



Lawrence County

Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

October 2026

LAWRENCE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

LAWRENCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

STUDIOS ARCHITECTURE

SCHOOL OF PLANNING
COLLEGE OF DESIGN, ARCHITECTURE, ART AND PLANNING
UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

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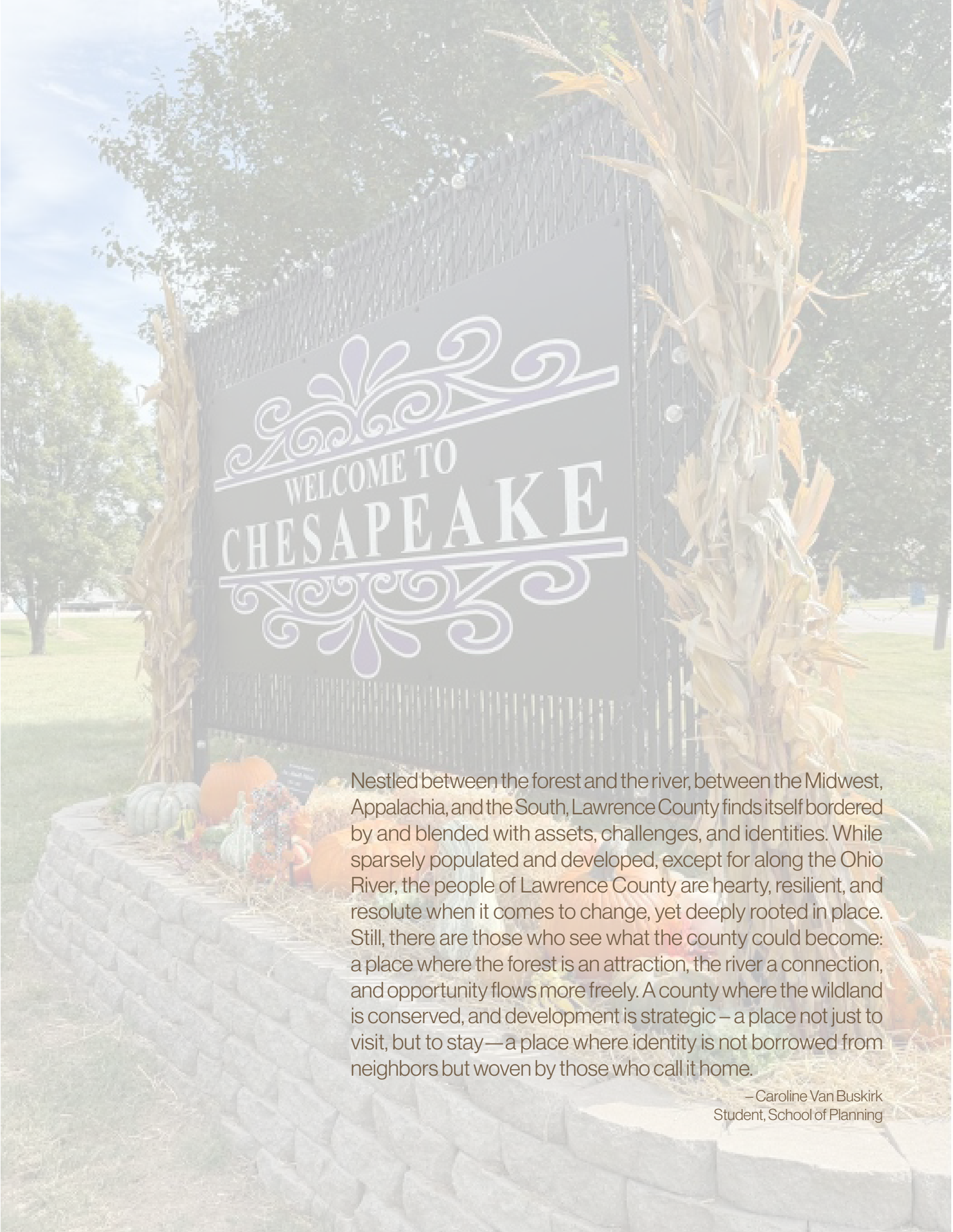
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Nestled between the forest and the river, between the Midwest, Appalachia, and the South, Lawrence County finds itself bordered by and blended with assets, challenges, and identities. While sparsely populated and developed, except for along the Ohio River, the people of Lawrence County are hearty, resilient, and resolute when it comes to change, yet deeply rooted in place. Still, there are those who see what the county could become: a place where the forest is an attraction, the river a connection, and opportunity flows more freely. A county where the wildland is conserved, and development is strategic – a place not just to visit, but to stay—a place where identity is not borrowed from neighbors but woven by those who call it home.

— Caroline Van Buskirk
Student, School of Planning



Introduction

“A master plan gives us a vision, but more importantly, it gives us a path forward. It helps us prioritize opportunities, pursue funding strategically and make investments that can serve Lawrence County for generations.”

— DeAnna Holliday
County Commissioner

Executive Summary

Where the foothills of the Appalachians dip their toes into the silver ribbon of the Ohio River, Lawrence County stands as a testament to the iron-willed spirit of the American frontier.

It is a land defined by the rhythm of the water and the deep, coal-black shadows of the forest - a place where history isn't just remembered, but etched into the very stones of the hillsides.

Building on Momentum, Toward a Holistic Vision

Lawrence County leadership, along with regional partners and grassroots organizations have been working on recreational and cultural initiatives in the county for decades. The Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative has already secured state funding to reimagine four riverfront communities — Proctorville/Lock 27, Ironton, South Point, and Burlington — as improved public destinations. The KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission's tri-state transportation framework has identified many important projects to improve multimodal transportation routes through and around the county. The Symmes Creek Restoration Committee has spent many years advocating for the ODNr Paddle Trail designation and rails-to-trails concepts for the county's abandoned rail corridors have circulated in community conversation for years, waiting for a framework to carry them forward.

Each of these efforts has largely developed on its own track, funded, planned, and championed by different agencies and advocates, often without a shared structure to link them into a single, legible framework. What Lawrence County needs is a vision to connect these efforts and to supplement these efforts to improve quality of life for its current and future residents and to provide economic development dollars through eco-tourism opportunities.

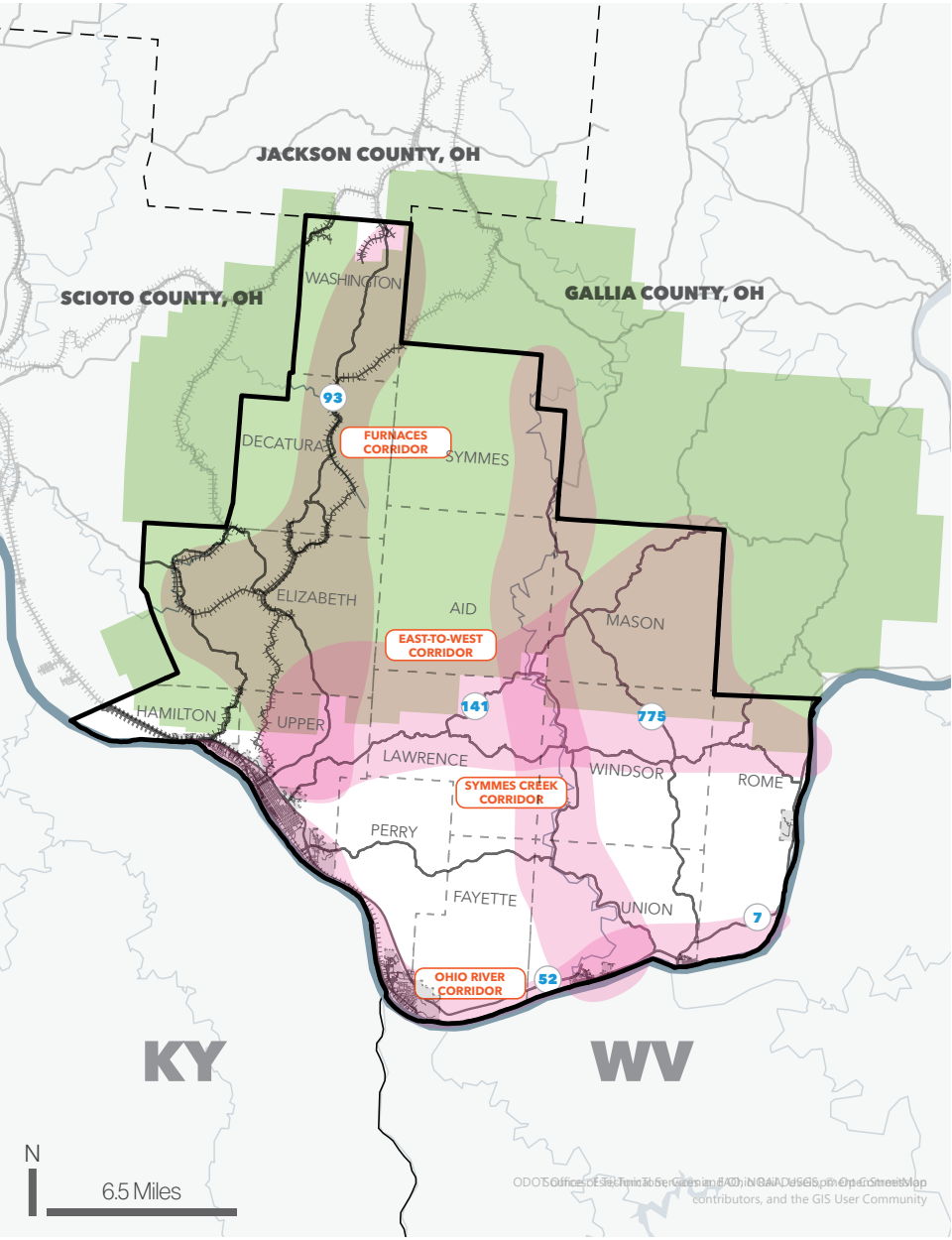
That is the task that the Lawrence County Commission set out for this master plan: engage the University of Cincinnati's Planning program, guided collaboratively by STUDIOS Architecture, to take stock of the county's existing assets and weave them into one holistic vision — one where the furnace ruins, the paddle trails of Symmes Creek, and the Ohio Riverfront are not disconnected destinations, but chapters in the same continuous experience.

“If everybody gives a little bit,
we can do a whole lot”

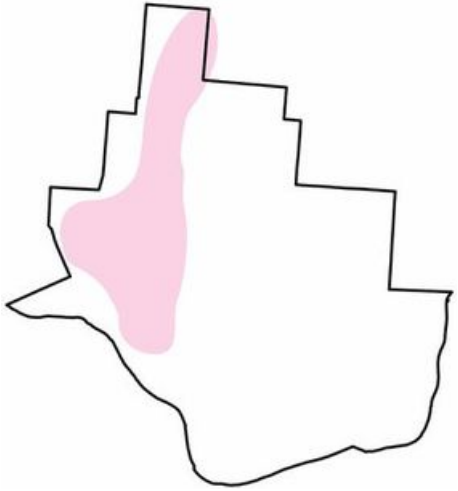
- Mike Finley
County Commissioner

This master plan seeks to:

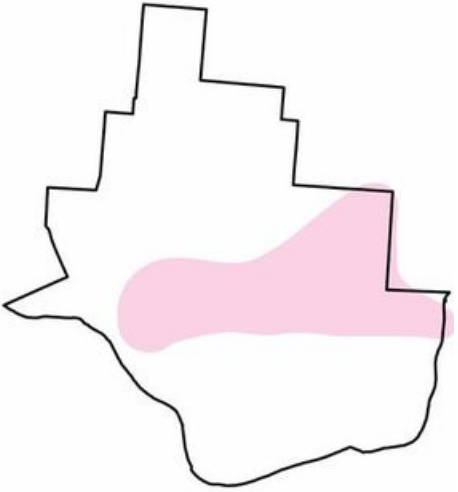
- Identify**
and leverage the robust natural and cultural assets of Lawrence County
- Improve**
existing public amenities
- Propose**
projects that provide increased access by residents to recreation opportunities
- Connect**
existing and proposed projects through a network of multimodal routes



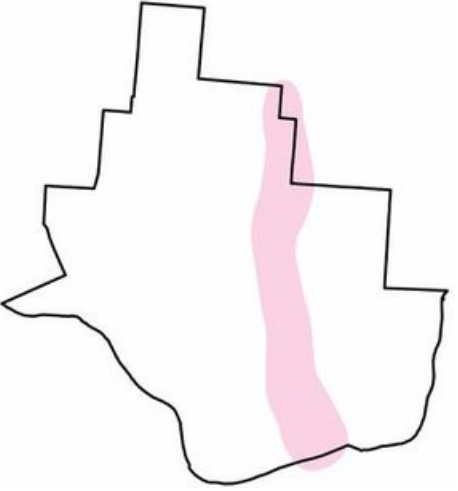
Four Corridor Framework Map
Source: Various Student Projects



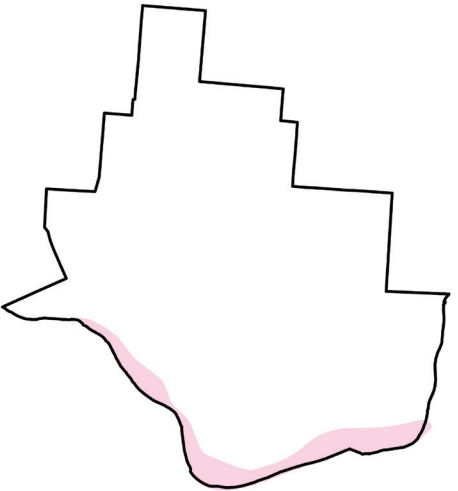
West Corridor
The Furnace Trail



Middle Corridor
East-West Connector



East Corridor
Symmes Creek



South Corridor
Along the Ohio River

Executive Summary

What follows in this master plan is documentation of our discoveries, project recommendations, the process for development of the master plan, examples of student work, and a variety of comparable community project case studies. Implementing any of the recommendations will require further study including community and regulatory engagement, planning and design, cost and implementation schedules.

In the Spring of 2025, the Lawrence County Commission passed a resolution to engage the University of Cincinnati's Planning School in the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the county. The University was to be guided by STUDIOS Architecture with the support of the Commissioners and the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation. Given that some plans were already being implemented for improving recreational opportunities, such as the four Governor's office funded Ohio River projects, this master plan was to develop a vision for the recreation opportunities throughout the county. There was also a desire to help prioritize the opportunities so that they can be implemented in phases over a 10-15 year time period. During early discussions with the LEDC and Commissioners, it became clear that the fundamental goal of this master plan should be to improve the quality of life for county residents and provide for economic development opportunities through eco-tourism, recreation and cultural events.

UC, working with STUDIOS, developed a three semester course curriculum to create the master plan. The process began in the summer of 2025 identifying existing assets within the county that could contribute to the master plan. The work included site visits, meeting with the County Commissioners, and a workshop with residents. It was during this early exploration that the University recommended adding cultural opportunities to the plan after learning of the strong cultural heritage in the county including sites that were utilized in the Underground Railroad system for freedom seekers crossing into free territory.

The Fall semester was used to identify project opportunities that could supplement work that was already underway in the county. Additional site visits were made along with presentations by the students to representatives of the County Commission and the LEDC. This work included a vision for projects in a zone along the Ohio River, two zones running parallel in the eastern and western portions of the county, and a zone through the middle of the county south of Wayne National Forest. The final semester, in the Spring of 2026, included additional outreach to residents and organizations and further presentations for feedback. During this semester, project opportunities were prioritized and a recommendation for a county-wide, multi-modal network of roads and trails for walking, hiking and biking was developed.

During exploration and research for the master plan, the University students and faculty and members of STUDIOS Architecture discovered a county rich in natural beauty and residents who are deeply proud of their community and active in restoring, protecting and developing ideas for its future. This master plan illustrates many of the unique features of the county that have contributed to its economic success throughout history. Those features that helped shepherd in the pig iron industry and the cultivation of the Rome Beauty Apple continue to be essential for the success of this future thinking master plan.



"This plan allows us to not only dream of something better, but a path to achieve it."

—Dr. Colton Copley
County Commissioner



"Design has the power to transform not only the places we inhabit, but the way we experience life, connect with one another, and imagine our future."

— Todd DeGarmo
Principal, STUDIOS Architecture



"This plan is about building on what makes Lawrence County special and creating an even better quality of life for the people who already call it home, while giving new families and visitors more reasons to choose us."

—DeAnna Holliday
County Commissioner



"They never came in with 'the' idea. They didn't tell us what 'we' were going to do. They brought their skills, talents, and gifts to Lawrence County and listened. How extraordinary."

—Dylan Bentley
County Administrator, Lawrence County (OH) Commissioners' Office

Acknowledgements

Prepared by STUDIOS Architecture and University of Cincinnati College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP) in collaboration with the Lawrence County Commissioners’ Office and Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation.



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In addition, the Lawrence County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Master Plan extends sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the process. This work would not have been possible without the dedicated students at University of Cincinnati DAAP, Lawrence County community organizations, and each and every individual who gave their time to provide thoughtful feedback.

Disclaimer

The student work included in this document was completed as an academic exercise and is presented exactly as submitted. This work is pedagogy-focused and intended to demonstrate learning and growth. The views and ideas expressed belong solely to the individual students and the work has not been edited or corrected for spelling, grammar, punctuation, or content. Any errors are part of the original work.

The renderings used in this document are conceptual and intended for information only. They were developed by architecture students based on work completed in planning courses and not AI generated.



Discovery

"When you drive through Lawrence County, you begin to understand that the roads tell a deeper story. The hills and the Ohio River, not just connect towns, but piecing together the county's identity. Infrastructure isn't just routes on a map, rather, a pathway through time. You notice how the landscape shifts between farmland, forest, and old industrial corridors. Infrastructure in Lawrence County isn't just about traffic counts or pavement conditions. But about how people live, how they get to school, to work, to the grocery store. It's about how the natural environment and built systems coexist. When we look at data, whether it be vehicle counts or road mileage, we need to get a sense of what's behind it. The numbers represent a living system. In Lawrence County, the infrastructure reflects the character of the place.

- Logan Vaughn
School of Planning Student

What We Discovered

This section documents the major features of the county that make the proposed Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan feasible. The county has already undertaken many steps to improve the quality of life for its residents. What we discovered should help create a plan that builds toward a more connected community and landscape.

While visiting Lawrence County, meeting with residents and researching topics that would shape the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, we discovered a community that takes great pride in country living and natural beauty. There are incredible recreational opportunities within the forests and waterways, family-oriented experiences such as the longest running Memorial Day Parade, and rich cultural heritage.

The county's population has long been tied to fluctuations in the industrial and agricultural industries. The county has also experienced the largest population decrease of the 88 counties in Ohio since the last census.

The landscape is shaped by steep topography that reaches from high mountain areas down to the Ohio River with more than 90% of the population along the river's edge. Wayne National Forest defines the northern edge of the more populated and accessible areas within the county.

Much of the land in the county is owned by Federal, State and Local governments with additional land acquisition through the FEMA Stafford Act. The county's Public Land Bank has continued to grow providing more opportunities for a connected network of public parks and recreational opportunities.

There is a network of hiking, biking, off-road vehicle, and horse trails throughout the county. There are also a number of roads that have or plan to have multi-modal designations through the KYOVA transportation plan initiatives. There are several opportunities to leverage, expand or connect these routes to provide a more robust recreational blueprint.

With the abundance of waterways bounding and within the county, there are also risks of flooding. The FEMA maps clearly illustrate the short and long-term flood vulnerabilities. The areas also provide opportunities for planning and design of resilient recreational strategies where other types of permanent construction may not be feasible.

We also discovered and spoke with many residents who are very active within the community - promoting and protecting the county's abundance of wildlife and natural beauty. There have also been broader efforts such as the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities which sought to improve trails and other natural resources through public-private partnerships.

Additionally, the county has been implementing a phased approach to transportation improvements utilizing the multi-state KYOVA Transportation Master Plan. Elements of this plan, such as the Ohio River Scenic Byway make possible a more active pedestrian experience for cyclists and hikers and communities along the Ohio River.

“We have incredible natural, recreational and cultural assets in Lawrence County. The opportunity now is to connect them, promote them and turn those assets into experiences that benefit our residents and strengthen our local economy.”

— DeAnna Holliday
County Commissioner

What We Discovered

- » **Pride in Community**
- » **Place Shaped by Geography**
- » **Abundance of Natural Resources**
- » **Cultural Significance**
- » **Legacy of Iron and Apples**
- » **Population Trends Tied To Industry**
- » **Influence of the Ohio River . and Wayne National Forest**
- » **Network of Trails**
- » **Flood, Wildfire & Social Vulnerabilities**
- » **Community Activism and Stewardship**
- » **Planning Momentum**



Pride in Community

What we discovered while exploring the county, meeting with the residents and researching the history was a culture of people with immense pride in their community and a landscape with many recreational, cultural and family-oriented experiences.



“Sometimes we become so accustomed to what surrounds us that we forget how special it is. Lawrence County has beautiful outdoor spaces, strong communities, rich history and experiences that are worth sharing with the rest of the region.”

– DeAnna Holliday
County Commissioner

Recreational Opportunities

Spanning 11,119 reclaimed acres along the Lawrence-Gallia county line, Crown City Wildlife Area offers rolling former mine land now rich with forest, grassland, streams, and ponds. It's a popular destination for hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, and wildlife watching — giving Lawrence County residents access to large-scale, undeveloped outdoor recreation.



Family-Oriented Experiences

Ironton, Ohio hosts the oldest continuously running Memorial Day parade in the United States, held every year since 1868 — the same year the Grand Army of the Republic established May 30th as Decoration Day. Organized to honor Civil War dead, it now recognizes veterans of all American wars, drawing thousands annually to Ironton's downtown for a 12-division procession.



Cultural Significance

Built in 1849 near Burlington on Macedonia Hill, overlooking the Ohio River, Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church is Ohio's oldest Black congregation and its only surviving antebellum Black church. As part of the Providence Anti-Slavery Baptist Association, its ministers sheltered freedom seekers crossing into free territory. Now on the National Register of Historic Places and the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, it's undergoing restoration into a historic site and community center.

Natural landscape shapes cultural identity

Lawrence County shows how a distinctive natural landscape can shape rich, place-based cultural identities across its communities. Recognizing these distinct identities also creates opportunities to strengthen connections between communities and creatively build on this diversity of place.

Forest and Riverfront

About 73% of the County's population lives in jurisdictions along the Ohio River, while the rest are in and around Wayne National Forest. This reflects two distinct living environments that give residents different everyday relationships with the landscape.

Raccoon Creek Watershed and Little Scioto Watershed

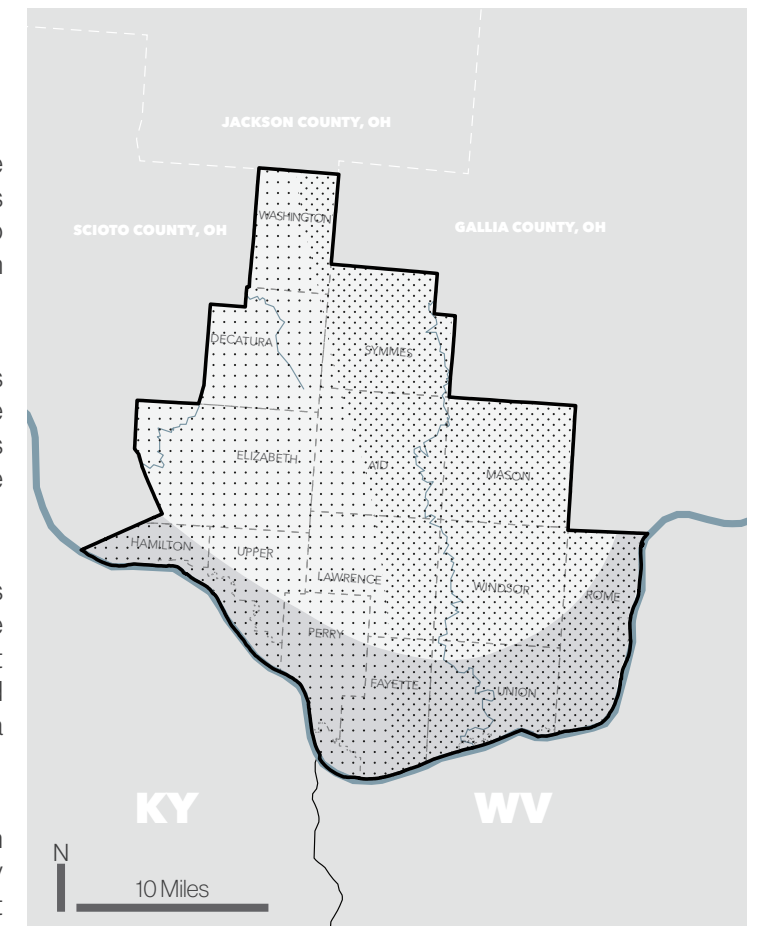
The two watersheds that naturally shape the County's geography offer a helpful lens for understanding how these distinct communities have developed and how they might grow more connected. Ironton's larger population has helped it draw significant attention and opportunity; there's now a chance to extend that momentum eastward.

Ohio River

The Ohio River underscores the County's unique location at Ohio's southern tip. It's a natural boundary that many residents cross daily for jobs and amenities, and in doing so, it also serves as a point of connection linking Lawrence County into a broader tri-state region.

Symmes Creek

Symmes Creek runs through the center of the County, shaping the character of the land east and west of it and offering a natural throughline that recreational and restoration projects (like the Symmes Creek Restoration Committee's work) can build on to link the two sides.



Lawrence County Cultural Districts Map
Source: PLAN3031 | Summer 2025



Social and Cultural Assets

PLAN3031 | Summer 2025
Jake Plummer | Kyra Williams | Sage Morrison

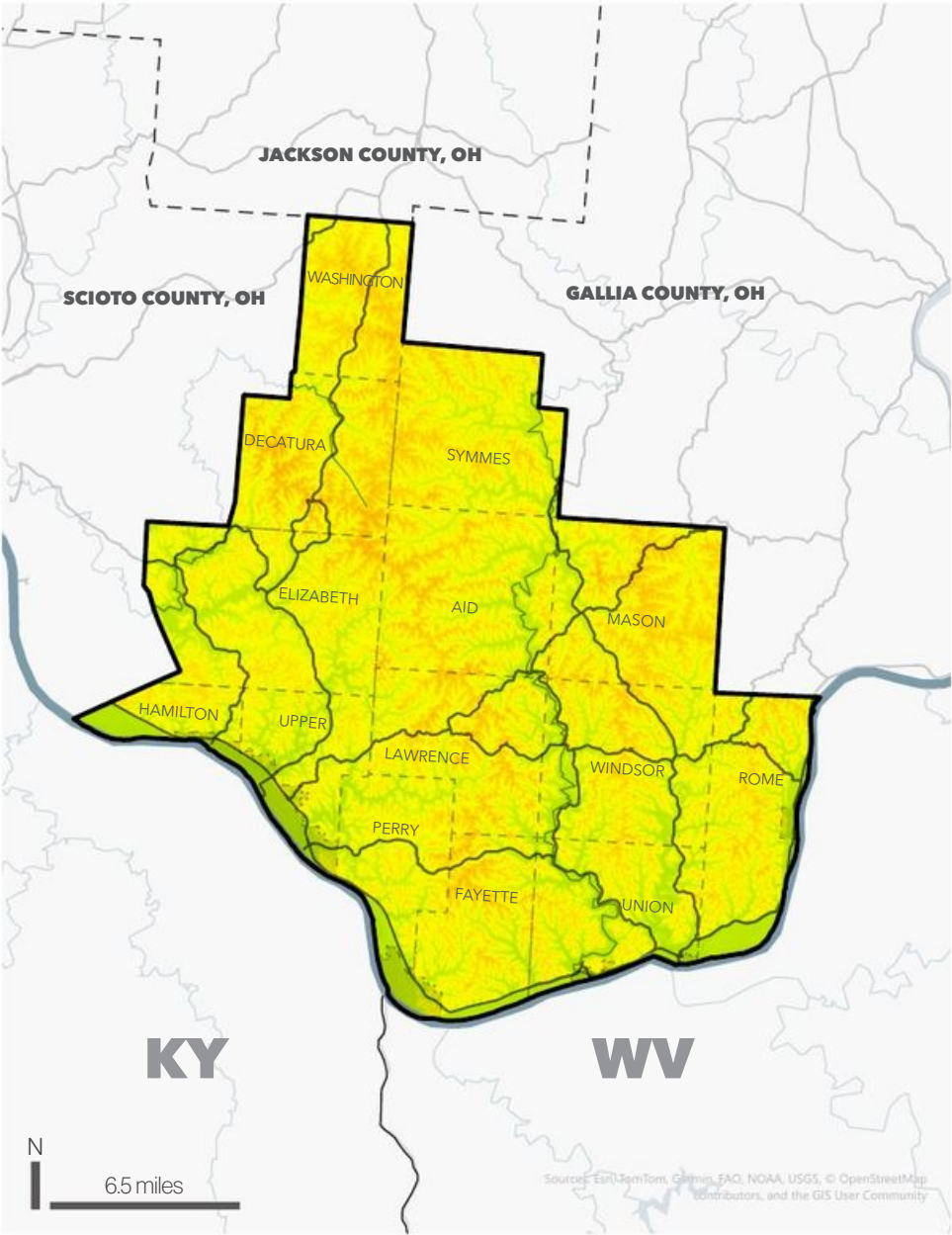
Lawrence County's historic towns, riverfront communities, and natural assets—including the Ohio River and Wayne National Forest—form a strong cultural foundation, while highlighting the need for more accessible gathering spaces that connect residents across its rural landscape.

Forest and River

With 52 miles of Ohio Riverfront, 103 square miles of National Forest, and 1061 ft elevation at its highest point, Lawrence County's terrain is its recreational asset and a draw for hikers, mountain bikers, boaters and anyone looking for elevation change and scenery.

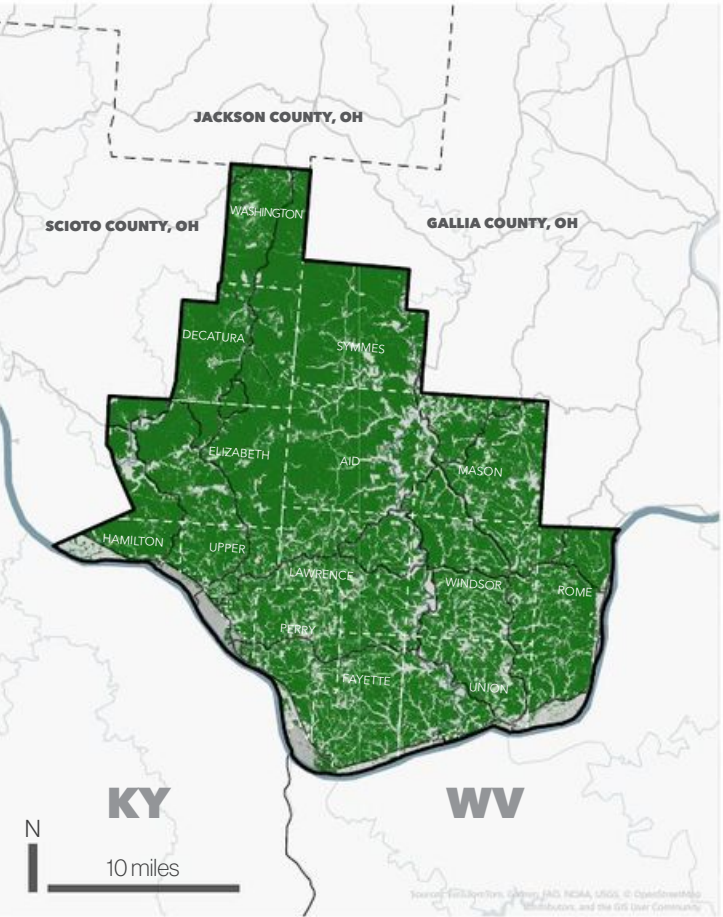
Lawrence County has a wealth of natural resources that facilitate outdoor recreation opportunities but this land and water are transitioning from the impacts of the extractive mining industry to forest recovery. The tree canopy in Wayne National forest is the product of a century of active reforestation that needs conservation. The watershed health is also linked to the county's mining legacy and requires monitoring and restorative care.

Planning for recreation in the county need to be intrinsically linked to, not competing with, conservation and restoration efforts.



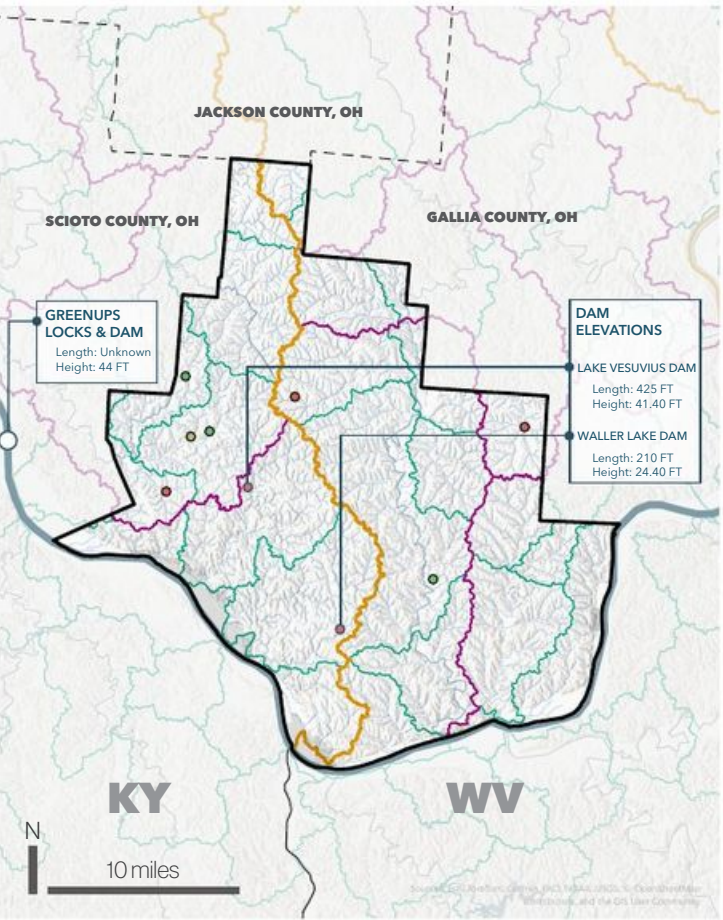
Flat to Steep

Flat along the Ohio River with steep hills, narrow valleys, cliffs, and cave features within a few miles from the river, this terrain is a landscape defined by erosion. The bedrock is made of sandstone and shale and rich in coal, clay and iron.



Tree Canopy

Lawrence County has approximately 82% of its land area covered with trees. High tree cover decreases heat islands, increases biodiversity, and helps with air quality. High tree cover also makes the county desirable for outdoor recreation opportunities.



Waterway & Dam #'s

118 Streams
3 Lakes
17 Reservoirs
10 Dams

Way of the water

Hydrologic Unit Codes divide the country into 22 regions (2 digits). The dams throughout the county are defined in three different classes, based on how much water can be held. A Lock and Dam system is used along the Ohio River, creating stable water channels for commercial and recreational boats. The water systems provide opportunity for boating and fishing.

Ohio's Southern Coast

Lawrence County, Ohio, also known as 'Ohio's Southern Coast', is located at the confluence of three states - Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky - where the Ohio River shapes a shared regional identity across state lines. The county boasts impressive natural assets including a scenic Ohio River shoreline and Wayne National Forest. Access to these assets provide ample opportunities for fishing, boating, hiking, foraging, horseback and bicycle riding.



350,000 people in a Tri-state region

The tri-state location gives Lawrence County a reach far beyond its own borders. Huntington, Ashland, and Ironton are regional hubs along the Ohio River, offering residents access to a much larger shared commercial, cultural and recreational base. The river, river towns and bridges function as connective infrastructure that link the communities into one larger, more resilient region.



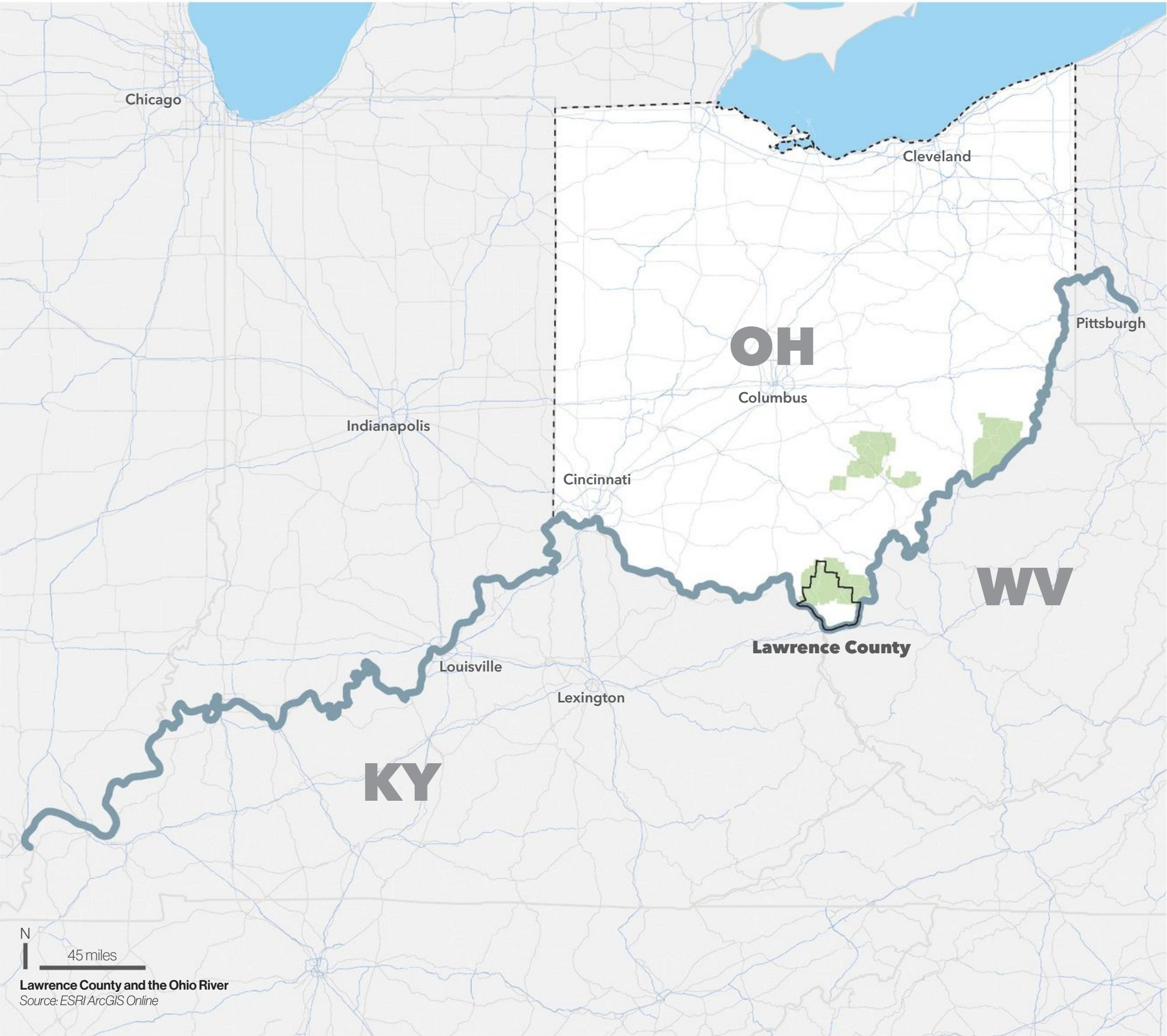
52 miles of Ohio River Shoreline

The Ohio River carried iron and goods to market and fueled the county's 19th-century industrial rise. Today it sustains a dual role moving freight along its banks, while boating, fishing, and riverfront parks draw residents and visitors. With investment in waterfront redevelopment, the river is transforming into one continuous destination.



75,000 acres in Wayne National Forest

Established in 1934, Wayne National Forest is Ohio's only national forest. Its Ironton Unit has regrown from cleared timberland into a biodiverse landscape centered on Lake Vesuvius. It now anchors the county's outdoor recreation: hiking, horseback riding, OHV trails, camping, and canoe launches, while its old furnace ruins tie the forest directly to the region's iron heritage.



Iron and Apples

The development of the iron industry and the “Rome Beauty” apple in Lawrence County share a parallel history of landscape transformation, economic significance, and regional identity that defined the area during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The natural resources and pioneering spirit of the people within the county that gave rise to its economic success remain intact today. These are foundational elements that can make a parks, recreation and culture master plan possible for the future.

Industrial and Agricultural Foundations

By the mid-1800s, Lawrence County was a hub for the iron industry. The western part of the county was defined by mining, blast furnaces, and the extraction of local iron ore. This industry required massive amounts of charcoal, leading to widespread deforestation as timber was cut to fuel the furnaces.

Among the men who built that industry was David Sinton, an Irish immigrant who came up through the ironworks at Hanging Rock, eventually taking ownership of Union Furnace, stockpiling iron ahead of the Civil War and selling into the wartime surge in demand. The geology and resources within Lawrence County; including limestone, abundant forest, and access to water, made for ideal smelting conditions. Sinton later moved his base of operations to Cincinnati. His daughter, Anna, married into the Taft family in 1873.

The Apple's Agricultural Rise. While the west was primarily industrial, the eastern end of the county became a center for agriculture. The Rome Beauty apple traces to 1817, when Joel Gillette, recently settled near Proctorville, found an unfamiliar seedling among a shipment of nursery stock. Family tradition holds that Joel handed the sprout to his son, calling it “a little Democrat tree” — a bit of family humor that became, a few years later, a strikingly deep-red apple unlike any other in the orchard. It would take another generation — sons, grandsons, and cousins including Nelson Cox and Captain H. N. Gillette — to carry the apple from a backyard curiosity to statewide recognition, renamed “Rome Beauty” in the 1830s in honor of its home township.

Legacy and Cultural Identity

Both industries left a lasting mark on the community's heritage. The birthplace of the Rome Beauty apple is commemorated with a monument at the Lawrence County Fairgrounds — fittingly, on the same ground where Joel Gillette once made his home. The iron furnaces that once dotted the landscape — Vesuvius, Olive, and others — remain iconic symbols of the region's industrial past, even as the fortunes they built, like Sinton's, moved on to Cincinnati and beyond.

The importance of these industries also fostered local organization and cooperation. Farmers in the mid-19th century formed associations such as the Rome and Union (Township) Farmers Club to improve their craft and share knowledge — mirroring the same collaborative spirit that built and operated the furnace partnerships driving the county's early industrial growth.

Both families and industries stood at the center of Lawrence County's economic story — and both are proof that the county's true resource was not the ore or the orchard, but the people willing to build something lasting from them.

Both industries relied heavily on the natural resources of the landscape. The iron industry's reliance on charcoal led to such significant deforestation that by the early 20th century, the landscape required intervention — including the creation of Dean State Forest in 1916 — to stop soil erosion.

The apple industry thrived as a commercial success for decades, with the Rome Beauty becoming a staple for growers across the region and gaining fame as the “Queen of the Baking Apples.” But like the iron industry before it, the golden age of the orchards eventually declined by the mid-1900s, with much of the former orchard land repurposed for housing and other development.

FARMING HISTORY

What is needed to be understood to start production?

Legend

- County Boundary
- Water Bodies
- Transportation
- Significant Sites
- Significant Farms

0 2.5 Miles

Lawrence County has a rich history in farming. In 1817 farmer Joel Gillet found apple tree seedlings from a nursery shipment. He planted the seedlings calling them Gillette's Seedling, later renamed to "Rome Beauty" named after Rome Township despite being located in Proctorville (Rome Beauty Orchard no longer exists).

Lawrence county was once known for its tobacco farming in the 19th and 20th century.

Other crops grown consist of grains, dried goods, and vegetables.

Cattle is the predominant form of livestock farming.

More recently farms are struggling. Farms in the area have been shutting down over the years. From 2017 - 2022 Lawrence County lost 102 farms, around 9,000 acres.

PRODUCTION

Farming History

PLAN4041 | Spring 2026

Ella Schultian | Emmett Foley | Melina Duque | Will Hein

Lawrence County's agricultural legacy spans from the historic Rome Beauty apple orchards to today's cattle, grain, vegetable, and family farms but the county also lost 102 farms and roughly 9,000 acres between 2017 and 2022.



Forested Landscape

About **75%** of Lawrence County is made of Deciduous Forest. Most of the developed land is concentrated to communities along the Ohio River. This speaks to Lawrence County's identity as a county defined by nature.

Land Cover Overview

The following summary of Lawrence County, Ohio, draws on the National Land Cover Database (NLCD), which classifies land cover across the United States using satellite imagery. NLCD describes what covers the land surface (forest, development, cropland, water) rather than how the land is legally designated or used. The categories below are broad groupings of NLCD classes, and figures reflect the dataset year noted in each section.

Forest

Forest cover is concentrated in Wayne National Forest. The transition zone between the urbanized riverfront and the forest is of particular conservation interest.

Developed Land

Development is concentrated in a narrow band along the Ohio River, with small settlements scattered within the forest. Low to medium intensity suburban residential development is spreading rapidly in the area between the forest and the river.

Crops and Grassland

As of roughly 2014, crops and grassland made up 46.85% of the county's land. This means more than half the county is non-agricultural (forest, developed land, water, and so on).

Open Water

Lawrence County covers about 1,178 square kilometers of land, with only about 6 square kilometers of water (under 1%). Open water is a very small share of overall land cover.

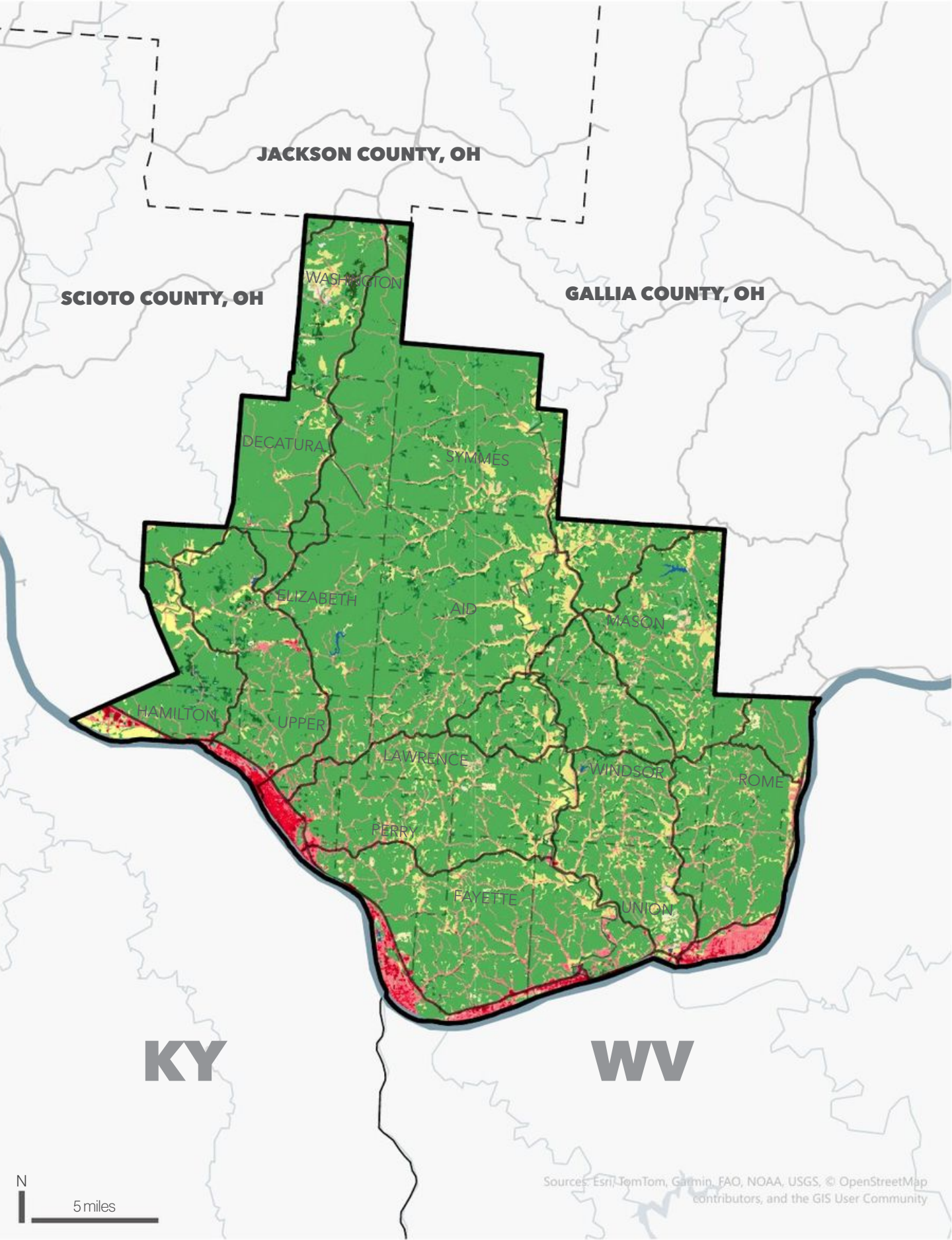
Lawrence County Land Cover Map >>
Source: National Land Cover Database



LAND COVER TRANSECT



Land Cover Transect
PLAN3031 | Summer 2025
Caroline VanBuskirk | Ella Lisac | Reese Stangelo
A land cover transect of Lawrence County, Ohio, follows the water from the forested Appalachian hills of the Wayne National Forest, through grassland, open water, and woodland marsh, down to river towns like Ironton along the Ohio River.



River and Forest Communities

Approximately 80% of the county's population lives on 20% of the land by the Ohio River.

Lawrence County reflects a settlement pattern common across rural Appalachian Ohio: a compact, historic city core, several small villages, and a majority of residents choosing the space, land, and lower cost of living that township life offers along the river and in the hills. Rather than concentrating growth in one urban center, the county's population is spread across its townships — a pattern that has helped preserve the rural, close-knit character many residents value, even as the county works to attract new investment and reverse decades of industrial-era outmigration.

Based on the 2020 Census and and American Community Surveys (ACS), the combined incorporated population - roughly 18,000 people live in the city and six villages combined - out of the county's total population of about 56,000–58,000. That means only around 30–32% of Lawrence County's residents live within an incorporated municipality; the rest (roughly two-thirds) live in the unincorporated parts of the 14 townships.

City, Villages and Townships

Lawrence County, Ohio is organized into the following local-government jurisdictions:

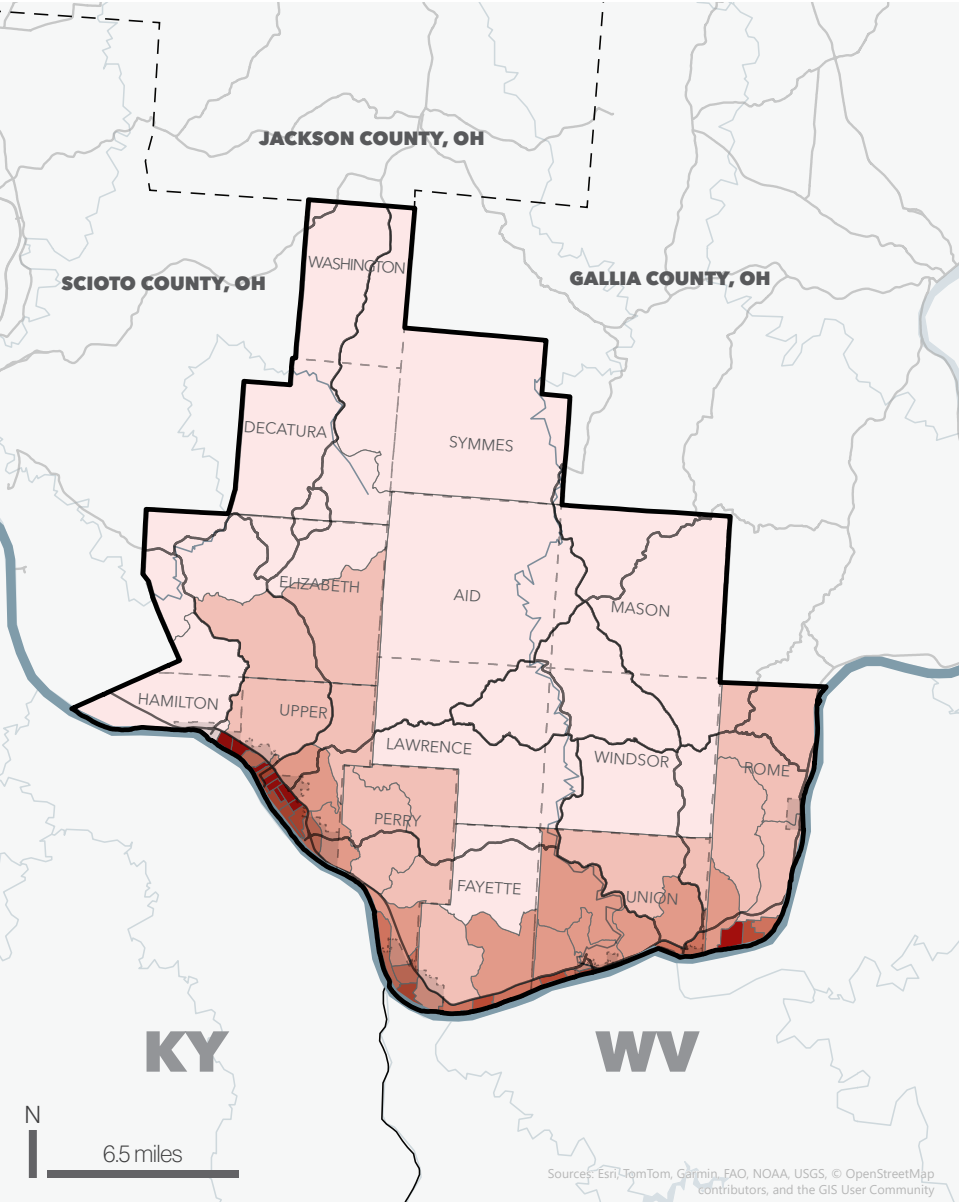
City (1) - Ironton
(the county seat and only incorporated city in the county, located in Upper Township along the Ohio River)

Villages (6) - Chesapeake, Coal Grove, Hanging Rock, Proctorville, South Point, Athalia
(all incorporated municipalities smaller than a city with populations under 5,000 and its own village council/ mayor, but they remain nested within and share services with their surrounding township)

Townships (14) - Aid, Decatur, Elizabeth, Fayette, Hamilton, Lawrence, Mason, Perry, Rome, Symmes, Union, Upper, Washington, Windsor
(unincorporated local government, each with a trustee, providing services outside incorporated areas)

Unincorporated communities -
(scattered throughout the townships which are just population centers/ hamlets within their township, without their own municipal government)

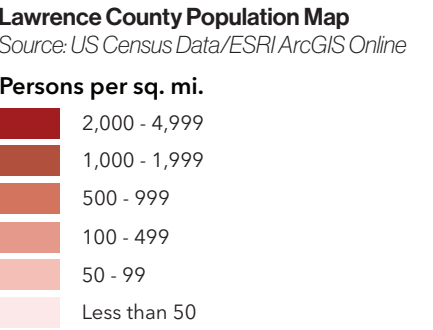
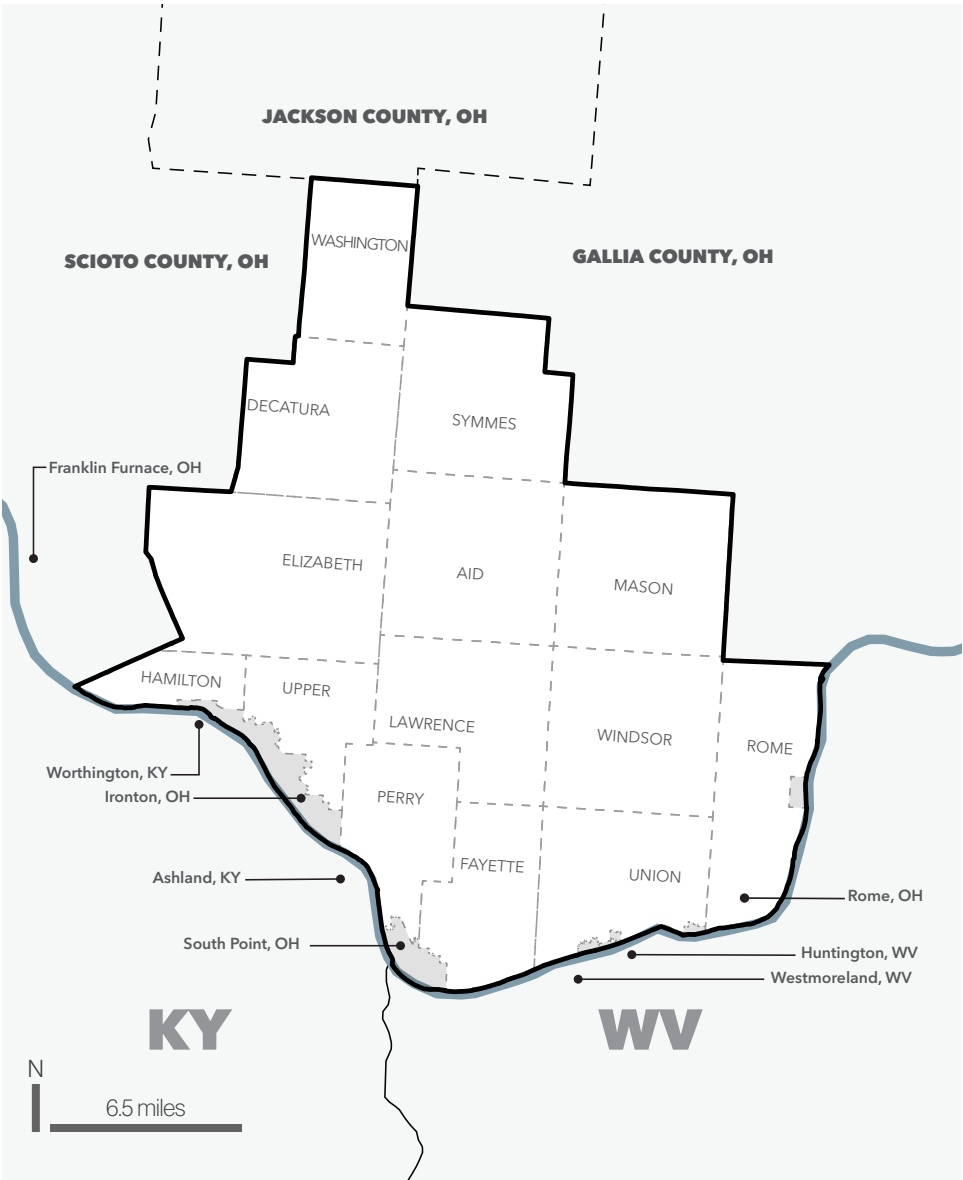
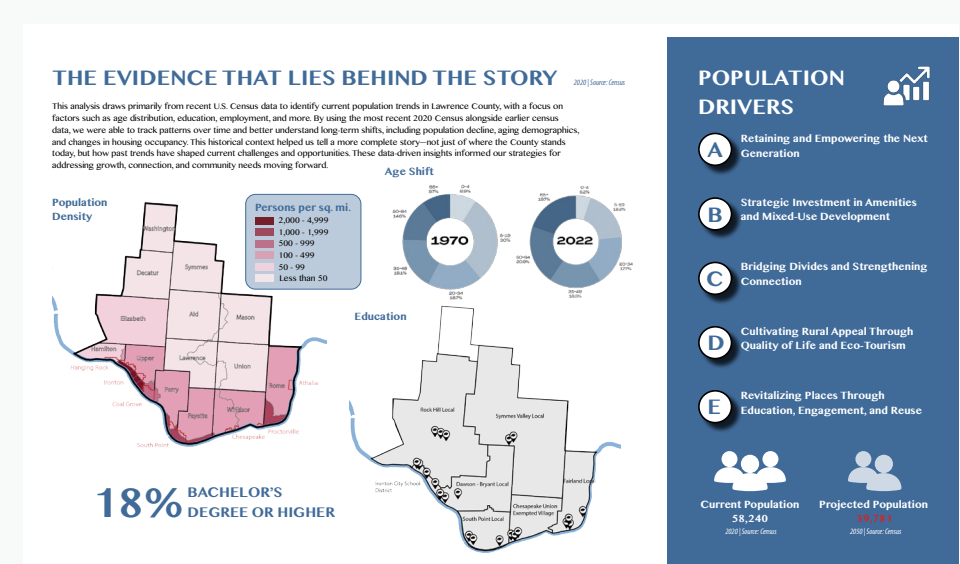
Cities & Townships of Lawrence County Map
Source: ESRI ArcGIS Online



Population Centers along the Ohio River

Population density concentrated in the river-adjacent southern townships (Union, Rome, Fayette, Perry) compared to the sparser northern townships (Washington, Symmes, Decatur).

Ironton has lost population steadily for decades — down from over 30,000 at its early-20th-century industrial peak to just over 10,000 today. South Point and Coal Grove, despite also shrinking, remain the county's second- and third-largest population centers. Chesapeake is the one place that's held essentially flat or grown slightly, likely tied to its proximity to Huntington. The village of Burlington (population ~2,400) is the largest unincorporated place in the county.



Drivers of Population
PLAN3031 | Summer 2025
Jake Plummer | Kyra Williams | Sage Morrison

Lawrence County's demographic trends point to both urgency and opportunity: population is projected to decline from 58,240 in 2020 to 39,781 by 2050, while an aging population and limited degree attainment present workforce challenges. Strategic investment in amenities, mixed-use development, education, connectivity, and rural quality-of-life assets can help retain younger residents and strengthen the county's long-term resilience.

Network of Trails

Given the access to public land, Lawrence County can position itself as a regional destination for hiking, camping, off-roading and hunting.

Lawrence County's extensive multimodal transportation assets include:

- 138 mile of hiking trails
- 60 miles of bike paths
- 12 Miles of trails at Lake Vesuvius in Wayne National Forest
- 30 Designated horseback riding trails throughout the forest
- 3 Off-road trails

Linking existing recreation assets with safer, connected bikeway infrastructure can strengthen tourism, access, and regional mobility.

Proposed Ohio Bikeways and Design Guidance

Ohio Department of Transportation

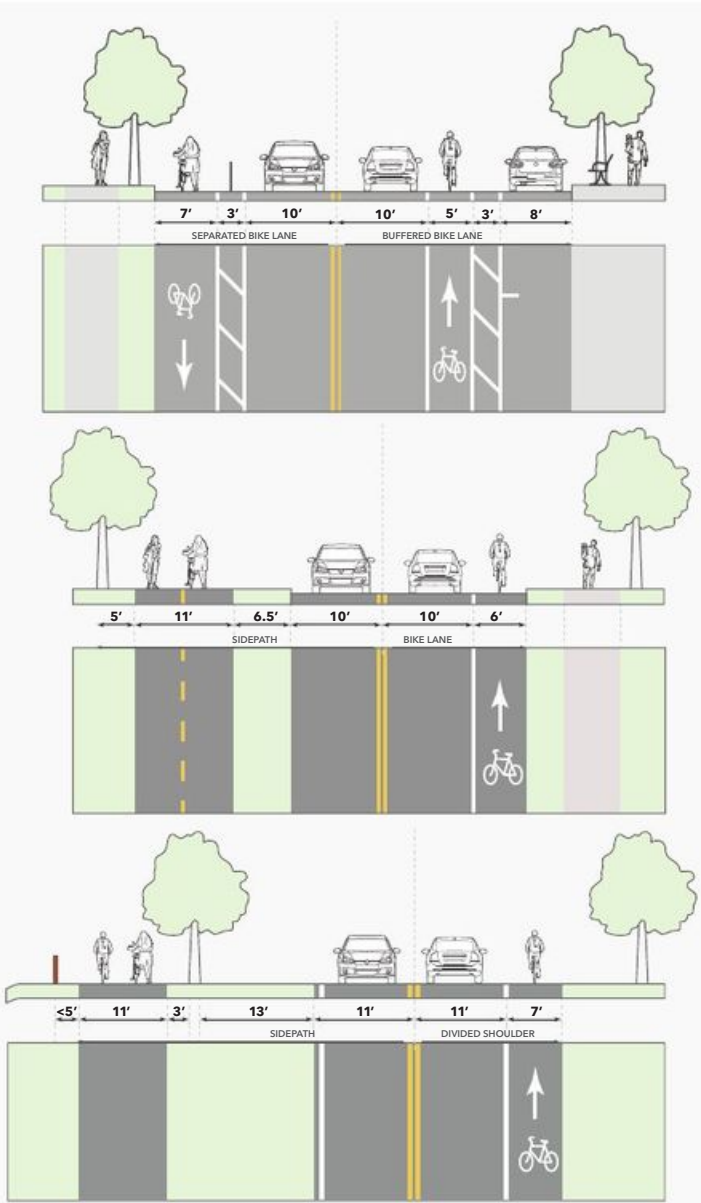
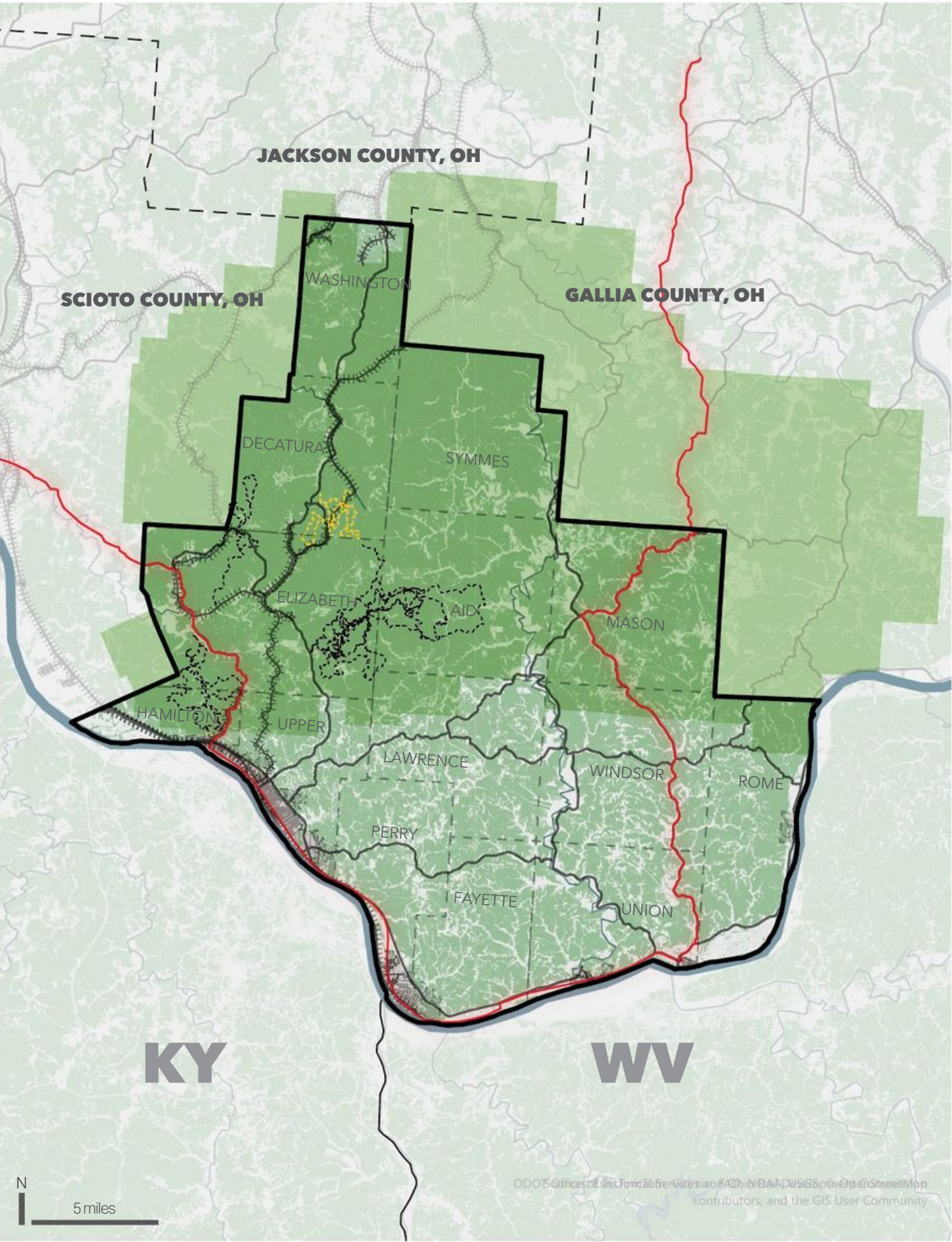
The Ohio River Scenic Bikeway and Ohio Bike Trail are part of Ohio's statewide State and U.S. Bike Route System developed under ODOT's Access 2040 plan. This program mostly uses existing roadway and bike facilities that were identified as safest for long-distance cyclists. A possible link with Huntington, WV's existing bike route system could extend the connectivity across the Ohio River into a broader tri-state cycling network.



Multimodal Bikeways and Design Guidelines for Urban, Suburban and Rural Streets
Source: ODOT's Multimodal Design Guide

Lawrence County Transportation Map
Source: ArcGIS Online/Ohio Department of Transportation

- National Forest Trail
- State Park Trail
- Proposed Ohio Bike Trail
- State Route
- Railroad Line
- State Park Trail
- Wayne National Forest
- Tree Cover



Land Use

Parks and open space make up the largest share of land use in Lawrence County, followed by agriculture. Residential uses account for the greatest number of parcels, but most of those parcels are smaller than half an acre. By area, residential use is therefore a much smaller share of the county.

53% Parks and Open Space

Land preserved or maintained primarily for conservation, recreation, or natural resource value rather than development. This category includes public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national and state forest land, greenways and trail corridors, floodplains, and undeveloped riparian buffers along waterways. It can include both publicly owned land (such as Wayne National Forest, Crown City Wildlife Area and Dean State Park) and privately held land under conservation easement or agricultural/forestry use that functions as open space.

36% Agriculture

Land used for farming, ranching, or other cultivation activities, including cropland, pasture, hayfields, orchards, and land enrolled in agricultural tax programs (such as Ohio's Current Agricultural Use Valuation, or CAUV).

3% Vacant Land

Vacant land uses for residential, commercial, and industrial are also concentrated along the river. Residential uses are the dominant type of vacant land. Vacant in this case refers to an empty parcel, rather than an abandoned structure.

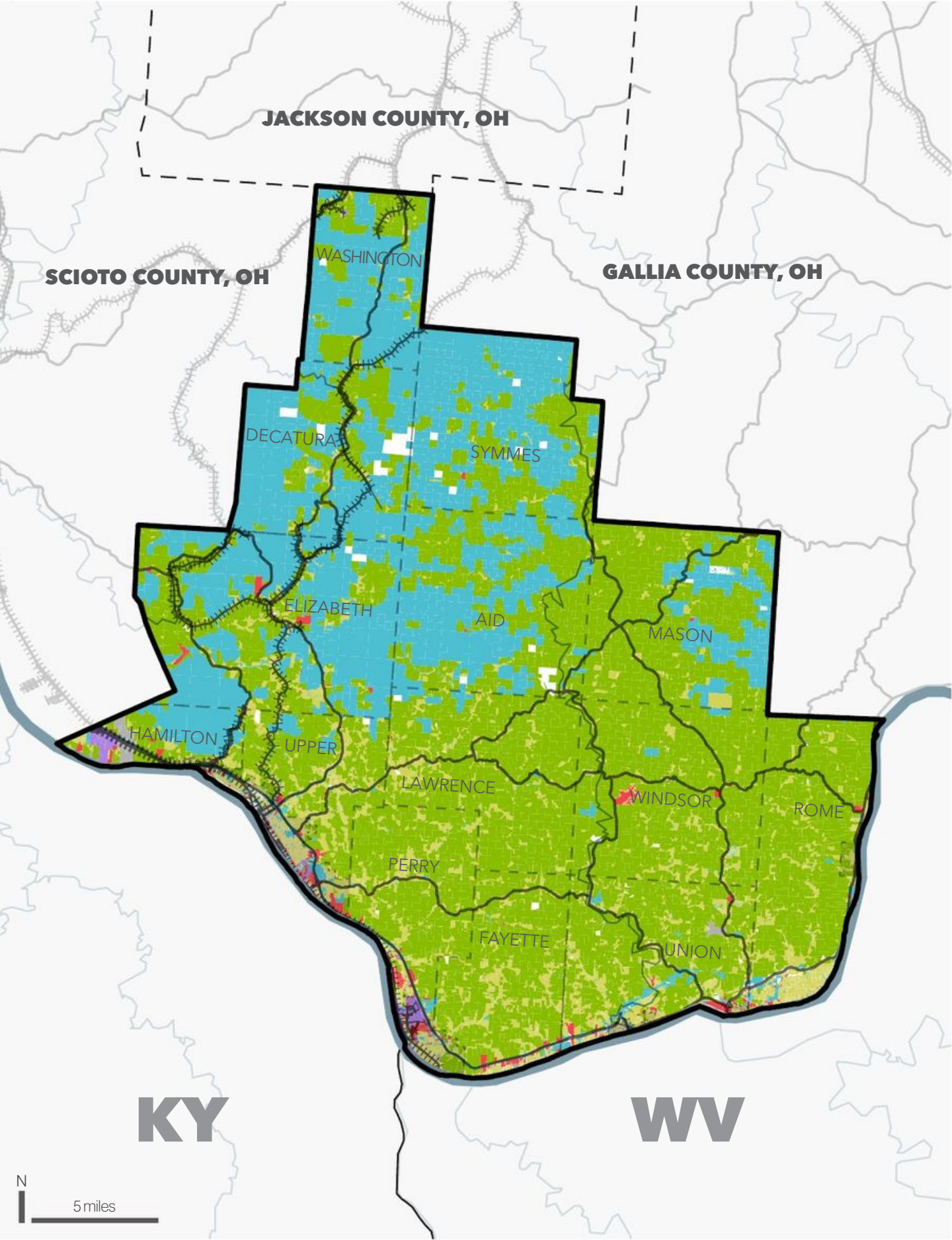
The master plan focuses on infill and redevelopment within the county's core communities while preserving open space and agricultural heritage.

Lawrence County Existing Land Use Map >>
Source: Lawrence County Auditor's Parcel Data



Land Use Transect
PLAN3031 | Summer 2025
Caroline VanBuskirk | Ella Lisac | Reese Stangelo

A cross-sectional illustration showing how development intensity and impervious surface increase as land use transitions from rural open space to dense commercial/industrial areas along the river corridor.

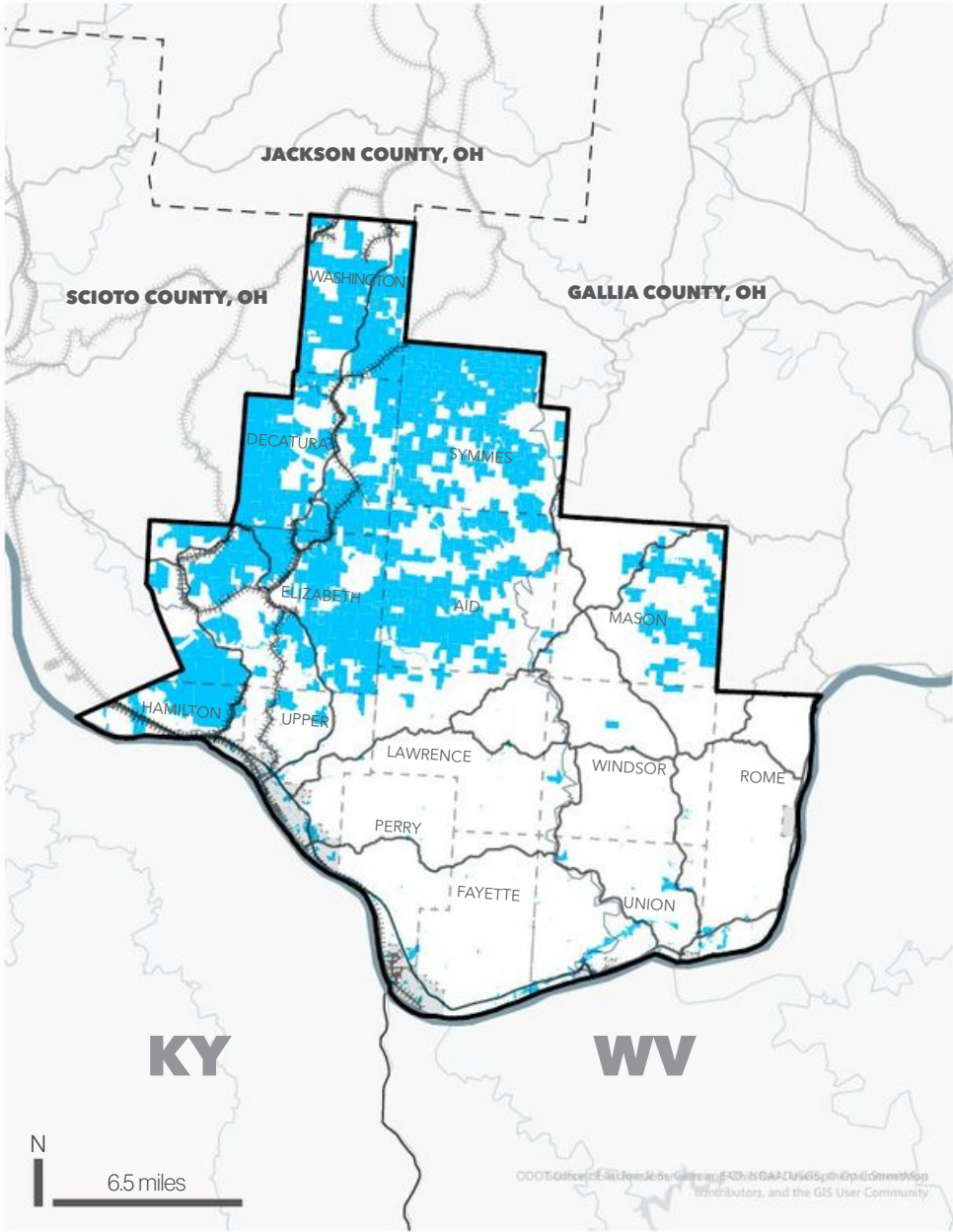


Land Acquisitions

A substantial share of Lawrence County's land is held by federal, state and county entities. This creates an opportunity to develop revenue-generating and recreational uses on existing holdings rather than paying to acquire new sites.

A majority of this land is in Wayne National Forest, Crown City State Wildlife Management Area and Dean State Park. Combined with Lawrence County's land bank holdings and FEMA Stafford Act properties, this presents a unique opportunity to restore, reconnect and reactivate the communities and destinations around the county.

The Ohio Legislative Service Commission lists Lawrence first among Ohio counties for public recreation land, at about 82,336 acres. Scioto, Vinton, Hocking and Muskingum follow with 49,000 to 76,000 acres each.

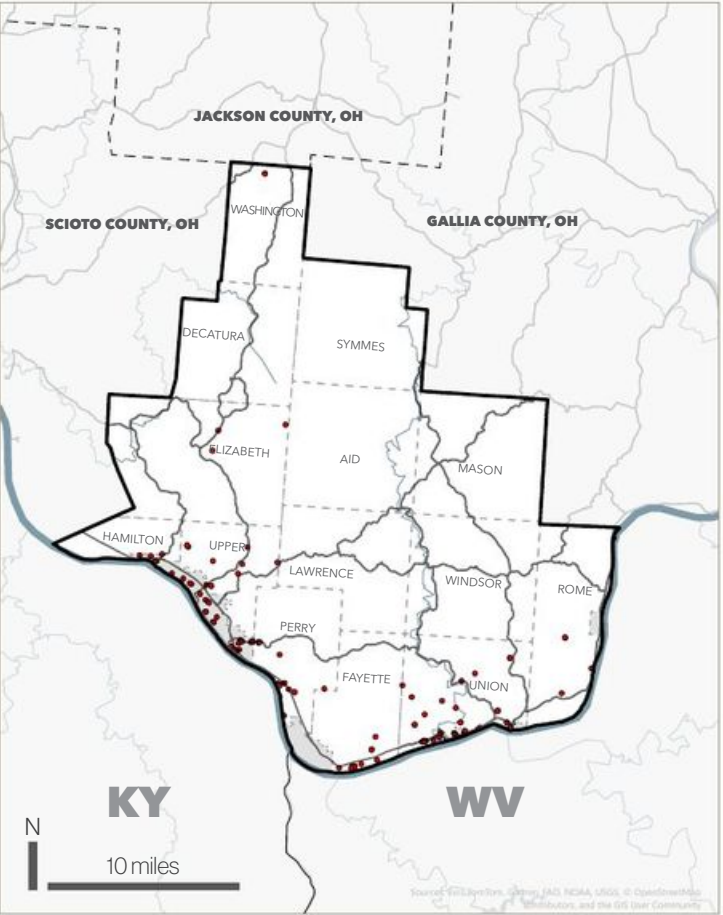


Public Land

This map shows all publically owned - federal, state, county or local - land in Lawrence County. This is protected, recreational land in Wayne National Forest, Crown City Wildlife Area and Dean State Forest. The leverage here isn't acquisition, it's connectivity. These holdings support 300+ miles of trails, OHV routes, hunting, and fishing regionally. The priority is to formalize county-level access agreements and partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service and ODNR Division of Wildlife, and identify gaps in access between this federal/state land and the county's population centers such as trailhead access points, connector trails, and way-finding.

Lawrence County Public Land Map
Source: Lawrence County Auditor's Parcel Data

Public Land

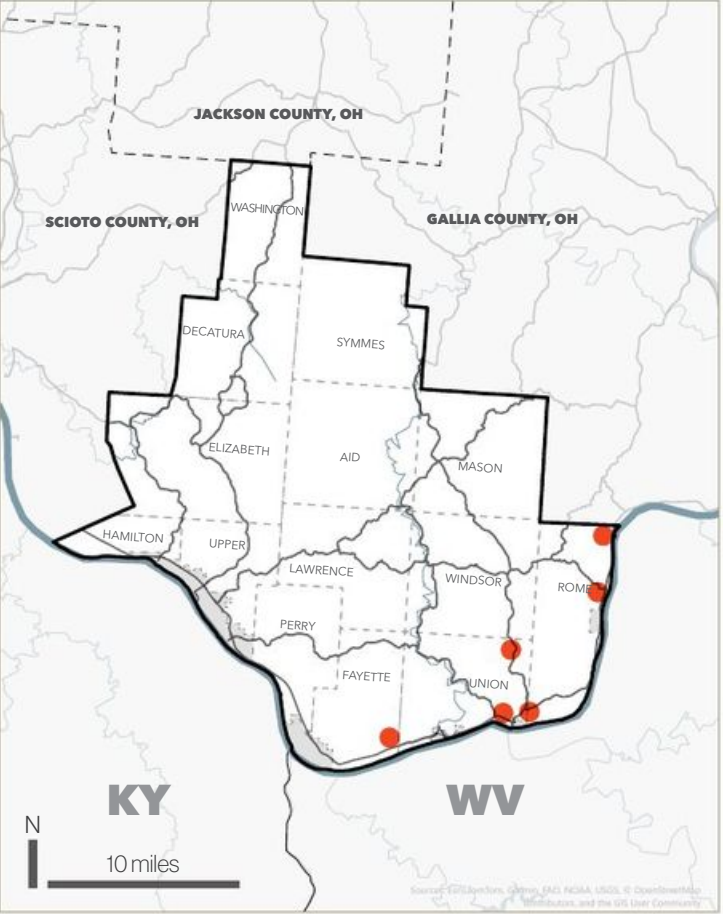


Land Bank Properties

As of May 2025, the Lawrence County Land Bank has 131 properties in its possession, totaling 25.9 acres, with an average of 0.29 acres. These are primarily vacant parcels collected through delinquent county property taxes. These are small, scattered, vacant in-town lots that are well suited to a distributed green infrastructure strategy: pocket parks, community gardens, stormwater/rain gardens, or pedestrian connector lots stitching together sidewalks and trail segments in Ironton, South Point, and other river towns.

Lawrence County Land Bank Map
Source: Lawrence County Auditor's Parcel Data

Lawrence County Owned Parcel



FEMA Stafford Act Properties

The Stafford Act allows FEMA to buyout properties - voluntarily - following flooding or other natural disasters. These properties can be transferred to the county or other agencies for flood prevention and public use. There are 171 properties in this category. Properties acquired with FEMA assistance must be dedicated and maintained in perpetuity as open space compatible with conservation of natural floodplain functions, and compatible uses explicitly include parks for outdoor recreation, wetlands management, and natural reserves. The master plan should create a concrete stewardship plan (river access points, floodplain trails, habitat restoration) for these properties.

Lawrence County Stafford Act Map
Source: Lawrence County Auditor's Parcel Data

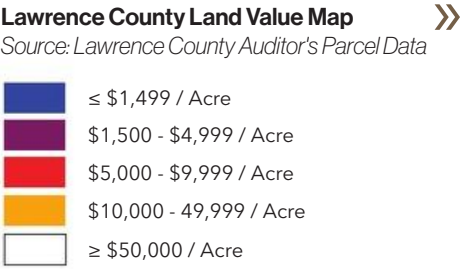
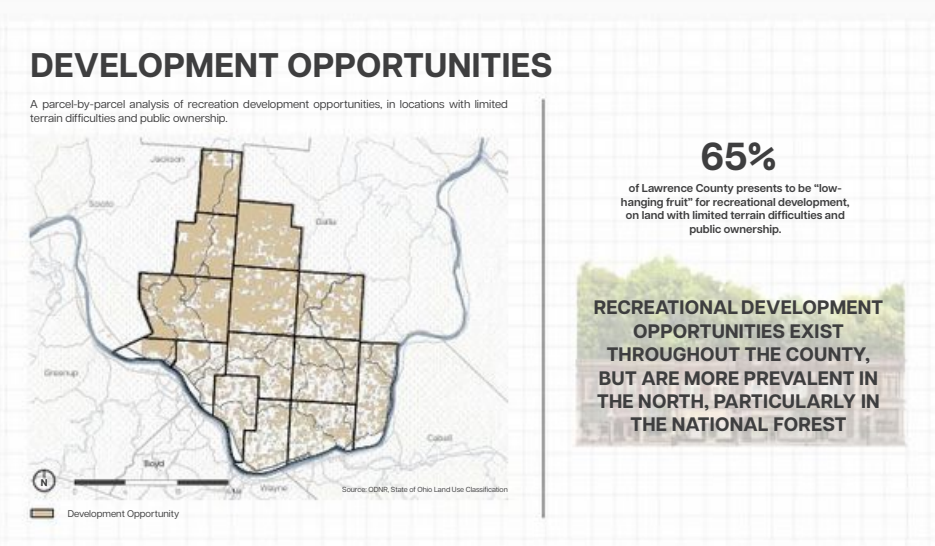
Cluster of Parcels

Land Value

Developed land along the Ohio River is the county’s most expensive, while flood-prone riverfront parcels remain relatively cheap. Land in Wayne National Forest is also low in value but not easily acquired.

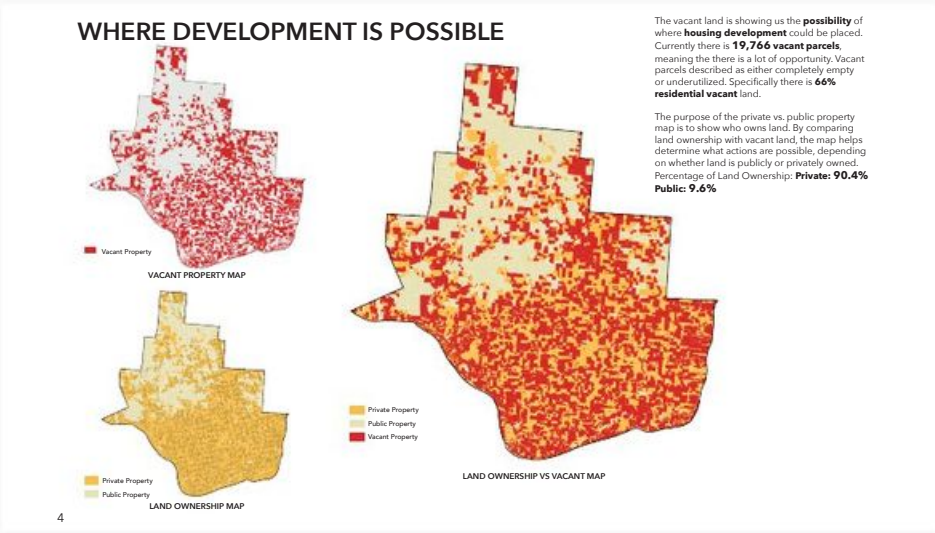
Flood-prone land along the Ohio River in Lawrence County is among the most affordable in the county. Most of it is already developed, mainly with industrial uses and mid-size single-family homes, which limits how fully residents and visitors can enjoy the river. Its low cost makes these parcels feasible to acquire and redevelop for public access and recreation.

Because they can tolerate periodic flooding without costly buildings, these parcels suit riverfront parks, trails, boat launches, fishing access, and open space that can absorb high water. Linked together, they could form a continuous greenway connecting river towns and to Wayne National Forest in the north. Housing is a good fit for the some of the nearly 20,000 vacant parcels outside the floodplain. Most of these projects will depend on voluntary sales, landowner partnerships, and the small share of public land already available.



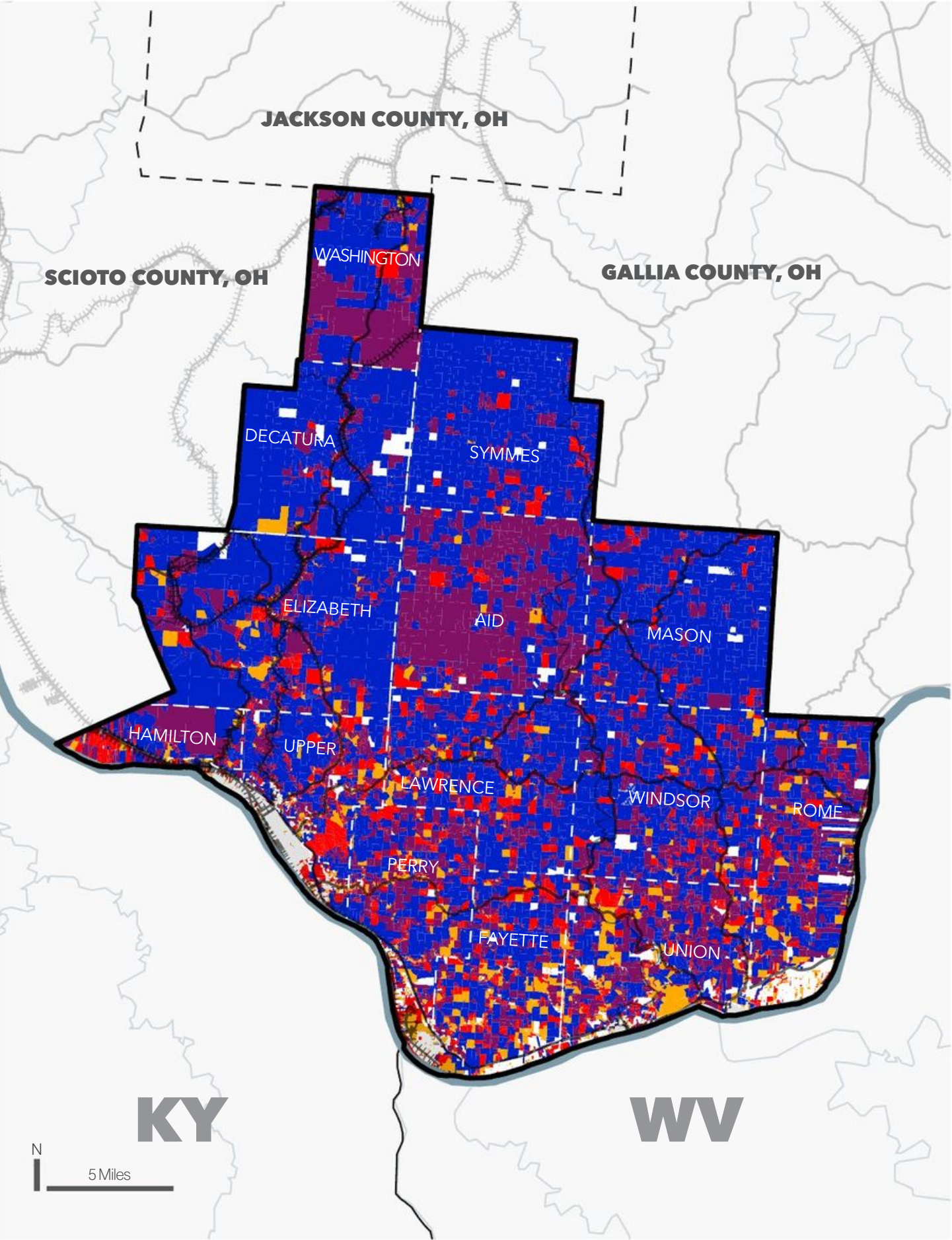
Development Opportunities
PLAN3031 | Summer 2025
Caroline VanBuskirk | Ella Lisac | Reese Stangelo

This analysis identifies substantial recreational development potential across Lawrence County, with 65% of the county offering publicly owned land and limited terrain constraints. Opportunities are countywide but are most concentrated in the north, particularly within the national forest.



Development Potential
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Amelia Weinstein | Bella Nelson | Emmy Fox | Trinity Finch

Nearly 20,000 vacant parcels, two-thirds of them residential, represent significant potential for housing. With 90.4% of land privately owned, ownership will shape which strategies are possible.



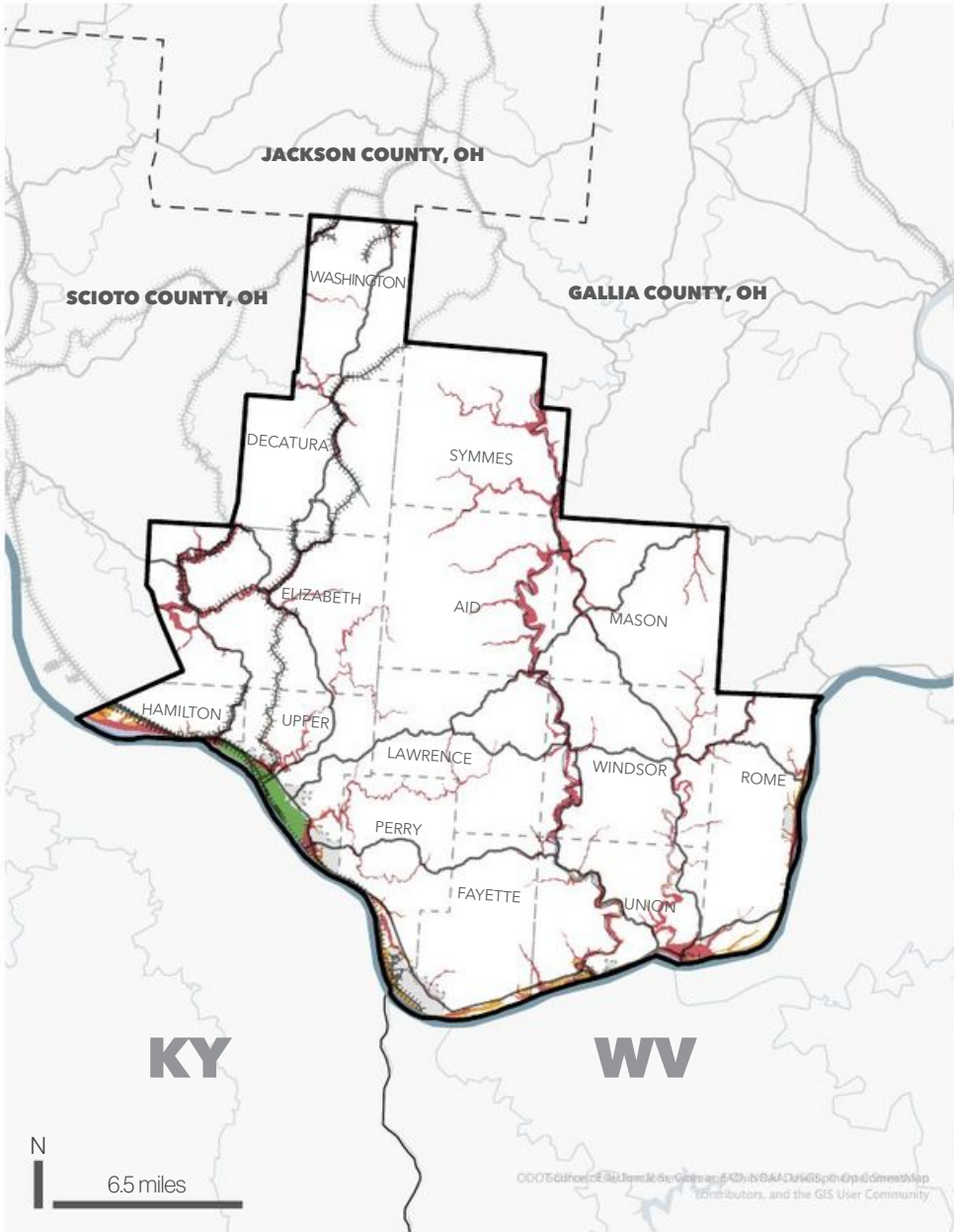
Vulnerabilities

Natural and outdoor recreational opportunities come with environmental and social considerations such as flooding, fires and community resilience.

Hazard-responsive land use can concentrate parks, forest, and open space in landslide-susceptible and flood-prone areas.

- 99% of properties (54,119) face wildfire risk.
- 95.3% of the county’s area is susceptible to landslides.
- 49.6% of properties face flood risk over the next 30 years.

Lawrence County’s SVI average is a moderate **0.37**, but tracts around Ironton, Proctorville, and Wayne National Forest score above **0.75**, so the places most exposed to hazards are often the least able to recover.

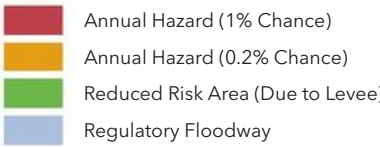
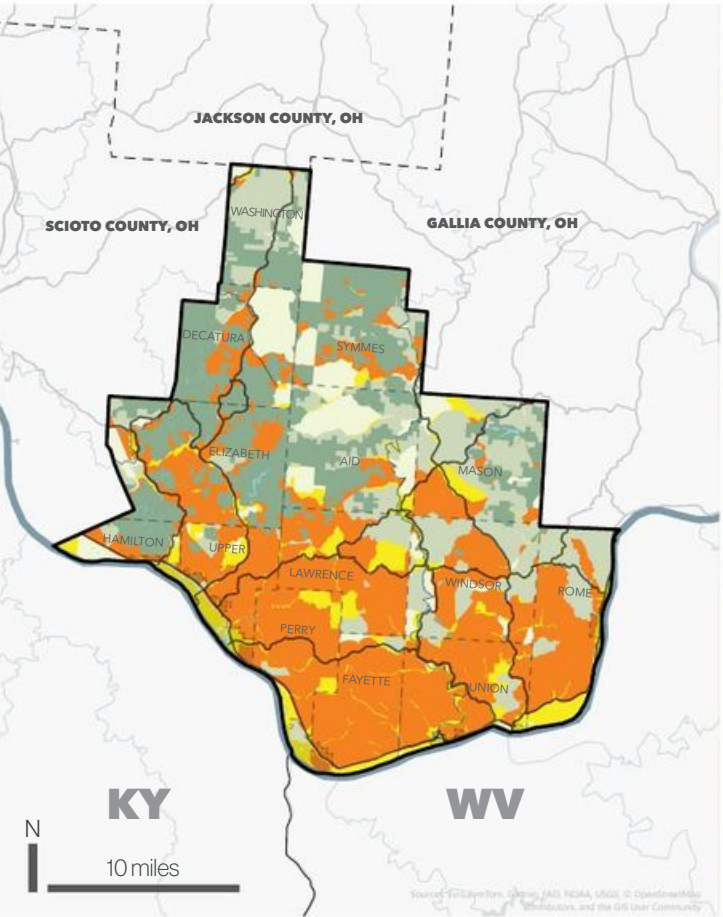


Flooding Risk

Almost half the county is at high or critical concern for flood zones. Today, there are more than **20,366** properties at risk, which is about **49.3%** of all properties in the county.

- » **High-Risk Areas:** A 1% or greater annual chance of flooding (commonly known as the 100-year floodplain).
- » **Moderate-to-Low Risk Areas:** Between 100-year and 500-year floodplains (0.2% to 1% annual chance of flooding), including areas protected by levees or subject to shallow flooding under 1 foot deep.

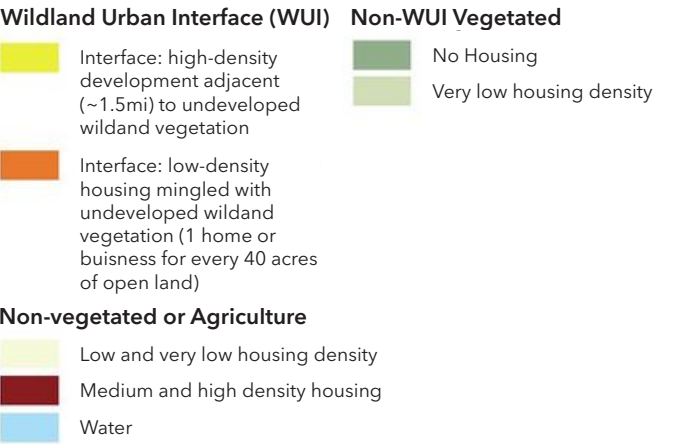
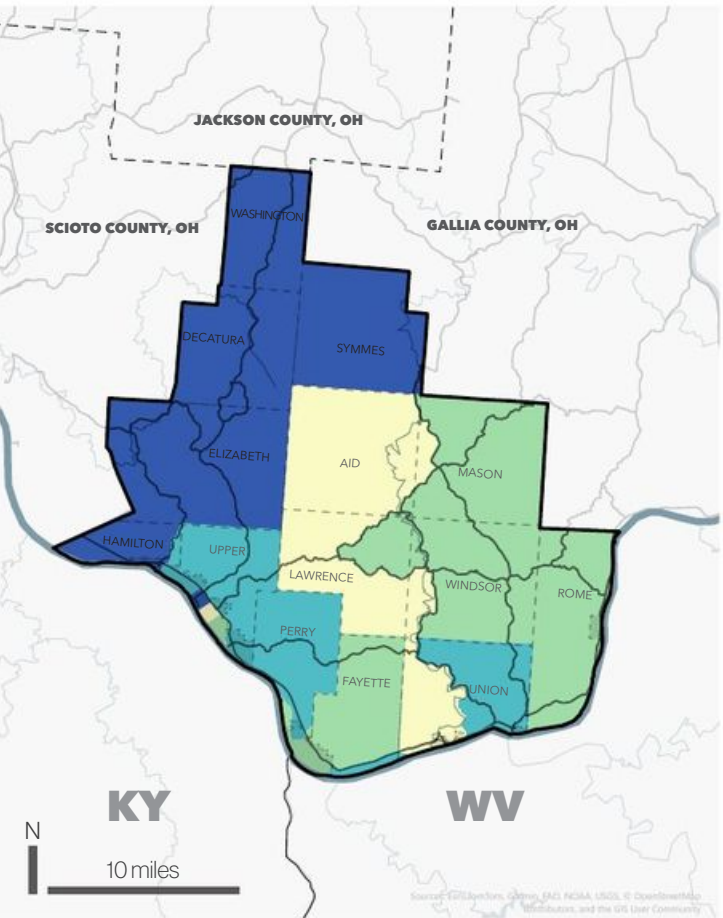
Lawrence County Flood Hazard Map
Source: ArcGIS Online



Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

WUI refers to the areas where structures and development mix with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels and are prone to human-environment conflicts such as wildfires, habitat destruction, and decline of biodiversity. Intermix is where buildings and wildland vegetation intermingle. Interface is where buildings approach large patches of wildland vegetation.

Lawrence County Wildland Urban Interface Map
Source: U.S. Forest Service - Geospatial Data Discovery Hub



Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)

The SVI index ranks communities using 15 to 16 U.S. Census indicators divided into four primary themes:

- » **Socioeconomic Status:** Poverty, unemployment, income, and high school diploma rates.
- » **Household Composition & Disability:** Age (minors and older adults) and disability status.
- » **Racial & Ethnic Minority Status:** Percentage of minority populations and English language proficiency.
- » **Housing Type & Transportation:** Multi-unit structures, mobile homes, crowding, and vehicle access.

While the county-level SVI average is a moderate 0.37 in Lawrence County, specific census tracts, particularly around older industrial river towns like Ironton and Proctorville, and communities within Wayne National Forest, frequently register localized SVI scores well above 0.75 due to concentrated poverty, a higher proportion of disabled residents, and older housing stock. This helps Lawrence County direct resources to communities that stand to benefit most.

Lawrence County Social Vulnerability Index Map
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)



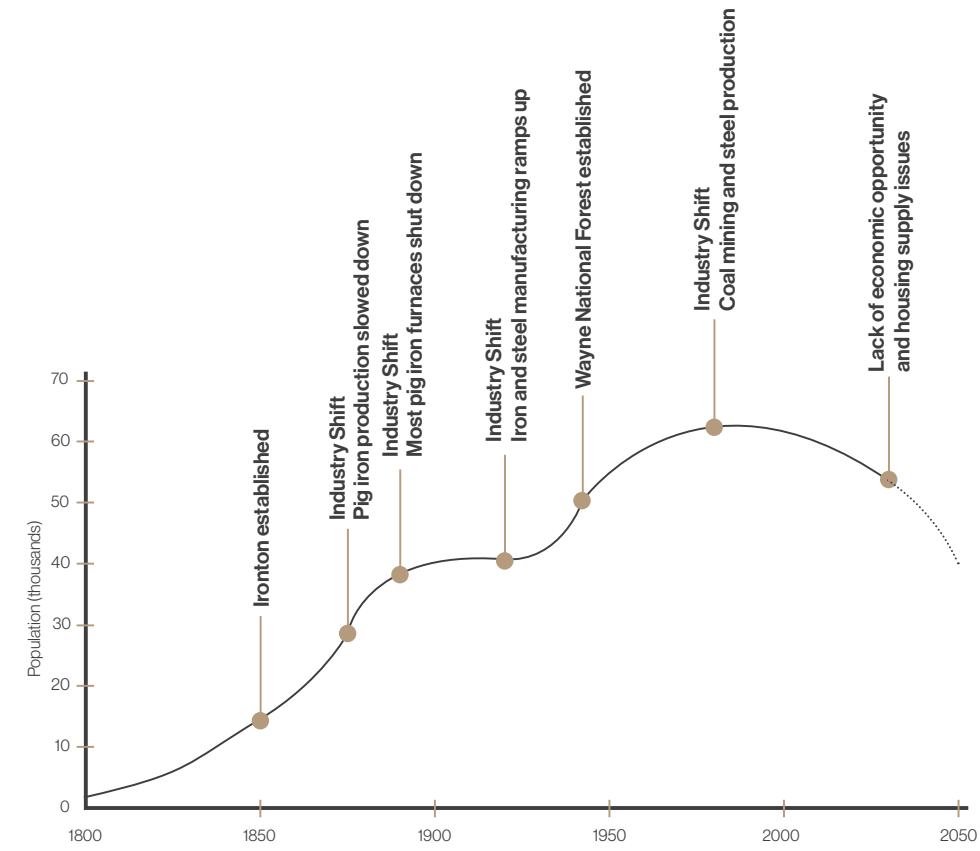
Industry and Population Trends

Lawrence County's historical population trajectory is strongly connected to its industrial legacy.

Named after **Captain James Lawrence**, a naval officer in the War of 1812, Lawrence County was formed in 1815 by settlers near Hanging Rock. The county saw significant growth in the 1850s as a result of the success of the pig iron production near the county seat of Ironton. As demand for crude iron slowed during the end of the 19th century, population stagnated. With the rise in steel production after the turn of the century however, Lawrence County saw growth and opportunity that continued through the 1980s.

Over the past three decades, the County has seen a steady **decline in population** due to lack of economic opportunities, **aging demographics**, and inability to retain young professionals and families. The past ten years have seen the sharpest decline in the County's history, marking this as a turning point to create new opportunities for economic growth through ecotourism while bolstering the connection to existing assets to serve the current residents.

The **Ohio River** has been the central thread of Lawrence County's development from founding through today - first as an industrial engine, now as a redevelopment target. The river dictated where the county's center of gravity landed (Hanging Rock, Burlington, Ironton), it was the delivery mechanism for the 19th-century iron boom, and today it's being re-engineered as a public amenity and quality-of-life draw as the county works to reinvent itself post-industry.



Ohio River

The county's original economic engine, the Ohio River enabled the transport of pig iron and later steel to markets nationwide, anchoring settlement near Hanging Rock and Ironton.

Pig Iron Furnaces

Beginning in the 1850s, Lawrence County's furnaces made it one of the nation's leading pig iron producers, drawing workers and families to the region for decades.

Railroads

Rail lines connected local furnaces and mills to broader markets, accelerating growth through the late 19th century and linking the county to the national industrial economy.

Rome Beauty Apple

Developed in Lawrence County in the early 1800s, this heirloom apple variety remains a point of local pride and a link to the county's agricultural roots.

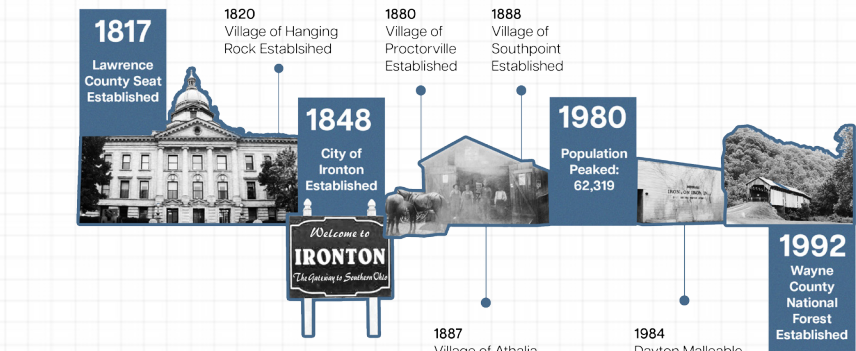
Wayne National Forest

Established in 1934, the forest now covers a significant portion of the county, offering a foundation for the ecotourism opportunities the county hopes to build on.

Coal and Steel Production

As iron demand faded, coal mining and steel manufacturing carried the county's industrial economy forward through much of the 20th century, sustaining growth into the 1980s.

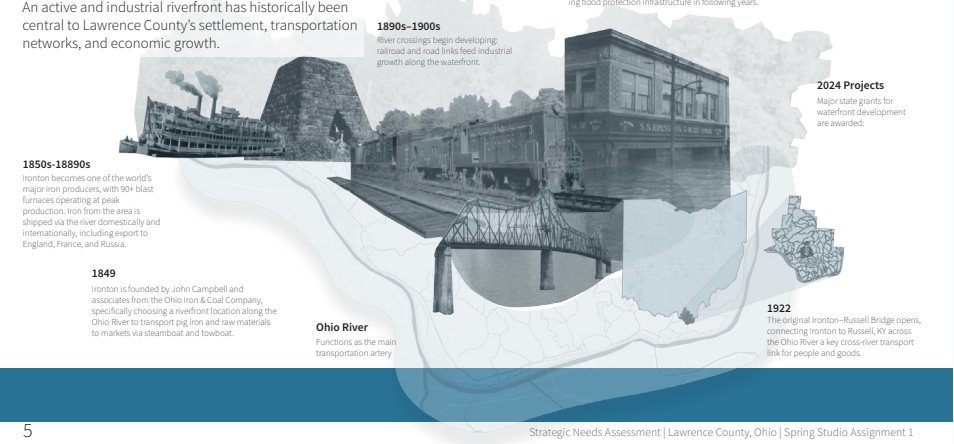
THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



Lawrence County Through the Years

PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Kayra Koprulu | Niamh O'Melia | Wynnne Serra | Zoe Limbach
The Ohio River shaped Ironton's industrial rise, its transportation links and its flood risk, and now frames its waterfront future.

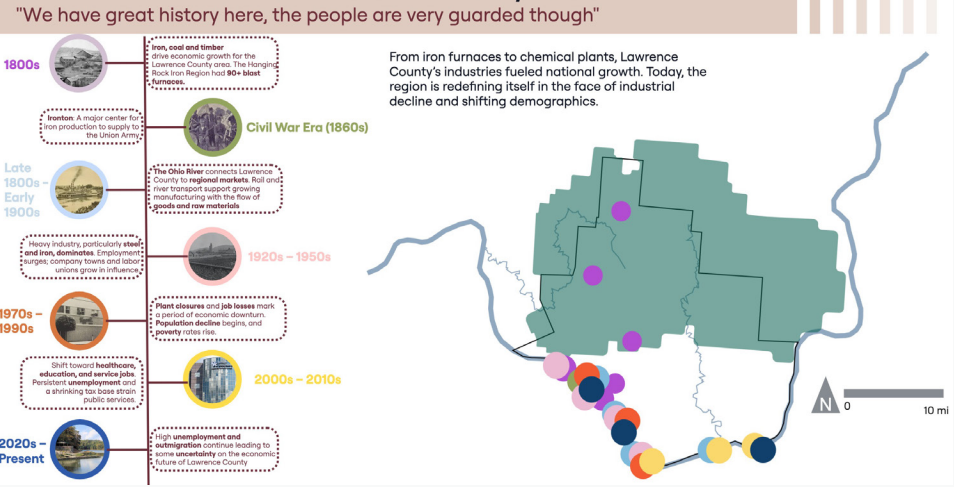
INDUSTRIAL LEGACY PAVES THE WAY FOR A GREEN SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Industrial Legacy - Sustainable Future

PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Kayra Koprulu | Niamh O'Melia | Wynnne Serra | Zoe Limbach
The riverfront has been the central thread of Lawrence County's development from founding through today.

Where has Lawrence County been?



Where has Lawrence County been?

PLAN3031 | Summer 2025
Celeste Leonard | Makenzie Stewart
Lawrence County's economy rose with iron, coal and timber, grew on the Ohio River's rail and water links, and peaked in the heavy-industry era of the early 20th century. Plant closures from the 1970s onward brought population loss and economic strain, and today the county is shifting toward healthcare, education and service jobs while facing continued unemployment and outmigration.

Community Activism and Stewardship

Across Lawrence County, community groups, volunteer committees, and grassroots non-profits have spent, in some cases, decades working to protect and promote recreation within the county. The proposed Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan is intended to be a unifying structure that connects and supplements these recreation opportunities into a single, county-wide vision.

Recreation Economy for Rural Communities

Lawrence County's Convention and Visitors Bureau, alongside local partners, participated in the federal Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) program — a joint initiative of the EPA, USDA Forest Service, and Appalachian Regional Commission that provides rural communities with planning assistance to grow their outdoor recreation economy and revitalize their Main Streets. Through RERC, the county focused specifically on improving trail systems and boat docks to showcase local natural resources, connecting to the nearby Wayne National Forest, and supporting local business development and Main Street marketing. The resulting Community Action Plan provided Lawrence County a group of trail, waterfront, and downtown-connectivity work this Master Plan builds upon.

Community Groups Already at Work



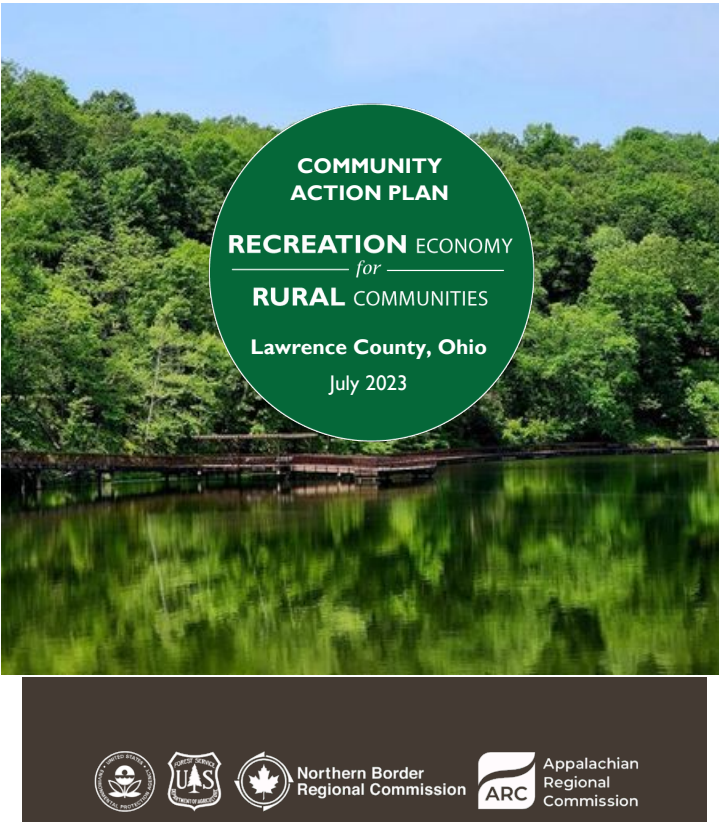
Southern Wayne Advocacy Council (SWAC)

A partnership-driven group working alongside Ohio University Southern and Wayne National Forest on youth environmental stewardship. Their inaugural Lawrence County Youth Environmental Stewardship Initiative brought Rock Hill and Dawson-Bryant students into the Ironton Ranger District for hands-on conservation work, including water quality testing, funded through the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio via the Lawrence County Community Foundation.



Friends of Ironton

A 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the betterment of Ironton and the tri-state region. Friends of Ironton has been responsible for the annual Rally on the River (which brings significant tourism revenue to the city), the downtown spray ground, and has kept the Ro-Na Theatre restoration alive for years through volunteer labor, grant applications, and community fundraising. The organization now owns and operates the Ro-Na as a working venue.



Home Town Love

A community and civic initiative actively focused on local beautification, historical preservation, and community engagement. The group works alongside local businesses and volunteers on litter control, hanging seasonal displays, and restoring historical properties. They have hosted community-focused gatherings such as the Hometown Love Spring Fair to support local gardening, planting, and neighborhood beautification.



Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church Restoration Project

A partnership between the church's Board of Trustees and the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, alongside the African American Community Fund. The church - Ohio's first Black church, part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom and only surviving antebellum Black church - was fully restored in November 2025. Tourism Initiative (AFHTI), a nine-county, three-state effort spanning Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia to document Underground Railroad sites across the region.



Third and Center

An arts-based non-profit "dedicated to building collaborative communities" through public art, events, and youth programming in downtown Ironton. Their projects include artistic crosswalk murals and bike racks (funded by the Ohio Arts Council and built by Collins Career Center welding students), the annual Summer Solstice Music and Arts Festival on the Ironton riverfront, community cleanup events ("Trash Bash"), and an NEA-funded youth arts program run with Ohio University Southern. They also operate the Ironton Senior Center.



Appalachian Freedom Heritage Tourism Initiative

A newly launched, nine-county, three-state effort spanning Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia to locate and document Underground Railroad sites across the Tri-State region. AFHTI publicly marked the restoration of the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church with an official site marker at the November 2025 Macedonia Jubilee — its first visible milestone in Lawrence County.



Symmes Creek Restoration Committee

Founded in 1977 by Arthur S. Ferguson Jr. — the same namesake as the canoe trail — this volunteer committee has spent nearly five decades promoting stewardship and ecological practice along Symmes Creek. Their work includes the annual "Canoe Caper" cleanup and fundraiser, publishing GPS-mapped launch site guides, partnering with Ohio University Southern on watershed wildlife studies, and pursuing the ODNR Paddle Trail designation.

Planning Momentum

Lawrence County is part of the KYOVA 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. This transportation master plan has been a successful road map for prioritizing and implementing county transportation projects. The proposed Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan intends to build on the momentum of the KYOVA plan and leverage projects currently underway.

The KYOVA 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan is the tri-state region's long-range roadmap, covering Cabell and Wayne Counties (WV), Boyd and Greenup Counties (KY), and Lawrence County, Ohio. Guided by federal infrastructure law, it prioritizes multimodal projects as funding becomes available rather than tackling connectivity piecemeal.

Within Lawrence County, the plan's centerpiece is completing the Chesapeake Bypass (SR 7) Phase II, a limited-access four-lane highway between Chesapeake and Rome Township. Once finished, it will divert through-traffic off old Route 7, freeing that corridor for shared bicycle and pedestrian use. The plan also builds on the US 52/SR 7 Corridor Safety Plan, aimed at converting that stretch into a safer, limited-access freeway and improving Ohio River access near Ironton. Ironton itself sees continued levee-trail and complete-streets work, building on the city's 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Together, these projects extend the studied multi-modal route linking Ironton eastward along the river.

Two KYOVA-identified projects are especially relevant to this proposed Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan:

A studied **multi-modal route** connecting Ironton eastward to other points along the Ohio River — a corridor the proposed Parks, Recreation and Culture builds directly upon.

The LAW-7 **Chesapeake Bypass**, currently under construction. Once complete, the bypass will draw through-traffic off of old Route 7, making the existing roadway viable as a shared corridor for bicycles and pedestrians.



“Transportation is about more than roads. It is about connecting people to jobs, recreation, businesses and one another. A strong transportation plan helps make Lawrence County more accessible, more attractive and better positioned for growth.”

—DeAnna Holliday
County Commissioner





Countywide Recommendations

“This plan is about building on what makes Lawrence County special and creating an even better quality of life for the people who already call it home, while giving new families and visitors more reasons to choose us.”

—DeAnna Holliday
County Commissioner

Four Corridors, One Plan

The proposed plan connects Lawrence County through complementary parks, recreation and cultural corridors - a Western Furnace Trail Corridor, an Eastern Symmes Creek Corridor, a Middle East-West Connector, and a Southern Ohio River Corridor - emphasizing route connectivity for scenic tours, adaptive reuse of existing assets, and phased implementation strategies.

Key Considerations

Heritage and identity as a economic driver

Ties economic development to telling a local story about industrial/furnace heritage, ecological restoration and strip mining, riverfront towns using public art, interpretive signage, and branding.

Adaptive reuse

By repurposing what already exists - abandoned rail corridors and furnace sites, reclaimed surface mines, and vacant/underused downtown buildings and industrial land - this plan turns liabilities into assets.

Slow tourism and place-based experience economy

Facilitate immersive, local and culture-driven visitation - slow tourism, country living experience or agritourism.

Environmental resilience embedded in economic planning

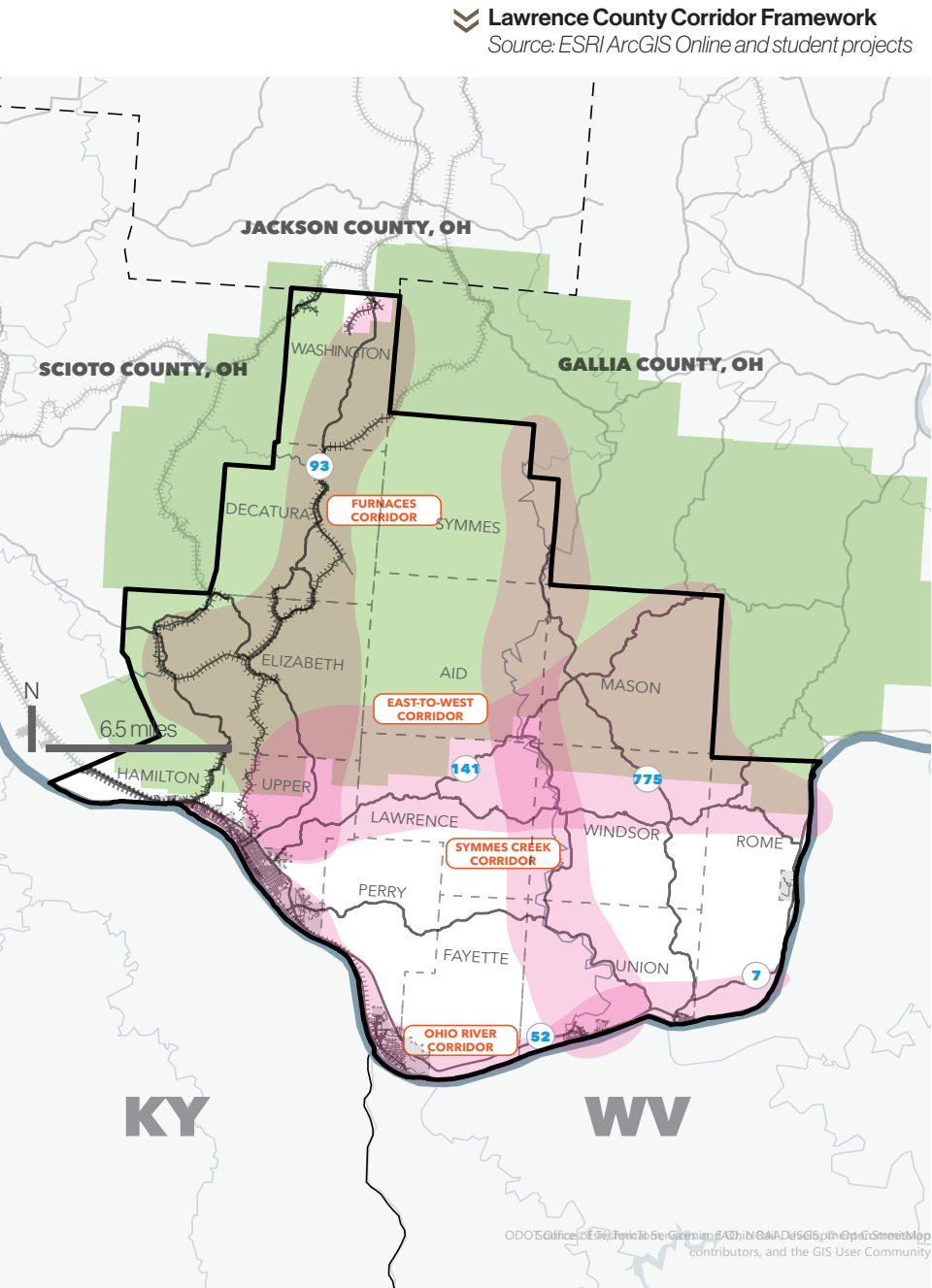
Using green infrastructure and conservation as tools for flood mitigation, erosion control and habitat preservation treat ecological health as inseparable from economic viability.

Trails and multimodal connectivity

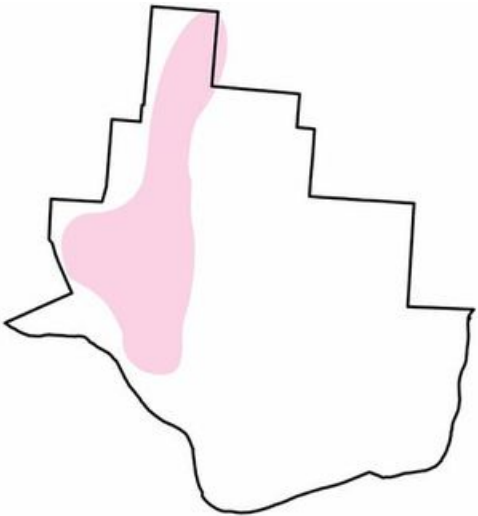
The organizing spines that link dispersed assets into one continuous, connected system rather than treating sites as isolated destinations.

Multi-stakeholder partnership

Need for a formal coordinating body bringing together public or private entities - county government, Wayne National Forest, KYOVA, chambers of commerce, and private developers.

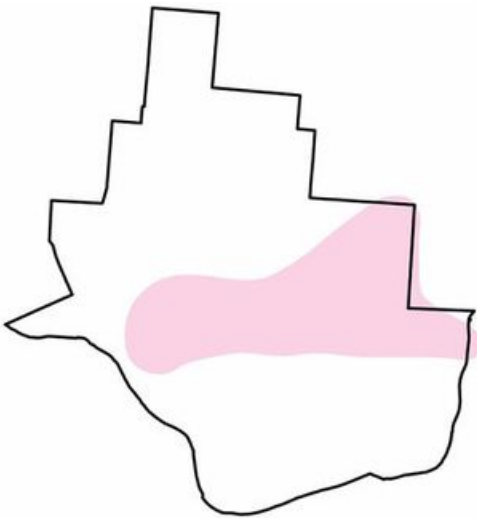


The project opportunities and recommendations in the **corridor framework plan** are organized into **four distinct zones** that can be connected by a network of multi-modal routes:



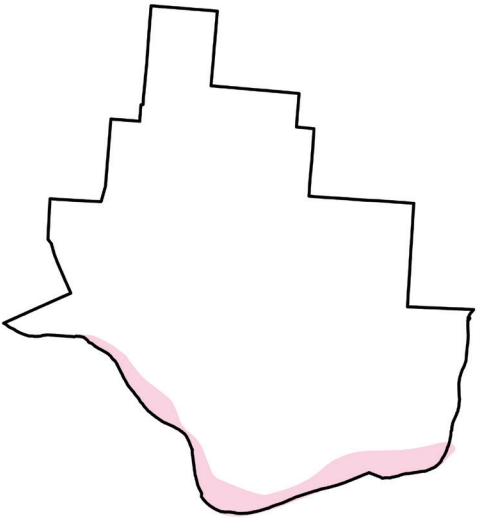
West Corridor The Furnace Trail

Reimagines the west side of the county (Ironton, Pedro, and Buckhorn hubs) around slow tourism, anchored by three assets: Lake Vesuvius, a 44-mile Rails-to-Trails corridor built from the historic DT&I and CH&D railway conversions, and the pig iron blast furnaces, reinterpreted as sites for artistic and interpretive programming. Multi-modal roads and trails connect the Ironton waterfront north to Buckhorn.



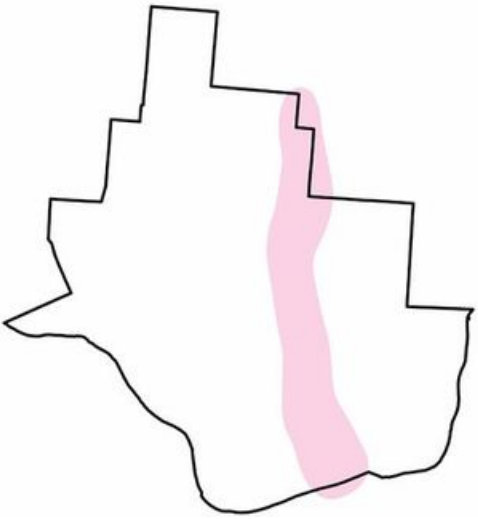
Middle Corridor East-West Connector

Imagines a "spine" linking critical natural, cultural, and economic nodes from Ironton through Pedro and Aid to the Crown City Wildlife Area. Agricultural and food-based themes emerged as a natural throughline connecting these points of interest.



South Corridor Along the River

Focuses on the Ohio River riverfront running through Ironton, South Point, Chesapeake, and Proctorville, addressing flooding, disconnection from the water, and underused land. Projects build on current funded public access points, supplementing them with pocket parks, trails, and multi-modal roads to expand recreation within reasonable driving and biking distance.



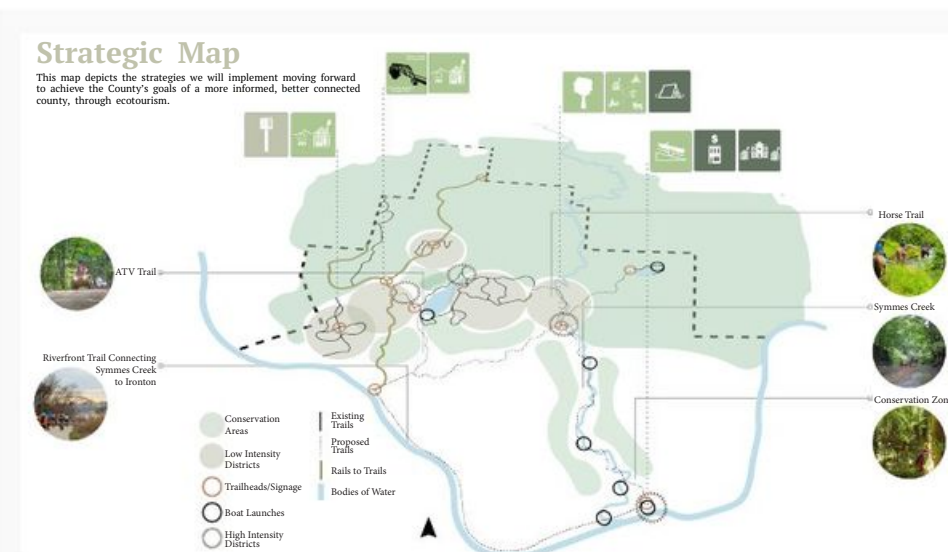
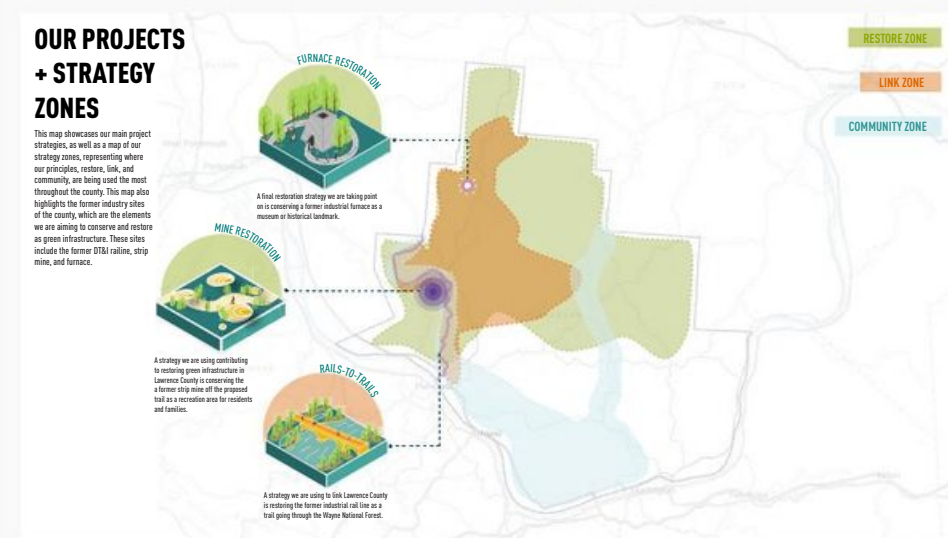
East Corridor Symmes Creek

Parallels Symmes Creek and builds on the long-standing work of the Symmes Creek Restoration Committee, establishing a "blue-green-gray" trail network: a canoe/kayak paddle trail with formal designation and improved way-finding, natural hiking trails, and ADA-compliant paved paths, with launch sites at Arabia, Aid, and Chesapeake.

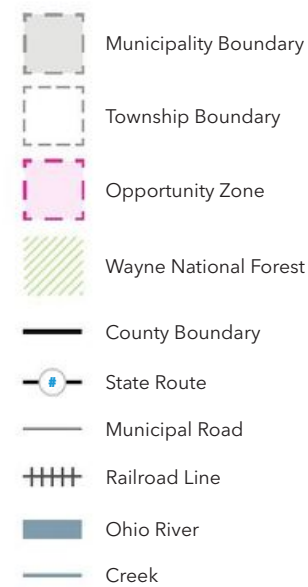
Multimodal Connectivity

With its robust natural and ecological assets, Lawrence County hosts many opportunities for new and improved parks, recreation, and cultural activities to improve the everyday quality of life of residents.

Located at the southernmost tip of Ohio, its tri-state border along the river could be a convergence zone attracting new residents from Kentucky and West Virginia. The Wayne National Forest covering the northern half of the county along with creeks, lakes, ponds and 82% tree coverage in between create a haven for those wishing to embrace life in a clean, natural environment. Parks and trails located in Lawrence County can be further connected and extended to serve multiple modes of transportation at once. For example, Ohio has designated portions of State Routes 775, 7, and 650 as Ohio Bike Route 65. Partnerships with state-level initiatives may increase access to funding, maintenance, and logistical support. Its natural river shoreline presents opportunities for resilient infrastructure to help protect the growth of future generations responsibly, while serving as sites for recreational and educational programming.



Lawrence County Strategic Framework >>



Multimodal Connections

PLAN3041 | Summer 2025

Emily Linesch | Logan Vaughn | Sean Kidd

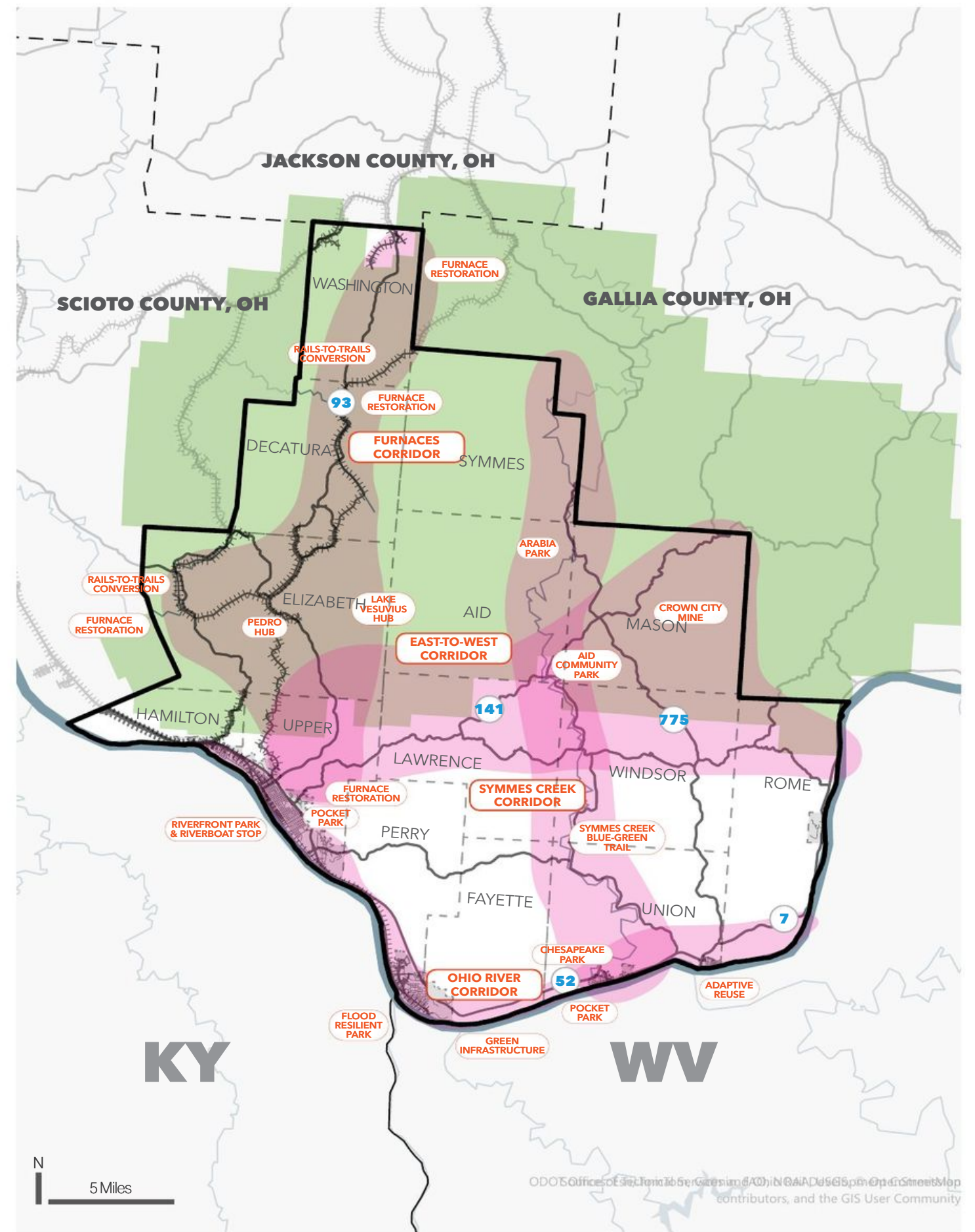
This strategic map illustrates a coordinated approach to ecotourism that links existing and proposed trails, riverfront access, conservation areas, and visitor amenities across the county. By connecting destinations such as Symmes Creek and Ironton while incorporating trailheads, signage, boat launches, and varied trail types, the plan aims to improve access, strengthen connectivity, and support long-term protection of natural resources.

Strategy Zones

PLAN3031 | Summer 2025

Aaralyn Gross | Lanie Tarowsky | Max Adams

This map presents Lawrence County's strategy zones and key restoration projects, organized around the principles of restore, link, and community. It prioritizes converting the former DT&I rail line into a trail through Wayne National Forest, repurposing a former strip mine as a recreational green space, and preserving a historic industrial furnace as a museum or landmark, connecting environmental restoration with recreation and local heritage.



County-Wide Multimodal Network

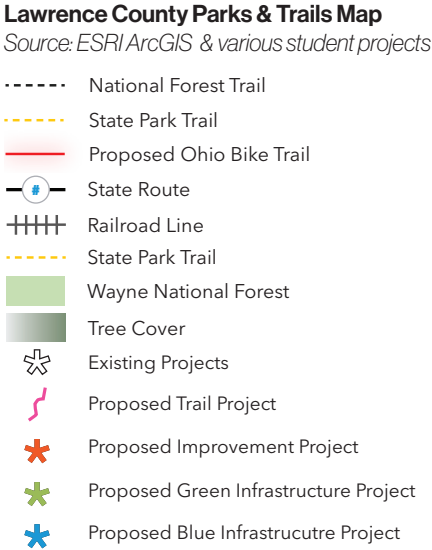
Lawrence County can position itself as a regional destination for hiking, camping, off-roading (e.g., Hanging Rock ATV Trails), and hunting by leveraging its scenic network of roads, trails, and historic rail line locations throughout the county.

A Connected System

With the KYOVA plan providing the regional backbone, this Master Plan proposes a series of connections that knit the county's parks, trails, and cultural sites together, linking many of the projects described elsewhere in this plan into a single, navigable system.

North and west of Aid, existing horse trails already thread through the landscape; the Symmes Creek Greenway Trail runs through the same area; and the Crown City Wildlife Area itself contains its own trail network at the route's terminus. Connecting these makes this route compelling: a bike rider or hiker could move from the Aid hub, onto the greenway, out onto the horse trails, and into the wildlife area's own trails, all as one continuous experience. This also ties the Symmes Creek Restoration project's "Aid Connection" hub into a larger land-based network, extending the county's recreational reach from the river all the way to its northern wildlife lands.

Individually, the Iron Furnace Trail, Symmes Creek, Union-Rome Park, and the county's river access points are each strong destinations. Woven together by a cross-county multi-modal network — and grounded in a regional plan the county has already adopted — they become something more: a single, legible and accessible system of parks, recreational activities and cultural heritage sites.



1 West County: State Route 93 North

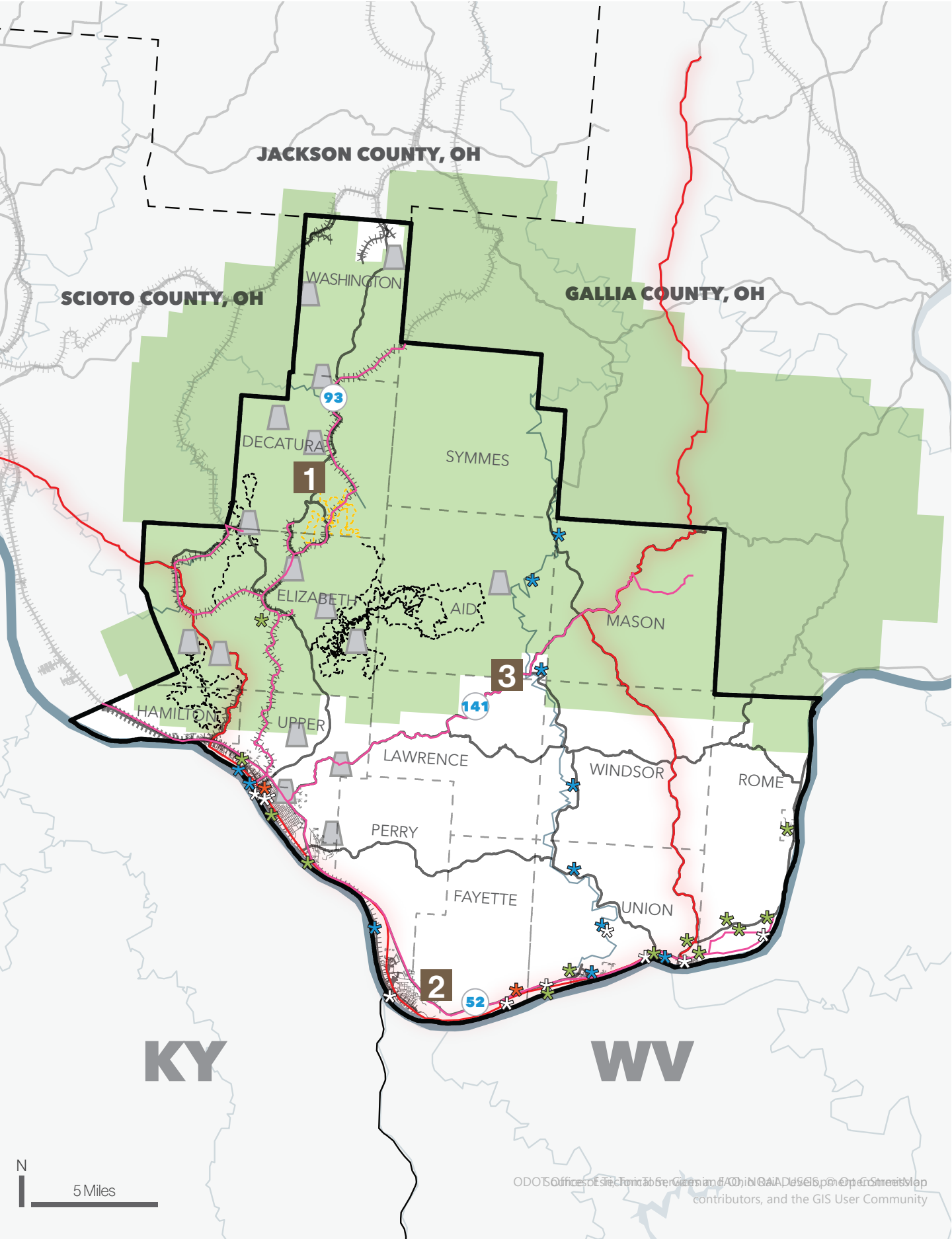
On the western side of the county, the primary north-south connection runs along State Route 93. This route provides motorized access to the string of historic furnace sites and trailheads functioning as the "Arts Corridor" for travelers moving between Ironton, Pedro, and Buckhorn.

2 River Corridor: Ironton to Lock 27

A safe, shared-use corridor along the Ohio River, making possible a continuous connection from Ironton to Lock 27 and linking the river communities by land and water. The Union-Rome Park proposal anticipates old Route 7's redesignation as a multimodal route connecting the park to Lock 27.

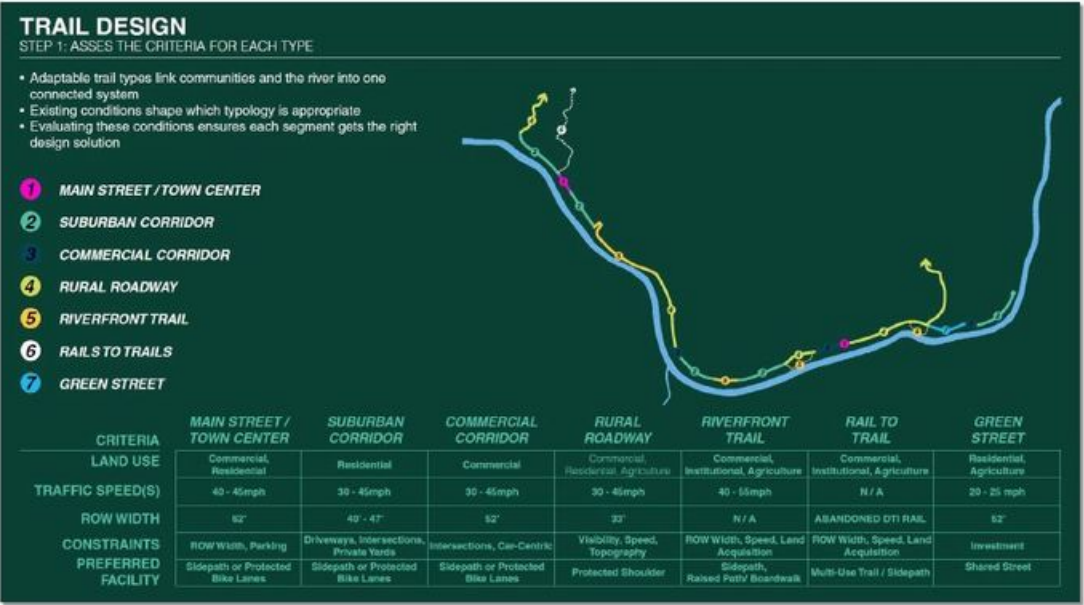
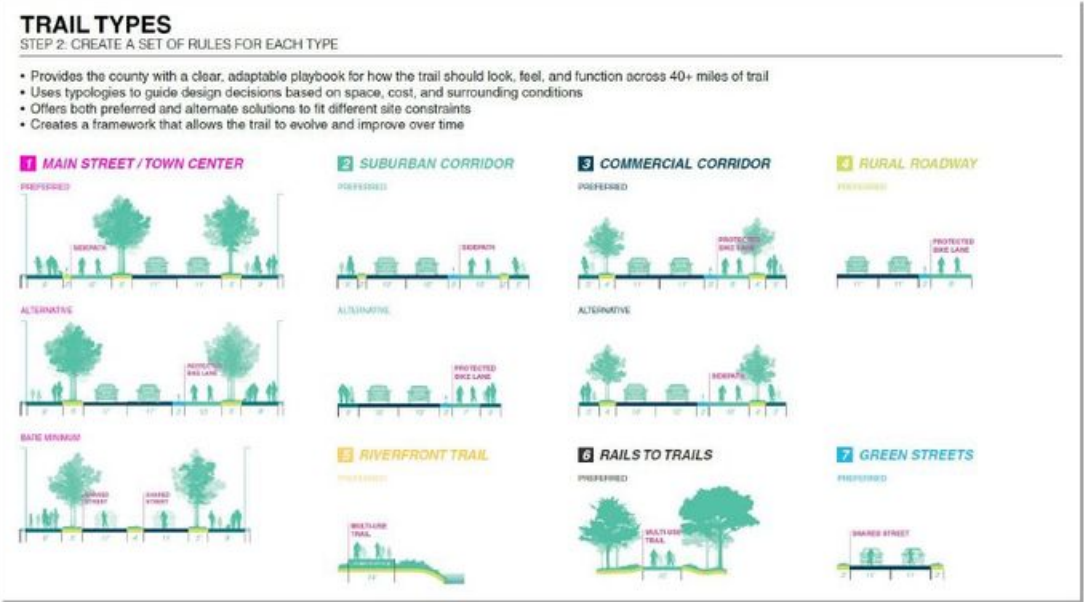
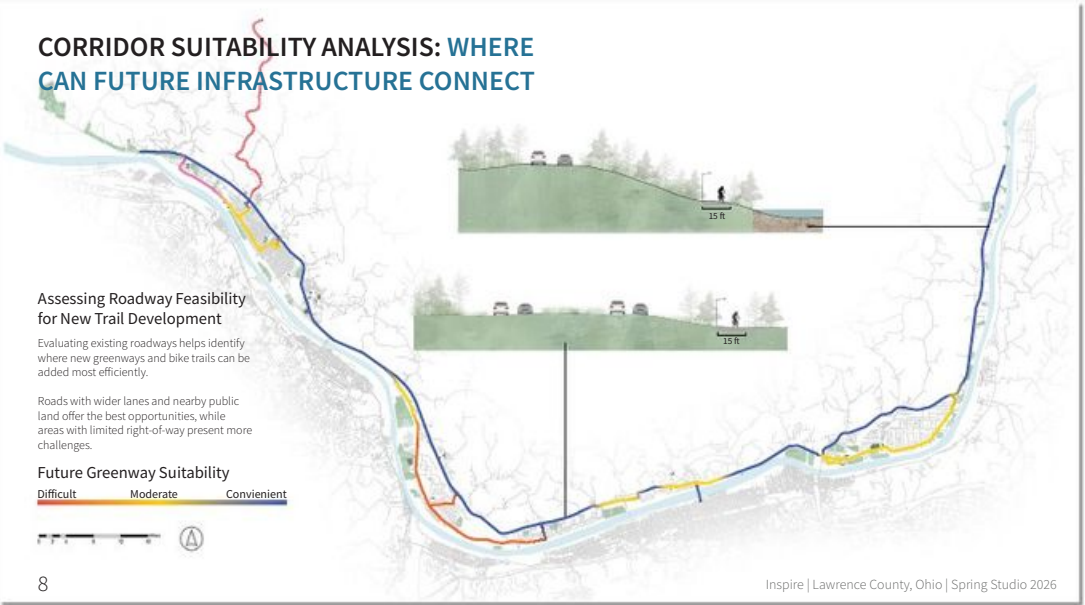
3 North County: Ironton–Aid–Crown City Connection

A third proposed connection would run from Ironton, through Aid, to the Crown City Wildlife Area. Like the SR 93 corridor, this is envisioned as a hybrid multimodal route rewarding car travelers and cyclists with challenging terrain and scenic views.



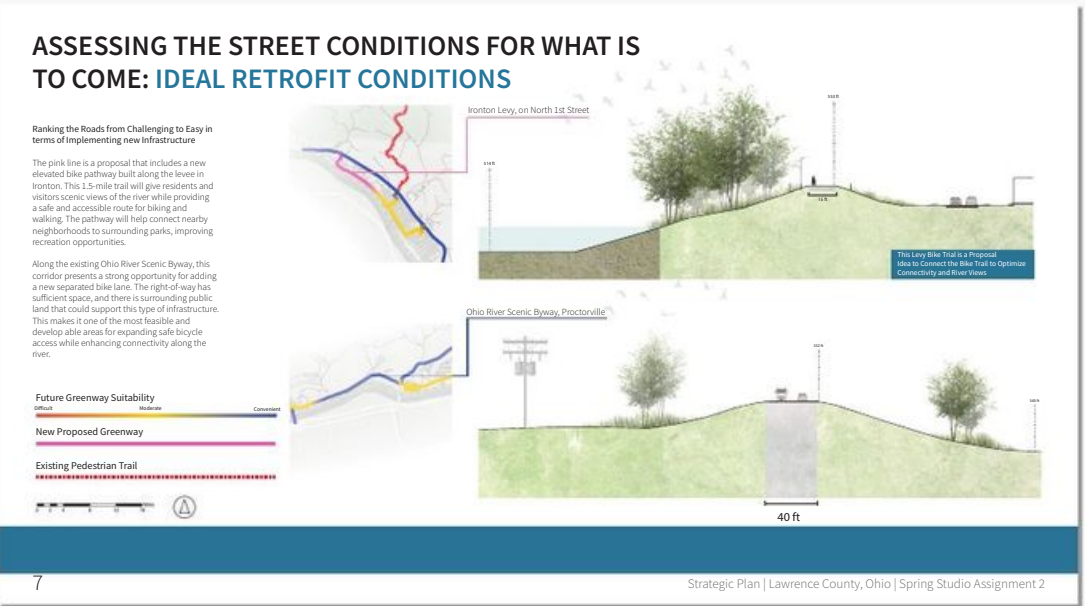
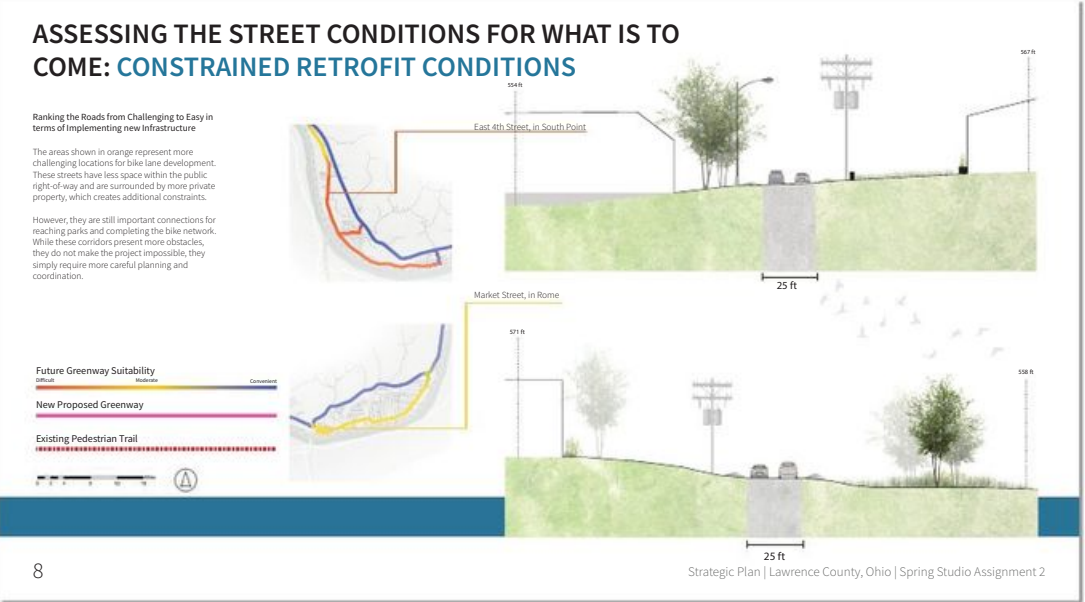
Ohio River Bikeway
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Aiden Hunicutt | Aidyn Kinney |
Elijah Milner | Sophia Gartland

Ohio's trail masterplan proposes a connected 40+ mile network linking communities, the Ohio River, and key development areas through trail designs tailored to local conditions. The plan identifies Ironton and Chesapeake as strong main-street investment hubs, while South Point offers potential for big-box redevelopment and riverfront connections. Seven trail typologies provide design guidance based on land use, traffic speeds, right-of-way width, and site constraints. Trailheads, amenities, and development nodes are intended to build identity, support local business activity, and guide gradual community investment along the corridor.



Ohio River Bikeway
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Kayra Koprulu | Niamh O'Melia |
Wynnie Serra | Zoe Limbach

The Ohio River corridor analysis highlights strong opportunities for future greenways along Ironton's North 1st Street levee and the Ohio River Scenic Byway in Proctorville, where available space and nearby public land support safer, more connected biking and walking routes. More constrained streets in South Point and Rome remain important network links but will require careful design and coordination due to limited right-of-way and adjacent private property.



Ohio River Water Trail
PLAN4041 Spring 2026
Margaret Dull | Elijah Venargus
| Adelaide Sheets

Ohio River Way's National Water Trail now covers more than 300 miles from Ashland to West Point, Kentucky, creating an opportunity for Lawrence County to join through a proposed extension centered on Ironton. Implementation includes river access improvements such as docks, kayak stops, paths, and public waterfront space, low-impact shoreline amenities and connecting visitors to local restaurants, shops, and other businesses to support broader economic revitalization.

OHIO RIVER WAY BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITY
JOINING A COALITION

Ohio River Way is an organization that pushes for increased recreational use of the Ohio River. They recently accomplished getting **over 300 miles** of the Ohio from Ashland to West Point, Kentucky designated as a National Water Trail. Lawrence County is not currently a part of this trail and is the first upstream county not included.



STRATEGICALLY PLANNING PROGRAMMING

ASSIGNMENT BASED ON CATALOG + SUITABILITY



“IN TO OUT” IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE ONE



RIVER

Prioritizing river access by emphasizing pedestrian infrastructure and river recreation through implementation of kayak stops/docks, designated pathways to the river, public riverside property and more.

PHASE TWO



SHORELINE PROGRAMMING

Initiating programming to enhance river experience such as short-term housing and entertainment amenities with river access.

PHASE THREE



ECONOMIC AFFECTS

As a result, local businesses will have the economic support from river tourists to boost internal activity and enhance the experience of business districts.

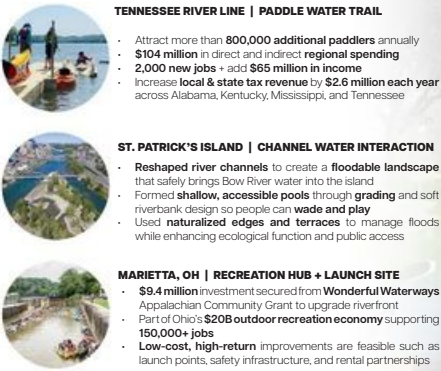


UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSECT

The natural transect that occurs provides opportunity for phasing to originate on and adjacent to the river then flowing outward as more economy prospers. Initiating light programming with river access will enhance the use of river infrastructure and boost local economy. Naturally, the business owners will benefit from tourists and locals utilizing river amenities.

PADDLE RECREATION HUB
NORTH OF SOUTH POINT

- GOALS**
- Use the momentum from Ohio River Way to create a community node where locals + tourists can gather to access the river
 - Establish a centrally located recreation hub that supports recreation, tourism, and local business growth
 - Use existing features and new cut + fill techniques to create a unique, welcoming water atmosphere



PUBLIC CREEK-SIDE CAMPSITE PARK
SYMMES CREEK | 36 ACRES

- GOALS:**
- Create a low-impact water recreation corridor by activating the Symmes Creek water way in proximity to the Ohio River
 - Allow for sustainable and outdoor opportunities for locals and tourists in order to build economic success.
 - Implement a variety of short-term lodging opportunities for tourist and locals to enjoy the quaintness of this location.



PROCTORVILLE MARINA
WEST OF PROCTORVILLE | 106 ACRES

- GOALS:**
- Increase accessibility to the river through improved boat launches and interactions.
 - Create opportunities to activate spaces that will allow for people to relax and spend more time in that location.
 - Foster an environment conducive for significant economic development.



Ohio River Water Trail
PLAN4041 Spring 2026
Margaret Dull | Elijah Venargus
| Adelaide Sheets

A waterfront-development strategy centered on expanding public river access, outdoor recreation, tourism, and local economic activity prioritizes projects such as a Proctorville marina and commercial district, a low-impact creek-side campsite park, and a paddle recreation hub near South. Across the concepts, the plan emphasizes boat and kayak launches, docks, camping and short-term lodging, flexible flood-resilient infrastructure, and ecological stewardship.

Agriculture and Tourism

Building on the Rome Beauty Apple, the county's land - its soils, climate zones, vacant agricultural acreage, and abandoned mine sites - should be the foundation for a new kind of regenerative economy by weaving agriculture, recreation, and small-business economy together across the landscape.

The Vision

Lawrence County has a lot of underused land: vacant farmland, abandoned mines, and empty urban lots. This plan treats that land as a resource rather than a liability. By connecting agriculture, recreation, and small-business production into one system that runs from the forest to the river, the county can build a circular, nature-based economy.

These agriculture-based destinations would complement the county's existing trail and heritage projects. All of them serve the same goal: giving people a reason to stay and thrive in Lawrence County.

Three Key Elements

- » **Agriculture:** beekeeping, indoor farming, mine-land revitalization, orchard restoration, and small-scale crops.
- » **Recreation:** outdoor education, fruit and forage trails, lodging, mushroom foraging, and trail expansion.
- » **Economy:** co-ops, business incubators, mobile distribution, food processing and production, and updates to land use and zoning rules.

Five Geographic Zones

- » **Forest Gateway Zone:** the entry point to the system.
- » **Forage Zone:** wild and cultivated foraging.
- » **Orchard Zone:** restored orchards and fruit trails.
- » **Surface Mine Zone:** reclaimed mine land put to productive use.
- » **Innovation Zone:** the hub for processing, incubation, and distribution.

1

Transforming Mines to Productive Ecosystems

A phased 1–10 year plan converting abandoned mines into crop plots, forage trails, apiaries, indoor farming greenhouses, and ecological remediation zones.

2

Forest Gateway

A gateway hub at the Wayne National Forest boundary combining lodging, mushroom foraging, outdoor education, and a fruit/forage trail.

3

Community-farms

Establishing a network of community-oriented farms, including the Rome Beauty apple heritage and natural landscape identity of the county)

4

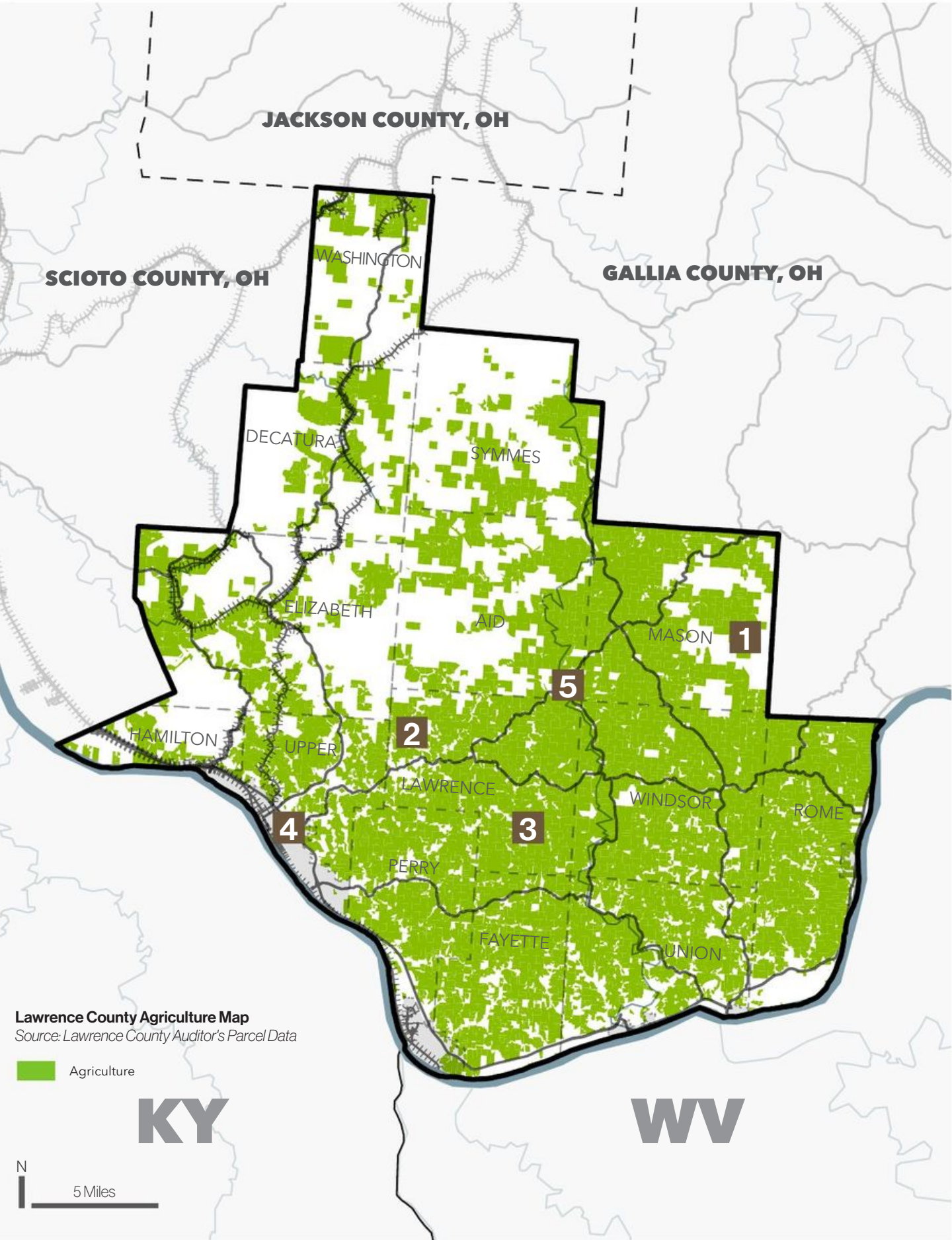
Urban Production & Processing

A food hub in Downtown Ironton aggregating and processing produce from northern county farms for regional markets, combining a co-op, business incubator, mobile distribution, and indoor farming.

5

Aid/Symmes Valley High School

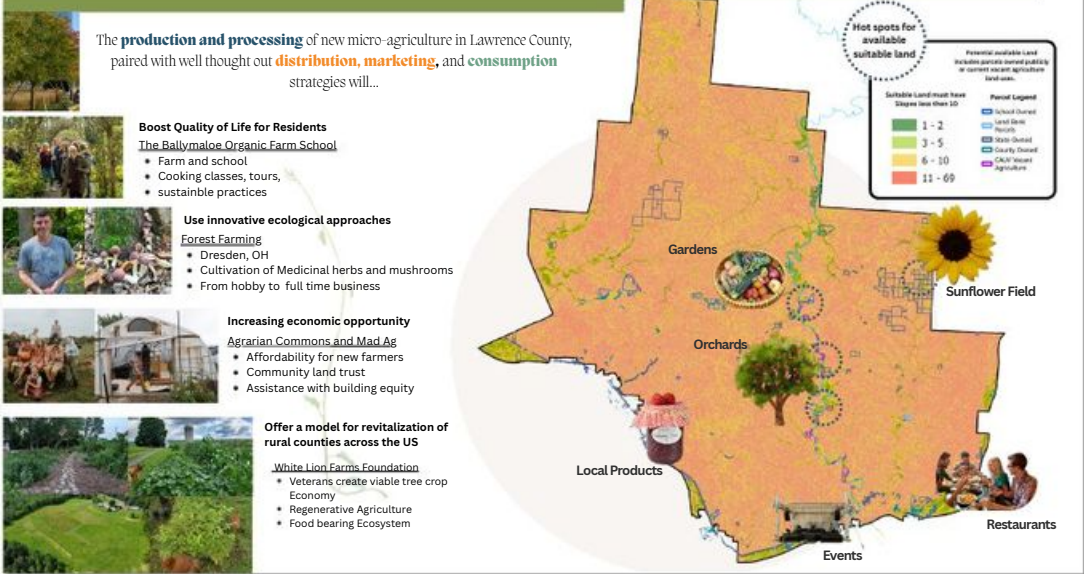
Build a local agricultural economy around companion-planted vegetable/flower gardens, orchards, and farm-to-table restaurant partnerships, with Symmes Valley High School as an institutional anchor - aiming for self-sustaining local production, culinary education, and community events.



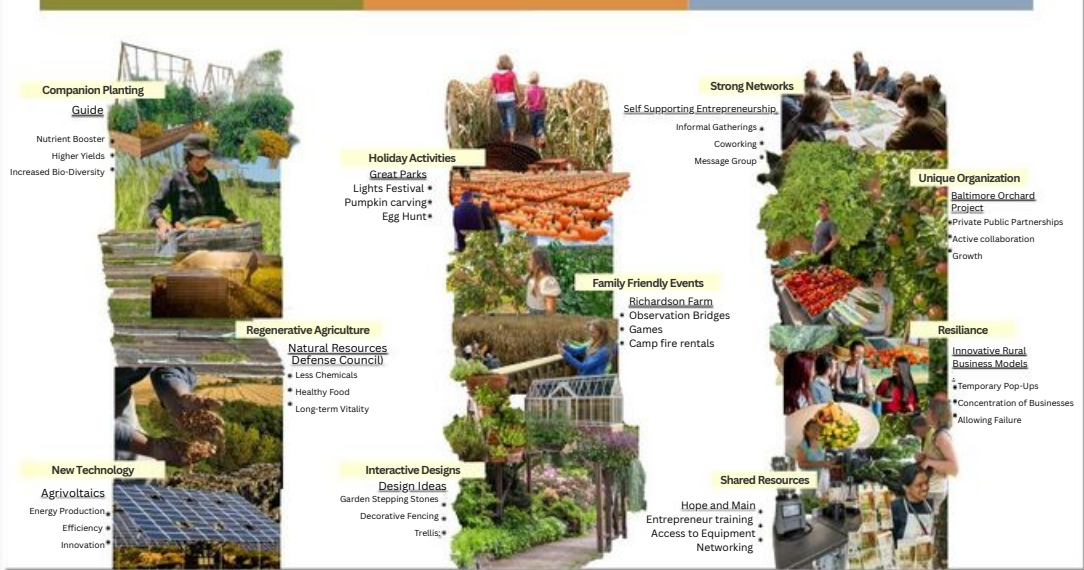
Fostering the Laurels
PLAN7007 | Fall 2025
Iris Boyer

Turning suitable public and vacant land into community gardens, orchards, and farms can build a circular food economy that is ecologically sound, community-centered, and economically resilient, starting in Aid in partnership with Symmes Valley High School's FFA.

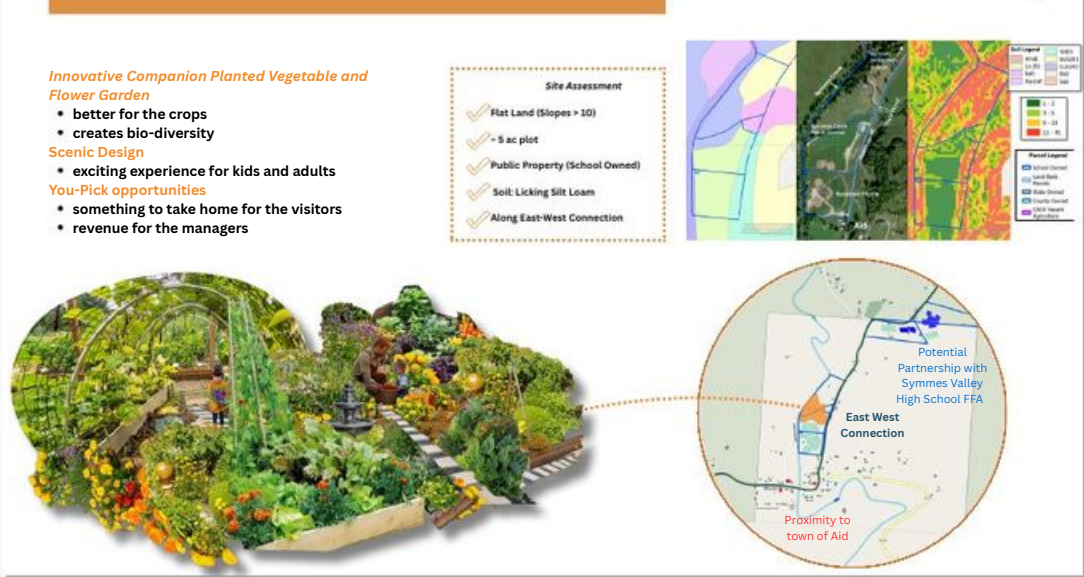
Vision for Circular Food Economy in Lawrence County



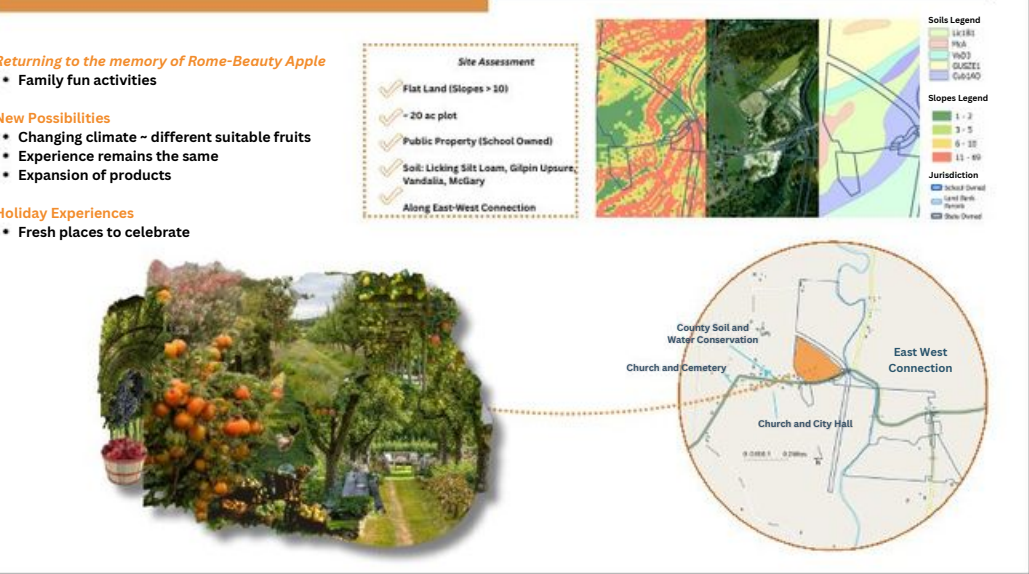
Ecological Stewardship | Experiential Aspirations | Economic Potential



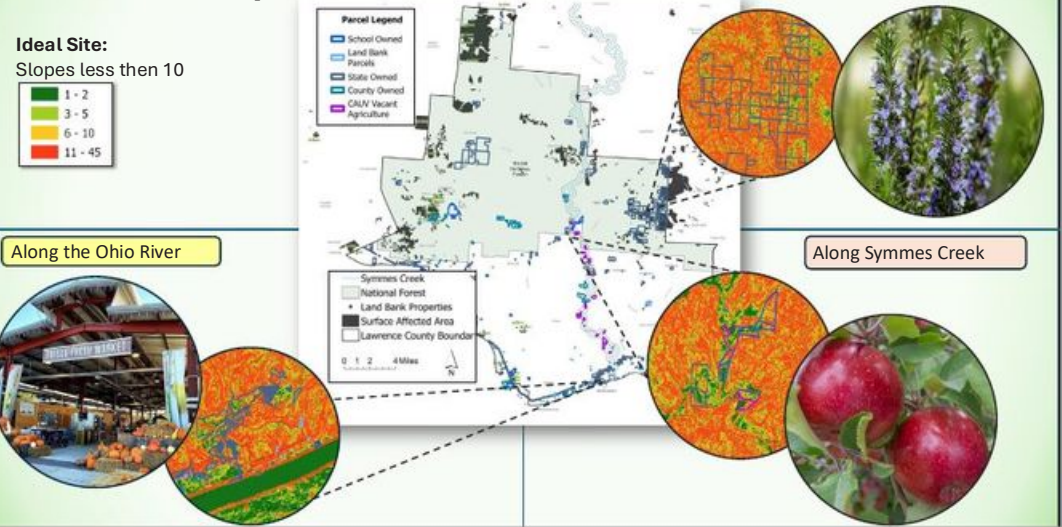
EXAMPLE 1: VEGETABLE AND FLOWER GARDEN



EXAMPLE 2: ORCHARD



Potential Zones for Community Farms in Lawrence County



Suitability specifics by Crop



Fostering the Laurels
PLAN7007 | Fall 2025
Iris Boyer

Turning suitable public and vacant land into community gardens, orchards, and farms can build a circular food economy that is ecologically sound, community-centered, and economically resilient, starting in Aid in partnership with Symmes Valley High School's FFA.

Food Ecosystem

PLAN3031 | Summer 2025
Caroline Van Buskirk | Reese Stangelo | Ella Lisac

A shared vision for regenerative land stewardship—uniting productive agriculture, ecological restoration, community learning, and lasting regional impact.

URBAN PRODUCTION & PROCESSING

To cultivate a thriving economy by transforming underutilized blocks into a dynamic hub for small business innovation, food processing, and regional distribution - empowering Appalachian growers, makers, and entrepreneurs to bring healthy, natural products from farm to table and from the community to the world.



Phasing

Short-Term (1-3 Years)

- Land Use Updates
- Storefront Activation
- Testing Kitchen

Mid-Term (3-5 Years)

- New Market Construction
- Trail Expansion
- Co-Op Hub

Long-Term (5-10 Years)

- Mobile Distribution Hub
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Indoor Greenhouses

Plan Principles

- Local food hub in Downtown Ironton for processing and distribution
- Aggregates produce from northern Lawrence County farms
- Prepares and packages food for regional markets
- Drives urban economic growth and small business support



STRATEGIES MAP
A Food-Lover's Guide to Lawrence County

IRONTON

As the largest city in the county by population, Ironton has a strong central business district and a popular **farmers' market**. With a floodwall along the river, flood risks for the community are significantly reduced. However, it creates a physical and visual barrier from the river. This project explores how to **reactivate** the space around the Farmers Market and the riverfront. All of this is to serve efforts to increase agricultural production in the county, by creating spaces for residents and tourists to **enjoy, learn, and participate in local agriculture**.

CHESAPEAKE

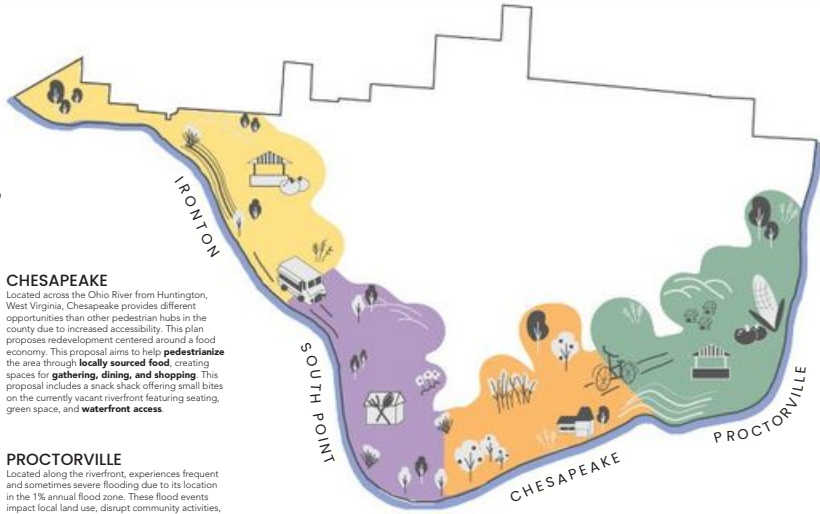
Located across the Ohio River from Huntington, West Virginia, Chesapeake provides different opportunities than other pedestrian hubs in the county due to increased accessibility. This plan proposes redevelopment centered around a food economy. This proposal aims to help **pedestrianize** the area through **locally sourced food**, creating spaces for **gathering, dining, and shopping**. This proposal includes a snack shack offering small bites on the currently vacant riverfront featuring seating, green space, and **waterfront access**.

SOUTH POINT

Known for its industrial park - The Point, South Point has seen new development from Azure which opens the door for more **food-related businesses**. Small greenery parks as well as a Youth Sports park dot the waterfront. South Point Park is receiving a grant toward infrastructure improvements as well as a **bike-pedestrian path**. This project explores how South Point is a place where individuals can expand their palate and explore new culinary experiences. It is the opportune location for a **Food Rescue Kitchen and Distribution Facility**.

PROCTORVILLE

Located along the riverfront, experiences frequent and sometimes severe flooding due to its location in the 1% annual flood zone. These flood events impact local land use, disrupt community activities, and challenge traditional agriculture. Rather than treating flooding solely as a hazard, this project explores how floodwaters can be used to **cultivate food**, guiding the design of swales, terraces, and plantings to create a **resilient, water-driven agricultural landscape**.



Grow it, Get it, Eat it.

PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Ella Schultian | Emmett Foley | Melina Duque | Will Hein

A riverfront food and community hub in Lawrence County, Ohio, connecting local farms, farm-to-table dining, public parks, educational programs, and food donations through walkable downtown spaces.

TRANSFORMING MINES TO PRODUCTIVE ECOSYSTEMS

The project aims to revitalize an abandoned surface mine in the northern area of the county by transforming it into a productive, ecologically sustainable spaces that blend micro-agriculture, recreational opportunities, and economic development. This approach allows for a unique blend of recreation, economy, and agricultural strategies blending opportunities for tourists and residents and strengthening the interplay between the urban and the forest.



Physical Constraints

- Northern portion of county, less connection/infrastructure, topography.
- Surface mine remediation + soil quality remediation
- Seasons affecting agricultural productivity
- Land acquisition

Regulatory Constraints

- Mine reclamation/ remediation standards
- Environmental regulations
- National Forest regulations
- Permits for uses



CONCEPTUAL SITE DIAGRAM



SITE PLAN

This 155-acre riverfront site experiences seasonal flooding and sits at the edge of an active community. Its location and landscape offer opportunities to explore resilient design strategies that respond to water while connecting people to the riverfront.

Potential Users

- Local residents
- Community farmers / urban growers
- Regional farmers and produce suppliers
- Farmers market vendors
- Youth and students (Fairland Local School District)
- Visitors and community members
- Pedestrians and daily path users
- Social service and community organizations



Programmatic Elements

Terrace Farming

- Three zones with plants of varying water tolerance.
- Flood-based farming that absorbs river floodwaters.
- Crops are harvested and sold at the farmers market.

Housing Development

- Residences located near the farmers market.
- Residents can own and steward terrace farming plots.

Farmers Market

- Open on weekends for residents and visitors.
- Includes a sorting hub with private truck access for deliveries from northern farms.
- Weekly educational programs for youth on produce sorting and distribution.

Connection Path

- Dedicated path connecting housing, farmers market, Kroger parking lot, and riverfront.
- Riverfront path offers views of terrace farming and the water.

Infiltration Systems

- Converted to permeable pavement with surrounding bioswales to absorb floodwater.



ENVISIONING PRODUCTIVE ECOSYSTEMS



CONCEPTUAL SITE VISION

PROGRAMMING: ~796 AC

Use	Acreage Estimate	Facilities	Programming Elements
Crop	223-270 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compost drop pointsTool lockers/shedsSignage + fencing for crops as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lease-to-own microplotsRotational regenerative framingMentorship + seasonal labor programs
Fruit + Forage Trails	80-120 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6-10 miles of trail networkWayfinding signsFlora + fauna and land history signageRest spots + kiosksBuffer zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seasonal forage tourismHikes / Educational walksU-pick Orchards
Apiculture	10-20 acres (Interspersed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">BeehivesApiary SheltersPollinator perimeter plantingStorage sheds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pollinator + Beekeeping educational toursNatural pollination across whole siteHoney + Beeswax Production/products
Infrastructure + Access	30-45 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2 Co-op hubs1 Processing/Distribution centerEquipment barn/operating hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Additional pathwaysPavilion/educational areaRainwater Harvesting tanks
Indoor Farming	20-35 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3-5 Modular greenhouses, ~5,000-10,000 sfSolar panelsWater tanksComposting bins/facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Year-round productionResearch/Partnerships with schools + universities
Ecological Remediation Zones	290-330 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wildlife Corridors + Buffers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Habitat Monitoring EquipmentSoil remediation

PHASING

Short-Term: 1-3 Years

Land & infrastructure establishment + build community partnerships

- Begin land acquisition, soil revitalization and grading sites
- Installation of first greenhouses and hives, sheds
- Community engagement and partnership-building
- Trail layout and clearing
- Small-site agriculture production

Mid-Term: 3-5 Years

Production expansion + launch of Co-Op + educational programs

- Expansion of micro-agriculture, greenhouses, and apiculture and educational programs
- Construction of co-op infrastructure, establishment of co-op programs
- Launch of orchards + forage trails, build signage + way finding
- Begin hosting groups, events, and workshops

Long-Term: 5-10 Years

Achieve full system integration and establish regional impact

- Full trail network built out, ecotourism brand established
- Integration with county-wide local food and recreation systems
- Monitoring program for biodiversity and soil health recovery
- Complete indoor farming + infrastructure build out
- Full-scale co-op program + training programs

SITE PLAN

MAP KEY

- Pedestrian Hubs
- Mixed Use Residential
- Pedestrian Pathway
- Tree (Apple Tree)
- Corn Plant
- Public Seating



Potential Users

- Local residents
- Community farmers / urban growers
- Regional farmers and produce suppliers
- Farmers market vendors
- Youth and students
- Visitors and community members
- Social service and community organizations

Progromatic Elements

Farm to Table Food options

- Primary restaurant / meeting space
- Riverfront snack shack

Community Farms

- Two farms located on the west side of the central business district

Public Space

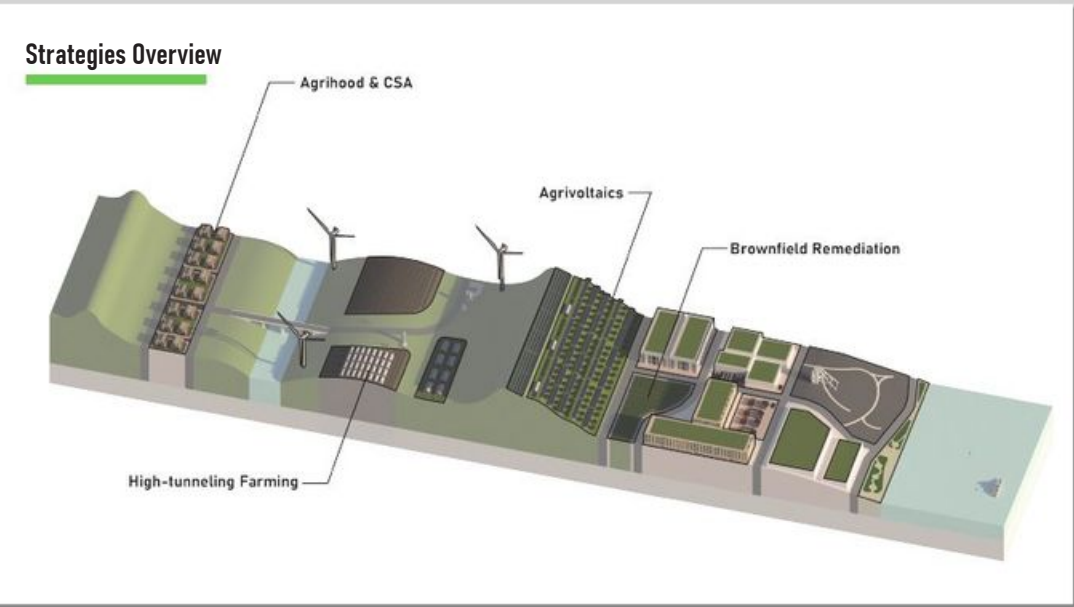
- Addition of parks and plazas
- Education
- Educational classes through the restaurants and farms

Food Donation

- Excess food from the farms and restaurants will go towards a donation program

Growing a Brighter Future
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Alex Cartwright | Andrew Ho |
Colin O'Donnell | Jackson Hannah

Integrated Housing, Farming
& Flood Resilience: A scalable
community model that combines
terraced agriculture, clustered
housing, open space, and flood
mitigation—balancing strong
funding potential with significant
upfront infrastructure and flood-
risk challenges.



STRATEGIES & ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Housing, food, and open space in one model
- Terraced farming reduces runoff and flood risk
- Scalable, projects can start small and grow with funding
- Addresses housing and food access together

WEAKNESSES

- High upfront costs for grading and infrastructure
- Cut & fill work requires significant capital
- Long wait time before community can enjoy the full benefits
- Needs a committed overarching organization to hold it together

OPPORTUNITIES

- Flood mitigation grants align directly with site conditions
- County flood history makes the funding case stronger
- Can draw all housing, agricultural, and environmental grants at once

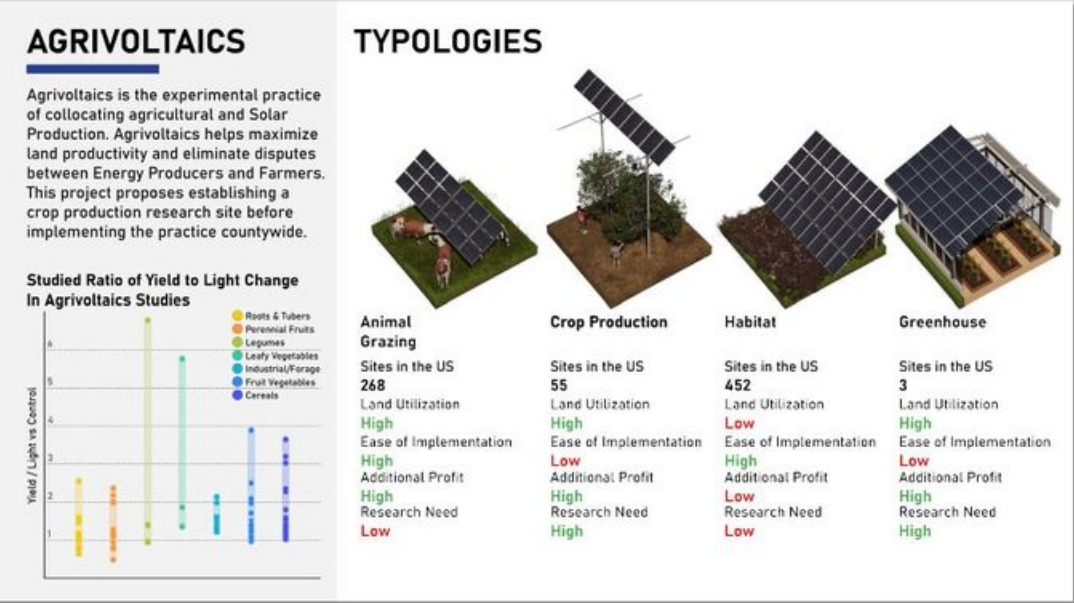
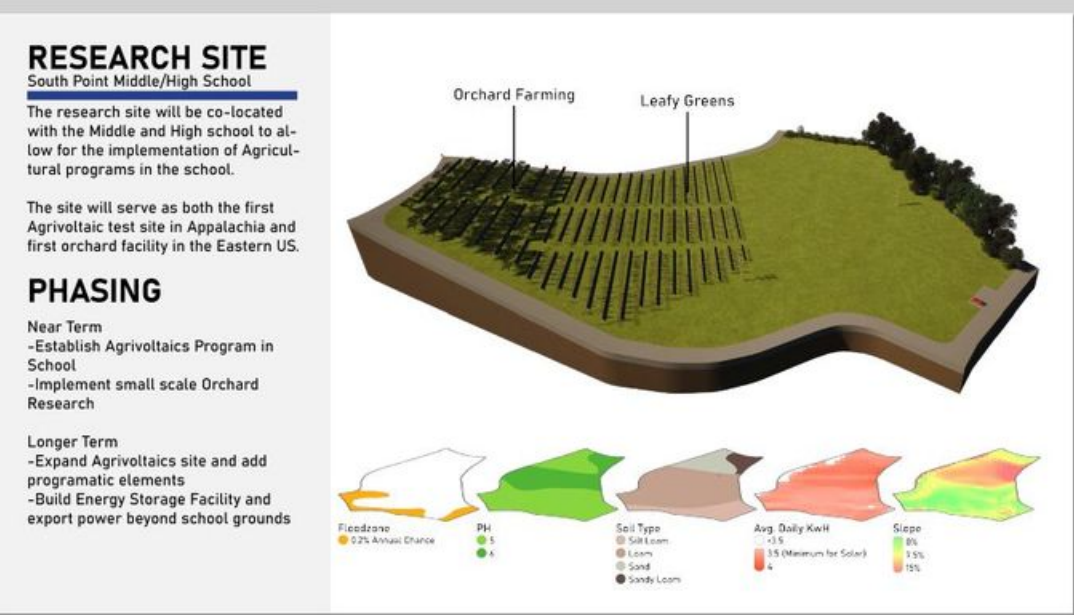
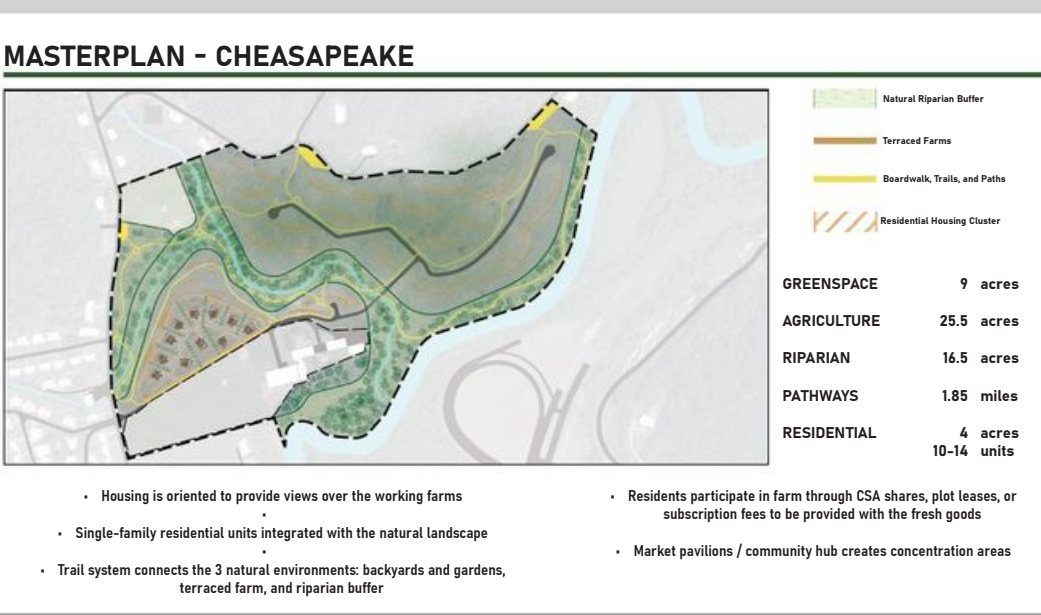
THREATS

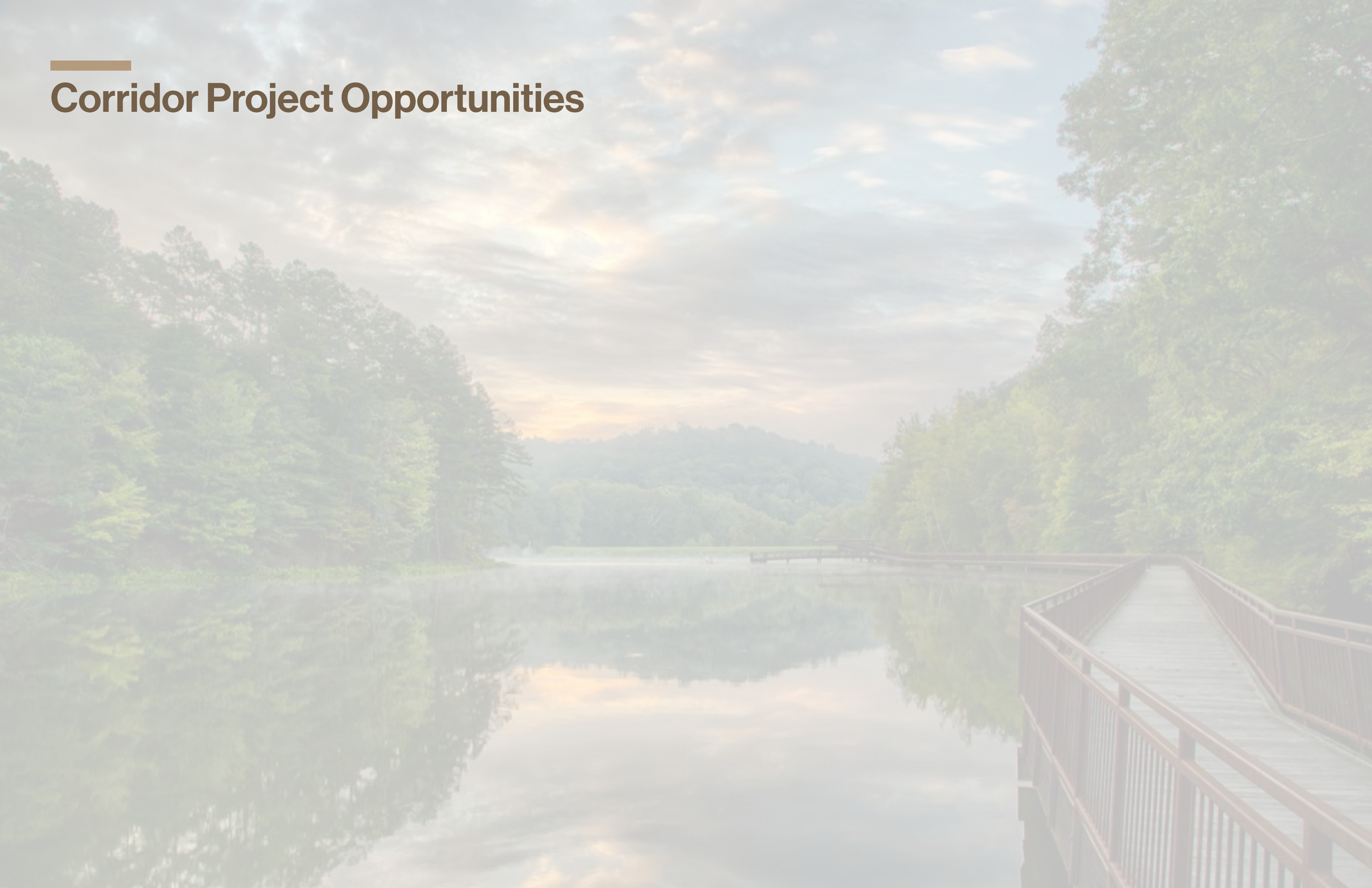
- Flooding could damage early investment
- Legal precedence
- Investment hesitation near flood-prone land



Growing a Brighter Future
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Corridor Project Opportunities

Experience, Ecology and Economy

With its robust natural and ecological assets, Lawrence County hosts many opportunities for new and improved parks, recreation, and cultural activities to improve the everyday quality of life of residents.

Lawrence County's tri-state border along the river could be a convergence zone attracting new residents from Kentucky and West Virginia. The Wayne National Forest covering the northern half of the county along with creeks, lakes, ponds and 82% tree coverage in between create a haven for those wishing to embrace life in a clean, natural environment. Parks and trails located in Lawrence County can be further connected and extended to serve multiple modes of transportation at once. For example, Ohio has designated portions of State Routes 775, 7, and 650 as Ohio Bike Route 65. Partnerships with state-level initiatives may increase access to funding, maintenance, and logistical support. Its natural river shoreline presents opportunities for resilient infrastructure to help protect the growth of future generations responsibly, while serving as sites for recreational and educational programming.

Blue and Green Infrastructure

Developing innovative planning and design strategies to create resilient landscapes that connect blue and green infrastructure

Population

Addressing population decline and its implications for urban and rural places in the county

Tourism Economy

Reinforcing the county's tourism assets/centers as hubs of social, economic and environmental resilience

Land Conservation/Restoration

Fostering practices that promote long-term protection of natural assets and actively restoring degraded ecosystems

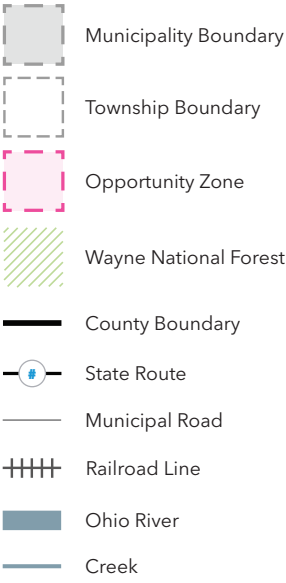
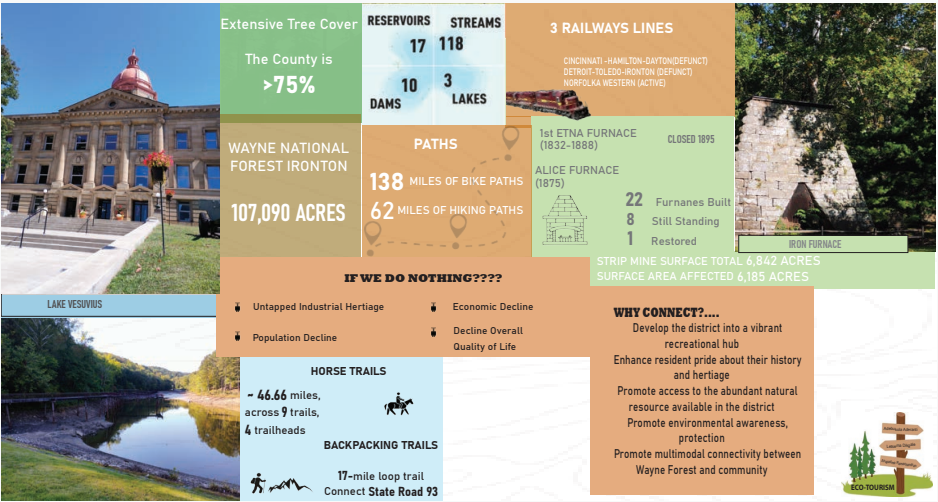
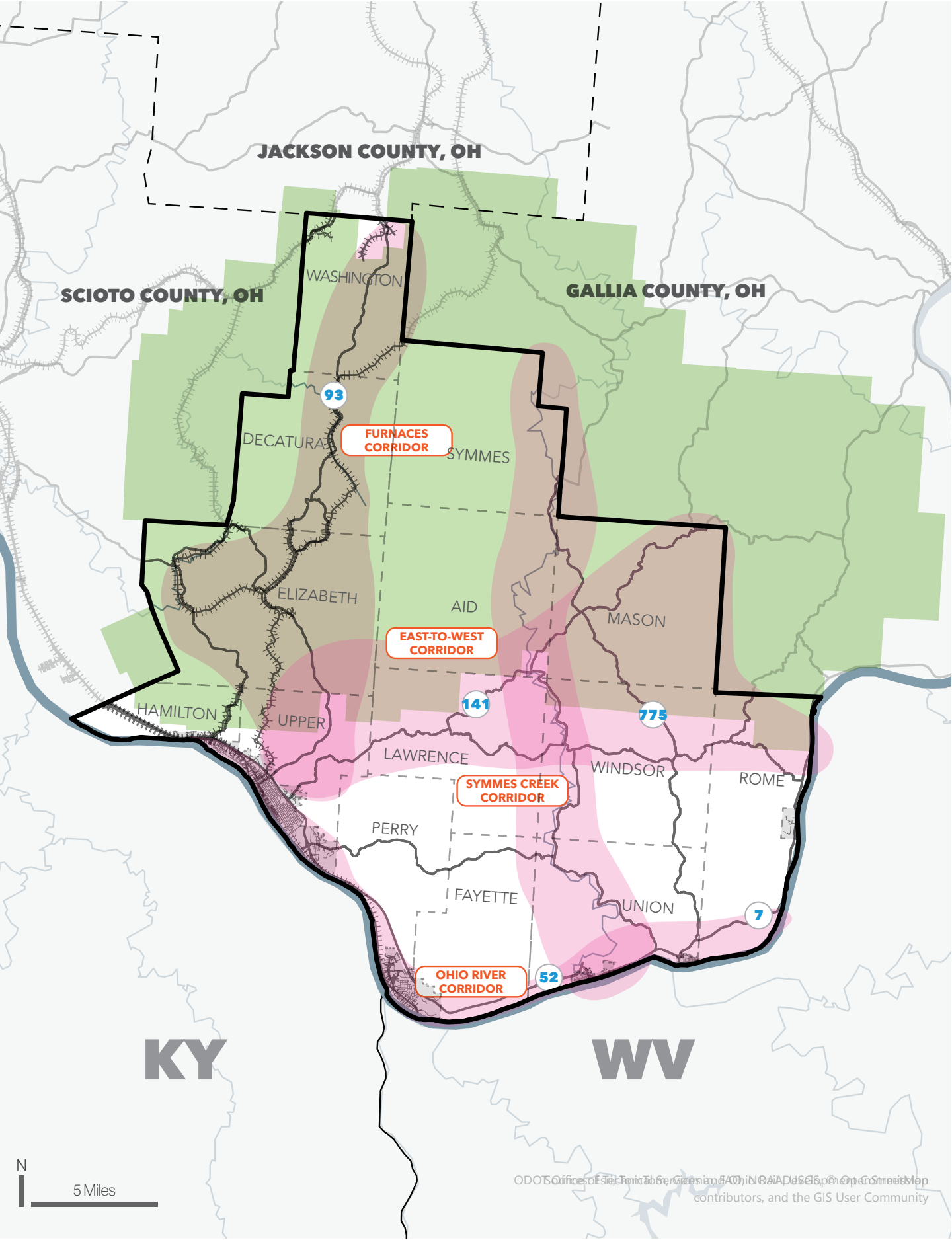
Urban Centers

Revitalizing existing urban centers in the county to accommodate tourism while ensuring livability for residents

Ohio River

Reinforcing the county's tourism assets/centers as hubs of social, economic and environmental resilience

Lawrence County Base Map
Source: ArcGIS Online and student projects



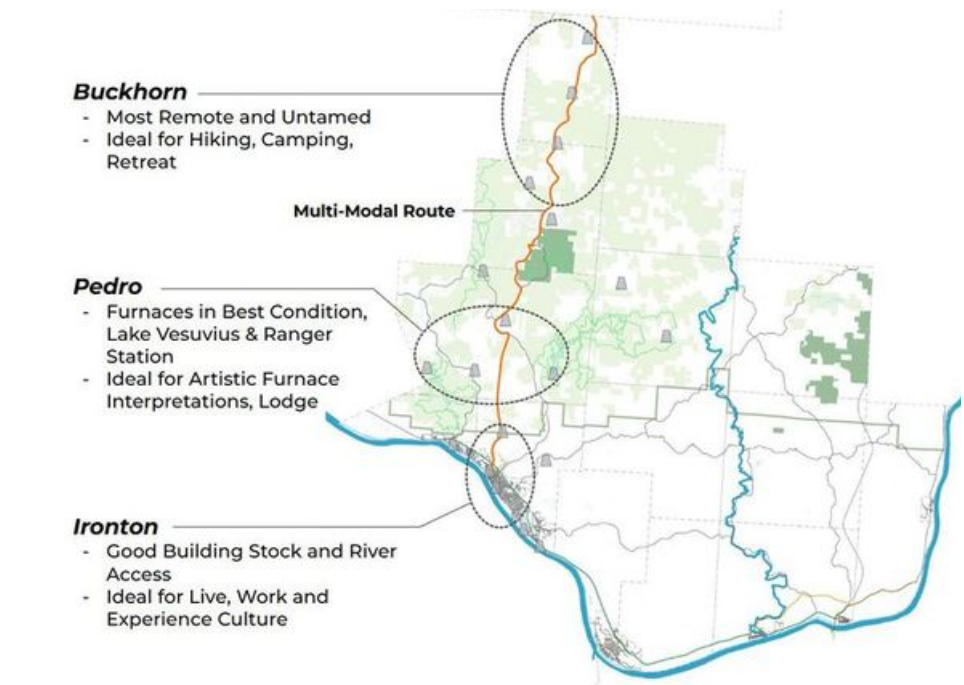
West Corridor | Furnace Trail

The Iron Furnace Trail project recommendation is intended to reimagine State Rt. 93, smaller roadways, and the former CH&D and DT&I rail line routes into a scenic tour and hiking experience for residents and outdoor enthusiasts visiting the county.

The Concept
The trail reimagines the iron furnaces—once the roaring engines of the 19th-century economy — as site-specific art installations. Rather than simply preserving them as static relics, this project invites artists to interact with the stone stacks. Imagine, for instance, the furnaces illuminated from within at night using solar-powered LEDs to mimic the "bloom" of a working furnace, creating a welcoming, glowing beacon in the Buckhorn wilderness. The Iron Canvas is an opportunity to invite world-class artists and cultured travelers into a conversation about art within the natural landscape.

There is a human story to be told through art installations that reflect the families of the iron workers and the conductors of the Underground Railroad who moved through these same hills. Additionally, art could highlight the resilience of the Wayne National Forest as it grows back over the industrial the past, celebrating the county's "green" future.

The Site
The rail corridor comprises both the DT&I and CH&D rail lines with a total length of 44 miles. It weaves along the valley floors from Ironton through Pedro to Washington Township. The corridor has flat to gentle slopes ranging from 0-6% and runs parallel to Storms Creek, Pine Creek, and State Route 93 in certain sections. It intersects with multiple land parcels owned by various entities, including individuals, corporations, NGOs, the county, the state, and the federal government. Currently, there are three tunnels along the length of the rail corridor. Two of these tunnels have collapsed (Dean Tunnel and the tunnel between Lawrence County and Gallia County), and the remaining one in Royersville is in poor condition. Some tunnel restoration should be considered to complete the experience.



1 The Ironton Gateway

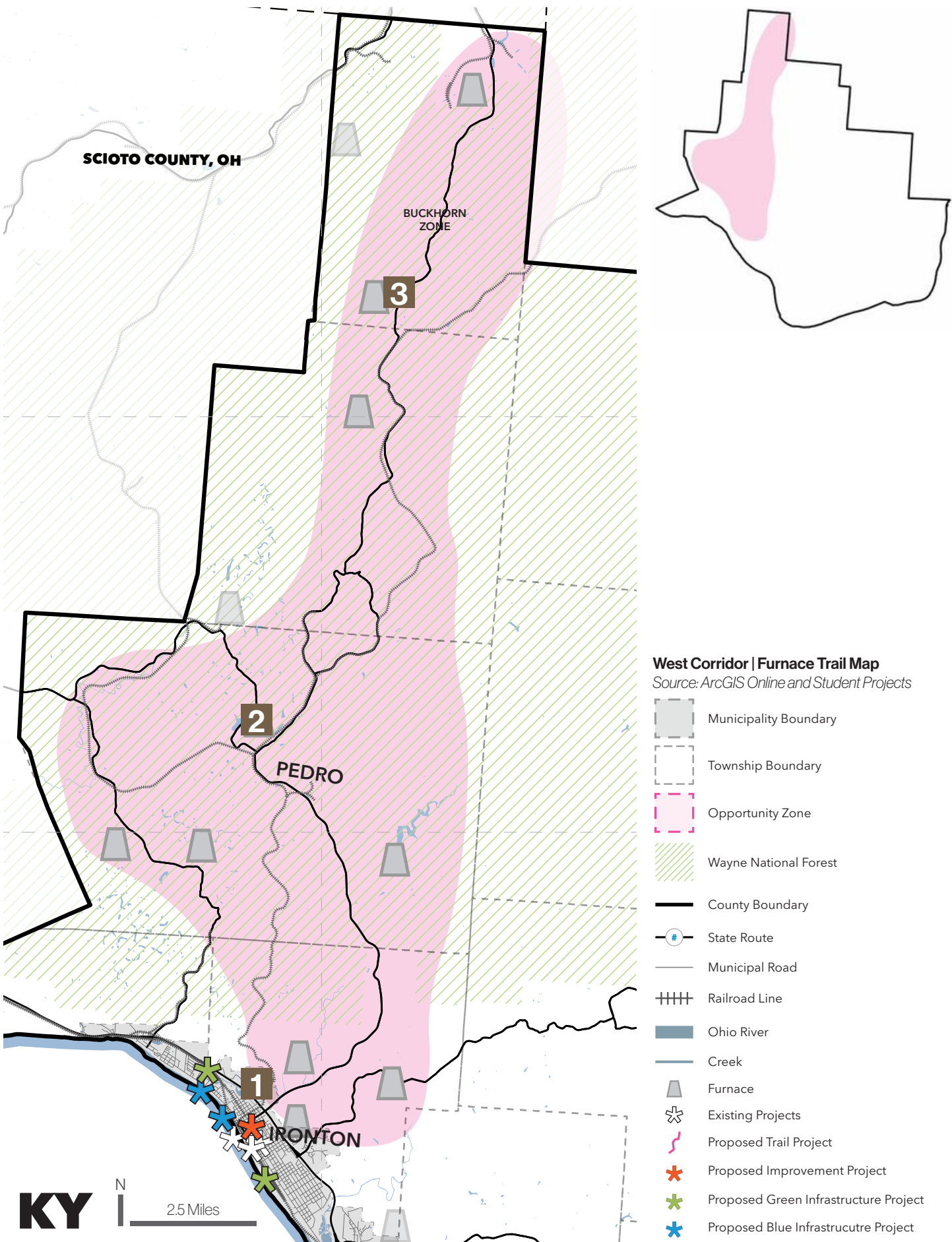
Starting at the county seat, the trail begins as an urban "Linear Park" that showcases the city's history. This trail should leverage existing points of interest within Ironton such as the murals painted on the levee wall which document historic moments and stories of several notable residents from the county.

2 The Pedro Hub

As travelers move north along the repurposed DT&I and CH&D corridor, a concentration of furnace locations, including Lake Vesuvius, along with existing hiking trails create a natural epicenter for the furnace trail.

3 The Buckhorn Odyssey

Further north, the environment shifts into a "remote wilderness" experience. The art becomes more rugged, found and integrated into the forest, rewarding hikers and cyclists with moments of discovery in the deep Appalachian woods.



West Corridor | Furnace Trail (cont.)

Multimodal Design: A Path for Everyone

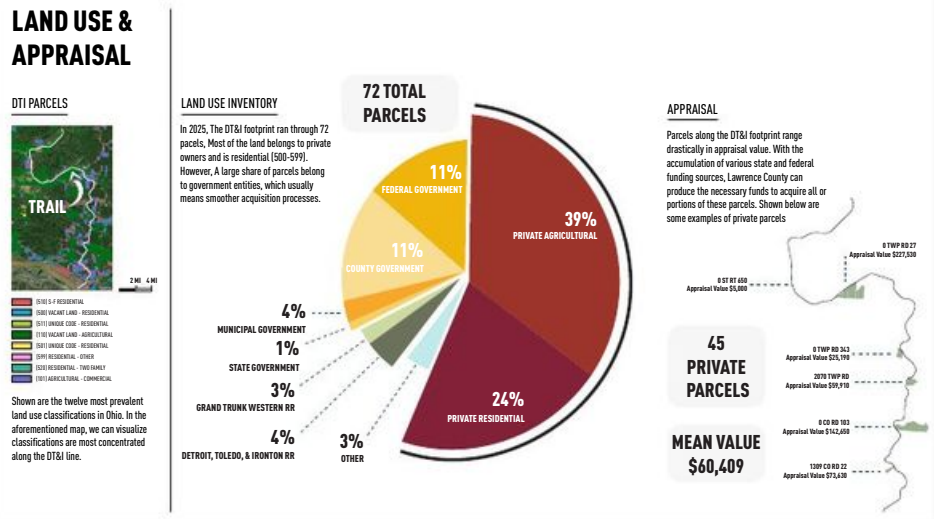
By leveraging State Route 93 for motorized tourism and conversion of 44 miles of the DT&I and CH&D railways for non-motorized use, the trail creates a layered experience:

- » **Cyclists and Hikers:** A safe, flat "Rails-to-Trails" path provides an accessible way for families and adventure seekers to cover long distances away from traffic. Proper interpretative and way-finding signage should be integrated for more identifiable trailheads, passage along the trails, lookouts, public art, and other points of interest.
- » **The Arts Corridor (SR 93):** Strategic pull-offs and overlooks along Route 93 allow those traveling by car or motorcycle to experience the larger-scale artistic interpretations, ensuring the project is inclusive of all mobility levels.
- » **Heritage Tourism:** By providing world-class recreation and unique cultural experiences, Lawrence County gives young professionals and families another reason to plant roots in the County and creates a reason for visitors to stay overnight, supporting local businesses in Ironton and surrounding townships to create experience economy opportunities.



The Pig Iron Trail
PLAN3031 | Summer 2025
Aaralyn Gross | Lanie Tarowsky | Max Adams

The Pig Iron Trail: A 27.8-mile Lawrence County connection linking Ironton's iron-making heritage, restored mine and furnace sites, and Wayne National Forest — creating space for neighbors and visitors to walk, run, bike, and explore.



Coordination and Funding Recommendations:

- » Build relationships between stakeholders with similar interests and goals (e.g. Rails to Trails conservancy, American trails)
- » Establish a steering committee to facilitate discussions between the Federal Government and the County regarding experiential moments within Wayne National Forest.
- » Seek funding through various sources, including the Clean Ohio Trails Fund and the Recreational Trails Program managed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. These funds align perfectly with the county's needs, such as designing and engineering services for its collapsed tunnels and constructing trailheads and new trail connections.

Short-term:

- » Community engagement to build support, buy-in, and awareness.
- » Improve coordination among all interested parties, notably the Federal Government (responsible for Wayne National Forest), the State of Ohio (responsible for Dean State Forest), and Lawrence County.
- » Identify funding sources for the development of the trail and associated amenities.
- » Build a trailhead in Ironton at the base of the trail to encourage use and boost momentum for its overall development.

Medium term:

- » Create linkages between local trails and the rail corridor.
- » Create a management policy and design guidelines for the development, use, and maintenance of the trails.
- » Promote the trail and improve brand visibility. This will be a continuous activity as long as the trails exist.

Long term:

- » Reconstruction of the collapsed Dean tunnel and the tunnel connecting Lawrence and Gallia County.
- » Reconstruction of the Royersville/Vesuvius tunnel.
- » Construction of the proposed trailheads along State Route 93, Pedro, and Royersville.



Urban Art Experience - NYC High Line



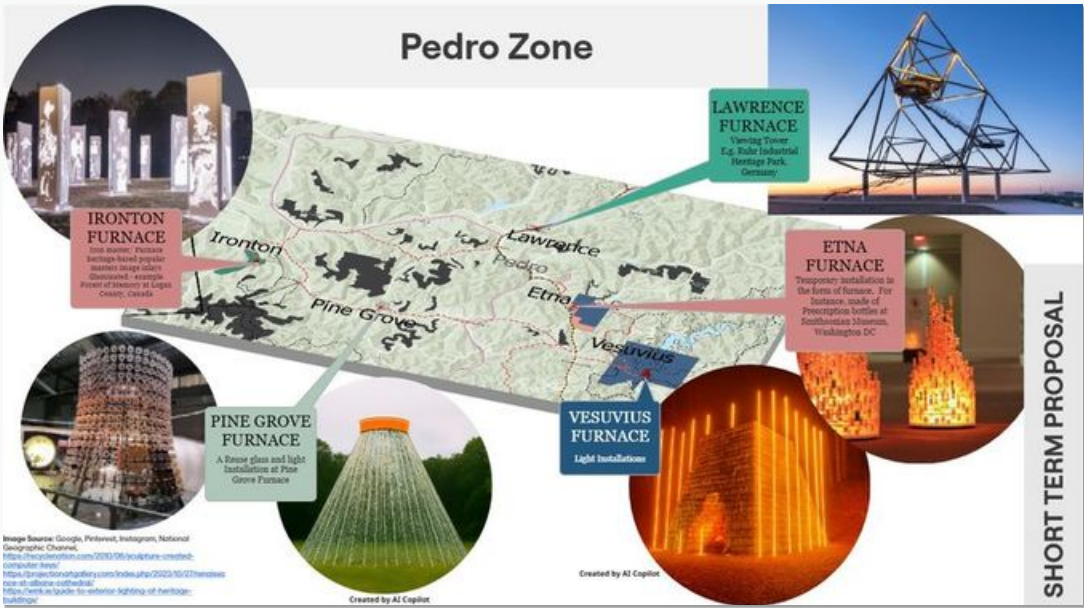
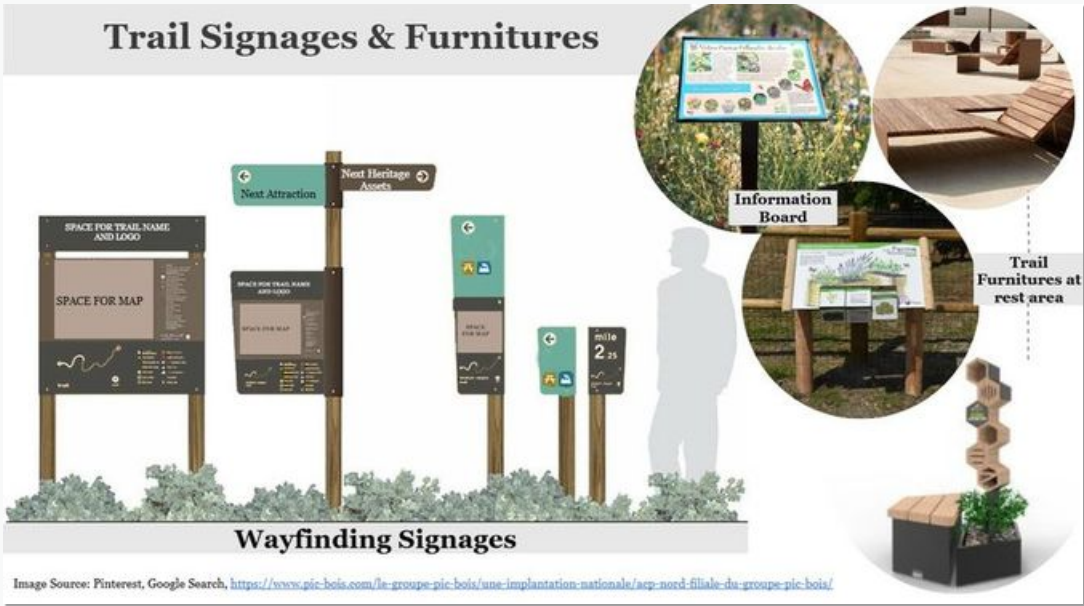
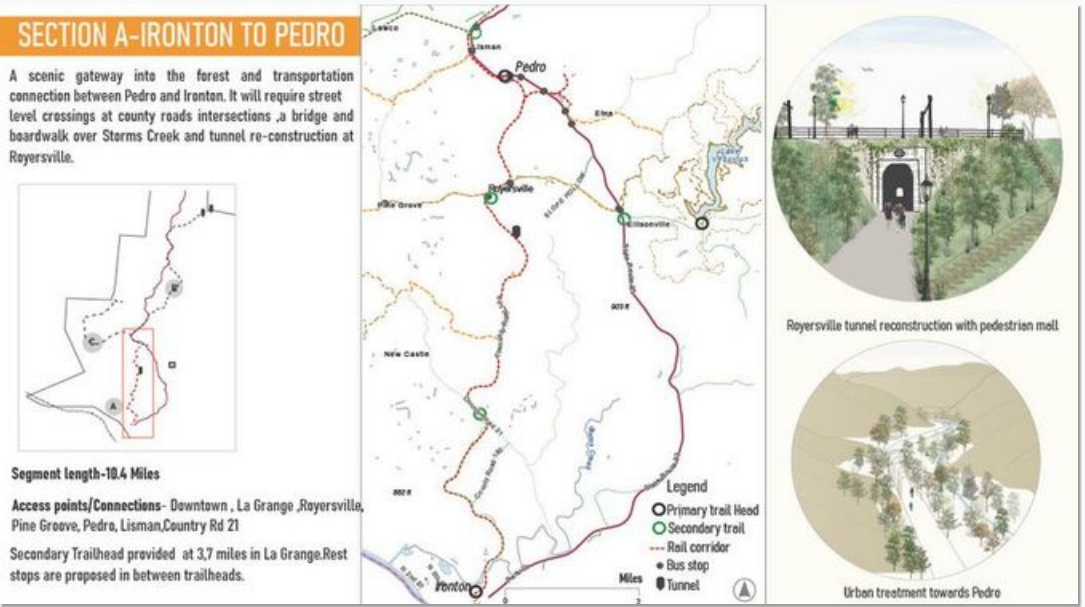
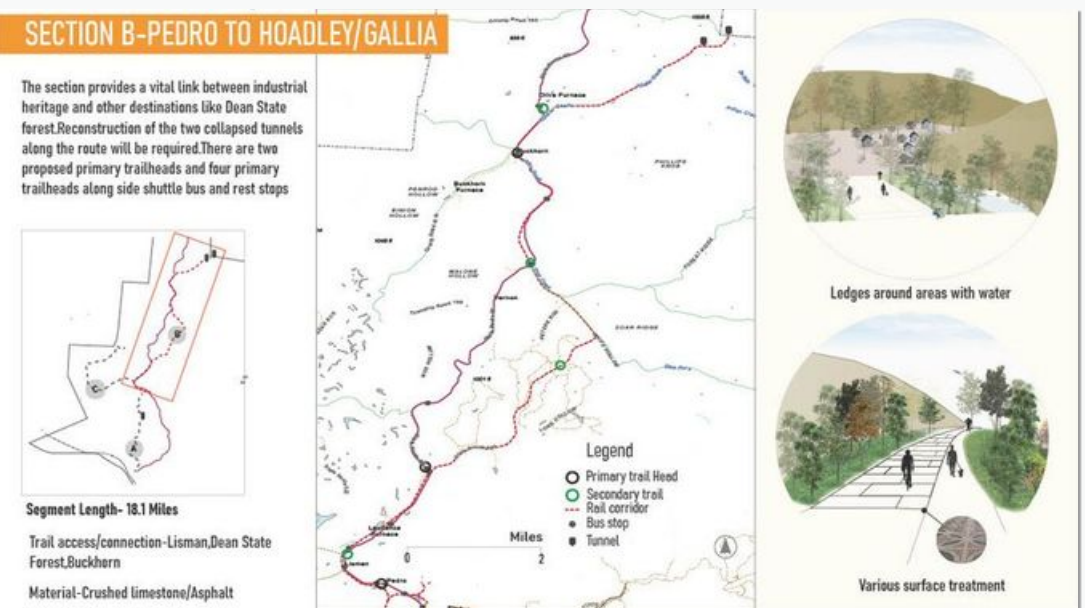
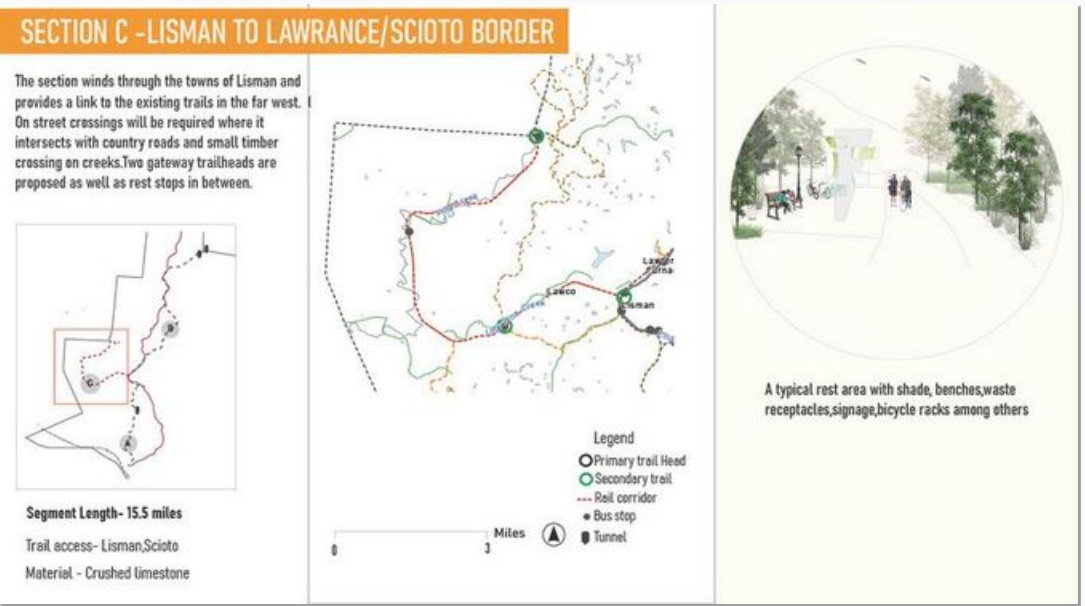
Art in the Wild - Maine Botanical Garden Trolls

Conceptual Furnace Trail Rendering



Furnace Trails: Interactive Art and Heritage
PLAN7007 | Fall 2025
Anupadma Ramchandran

A visual exploration of art installations, illuminated furnace imagery, viewing towers, trail signage, and rest-area furnishings that reinterpret Ironton, Lagrange, Pine Grove, Lawrence, and Etna furnace heritage for contemporary public spaces.



Rails to Trails
PLAN7007 | Fall 2025
Letsema Dikgale

Rails-to-trails conversion in Lawrence County, Ohio, creating a 33.6-mile multiuse corridor that links Lisman, Buckhorn, Dean State Forest, and the Lawrence-Scioto border through industrial heritage, reconstructed tunnels, trailheads, rest areas, creek crossings, and crushed-limestone/asphalt trail surfaces.

East Corridor | Symmes Creek

The proposed Symmes Creek Blue-Green Trail is a walking/hiking pathway designed to provide land connectivity between the canoe launch sites on the Arthur Ferguson Canoe Trail.

The Concept

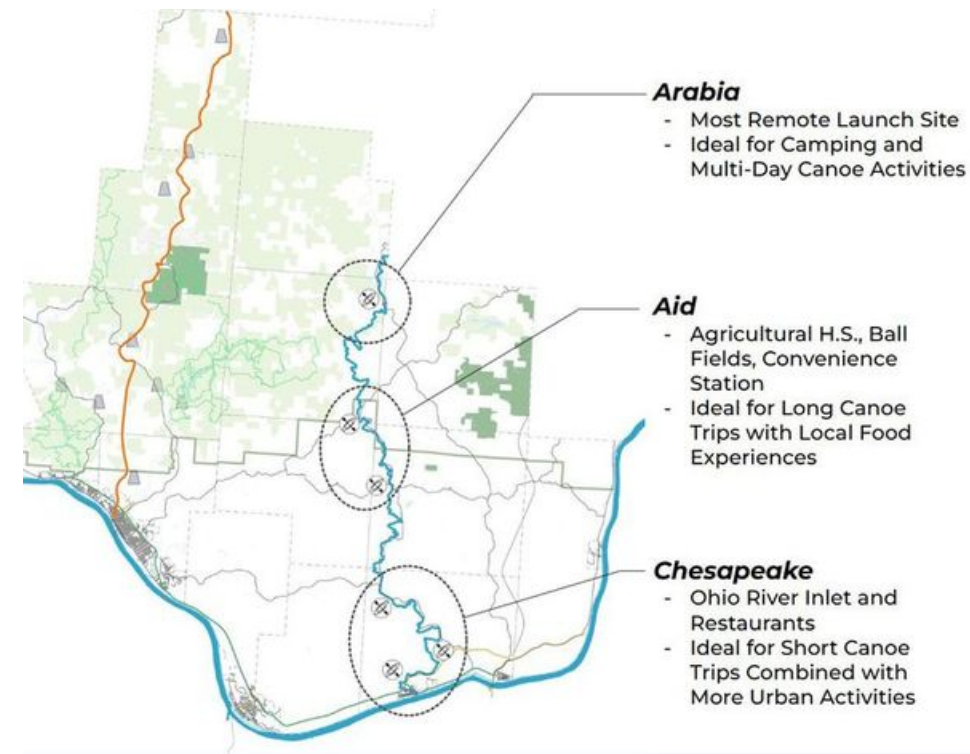
Symmes Creek is a 76-mile invitation to explore the heart of Lawrence County. Whether you are sleeping under the stars in Arabia or grabbing lunch in Chesapeake, the creek offers an outdoor culture and premier eco-tourism destination.

By focusing on physical restoration and official ODNR designation, this project recommendation proposes to create a diverse “choose your own adventure” recreational model that caters to a variety of demographics — from the ardent outdoor adventure seeker to the casual day-tripper. The proposal includes enhancement and connectivity between the Arthur S. Ferguson, Jr. Canoe Trail and Symmes Creek, stretching from Arabia to the Ohio River at Chesapeake.

Symmes Creek Blue-Green Trail

The proposed Symmes Creek Blue-Green Trail is a walking/hiking pathway designed to provide land connectivity between the canoe launch sites on the Arthur Ferguson Canoe Trail. This project seeks to improve launch sites and implement a trailway while serving three key principles:

- » **Ecology:** The service of Ecology is performed through the improvement of launch sites and creek health as well as the introduction of new maintenance procedures that bolster and protect the environment surrounding the creek.
- » **Economy:** Economy will be serviced through the connection of launch sites to local economic activities.
- » **Experience:** The final principle of Experience will be implemented through the incorporation of local activities and amenities supporting the launch points.



1

The Arabia Wilderness

Designed for the multi-day adventurer. Starting at the Arabia launch, paddlers can enter the most secluded portions of the creek. This region leverages the “untamed” nature of the Wayne National Forest. The vision includes designated “Paddle-In” campsites and trailheads that link the water to the forest’s hiking network, allowing for a seamless “land and water” Appalachian experience.

2

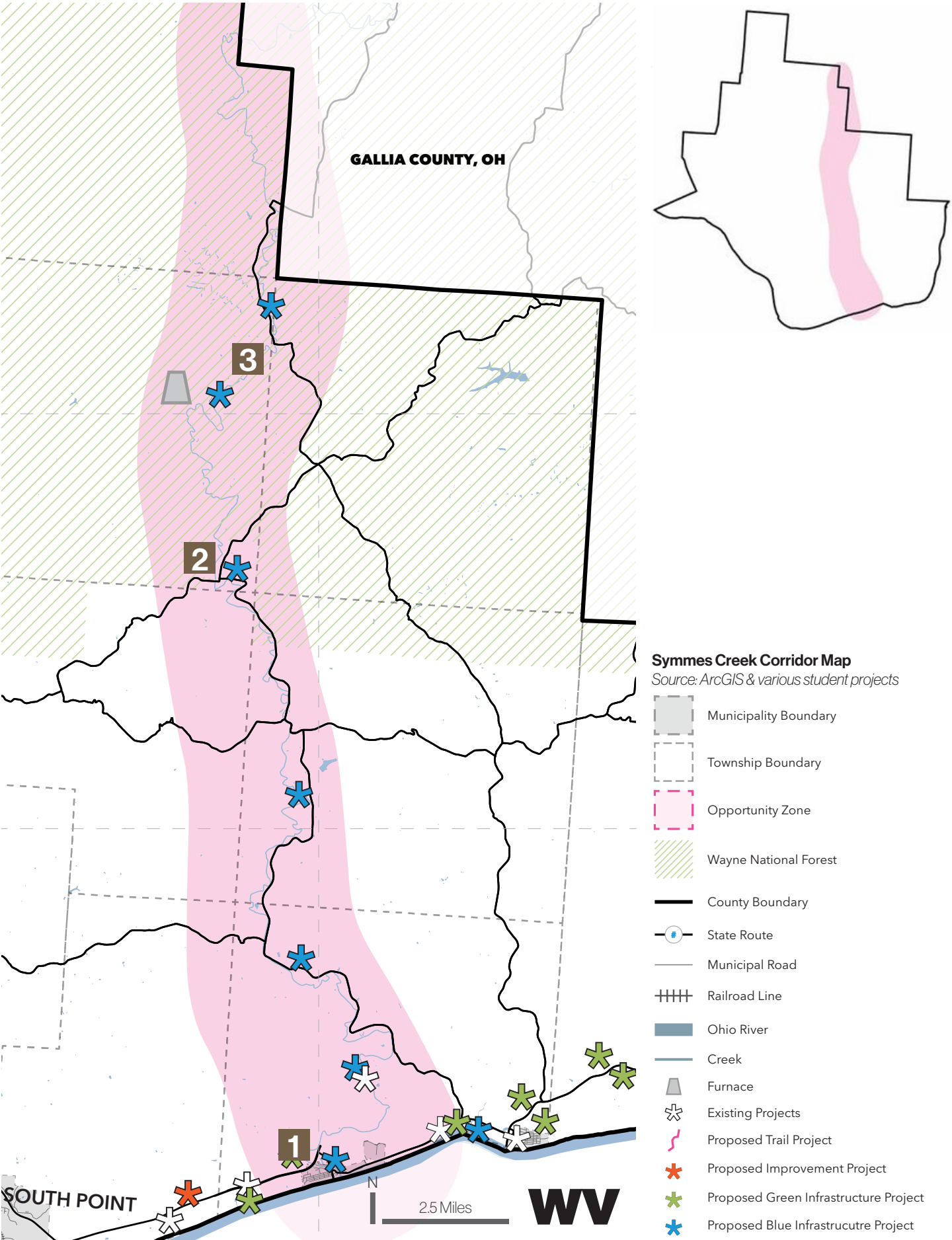
The Aid Connection

Targeted at families and day-trippers seeking a 4 to 6 hour excursion from the Aid canoe Launch to the Ohio River. By centering this region around the Aid canoe launch, the plan proposes an economic loop for the local community. Small-scale “trail-side” infrastructure — such as gear rentals, refreshment stands, and general stores — allows paddlers to refuel and relax mid-trip from points further north or to prepare to kick off their journey, turning the creek into a driver for small-business growth.

3

The Chesapeake Gateway

The final stretch where the creek meets the Ohio River focuses on high-quality, accessible launch points near Chesapeake. It offers an “urban paddle” experience where residents and visitors can enjoy the water for a few hours before easily accessing restaurants, lodging, and the conveniences of the riverside communities.



East Corridor | Symmes Creek

Restoration and Formal Recognition

- » **Cleanup & Reinforcement:** Removing decades of debris and logjams will ensure the full 76 miles are truly navigable. Combined with bio-engineered embankment reinforcement, this preserves the water quality and prevents the erosion that threatens local farmland.
- » **Erosion Control:** Stream health was an immediate determined need. During our site visit, we observed that the stream was quite low. Based on the USGS gauge station in Aid Township, it was determined that the stream was traditionally staged at 5.58 feet. This shows a variation in the stream basin that may be difficult to work around; however, there are ways that the stream can be cared for that ensure it does not lose any more capability in terms of its capacity. One way that stream health can be improved, along with capacity potential, is through protection against erosion. Stream curves are the primary location where erosion can occur, and one method for mitigating erosion is through the planting of native plants into the exterior of the bend. This holds the soil in place and reduces stream impact on banks. Logs and wood debris can also provide a similar benefit, which brings up the point of pollution reduction. Organizations such as the Symmes Creek Restoration Committee could be engaged to help community efforts to clean up the creek. Any large wood debris found could be reutilized to bolster the banks of the creek and reduce erosion.
- » **Trail Pathfinding:** Trail pathfinding is an important aspect for improving the recreational experience. A trail strategy was conducted through the development of a suitability model, derived through the geospatial arrangement of water bodies, roadways, landscape slope, land vacancies, and land use. Two trailways were conceptualized: one by hand following nearby roadways, and one based on a least-cost path utilizing the suitability model. More work will need to be conducted surrounding the design of the trail; however, the idea is to have stages of the trail, specifically throughout the northern more rural portions, that will be much more rugged and natural. Along roadways, trails should be designed with porous asphalt that helps guide and direct water toward channels that lead to the creek.
- » **ODNR Designation:** Partnering with the Symmes Creek Restoration Committee to secure the Paddle Trail designation from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is critical for the proposal. This status provides the formal framework for unified, high-visibility way-finding and safety signage; state-funded inclusion in regional recreational brochures and maps; and access to dedicated conservation and tourism grants.

Quality of Life & Retention

- A restored Symmes Creek acts as a “blue-way” counterpart to the proposed Iron Furnace Trail. It offers:
- » **Health & Wellness:** Provides residents with 76 miles of low-impact, high-engagement exercise.
 - » **Ecological Stewardship:** By improving the launch points and reinforcing the banks, the county demonstrates a commitment to the environment that resonates with modern families looking to move to areas with “active” conservation values.
 - » **Connectivity:** The creek serves as a natural thread that ties the remote northern wilderness of the county directly to the southern population centers on the Ohio River.

Launch Point Infrastructure

- To transition Symmes Creek into a premier ODNR-designated Paddle Trail, the master plan moves beyond the water itself to address the “land-side” needs of the modern traveler. A holistic vision requires that every journey is supported by high-quality, sustainable infrastructure.
- To protect the environment of the surrounding areas, the proposal recommends self-sustaining, low-maintenance restroom facilities at key launch points. By utilizing solar power for lighting and ventilation, these units operate entirely off-grid, minimizing the county's long-term utility costs and environmental footprint. Clean, reliable facilities are often an important factor for families and tourists choosing a destination — providing these at the Arabia, Aid, and Chesapeake hubs ensures a dignified and comfortable experience for all users.
- The ODNR designation will unlock the funding necessary for a comprehensive signage system including safety and storytelling. Clear mileage markers and “next exit” notifications can help paddlers track their progress and identify their location in an emergency, while signage including QR codes and plaques detailing the history of the Underground Railroad river crossings and local industrial heritage turns every paddle trip into an educational journey.
- The proposal recommends graded, permeable-surface parking lots at select canoe launch points to accommodate increased traffic without causing runoff issues, improving accessibility for seniors and individuals with limited mobility, and preventing congestion on rural roads, particularly near the Aid and Arabia points. Additionally, social sites could be developed, such as community gardens and a rotating event space for farmers' markets and other events at launch points.



Areas of Restoration Needed



Deteriorated Way-finding at Aid Canoe Launch



Symmes Creek Near Waterloo



Inaccessible Launch at Aid



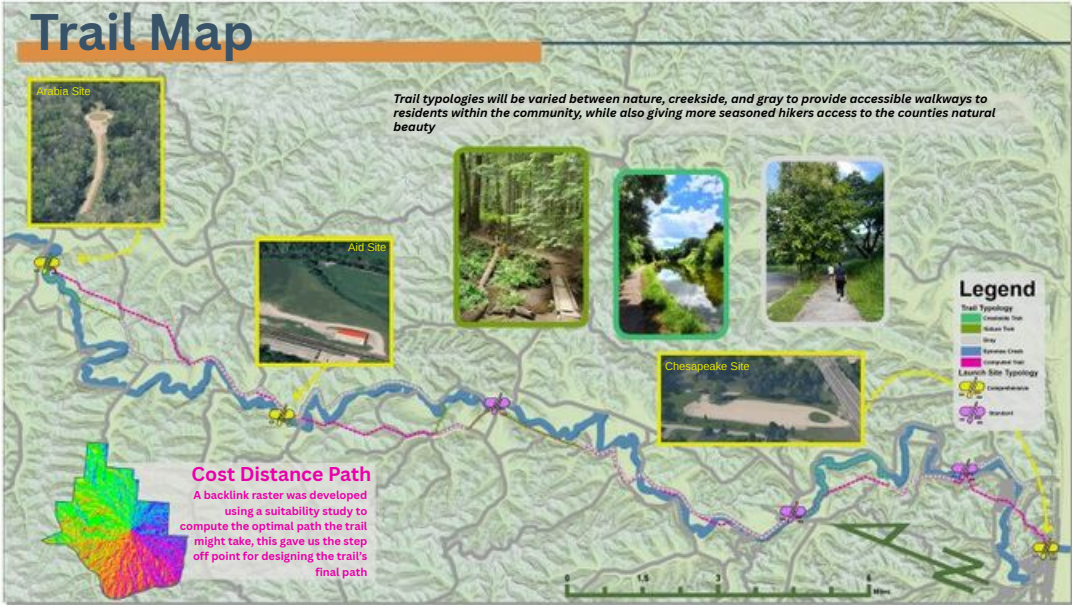
Sustainable, Low-Maintenance Restrooms

Aid Canoe Launch Rendering



Symmes Creek
PLAN7007 | Fall 2025
Travis Clark

A blue-green trail network that connects sites at Arabia, Aid, and Chesapeake through routes informed by a suitability analysis. The trail will combine nature, creekside, and accessible paved or “gray” segments, while launch sites will provide core amenities such as restrooms, parking, canoe racks, way-finding, and trail maps in a natural-looking setting. Larger comprehensive sites can serve as community parks, with features such as playgrounds and pavilions at Arabia Park, gardens and market or event space at Aid Community Park, and fishing, exercise, and Ohio River educational amenities at Chesapeake Park.



Launch Site Typologies

Standard

- Every site designed to have basic amenities and resources to provide ease of access to the Blue-Green Trail
- Public Restrooms, minor parking, and canoe racks implemented at all launch sites
- Wayfinding signage and basic trail information provided at each site

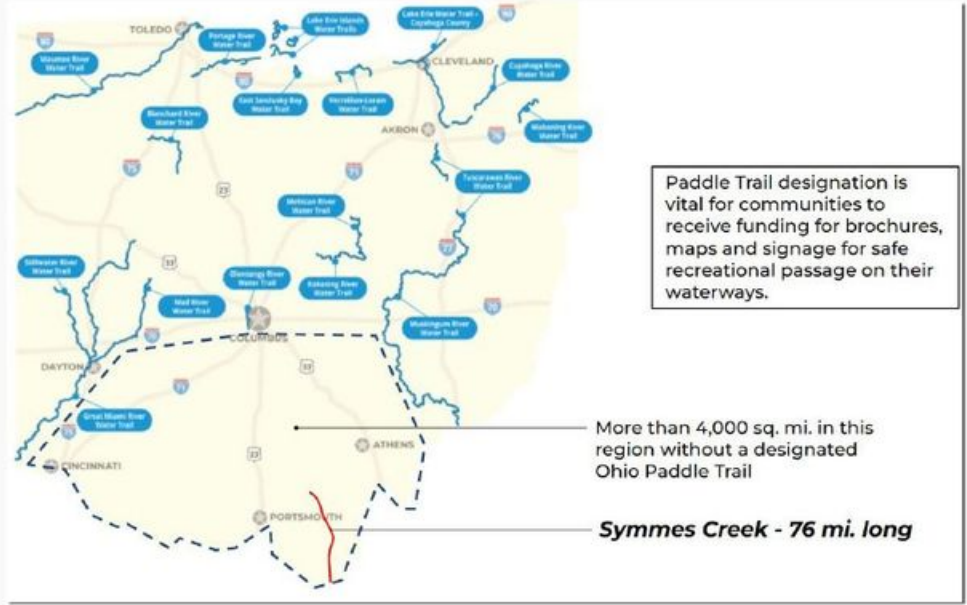


Launch Site Typologies

Comprehensive

- Sites are more involved, contain recreational or public activity spaces
- have more large scale amenities and function more as a park and less as a launch site
- Sites function at a larger capacity and will likely have some degree of expanded parking for ease of access

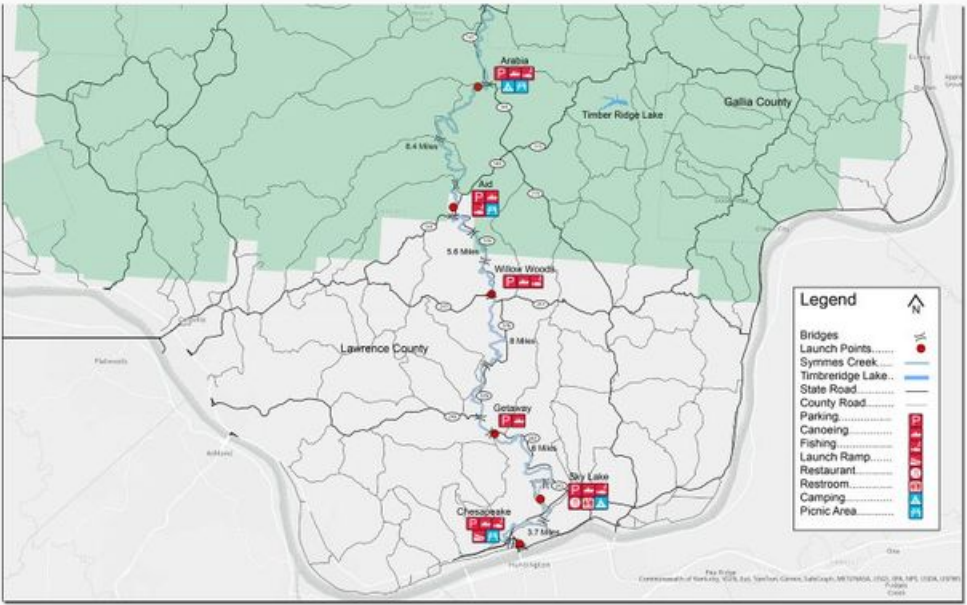
With greater areas to work with, playgrounds, farmers markets, and other community spaces hold high potential for development



Symmes Creek Trail Guide PLAN... | Spring 2026

Celeste Leonard | Jake Plummer | Shea McCrea | Kyra Williams | Brody Smith

A mock up of a trail guide for the 31.7-mile, Class I Arthur S. Ferguson Jr. Canoe Trail on Symmes Creek in Lawrence County, Ohio, including mapping six launch sites from Arabia to Chesapeake and their distances, amenities, and access details. It highlights the creek's forested Appalachian scenery, sandstone outcrops, farmland, fishing and wildlife, as well as the community events, trail history and industrial heritage.



Symmes Creek Water-Trail Map & Guide Arthur S. Ferguson Jr. Canoe Trail

Access Points:

A / Arabia Launch
Address: 1/4 Mile west of S.R. 141 on County Road 16 (Aarons Creek Road)
GPS: Latitude 38.6619, Longitude -82.4794 | River Access: Right
Amenities: Campsite, Paved Parking Lot, Fishing, Picnic Area

Photos of Site:

The Arabia Canoe Launch is the northern starting point of the canoe trail, located just west of SR 141 on County Road 16 (Aarons Creek Road). Opened in late 2010 through a partnership between Wayne National Forest, ODNR, and the SCRC, the site features a paved parking lot, campsite, picnic area, and direct creek access. A grocery store and restaurant are about one mile away on SR 141. The launch sits within the Wayne National Forest, surrounded by tall hardwoods and sandstone formations visible from the water.

Arabia to Aid- 8.4 Miles:
This is the longest and most remote segment. You'll paddle through some of the most scenic stretches of the Wayne National Forest, with sandstone outcrops along the banks and mature forest overhead. One of the trail's two small riffles is on this section. Watch for deer, turkey, and great blue herons.

Symmes Creek Water-Trail Map & Guide Arthur S. Ferguson Jr. Canoe Trail

B / Aid Launch
Address: 1/2 Mile north of Aid and 1/4 Mile south of Symmes Valley Schools on S.R. 141
GPS: Latitude 38.6613, Longitude -82.494746 | River Access: Left
Amenities: Ample Grass Parking Area, Fishing, Picnic Area

Photos of Site:

The Aid launch sits approximately half a mile north of Aid and half a mile south of the Symmes Valley Schools along SR 141, next to the baseball fields. The site has an ample grass parking area, picnic facilities, and fishing access.

The USGS maintains a stream monitoring station nearby (USGS-03205470). Paddlers can check real-time water levels at waterdata.usgs.gov before heading out.

Aid to Willow Wood- 5.6 Miles:
The landscape transitions from deeper forest to a mix of wooded hillsides and open farmland. The creek widens and slows in places, creating calm pools great for fishing or drifting. Look for beaver activity along the banks, gnarled trees and occasional lodges are common. The valley opens up with views of the rolling hills of central Lawrence County.

Symmes Creek Water-Trail Map & Guide Arthur S. Ferguson Jr. Canoe Trail

F / Chesapeake Launch
Address: Launch Ramp is 1/4 Mile north of S.R. 7 on County Road 123
GPS: Latitude 38.429824, Longitude -82.451395 | River Access: Left
Amenities: Launch Ramp, Ample Paved Parking Lot, Fishing, Picnic Area

Photos of Site:

The Chesapeake boat ramp is the southern terminus of the canoe trail, located a quarter mile north of SR 7 on County Road 123. Reopened in 2005 through a partnership between the SCRC and Lawrence County Commissioners, the site features a concrete launch ramp, ample paved parking, picnic area, and fishing access. The SCRC hosts its annual August raffle and community clean-up here.

Historical Significance:
Chesapeake sits where Symmes Creek meets the Ohio River, directly across from Huntington, West Virginia. Before the Civil War, people escaping slavery crossed the river near this point and followed Symmes Creek northward through forty miles of forest to reach Poke Patch, a rock community near the headwaters where Lawrence, Gallia, and Jackson counties meet. Rock overhangs along the creek provided shelter on the journey. The full trail from Arabia to Chesapeake traces the same landscape that shaped these stories of courage and freedom.

South Corridor | Along The River

By leveraging the work that is already underway at four key locations along the river, the existing boat launch points, designated multimodal routes between Ironton and Rome, and a few strategic interventions this proposal imagines a connected waterfront that offers an authentic, accessible water experience for residents and visitors alike.

The Vision

Lawrence County, "Ohio's Southern Coast", is home to more than 50 miles of Ohio riverfront, rolling Appalachian hills, and a network of small, close-knit river towns with character and untapped potential. By building and connecting existing trails and parks that bring residents and visitors to the water, reactivating vacant land for housing and agriculture, strengthening local food systems, growing new jobs and educational pathways, and designing resilient, flood-adapted spaces across Ironton, South Point, Burlington, Chesapeake, Proctorville, Rome and Athalia, the plans come together as a shared vision: a Lawrence County where the river fuels a more connected, prosperous, and vibrant Southern Coast.

» The river/trail as connective infrastructure

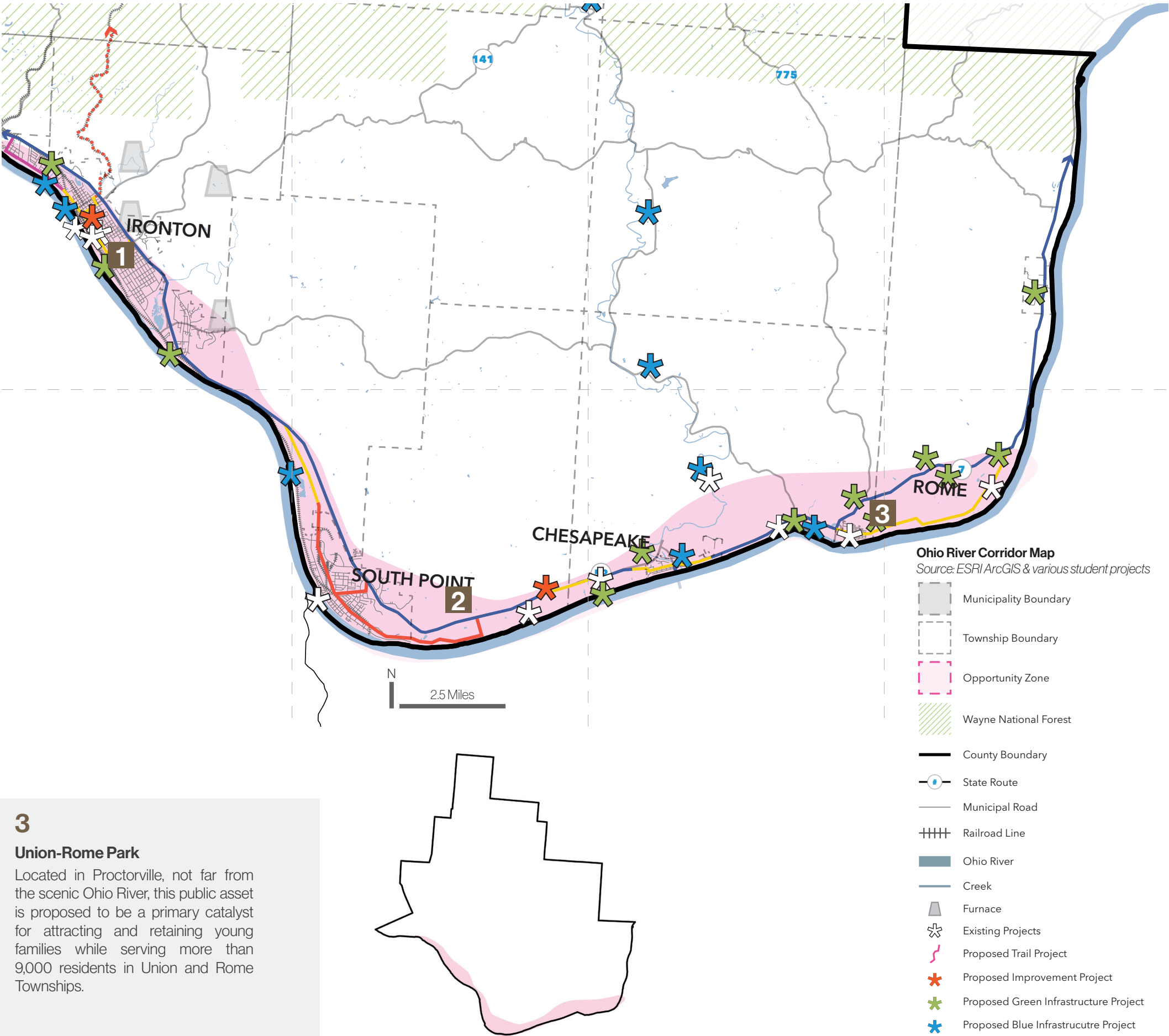
Whether it's a water trail, a land trail network, or trail-connected parks, the act of intentionally linking riverfront towns - Ironton, South Point, Burlington, Chesapeake, Proctorville, Rome, and Athalia - to each other and to the water is central to the plan.

» Small, tactical, catalytic interventions

The master plan favors reusing existing underutilized assets (public land, vacant lots, empty gas stations, abandoned factories, underused parking lots, existing plazas) rather than large greenfield development. Housing, jobs, parks, trails, environmental remediation, and community development in Ironton, South Point, Chesapeake, Proctorville, and Rome are key considerations.

» Resilience and equity

Flood adaptation (levees, floodplain storage, amphibious housing, flood-safe siting) and social equity (food-insecure households, affordable/attainable housing, small-scale entrepreneurship, education-to-career pipelines) are non-negotiable constraints.



1

Ironton

Ironton functions as the anchor town for the riverfront. Main-street revitalization, trail infrastructure, housing, education, and remediation efforts converge, largely because of its existing downtown fabric, levee-protected riverfront, within the county's most populous community.

2

Connected Ohio Riverfront

Reconnecting Lawrence County to its riverfront is the catalyst in this proposal. This approach activates the riverfront by extending the water trail, clarifying the alignment for a land-side multiuse trail and nodal developments in existing riverfront communities.

3

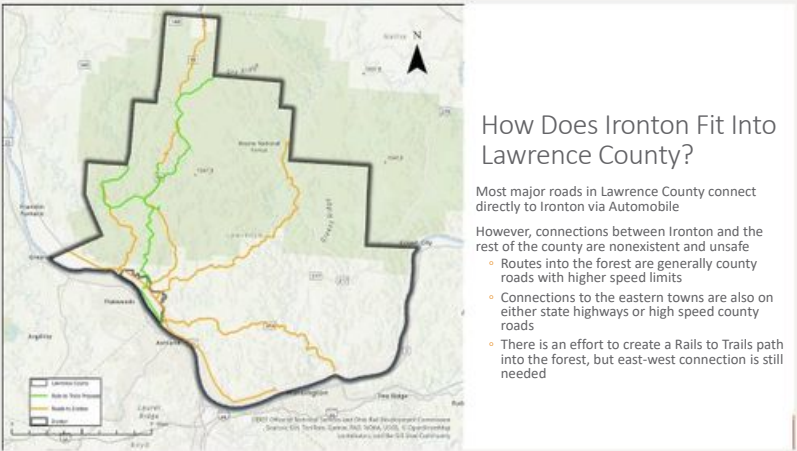
Union-Rome Park

Located in Proctorville, not far from the scenic Ohio River, this public asset is proposed to be a primary catalyst for attracting and retaining young families while serving more than 9,000 residents in Union and Rome Townships.

Ironton has the foundations to reconnect with the river, rivertowns, and visitors. Its strong street grid, historic sites, and beloved community events are assets to build on. This plan guides that growth across four areas: the waterfront, downtown, connections, and tourism. Each is phased over time, from quick early wins to long-term transformation.

- » **Waterfront:** The existing floodwall protects the city from flooding but effectively severs its connection to the Ohio River. The proposal calls for a short-term (5-year) Downtown Riverfront Park featuring greenspace, an amphitheater, a marina, and a riverboat dock. Intermediate and long-term phases would expand this by acquiring additional riverfront land, replacing sections of the wall with a "green" river wall, and adding a connective bike path linking the new parks.
- » **City:** Vacancy in the Central Business District is identified as a core weakness. Redevelopment is phased by target area: in the short term (0–5 years), a pedestrian-only arts district on 3rd Street anchored by the restoration of the RO-NA Theater, along with bike rentals and public art installations; in the intermediate term (5–15 years), infill housing (duplexes and small apartments) and new pocket parks; and in the long term (15+ years), larger parks, Underground Railroad heritage sites, hotels, coffee shops, and specialty retail.

- » **Connections:** Ironton benefits from a strong internal street grid but remains car-dependent, with poor connections to the rest of Lawrence County and neighboring towns. A three-step bicycle network is proposed: (1) link the Moulton's Field trailhead to downtown via Railroad Street; (2) route cyclists through 2nd and 3rd Streets via a key transitional turn; and (3) extend the network east toward South Point, with a spur connecting local schools.
- » **Tourism:** The plan recommends building on existing draws — the Memorial Day Parade, the "Thunder on the River" motorcycle rally, Underground Railroad sites, and fishing/catfish tournaments — while expanding non-conventional lodging options (Airbnbs, conversions of vacant upper floors), establishing a riverboat stop, and widening sidewalks to better connect hotels to downtown.



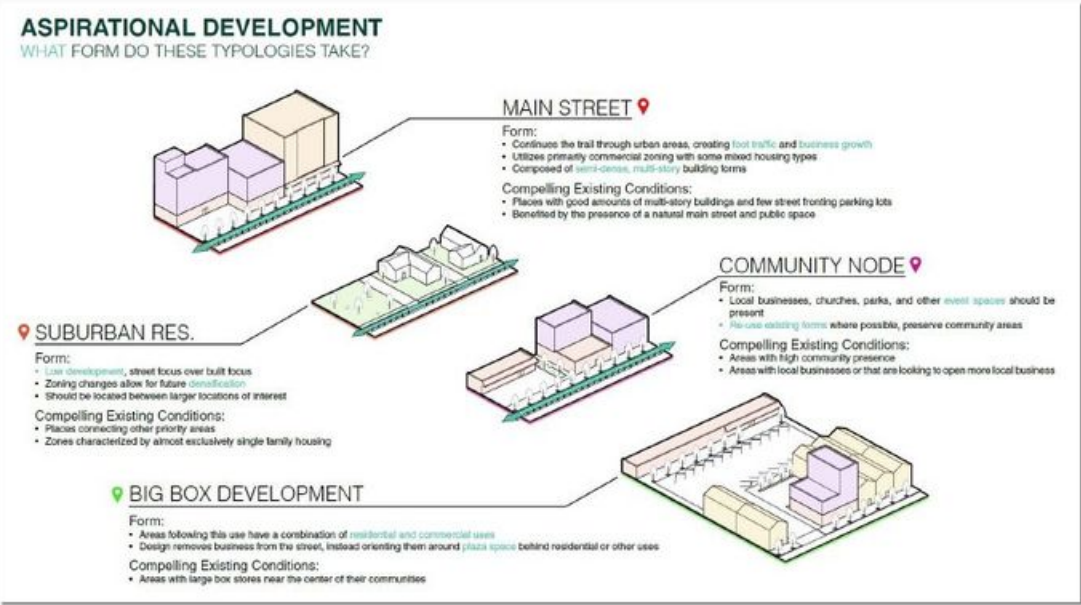
Downtown Ironton
PLAN7007 | Fall 2025
Kenny Smith

A phased vision to remake downtown Ironton as a regional destination by improving access, activating the riverfront, reusing vacant historic buildings, and expanding housing and public space. It identifies a key mobility gap: while major roads connect Lawrence County to Ironton by car, multimodal connections to the forest and eastern towns are limited, making trails and east-west links important. The plan also identifies a proposed riverboat stop on the Ohio River as a tourism gateway into downtown, supported by an amphitheater and boat launch and calls for adaptive reuse of underutilized downtown buildings, including the Brumberg Building, into a hotel and amenities hub to reduce vacancies.



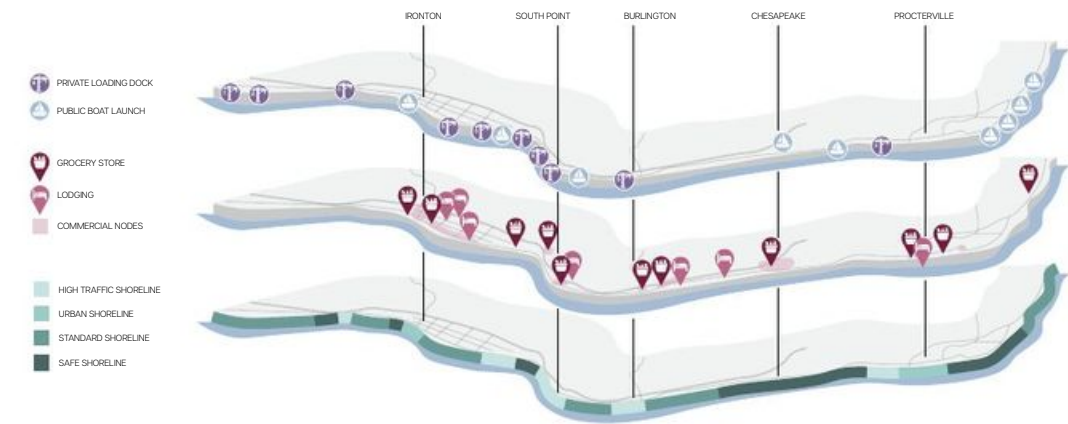
Ironton's Main Street
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Aiden Hunicutt | Aidyn Kinney |
Elijah Milner | Sophia Gartland

A framework for revitalizing community corridors along the Ohio River in Lawrence County. The proposed long-term vision for Ironton's main street emphasizes a pedestrian-oriented streetscape, stronger local business activity, new housing and investment, community programming, and trail connections.



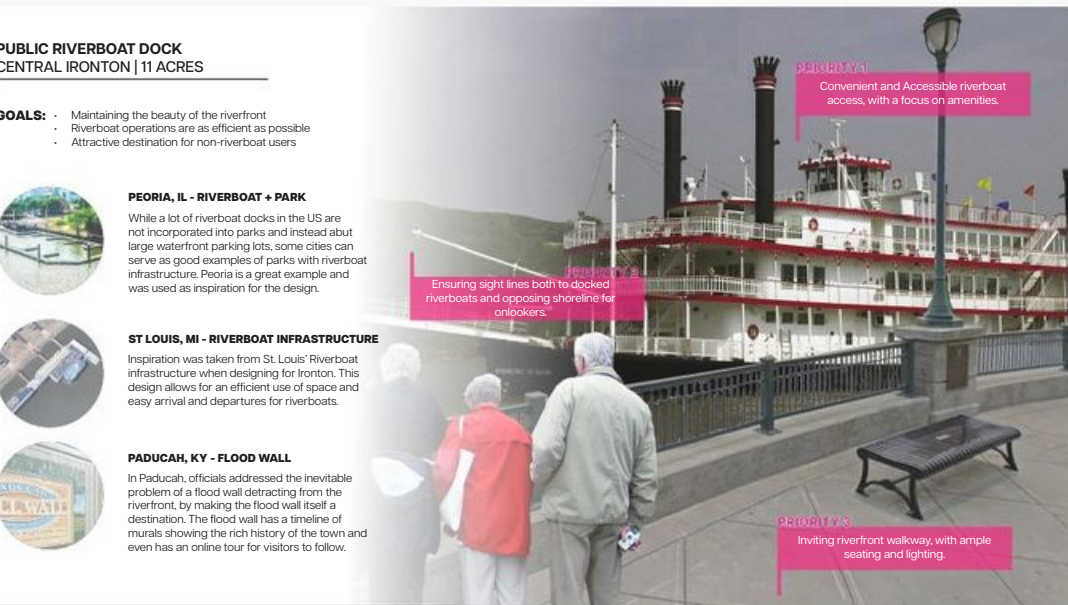
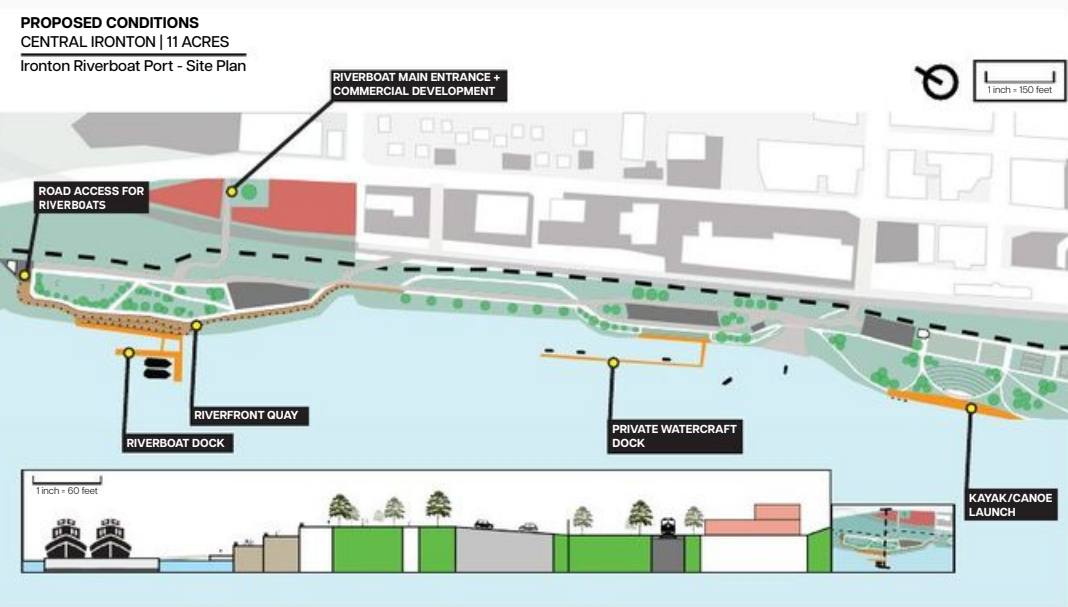
DETERMINING SUITABLE SITES

PRELIMINARY DATA THAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN CONSIDERING WHERE TO DEVELOP.



Riverboat Stop
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Adelaide Sheets | Eli Goan |
Elijah Vernagus | Margaret Dull

This concept positions Central Ironton as a multi-use riverfront: operationally functional for riverboats while also serving as a public park, recreation launch point, and commercial destination. Ironton's riverfront park could combine efficient riverboat operations with public recreation and commercial activity.



Conceptual Ironton Rendering



South Corridor | Along The River

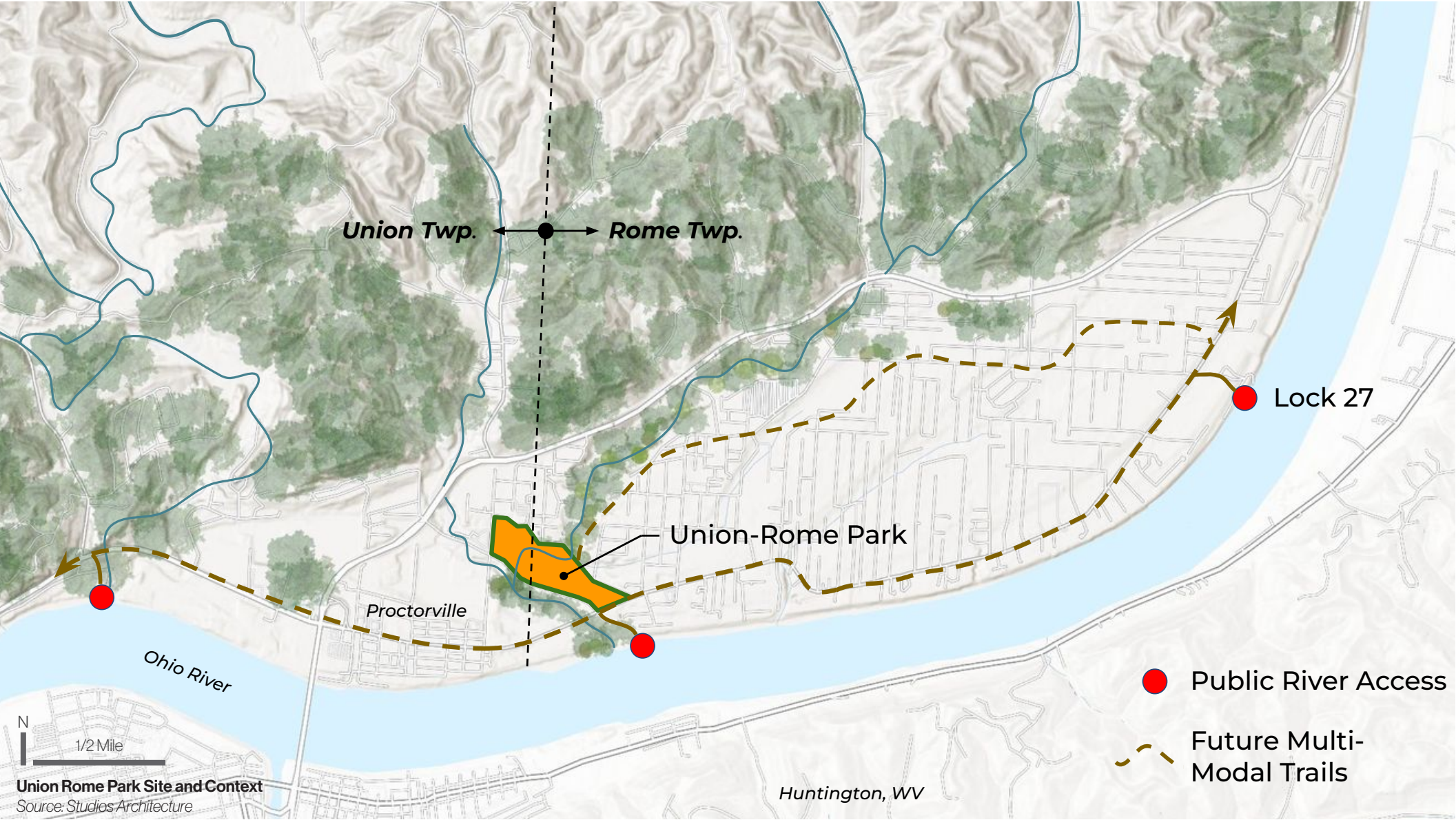
The cornerstone project in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan is a proposed park and trail system at the intersection of Union and Rome Townships. Located in Proctorville, just a short walk from the scenic Ohio River, this proposed first of its kind public asset is imagined as a primary catalyst for attracting and retaining families while serving more than 9,000 residents in Union and Rome Townships.

The Concept

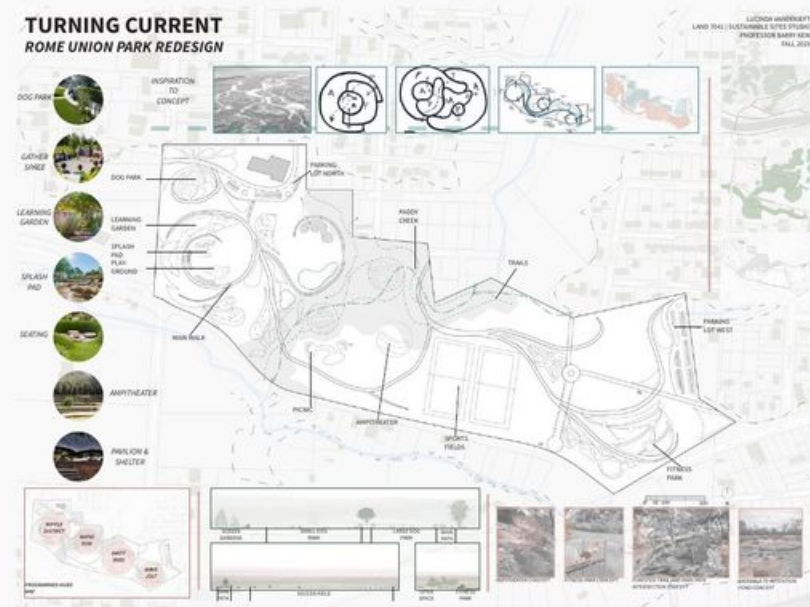
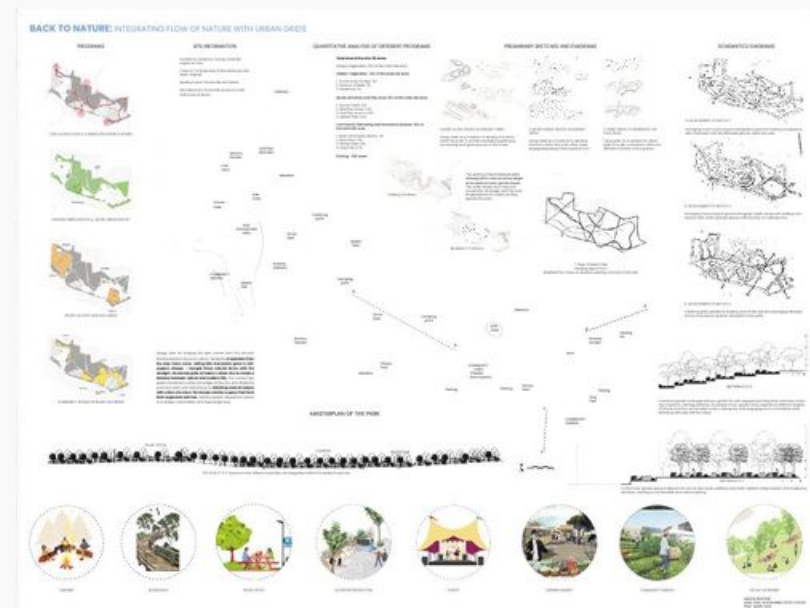
With the construction of the new State Route 7 Chesapeake Bypass connecting the East Huntington Bridge to State Route 775 in Proctorville, there is opportunity to create a more pedestrian and cyclist friendly multimodal connection along the Ohio River via old Rt. 7 from points south to Lock 27. The proposed Union-Rome Park is a central feature to this trail network that can become a destination for families and friends to enjoy the natural beauty of the land with active play and pavilion areas. Secondary trails can provide access to the nearby fairgrounds and public schools.

Resilient Design: Low lying portions of the park land within the flood plain can be designed with natural features that enhance local biodiversity while serving to mitigate flood vulnerability.

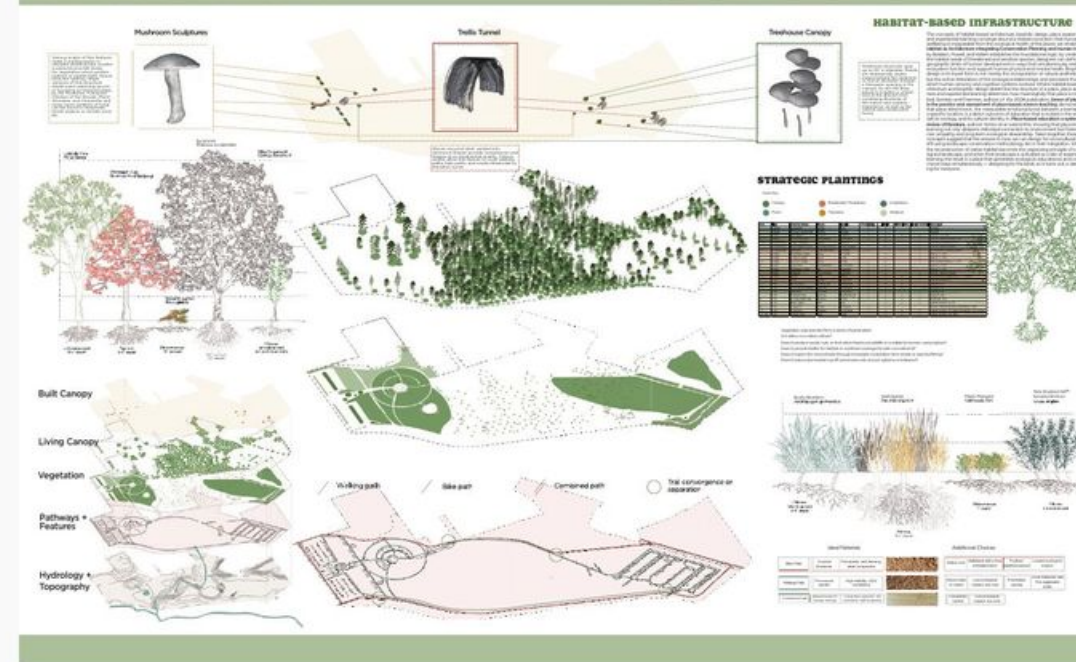
Socio-Economic Objectives: The proposed park and its associated network of trails can provide high-quality public amenities and a direct connection to the Ohio River's natural beauty, strengthening a "live, work, play" environment essential for regional growth and long-term resident retention.



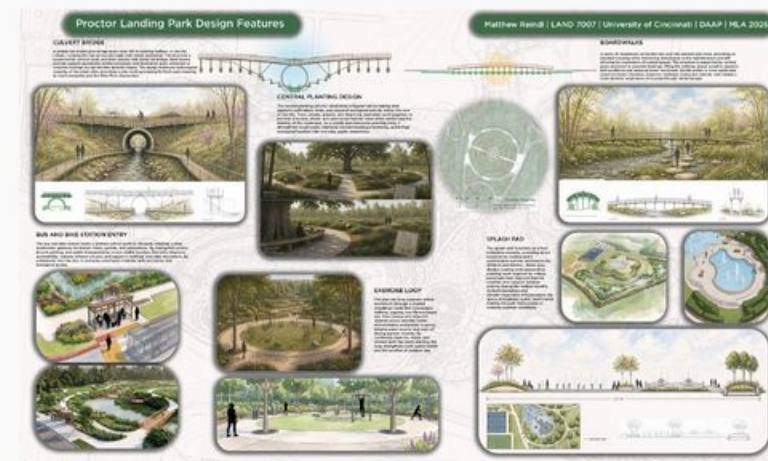
Conceptual redesigns for Rome Union Park in Lawrence County, Ohio, centered on recreation, ecological restoration, and connected public space. Shared design directions include nature-led park structure, connected circulation, active and passive recreation, and ecological performance.

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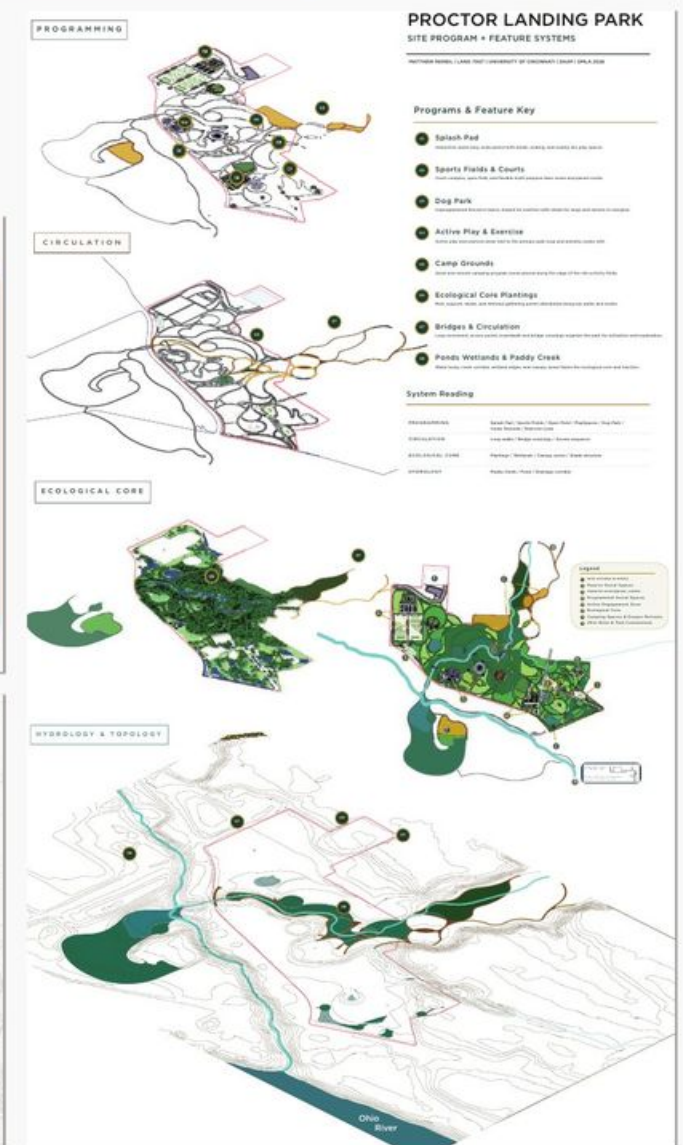
G. Ragusa | MLA 2026 | LAND 7007 | DAAP | UC



A connected riverfront park system where recreation, camping, wetlands, and creekside habitats are linked by loop trails, bridges, and accessible gathering spaces.



A habitat-based landscape framework that combines native planting, permeable paths, rainwater-harvesting canopies, and experiential learning features to support ecological health and everyday park use.



Conceptual Air Park Trail Rendering



Ohio River Catalyst Sites

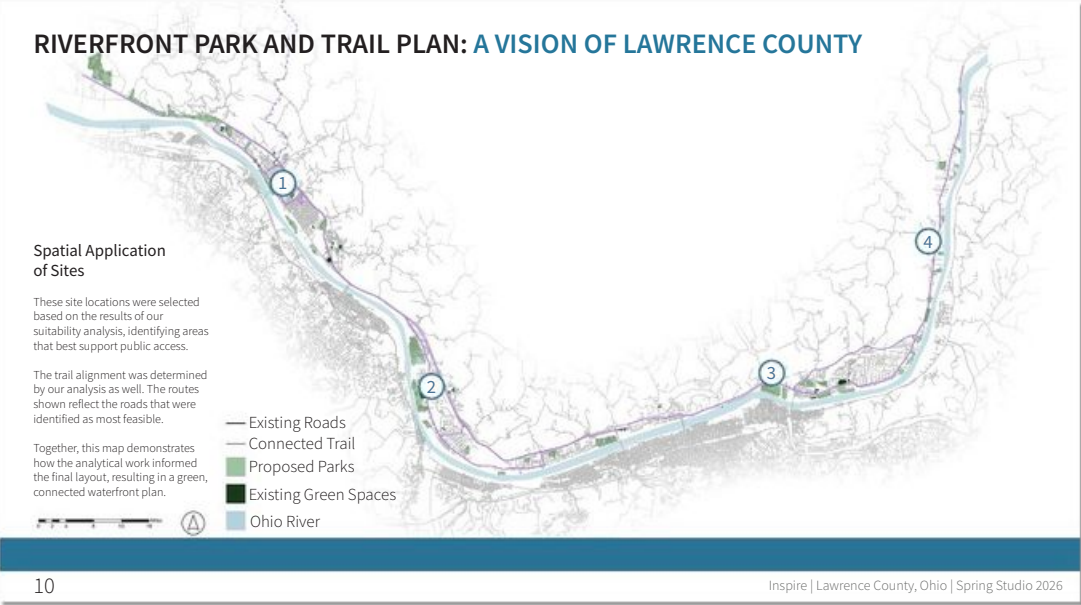
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Aiden Hunicutt | Aidyn Kinney |
Elijah Milner | Sophia Gartland

Lawrence County's Riverside communities offer several recreation and development assets, including river paths, parks, boat launches, an airport, and riverfront facilities.

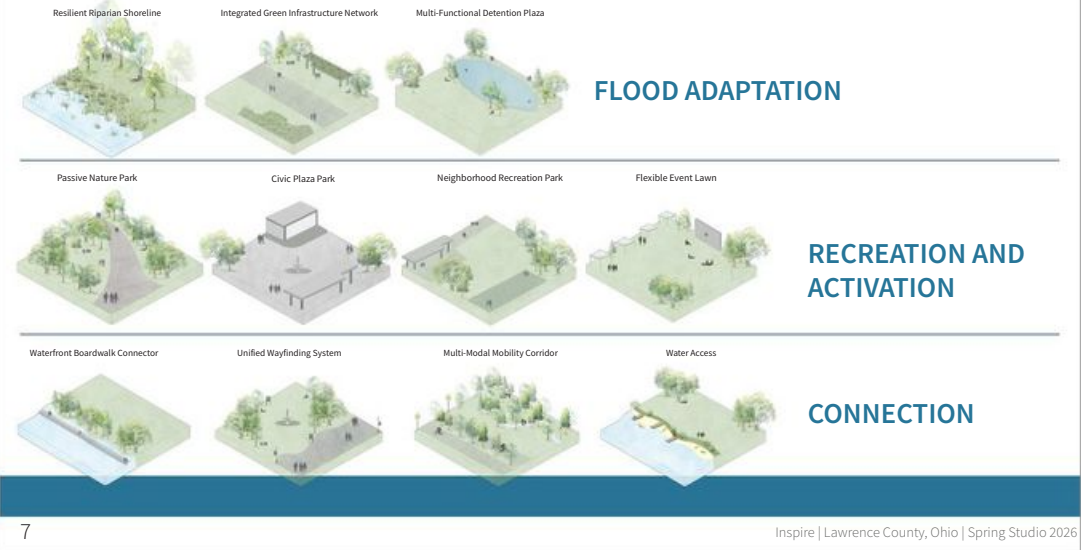
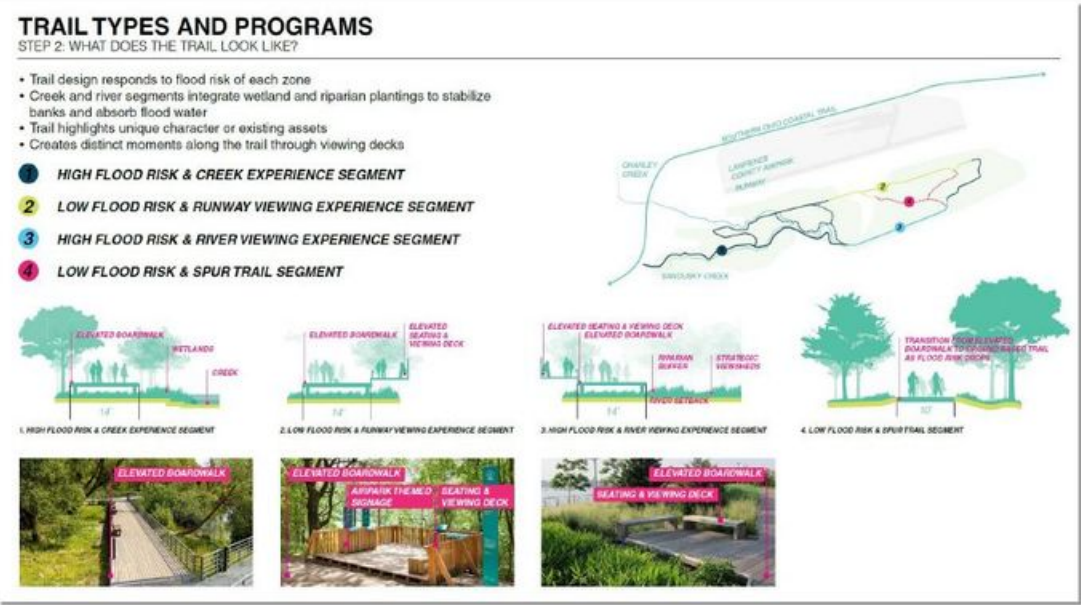
Riverfront Parks and Trails

PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Kayra Koprulu | Niamh O'Melia |
Wynnie Serra | Zoe Limbach

A connected riverfront park and trail system designed to improve public access to the Ohio River while strengthening flood resilience and recreation opportunities. Guided by site-suitability and trail-feasibility analyses, it links proposed parks, existing green spaces, and feasible road corridors through features such as riparian shoreline restoration, green infrastructure, detention plazas, boardwalks, water access, recreation areas, event lawns, multimodal routes, and unified way-finding.



STRATEGY CATALOG | PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES



River and Runway Trail

PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Sophia Gartland

A 2.75-mile loop that links river, creek, and runway experiences while responding to flood risk and airport safety constraints. The trail system is designed for walkers and cyclists of varying abilities and distances. Its route is shaped by runway protection and lateral safety zones, floodplains, and terrain, with an emphasis on bringing users to the river. Flood-responsive design includes elevated boardwalks, viewing decks, wetland plantings, and riparian buffers to support bank stability and absorb floodwater. Trail experiences include a high-flood-risk creek experience, a low-flood-risk runway viewing segment, a high-flood-risk river experience, and a low-flood-risk spur trail to ground-level trail where flood risk decreases.

Riverfront Parks and Trails
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Kayra Koprulu | Niamh O'Melia
| Wynnie Serra | Zoe Limbach

These projects reimagine the Ohio riverfront in Lawrence County as an inclusive, flood-resilient riverfront destination centered on recreation, habitat, and public access. Drawing on waterfront precedents in Baltimore and Lisbon, the design uses topography, views, trails, and protected riparian areas to create a park that supports both community life and the river's natural flow.

PHASE 3: COMPLETE + ANCHOR
CREATING A DESTINATION COMMUNITY CENTER

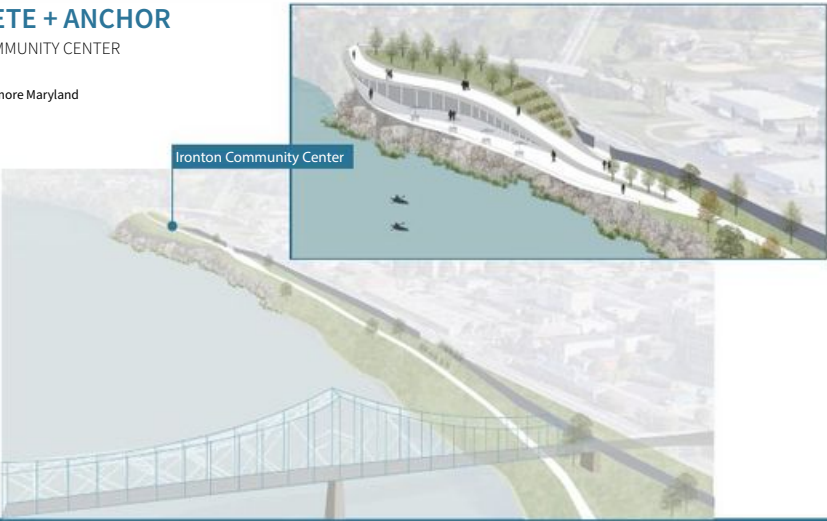
CASE STUDY: Federal Hill Park in Baltimore Maryland

Shows how elevation can create a protective and civic waterfront landscape through flood resilience, panoramic views, and strong public connections.



CASE STUDY: MAAT Museum in Lisbon, Portugal

Demonstrates how a riverfront building can blend architecture and landscape through a walkable roof, civic space, and strong waterfront access.



13

Inspire | Lawrence County, Ohio | Spring Studio 2026

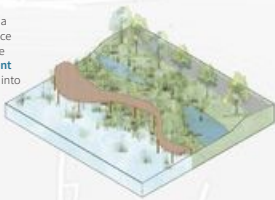
TRAILS CONNECTED
RECREATION - PATH - FLOOD PREVENTION
A PARK FOR ALL



ENVISIONING A PARK
The natural flow of the park is from the street view **flowing towards the waterfront**, focusing on specific view sheds and leading people towards the direction of the natural flowing body of water

WHAT A PARK NEEDS?

This is a top view, comprehensive plan of a new park to be implemented into Lawrence County. The intention of this park because of the natural size is to have **three different phases** and park strategies implemented into the entirety of the area.



18

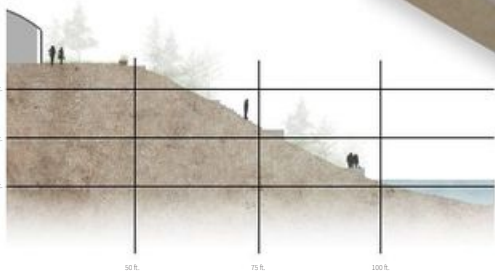
Plan to Projects | Lawrence County, Ohio | Spring Studio Assignment 2026

RE-IMAGINING THE RIVERFRONT
Adaptive Design for Recreation, Habitat, and Water Access

This proposal reworks **Athalia Park** into a layered landscape that combines **community space** with the **natural environment**.

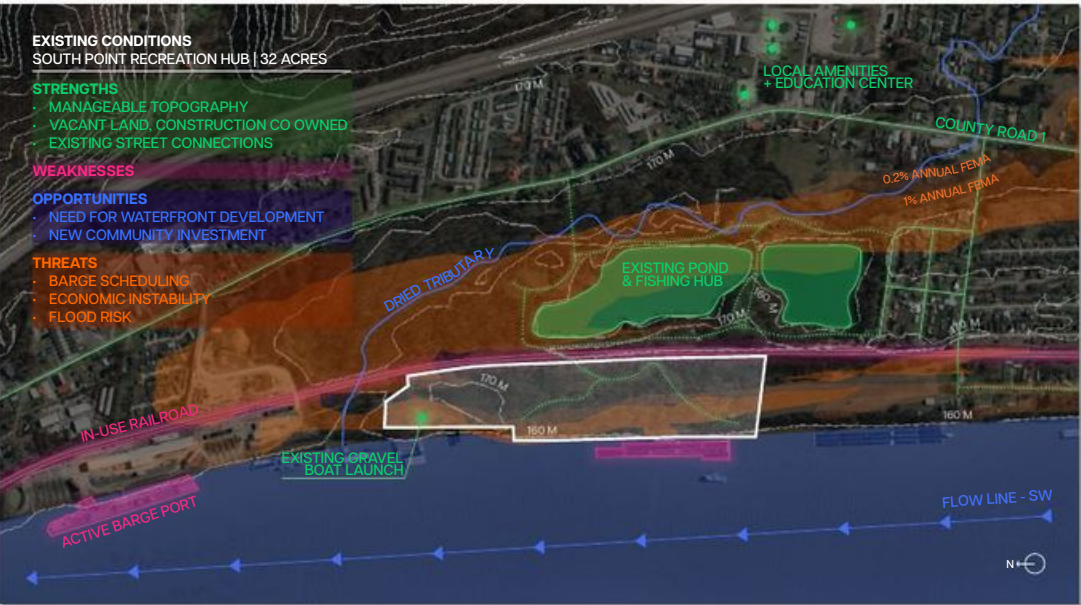
The flat upper area supports **neighborhood scale** uses like courts, open lawn, and gathering space, while a series of **terraces and winding paths** lead down toward the river.

Accessible routes, overlooks, and reflection spaces line the slope, **connecting the park to the waterfront**.

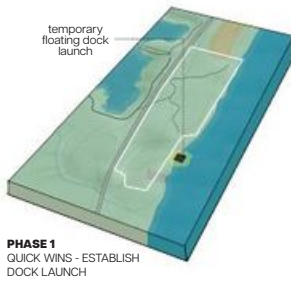


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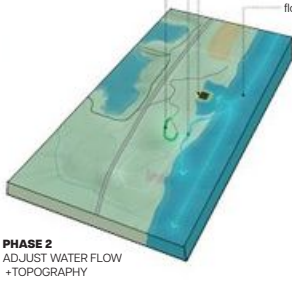
Inspire | Lawrence County, Ohio | Spring Studio 2026



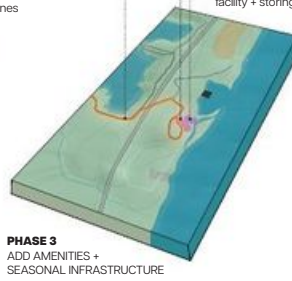
VISUALIZING THE PROJECT
SOUTH POINT RECREATION HUB | 32 ACRES



PHASE 1
QUICK WINS - ESTABLISH DOCK LAUNCH



PHASE 2
ADJUST WATER FLOW + TOPOGRAPHY



PHASE 3
ADD AMENITIES + SEASONAL INFRASTRUCTURE



BEFORE POND TRANSFORMATION



AFTER POND TRANSFORMATION

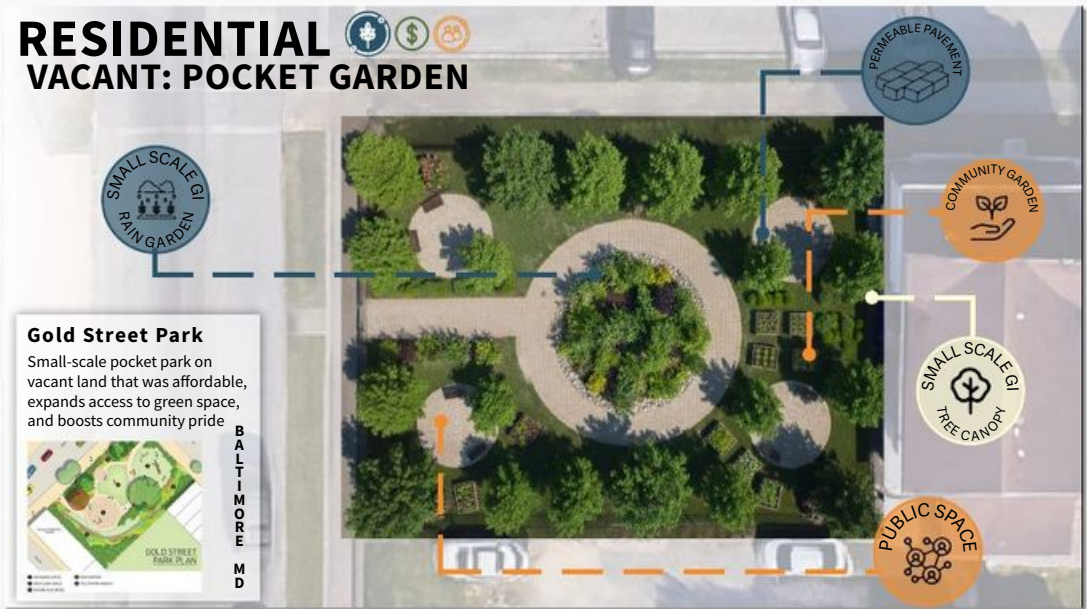


South Point Recreation Hub
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Margaret Dull

The South Point Recreation Hub is a phased plan to transform 32 acres of vacant waterfront land near an active barge port into a public recreation destination centered on water access, family amenities, and flexible seasonal uses. Key elements include flood-responsive design, a dock and launch area, with a future rental and paddle-storage facility, enhancement of the existing pond and a diverted play-water channel, visitor amenities and access improvements.

Green Infrastructure
PLAN7007 | Spring 2026
Alexa Krauth

Small-scale green infrastructure can deliver outsized public value when cities target underused, flood-prone, and erosion-prone sites. The projects combine practical stormwater and shoreline measures—such as native vegetation, rain gardens, permeable pavement, planter boxes, gabion walls, and riprap—with community amenities including boardwalks, terraces, fishing access, gardens, and public gathering space.



CHESAPEAKE FOCUS AREA

At the moment, 3rd Street through Chesapeake serves as the towns main thoroughfare. Business line the street and many people pass through daily. Improving the design of the street would increase curb appeal of business, improve pedestrian safety, bring more foot traffic to business, and create more habitat for wildlife.



SIMILAR STREETSCAPE RE-DESIGN IN MIDDLETOWN, OHIO

Middletown, Ohio had almost the exact road dimensions that Chesapeake currently has. With that space, they re-designed the street to be more inviting and visually nice. The Heritage Ohio grant was the largest source of funding for this re-design project.



Chesapeake Hub
PLAN4041 | Spring 2026
Elijah Millner

The proposed 3rd Street redesign in Chesapeake will create a safer, more welcoming downtown corridor by improving pedestrian access, supporting local businesses, adding trees and habitat, and incorporating a bike route that connects visitors with Chesapeake's main street.

BIKE PATH ON 3rd STREET

Having the bike path ride along 3rd street would encourage users to frequent businesses. Street parking will move to the other side of the street in select locations.



BIKE PATH ON REAR ALLEY

Having the bike path in the alley would create more space for parking on 3rd street, larger sidewalks, and more room for larger trees along the street. This alley would have to be shared with the occasional vehicle, however. The alley would remain about 16' wide and could do with a re-surfacing job.



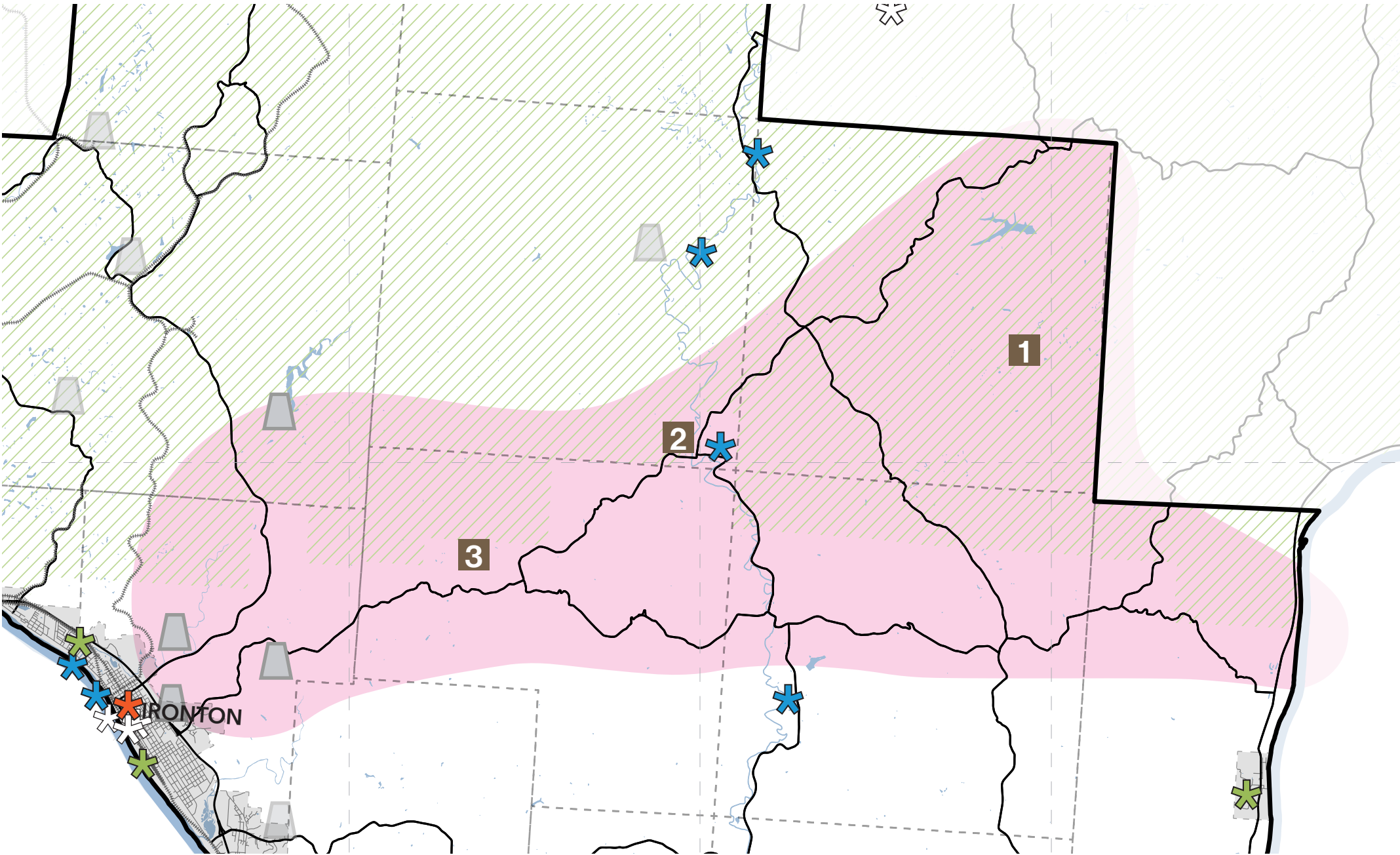
Middle | East-West Connection

This recommendation proposes to strengthen connections between more northern communities within the county from east to west by designating a continuous multimodal route that touches multiple recreational destinations.

The Concept

Lawrence County's transportation network runs largely north-south via the major state routes. The transportation master plan includes an east-west by-pass relieving traffic pressure along coastal communities. However, there's no equivalent to an east-west connector further north in the county where opportunity exists to connect communities through agricultural traditions and recreational activities. This east-west corridor running along state route 141 can provide side-by-side access for biking and hiking from Ironton to the Crown City Wildlife Preserve.

- » **Experience:** The recommendation is to identify and enhance destination points along the corridor from Iron Furnaces in the Pedro region, through multiple horse trails including Elkins Creek Horse Camp, crossing Symmes Creek near Aid, and culminating in a mine restoration project in the Crown City Wildlife Preserve.
- » **Ecology:** Three candidate routes were evaluated by overlaying tree canopy, Wayne National Forest boundaries, and Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) risk data. The proposed route provides for a defensible design for fire-resistance construction and emergency access.
- » **Economy:** The most significant proposal is the Crown City Mines restoration - converting ~2,963 acres of state-owned reclaimed surface mine land into productive, revenue-generating landscapes including sunflower fields and mesacanthus for phyto-remediation and biofuel, lavender fields with bee-keeping, pick-your-own berry fields (native species: red mulberry, plum, cranberry, chokeberry, blueberry), and birdwatching zone (notably home to Northern Bobwhite Quail).



1

Crown City

The Crown City Mine Restoration project proposes transforming reclaimed coal mine land into an ecologically restored, income-generating landscape. This project combines environmental cleanup, habitat restoration, renewable energy, farming, tourism, and local seasonal employment.

2

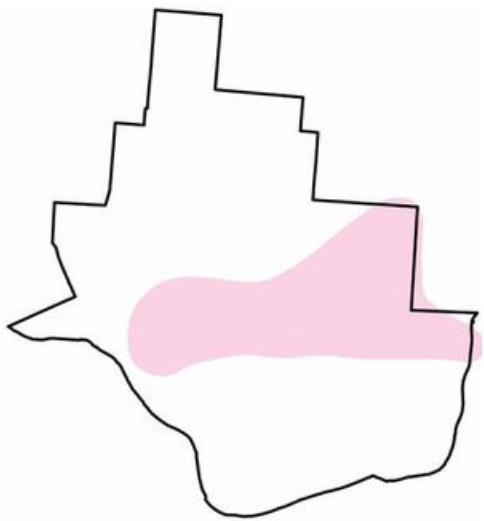
Aid

A scenic edible garden near Symmes Valley High School, run initially through the school's FFA chapter (with potential for Agricultural Proficiency Awards), featuring a "pick-your-own" model and production of secondary goods (juices, jams, ciders).

3

Connection and Conservation

The plan also emphasizes an east-west conservation approach that protects natural systems, expands recreational connectivity, supports sustainable settlement and community hubs, and preserves productive farmland through local food, agri-business, and environmental stewardship initiatives.



East-to-West Corridor Map

Source: ESRI ArcGIS & various student projects

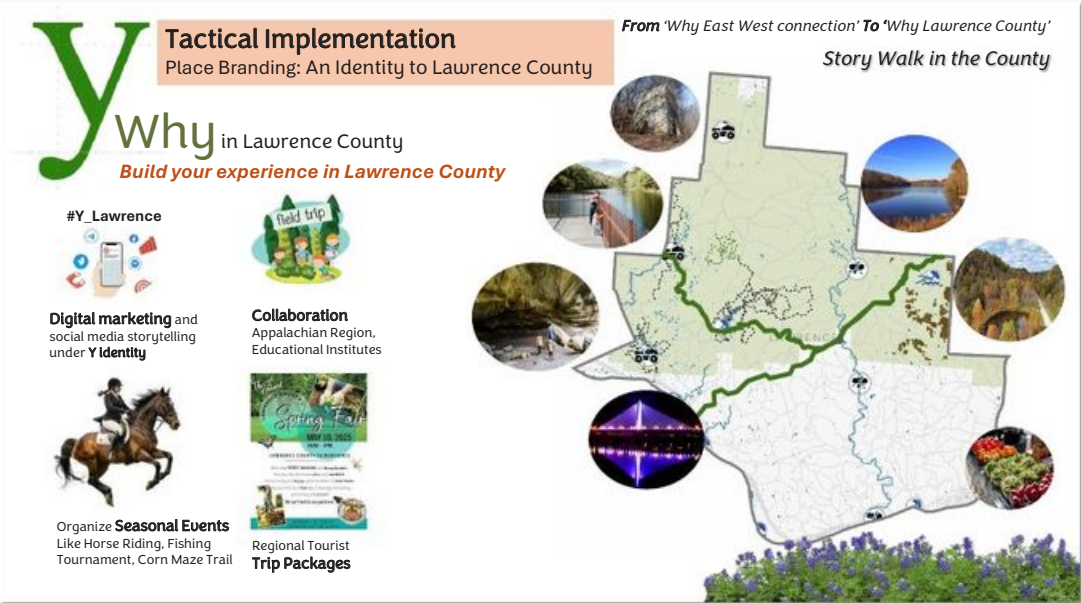
- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | Municipality Boundary | | Ohio River |
| | Township Boundary | | Creek |
| | Opportunity Zone | | Furnace |
| | Wayne National Forest | | Existing Projects |
| | County Boundary | | Proposed Trail Project |
| | State Route | | Proposed Improvement Project |
| | Municipal Road | | Proposed Green Infrastructure Project |
| | Railroad Line | | Proposed Blue Infrastructure Project |

Conceptual Crown City Wildlife Mine Restoration Rendering

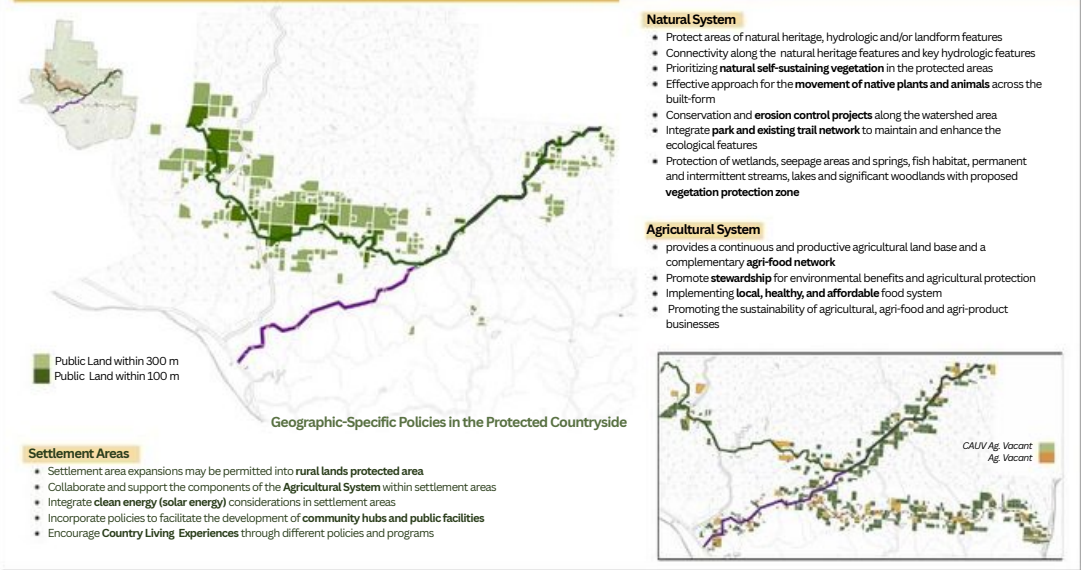


East-West Connection
PLAN7007 | Fall 2025
Yurika Ban

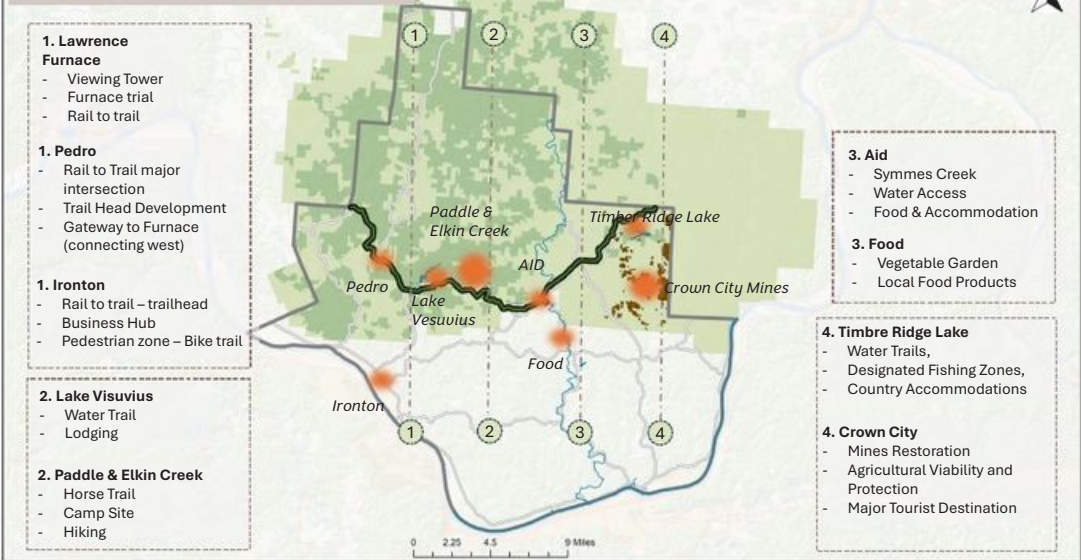
A tactical plan to strengthen Lawrence County's identity as a connected outdoor, heritage, and agricultural destination. It proposes the #Y_Lawrence brand, digital storytelling, regional partnerships, and seasonal events, while linking destinations such as Lawrence Furnace, Pedro, Ironton, Lake Vesuvius, Elkins Creek, Aid, Timber Ridge Lake, and Crown City through trails, water access, lodging, food, and restored cultural sites. The plan also emphasizes an east-west conservation approach that protects natural systems, expands recreational connectivity, supports sustainable settlement and community hubs, and preserves productive farmland through local food, agri-business, and environmental stewardship initiatives.



East West Connection: Conservation Approach



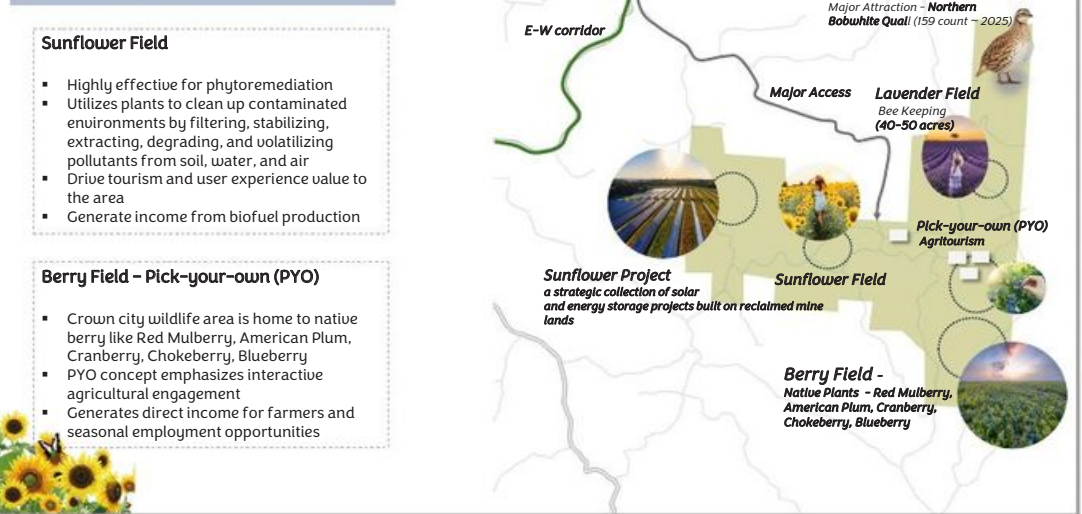
Experience: Place Based Identity



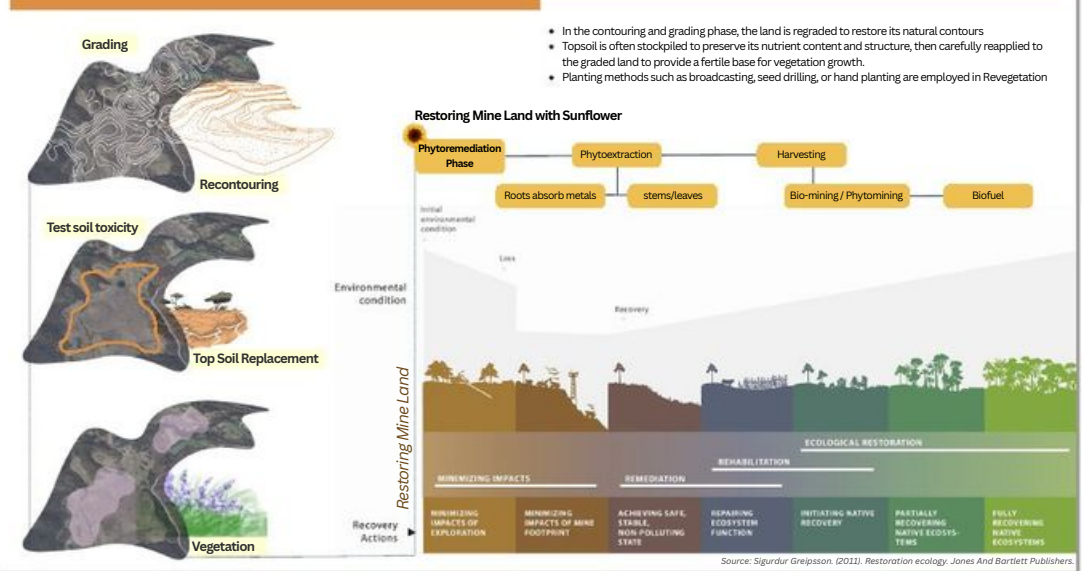
Crown City Mine Restoration



Economy:
Crown City Mines Restoration



Ecological Restoration: A Process



Crown City Mine Restoration
PLAN7007 | Fall 2025
Yurika Ban

The Crown City Mine Restoration project proposes transforming reclaimed coal mine land into an ecologically restored, income-generating landscape. Sunflower fields would support phyto-remediation by absorbing contaminants such as lead, zinc, copper, and manganese, with harvested biomass offering potential biofuel. The project also identifies a solar and energy-storage opportunity complementary agritourism uses including lavender and bee-keeping, pick-your-own fields of native berries, and bird-watching habitat. Together, these elements combine environmental cleanup, habitat restoration, renewable energy, farming, tourism, and local seasonal employment.

Process



Lawrence County's distinct geographic position has allowed for a unique culture to flourish, bringing in elements of southern charm, Appalachian folklore, with an industrial and mining history similar to metropolitan areas to the north. It has strengths and opportunities in its abundance of natural amenities and strong regional identity. Residents of the county are wondering how they can capitalize on their forest, plain, and riparian landscapes, without sacrificing their traditions and livelihood.

— Student, School of Planning

Public & Private Partnership

Following the Resolution by the Lawrence County Commission for the development of a connected recreation plan, the University of Cincinnati, in consultation with STUDIOS Architecture and the Lawrence County Economic Corporation, proposed a three semester process to develop a Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

2025 Summer Semester

STUDIOS Architecture and the University of Cincinnati partnered with the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation and Lawrence County Commission to explore, document and analyze Lawrence County's parks, recreation and culture assets as they stand today. Students in the Urban Planning program course researched and took inventory of County statistics including population, demographics, infrastructure, access to waterways, trail networks, and land use. STUDIOS accompanied students to identify potential sites for new parks, recreation, and tourism projects that could support the county's goals of attracting and retaining residents while promoting responsible ecotourism. The group had the privilege of joining the County Commission and community for workshops to further understand the needs and desires of county residents.

2025 Fall Semester

STUDIOS and the University of Cincinnati returned to Lawrence County in September of 2025 to solicit additional input from county residents to help shape the development of future project proposals. Students and faculty joined STUDIOS to visit key assets including preserved iron furnaces, the Crown City Wildlife Preserve, the four state-funded riverfront improvement sites, and the opportunity zones identified as part of the summer 2025 coursework. STUDIOS and the UC students subsequently developed project proposals alongside one another to put forth recommendations as part of the larger Master Plan document with feedback from the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation and the Lawrence County Commission.

2026 Spring Semester

University of Cincinnati further engaged active groups and associations within the community with the guidance of the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation and Lawrence County Commission to garner input for prioritizing the project proposals over the coming 10 to 15 years.

The Ohio Riverfront Studio focused on the approximately 52 miles of Ohio Riverfront in Lawrence County. A vast majority of the county's population reside no more than 1.5 miles from the riverfront in communities such as Ironton, Chesapeake, Burlington, Southpoint, Coal Grove, Athalia, Proctorville and Rome. A vast majority of the county's employment is also located in this riverfront urbanized zone. While the northern portion of Lawrence County is dominated by hilly terrain, scenic forested landscapes, and Wayne National Forest, county residents also strongly identify with the Ohio River and revel in being the 'southern coast' of Ohio.

PLAN3031 Planning Design Studio: Comprehensive/Regional
Shilpa Mehta/Barry Kew
(with the participation of Hayden Shelby and Leah Hollstein)

PLAN4063 Planning Theory & Ethics

PLAN4084 Finance & Budgeting for Planners
Chris Auffrey

PLAN7007 Plan-Making Workshop
Shilpa Mehta

PLAN6033/5133 and **LAND7042**
Greening Cities and Neighborhoods: Tools, Practices, and Planning
Leah Hollstein

LAND7041 Sustainable Sites I Studio
Barry Kew

PLAN4041 Planning Design Studio
Shilpa Mehta

LAND7010 MLA Capstone Studio
Barry Kew

PLAN6029 Community Development Planning
Hayden Shelby



Resolution of Lawrence County Commission dated April 8, 2025.

Whereas the Lawrence County Commission recognizes the need for well-planned and connected parks and recreation throughout Lawrence County with solid plans to finance the development, construction, and operation of such facilities; and,

Whereas Lawrence County has been discussing these needs for several months making investments in land for these purposes with additional investments currently being made by the State of Ohio at several locations across the County with an emphasis on the Ohio River recreation opportunities; and,

Whereas The University of Cincinnati has a nationally respected planning school as a part of the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning, and periodically conducts planning projects to assist underdeveloped regions.

Be it Resolved that the Lawrence County Commission officially requests that the University of Cincinnati's School of Planning Select the recreation and park needs of Lawrence County Ohio as a project whereby a comprehensive plan for parks and recreation be developed. It is further requested that the plan include reasonable connectivity of all features and a full economic and financial feature to assist in the developing and maintenance of the proposed facilities.



Colton Copley
Dr. Colton Copley, President
Deanna Holliday
Mrs. Deanna Holliday, Vice President
Mike Finley
Mr. Mike Finley, Member



“This partnership has unlocked ideas and a future that we would not have been able to achieve on our own.”

– Dr. Colton Copley
County Commissioner

County Visits

On the heels of the opportunities identified by the Summer 2025 students and input from community members, University of Cincinnati students and STUDIOS Architecture further explored the unique potential for projects along the riverfront, the post-industrial corridor, and for connecting the east and west at sites such as Aid and Timber Ridge Lake.

The group documenting the riverfront sites visited the Ironton Riverfront, South Point Boat Ramp, Burlington Riverfront, Indian Guyan Boat Ramp, Lock 27, Chesapeake-Symmes Creek Inlet, and one additional access site near Proctorville. UC and STUDIOS discussed potential design strategies to drive economic development, mitigate flood risk, and connect the sites via a land trail. The group exploring the post-industrial corridor north of Ironton visited several former iron furnace sites including Vesuvius Furnace, as well as others that have not been preserved. The group also explored the potential for a rails-to-trails conversion of the CH&D and DT&I rail lines, and broader connections via multi-modal routes along Route 93. A third group explored the Symmes Creek Corridor and sought potential opportunities for strategic canoe launch amenities to support improved use of this paddle corridor.

"Lawrence County is highly unique in its collection of both natural features as well as its social character. While you might visit the natural scenery of the county's rolling hills and lush woods, there is a personality to the communities that make places such as Ironton, Proctorville, and even some of the very smallest townships a worthwhile experience. For these reasons I see Lawrence County as a place with high potential for growth and enjoyment, both for residents and visitors alike."

—Travis Clark
UC DAAP Student

1 Ohio Riverfront

The Ohio riverfront from Ironton to the historic Old Lock and Dam 27 site in Rome Township features scenic local

2 Lake Vesuvius & Furnace

A 143-acre water body named after the 19th-century iron industry, this area features a historic stone furnace from the region's prominent 1800s iron-smelting era, campgrounds, a swim beach, picnic

3 Proctorville

Proctorville and Rome are closely connected communities located along the Ohio River.

Proctorville is famous as the birthplace of the famous "Rome Beauty" apple, which was first grown in Rome Township in

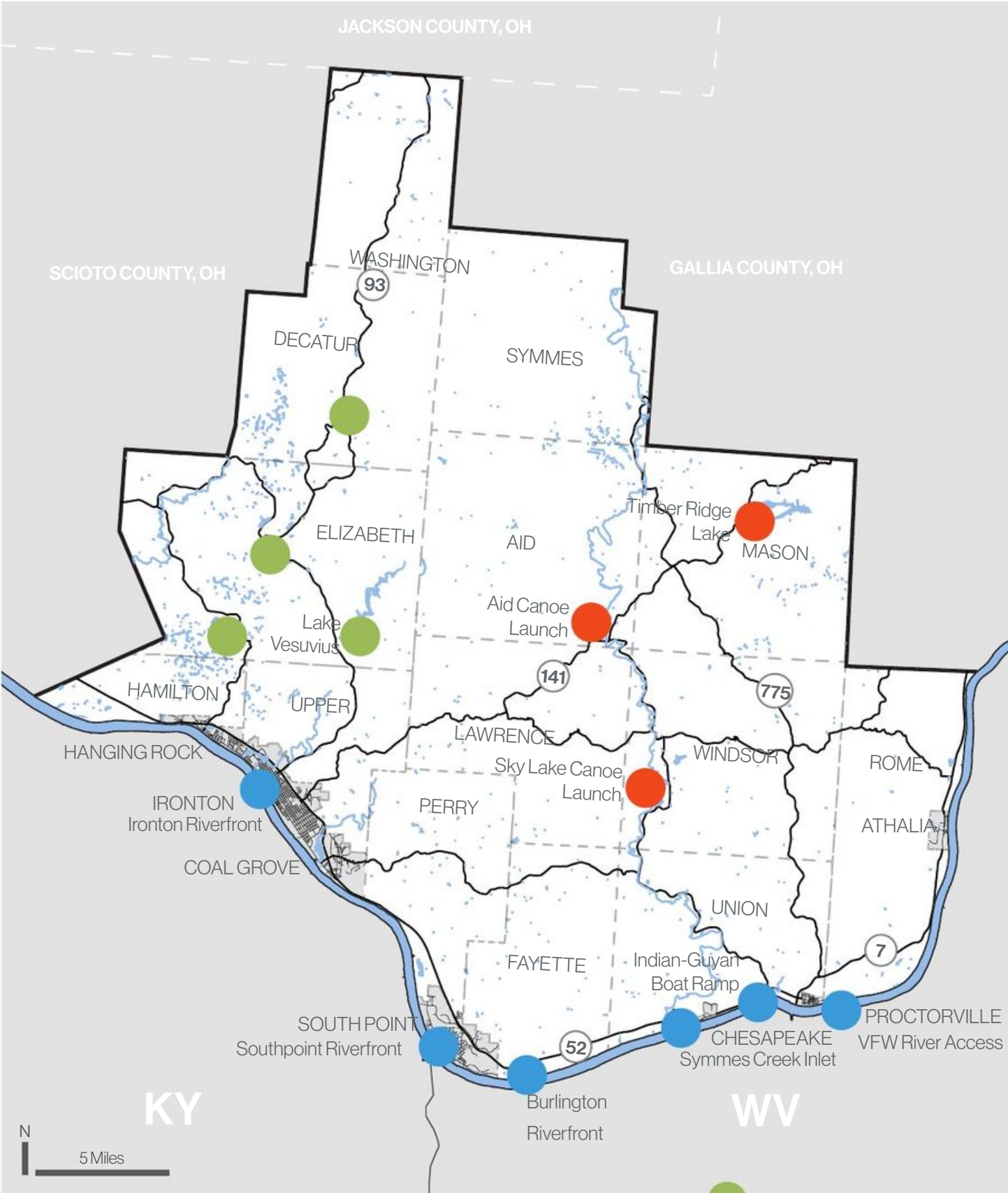
4 Aid

At the intersection of Symmes Creek and OH-141, Aid is a small hamlet and home

5 Timbre Ridge Lake

This 100-acre lake is located in the Wayne National Forest Ironton Ranger District. There are over 1,200 acres of Wayne National Forest surrounding Timbre Ridge Lake and this area is great for fishing, hunting, camping, or hiking trips.

Crown City Wildlife Area is an 11,120-acre state wildlife area located in Gallia and Lawrence counties just south of Timbre Ridge Lake. Much of the land comprising the Crown City Wildlife Area was subjected to historical surface and strip mining before being acquired and reclaimed as public wildlife land.



Lawrence County Site Visit Map
Source: ESRI ArcGIS Online

- Post-Industrial Corridor Sites Visited
- River Access Sites Visited
- Symmes Creek Corridor Sites Visited

Funding & Maintenance Sources

“The best projects happen when people work together. Local government cannot do it alone. By bringing together our communities, businesses, universities and state and federal partners, we can accomplish far more than any one organization could on its own.”

—DeAnna Holliday
County Commissioner

Funding & Maintenance Sources

The project proposals within the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan will rely on collaboration between public and private organizations to identify and provide funding for additional detailed planning, land acquisition, approvals, construction, and maintenance. The following section identifies, Federal, State and Appalachian partnership sources that may be applicable for the proposed projects.

Federal Funding Programs

» **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**

A federal matching-fund program (administered in Ohio through ODNR) supporting acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas. Typically matches up to 50% of project cost. Requires the applicant to hold title to the land, making it well suited to publicly-owned sites.

» **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)**

A federal-aid program funding trail development and maintenance, administered in Ohio jointly with the Clean Ohio Trail Fund through ODNR. Supports both motorized and non-motorized trail construction, engineering, and design.

» **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

A federal-aid program administered by ODOT, funding pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, and Safe Routes to School projects. ODOT has special solicitations specifically for pedestrian/bicycle projects.

» **USDA Rural Development — Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program**

Funds essential community facilities in rural areas, including public restrooms, community centers, and recreational infrastructure, through a mix of grants and low-interest loans.

» **National Park Service — Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)**

Not a monetary grant — this program provides technical assistance (planning, design expertise, community engagement facilitation) to communities developing trails, parks, and river-based recreation. No cost-share required.

» **Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) / Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)**

Two related federal programs, both administered in Ohio through ODNR's Division of Parks and Watercraft. BIG funds tie-up facilities and docking amenities for large cruising boats (26+ feet); CVA funds pump-out stations and waste reception facilities to keep waterways clean. Both are typically paired with a state match.

» **BUILD Discretionary Grant Program (U.S. Department of Transportation)**

A competitive federal grant for surface transportation projects with significant local or regional impact. Note: this program was recently renamed from RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) to BUILD (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development). Requires a benefit-cost analysis but it funds at a scale (multi-million dollar awards) well beyond most of the state programs.

» **USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) Grants**

Supports food-access and urban farming projects — planning and implementation grants for community gardens, food-access education, and related infrastructure.

» **Economic Development Administration (EDA) — Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance**

EDA's standing infrastructure grant program, funding construction and non-construction projects tied to job creation and economic development.

Ohio State Funding Programs

» **ODNR NatureWorks Grant Program**

Ohio's primary local-parks grant program, offering up to 75% reimbursement (capped around \$150,000 per county allocation) for acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of public park and recreation areas. Open to townships, villages, cities, counties, and park/conservancy districts (not non-profits or school boards).

» **Clean Ohio Trail Fund**

Administered by ODNR, often paired with the federal Recreational Trails Program in a combined application. Reimburses up to 75% of trail development costs, with priority given to increasing trail access in underserved communities.

» **Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program**

Administered by the Ohio Public Works Commission through regional Natural Resources Assistance Councils (for Lawrence County, this would run through the district covering southern Ohio). Funds preservation of open space, sensitive ecological areas, and stream corridors — including acquisition and related improvements.

» **ODNR Paddle Trail Designation Program / H2Ohio Rivers Program**

The Paddle Trail designation unlocks state-funded signage, mapping, and brochure inclusion, while H2Ohio supports volunteer cleanup efforts along creeks.

Ohio History Fund (Ohio History Connection)

A competitive matching-grant program (typically \$2,000–\$20,000 per award) funded partly through Ohio's income-tax check-off, supporting local history and preservation projects statewide. Notably, this program has funded a similar project elsewhere in Ohio — a former steel town's “Millworkers Trail,” combining interpretive signage with local industrial heritage storytelling.

» **Ohio Arts Council**

Multiple grant programs exist depending on project type — ArtSTART (entry point for first-time applicants), ArtsRISE (community access/engagement), Sustainability grants (multi-year operating support), and a “Fund Every County” initiative specifically designed to ensure grant dollars reach all 88 Ohio counties, which is worth noting given Lawrence County's rural status.

» **ODOT Pedestrian & Bicycle Special Solicitation**

A more targeted, shorter-cycle companion to the broader TAP program, aimed at projects that can move quickly. Notably, this exact program recently funded the Ohio River Way's planning work on a 182-mile Ohio River Trail running from North Bend to Chesapeake, Ohio — passing directly through Ironton.

» **Ohio Waterways Safety Fund (ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft)**

Funded by boat registration fees, a share of the state motor fuel tax, and U.S. Coast Guard contributions. Supports several related grant types: Boating Safety Education grants, Marine Patrol Assistance grants, and — most relevant here — boat launch and marina construction grants, which reimburse up to 75% of boat launch costs and 50% of marina-based project costs.

» **Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) — State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) & Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP)**

Ohio's primary infrastructure grant/loan program for roads, bridges, water supply, wastewater, and stormwater systems — administered regionally (for Lawrence County, through the appropriate multi-county Public Works Integrating Committee district). Not recreation-specific, but often essential for the supporting infrastructure — access roads, parking, utility extensions — that a recreation project needs before it can open.

» **Ohio Department of Development — Brownfield Remediation Program**

Funds cleanup, demolition, and site preparation at contaminated commercial or industrial sites. As of the current biennium, the state has reserved a dedicated allocation for every one of Ohio's 88 counties, meaning Lawrence County likely has a set-aside amount still available regardless of statewide competition.

» **Ohio State Capital Budget (Ohio General Assembly)**

Distinct from the competitive grant programs above: the state's biennial capital budget bill periodically includes direct legislative appropriations for specific local projects, typically requested through a county's state representative or senator rather than through a standard grant application.

Funding & Maintenance Sources

Appalachian-Focused Funding Programs

- » **Ohio's Appalachian Community Grant Program (Governor's Office of Appalachia, Ohio Department of Development)**
The program is already funding the four Ohio River Waterfront sites through its Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative. A related, separate track under the same broader program — the Appalachian Downtowns and Destinations Initiative — has committed funds across multiple Appalachian counties for downtown revitalization, trail and park infrastructure, and cultural-site improvements.
- » **Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO)**
A private philanthropic foundation making competitive grants across Appalachian Ohio, organized around five “Pillars of Prosperity” — including arts and culture, and environmental stewardship. This is a non-profit funder, which may provide for additional flexibility.

Public-Private Partnerships for Long-Term Stewardship

- Unlike the grant programs above, which typically fund planning or construction, these organizations are more often engaged for long-term maintenance, land stewardship, and operational partnership.
- » **Rails to Trails Conservancy**
A national non-profit stakeholder to help build advocacy, provide technical resources and has (in some regions) supported trail maintenance partnerships and conservancy models where a non-profit takes on some ownership or maintenance responsibility easing the long-term burden on county government.
 - » **The Nature Conservancy**
A national land conservation non-profit that partners with local governments on habitat restoration, riparian corridor protection, and conservation easements — sometimes taking on direct land management responsibility for sensitive natural areas. Ohio has an active Nature Conservancy chapter with regional project experience.

Strategic Partners for Direct Outreach

- These are not grant-making bodies in the traditional sense, but organizations worth contacting directly early in implementation — either because they control access to funding, or because aligning with their existing plans could assist in opening doors to future joint funding.
- » **Ohio Valley Regional Development (OVRDC)**
Lawrence County is one of eleven ARC-eligible counties served by OVRDC, which acts as the required Local Development District for any Appalachian Regional Commission application — meaning OVRDC, not the county directly, is the first point of contact for pursuing ARC funding (including the Area Development Program and larger initiatives like POWER and ARISE). ARC's current strategic priorities explicitly include “Building Regional Culture and Tourism” and infrastructure.
 - » **Ohio River Way**
This non-profit is actively developing a comprehensive plan for a 182-mile Ohio River Trail from North Bend to Chesapeake — a route that necessarily passes through Ironton. Their plan is funded by ODOT and explicitly described as complementary to the Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative. Aligning Lawrence County's Cross-County Multi-Modal Routes and Ohio River Waterfront Access proposals with their planning process could open access to a broader coalition and future joint funding applications, rather than Lawrence County pursuing river-trail connectivity in isolation.



Next Steps



"Nobody can do it alone, it takes all of us coming together to make this thing happen"

- Mike Finley
County Commissioner

Next Steps

The Lawrence County Recreational and Cultural Master Plan envisions a connected, phased parks, trails, heritage, riverfront, and local-food system that turns Lawrence County’s natural, industrial, and agricultural assets into drivers of quality of life, resilience, and tourism.

Build four connected corridors:

- » **Furnace Trail:** Convert the former DT&I and CH&D rail corridors into a rails-to-trails route(approximately 44 miles), use SR 93 as a scenic driving and arts corridor, and reinterpret historic furnaces through public art, lighting, and interpretation.
- » **Symmes Creek Blue-Green Trail:** Restore creek health, improve the Arabia, Aid, and Chesapeake launches, establish hiking/walking links between them, and pursue ODNR Paddle Trail designation.
- » **Ohio River corridor:** Link river towns with water access, shared-use trails, pocket parks, resilient riverfront parks, and recreation hubs. Priorities include Union-Rome Park, Ironton’s riverfront park and riverboat stop, and improved access in South Point, Proctorville, and Chesapeake.
- » **East-West connector:** Create a continuous multimodal route from Ironton through Pedro and Aid to Crown City Wildlife Area, connecting furnaces, horse trails, water access, food destinations, and restored mine lands.

Use adaptive reuse and place-based identity:

Reuse rail lines, furnaces, vacant downtown buildings, vacant lots, underused industrial land, and reclaimed mines rather than relying on greenfield development. Strengthen the county’s story through heritage interpretation, art, branding, and events tied to industrial history, the Underground Railroad, forests, water, and agriculture.

Make resilience integral to development:

Use native planting, erosion control, green infrastructure, permeable surfaces, flood-adapted parks, riparian buffers, and flood-safe siting. These measures address streambank erosion, river flooding, habitat protection, and runoff while improving recreation.

Grow an agriculture-and-tourism economy:

Transform mine land and vacant agricultural land into productive landscapes such as orchards, forage trails, apiaries, greenhouses, sunflower and lavender fields, berry farms, and birdwatching areas. Support this with a food hub and processing/distribution functions in Ironton, community farms, school-linked gardens in Aid, co-ops, events, and small-business incubation.

Coordinate implementation countywide:

Establish a formal coordinating or steering body that includes Lawrence County, municipalities, Wayne National Forest, state agencies, KYOVA, community organizations, chambers, landowners, and private partners, with early emphasis on County–Wayne National Forest–State coordination for trail access, land ownership, permitting, and management. Standardize branding, way-finding, management, maintenance, and safety across the network.

The first phase creates usable access points and visible improvements. The second phase turns isolated assets into connected economic hubs. The final phase concentrates capital on continuous trails, tunnels, mine restoration, and flood-resilient waterfront destinations after partnerships, operating capacity, and demand are established.

Immediate priorities

» **Form the coordinating structure**

Create a cross-sector steering committee, with early emphasis on County–Wayne National Forest–State coordination for trail access, land ownership, permitting, and management.

» **Confirm feasible projects and parcels**

Map public and private ownership, prioritize publicly controlled and vacant sites, and complete feasibility work for trail alignments, launch sites, riverfront access, and mine restoration.

» **Launch community engagement and branding**

Build public support, define a unified county story and visual identity, and begin coordinated way-finding and tourism messaging.

» **Pursue early funding**

Target the Clean Ohio Trails Fund, Ohio Recreational Trails Program, ODNR designation-related grants, state bike-route partnerships, conservation funding, and riverfront/recreation grants.

» **Deliver visible early wins**

Build the Ironton Furnace Trail trailhead; repair and upgrade basic canoe-launch amenities; add clear safety, mileage, and interpretive signage; and initiate creek cleanups and erosion-control planting.

Near-term implementation

» **Complete design and operating standards**

Adopt trail, launch, park, and green-infrastructure design guidelines, along with maintenance, safety, accessibility, and management policies.

» **Advance corridor connections**

Connect local trails to the rail corridor; develop the old Route 7 shared-use concept after bypass traffic shifts; and refine the Ironton–Aid–Crown City route.

» **Secure formal designations and partnerships**

Work with the Symmes Creek Restoration Committee to obtain ODNR Paddle Trail designation and build relationships with trail organizations such as Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and American Trails.

» **Start pilot economic projects**

Begin soil testing, grading, and small-scale crop, greenhouse, apiary, and trail pilots on suitable mine or vacant agricultural sites; activate downtown storefronts and a food-processing/testing-kitchen concept in Ironton.

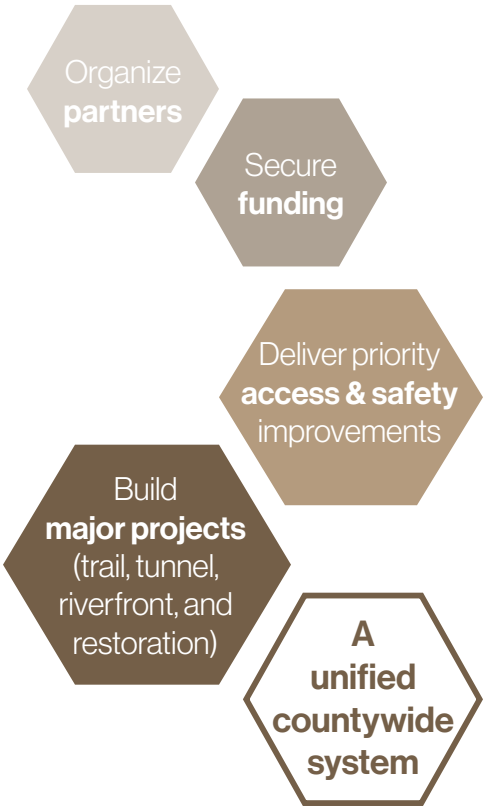
Long-term capital projects

» **Complete major access and destination investments**

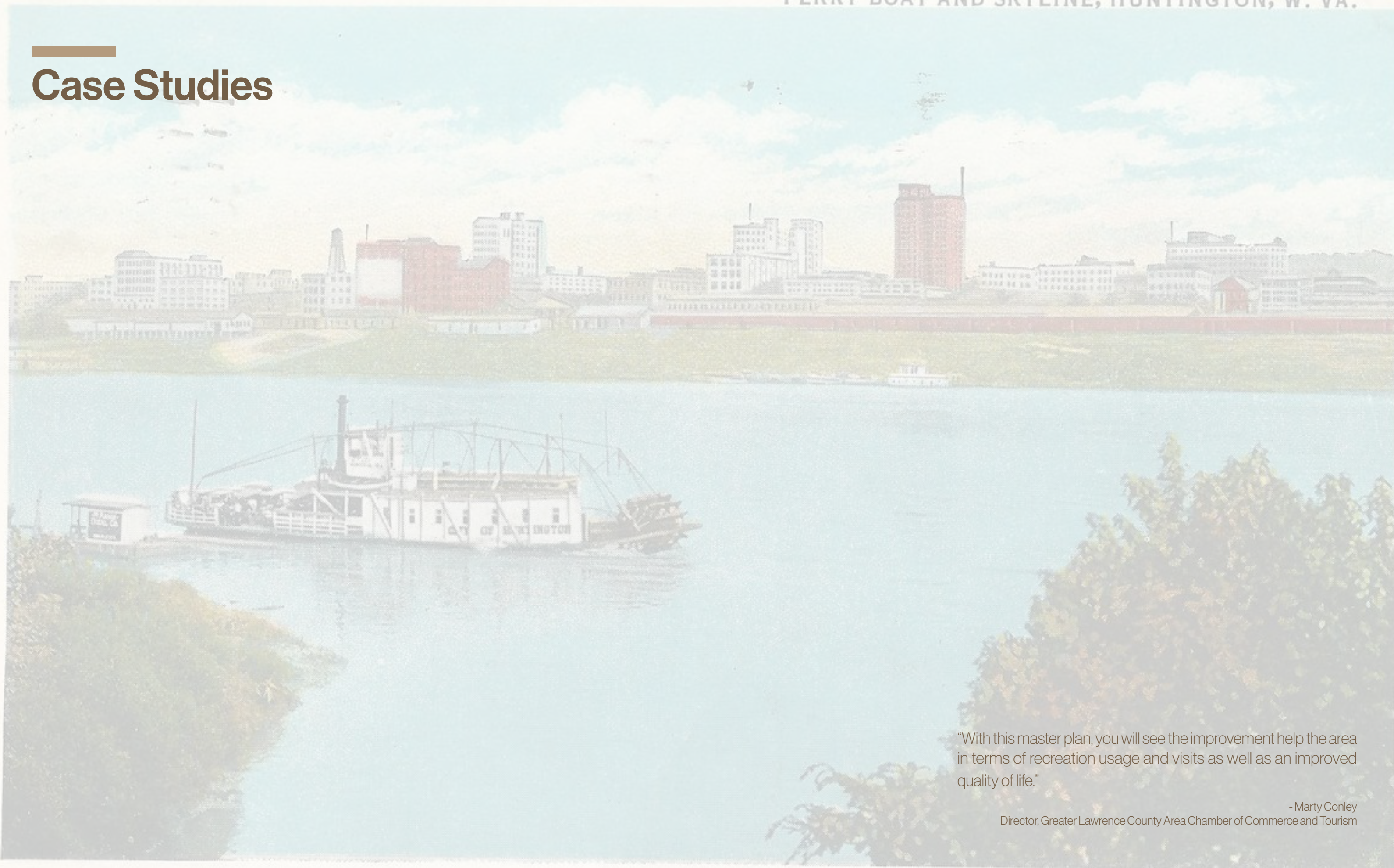
Reconstruct the Dean, Lawrence–Gallia, and Royersville/Vesuvius tunnels where feasible; build additional trailheads along SR 93, Pedro, and Royersville; develop Union-Rome Park and connected riverfront trails; and expand Ironton’s riverfront park, marina, and riverboat facilities.

» **Scale restoration and local enterprise**

Expand creek restoration, flood-resilient park systems, mine-land remediation, co-op infrastructure, food distribution, lodging, and year-round recreation programming.



Case Studies



“With this master plan, you will see the improvement help the area in terms of recreation usage and visits as well as an improved quality of life.”

- Marty Conley
Director, Greater Lawrence County Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism



Trails

- » **South Portland-Scarborough Connector (Eastern Trail, ME):** An 8.2-mile multi-use rail-trail requiring grade-separated track crossings (minimum 22-ft clearance, 14-ft pathway width), boardwalks, and extensive wetland bridges. Estimated in 2006 at \$3.64M for trail surface and \$4.53M for bridges/tunnels, modelling a projected \$44.1M cost (in 2025 dollars) for Lawrence County's 27.8-mile DT&I corridor. Demonstrates construction feasibility through similar rugged, heavily forested topography.
- » **Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail (Susanville, CA):** A 25.4-mile rails-to-trails conversion along the Susan River Canyon crossing 12 bridges/trestles and 2 tunnels. Demonstrates multi-layer funding stacks (Recreational Trails Program, LWCF, FHWA, IIJA, state active transportation funds) and economic activation via annual Rails-to-Trails festivals hosted at a restored depot.
- » **The 606 / Bloomingdale Trail (Chicago, IL):** A 2.7-mile elevated rail-to-trail conversion connecting four diverse neighborhoods with integrated access ramps, public art, and neighborhood park connections. Highlights how grade-separated linear trails can function simultaneously as green spaces and active transportation networks.
- » **Loveland, OH & Little Miami Scenic Trail:** A 78-mile paved trail that attracts nearly 1.8 million visits annually. In Loveland, the trail bisects the historic core, generating a retail/hospitality district where real estate values increased \$7.05 for every linear foot closer to the trail corridor.
- » **Raccoon River Valley Trail (Iowa):** An 89-mile multi-jurisdictional paved loop through 15 communities and 4 counties. Emphasizes inter-governmental coalitions, lighted architectural bridges, and partnerships with Iowa State University design students for county way-finding and trail-town branding.
- » **Chattahoochee RiverLands (Atlanta Metro, GA):** A 100-mile vision plan uniting multiple municipalities along a river corridor through water recreation, equitable trail access, historical way-finding, and riparian conservation.
- » **Xuhui Runway Trail (Shanghai, China):** Adaptive reuse of a former airport runway into an accessible, multi-modal linear park accommodating bikes, pedestrians, and transit nodes.
- » **Licking River Greenway & Trails (Covington, KY):** Integrates 14 floodwall murals, levee crest trails, and digital QR-code way-finding toolkits to interpret local ecology and industrial history at low municipal cost.
- » **Northwoods Regional ATV Trail System (Aitkin/Itasca Counties, MN):** A 70-mile motorized trail network that generates \$22M–\$30M annually in visitor spending. Demonstrates collaborative management between county forestry departments, state agencies, and rider clubs to manage trail wear, drainage, and multi-user conflicts (ATV vs. equestrian vs. hiking).
- » **The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP)** is a 150-mile rail trail running from Cumberland, Maryland, to McKeesport, Pennsylvania, just outside Pittsburgh. Built on former railroad corridors, it follows rivers and winds through forests, tunnels, and old bridges, with a gentle grade that makes it popular with cyclists and hikers of all abilities. Highlights include crossing the Eastern Continental Divide, the scenic Salisbury Viaduct, and charming trail towns like Confluence, Chiopyle, and Connellsville, which offer lodging, food, and bike services.



Riverfront Infrastructure & Water Tourism

- » **Portsmouth, OH (Waterfront Transformation):** Lawrence County's direct neighbor along the Ohio River secured a \$34.2M grant from Ohio's Wonderful Waterfronts Appalachian Community Grant Program to construct riverboat landings, amphitheaters, levee murals, fishing piers, and riverside campgrounds. Inducted into the Ohio River Way in 2022.
- » **Tennessee RiverLine Paddle Trail (AL, MS, TN, KY):** A 652-mile continuous paddle and water-trail system projected to attract 800,000 paddlers, generating \$104M in spending, 2,000 jobs, and \$2.6M in local/state taxes across regional gateway communities.
- » **Greenville, MS (Mississippi River Cruise Port):** A river city with a declining manufacturing base and high poverty that partnered with federal and state agencies to establish a dedicated docking stop for overnight Mississippi River cruise ships. Cruise passengers access local Delta blues museums (B.B. King Museum), gospel music performances, and historic tours.
- » **Paducah, KY (Floodwall Murals):** Turned utilitarian USACE flood defenses into an international tourist attraction through historic murals, a guided digital audio walking tour, and annual river events.
- » **Marina Models (Ludlow Bromley, KY; Lake Cumberland, KY; Charlevoix, MI):**
 - » **Ludlow Bromley Yacht Club:** Floating marina/hospitality node driving nighttime waterfront activity.
 - » **Lake Cumberland State Dock:** High-capacity public launch tied directly to upland dining and state park lodging.
 - » **Charlevoix Marina:** Municipal marina positioned steps from downtown commercial retail, funneling boaters into downtown restaurants and shops.
- » **Peoria, IL & St. Louis, MO (Riverboat Infrastructure):** Peoria models docking infrastructure integrated cleanly into a public park rather than an asphalt parking lot. St. Louis illustrates barge and gangway infrastructure engineered for efficient mooring and changing river pool stages.
- » **Water Works Park (Minneapolis, MN):** A multi-level park integrating historic flour mill ruins, terraced seating overlooking the Mississippi River, an indigenous restaurant, and direct paddlecraft put-ins.
- » **Winona, MN (Riverboat Stop):** Similar to Ironton (former industry town with constrained development between river and challenging topography), taken advantage of Mississippi River location for Riverboat Tourism as a “Riverboat Stop”, including boat tours for local history and wildlife and guided walking tours of historic, industry-focused downtown.

Case Studies



Green Infrastructure & Flood Defense

- » **Tom Lee Park (Memphis, TN):** A 31-acre park on the Mississippi River riverbank that uses elevated landforms, levee integration ("Protect" strategy), civic gathering spaces, and flood-tolerant plantings to preserve riverfront civic life.
- » **Yanweizhou Park (Jinhua, China):** A 64-acre park at a river confluence designed on a "Retreat/Flow" concept. Replaced concrete channel walls with water-resilient terraced embankments and fully gravel-permeable surfaces that absorb floodwaters and naturally filter water.
- » **Riverfront Crossings Park (Iowa City, IA):** Converted a former repetitive-loss industrial/commercial river corridor into a dynamic 100-year floodplain park with restored wetlands, native plantings, river overlooks, and trail networks, while concentrating dense mixed-use redevelopment outside the hazard zone.
- » **Sea Change: Boston (Adaptation Framework):** A coastal/riverine resilience framework detailing four policy mechanisms: Fortify (levees, dry flood-proofing for critical assets), Adapt (elevated foundations, wet flood-proofing, sacrificial ground floors), Move (voluntary buyouts, wetland restoration), and Alternative Use (floodable recreation corridors).
- » **Buoyant Foundation Project (Port Maria & Bliss Pastures, Jamaica):** Amphibious retrofit architecture for flood-prone residences. Existing homes are retrofitted with under-floor expanded polystyrene buoyancy blocks and vertical guidance posts, allowing structures to rise safely during floods and settle back down without structural damage.
- » **Riverview East Academy (Cincinnati, OH):** An educational facility constructed in the Ohio River floodplain elevated entirely on concrete piers/stilts, allowing seasonal high water to flow beneath parking and grounds without damaging school operations.
- » **New Orleans Green Infrastructure Plan:** Post-Katrina transition to "living with water" using urban bioswales, rain gardens, interconnected canals, and retained urban wetlands to relieve stormwater loads on mechanical pumping systems.
- » **Tamnava River Watershed (Serbia):** Evaluates Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) combined with gray infrastructure. Recommends earthen retention basins on agricultural tributaries, reconnected floodplains, and riparian buffers to reduce peak downstream flood crests in towns.
- » **Leidsche Rijn Urban Drainage (Utrecht, Netherlands):** A former agricultural district transformed into housing using an interconnected network of infiltration trenches and retention swales. Safely stores and infiltrates 100-year flood events into local aquifers without overwhelming regional canals.
- » **Pontelio Slope Stabilization (Belo Horizonte, Brazil):** Stabilized a failing 115-ft roadside hillside using 130 soil-nail anchor rods, biodegradable coconut-fiber blankets, and hydro-seeding rather than rigid concrete slabs, allowing subsurface water to drain naturally while halting landslides.
- » **Cedar Rapids, IA (Voluntary Buyout Program):** Following disastrous 2008 flooding, the city utilized FEMA Hazard Mitigation and HUD CDBG grants to acquire 1,350+ repetitive-loss properties at 107% pre-flood market value, creating a permanent greenway and flood-storage buffer.
- » **Smale Riverfront Park (Ohio):** A terraced, flood-adapted riverfront park in



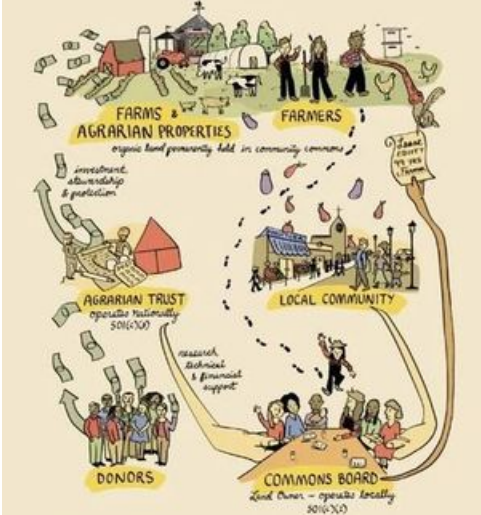
- » downtown Cincinnati shows how green infrastructure can work with a flood-prone river and illustrates a shift in resilient landscape design, from preventing flooding to planning for it, which lowers repair costs and preserves recreational and ecological value.
- » **Los Angeles County Green Infrastructure Policy Mechanisms:** A three-pronged municipal strategy to scale stormwater retrofits on private properties: Regulatory (mandated low-impact standards for redevelopment), Financial (stormwater fee rebates for installing cisterns/swales), and Market-Based (credit trading for regional stormwater compliance).
- » **Cincinnati "Re-Leaf" Forestry Program:** Since 1989, this city program has distributed 26,000 free shade trees across 40+ species to private homeowners, expanding the municipal tree canopy from 38% to 43% (2010–2020) and reducing urban runoff.
- » **Geauga County SWCD Rain Barrel Yard Art Program (OH):** Engages local artists to paint 55-gallon rain barrels that are raffled or auctioned, educating homeowners on residential roof runoff capture while raising funding for local conservation districts.
- » **Gold Street Park (Baltimore, MD):** A low-cost pocket park built on a vacant residential parcel incorporating permeable pavers, a rain garden, native pollinator plantings, and small gathering spaces.
- » **Grand Riverfront Boardwalk (Grand Rapids, MI) & Bryan Park (Bloomington, IN):** Grand Rapids deployed rip-rap, gabion stone baskets, and elevated boardwalks for bank stability. Bloomington utilized native wetland grasses and bioretention swales in a neighborhood park to manage 2008 flood events.
- » **Blue Hole Regional Park (Wimberley, TX):** A 126-acre municipal acquisition of a degraded, private swimming hole. Revitalized through invasive species removal, cedar mulch recycling, water-quality protection, and limited entry reservations, generating \$300,000 in municipal revenue within two years.
- » **Boston Emerald Necklace (MA):** Designed with a primary motive of large-scale drainage and flood control to manage multiple interacting water bodies. The design successfully converted tidal marshes into a connected chain of parks that naturally store, absorb, and direct stormwater runoff away from vulnerable residential areas.

Case Studies



Economic Revitalization

- » **Bentonville, AR (Downtown Infill & Trail Integration):** Transformed an underused downtown into a high-density, mixed-use engine by connecting core urban blocks directly into regional mountain bike trails, allowing outdoor dining, pedestrian plazas, and small-scale infill.
- » **Johnson City, TN (Founder's Park & Pavilion):** A 200,000 sq. ft. downtown redevelopment built in 2013/2017 using municipal stormwater utility fees and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Daylights a buried urban creek (Brush Creek) into a floodable natural amphitheater and covered farmers market facility, sparking private downtown investment.
- » **Emporia Main Street (Emporia, KS):** Main Street America model yielding \$194M in reinvestment, 2.5 million annual visitors, and an entrepreneurship incubator that launched ~150 regional small businesses.
- » **College Hill CURC / OurShop (Cincinnati, OH):** A neighborhood Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation that activates vacant commercial storefronts along Hamilton Avenue by offering free, short-term brick-and-mortar retail space ("OurShop") for local startup entrepreneurs, reducing storefront vacancy.
- » **Greenville, KY (Downtown Streetscape):** Small-town revitalization focusing on decorative brick sidewalks, street trees, period lighting, facade restoration, and a dedicated downtown festival stage for community gatherings.
- » **Asheville, NC (Place-Based Growth & Transit):** Demonstrates an economic baseline where Leisure & Hospitality (13%), Retail (13%), Healthcare (19%), and Manufacturing (12%) support a \$3B tourism economy, anchored by the municipal "ART" multi-modal bus network and greenway connections.
- » **Elkhart Lake, WI (Slow-Tourism Economy):** Reoriented a small lakeside community toward "slow tourism"—encouraging multi-day stays, historic lodge restorations, farm-to-table culinary experiences, and non-motorized trail loops.
- » **Guntersville, AL (Lakefront Commercial Node):** Clustered local retail, outfitter services, and dining along a walkable lakeside commercial spine, turning passing boaters and hikers into downtown consumers.
- » **Green Tortoise Hostel (San Francisco, CA):** An adaptive reuse model transforming underutilized historic multistory buildings into communal lodging with dorms, private rooms, and shared kitchens to support budget-conscious adventure travelers and hikers.
- » **Los Angeles Produce Market (CA):** A functional master plan pairing large-scale produce distribution warehouses with a public-facing retail market, incubator food stalls, and upper-floor creative office space.
- » **Chewonki Foundation / Camp Chewonki (Wiscasset, ME):** A 400-acre non-profit youth environmental camp and ecotourism center operating on low-impact development principles, featuring solar energy, composting, nature trails, and watershed stewardship.
- » **Madison, IN (Ohio River Tourism Hub):** A historic Ohio River community generating \$20M in county GDP, \$10M in taxes, and supporting 665 jobs through river-focused tourism. Built around the annual Madison Regatta hydroplane races (held since 1951, drawing 100,000+ spectators), historic preservation, arts festivals, and boat access.



Local Agriculture & Food Tourism

- » **Athens County "30 Mile Meal" (Athens County, OH):** An Appalachian initiative uniting farmers, grocers, restaurants, and farmers markets within a 30-mile radius. Despite a 32.8% poverty rate, the network expanded food access to 5,000+ residents across 7 months and bolstered dozens of small family farm operations.
- » **740 Rescue Kitchen (Hocking College / Joe Burrow Foundation, Nelsonville, OH):** A regional commercial culinary hub that transforms surplus produce and meats into balanced, packaged meals distributed to schools, pantries, and shelters across 10 rural Appalachian counties.
- » **Maryland SARE High Tunnel Research Study:** A 3-year agricultural trial demonstrating that unheated high tunnels generate \$31.77/sq. ft. in gross return over three years (e.g., intensive spinach and early/late-season indeterminate tomatoes). Highlights passive solar heat, drip irrigation, zero rain exposure (preventing fungal disease), and daily management.
- » **Forest Farming (Dresden, OH):** Cultivation of high-value woodland crops (ginseng, goldenseal, medicinal herbs, specialty mushrooms) under native hardwood canopies, generating supplemental income from private woodlots without clear-cutting.
- » **Kuyucak Lavender Village (Isparta, Turkey):** A remote, drought-stricken rural village of 250 residents that shifted into specialized lavender farming. Leveraged social media to attract hundreds of thousands of ecotourists, spinning off cottage industries in honey, essential oils, soaps, and guesthouses.
- » **GrowHaus (Denver, CO):** A neighborhood food hub combining indoor hydroponics/aquaponics, food pantry distribution, and adult culinary/agricultural job training.
- » **Lone Tree Foods (Lincoln, NE):** A regional producer-owned food co-op uniting 30+ family farms under a consolidated logistics, cold-storage, and online ordering system that sells directly to wholesale buyers, school districts, and supermarkets.
- » **Utrecht Edible Neighborhoods (Netherlands):** Public open spaces and sidewalk verges planted with public fruit trees, berry bushes, and culinary herbs maintained by local residents, enhancing social cohesion and neighborhood food literacy.
- » **White Lion Farms Foundation:** An agroforestry project that supports military veterans through regenerative tree crop production (chestnuts, hazelnuts, fruit orchards).
- » **Agrarian Commons & Mad Agriculture:** Innovative community land trust models that acquire farmland to take it off the speculative market, granting long-term, equity-building 99-year leases to young and regenerative farmers.
- » **Plant with Purpose (San Diego / Global):** Combines community-led reforestation, erosion control, and micro-savings loans with entrepreneurship training to reverse rural poverty and watershed degradation.
- » **Baltimore Orchard Project (MD) & Richardson Farm (IL):** Urban agroforestry partnerships that plant and glean fruit trees on public parcels, while Richardson Farm showcases agritourism through corn mazes, observation structures, and campfire rentals.
- » **North Star Shrimp Initiative (Ecuador / Asia):** An aquaculture framework establishing verifiable sustainability standards, protecting coastal mangrove

Case Studies



Historic Iron Furnace Heritage Tourism

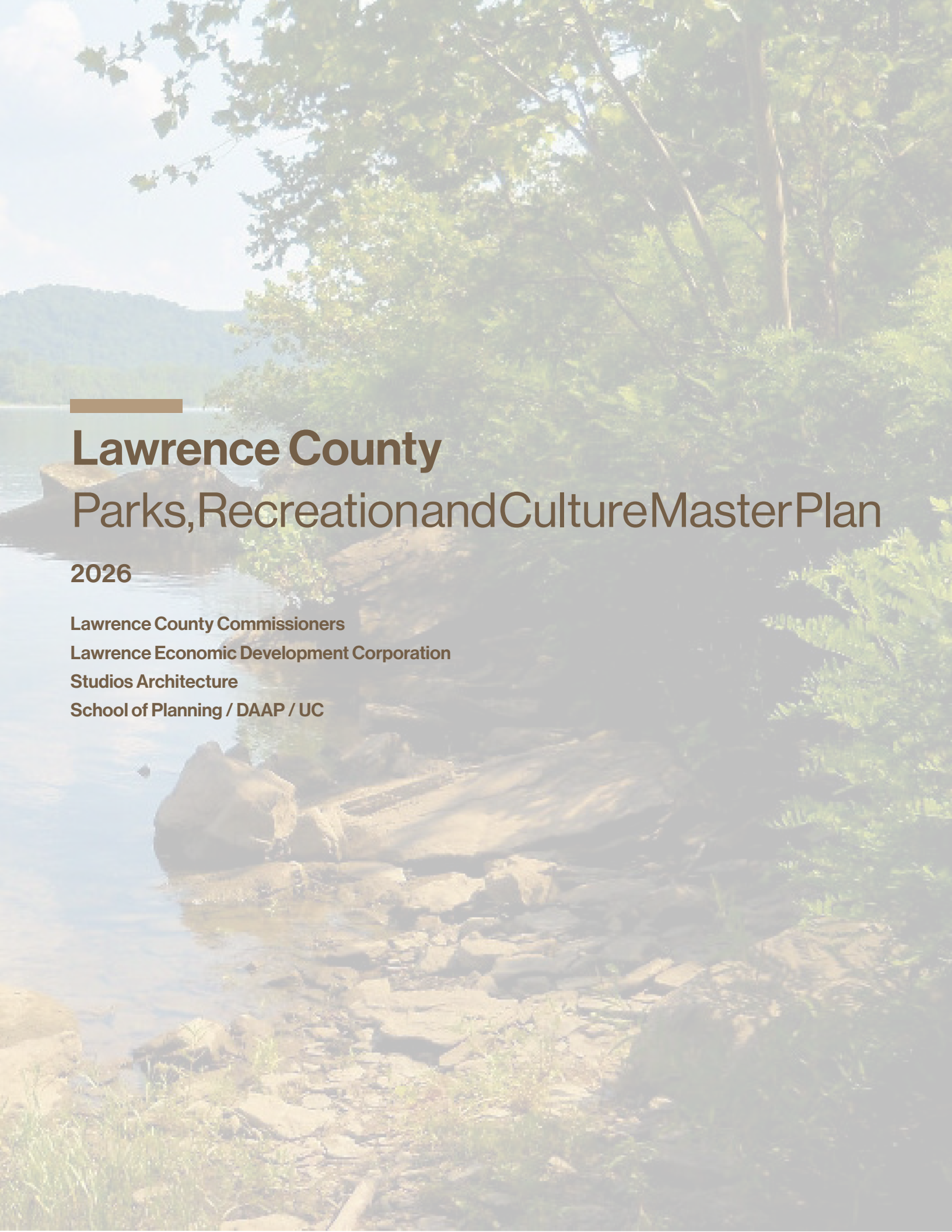
- » **Buckeye Furnace (Jackson County, OH):** An intact, reconstructed 1852 charcoal iron blast furnace in the Hanging Rock Iron Region operating as a living history museum and park, providing an operational roadmap for Lawrence County to restore its own historic furnaces (e.g., Olive, Vesuvius, Etna).
- » **Bluff Furnace (Chattanooga, TN):** The excavated site of an 1850s coke furnace reconstructed as a 50-foot architectural steel replica and public art installation along the riverwalk, blending historic preservation with contemporary public space.
- » **Cooper Furnace (Lake Allatoona, Cartersville, GA):** An 1840s blast furnace ruin preserved by the USACE as an interpretive focal point within an active lakefront recreation park with hiking trails, picnic shelters, and sports facilities.
- » **The Trolls (Various Locations):** Thomas Dambo is a Danish artist known for turning discarded materials, mainly reclaimed wood and pallets, into giant troll sculptures hidden in forests and parks around the world. His project, the Trolls: Save the Humans series (and earlier "Forgotten Giants"), has placed well over 100 of these sculptures across more than a dozen countries, including Denmark, the US, Germany, France, Italy, and Puerto Rico. Each troll comes with a story and a hidden location, so visitors have to hike or hunt to find them, often using a map or a poem with clues. The trolls are built with the help of local volunteers and are meant to carry an environmental message about recycling, caring for nature, and what we throw away. Because they're made from scrap and left outdoors, they're also designed to age naturally and eventually return to the earth.

Energy & Reclaimed Lands

- » **Dominion Energy Biomass Facility (Altavista, VA):** A 29-acre, 51 MW electrical generating station burning local forestry wood waste and sawmill residue to power 17,200 homes. Generates 30 high-paying full-time operations jobs and supports hundreds of regional logging, clearing, and trucking positions. Modelled for the 99-acre LEDC-owned industrial site in South Point, OH.
- » **Appalachian Botanical Co. (Ashford, WV):** Reclaimed a 35-acre mountaintop removal coal site to grow commercial lavender and operate apiaries, employing local residents recovering from substance use or economic hardship to manufacture premium body-care and cosmetic products.
- » **Global Mine Reclamation Case Studies:**
 - » **Eden Project (Cornwall, UK):** Transformed a sterile china clay pit into massive geodesic biodomes housing global biomes, drawing over 1 million visitors annually.
 - » **Lusatia District (Germany):** Flooded open-cast lignite coal pits to create a connected chain of recreational lakes and marinas.
 - » **Berwind Lake (WV):** Turned retired coal company land into a public wildlife management and fishing area.
 - » **Sullivan Mine (Canada) & Beenup (Australia):** Engineered wetlands and wildlife habitats on reclaimed lead-zinc and mineral sand mines.
- » **Bear Run Solar (Sullivan County, IN) & Sunflower Projects (IL & IN):** 560 MW utility-scale solar installations constructed on former strip-mined coal lands, powering 95,000+ homes and generating 400 construction jobs while returning post-mining brownfields to productive tax generation.

"Lawrence County, located at Ohio's southernmost point, is a region that has long been overlooked. Upon digging deeper, however, it is clear to see their untold story of pride and resilience. Between the painted landscape of rolling hills and winding streams is a population of people who have suffered from years of economic and social disinvestment. However, the narrative of the county is slowly beginning to shift thanks to local development initiatives. In fact, the county has a recent history of grassroots development enterprises. Among these enterprises is Elkins Creek Horse Camp, established in 2007. This facility was started by one individual and grew with the help of over 600 volunteers from around the country. From these efforts, over 100 miles of horse and backpacking trails have been created in the county. The success of this initiative is a testament to the perseverance and pride within Lawrence County. Stories such as this one help tell the entire narrative of Lawrence County and shed light on the possibility of positive, lasting change in the community."

-Ella Lisac
School of Planning Student



Lawrence County

Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

2026

Lawrence County Commissioners

Lawrence Economic Development Corporation

Studios Architecture

School of Planning / DAAP / UC