



**FAYETTE COUNTY**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

NOVEMBER 21, 2025



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### **Letter to the Community**

This plan was created to help guide the future of our County. It shows how we can protect the things we love, including our small-town feel, our friendly community, and our rural land. At the same time, Fayette County is changing, and we need to make smart choices. It is important that the County makes room for new jobs and economic growth. New projects and investments are bringing us opportunities. If we plan carefully, this growth can help improve life for everyone.

Many community members shared their ideas as part of the planning process. The plan is organized around six main goals and includes many steps we can take over the next ten years. It also highlights 13 top priorities that are most urgent to address. These will guide the County's work in the near future.

To make this plan a reality, many people will need to work together—County Commissioners, County staff, the City of Washington Court House, and the villages and townships across the County. Everyone has an important role in making our shared vision a reality.

Now it is time to take action. By working together and building on the progress we have already made, we can make Fayette County an even better place to live, work, and enjoy for generations to come.

Sincerely,

  
Tony Anderson

Commissioner

  
Jim Garland

Commissioner

  
Donnie Fleak

Commissioner

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# Acknowledgements

## COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Jim Garland  
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## PHOTO CREDITS CONSULTANT

Planning NEXT

Falcon Photo Ohio, LLC

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Part 1



# Strategic Plan

# Introduction



Fayette County residents cherish its rural charm and strong sense of community. At the same time, the County is experiencing significant economic growth, driven in part by major developments at the Mega-site and its strategic location along Interstate 71, providing convenient connections to Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus for both businesses and residents.

To ensure this momentum leads to lasting benefits, the Fayette County Commissioners launched a strategic planning process in Summer 2025. As the County grows and evolves, this Strategic Plan will help ensure that change is **thoughtfully managed and aligned with the values of the people who call Fayette County home.**

## WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN?

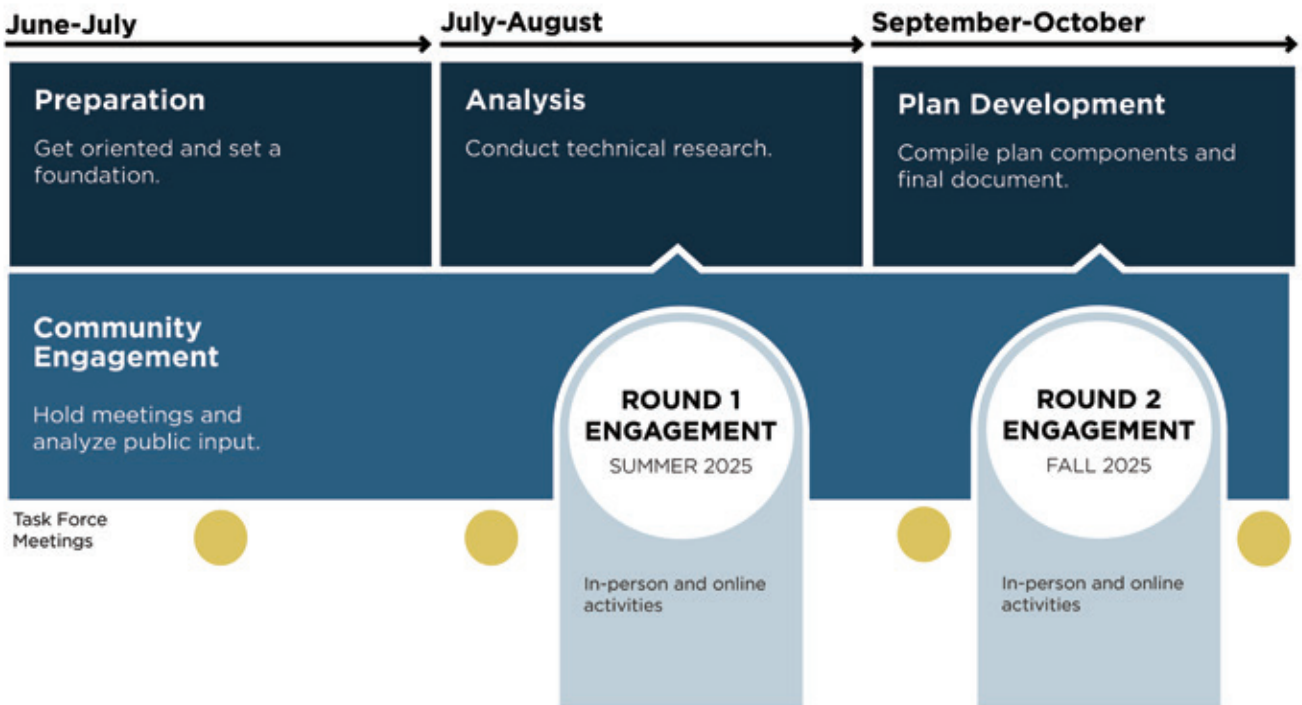
A Strategic Plan is a long-term guide for the future. It provides an opportunity to take stock of a community's assets and define what is special and should be preserved or enhanced. It is also a chance to address opportunities for improving upon what exists today. It is based on input from anyone in the community who cares about the future as a place to thrive, succeed, and prosper. The plan serves as a **guide for decision-makers** and will include an overarching vision that aligns all aspects of community life, **identifying goals and specific actions to be implemented over time.**

### Why does Fayette County need a Strategic Plan?

Fayette County has long been a stable community, but recent economic growth, including new development at the Mega-site, is creating new uncertainties for residents, businesses, and local leaders. The strategic planning process will help the County respond proactively, fostering transparency and accountability. The plan will identify a clear and inclusive strategy that leverages existing assets and encourages responsible growth.

# Process

The Fayette County Strategic Plan kicked off in June 2025 and involved an inclusive engagement process to gather input from the community.



**+1,300**  
PIECES OF INPUT

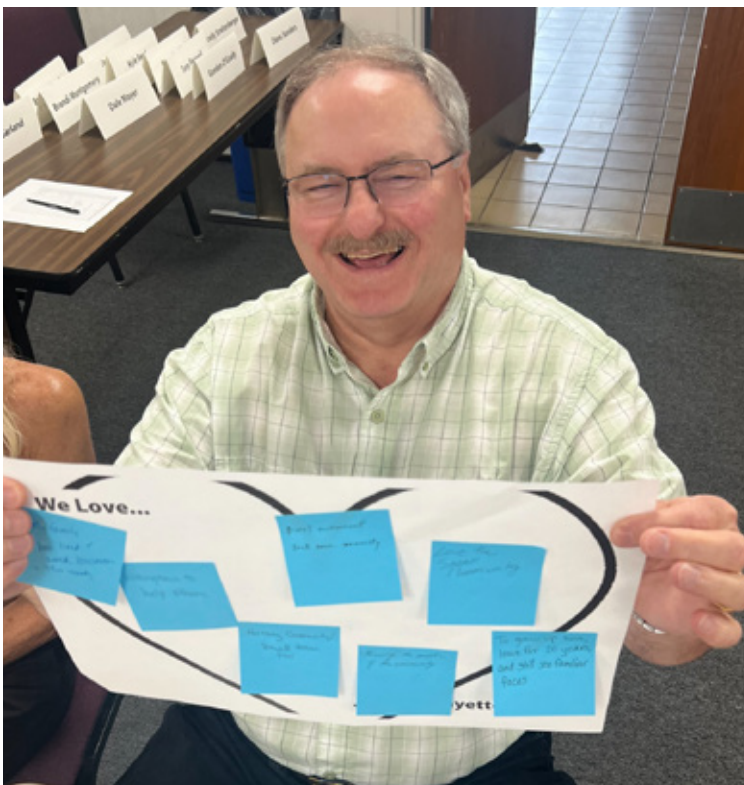
**+250**  
PARTICIPANTS

**Task Force**

A 21-member Task Force was established to guide the planning process, bringing together a diverse mix of voices from across the community, including representatives from various professions, age groups, and backgrounds. These individuals promoted the process and encouraged participation through their networks. Beyond outreach, the Task Force played a vital role as a sounding board, offering valuable insights and feedback on the emerging themes for the plan.

Two rounds of engagement were conducted as part of the process.

**Round 1: Meetings-in-a-Box, Pop-up Engagement, and Survey.** The first round of engagement took place in July and August 2025. As part of the first round, Meetings-in-a-Box were conducted throughout the community, offering residents a chance to share their ideas and perspectives through small group workshops. Designed to be interactive and inclusive, these sessions focused on gathering input to help shape the vision and strategic direction of the plan. Meetings were hosted at various times and locations throughout the county by Task Force members and County staff. Staff and Task Force members also attended community events such as the Bloomingburg Community Days, the Fayette County Fair, and Art on the Square, to conduct pop-up engagement and bring the planning process directly to where people gathered. To further expand access, an online survey replicating the meeting activities was available on the project website. A promotional video was released to spread the word about the process and prompt online engagement.



**Round 2: Open House and Survey.** The second round of community engagement began in late-September 2025 and continued through mid-October. This phase focused on presenting the draft plan, including the vision, goals, and recommendations, for public feedback. It kicked off with the Chamber of Commerce BAH, when local professionals were invited to build relationships and network with their peers. Draft plan content was available for review and input during the event. Elected officials from all levels of government in the County were invited to stay after the event to review draft plan content in their own Elected Official Open House almost a month later. The round concluded with a public open house, offering all community members the opportunity to explore the draft plan content and share their input. To ensure everyone had a chance to weigh in, an online survey mirroring the in-person content was available on the project website.



**Stakeholders**

To complement the broader community engagement efforts, a series of in-depth stakeholder interviews were conducted. These conversations included a range of stakeholders from across Fayette County, including elected officials, service providers, business leaders, real estate professionals, public health representatives, and others with a deep understanding of the County's opportunities and challenges. Their input provided valuable context on emerging trends, community needs, and the practical considerations



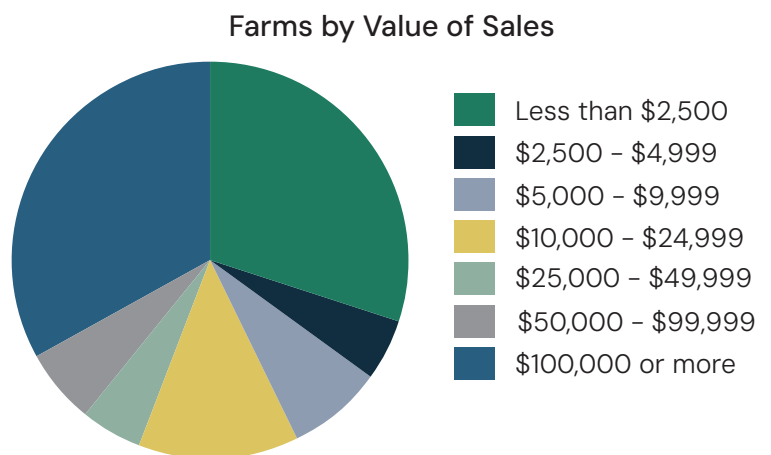
# Existing Conditions

As part of the process, an environmental scan was conducted to understand the existing conditions of the community. Fayette County, a predominantly rural area, is experiencing transformative change, including new developments at the Mega-site and significant infrastructure improvements. These changes are creating both stresses and new opportunities. Highlights of external conditions and emerging trends affecting the County can be found below. These findings served as a foundation for developing the Strategic Plan.

## A large portion of the County's land is agricultural in use.

In 2022, there were approximately 550 farms in the County, with more than 200,000 total acres of farmland.

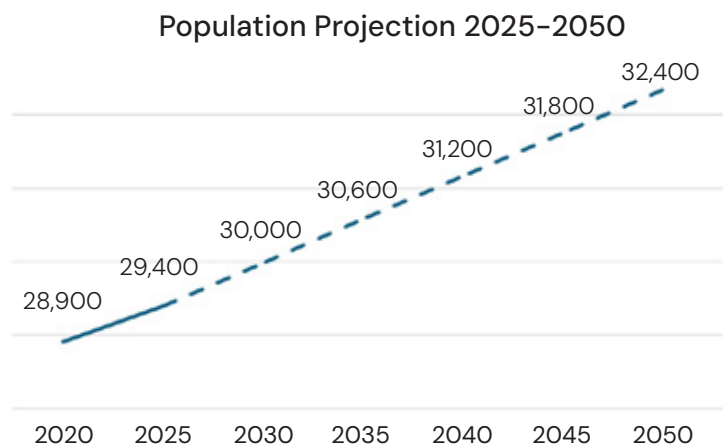
Most farms made annual sales of less than \$2,500 or \$100,000 or more.



Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture – Fayette County Profile, USDA

## The population is projected to increase 11% by 2050.

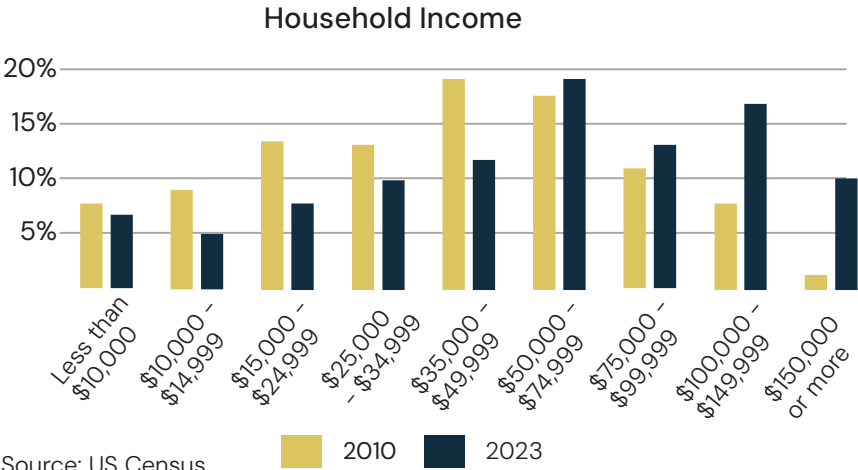
With the influx of new economic development opportunities, Fayette County's population is expected to increase.



Source: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning (MORPC) Projections

**Household incomes are steadily increasing.**

The number of households making \$50,000 or more has increased since 2010.



Source: US Census

**The quality and types of housing available are not meeting community needs.**

61% of housing units were built in 1979 or earlier. The development of new housing has significantly slowed since 2010.

79% of housing units are single-family homes. 17% are multi-family units.

There has been a 23% increase in people 65 years or over living alone.

Source: US Census

**Local jobs rely on manufacturing and retail.**

The largest employment industry in the County for residents and non-residents is Retail Trade, followed closely by manufacturing.

The construction and manufacturing industries had the largest growth in residential employment since 2010.

Employment by Industry



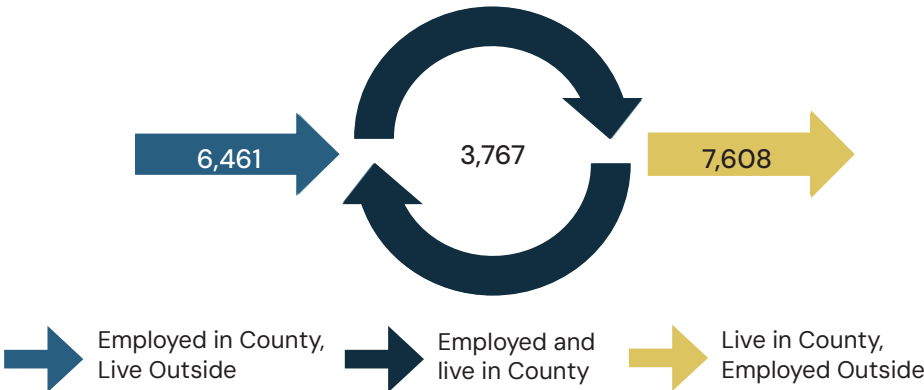
Source: US Census, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, Ohio Labor Market Information

**Most residents travel outside the County for work.**

Many of the employees in the County travel from elsewhere for work, and many who live in the County work elsewhere.

The mean travel time to work is 27.5 minutes.

Commuting Trends



Source: US Census, Census On the Map

# Framework

## VISION

The vision is the highest and most general expression of a community's future. It reflects the community's values and sets the tone for more specific recommendations.

**Fayette County will be a caring rural community where neighbors support one another, growth is purposeful, and people, places, and traditions are honored.**



The Strategic Plan framework is organized by the following elements: vision, values, goals, and actions. These elements were derived from community input and refined in collaboration with County staff and the Task Force.

VALUES

Values reflect, at a high level, what the community cares about.

**THE PEOPLE OF FAYETTE COUNTY VALUE:**

1. **Close-knit community connections**  
where neighbors know and support one another, creating a strong sense of belonging and community pride.

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2. **A thriving rural heritage**  
where agricultural traditions continue to shape the County's identity and economy.

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3. **Strong educational foundations**  
that empower youth and families through high-quality early-childhood programs, schools, and community opportunities.

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4. **Regional accessibility**  
that enhances quality of life, with convenient connections to nearby cities and towns while maintaining Fayette County's charm.

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5. **Being an inviting place for all generations**  
where people of every age and ability can live and thrive together.

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## Goals

A goal is a desired outcome expressed in simple terms.

GOAL 1

### **Civic Services:**

Deliver efficient and collaborative services enabling residents to experience reliable support, safety, and clear communication.

GOAL 4

### **Resilient Systems:**

Maintain and improve infrastructure to ensure communities stay prepared for increased capacity needs.

GOAL 2

### **Community Identity and Character:**

Guide growth in ways that protect rural character and create places that reflect local identity and pride.

GOAL 5

### **Community Amenities:**

Enhance community amenities to foster a more vibrant and enjoyable living environment.

GOAL 3

### **Strong Economy:**

Build a resilient economy that supports opportunity, stability, and long-term community prosperity.

GOAL 6

### **Health and Wellness:**

Foster a community that promotes health and well-being for people of all ages.

Each of the goals contains a set of objectives and actions.

## Objectives

are sub-topics within each of the chapter goals. These statements serve to further organize the plan's actions based on the priorities from the public.

## Actions

are projects, policies, or programs. Actions work in support of the goals and overall vision statement. Some actions are significant in scale and scope, functioning long-term to stretch the community in terms of its current services, ideas, policies, etc. Other actions are smaller in scope and can be achieved in a shorter time frame with fewer resources. All actions, however, are designed to help the community realize its goals and vision. The actions are not organized in priority order. They are intentionally crafted to be clear, accessible, and easy for residents, County staff, and leadership to understand.

# Overview

The strategic plan contains 60 actions organized by six goal areas.



# Goal 1



## Civic Services

Deliver efficient and collaborative services so residents experience reliable support, safety, and clear communication.

**A. Strengthen the County's ability to plan and use resources effectively.**

1. Assess and align the organization of County departments and support structures to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan.
2. Increase administrative capacity to manage change cost-effectively.
3. Pursue potential sources of external project and program funding.
4. Complete and adopt a comprehensive land use plan.
5. Update and implement subdivision regulations.
6. Streamline and modernize processes to boost efficiency.
7. Assess physical space needs to optimize county operations and support service delivery.
8. Improve inter-department and partner organization communication and collaboration.

**B. Foster transparent, inclusive, and consistent communication with residents and stakeholders.**

1. Create a countywide brand.
2. Facilitate regular intergovernmental meetings and shared tools to strengthen coordination across the County.
3. Provide regular updates on county operations.
4. Identify and encourage public/private partnerships to further the goals of the County.
5. Collaborate with all levels of local government to identify needs and strategies to improve emergency services and increase capacity.
6. Expand and coordinate legislative engagement with state and federal elected officials.
7. Strengthen the existing relationships with all County school districts to collaborate on shared goals.
8. Promote and provide opportunities for civic engagement and volunteerism.

**C. Modernize digital infrastructure to ensure secure, inclusive, and user-friendly access to County services.**

1. Enhance cybersecurity measures to protect County systems, data, and services.
2. Improve accessibility of County websites and apps to ensure all residents can easily access public information and services.

## **A. Strengthen the County's ability to plan and use resources effectively.**

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### **A.1. Assess and align the organization of County departments and support structures to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan.**

Review how County departments and support structures are organized. Consider the roles of partnerships, consultants, and specialized expertise in enhancing operational capacity and responsiveness. Identify gaps where new or additional technical skills, resources, or educational and professional experience could strengthen capacity and enable the County to meet strategic goals.

### **A.2. Increase administrative capacity to manage change cost-effectively.**

Identify potential roles that can guide and manage organizational change. Evaluate current staffing levels and skill sets to determine where additional expertise or leadership is needed. Consider positions such as a County Administrator to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan and other projects, policies, and programs. Additional roles could include a planner or parks and recreation coordinator. Explore cost-effective approaches to expanding capacity, such as restructuring existing roles and encouraging cross-departmental collaboration.

### **A.3. Pursue potential sources of external project and program funding.**

Explore opportunities for external funding at the regional, state, and federal levels, including grants, infrastructure investments, and intergovernmental partnerships. Consider funding from private foundations, non-profit organizations, and corporate sponsors that align with the County's goals. Develop a proactive approach to tracking funding cycles, eligibility requirements, and application deadlines. Consider building internal capacity to manage grant writing and build relationships with agencies, organizations, and businesses that can serve as funding collaborators or advocates.

### **A.4. Complete and adopt a comprehensive plan.**

Complete a new comprehensive land use plan to replace the current plan, which was completed in 2016. The new plan should include more rigorous analysis of infrastructure needs, developable land opportunities relative to desired uses and growth patterns, and market conditions. It should also be more oriented toward implementation.

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**A.5. Update and implement subdivision regulations.**

Revised subdivision regulations should provide clear guidance on development expectations and priorities. Ensure the regulations reflect what the County wants to see in terms of design, connectivity, and long-term land use. Include specific requirements for open space, infrastructure, utilities, environmental considerations, and other development areas that are important to the community. Provide direction that helps developers understand how to align projects with County goals.

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**A.6. Streamline and modernize processes to boost efficiency.**

Improve operational efficiency by streamlining and modernizing internal and external processes across departments. Coordinate efforts between County and municipal building departments to reduce redundancies and improve communication, ensuring smoother project reviews and approvals. Transition from paper-based applications to digital platforms that enhance accessibility, tracking, and responsiveness. Evaluate existing workflows to identify bottlenecks and opportunities for improvement. Prioritize updates that support transparency and reduce processing times.

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**A.7. Assess physical space needs to optimize county operations and support service delivery.**

Evaluate the County's current physical space to ensure facilities effectively support operations and service delivery. Assess current buildings and workspaces to identify limitations and opportunities to improve efficiency. Analyze agencies with anticipated growth to ensure that their future space needs are met or planned for. Explore options for expansion or relocation.

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**A.8. Improve inter-department and partner organization communication and collaboration.**

Foster regular engagement with key partners such as the Ohio State University Extension, the Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Community Action Commission to align efforts and share resources effectively. Identify existing barriers to collaboration and develop strategies to improve information flow, joint planning, and project execution. Encourage cross-training, shared initiatives, and integrated systems.

## **B. Foster transparent, inclusive, and consistent communication with residents and stakeholders.**

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### **B.1. Create a countywide brand.**

Develop a cohesive countywide brand that reflects the community's identity, values, and vision for the future. Extend the brand across platforms, including County websites, online communications, wayfinding signage, and gateways. Create visual and messaging standards that unify how the County presents itself to residents, visitors, and partners. Utilize the brand to enhance recognition and support economic development and tourism. Engage stakeholders in the branding process to promote shared ownership and authenticity.

### **B.2. Facilitate regular intergovernmental meetings and shared tools to strengthen coordination across the County.**

Facilitate collaboration both internally among County departments and externally with cities, villages, and townships. Create consistent communication channels and shared resources that support joint decision-making, problem-solving, projects, and goals. Encourage transparency and alignment on priorities by hosting forums for discussion, data sharing, and project updates.

### **B.3. Provide regular public updates on county operations.**

Updates should be consistent and accessible to keep the public informed and engaged. Consider a variety of communication methods, such as an annual report that highlights accomplishments, a public-facing annual update meeting, and regular posts across social media platforms. Develop an email list of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to share timely updates, announcements, and opportunities for public input.

### **B.4. Identify and encourage public/private partnerships to further the goals of the County.**

Seek collaboration opportunities with businesses, non-profits, educational institutions, and other private entities that have expertise or innovative approaches to County goals. Focus on partnerships that align with priorities such as infrastructure development, workforce training, and community programming.

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**B.5. Collaborate with all levels of local government to identify needs and strategies to improve emergency services and increase capacity.**

Engage cities, villages, and townships to identify current service gaps and plan for increased capacity due to population growth and development. Police, fire, and EMS services should be included in all planning efforts to ensure they are equipped to respond to emergencies effectively and efficiently. Establish a committee of emergency service providers to guide coordination efforts and oversee a comprehensive service delivery study. Use the findings to develop a plan that supports resource-sharing, infrastructure investment, and improved public safety outcomes.

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**B.6. Expand and coordinate legislative engagement with state and federal elected officials.**

Establish regular communication channels to share County priorities, advocate for funding and policy support, and stay informed on legislative developments that impact the County. Develop a strategic approach that includes scheduled outreach such as biannual check-ins with representatives, participation in relevant forums, and collaboration with other jurisdictions as appropriate. Leverage these relationships to advance initiatives, secure resources, and influence policy decisions that benefit the community. Prioritize updates that support transparency and reduce processing times.



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**B.7. Strengthen the existing relationships with all County school districts to collaborate on shared goals.**

Work closely with County school districts to identify shared priorities and explore opportunities for collaboration that benefit students, families, and the broader community. Engage in joint planning efforts that support educational programming and workforce development. Create consistent communication channels to share resources and updates.

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**B.8. Promote and provide opportunities for civic engagement and volunteerism.**

Build a network of local organizations that promote and encourage civic engagement and volunteerism. Consider creating a shared online calendar or portal where residents can easily find and sign up for volunteer opportunities across the County. Use inclusive messaging and outreach to help individuals overcome imposter syndrome and feel confident in their ability to contribute, whether by serving on boards, participating in local government, or supporting other community initiatives.



**C. Modernize digital infrastructure to ensure secure, inclusive, and user-friendly access to County services.**

**C.1. Enhance cybersecurity measures to protect County systems, data, and services.**

Conduct regular assessments of existing infrastructure to identify vulnerabilities and prioritize upgrades. Invest in modern security tools, staff training, and incident response protocols to ensure resilience and continuity in service. Coordinate across departments to establish consistent standards and practices. Consider partnerships with external experts to enhance protection amid evolving digital threats.



**C.2. Improve accessibility of County websites and apps to ensure all residents can easily access public information and services.**

Conduct a thorough review of digital platforms to identify barriers for users with disabilities or limited digital literacy. Implement design and functionality updates that support different screen readers and modes of access. Prioritize clear navigation and content organization.



# Goal 2



## **Community Identity and Character**

Guide growth in ways that protect rural character and create places that reflect local identity and pride.

**A. Maintain the integrity of the County's natural and agricultural landscapes.**

1. Explore and promote a full range of measures to protect prime agricultural areas from development, where appropriate.
2. Establish and continue partnerships to conserve working farms throughout Fayette County.
3. Promote development and construction practices that balance respect for natural resources and the rural environment.

**B. Strengthen Fayette County's sense of place.**

1. Utilize updated County branding to create a wayfinding program.
2. Expand opportunities for agritourism across the County.
3. Provide regular updates on county operations.

## **A. Maintain the integrity of the County's natural and agricultural landscapes.**

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### **A.1. Explore and promote a full range of measures to protect prime agricultural areas from development, where appropriate.**

Consider tools such as agriculture stabilization zones, agricultural security areas, and conservation easements to protect farmland from encroaching residential, commercial, and industrial development. Adopt policies that prioritize agricultural uses and recognize the economic, environmental, and cultural value of farmland. Include regulatory guidance in the updated comprehensive land use plan (1.A.5) to direct development and encourage the conservation of open space, scenic views, and agricultural lands. Link these efforts to the creation of an updated future land use map, providing a clear intent for where growth should and should not occur. Collaborate with landowners and conservation organizations to promote participation in agricultural conservation programs and voluntary easement agreements.

### **A.2. Establish and continue partnerships to conserve working farms throughout Fayette County.**

Collaborate with entities such as the Farm Bureau, the Ohio State University Extension, and the Ohio Department of Agriculture to identify farmland at risk and develop strategies for long-term protection. Foster relationships that combine technical expertise, policy support, and community engagement to ensure farming remains a viable part of the County's economy and identity.

### **A.3. Promote development and construction practices that balance respect for natural resources and the rural environment.**

Encourage design approaches such as conservation subdivisions and clustered development that conserve open space and minimize land disturbance. Promote the use of buffering and vegetative screening to maintain scenic views and reduce visual impacts. Implement lighting standards like downlighting. Implement these and other mitigation efforts into planning and zoning policies to ensure new construction complements the landscape.

## **B. Strengthen Fayette County's sense of place.**

### **B.1. Utilize updated County branding to create a wayfinding program.**

The wayfinding program should be consistent throughout the County, including roads, parks, and more. Improve gateways and signage at key entry points to create a welcoming and consistent visual experience. Update road and park signage to reflect the updated brand and provide clear, accessible information. Incorporate maps and directional tools that highlight points of pride, including areas of historical significance, landmarks, and natural features.

### **B.2. Expand opportunities for agritourism across the County.**

Streamline permitting processes and review zoning codes to ensure agritourism uses are clearly defined and allowed where appropriate. These uses may include farm tours, seasonal events, and on-site retail. Collaborate with Fayette County Travel & Tourism to actively market agritourism destinations and events that attract visitors from outside the County while educating them about local agriculture. Promote experiences that celebrate the County's farming heritage and educate the public about working farms.



# Goal 3



## **Strong Economy**

Build a resilient economy that supports opportunity, stability, and long-term community prosperity.

**A. Expand access to diverse and affordable housing options to support community growth and workforce stability.**

1. Conduct a housing inventory and market study.
2. Increase workforce housing.
3. Encourage a range of housing products through zoning changes, regulatory streamlining, and incentives.

**B. Build a skilled and resilient workforce.**

1. Implement programs to train the local workforce to identify and meet employer needs.
2. Create pathways for student skill development that support long-term retention in the county workforce.
3. Partner with a local career technical center to establish a campus in Fayette County and expand existing offerings.
4. Establish a training center that offers flexible trade and workforce programs.
5. Explore and evaluate messaging and incentives to attract skilled professionals originally from the County back to the area.
6. Promote new and existing workforce development resources.
7. Advance childcare quality and accessibility.

**C. Strengthen the local economy by supporting small and large businesses, entrepreneurs, and vibrant commercial centers.**

1. Market the mega site as a premier destination for large-scale employers and ancillary businesses.
2. Launch targeted initiatives to attract, educate, and empower local entrepreneurs and small businesses.
3. Promote revitalization of downtowns and rural business hubs.

## **A. Expand access to diverse and affordable housing options to support community growth and workforce stability.**

### **A.1. Conduct a housing inventory and market study.**

This effort could be incorporated into the comprehensive land use plan (1.A.5) to inform land use decisions and housing strategies. The study should analyze housing types, affordability, vacancy rates, and demand trends to guide future policy and investment in housing. Collaborate with partners like Washington Court House and Miami Trace School District, who have completed similar studies, to build on existing data and ensure consistency.

### **A.2. Increase workforce housing.**

Promote a mix of rental and ownership options that meet the needs of residents across income levels. Focus on housing types that are affordable, accessible, and located near employment centers and essential services. Coordinate with local governments, developers, and employers to identify barriers and incentives that can accelerate production. Integrate workforce housing strategies into broader planning efforts, including the comprehensive land use plan.

### **A.3. Encourage a range of housing products through zoning changes, regulatory streamlining, and incentives.**

Support the development of diverse housing options that meet the needs of families, seniors, young professionals, and others at various life stages. Promote flexibility in housing types such as duplexes, townhomes, accessory dwelling units, and mixed-use developments. Align these efforts with broader planning efforts to ensure housing development complements infrastructure, services, and community character.



## **B. Build a skilled and resilient workforce.**

### **B.1. Implement programs to train the local workforce to identify and meet employer needs.**

Develop workforce training programs that respond to employer needs and support economic growth. Partner with local and regional educational providers such as technical schools, colleges, and universities, as well as community organizations. Focus on equipping workers with skills that match current and emerging job markets. Encourage and facilitate collaboration between employers and training providers to ensure programs remain responsive.

### **B.2. Create pathways for student skill development that support long-term retention in the county workforce.**

Collaborate with schools, employers, and training providers to offer hands-on learning experiences, mentorships, and career exploration in both the trades and professional fields. Align programs with local industry needs to ensure students gain relevant skills and see opportunities to build careers within the County.

### **B.3. Partner with a local career technical center to establish a campus in Fayette County and expand existing offerings.**

Focus on offering a range of courses that align with local workforce needs, including skilled trades, healthcare, manufacturing, and other emerging industries. Collaborate with employers and community organizations to design programs that are responsive to demand and accessible to students of all backgrounds.

### **B.4. Establish a training center that offers flexible trade and workforce programs.**

Consider public/private partnerships to maximize funding and technical expertise. The center could be established in conjunction with the career technical center in recommendation 3.B.3, but should be focused on shorter technical training programs such as commercial driver's license (CDL) certification, forklift operation, and other high-demand skills that support employment. The center should accommodate varying schedules to make training accessible.

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**B.5. Explore and evaluate messaging and incentives to attract skilled professionals originally from the County back to the area.**

Develop messaging and programs that highlight the benefits of returning to live and work locally. Explore financial incentives like relocation assistance, student loan repayment programs, and housing assistance to reduce barriers and make relocation more appealing. Tailor outreach to professionals originally from the County, emphasizing community connections and opportunities. Develop a strategy that effectively attracts workers in in-demand professions.

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**B.6. Promote new and existing workforce development resources.**

Expand awareness and use of the existing workforce development resources in the County. These resources include the OhioMeansJobs Resource Center, located in the County building, that offers services such as job search assistance, classes, and access to a computer lab. Include communication about these resources in County outreach materials, digital platforms, and community events. Collaborate with employers and community organizations to connect workers and residents to the resources.

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**B.7. Advance childcare quality and accessibility.**

Support initiatives that expand availability and reduce barriers. Collaborate with providers and employers to identify gaps and develop solutions. Focus on increasing capacity and ensuring affordability. Consider implementing childcare training classes in the development of a local career technical center. Explore funding opportunities to assist in the development and expansion of childcare opportunities.

## **C. Strengthen the local economy by supporting small and large businesses, entrepreneurs, and vibrant commercial centers.**

### **C.1. Market the mega site as a premier destination for large-scale employers and ancillary businesses.**

Collaborate with economic development partners to promote the mega site's advantages through strategic outreach. Highlight its prime location, robust infrastructure, and scalable development potential to attract anchor employers, vendors, and support services. Showcase the site's capacity to accommodate a variety of business development, including advanced manufacturing, logistics, and technology operations. Emphasize its connectivity to regional and national markets.

### **C.2. Launch targeted initiatives to attract, educate, and empower local entrepreneurs and small businesses.**

Establish business incubators, mentorship programs, and grant opportunities to help new ventures launch and scale up. Strengthen partnerships with chambers of commerce and economic development organizations to provide coordinated outreach and support. Offer incentives and technical assistance programs to reduce barriers. Streamline permitting processes to make it easier for businesses to open and operate.

### **C.3. Promote revitalization of downtowns and rural business hubs.**

Invest in infrastructure improvements that enhance accessibility, safety, and visual appeal. Launch or support façade improvement programs to help property owners restore and modernize storefronts while preserving local character. Encourage mixed-use development through incentives to bring together residential, retail, and office uses to create vibrant, walkable city and village centers.



# Goal 4



## **Resilient Systems**

Maintain and improve infrastructure to ensure communities stay prepared for increased capacity needs.

**A. Ensure long-term reliability and efficiency of essential services.**

1. Evaluate water and wastewater services regularly and develop a long-term plan for future service provision.
2. Create a plan to improve roads, bridges, and related transportation infrastructure.
3. Identify and implement strategies to improve electric capacity.
4. Support major infrastructure and facility improvements in communities.
5. Establish partnerships with local governments to coordinate and combine services, where appropriate.
6. Advance the expansion and build-out of broadband networks.
7. Coordinate and deliver timely, accurate, and consistent communication across all levels of government and the public during emergencies.

## **A. Ensure long-term reliability and efficiency of essential services.**

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### **A.1. Evaluate water and wastewater services regularly and develop a long-term plan for future service provision.**

Regularly assess water and wastewater services to ensure they meet current demands and are prepared for future growth. Conduct evaluations of the systems to identify capacity limits, future infrastructure needs, and service gaps. Use this information to develop a long-term plan for expansion and the continued delivery of services. Coordinate with local governments and utility providers to align investments and explore regional solutions. Prioritize proactive planning to avoid costly emergency upgrades and ensure infrastructure keeps pace with development.

### **A.2. Create a plan to improve roads, bridges, and related transportation infrastructure.**

Begin with a survey of existing conditions that assesses structural integrity, traffic flow, and safety concerns. Identify problem areas that require immediate attention and prioritize them based on urgency, usage, and impact to the community. Use the findings of the survey to guide long-term planning efforts, including phased improvements, funding, and coordination with federal, state, and local partners.

### **A.3. Identify and implement strategies to improve electric capacity.**

Prioritize infrastructure upgrades and grid modernization to ensure reliable service and accommodate future development. Collaborate with utility providers to align investments with anticipated industrial and residential growth. Be intentional in selecting energy sources and providers that support continued reliable service and resilience in the grid.

### **A.4. Support major infrastructure and facility improvements in communities.**

Assist communities with planning, coordination, and implementation of upgrades to locally owned assets such as buildings, utilities, and public spaces. Encourage shared infrastructure investments and facilitate intergovernmental agreements that allow for shared use and maintenance of facilities. Provide technical assistance to smaller governments on procurement and contracting processes, such as bidding, contracting, and compliance, to ensure projects are executed effectively.

**A.5. Establish partnerships with local governments to coordinate and combine services, where appropriate.**

Coordinate with local governments to identify opportunities to combine services in ways that improve efficiency and reduce duplication. Explore shared service models for functions such as maintenance, permitting, and administrative support. Establish partnerships that clarify roles, responsibilities, and cost-sharing arrangements.

**A.6. Advance the expansion and build-out of broadband networks.**

Establish partnerships with new and existing providers. Apply for available grant funds to support infrastructure investment and prioritize broadband integration with planned projects, such as road and utility upgrades. Identify underserved areas and coordinate efforts to extend high-speed internet access.

**A.7. Coordinate and deliver timely, accurate, and consistent communication across all levels of government and the public during emergencies.**

Establish clear protocols for information sharing between County departments, municipalities, and emergency service providers. Use multiple platforms such as social media, websites, email alerts, and local media to reach a wide audience quickly and effectively. Develop pre-approved message templates and designate communication leads to streamline response efforts.



# Goal 5



## Community Amenities

Enhance community amenities to foster a more vibrant and enjoyable living environment.

**A. Expand and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and public spaces.**

1. Improve signage, maps, and wayfinding to and along parks and trails.
2. Identify and develop new park and recreation opportunities.
3. Identify potential sources of funding and partnerships for park, recreation, and open space development.
4. Expand parks and recreation events and programming.
5. Expand the trail network.
6. Align strategies and initiatives with the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan.

**B. Foster vibrant, welcoming places that support social connection, local culture, and economic activity.**

1. Develop and enhance public spaces that foster community gathering, connection, and engagement.
2. Support development that includes places to eat, shop, and enjoy entertainment.
3. Consider walkability and connectivity when planning and improving community gathering places and focused development areas.

## **A. Expand and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and public spaces.**

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### **A.1. Improve signage, maps, and wayfinding to and along parks and trails.**

Install clear, consistent directional signage at trailheads, intersections, and key access points to help users navigate recreational areas. Develop updated maps that highlight trail routes, amenities, and points of interest. Make updated maps available online, in print, and on signage. Incorporate branding elements from the County brand to create a cohesive wayfinding system throughout the County.

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### **A.2. Identify and develop new park and recreation opportunities.**

Evaluate community needs and areas that are currently underserved by parks, recreation facilities, and active open space. Explore options for new parks, trails, and recreational facilities that support active lifestyles and access. Consider opportunities to repurpose underutilized land and collaborate with nonprofits, community groups and other partners. Engage residents in the planning processes to ensure new parks and recreation amenities reflect local needs and interests.

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### **A.3. Identify potential sources of funding and partnerships for park, recreation, and open space development.**

Encourage design approaches such as conservation subdivisions and clustered development that conserve open space and minimize land disturbance. Promote the use of buffering and vegetative screening to maintain scenic views and reduce visual impacts. Implement lighting standards like downlighting. Implement these and other mitigation efforts into planning and zoning policies to ensure new construction complements the landscape.

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### **A.4. Expand parks and recreation events and programming.**

Introduce new activities that reflect the interests of the community. Consider diverse age groups and seasonal opportunities when programming. This could include fitness classes, cultural festivals, and nature walks. Strengthen partnerships with school districts and community organizations to co-host events and share resources. Use feedback from residents to guide programming decisions and offerings.

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### **A.5. Expand the trail network.**

Develop new routes that offer flexibility and connectivity for users. Prioritize linear and circular trails with multiple access points to allow users to get on and off easily. Focus on linking new segments to existing trails, creating an active transportation system.

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### **A.6. Align strategies and initiatives with the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan.**

Use these guiding documents to inform decisions related to public health, infrastructure, housing, and more. Collaborate with Fayette County Public Health, service providers, and community organizations to integrate health and wellness goals into planning efforts. Prioritize actions that promote access to care and improve quality of life.



## **B. Foster vibrant, welcoming places that support social connection, local culture, and economic activity.**

### **B.1. Develop and enhance public spaces that foster community gathering, connection, and engagement.**

Focus on creating spaces with things to do that appeal to all ages. This could include community event centers such as pavilions as well as playgrounds, seating areas, and public art. Integrate active recreation along trails, including fitness stations and picnic areas. Prioritize accessibility, comfort, and aesthetics to ensure spaces are welcoming.

### **B.2. Support development that includes places to eat, shop, and enjoy entertainment.**

Promote mixed-use and commercial developments that feature restaurants, retail spaces, and entertainment in accessible locations that appeal to all ages and price points. Use zoning updates, incentives, and infrastructure investments to attract businesses that contribute to vibrant places.



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**B.3. Consider walkability and connectivity when planning and improving community gathering places and focused development areas.**

Design spaces that are easily accessible by foot, bike, and other modes of transit. Construct safe and attractive sidewalks and trails that link neighborhoods, parks, commercial centers, and public facilities. Incorporate features such as crosswalks, lighting, and benches to create enjoyable user experiences. Require new developments to integrate into the broader transportation network.





**A. Improve the availability, coordination, and quality of health services to support community well-being across all ages.**

1. Continue collaborating with local health partners to address priorities from the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment.
2. Improve access to existing health services and promote health literacy through accessible education, outreach, and community partnerships.
3. Increase coordination, communication, and collaboration among agencies and non-profits.
4. Expand local options that allow older residents to remain in their homes and communities as they age.

**B. Expand infrastructure that encourages physical activity and safe movement throughout the County.**

1. Increase mobility options and opportunities for all ages.
2. Expand active transportation connections and amenities.
3. Support urban design interventions and wayfinding signage that make urbanized areas “park once” destinations.
4. Collaborate with community partners to create and promote incentive-based programs that encourage residents to be more physically and socially active.

## **A. Improve the availability, coordination, and quality of health services to support community well-being across all ages.**

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### **A.1. Continue collaborating with local health partners to address priorities from the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment.**

Collaborate with partners such as Fayette County Public Health, the Fayette County Community Health Alliance, Adena Fayette Medical Center, and future partner Kettering Health to align County priorities and initiatives with community health goals. Coordinate efforts that improve access to care, address health disparities, and promote wellness.

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### **A.2. Improve access to existing health services and promote health literacy through accessible education, outreach, and community partnerships.**

Promote available programs, services, and resources through County platforms, printed materials, and public events. Collaborate with local health providers, schools, and non-profits to provide clear information on topics like nutrition, mental health, and chronic disease management. Use multiple formats to make information accessible to a wide range of people, including workshops, printed materials, and social media. Prioritize plain language and messaging to ensure audiences can understand and utilize the information.

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### **A.3. Increase coordination, communication, and collaboration among agencies and non-profits.**

Focus on connecting groups that offer critical support, such as transportation to medical appointments, food assistance, and housing assistance, to ensure residents can easily access help when needed. Develop a centralized location or digital platform to house information about these organizations and the services they provide. Encourage regular coordination and shared outreach efforts among organizations. Facilitate regular forums for collaboration and data exchange to align goals among agencies and non-profit organizations. Develop centralized tools or platforms for tracking initiatives, sharing resources, and planning and promoting joint programming.

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### **A.4. Expand local options that allow older residents to remain in their homes and communities as they age.**

Promote age-in-place strategies by increasing access to supportive services such as home maintenance assistance, transportation, healthcare coordination, and social engagement programs. Aging in place refers to the ability of individuals to live safely, independently, and comfortably in their own homes as they grow older. Collaborate with service providers, non-profit organizations, and housing partners to develop solutions that address mobility, safety, and affordability.

## **B. Expand infrastructure that encourages physical activity and safe movement throughout the County.**

### **B.1. Increase mobility options and opportunities for all ages.**

Support a variety of transportation modes that enhance independence and access. Expand public transit and on-demand services to better serve older adults, youth, and individuals without cars. Collaborate with local partners to identify gaps in the system and develop solutions to make it easier for everyone to move around the County.

### **B.2. Expand active transportation connections and amenities.**

Establish business incubators, mentorship Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to create safe routes between neighborhoods, schools, and points of interest. Enhance and increase the number of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike infrastructure to support everyday mobility and recreational use. Prioritize connectivity, safety, and comfort to encourage walking and biking as viable transportation options for residents of all ages and abilities.

### **B.3. Support urban design interventions and wayfinding signage that make urbanized areas “park once” destinations.**

Encourage development that enables “park once” behavior in appropriate areas, allowing visitors to leave their vehicles in a central location and make stops to multiple destinations on foot. Design streetscapes and public spaces with accessibility in mind, accommodating mobility devices and allowing safe pedestrian use. Consider the use of wayfinding systems that highlight walking distances, such as “300 steps to the coffee shop”, to promote exploration. Prioritize safety through well-marked crosswalks, lighting, and traffic calming measures.

### **B.4. Collaborate with community partners to create and promote incentive-based programs that encourage residents to be more physically and socially active.**

Work with organizations like the Fayette County Family YMCA to offer challenges and activities that appeal to all ages and fitness levels. Consider the use of digital apps that pair with fitness trackers to support step challenges, competitions, and other goal-oriented programs. Promote these initiatives through coordinated outreach and collaboration with partners.



## Part 2



# Implementation



**The Strategic Plan will not only serve as a guide for County Commissioners and staff, but it will also identify critical partners and the coordination necessary to realize the recommended actions. The implementation of the Strategic Plan will be overseen by the County Commissioners with support from all the County departments.**

## Overview

Staff should integrate the plan's priority recommendations into departmental work plans to ensure the successful and ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan. The work plans should outline the departmental mission, essential core services, and specific Strategic Plan actions being worked on for the upcoming fiscal year, along with budget requests to accomplish both the essential core services and the Strategic Plan actions. It is recommended that each department reconcile its core services with future needs as outlined in the Strategic Plan. In addition, the Strategic Plan should be an opportunity to help organize staff reports (i.e., report out on actions that are ongoing, complete, or future actions) and department head goals (i.e., tie department goals back to the Strategic Plan).

The Strategic Plan should be actively managed and regularly monitored for implementation effectiveness and relevance. This review should happen on a **formal basis no less than twice per year**. A status report should accompany this review and be promoted throughout the community, such as through the County website.

### Reporting and Monitoring

An implementation matrix has been included to support this plan. The matrix is a tool that can be used to track progress over time. It connects each recommendation with a timeframe for completion, effort leader, supporting entities (e.g., departments and organizations), and potential funding sources. It is anticipated that priorities and implementation steps may change over time based on annual reviews, new developments, or successes in other areas.

### Updating the Plan

A formal review of the Strategic Plan should be considered every **ten years** to address changes in the County over that period and new priorities that have emerged. This should start with an overall assessment of the implementation of the previous plan and should include the identification of issues that may have emerged since the previous plan was adopted.

## How to Use the Plan

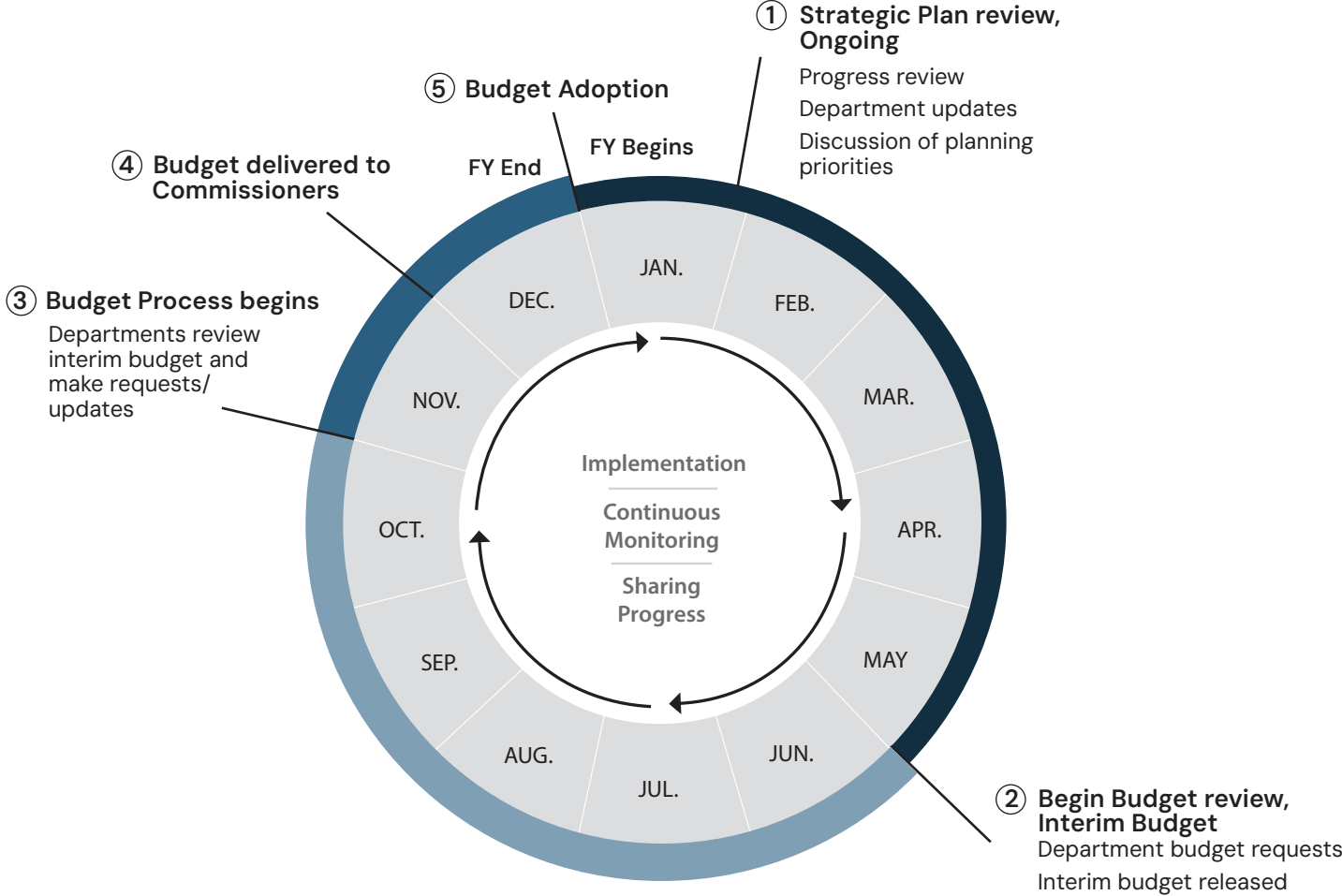
This document should be used **daily** as public and private decisions are made concerning the community's future. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should be institutionalized to align with the vision and strategies.

- **Annual Work Programs and Budgets:** County staff should be cognizant of the recommendations of the plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. They should also map funding and budget requests that will help move the plan forward. This also includes considering the plan when making important policy and financial decisions that impact the community.
- **Community Planning:** Community planning efforts, including those of the County, community organizations, and the school districts, should be aligned with the vision, values, goals, and recommendations of the plan.
- **Private Investment Decisions:** Property owners, developers, and other private entities should consider the plan's recommendations in their planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will use the plan as a guide in their deliberations about proposals, projects, and funding requests. Property owners and developers should be cognizant of and development proposals consistent with the plan's recommendations.
- **Civic and Social Engagement:** All civic and community groups should create opportunities to explore solutions to issues of concern to the community. They should seek alignment with the plan's recommendations and collaborate across various interests, missions, and constituencies.



### Plan Management Cycle

This plan should be integrated into annual County processes, including budgeting and capital improvements planning. It should also be regularly tracked for progress and assessed for effectiveness. The diagram below illustrates the recommended plan management cycle. It begins with the start of the fiscal year (FY) and includes various steps that lead to the adoption of a budget for the following fiscal year.



- Strategic Plan Review
- Budget Adoption Process (for upcoming fiscal year)

# Priority Action Matrix

ACTION	TIMEFRAME IMMEDIATE (1-2 YEARS) SHORT-TERM (3-4 YEARS)	LEAD	SUPPORT
1.A.2. Increase administrative capacity to manage change cost-effectively.	Immediate	County Commissioners	Human Resources
1.A.4. Complete and adopt a comprehensive land use plan.	Immediate	County Commissioners	Zoning Department, Engineers Office, Economic Development
1.B.2. Facilitate regular intergovernmental meetings and shared tools to strengthen coordination across the County.	Immediate	County Commissioners	Township Trustees, City and Village Councils
1.C.1. Enhance cybersecurity measures to protect County systems, data, and services.	Immediate	Information Technology	County Commissioners
3.B.6. Promote new and existing workforce development resources.	Immediate	Economic Development	
1.B.5. Collaborate with all levels of local government to identify needs and strategies to improve emergency services and increase capacity.	Short-term	Emergency Management Agency, Emergency Medical Services, Sheriff's Office	County Commissioners, Townships, Municipalities

The following matrix focuses on priority actions and does not include all actions identified in the plan. The matrix is designed to support implementation by highlighting the most impactful and time-sensitive actions, along with clear timeframes and lead and support entities.

ACTION	TIMEFRAME IMMEDIATE (1-2 YEARS) SHORT-TERM (3-4 YEARS)	LEAD	SUPPORT
1.B.1. Create a countywide brand.	Short-term	County Commissioners	Fayette County Travel & Tourism Bureau
3.B.7. Advance childcare quality and accessibility.	Short-term	Economic Development	
3.A.1. Conduct a housing inventory and market study.	Short-term	Economic Development	Fayette/Highland Metropolitan Housing Authority, Townships, Municipalities
4.A.1. Evaluate water and wastewater services regularly and develop a long-term plan for future service provision.	Short-term	Water & Sewer Department	Ohio EPA, Engineers Office
4.A.3. Identify and implement strategies to improve electric capacity.	Short-term	County Commissioners	Engineers Office
4.A.6. Advance the expansion and build-out of broadband networks.	Short-term	County Commissioners	Engineers Office
5.B.2. Support development that includes places to eat, shop, and enjoy entertainment.	Short-term	County Commissioners	Economic Development, Building Department





# Glossary

# Glossary

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**Active Transportation:** any self-propelled, human-powered method of travel, such as walking, bicycling, or using wheelchairs.

**Agricultural Conservation Easement:** A voluntary deed restriction placed by landowners on their property to protect resources such as productive agricultural land, ground and surface water, wildlife habitat, historic sites, or scenic views. Agricultural Conservation Easements (ACEs) are drafted to keep land available for agriculture and limit subdivision, nonfarm development and other uses of the land that are incompatible with farming.

**Agricultural Security Areas (ASA):** A program authorizes one or more landowners of at least 500 acres of contiguous farmland to request from the Township Trustees and County Commissioners to enroll into an Agricultural Security Area for a 10-year period. It provides certain benefits to farmers, including protection from non-agricultural development, a critical mass of land to help keep farming viable, and possible tax abatement on new real property.

**Agriculture Stabilization Zone:** also known as agricultural protection zone, a land management designation intended to preserve farmland and farming activities from incompatible urban or commercial development.

**Agritourism:** a commercial activity that combines agriculture with tourism, inviting visitors to farms to learn about farming, participate in farm activities, and enjoy rural experiences.

**Buffering:** an area of land that serves as a barrier between two or more properties, providing a barrier between potentially incompatible uses.

**Comprehensive Plan:** a long-term policy document that outlines a community's goals for development, growth, and land use.

**Conservation Easement:** a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government entity that permanently limits uses of land to protect its conservation values. Landowners continue to own and manage their land and retain the right to sell the land or pass it on to future generations.

**Conservation Subdivision (Clustered Development):** a residential development that prioritizes preserving some of the land, these subdivisions typically set aside 50% or more of a development as a permanent open space that can be farmed, used as recreational space, or set aside as a natural area.

**Downlighting:** a technique for controlling light pollution by requiring that external light fixtures be directed downward, often with a shielded design, to confine light to the area directly beneath the fixture, helping to reduce glare and protecting residential areas and the night sky.

**Mega Site:** a large, development ready industrial property, typically over 1,000 acres, designed to attract larger-scale investment.

**Mixed-use Development:** a type of project that combines residential, commercial, and/or other types of land uses into a single development or building.

**Open Space:** land that is not intensively developed for residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional use. It provides many uses to the community, whether it is publicly or privately owned. Open space includes agricultural land, forest land, public parks, and nature preserves, among other uses.

**“Park Once” Destinations:** areas designed for efficiency, where people park their car in a central location and then walk to multiple destinations within a neighborhood, rather than driving from place to place.

**Screening:** the requirement to create a visual and/or acoustic barrier, using elements like fences, walls, berms, or dense landscaping or vegetation, to block the view of certain uses or features from public streets or adjacent properties to reduce negative impacts such as noise, visual clutter, or light pollution and to ensure a project is consistent with its surroundings.

**Subdivision Regulations:** local government rules that establish standards and procedures for dividing a parcel of land into smaller, buildable lots, blocks, and open spaces.

**Traffic Calming:** the use of physical measures and design strategies, such as speed humps and narrowed lanes, to slow vehicle speeds and reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use in areas with high pedestrian and bicycle activity.

**Wayfinding:** a design and informational system, such as signs and maps, that help people navigate, orient themselves, and find their way through a physical space.

**Workforce Housing:** provides quality, affordable homes for essential middle-income workers who cannot afford market-rate housing but earn too much for subsidized affordable housing programs.