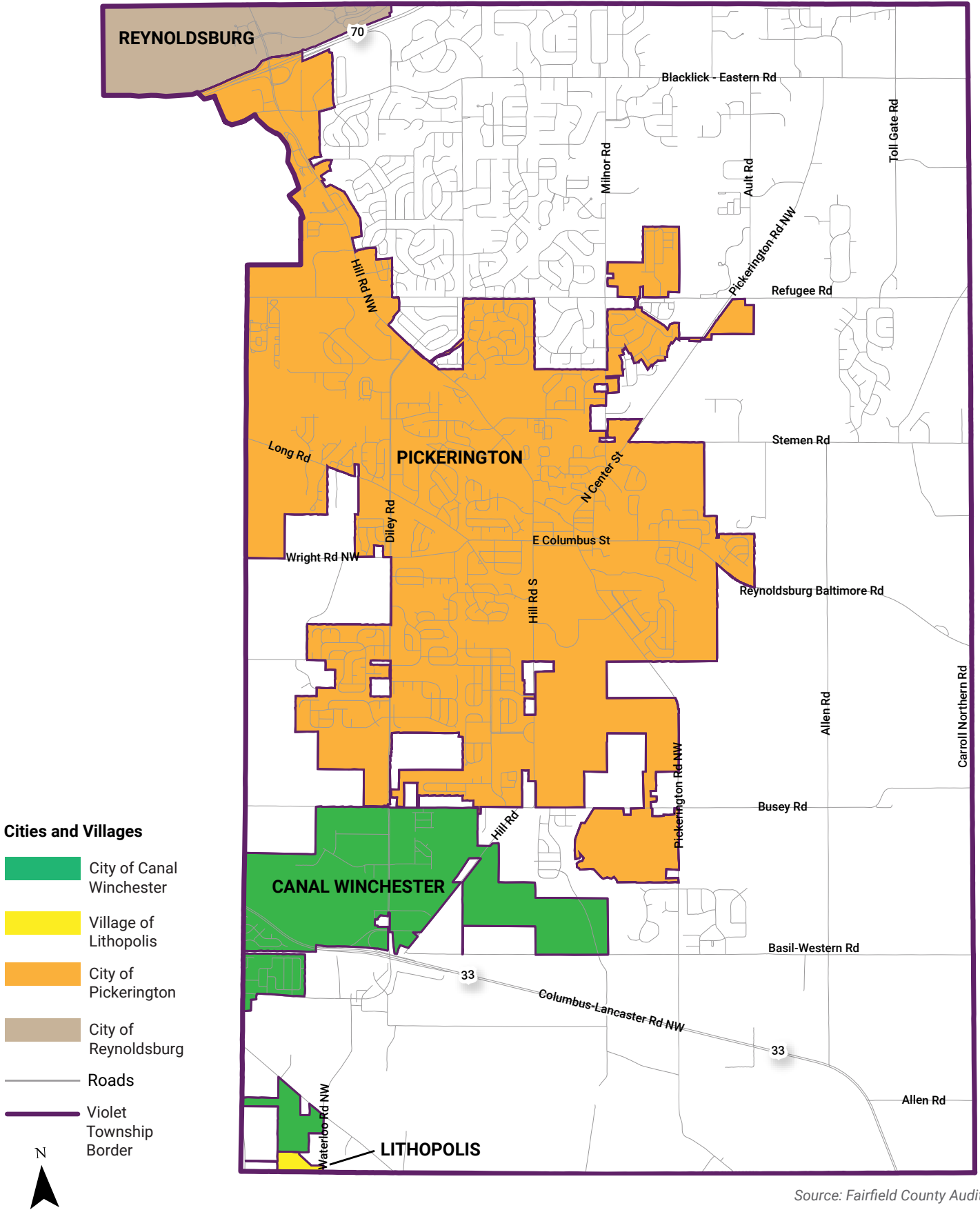
Image: Donley Homes Meadowmore Reserve

Figure 6 - Current Zoning



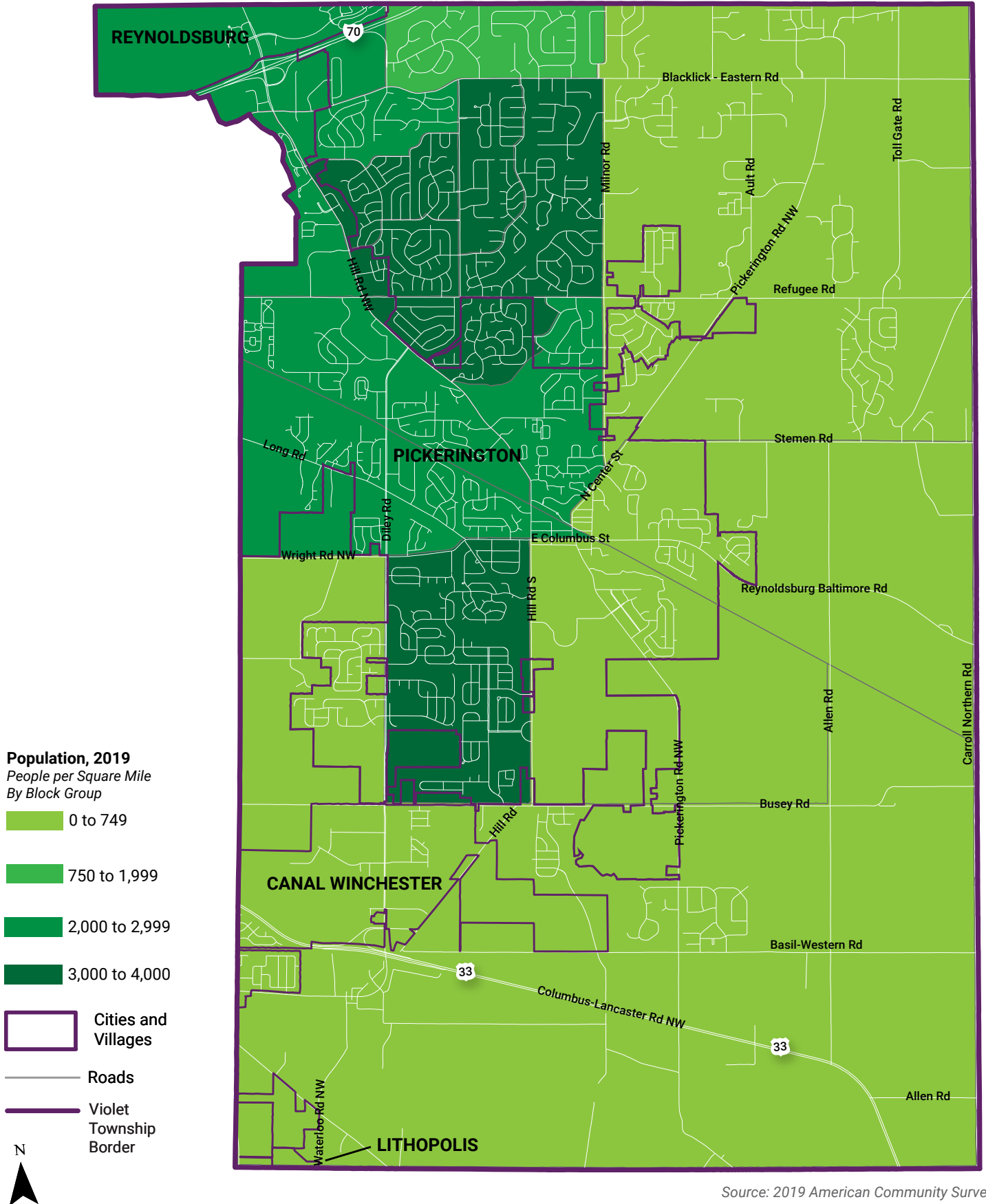
Existing Conditions

Figure 7 - Municipalities in Violet Township



Source: Fairfield County Auditor

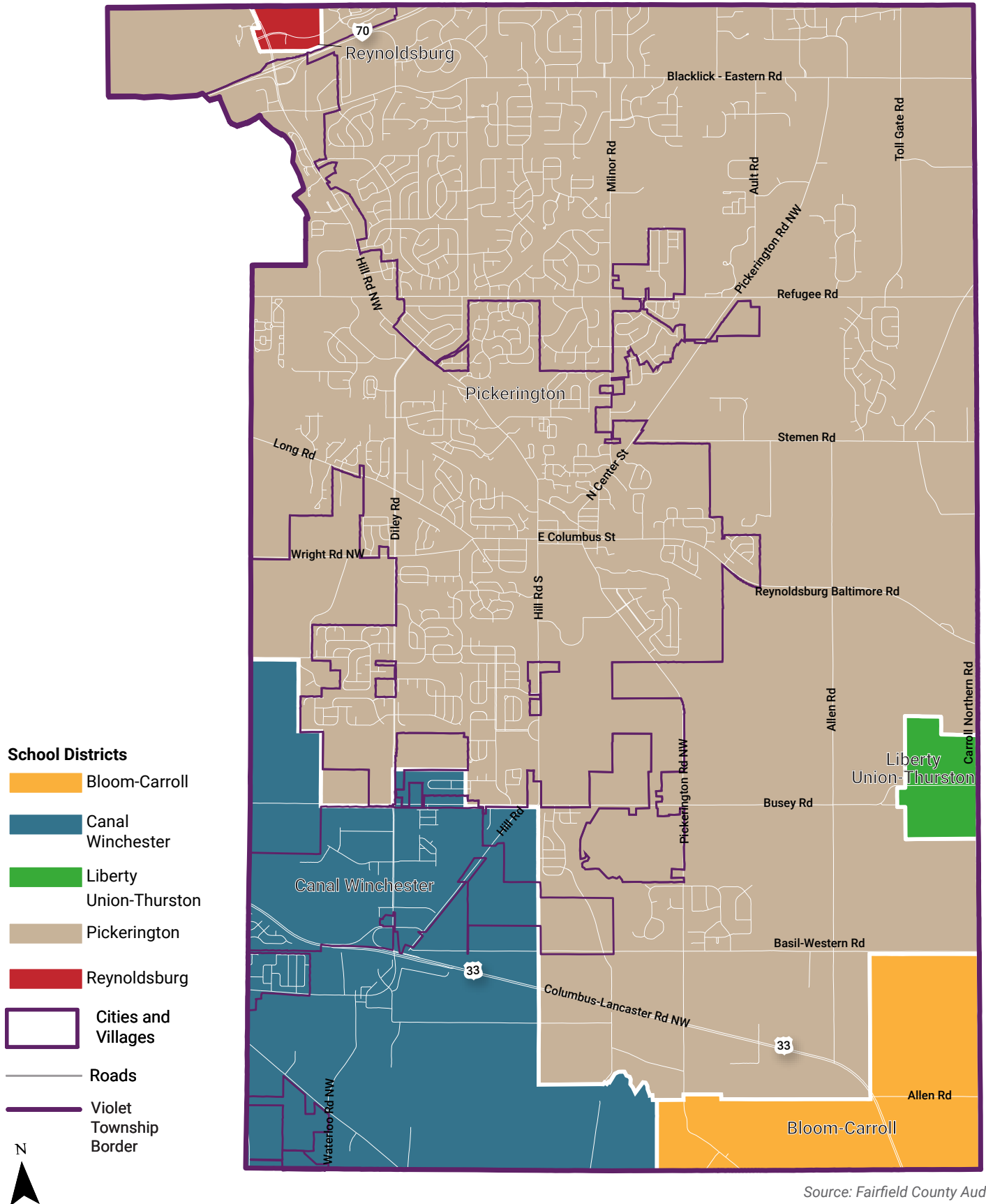
Figure 8 - Population Density



Source: 2019 American Community Survey

Existing Conditions

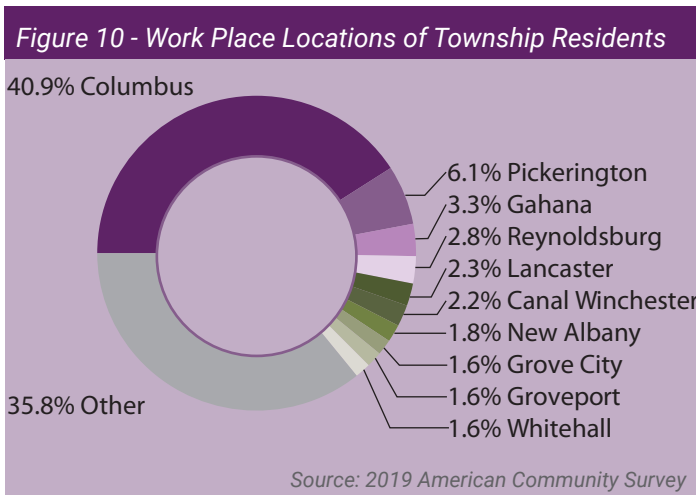
Figure 9 - School Districts in Violet Township



Source: Fairfield County Auditor

TRANSPORTATION

According to 2019 American Community Survey data, 86% of workers in Violet Township drove alone as their primary mode of commuting to work, while 5% of workers indicated that they worked from home. This data highlights that Violet Township is a predominantly suburban and rural area where most people depend on cars for transportation. Approximately 41% of workers in Violet Township work within the City of Columbus, compared with 6% who work in the City of Pickerington (Figure 10). Although this commute pattern is not entirely surprising given Violet Township’s position relative to Columbus, it does indicate that there is potential for more Violet Township residents to be able to work where they live.



Roadway Infrastructure

Violet Township is served by two major expressways, Interstate 70 on the northwest edge of the Township, and US-33 in the southern portion. These two routes carry high volumes of traffic in and out of downtown Columbus. Figure 12 shows Violet Townships roads by functional class. The functional class of a roadway indicates its primary purpose. Arterials generally move traffic longer distances between larger areas, while collectors usually move traffic from local streets to arterials or other collector streets.

Roadways in Violet Township fall under various jurisdictions. ODOT administers I-70 and US-33, Fairfield County is responsible for a number of the collector roads, and the rest fall under the jurisdiction of the Township.

Interchange Projects

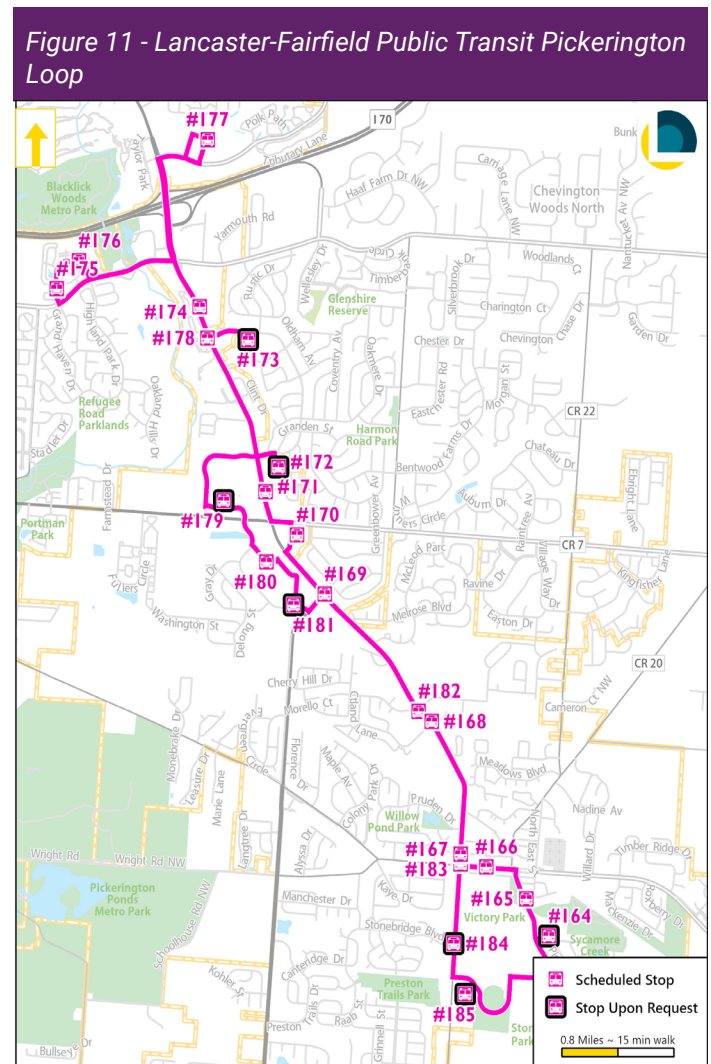
The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) currently has two major freeway interchange projects

slated within Violet Township’s jurisdiction. ODOT plans to remove the traffic signal at the intersection of Pickerington Road and US-33 and install a full interchange with on/off ramps, similar to the current configuration at US-33 and Diley Road. Construction is projected to begin in 2024 and wrap up by 2026.

Construction of a full interchange at I-70 and Taylor Road, currently only an eastbound off-ramp, is also planned. This would also involve upgrades to the interchange at I-70 and SR-256. Initial design work on this project is set to begin in 2022, but the timeline for construction has yet to be established. These interchanges carry the highest average traffic volumes in the Township (Figure 13).

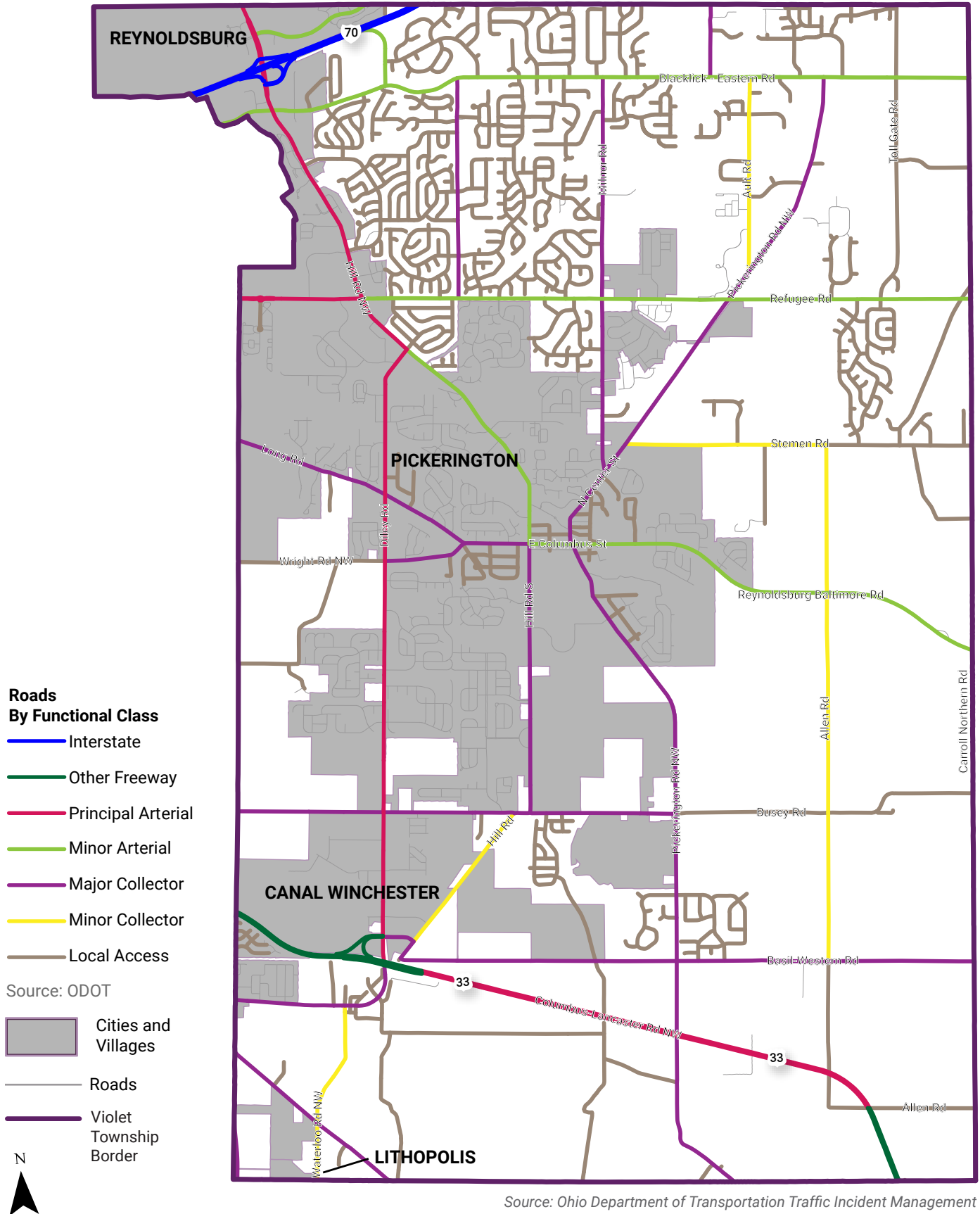
Public Transportation

Violet Township is served by Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit, which operates a bus loop on weekdays along SR-256, mostly in the incorporated portion of the Township (Figure 11).



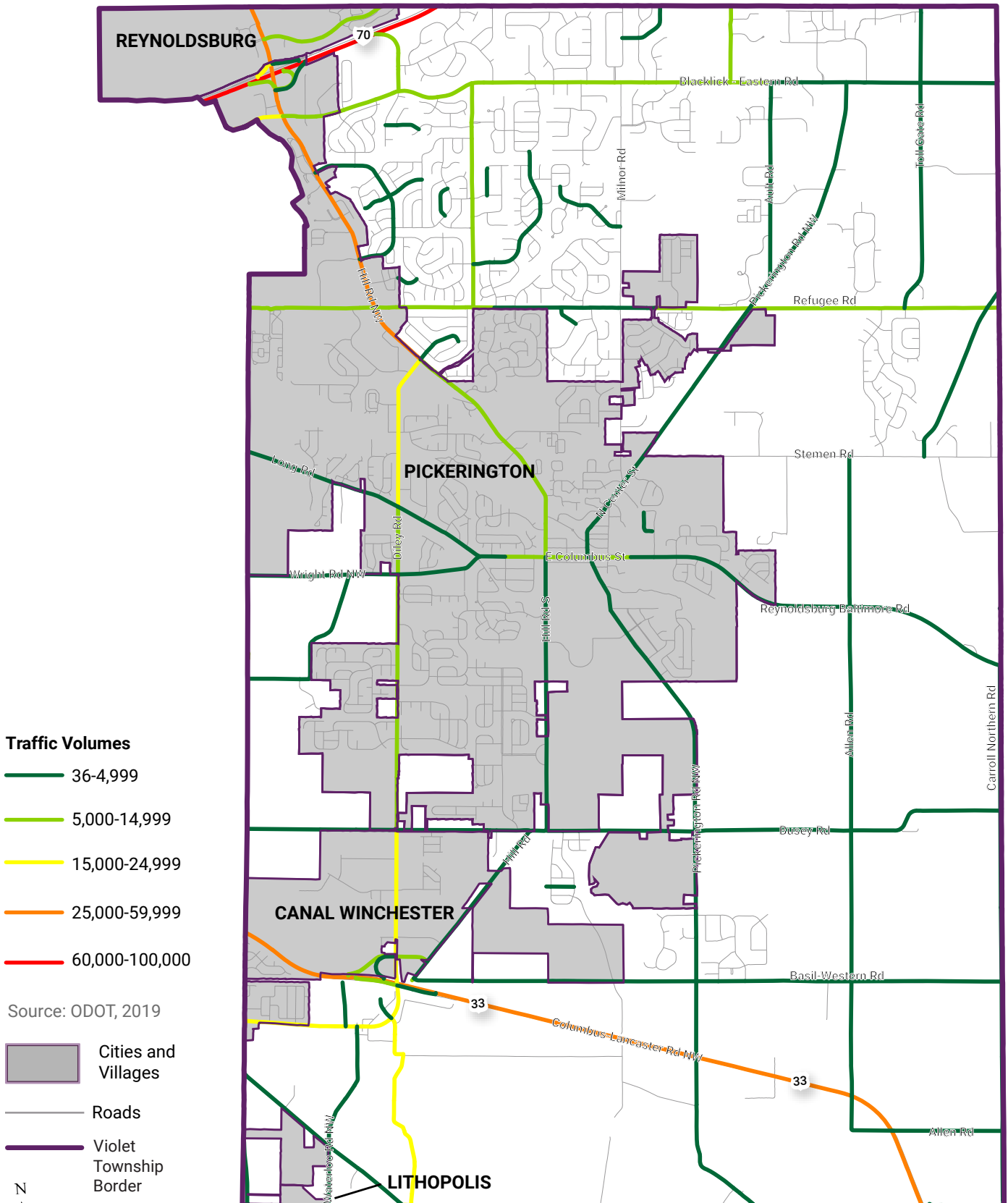
Existing Conditions

Figure 12 - Roadways by Functional Class



Source: Ohio Department of Transportation Traffic Incident Management (TIM)

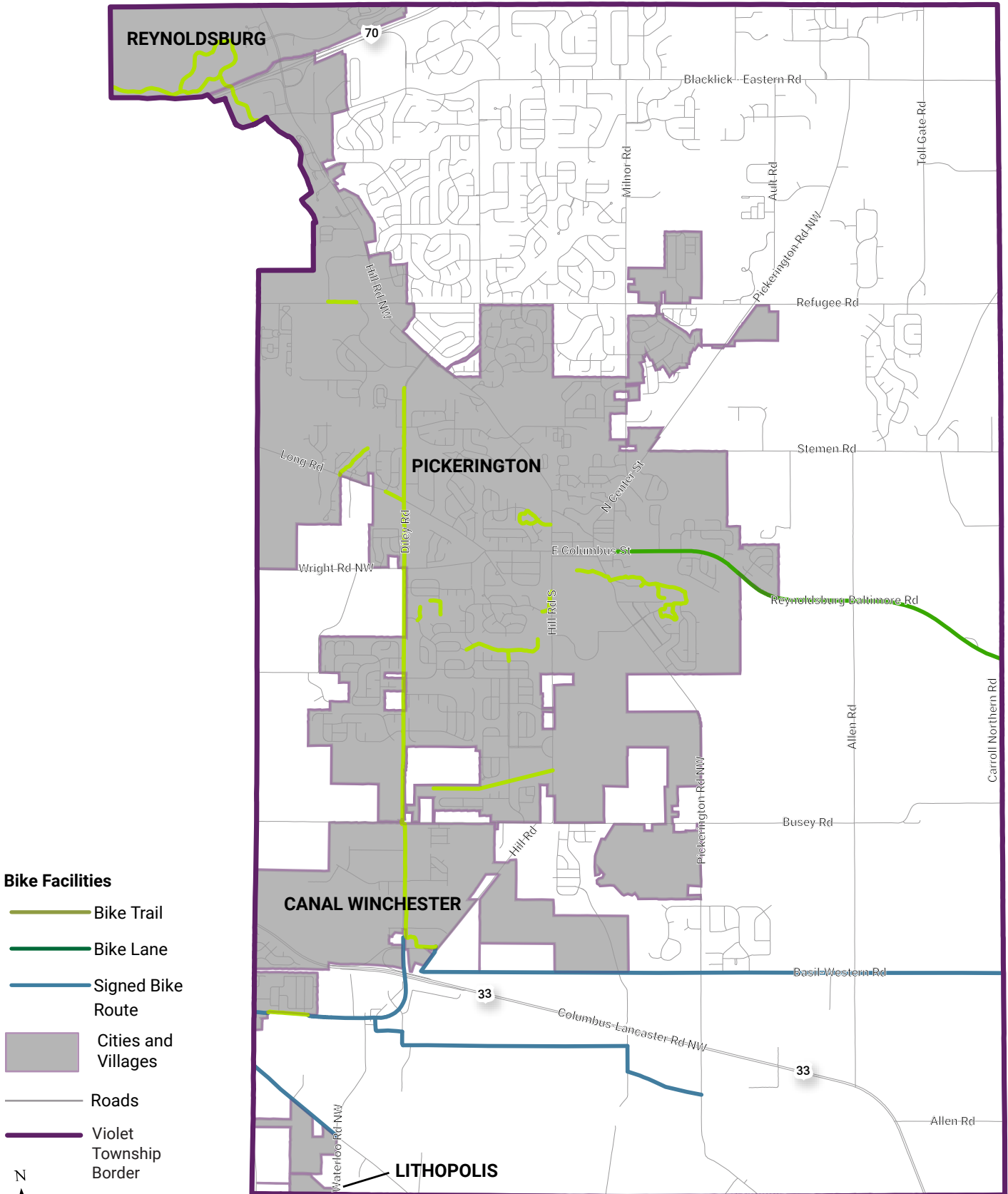
Figure 13 - Average Daily Traffic Volumes



Source: Ohio Department of Transportation Traffic Incident Management (TIM)

Existing Conditions

Figure 14 - Bike Infrastructure



- Bike Facilities**
- Bike Trail
 - Bike Lane
 - Signed Bike Route
 - Cities and Villages
 - Roads
 - Violet Township Border
- N

Source: MidOhio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)

Active Transportation

There are a number of bikeways and multi-use path systems within Violet Township, mostly within the incorporated areas. The Blacklick Creek Trail of the central Ohio Greenways network briefly crosses northwestern Violet Township, and Fairfield County has designated four bicycle routes in their 2013 *Rolling Forward* plan that pass through the Township. Figure 14 shows the existing bike facilities in the Township. Additionally, there is a multi-use path alongside Diley Road and a portion of Refugee Road in the incorporated portion of the Township. Many of the subdivisions in Violet Township offer sidewalks and/or multi-use paths. Trails are required in new subdivision developments.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Violet Township owns and maintains three parks as well as several other green spaces and cemeteries throughout the Township.

Violet Township does not currently have a Parks board; all decisions regarding parks and programming are made by the Board of Trustees and Township administrative staff. There are also a number of parks and open spaces within Violet Township that are run by other organizations.

Figure 15 shows the parks in Violet Township are, the number next to each parks decription matches its number on the map.

Violet Township Dog Park (1)

Located on the north side of Pickerington, the dog park was funded, planned and constructed with community involvement.



The Wigwam (2)

The Wigwam property totals approximately 63 acres, 30 of which are rare, old-growth forest. The Wigwam's woodland is an example of what the historical forests of the region would have looked like. Violet Township is working with the Fairfield County Parks system to install walking trails on this portion of the property.



Busey Road Park (3)

This township park, located on Busey Road in the south of Violet Township was recently acquired and contains an example of mature forest growth.



Harmon Road Park (4)

This township park is located in the norther part of Violet Township in a residential neighborhood.



Existing Conditions

Nelson Park (5)

Nelson Park is located on Chester Drive, not far from Harmon Park.



Pickerington Ponds Metro Park (6)

One of the Columbus Metro Parks, Pickerington Ponds is partially located in the western area of Violet Township. The park can be accessed from Violet Township by Wright Road and Bowen Road.



Blacklick Woods Metro Park (7)

Also a Columbus Metro Park, Blacklick Woods is partially located in the northwest corner of Violet Township. The Blacklick Creek Greenway Trail connects the southeast corner of the park to Tussing Road.



Photo Credit: Gregory Hamilton

City of Pickerington Parks (8)

The Pickerington Park and Recreation Department manages a number of parks within the City of Pickerington including Sycamore Creek Park, Victory Park, and Simsbury Park as well as other, smaller parks.



Photos from top to bottom: Sycamore Creek Park, Victory Park, and Simsbury Park.

Zeller Park (9)

Owned and managed by Fairfield County Parks, Zeller Park has open soccer/athletic fields and a large wooded area around Sycamore Creek.

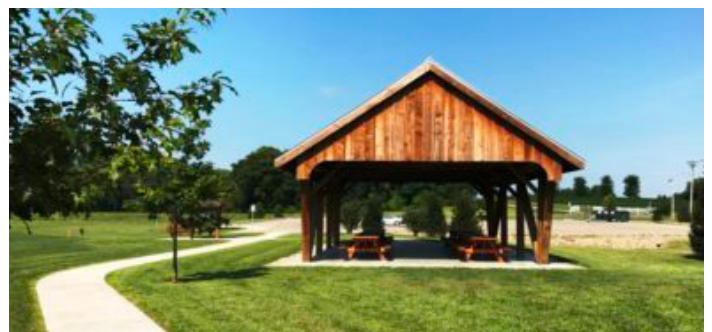
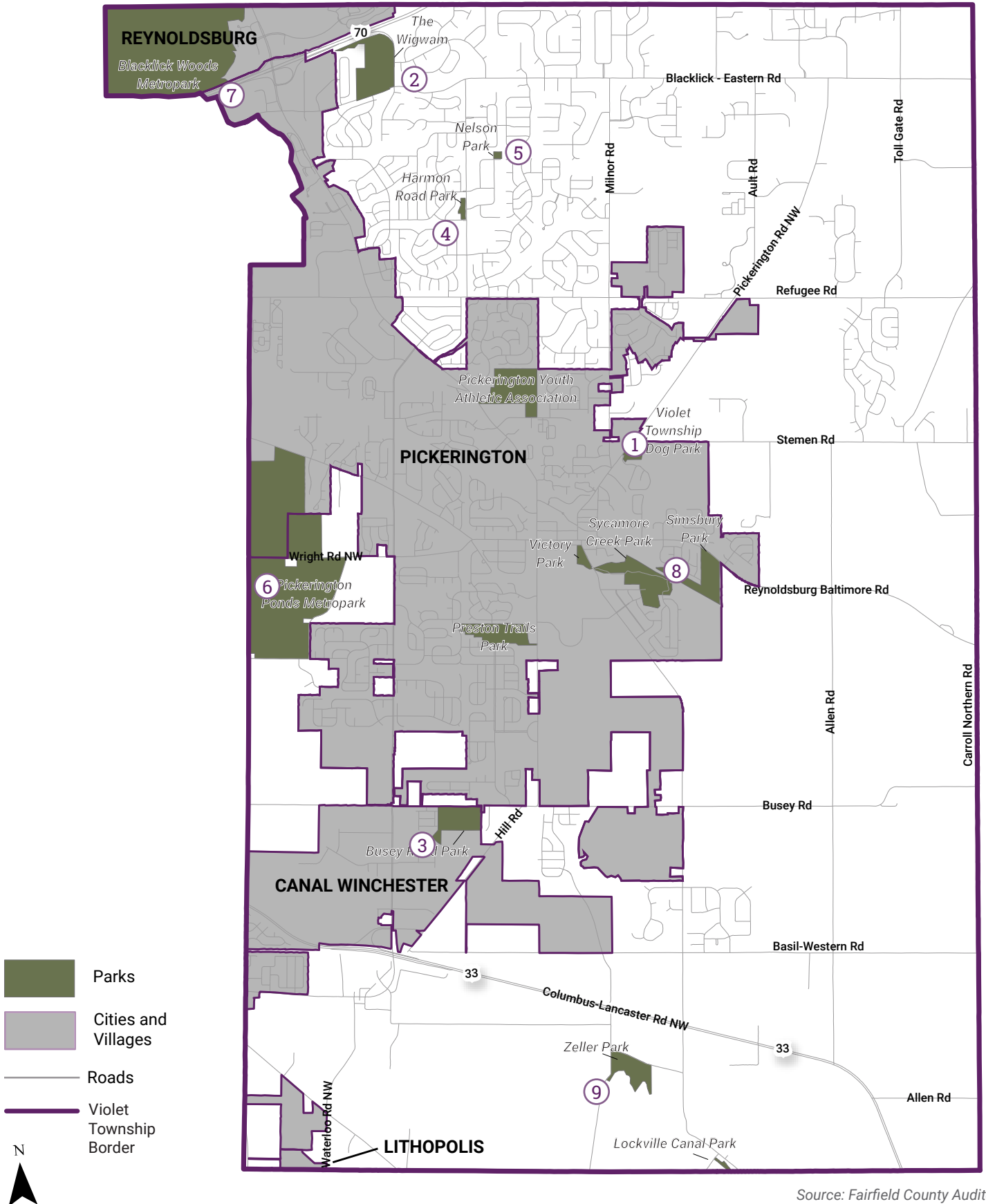


Photo Credit: Fairfield County Park District

Figure 15 - Parks



Source: Fairfield County Auditor

Existing Conditions

CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

One of Violet Township’s assets is its beautiful natural features. Three main creeks (Sycamore Creek, Georges Creek, and Walnut Creek) traverse the Township, as well as smaller streams and tributaries. Other natural areas include many types of wetlands, vernal pools, and pockets of mature woodlands. Conservation efforts seek to protect water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, create protected wildlife corridors, and increase outdoor, nature-based recreational and educational opportunities for the community. Conservation efforts may also take into account anticipated impacts from climate change including flooding and damaging wind storms. A map of Violet Township’s natural resources can be seen in Figure 16.

In Violet Township, there are a variety of conservation projects and properties, some of which are on public park properties, and some of which are conservation efforts on private land.

Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a federal program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Through the CRP, the FSA compensates farmers in exchange for the farmer removing environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production, and planting species that will improve environmental health and quality. A number of farms in Violet Township take advantage of the CRP for a portion of their farmland.

County Wellfields

While properties that are used for wellfields for the county water system are not strictly conservation properties, the development potential for these properties is severely restricted in order to retain the water quality of the land.

Fairfield County owns 85 acres of wellfield land in Violet Township in the southeast portion of the township.

Coyote Run

Coyote Run is a working farm and private preservation project, located within and south of the City of Pickerington. Totaling over 900 acres, Coyote Run is home to a State Nature Preserve, wetlands and vernal pools, as well as hundreds of species of plant and animal life.



State Nature Preserves

Pickerington Ponds Metro Park contains one of the largest remaining natural wetlands in the area. More 400 acres of the park’s 1,608 acres are a dedicated state nature preserve. All of the park area in Violet Township is part of the nature preserve.

The park also contains Wetland Reserve Program and Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program restorations. An especially important feature is Ellis Pond, a glacial kettle lake fed by an underground aquifer; these features are critical to its functioning as prime grounds for migratory and breeding birds.

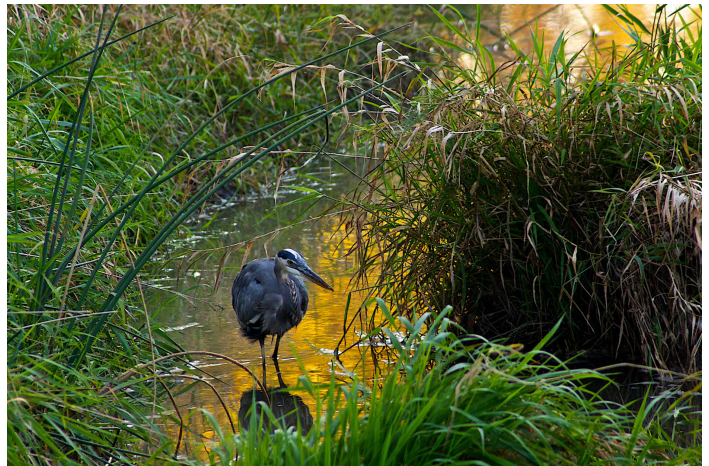
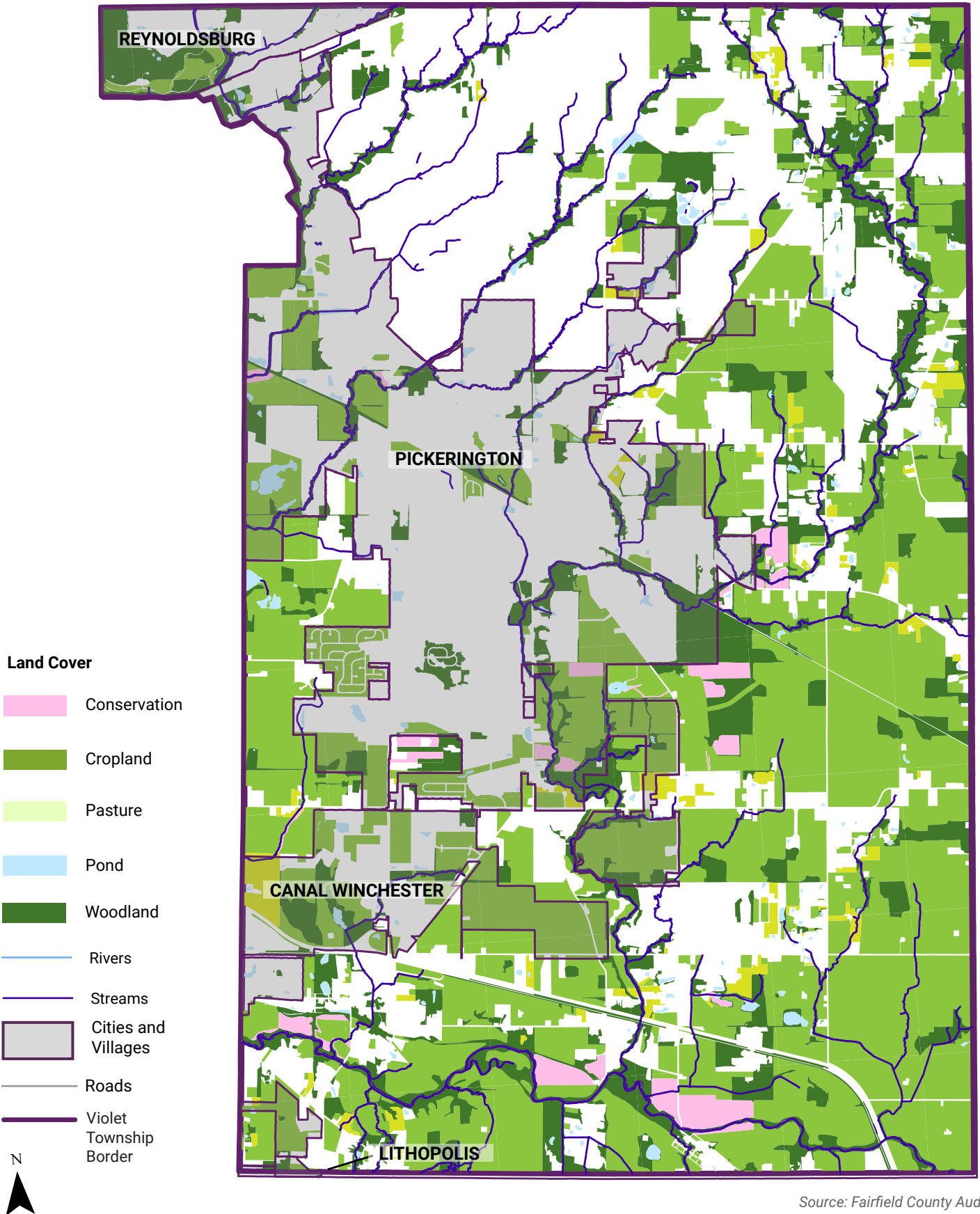


Figure 16 - Natural Resources



Source: Fairfield County Auditor

Existing Conditions

Wetlands

Wetlands are a valuable natural resource for maintaining water quality and providing habitat to native and migrating animals. Hydric soils retain more water and for longer periods of time than other soil types. Because of this water retention, development on hydric soils and wetlands may require specific site engineering depending on the soil type.

Much of the land area in Violet Township contains these types of soils and may be impacted by specific development standards. Figure 17 shows a map of Violet Township's wetlands.

Watersheds

A watershed is all of the land that drains into a common waterway. The United States Department of Agriculture delineates watersheds based on topographical analysis. Watersheds are important to agriculture and conservation because regulations within the watershed can play a role in water quality.

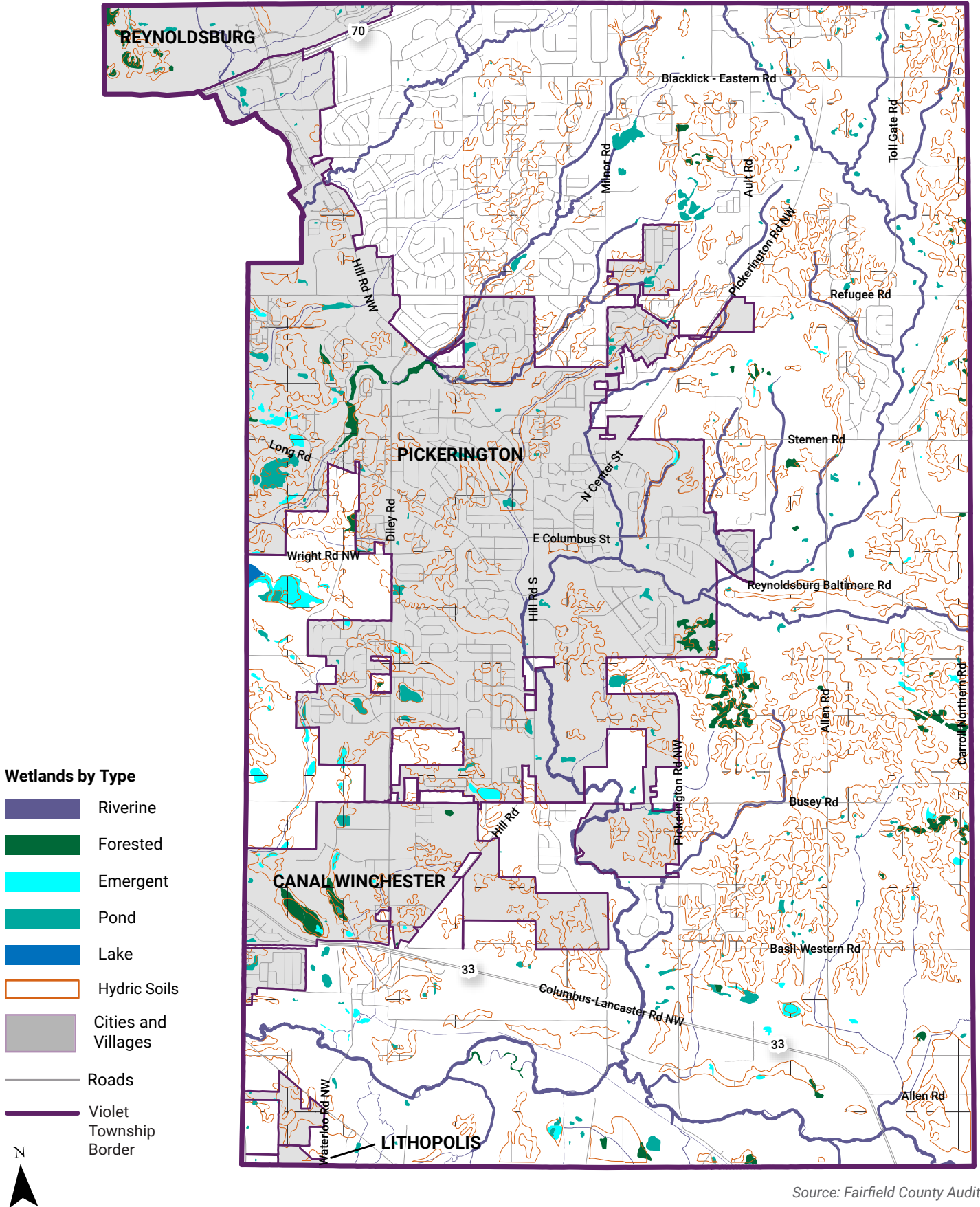
There are five watersheds within Violet Township. They drain into Blacklick Creek, George Creek, Poplar Creek, Sycamore Creek and Walnut Creek (Figure 18).

Floodplains

Floodplains are areas surrounding waterways that would be impacted in the event of a flood. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) determines the 100-year and 500-year floodplains which are associated with specific risk levels and insurance requirements. Figure 19 shows the floodplains by zone in Violet Township.

The Violet Township zoning code requires any development to be set back at least 25 feet from a waterway.

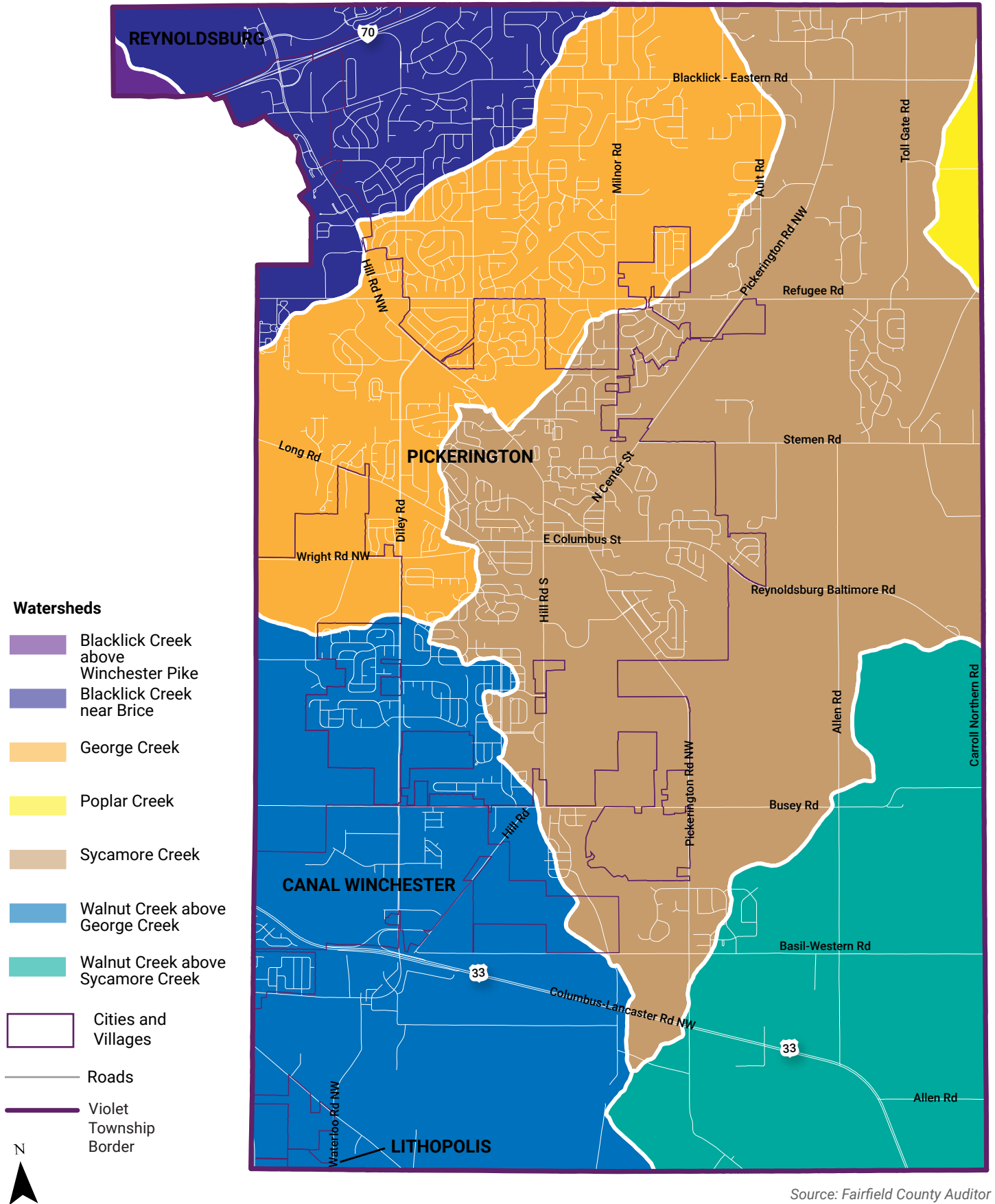
Figure 17 - Wetlands



Source: Fairfield County Auditor

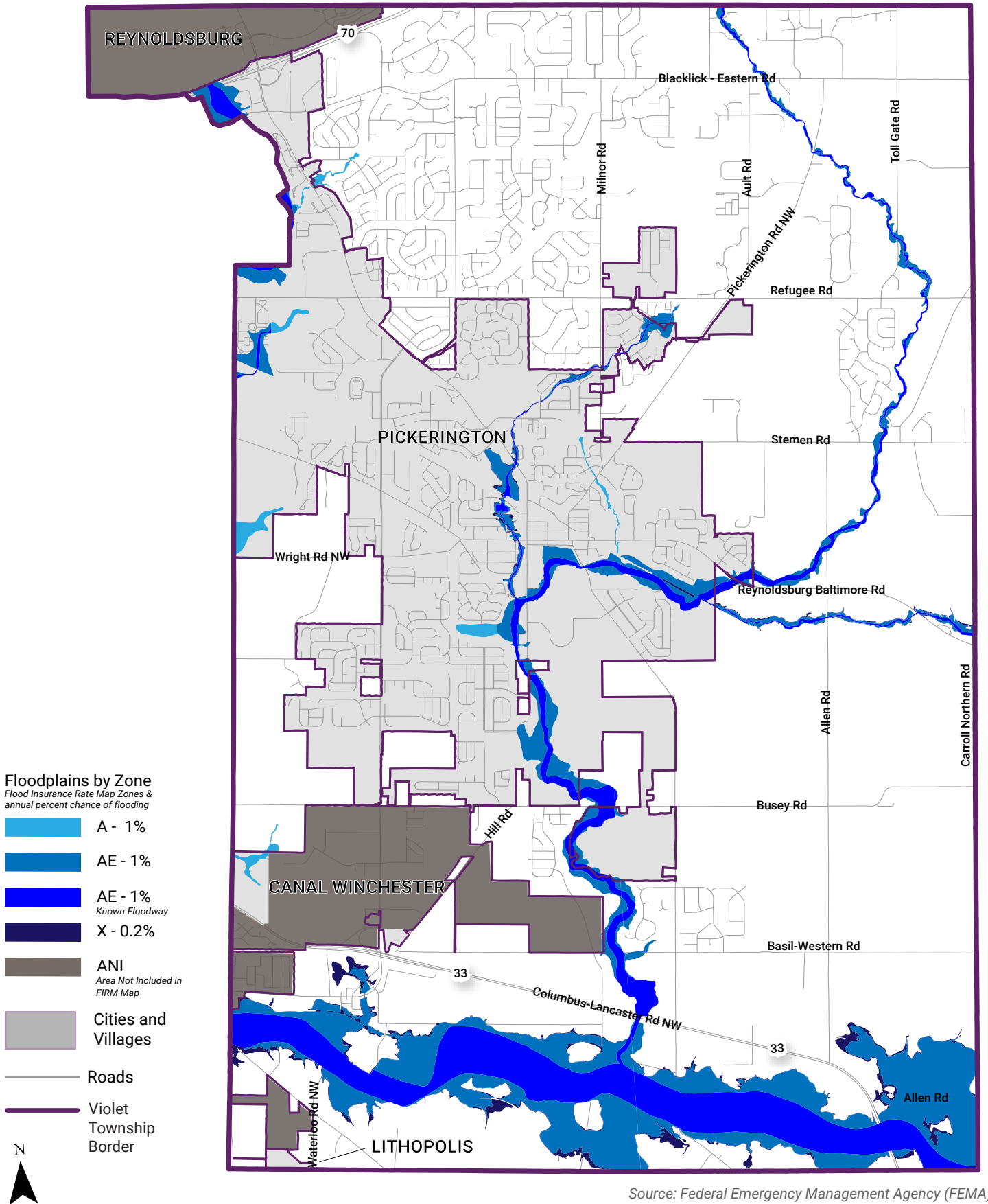
Existing Conditions

Figure 18 - Watersheds



Source: Fairfield County Auditor

Figure 19 - Floodplain



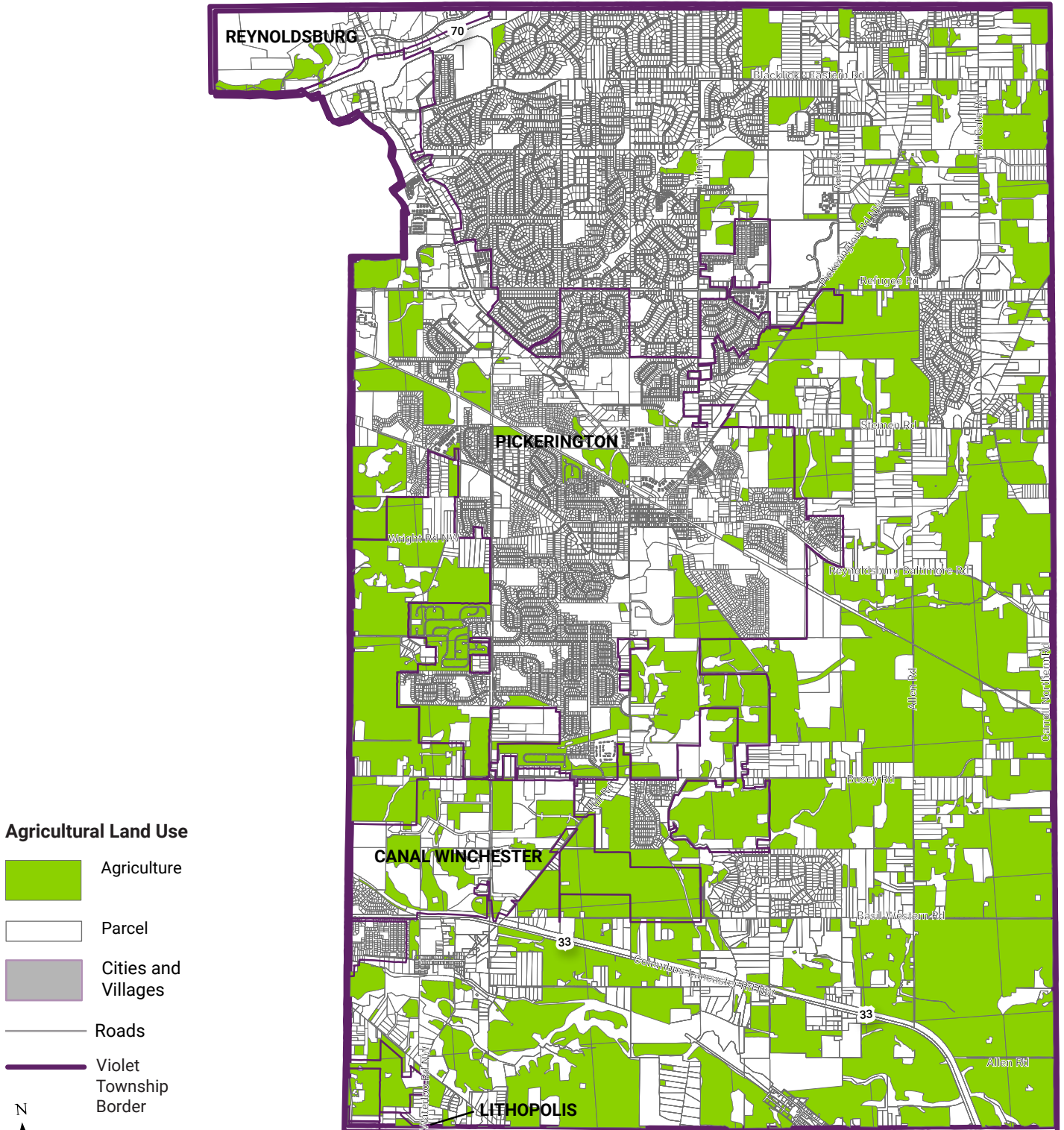
Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Existing Conditions

AGRICULTURE

According to data from the Fairfield County Auditor, just over 4,000 acres in Violet Township are currently used for agricultural purposes, which is approximately 21.7% of the land in the Township. Figure 20 shows that the agricultural land is mainly in the southern half of the township.

Figure 20 - Agricultural Land



Source: Fairfield County Auditor

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

This section provides a summary of the public engagement findings, with key takeaways from engagement in bold. The full public engagement report can be found in the appendix.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a review of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a community. The SWOT analysis for Violet Township is based on discussions with the steering committee, stakeholder interviews and public survey responses. Results of the SWOT analysis for Violet Township are summarized in Figure 21.

A common theme that emerged regardless of whether the topic was current strengths/weaknesses or future opportunities/threats, was the need for a clear, defined vision to guide Violet Township.

The small town, rural feel of Violet Township is seen as one of the main strengths of the community and there is a desire to preserve or conserve the agricultural land and open space, particularly in the eastern portion of the Township.

Violet Township’s convenient location relative to Columbus is another strength, but one that complicates

the desire to maintain the small town atmosphere because of the projected population growth of central Ohio.

Housing

Responses on housing and housing development in Violet Township were mixed. Only 5% of survey participants said they would like to see more housing in Violet Township, but in a visual preference survey of what Township residents would like future development to look like, more than half of respondents chose an image including housing. Housing clustered around open space or agriculture was the most popular response followed by a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Engagement participants expressed concerns that new housing developments would burden the school system and/or increase traffic in the area.

Addressing these concerns should be a top priority for the township, given that current zoning regulations, not withstanding variances or planned unit developments (PUDs), indicate that much of the growth in the future will be residential development.

Figure 21 - SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Proximity to Columbus and culture
- Access to open space (large lot sizes)
- Housing affordability (with comparably lower taxes)
- Great school system
- Dedicated state nature preserve with Sycamore Creek
- Community pools
- Emergency response & services
- Farmland
- Developable sites

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of local commercial
- Limited recreation & walkability (trails, programming, etc.)
- Tax burden on residents
- Broadband and cell limitations
- Limited resources for localized planning
- Lack of opportunities to age in place
- Workforce (mismatch between local jobs and residents)
- Traffic congestion

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growth
- Business attraction and generating tax revenue
- Increase in public trails and connectivity
- Regional collaboration
- Long-term visioning
- The Wigwam
- Wildlife/habitat regulations for new development
- Regulations for stormwater management
- Potential to meet market demands in innovative ways

THREATS

- Pressure/toll of external development
- Traffic safety concerns
- Capacity of schools
- Annexation
- High property taxes
- Resident retention
- Environmental protection
- Township’s inability to levy an income tax
- Maintain amenities/ services to be competitive with other communities

Public Engagement Findings

Commercial Development

Entertainment-oriented uses, such as retail and dining, were the most popular responses for the type of commercial development residents would prefer in Violet Township.

The ability to easily and safely walk or bike to commercial destinations was also a common theme throughout the engagement process.

Improvement Areas

Engagement participants marked areas they wanted to retain and areas they wanted to re-imagine within Violet Township (Figure 22). Clusters marked for improvement are circled in yellow and indicate where improvement efforts should be focused.

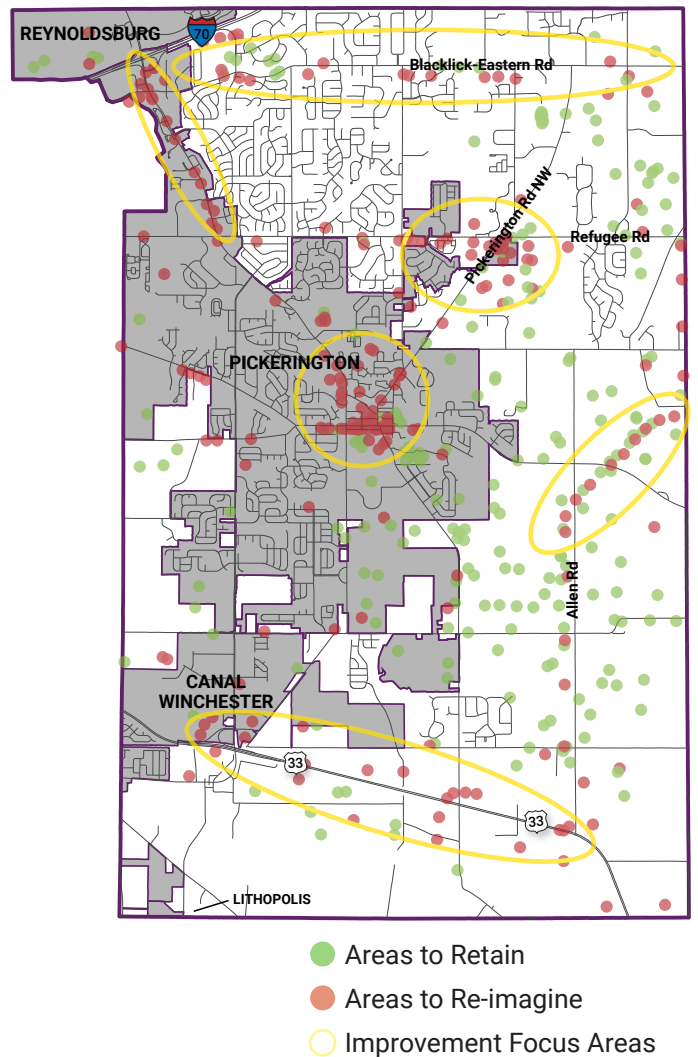
The I-70 interchange area in the northwest cluster was identified as a concern because of congestion and traffic flow. There were also road safety concerns along the US-33 corridor, especially with increased development pressure.

The area around the high school at the intersection of Refugee and Pickerington roads was identified as an opportunity area for mixed-use commercial development. Although located within the city of Pickerington, the public expressed a desire to re-imagine Olde Pickerington as a walkable, mixed-use downtown to attract economic investment and improve the quality of life for residents.

Other areas for improvement identified were along Blacklick-Eastern Road in the north of the Township and along OH-256 near Allen Road to the east.

Regardless of specific clusters, adding sidewalks or trail connections was a frequent request by those discussing opportunities to re-imagine the township.

Figure 22 - Public Engagement Improvement Areas



FUTURE LAND USE

PURPOSE

The future land use map is intended to serve as a guide for future decisions regarding zoning, development, and conservation efforts. It describes the general intent for the future of different areas of the Township, and is one of the key components of any comprehensive plan. The future land use map is not legally binding and serves a different purpose than a zoning map. It is not a mandate for any development or redevelopment, and does not alter the property rights of any landowner.

Additionally, development is always site-specific, meaning that any development or redevelopment should be evaluated on an individual basis using a number of factors. While the recommendations of this land use map should be one of those factors, it should not be the sole factor in evaluating any proposed development in the future. While this map does separate uses at the parcel level in order for easy comparison with the current zoning map, the boundaries of each district should be considered somewhat porous, as conditions may dictate that surrounding contexts influence neighboring sites as they develop in the future. Photos provided in this section are example images of the intensity of development that would be appropriate for the land use classification and are not meant to dictate development style.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Residential

Land currently used for residential purposes, including farmland, and land that could be used for residential purposes in the future.

Preserved Land

Existing greenspaces in the form of parks, conservation areas, and wellfields.

Institutional

Land owned by a public or nonprofit entity, primarily local governments and schools.

Neighborhood Commercial Retail

Concentration of local goods and services provided primarily by small businesses.

Mixed Use

Can be similar to neighborhood commercial retail development, but explicitly includes a mix of commercial and residential uses, including retail, restaurants, residences, and offices.

Suburban Office

Offices typically occupied by larger businesses, located close to a major corridor for ease of employee access, and situated in a campus-like atmosphere.

Business, Logistics, and Manufacturing

Commercial uses that require a large amount of space, access to freight networks, and easy access for employees.

Future Land Use

Residential

The residential classification can encompass a variety of uses. It can indicate that the land in question is currently used for residential purposes, or that it could be used for residential purposes in the future. Farmland is also typically classified as residential, which is the case in this plan, and much of the residential classification in the southeast portion of the Township is currently active farmland.

Any new residential development should incorporate large open spaces, as well as active transportation connectivity in the form of sidewalks and multi-use paths. Other amenities, such as playgrounds and shelter-houses, are also to be encouraged whenever feasible.

Preservation of open space and incorporation of natural features is often referred to as cluster development. New subdivisions are recommended to use Planned Unit Development incorporating cluster development to concentrate housing around large open spaces or agriculture and endeavor to incorporate the natural features of the site into the design whenever possible. Rather than subdividing the land into large individual parcels, residential lots are smaller and clustered in one area in order to maintain shared open space. Figure 24 shows an example of cluster development. Residential clusters can be strategically placed near existing infrastructure and active transportation routes.



Figure 23 - Residential Development Examples

Figure 24 - Cluster Development Example



Preserved Land

Greenspace and preservation are important for any community. The land in this classification represents a number of public parks, including Pickerington Ponds Metro Park in the west, Zeller Park in the south, and several small parks and greenspaces located in or near Township subdivisions. Coyote Run, a working farm and private conservation project, is in the center of the Township. Fairfield County Utilities' wellfields in the south and southeast are also included, and while they are not strictly conservation projects, development of these parcels is severely limited in order to protect the land's water quality.

Institutional

Institutional represents land that is owned by a public or nonprofit entity, primarily local governments and schools. This land's use is expected to remain the same for the foreseeable future and is limited to a handful of parcels in northern Violet Township. They include the following locations:

- Wigwam Event Center
- Fairfield Elementary School
- Harmon Middle School
- Pickerington Lakeview Junior High School
- Pickerington High School North
- Toll Gate Elementary School

Neighborhood Commercial Retail

Neighborhood commercial retail encompasses many of the small businesses that provide goods and services to the local community. These are typically small-scale developments that are located on or near major roadways, collectors and intersections. The uses in this classification should be complementary and serve local residents, and developments should be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Development of local neighborhood commercial retail centers is essential to enhancing residents’ quality of life in Violet Township. Not only do they provide nearby goods and services, they also promote small local business and community resilience. This type of development encourages local entrepreneurship, walkability, and an active and connected lifestyle that many people crave. Many neighborhood commercial retail centers are used for community gathering and “third spaces” - places to relax, work, and connect with others in your community. Hyperlocal coffee shops and bars are popular in this type of development, as well as small grocery stores, banks, and professional services. Medical offices, general retail, and restaurants are other typical uses that would be acceptable in this classification.



Mixed Use

Mixed use developments are developments that have both residential and commercial components. The area targeted for mixed use in this plan is primarily centered around Pickerington and Refugee Roads. A mixed use development here should endeavor to build a walkable community that would support local business and provide a sense of place for residents and visitors. Any existing residences that neighbor a new mixed use development should be properly buffered from the new development.

This type of development has experienced recent attention and popularity, but it has existed for centuries. Many towns were initially built in this manner because it provides a bustling center of economic activity day and night. Apartments, condominiums, offices, retail, restaurants, and other uses all work in harmony to provide an active and vibrant experience for residents, workers, and visitors alike. Mixed-use developments offer an alternative to the single-family home lifestyle prevalent throughout Violet Township, primarily attracting both young professionals and empty nesters. This benefit is two-fold, as it allows newcomers to afford living in the area without buying a house, while also freeing up homes for young families to buy once empty nesters decide to downsize.



Future Land Use

Suburban Office

There is a general lack of offices in the unincorporated area of Violet Township. The area north of Busey Road in the western portion of the Township could be a suitable location for suburban office development. An office development in this area should have a campus-like feel, and should endeavor to take advantage of the natural features of the area. Any existing residences that border an office development should be properly buffered from the developed site.

Highlighting land for the development of dedicated office space encourages both new businesses and new residents to relocate to the area, adding to the Township's tax base. These types of offices are ideal for professional service businesses, which often align with high-paying jobs. A suburban location can make the area an attractive alternative to premium rents found in Central Business Districts and downtowns, especially for new businesses, branches of existing businesses, and start-ups. Such a location can also be attractive to businesses and employees looking for a more campus-like atmosphere at their workplace, providing landscaped plazas, scenic open spaces to eat lunch, and multiuse paths that serve both workers and residents alike.

Figure 27 - Suburban Office Development Examples



Business, Logistics, and Manufacturing

Business, Logistics, and Manufacturing is a classification that can indicate a wide variety of commercial uses, and is primarily located in the south and southeastern portions of Violet Township in this plan. Office parks, light industry, or manufacturing would be preferred uses for this area, although logistics or office/warehouse facilities are also appropriate (as long as they incorporate office and warehouse or light industrial space into a single building). Close proximity to US-33 makes this area particularly ripe for development, and the area laid out in the future land use map aligns with the CEDA (Cooperative Economic Development Agreement) that Violet Township has with the City of Canal Winchester, and the Planned Commercial Overlay District in the Violet Township zoning code.

As much as possible, developments in this area should be integrated in an industrial park setting. Any developments should incorporate substantial landscaping and vegetation in order to minimize disruption to any nearby residential uses.

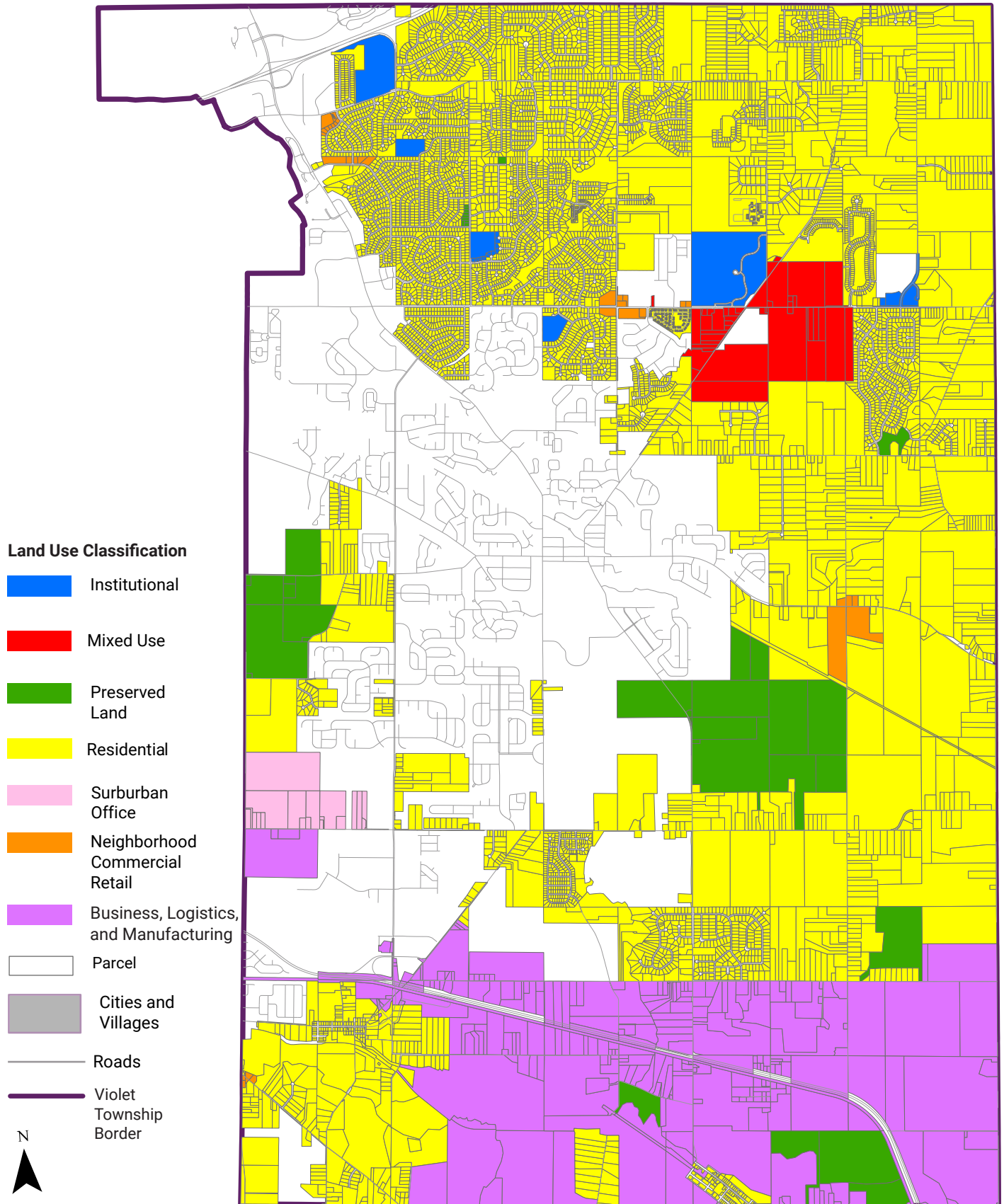
This type of development is vital to Violet Township's economic well-being and its ability to continue providing exceptional services to residents. Allowing and encouraging more business, logistics, and manufacturing uses not only ensures access to well-paying jobs for residents, but also eases the tax burden on residents by shifting some responsibility for maintaining services to large businesses and away from homeowners. These types of uses typically require a lot of land and access to major freight networks, making the US-33 corridor an ideal location. This easy access also serves as a draw to employees and potential future residents of the area.

Figure 28 - Business, Logistics, and Manufacturing Development Examples



Future Land Use

Figure 29 - Future Land Use



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies in this section are the result of a highly collaborative process between the Vision for Violet steering committee, Violet Township staff, and Violet Township residents. The draft goals were presented to the public at a Community Workshop event on October 7th, 2021, and each goal was supported by a majority of attendees. The strategies were then created using a fusion of local and national best practices in consultation with the Vision for Violet steering committee.

The result of this process is a roadmap to the future broken down into achievable steps. While none of these goals or strategies are binding, they represent an authentic vision of what the Violet Township community would like to see in the future, and future decisions should, whenever possible, be taken through the lens of these goals and strategies, with an eye towards raising the quality of life for all Violet Township residents.

CONCEPT AREAS

To further identify areas of focus, the township was divided into concept areas that have different characteristics and objectives for future development. Figure 30 provides a map of these concept areas. Goals identified as relevant to these areas are not all inclusive, but emphasize the desired character of future development.

Improving the active transportation network is desired across the entire Township. While this plan does not go into detail on specific strategies to accomplish full connectivity, Figure 31 highlights the gaps in the existing network to show where efforts for the goals aimed at active transportation improvements can be focused.

Blacklick-Eastern Corridor

The Blacklick-Eastern Corridor is mostly residential and is designated residential in the future land use map. There is the potential for a neighborhood commercial district at the eastern end of the corridor at Toll Gate Road. Since this area is closer to Columbus and easily accessible from I-70, infill development is likely.

Relevant Goals:

- Economic Development Goal 1
- Housing Goal 2
- Transportation Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4

Harmon Road Neighborhoods

The Harmon Road Neighborhoods have been significantly developed since the last comprehensive plan with planned developments. There are a number of parks and institutions in this area that lack connections to the existing active transportation network despite sidewalks or trails being required in new planned developments.

Relevant Goals:

- Housing Goal 1
- Transportation Goals 1, 2, and 3
- Parks Goals 1 and 2

Refugee Road District

The Refugee Road District has also been developed since the last comprehensive plan. The area around Pickerington North High School has been identified for mixed use development. Further infill of this area with planned developments increases the importance of pedestrian infrastructure improvements along Milner Road to the Blacklick-Eastern Corridor.

Relevant Goals:

- Economic Development Goal 1
- Housing Goals 1 and 2
- Transportation Goals 2, 3, and 4

Eastern Violet Rural Area

The eastern portion of Violet Township is the most rural part of the Township, maintaining its rural character and open space is strongly desired. This area also has many natural resources including Sycamore Creek and its tributaries.

Relevant Goals:

- Conservation Goals 1, 2, and 3
- Transportation Goal 3
- Parks Goal 3

Goals and Strategies

US-33 Corridor

The majority of the southern portion of Violet Township along the US-33 Corridor is slated for Business, Logistics, and Manufacturing in the future land use map. As this area develops, transportation connections and the environmental impact of development and manufacturing will become more important.

Relevant Goals:

- Economic Development Goals 1, 2, and 3
- Transportation Goals 1 and 2
- Conservation Goal 3

Pickerington Ponds District

The Pickerington Ponds district includes the undeveloped area south of Pickerington Ponds Metro Park and the residential areas in between Pickerington and Canal Winchester. Connecting the existing trail infrastructure to the park and improving the connection south to the US-33 Corridor will be important as this area continues to develop.

Relevant Goals:

- Housing Goals 1 and 2
- Conservation Goals 1, 2, and 3
- Parks Goals 1 and 2

Figure 30 - Concept Areas

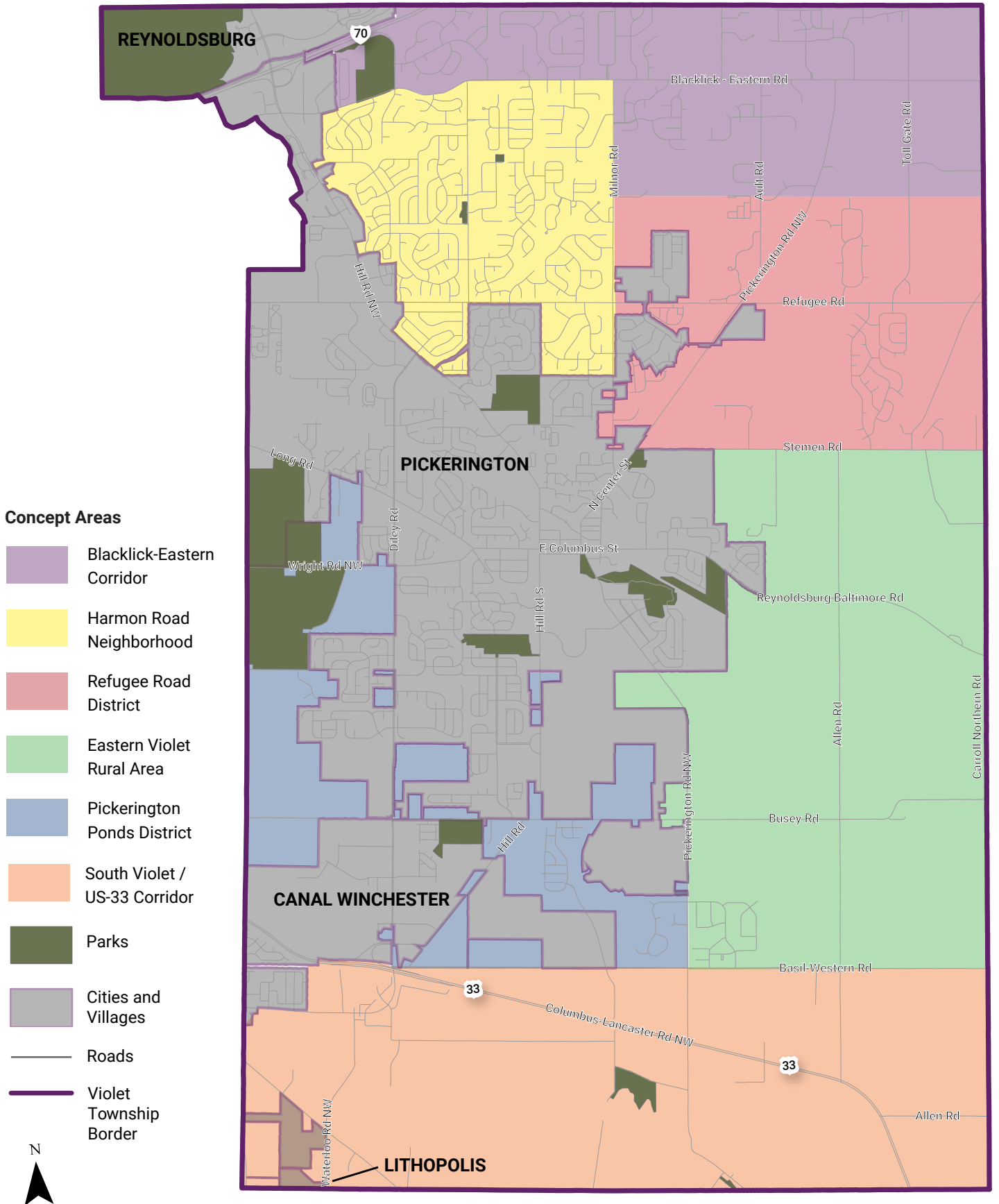
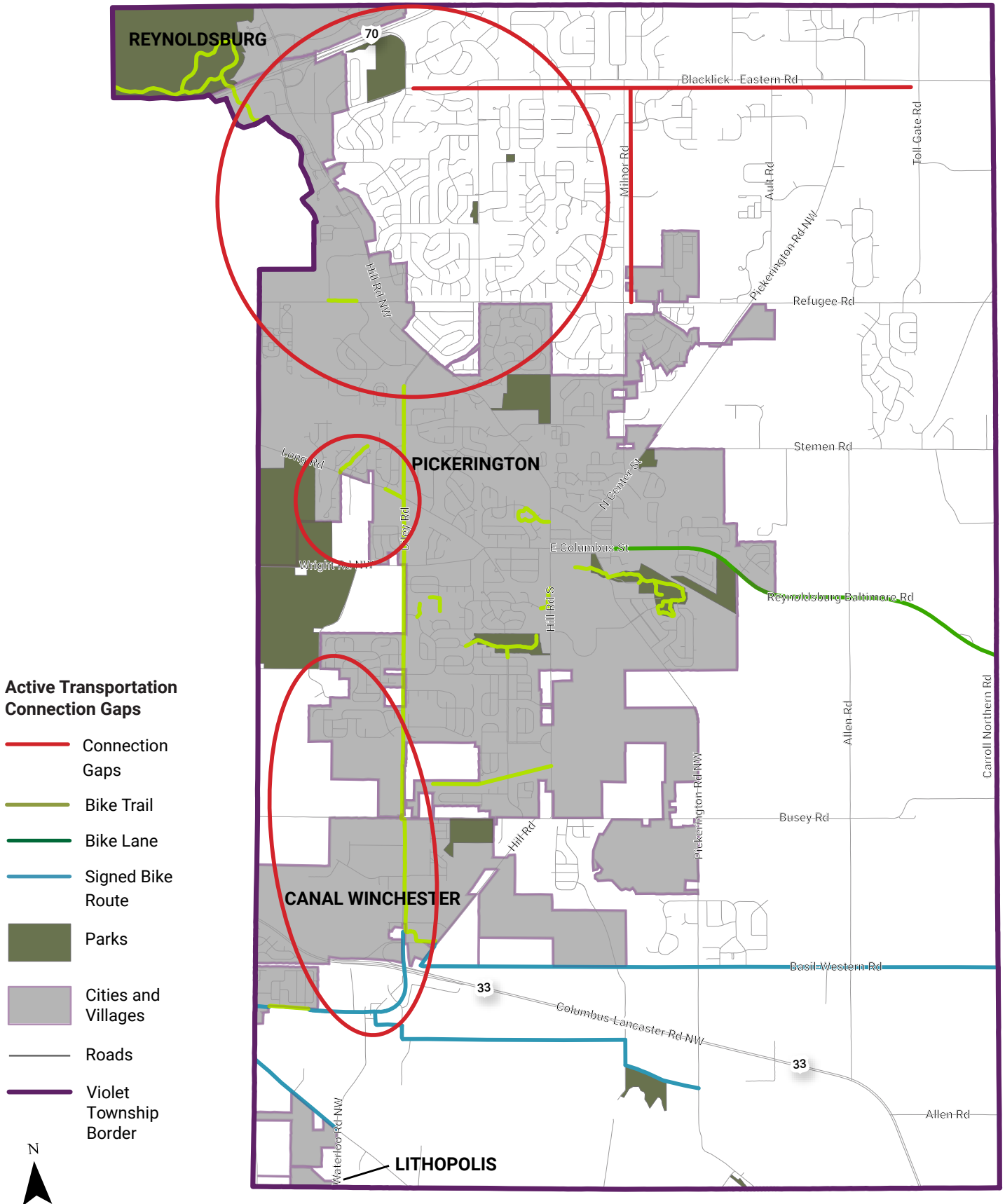


Figure 31 - Active Transportation Connection Gaps



HOUSING

Providing housing for the growing population will be a challenge for all of central Ohio moving forward. As development trends and best practices change over time it is important that Violet Township continues to re-evaluate its zoning code and development patterns in order to provide a variety of housing types for residents and ensure the code aligns with the long-term vision of the Township.

Mixed use developments decrease vehicle traffic, encourage walkability, provide easy access to businesses, and can create a sense of place. Cluster development and good subdivision design allow for more natural space to be preserved than traditional subdivision design. Public engagement revealed that there is confusion or misunderstanding around terms such as “smart growth”, “responsible growth” and “urban sprawl” despite being frequently used by respondents. Educating residents on the intricacies of zoning, how it affects growth, and the benefits it brings to the community is beneficial for future planning efforts as the zoning code is Violet Township’s most effective regulating tool.

Goal 1: Provide a range of housing options for Township residents.

- 1A: Enhance residential opportunities for aging adults.
- 1B: Provide designated opportunities for mixed use development in the Township.

Goal 2: Concentrate residential development in nodes surrounded by greenspace.

- 2A: Emphasize form and access to shared public greenspace in site review.
- 2B: Conduct a zoning code audit to compare residential district regulations with the long-term goals of this plan.
- 2C: Increase educational resources / public access to zoning regulations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is important for any community. Attracting new businesses means providing jobs for residents, increasing the tax base, and circulating money in the local economy. Violet Township’s location, growth, and affluent population makes it well-poised to take advantage of further economic development. Crucially, approximately 41% of Violet Township residents work in nearby Columbus, meaning that there are opportunities for Township residents to work in the same area where they live.

Many current employment centers within Violet Township fall within the incorporated areas of the Township, primarily within the cities of Pickerington and Canal Winchester. The commercial strips of State Route 256 and Olde Pickerington Village, provide a large number of restaurant and retail jobs, while Canal Pointe Industrial Park, located in Canal Winchester, is home to a large number of light industrial, manufacturing, and logistics enterprises.

The growing population of the Township will continue to drive demand for infrastructure improvements, jobs, businesses and services. Mixed use developments are well-suited for small businesses as they provide an opportunity for a built-in customer base, foot traffic, and a community feel. The nature of being a township makes cooperation with other municipalities even more important for the success of economic development of Violet Township.

Goal 1: Increase neighborhood commercial and retail development, where appropriate.

- 1A: Identify opportunities for a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD).
- 1B: Provide designated opportunities for mixed use development in the Township.
- 1C: Encourage the creation of New Community Authorities for new developments.

Goal 2: Encourage light business, logistics, and manufacturing development, where appropriate.

- 2A: Identify sites suitable for industrial development that could be good candidates for JobsOhio’s SiteOhio program.
- 2B: Work with the Fairfield 33 Alliance to promote sites in Violet Township.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 3: Work collaboratively to provide large-scale amenities such as sports facilities and arts and cultural facilities.

- 3A: Work with the City of Pickerington, City of Canal Winchester, and Fairfield County to implement recommendations from feasibility studies for a sports facility in the community.

Economic Development Tools

Economic development tools are programs, entities, or partnerships that Violet Township can use to help achieve its economic development goals. The following are examples of some of the tools that may be applicable to Violet Township and do not represent an exhaustive list of all economic development tools.

Cooperative Economic Development Agreement (CEDA)

A Cooperative Economic Development Agreement, also known as a CEDA, is an agreement between a municipality and a township in order to promote economic development in a certain area. Violet Township established a CEDA with the City of Canal Winchester on the north side of US-33, in 2001. Under this agreement, a portion of income taxes from businesses within the CEDA area of Canal Winchester go to Violet Township, and Violet Township maintains the roads within the CEDA. There is also a separate set of development standards that are applied to the CEDA area, and a CEDA Land Use Committee, made up of representatives from Violet Township, Canal Winchester, and Fairfield County Regional Planning, review development projects within the CEDA area.

New Community Authority (NCA)

A New Community Authority (NCA) or simply a Community Authority (CA), represents a partnership between a local government and a private developer. In Ohio, a Community Authority is a special unit of government that has a wide range of abilities and tools that it can use to promote economic development. A governing board including the developer, local government, and the public governs the CA. The CA is able to issue bonds, oversee economic development projects and public improvements, and levy community development charges which can take the form of property tax assessments, sales tax, or income tax within the NCA area. Community Authority projects around central Ohio include Bridge Park in the City of Dublin, and Easton Town Center.

Port Authority

A Port Authority is a political subdivision formed by a local government in Ohio. A Port Authority can acquire, sell, and improve real and personal property. A Port Authority can issue bonds for economic development projects, and levy taxes with voter approval. Port Authorities in Ohio often have greater flexibility to buy and sell property, and are not taxed on building materials for any project that is under the Port Authority's control. Violet Township's Port Authority was recently absorbed by the Fairfield County Port Authority. Violet Township can advocate for future economic development projects within the Township to be executed through the County Port Authority.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development mechanism available to local governments in Ohio. Once a parcel is granted a TIF, property tax payments derived from the increased assessed value of the property are directed to a separate fund to finance the construction of public infrastructure in the area. There are no active TIFs in the unincorporated areas of Violet Township; however, there are TIF properties that are located within the incorporated areas of Reynoldsburg, Pickerington, and Canal Winchester within Violet Township.

Joint Economic Development District (JEDD)

A Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) is a special district that is the result of a partnership between a township and a city or village. A JEDD allows a township and municipality to levy an income tax on any business in the JEDD area, and split the revenue between them in order to provide services for the area. Since townships in Ohio are normally unable to collect income tax, JEDDs can provide an important income stream that would not otherwise exist.

CONSERVATION

Conservation of land to ensure positive development patterns is an important factor for any growing community, especially for Violet Township which is known for its small town, rural character. With numerous creeks and watersheds in the Township, monitoring and maintaining riparian corridors is essential for maintaining water quality. Violet Township is currently enrolled in MORPC's Sustainable 2050 Program, however there are various certification levels within that program that the Township has yet to achieve.

Goal 1: Identify ecologically sensitive areas that would be suitable for conservation to include suitable natural restoration and preservation areas.

- 1A: Work with landowners and regional partners to identify prime farmland for potential voluntary conservation easements or other voluntary protective programming.
- 1B: Work with local and regional partners to evaluate feasibility of and funding for a Nine-Element Watershed Plan for Sycamore Creek.
- 1C: Evaluate and consider increasing existing setback from waterway for development.

Goal 2: Seek out funding sources and strategies to preserve land in Violet Township.

- 2A: Work with landowners and regional agencies to identify funding sources and best practices for conserving land.

Goal 3: Explore policies that contribute to sustainability and alleviate the potential impacts of climate change.

- 3A: Work with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission through their Sustainable2050 program to set sustainability goals and benchmarks.
- 3B: Identify sites that will be most impacted by climate change, especially floodplains, wetlands, and stream banks.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Public emphasized a desire for increased active transportation infrastructure and connectivity to parks. An agreement with Fairfield County Parks to install walking trails at the Wigwam Property is one example of solutions that could be used in other parks in the Township.

Goal 1: Increase and diversify programming at Township parks and facilities.

- 1A: Evaluate feasibility of creating a Parks Department/District and/or formalizing an operations and maintenance agreement with an existing parks district.
- 1B: Work with other Parks and Recreation Departments to bring programming to Violet Township parks and facilities.

Goal 2: Enhance buildings and infrastructure at Township parks and facilities.

- 2A: Explore grants and other funding opportunities to enhance buildings and infrastructure at Township parks and facilities.
- 2B: Partner with regional agencies on development of buildings and infrastructure.

Goal 3: Identify opportunities for additional parkland.

- 3A: Explore grants and other funding opportunities for additional parkland.
- 3B: Create an evaluation matrix to evaluate opportunities for additional parkland as land becomes available.

Goals and Strategies

TRANSPORTATION

Rapid growth in Violet Township and the surrounding area has increased traffic, particularly truck traffic, causing a strain on the existing road infrastructure. As the population is projected to continue to increase, it is imperative that Violet Township continue to work with other transportation partners through the Fairfield County Transportation Improvement District to ensure that Violet Township residents benefit from any ongoing and future projects.

A growing population means more demand for alternative modes of transportation as well as demand on the road infrastructure. Public transportation and active transportation is currently limited within the Township, and the public desires more connectivity. Active transportation improvements can also be beneficial to economic development as it encourages residents to walk or bike to local businesses.

Goal 1: Work with other local and regional agencies to enhance freeway connections for Township residents.

- 1A: Collaborate with transportation partners to improve freeway access to I-70 and US-33.
- 1B: Collaborate with transportation partners on a context-appropriate US-33 and I-70 connector.
- 1C: Create a publicly-available list of current and planned freeway improvements.

Goal 2: Support public transportation options within and around Violet Township.

- 2A: Support and work with Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit to evaluate their routes within and around Violet Township.
- 2B: Reach out to the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) to determine feasibility for COTA routes and/or a park-and-ride location within Violet Township.
- 2C: Evaluate transit needs of seniors living within Violet Township and work with local partners to ensure those needs are met.
- 2.4: Explore funding sources for additional public transit services.

Goal 3: Provide greater active transportation connectivity through the development of sidewalks and multi-use paths.

- 3A: Connect residential neighborhoods to local businesses.
- 3B: Include active transportation infrastructure in future streetscape improvements and future developments.
- 3C: Conduct a sidewalk and trail analysis as part of an active transportation plan.
- 3D: Focus on connecting existing parks within Violet Township to each other and to residential neighborhoods when planning new active transportation connections.

Goal 4: Work to enhance and improve local roadway networks.

- 4A: Create a publicly-available list of current and planned roadway improvements.
- 4B: Work with Fairfield County and other partners to improve Refugee Road east of City of Pickerington.

Appendix: Public Engagement Report