

Geauga County

F A R M L A N D PRESERVATION PLAN



Our land...
Our legacy

**GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO
FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
1999
Amended 2001, Amended 2008**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The United States' Land Base.....	I-1
Farmland Loss.....	I-1
Ohio Farmland Preservation Task Force.....	I-3
Geauga County Farmland Preservation Task Force.....	I-4
Public Purpose in Saving Farms.....	I-5

CHAPTER II: GEAUGA COUNTY PROFILE

Location.....	II-1
Population.....	II-3
Generalized Land Use.....	II-8
Generalized Land Use Conversion.....	II-11
Real Property Assessment Valuations.....	II-13
Residential Land.....	II-13
Commercial Land.....	II-21
Light Industrial Land.....	II-23
Parks Recreation	II-25
Conservation and Open Space	II-27
Environmentally Sensitive Land.....	II-28
Agricultural Land.....	II-30
Existing Zoning.....	II-48
Generalized Future Growth Areas.....	II-50
Existing Infrastructure.....	II-53
Planned Infrastructure.....	II-66

CHAPTER III: AGRICULTURAL CENSUS DATA

Introduction.....	III-1
Number of Farms.....	III-1
Farmland.....	III-2
Average Size of Farms.....	III-2
Farms by Size.....	III-3
Farm Operators.....	III-3
Estimated Market Value of Land and Buildings	III-6
Estimated Market Value of Machinery and Equipment.....	III-7
Total and Harvested Cropland.....	III-7
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold.....	III-8
Farm Production Expenses.....	III-11
Livestock and Poultry Inventory.....	III-12
Miscellaneous Poultry and Livestock Inventory.....	III-15
Crops	III-17
Maple Syrup Producers.....	III-18
Labor Force.....	III-19

CHAPTER IV: AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION TOOLS AND PROGRAMS

Agricultural Conservation Easements.....	IV-1
Agricultural Districts.....	IV-2
Bargain Sales.....	IV-4
Conservation Reserve.....	IV-5
Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program.....	IV-5
Forestry Tax.....	IV-6
Land Banking/Outright Purchase	IV-7
Land Trusts.....	IV-8
Outright Donation.....	IV-9
Donation of Development Rights (PDR).....	IV-10
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).....	IV-11
Zoning.....	IV-14

CHAPTER V: RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview	V-1
Agricultural Security Areas (ASA's).....	V-1
Recommendations.....	V-5
Education.....	V-5
Public Sector Initiatives.....	V-6
Private Sector Initiatives.....	V-7

CHAPTER VI: RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION TASK FORCE

Preface.....	VI-1
Subcommittee Reports.....	VI-5
Notes.....	VI-15

CHAPTER VII: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MAPS

1. Northeast Ohio Counties	II-1
2. Political Boundaries.....	II-2
3. Northeast Ohio Population Percent Change	II-3
4. Percent Change in Population Geauga County 1990-2000	II-6
5. Geauga County Generalized Land Use 1975.....	II-9
6. Geauga County Generalized Land Use 1996.....	II-10
7. Generalized Land Use Conversion 1975 to 1996.....	II-12
8. Residential Construction Starts Geauga County 1970 to 1979	II-14
9. Residential Construction Starts Geauga County 1980 to 1989	II-15
10. Residential Construction Starts Geauga County 1990 to 2006	II-16
11. Geauga County Housing Density 2000	II-17
12. Generalized Residential Land Use, Geauga County: 1996.....	II-20
13. Generalized Commercial Land Use, Geauga County: 1996.....	II-22
14. Generalized Industrial Land Use, Geauga County: 1996.....	II-24
15. Public Parks and Open Space, Geauga County	II-26
16. Protected Lands, Geauga County	II-27
17. Composite Capability.....	II-29
18. Geauga County Prime Agricultural Soils.....	II-31
19. Geauga County Soil: Corn Yields.....	II-34
20. Geauga County Soil: Wheat Yields.....	II-35
21. Geauga County Soil: Oat Yields.....	II-36
22. Geauga County Soil: Grasses & Legume Hay Yields.....	II-37
23. Geauga County Soil: Potential For Grain & Seed Crops.....	II-38
24. Geauga County Soil: Potential For Grasses & Legumes.....	II-39
25. Geauga County Land Enrolled in CAUV 2007	II-41
26. Land in CAUV	II-43
27. Geauga County Land Enrolled in Agricultural Districts.....	II-45
28. Geauga County Land Enrolled in Forestry Tax	II-47
29. Geauga County Generalized Zoning	II-49
30. Generalized Future Residential, Commercial And Light Industrial Growth Areas For Geauga County.....	II-51
31. Road Network, Geauga County.....	II-54
32. Traffic Counts For U.S. & State Routes: 1998 -2001.....	II-56
33. Geauga County Operated Wastewater Treatment Plants	II-59
34. Generalized Areas Served By A Publicly Operated Central Water Supply System.....	II-61
35. Electric Service Areas	II-63
36. Telephone Service Areas.	II-64
37. Generalized Natural Gas Service Areas For Geauga County.....	II-65
38. Community Plans for Wastewater Treatment	II-67
39. Agricultural District, CAUV, & Forestry Program Parcels With Prime Agricultural Soils, Geauga County.....	V-3
40. Generalized Agricultural Security Areas, Geauga County.....	V-4

FIGURES

1.	Cycle of Farmland Conversion.....	I-3
2.	Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units 1990 - 2000.....	II-19
3.	CAUV Acreage By Community, Geauga County: 2007.....	II-40
4.	Total Number of Farms In Geauga County.....	III-1
5.	Total Farmland (Acreage), Geauga County.....	III-2
6.	Average Size of Farms (Acreage), Geauga County.....	III-3
7.	Full & Part Time Farm Operators, Geauga County.....	III-4
8.	Estimated Market Value of Land & Buildings, Geauga County.....	III-6
9.	Estimated Market Value of Machinery & Equipment, Geauga County.....	III-7
10.	Total Cropland, Geauga County.....	III-8
11.	Farm Production Expenses, Geauga County.....	III-11
12.	Number of Farms With Cattle & Calves, Geauga County.....	III-13
13.	Number of Farms With Hogs & Pigs, Geauga County.....	III-13
14.	Number of Farms With Sheep & Lambs, Geauga County.....	III-14
15.	Number of Farms With Horses & Ponies, Geauga County.....	III-14
16.	Number of Farms With Poultry, Geauga County.....	III-15
17.	Number of Farms In Maple Syrup Production, Geauga County.....	III-18
18.	Transfer of Development Rights.....	IV-12

TABLES

1.	U. S. Land Base.....	I-1
2.	Northeast Ohio Population 1970 to 2000	II-3
3.	Geauga County Population 1950 to 2000	II-5
4.	Geauga County Population Projections: 2005-2030.....	II-7
5.	Geauga County Generalized Land Use.....	II-8
6.	Generalized Land Use Conversion, From 1975 to 1996.....	II-11
7.	Real Property Assessed Valuations, 1998-2005.....	II-13
8.	Number of Units In Structure: Geauga County 2000.....	II-18
10.	Acreage In Prime & Non-Prime Agricultural Soils, Geauga County.....	II-32
11.	Prime Agricultural Soils, Geauga County.....	II-33
12.	CAUV Land, Geauga County For Years 2001 and 2007.....	II-42
13.	Land In Agricultural Districts, Geauga County: 2001 and 2007	II-44
14.	Land In The Forestry Tax Program, Geauga County: 2001 and 2007...	II-46
15.	Projected Single Family Housing Units, 2005 to 2030	II-52
16.	Projected Households, 2000 to 2030	II-53
17.	Road Mileage By Community, Geauga County: 2007.....	II-55
18.	Accidents By Community, Geauga County: 2005.....	II-57
19.	Public Water Connections, Geauga County	II-60
20.	Farm Operators, Tenure, Characteristics, and Type of Organization: 1997 to 2002.....	III-4
21.	Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold: 1982-2002.....	III-9
22.	Farm Production Expenses: 1982 to 2002.....	III-11
23.	Miscellaneous Poultry and Livestock Inventory.....	III-15
24.	Major Crops.....	III-17
25.	Occupations of Residents 16 Years Old and Over For Years 1980, 1990 and 2000.....	III-19

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States' Land Base

According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture (1992) the United States encompasses nearly 2.3 billion acres of land (see Table 1). Of this total, about 940 million acres is held by farmers, with roughly 360 million acres in cropland. While land is a finite resource, America certainly is not faced with the problem of depleting its overall land base for development. However, while the quantity of available land is apparently not an issue, the quality of it may be. Prime farmland (class I and class II soil types) reflects about 243 million acres or somewhat less than one-third of all agricultural land. Because prime farmland is typically level to gently sloping, well drained, and not as prone to erosion, it often becomes a target for conversion to development.

Table 1

U.S. Land Base

<u>All Land</u>	<u>Acres (in millions)</u>
Publicly Owned	839
Privately Owned	1,417
Total	2,256
<u>Privately Owned</u>	
Cropland	410
Grassland / Rangeland	530
Total Farmland	940
Total Farmland	940
Forest Land	400
Developed Land	77
Total Private Land	1,417

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Farmland Loss

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has estimated that about 2 million acres of productive farmland throughout the country are converted annually to nonagricultural uses. The ongoing loss of agricultural land is a matter of increasing concern in the state of Ohio. With about 26 million acres, Ohio is one of only five states with more than 45 percent of its land base classified as prime or unique farmland. However, as previously noted, prime farmland may also be attractive for development purposes. Between 1982 and 1992, according to the American Farmland Trust, 472,000 acres of land were

developed in Ohio, of which 59% (or 281,000 acres) was classified as prime or unique farmland. During the period of 1960 to 1990 the population in the state of Ohio grew by 13%, whereas the overall land area needed to accommodate this growth increased by 64%. In other words, the land area needed to address growth was about five times more than the rate of population change. This is nearly double the national average (Rusk, 1993). For the five county Cleveland region (Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina) the trends are even more significant. By the year 2010 the region is expected to lose 3% of its population, while residential development may occupy 30% more land area.

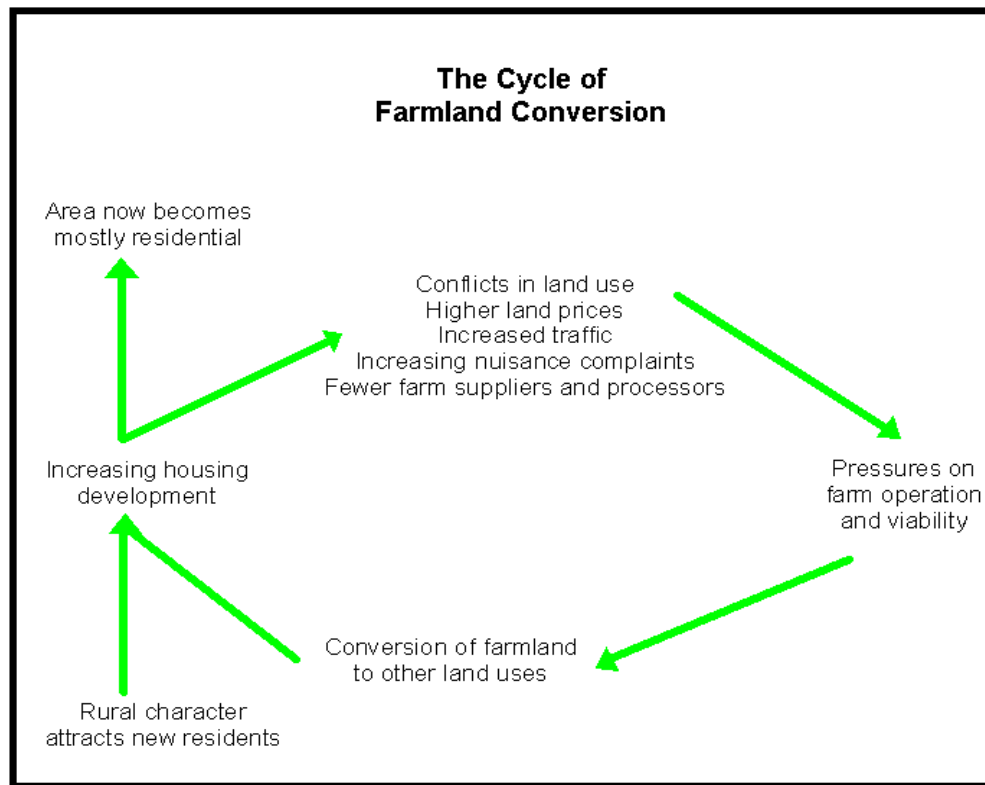
The American Farmland Trust (AFT) also documented the threat to agriculture on the Northeast Ohio region. The AFT ranked the Eastern Ohio Till Plain (which includes Northeast Ohio and Geauga County) number 7 in the top 20 most threatened areas for farmland conversion in the United States. Between 1982 and 1992, 57% of the land developed in the Eastern Ohio Till Plain region was classified as prime or unique agricultural land, representing 66,000 acres. According to the Ohio Department of Development, from 1990 to 1994, 23% of the farmland in the Cleveland-Akron metropolitan area was lost.

Figure 1 depicts the typical cycle of farmland conversion. As development impinges on agricultural areas, farming activities may be impaired. The cycle of conversion generally involves the following progression.

- Land prices increase as development occurs beyond affordable limits for agricultural purposes and farmers may be enticed to sell their land.
- Complaints may rise from nonfarm residents relative to manure spreading on fields, chemical sprays, noise, dust from tilling fields, farm machinery on roads, etc.
- Crop and/or livestock loss may occur from chronic trespass, vandalism, or loose dogs.
- As the number of farms diminish, agricultural support businesses also decrease, making it more difficult to secure needed supplies.
- Farmers may stop growing crops or raising certain livestock in anticipation of selling their land for development.
- Prime farmland becomes more expensive to find and acquire, the local economy changes, and the rural community character begins to vanish.

Figure 1

Cycle of Farmland Conversion



Source: Holding Our Ground, AFT, 1998

Ohio Farmland Preservation Task Force

In recognition of the disturbing movement toward continuing farmland loss, former Governor George Voinovich issued an executive order in 1996 to formulate the Ohio Farmland Preservation Task Force. In June of 1997 the Task Force published its findings and recommendations. The recommendations included the following.

- Endorse a policy statement establishing that it is a priority for the State of Ohio to preserve the state's productive agricultural land and protect its unnecessary and irretrievable conversion to nonagricultural uses.
- Create an Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP) within the Ohio Department of Agriculture.
- Create an Ohio Farmland Preservation Program, which provides a menu of voluntary options to preserve farmland as well as to enhance the economic viability of agriculture.

- Create a pilot state Farmland Preservation Fund to provide funding for voluntary incentives for farmland preservation.
- Establish an Ohio Farmland Preservation Strategy that coordinates and guides state policies, programs, and actions so as to avoid unnecessary and irretrievable conversion of productive agricultural land to nonagricultural uses.
- Encourage local governments to prepare comprehensive land use plans.
- Improve the ability of local governments to plan and manage land uses that are not incompatible with agriculture and necessary urban expansion.
- Legislation should be adopted to allow counties and municipalities the permissive ability to regulate lot sizes and land divisions including acreage and health concerns within the context of an adopted local comprehensive land use plan.
- Promote economic development programs and initiatives for agriculture at the state and local levels.
- Reduce the influence and contribution of federal and state taxes on the conversion of farmland.
- Support continued state funding for local land banking.
- More effectively utilize existing infrastructure in urban areas.

In follow-up to the Task Force report, state grants were offered to counties to prepare farmland preservation plans. The Geauga County Board of Commissioners secured a grant in 1998 through the Ohio Department of Development to prepare a farmland preservation plan.

Gauga County Farmland Preservation Task Force

In February of 1999 the Geauga County Board of Commissioners formed the County Farmland Preservation Task Force. The members of the Task Force represented a cross section of public and private sector interests. The members were:

- Kevin O'Reilly, Jr. (Chairman)
- Patrick J. Cavanagh (Vice Chairman)
- Ralph Elmer Hershberger
- Louise Stienbarger
- George Marx
- James Zella
- Nancy Patterson
- Charles Lausin
- Randy Bennett

Resource agencies included the Geauga County Cooperative Extension Service, the Geauga Park District, and the Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District. Staff to the Task Force were the Geauga County Planning Commission and the County Community and Economic Development Department.

The initial meeting of the Task Force was held on March 1, 1999 and the components of the plan were outlined in accordance with state guidelines received with the grant. The primary objective of the Task Force was to prepare recommendations to be included in a county farmland preservation plan by the end of 1999 for presentation to the Board of County Commissioners.

Public Purpose in Saving Farms

Initially, efforts in some communities (not necessarily in Geauga County) to save farms centered on creating opposition to new subdivisions or the extension of infrastructure. However, over time, many people came to the realization that they were actually attempting to safeguard a way of life. That is, by protecting family farms, the rural atmosphere may be perpetuated and the local agricultural economic base maintained. By encouraging the continued existence of agriculture, people were actually promoting various public purposes related to the general welfare of the community as opposed to simply saving a piece of land from development. Some of these public purposes are discussed in more detail below.

- Controlling public costs

Protecting farmland represents sound fiscal policy. The public service and facility costs of farms and farmland are low. It has been shown through various Cost Of Community Services (COCS) studies, utilizing a model devised by the American Farmland Trust (AFT), that the tax returns to a community from agriculture are higher than the public service and infrastructure outlays they need. In a typical COCS study, the community is divided into three land use categories: residential, commercial/light industrial, and farmland/open space. A ratio is devised to compare how many dollars in local government services are spent per dollar collected in revenue. A ratio higher than 1.0 indicates that for every dollar of revenue collected from a given land use category, more than one dollar is spent to service it. COCS studies typically find that residentially developed land is a net drain on local government budgets (the COCS ratio is above 1.0). For every dollar in revenue collected, about \$1.15 to \$1.50 is expended in the form of services by the local government. However, the COCS ratios for the commercial/light industrial and agricultural/open space categories are ordinarily below 1.0. For commercial/light industrial development, the ratio is usually from 0.35 to 0.65, revealing that for each dollar collected about local government spends 35 to 65 cents in services. For the agriculture/open space category, the ratio is slightly lower, ranging from 0.30 to 0.50. Through a farmland preservation program, communities may be able to maintain the tax base while controlling public costs related to services. In a sense, it is the community's choice whether tax dollars should go towards paying for land protection or pay to service new development. Protecting land may result in a cleaner, healthier, and less congested environment.

The Geauga County Planning Commission retained Kent State University to prepare a COCS study for Auburn Township (see Appendix for complete report). The study revealed that non-residential land uses, including agriculture, subsidizes (through an excess of revenues over expenditures) residential land use. The ratio of revenue to expenditures for Auburn was residential, 1 : 1.34; agriculture, 1 : 0.37; and industrial/commercial, 1 : 0.10. The study further concluded that, “prime farmland may not generate the tax revenue of residential development, but it does not require the same level of community services. The conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses is an irreversible process involving the loss of a major resource. Before it occurs, careful analysis of the pros and cons of development versus preservation should be undertaken and the results used to inform local decision-making.”

- Enhancing the local and regional economy.

Agriculture is an important component in the local and regional economy. Farming supports a variety of other businesses including wholesale and retail food outlets, feed stores, implement dealers, granaries and processing plants. This is a mutually dependent relationship—farms need the support of related businesses and such businesses need the farms to survive. By protecting active farms and farmland, the quality and character of the local and regional economy is maintained and enhanced. Agriculture spreads economic diversity. For instance, employment within the fields of marketing, finance, transportation and other industries are interrelated with farming.

- Curbing sprawl and promoting good land use planning

Communities may curb development “sprawl” into rural areas with a farmland protection program combined with promoting more compact and infill development in municipalities. The service costs associated with fragmented, low density development in rural areas are high. Saving farms and farmland may have the effect of guiding growth into those areas best suited for it and where infrastructure is available as well. Once farmland is covered with development, the prognosis for revitalizing it for food and fiber production is bleak.

- Maintenance of open space and the environmental infrastructure

Conserving farmland may have the additional effect of maintaining open space and preserving sensitive components of the environment. Such “environmental infrastructure” may include jurisdictional wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, floodplains, and wildlife habitats. As a part of a viable farmland preservation program, farmers should be educated relative to the positive elements of preserving sensitive lands. These areas have been mapped as a part of this plan.

- Energy conservation

Farming on prime soils may involve lower energy consumption than on other soil types. For instance, because of the natural qualities associated with prime soils (good moisture content, depth and texture, positive drainage) less energy may be expended on applying conservation practices, irrigation, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and operation of farm implements. By maintaining highly productive, self-sufficient soils (particularly near municipalities) communities may conserve energy, which may otherwise be used in transportation of agricultural products as well.

- Maintaining specialty produce and animal raising

Geauga County is recognized nationally for its maple sugar production. Direct marketing of vegetables, fruits, and related items is growing. Unique animal raising and care, such as bison, ostriches, and the like is increasing. Such specialty produce and animal care enhances local identity and contributes to the economic base. In essence, protecting farming means a local supply of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other goods is readily available.

- Retention of rural lifestyle

Through the retention of existing farms and farmland, the county will preserve its prevailing rural lifestyle. The unique cultural heritage that is associated with agriculture is an important attribute. Most of the surveys of residents that have been undertaken by local communities reveal that the rural character of the county is a highly regarded aspect of living here.

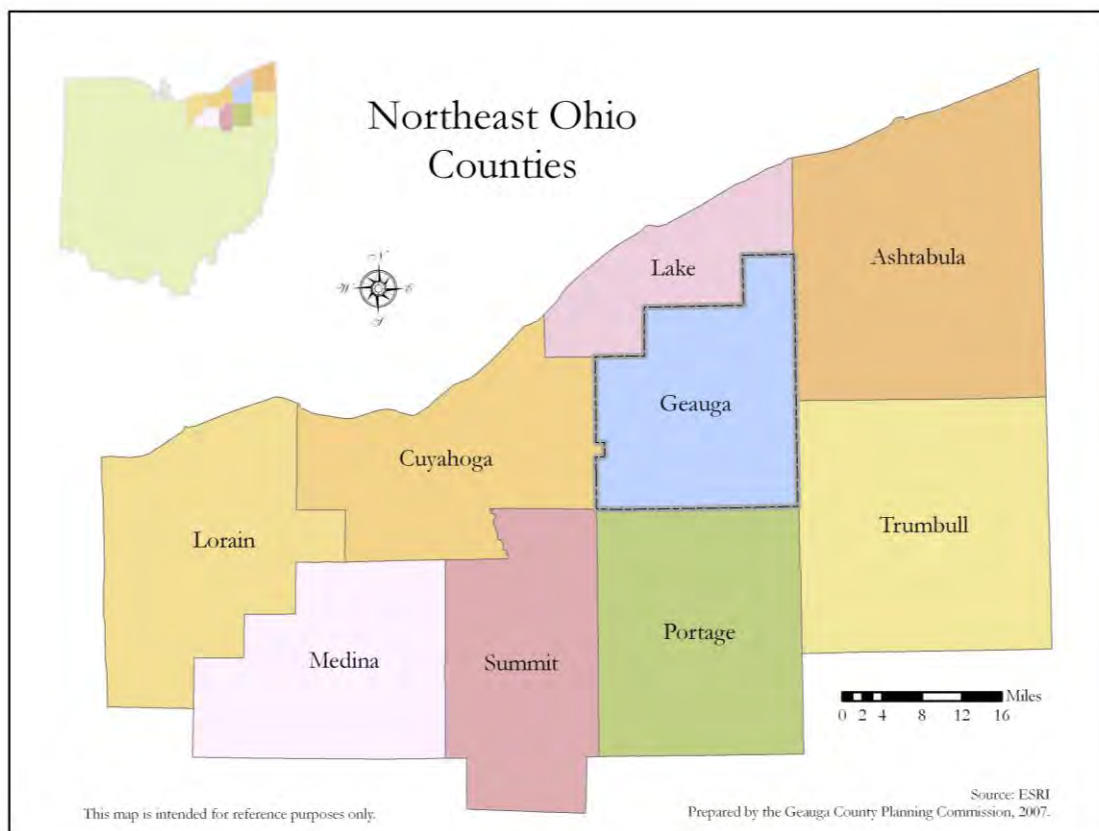
CHAPTER II

GEAUGA COUNTY PROFILE

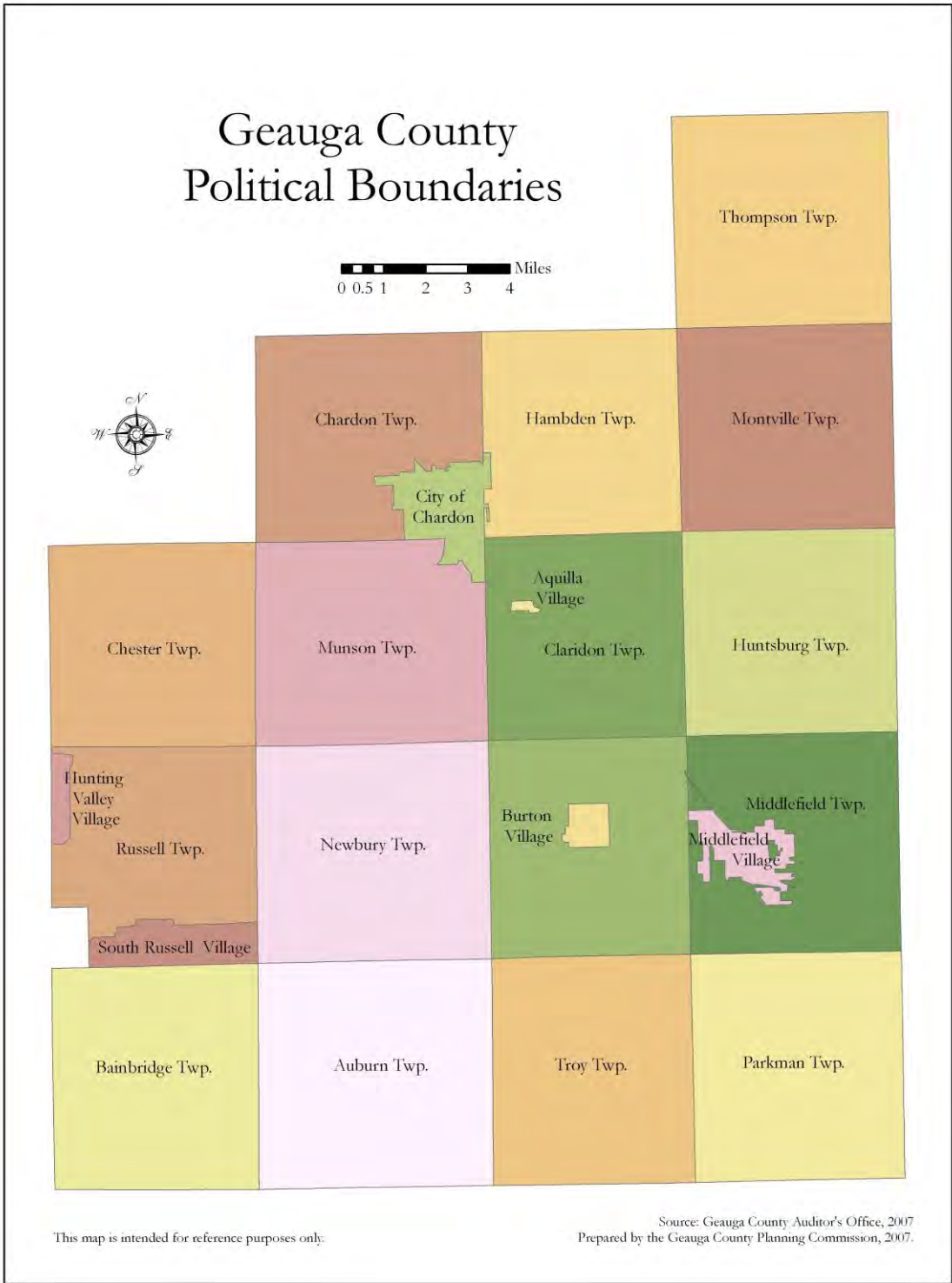
Location

Geauga County is located in northeast Ohio (Map 1) about 35 miles east of Cleveland. It is contiguous with Lake County (to the north), Ashtabula County (to the east), Trumbull County (to the southeast), Portage County (to the south), and Cuyahoga County (to the west). The county contains about 409 square miles in area comprised of 16 townships and six municipalities. Each township originally contained about 25 square miles; however, due to the creation of the various municipalities and the annexation activity associated with them, some townships are currently smaller in area. Chardon is the largest municipality (both in terms of population and geographic area) and is the county seat as well (Map 2).

Map 1



Map 2



Population

Table 2 and Map 3 depict the population change in Northeast Ohio from 1970 to 2000. Overall the region suffered a 4.8% reduction in total population. Counties that grew the most included Medina, Geauga and Portage. Counties that suffered the greatest population decline included Cuyahoga, followed by Trumbull and Summit.

The 2000 census provided that the population for Geauga County was 90,985. From 1970 to 2000 the county's population grew by 44%. The latest population estimate for Geauga County by the U.S. Census Bureau was 95,676 as of July 2006. The average annual county population growth rate has continued to remain around 1% since 1950 into 2000.

Table 2

Northeast Ohio Population 1970 to 2000

<u>County</u>	<u>Population</u>				<u>Percent Change 1970 - 2000</u>
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	
Ashtabula	98,237	104,215	99,821	102,728	5
Lake	197,200	212,801	215,499	227,511	15
Gauga	62,977	74,474	81,129	90,895	44
Cuyahoga	1,721,300	1,498,400	1,412,140	1,393,978	-19
Lorain	256,843	274,909	271,126	284,664	11
Trumbull	232,579	241,863	227,813	225,116	-3
Summit	553,371	524,472	514,990	542,899	-2
Portage	125,868	135,856	142,585	152,061	21
Medina	82,717	113,150	122,354	151,095	83
Total	3,331,092	3,180,140	3,087,457	3,170,947	-4.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Map 3

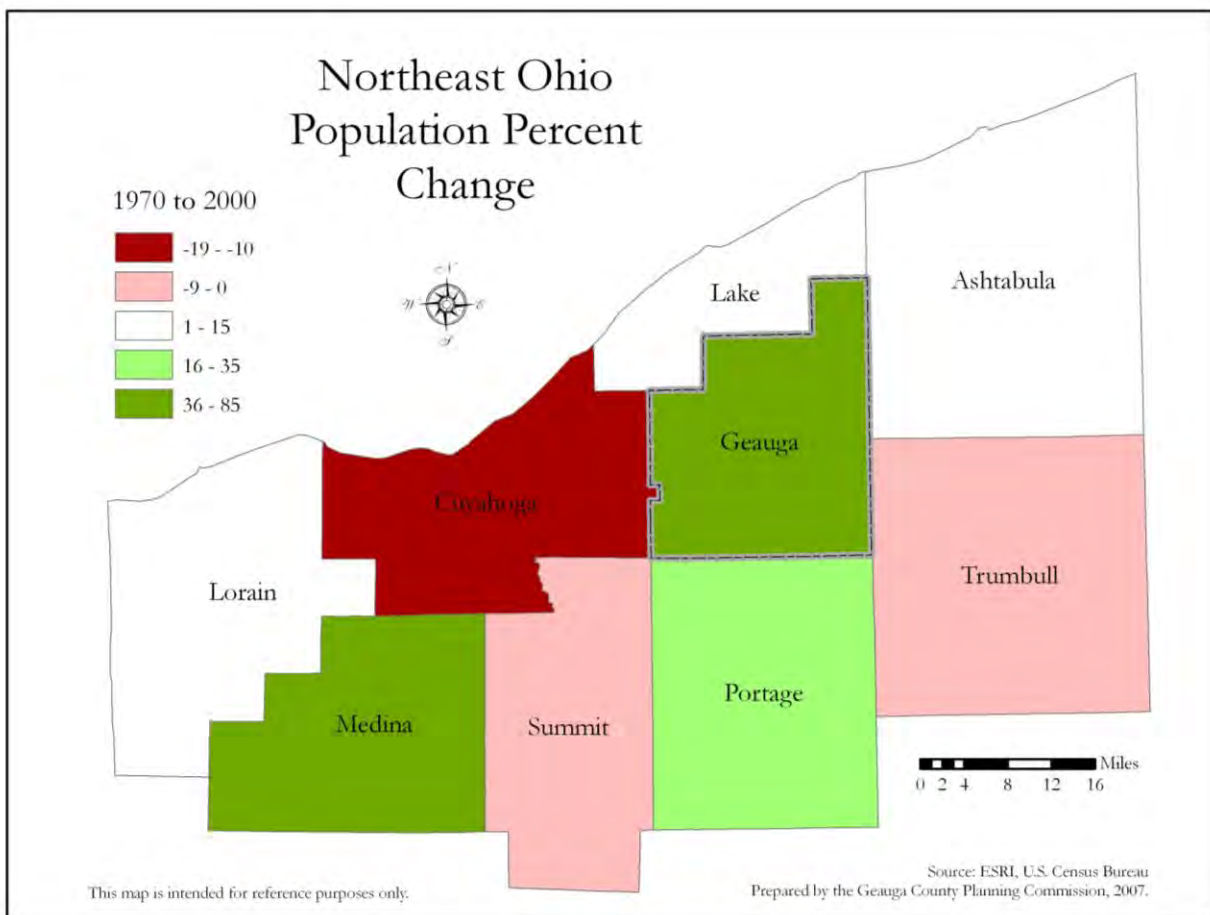


Table 3 displays population within Geauga County by jurisdiction from 1950 to 2000. Those townships experiencing the largest population percent changes from 1970 to 2000 included Auburn, Huntsburg and Munson. Aquilla Village experienced a 4.4% decline, while Chester and Hunting Valley Village grew at some of the slowest rates in the county.

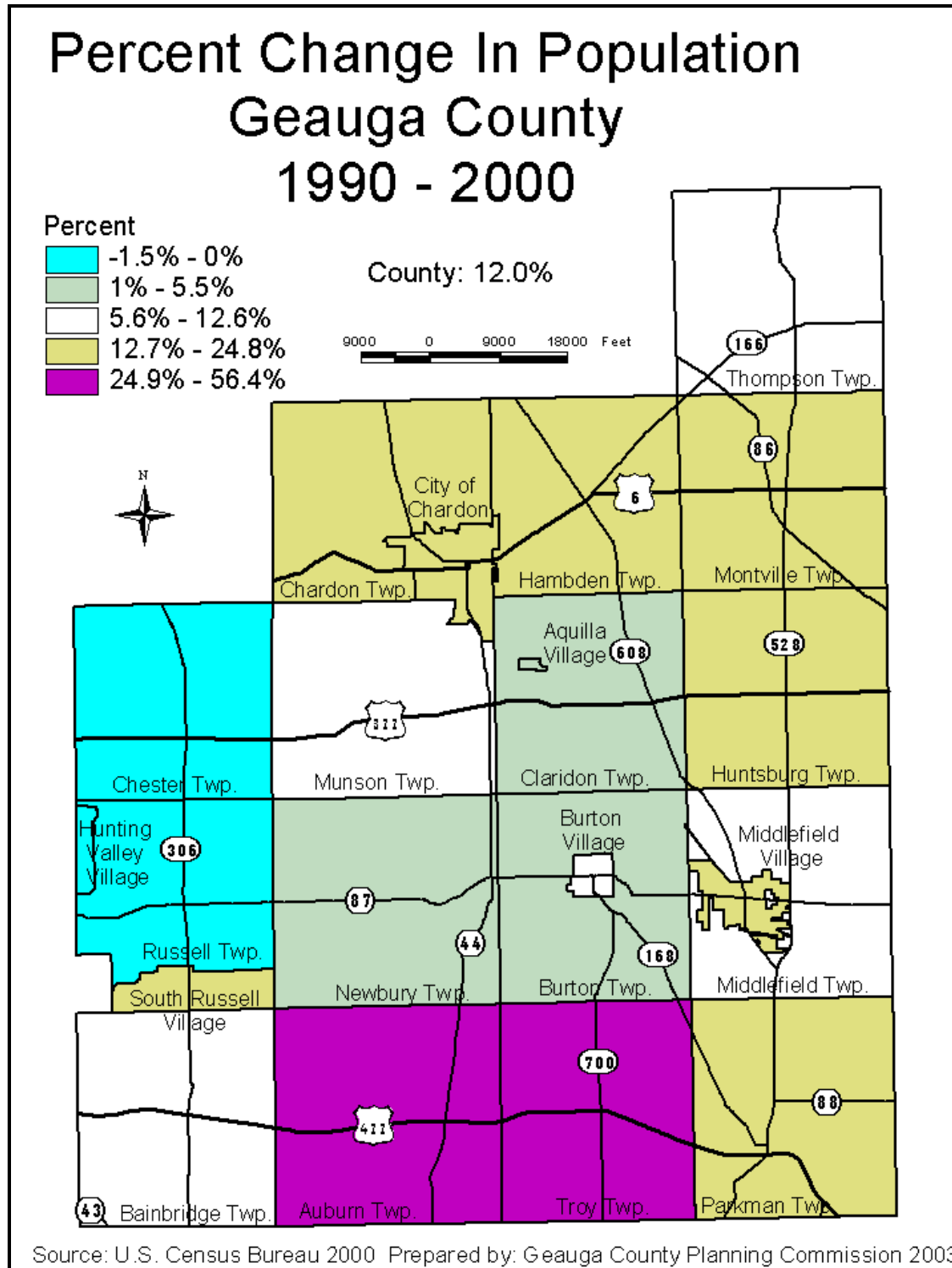
Table 3**Geauga County Population 1950 to 2000**

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% Change 1970 to 2000</u>
Aquilla Village	386	459	389	355	360	372	-4.4%
Auburn	1,075	1,451	1,587	2,351	3,298	5,158	225.0%
Bainbridge	2,926	5,423	7,038	8,207	9,694	10,916	55.1%
Burton	954	1,920	2,366	2,779	2,838	2,908	22.9%
Burton Village	932	1,085	1,214	1,401	1,349	1,450	19.4%
Chardon	896	2,056	3,180	3,537	4,037	5,156	62.1%
Chester	2,097	6,566	10,388	11,212	11,049	10,968	5.6%
City of Chardon	2,478	3,154	3,991	4,434	4,446	4,763	19.3%
Claridon	1,122	1,861	2,124	2,457	2,656	2,801	31.9%
Hambden	980	1,764	2,494	2,934	3,311	4,024	61.3%
Hunting Valley Village	47	79	124	153	151	145	16.9%
Huntsburg	1,137	1,481	1,792	2,201	2,642	3,297	84.0%
Middlefield	1,367	2,063	2,738	3,572	4,111	4,418	61.4%
Middlefield Village	1,141	1,467	1,726	1,997	1,898	2,233	29.4%
Montville	862	1,216	1,307	1,722	1,682	1,984	51.8%
Munson	1,221	2,460	3,569	5,222	5,775	6,450	80.7%
Newbury	1,941	3,719	4,038	5,337	5,611	5,805	43.8%
Parkman	1,318	1,782	2,084	2,638	3,083	3,546	70.2%
Russell	1,199	3,089	4,669	5,363	5,614	5,529	18.4%
South Russell Village	349	1,276	2,673	2,784	3,402	4,022	50.5%
Thompson	1,060	1,369	1,834	2,083	2,219	2,383	29.9%
Troy	1,158	1,833	1,652	1,735	1,903	2,567	55.4%
Total	26,646	47,573	62,977	74,474	81,129	90,895	44.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Map 4 depicts population percent change within the county from 1990 to 2000. Auburn and Troy Township experienced the greatest increases over this time period. While Russell, Chester and Hunting Valley Village saw the smallest increases.

Map 4



Population projections to the year 2030 were prepared for both the county and sub-county areas (Table 4). These projections were based on historical trends. As a precautionary note, as the length of the projection horizon increases the reliability of the

figures may diminish. The communities with the highest rate of population growth are projected to be Munson Township at 29% and Auburn Township at 37%.

Table 4

Geauga County Population Projections: 2005-2030

<u>Community</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>% Change 2000-2030</u>
Aquilla Vill.	372	372	372	372	372	372	372	N/A
Auburn Twp.	5,158	5,734	6,310	6,886	7,462	8,038	8,614	67%
Bainbridge Twp.	10,916	11,541	12,166	12,791	13,416	14,041	14,666	34%
Burton Twp.	2,908	2,995	3,082	3,169	3,256	3,343	3,340	15%
Burton Village	1,450	1,488	1,526	1,564	1,602	1,640	1,638	13%
Chardon Twp.	4,763	4,949	5,195	5,441	5,687	5,933	6,179	30%
Chardon City	5,156	5,343	5,530	5,717	5,904	6,091	6,278	22%
Chester Twp.	10,968	11,062	11,156	11,250	11,344	11,438	11,532	5%
Claridon Twp.	2,801	2,910	3,019	3,128	3,227	3,346	3,465	24%
Hambden Twp.	4,024	4,480	4,756	5,032	5,308	5,584	5,860	46%
Hunting Valley Vill.	142	142	142	142	142	142	142	N/A
Huntsburg Twp.	3,297	3,540	3,783	4,026	4,269	4,512	4,755	44%
Middlefield Twp.	4,418	4,689	4,960	5,231	5,502	5,773	6,044	37%
Middlefield Village	2,233	2,314	2,395	2,476	2,557	2,638	2,719	22%
Montville Twp.	1,984	2,093	2,202	2,311	2,420	2,529	2,638	33%
Munson Twp.	6,450	6,915	7,380	7,845	8,310	8,775	9,240	43%
Newbury Twp.	5,805	6,090	6,375	6,660	6,945	7,230	7,515	29%
Parkman Twp.	3,546	3,782	4,018	4,254	4,490	4,726	4,962	40%
Russell Twp.	5,529	5,668	5,807	5,946	6,085	6,224	6,363	15%
South Russell Village	4,022	4,239	4,456	4,673	4,890	5,107	5,324	32%
Thompson Twp.	2,383	2,472	2,561	2,650	2,739	2,828	2,917	22%
Troy Twp.	2,567	2,715	2,863	3,011	3,159	3,307	3,455	35%
County	90,895	95,397	99,899	104,401	108,903	113,405	117,907	30%

Source: Geauga County Planning Commission

Generalized Land Use

In 1975 and again in 1996 the county retained the services of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to prepare generalized land use maps (Maps 5 and 6). The maps and accompanying data (Table 5) provided an opportunity to compare land use trends over a 20-year time period. It should be noted that the methodology used to prepare the maps was through the interpretation of aerial photography. Only the affected area on a parcel of land was counted as “developed.” For example, on a residential parcel only the homesite and not the entire lot was determined to be “developed.”

Table 5

Geauga County Generalized Land Use

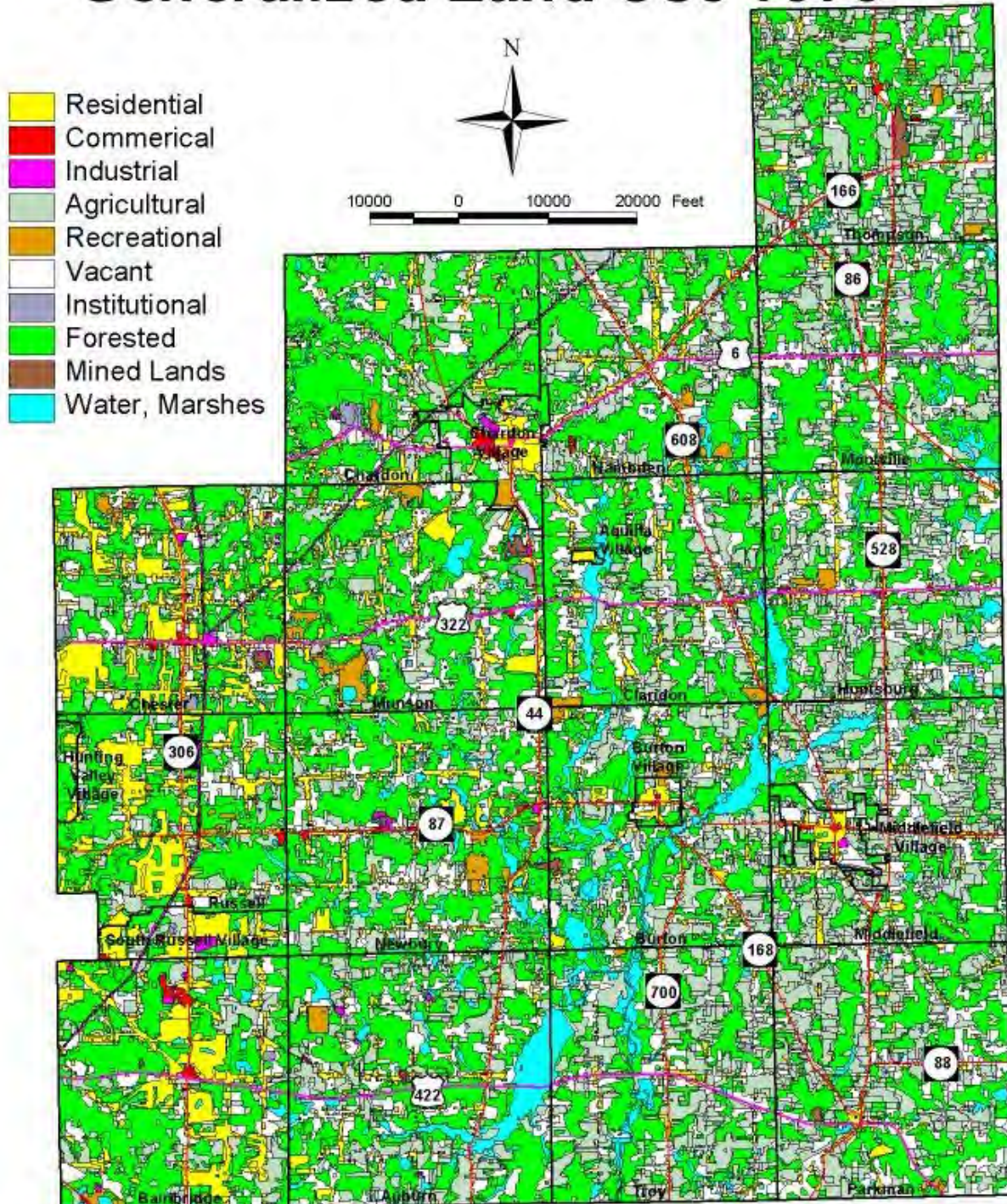
	<u>1975</u>		<u>1996</u>		<u>1975-1996</u>	<u>1975-1996</u>
<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of County</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of County</u>	<u>Change In Acres</u>	<u>% of Change</u>
Residential	23,980.51	9.17%	41,374.56	15.84%	17,394.05	73.14%
Commercial	799.23	0.31%	2,793.04	1.07%	1,993.81	249.56%
Industrial	1,034.03	0.40%	1,054.52	0.40%	20.49	2.03%
Agricultural	63,385.93	24.25%	51,492.25	19.70%	-11,893.68	-18.82%
Recreational	2,921.94	1.12%	2,395.16	0.92%	-526.78	-21.46%
Vacant	49,844.20	19.07%	9,943.66	3.80%	-39,900.54	-80.17%
Institutional	1,016.59	0.39%	2,644.84	1.01%	1,628.25	160.08%
Forested	105,313.10	40.29%	139,702.67	53.45%	34,389.57	32.75%
Mined Lands	678.64	0.26%	949.75	0.36%	271.11	39.91%
Water, Marshes	12,394.50	4.74%	9,018.22	3.45%	-3,376.28	-27.24%
Total	261,368.67	100.00	261,368.67	100.00		

Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources 1996

According to the ODNR data, land in agriculture declined by about 19%, while commercial and residential developed land increased by 250% and 73% respectively.

Map 5

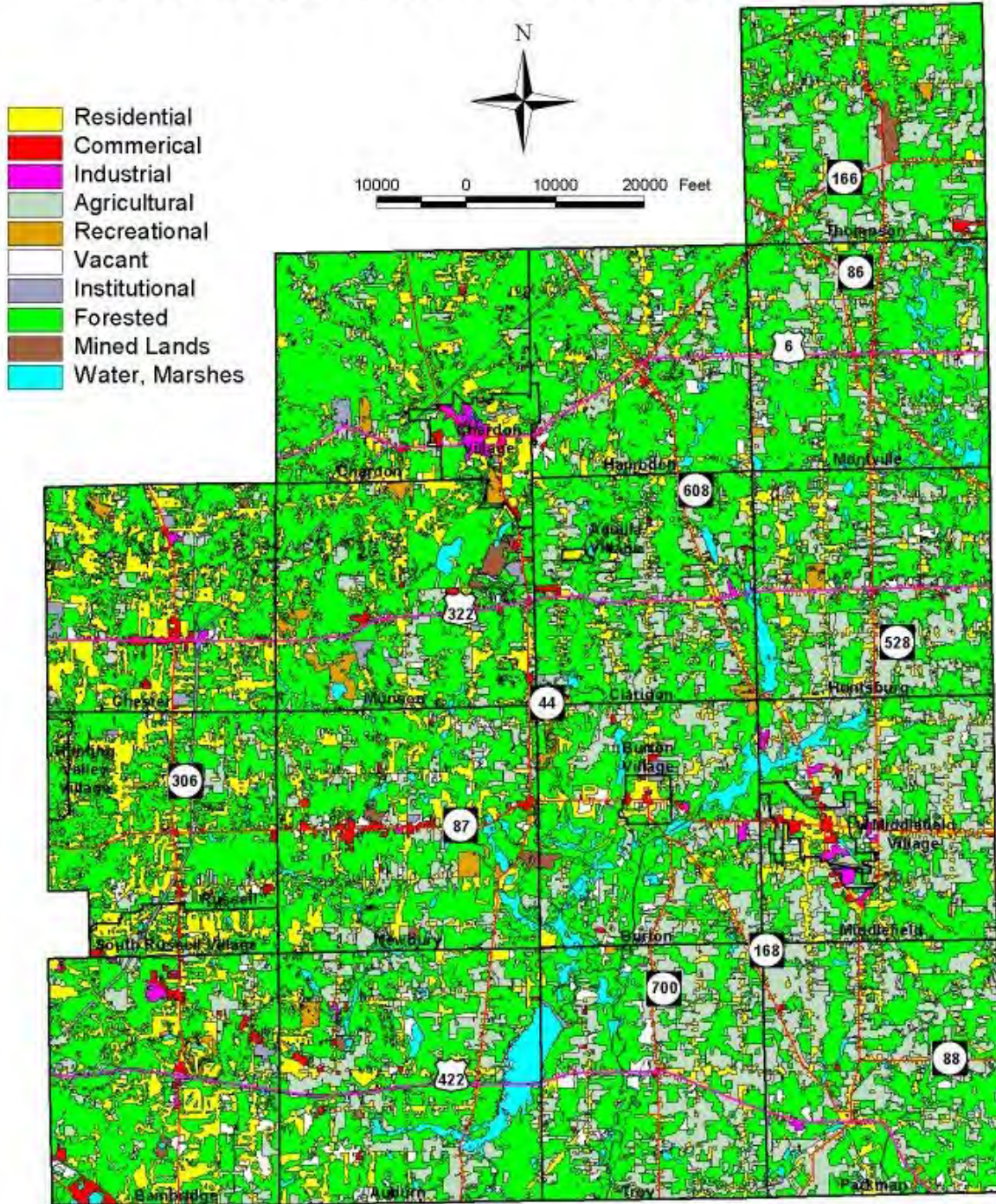
Geauga County Generalized Land Use 1975



Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources
By: Geauga County Planning Commission 11/24/98

Map 6

Geauga County Generalized Land Use 1996



Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources
By: Geauga County Planning Commission 11/24/98

Generalized Land Use Conversion

In addition, ODNR prepared and mapped generalized land use conversion information from 1975 to 1996 (Map 7 and Table 6). These data revealed that over the last 20 years there was no change in over 50% of the county. However, about 17% of the vacant, agricultural, and forested land base was converted to developed land.

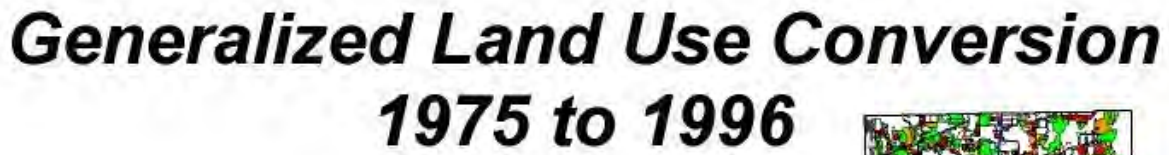
Table 6

Generalized Land Use Conversion **Geauga County From 1975 to 1996**

<u>Land Use Conversion</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of County</u>
Vacant to Developed	29,206	11.17%
Agricultural to Developed	8,943	3.42%
Forested to Developed	8,279	3.17%
Open Water, Marshes to Developed	7,142	2.73%
No Change	141,665	54.20%
Developed to Developed	2,506	.96%
Water	5,253	2.01%
Forested to Agricultural or Vacant	5,092	1.95%
Agricultural to Forested or Vacant	24,426	9.35%
Developed to Undeveloped	2,843	1.09%
Vacant and/or Other to Other Undeveloped	26,013	9.95%
Total	261,368	100.00%

Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Map 7



Real Property Assessed Valuations

Data obtained through the Ohio Department of Taxation reveal that real property assessed valuations have climbed dramatically in Geauga County from 1998 to 2005. Table 7 provides figures for residential, commercial, light industrial, and agricultural and mineral assessed valuations. Residential values make up nearly 80% of total real property assessment values, followed by agricultural and commercial. Total real property assessment valuations increased almost \$1.2 billion or 70% from 1998 to 2005.

Table 7

Real Property Assessed Valuations **1998-2005**

	1998		2005	
	Value (\$)	% of Total	Value (\$)	% of Total
Residential	1,317,352,390	78.8	2,242,703,040	78.8
Agricultural	188,324,470	11.3	297,403,560	10.5
Commercial	118,409,180	7.1	224,277,780	7.9
Industrial	46,137,230	2.8	79,713,080	2.8
Mineral	1,741,600	0.1	1,747,470	0.1
Total	1,671,964,870	100.0	2,845,844,930	100.0

Residential Land

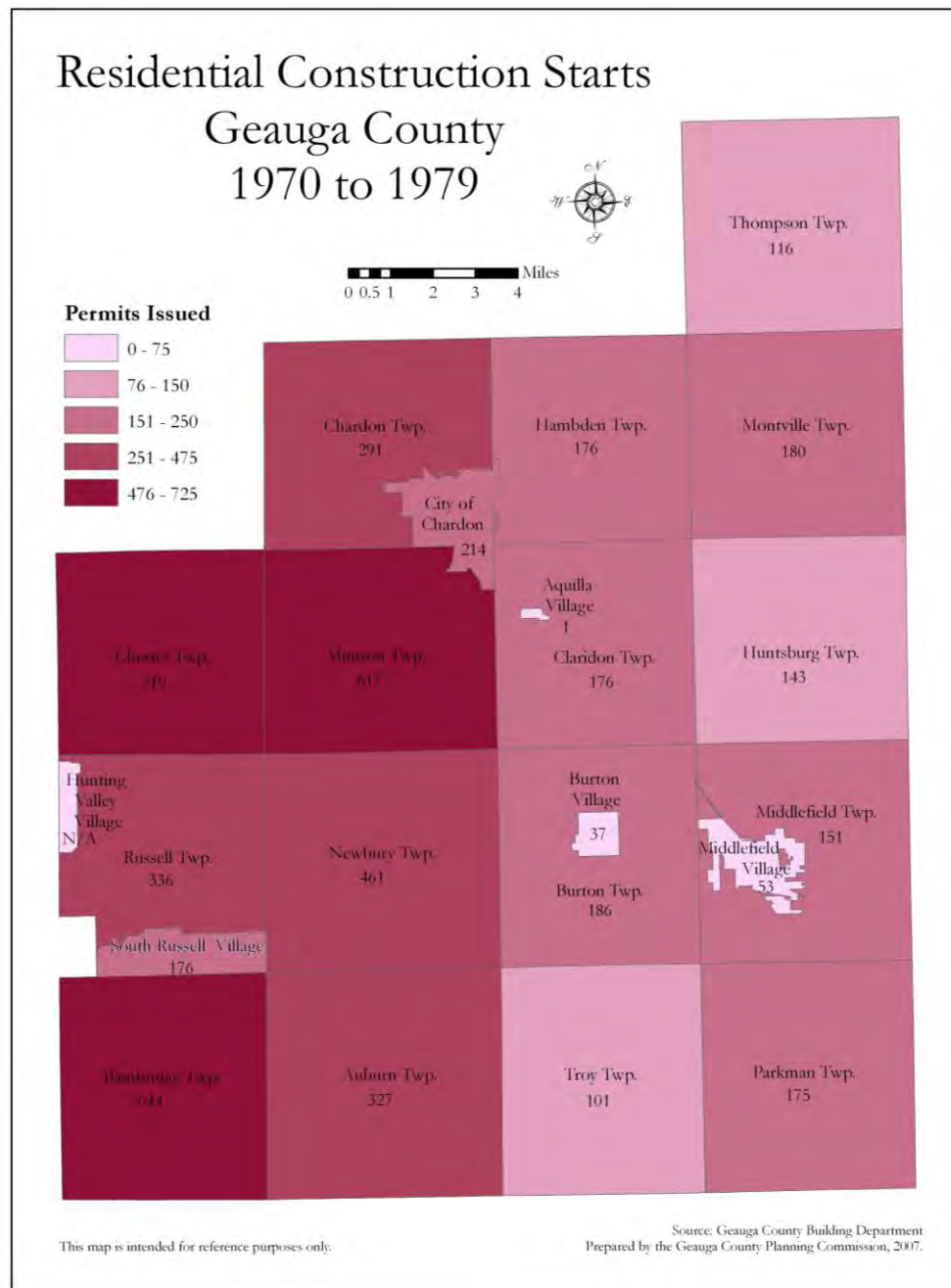
Historically, residential development activity was primarily located west of S.R. 306 in the county. In the 1970's and 1980's the activity began to move in a more easterly direction and included the area up to S.R. 44. This trend accelerated in the 1990's with the opening of U.S. Route 422 in the southwestern part of the county. Other areas, to the east of S.R. 44, have been impacted by growth during the late 1990's. In particular, Hambden Township, Huntsburg Township, and Middlefield Village have experienced an increase in development activity. The following maps depict past residential development based upon County Building Department data (see Maps 8, 9, and 10).

Other expected trends include the following.

- The municipalities in the county, especially Chardon and Middlefield will experience further residential development activity for the foreseeable future due to the availability of infrastructure to support it.
- In the unincorporated areas, it is expected that the general trend of residential development moving from west to east will continue in the county.
- The U.S. Route 422 corridor will continue to experience development pressure.

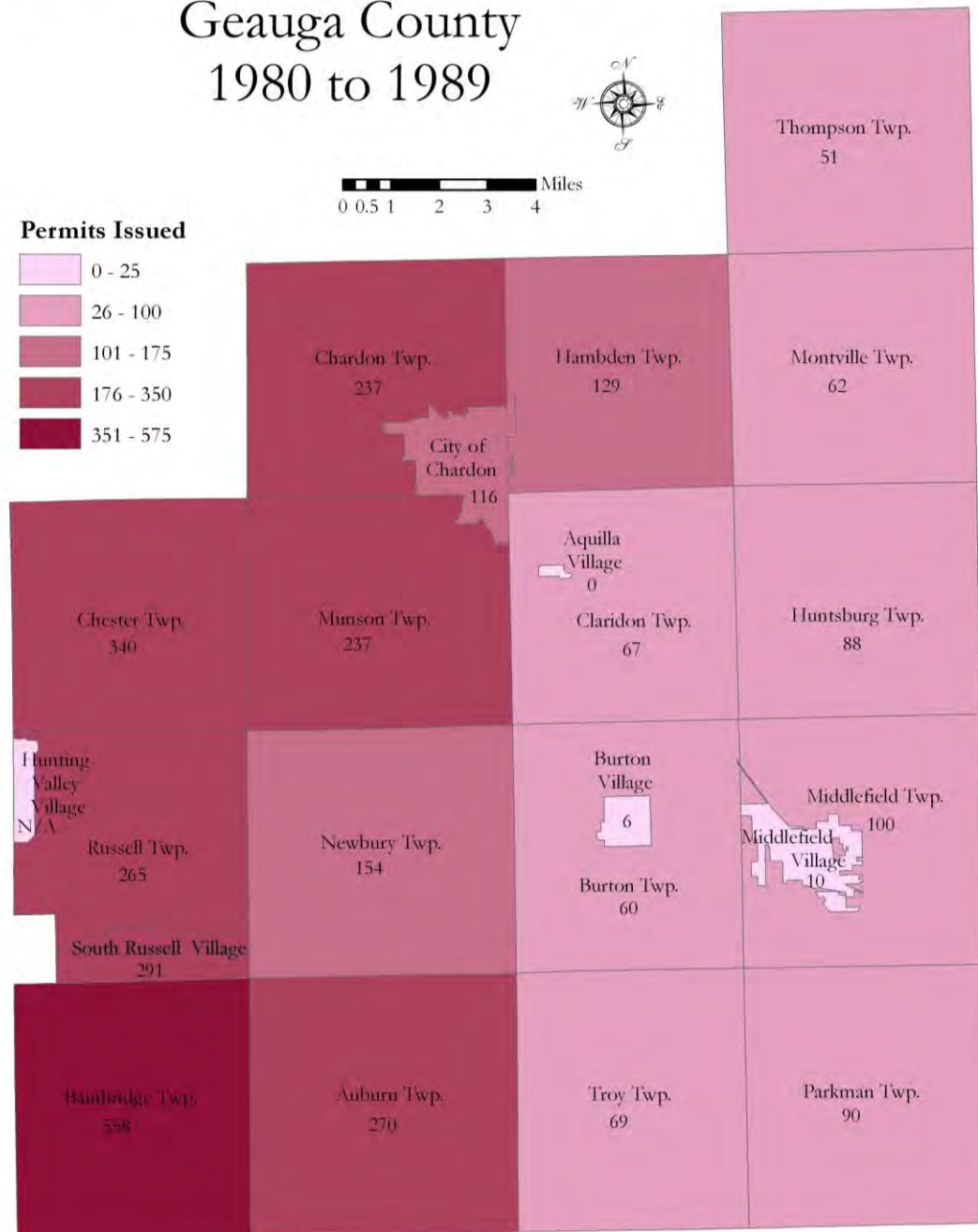
- Other areas impacted by development may include Hambden Township, Huntsburg Township, Newbury Township, Troy Township and Parkman Township.
- The townships of Thompson and Montville will likely have the least amount of new residential development.

Map 8



Map 9

Residential Construction Starts Geauga County 1980 to 1989

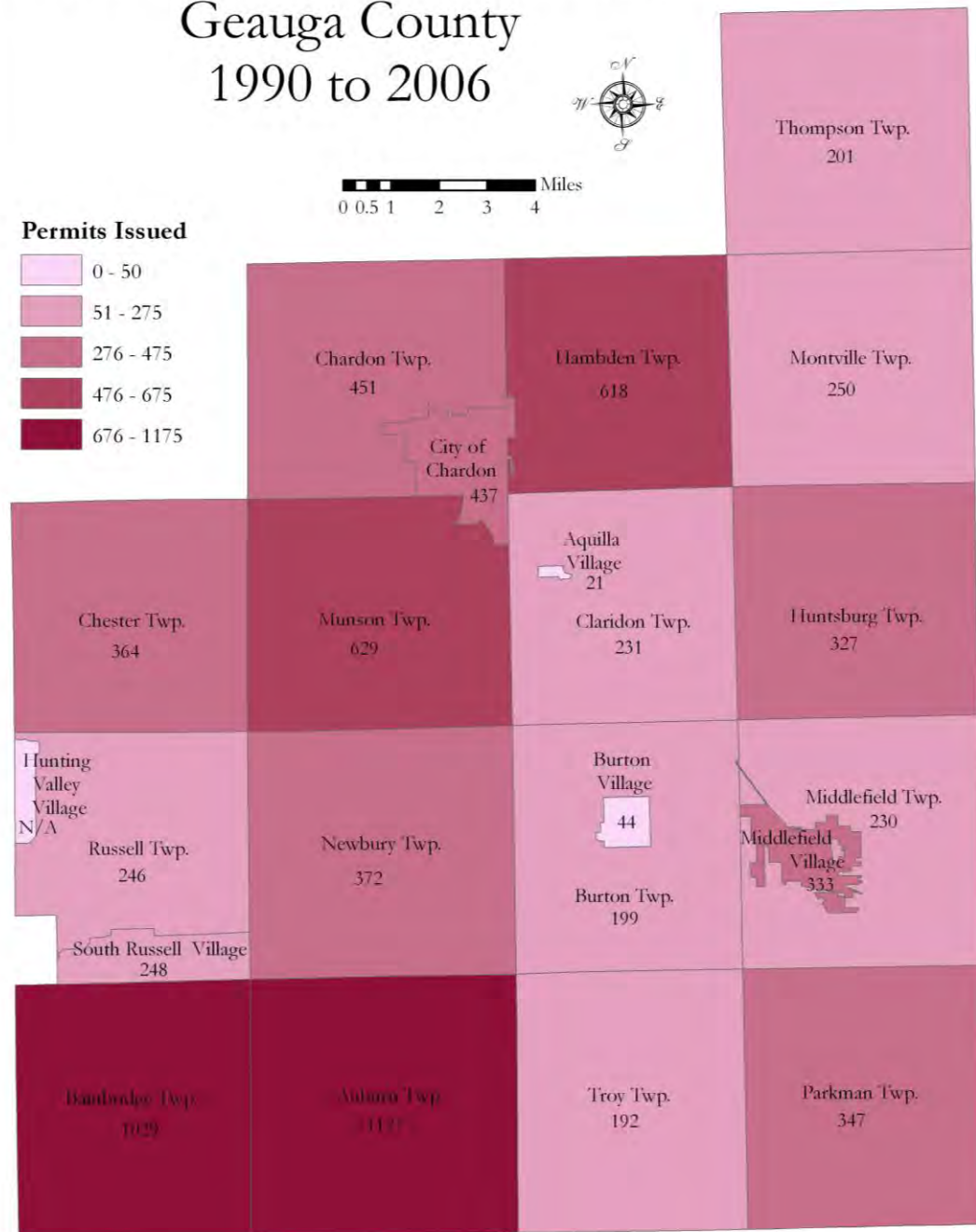


This map is intended for reference purposes only.

Source: Geauga County Building Department
Prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission, 2007.

Map 10

Residential Construction Starts Geauga County 1990 to 2006

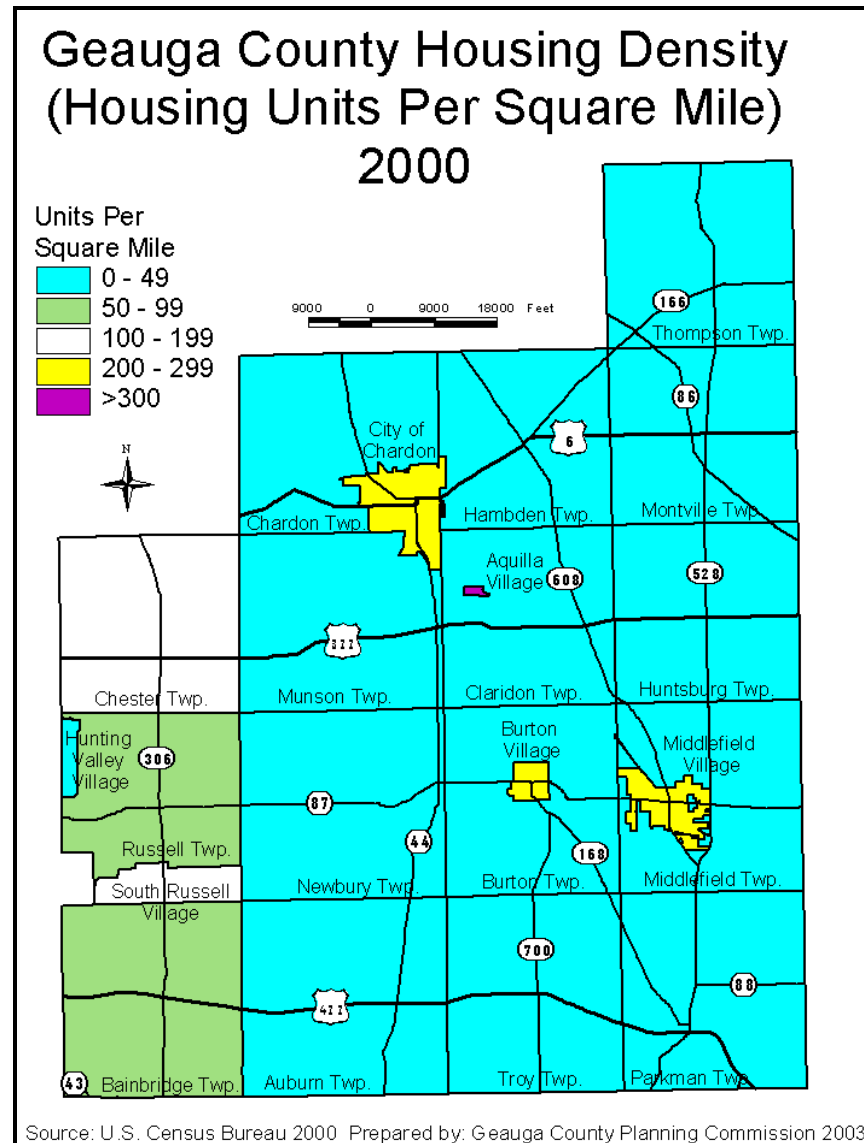


This map is intended for reference purposes only.

Source: Geauga County Building Department
Prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission, 2007.

Map 11 is a representation of the density of housing units per square mile from the 2000 census data. Again, the west to east pattern of development is discernable from the map. The westerly communities have been impacted more by development activity than those in the eastern portion of the county.

Map 11



According the 2000 census, the majority of the housing units in the county (86%) were single-family 1-unit detached variety (see Table 8). An additional 2.8% of housing units were 1 unit attached. Multifamily housing units made up 6.8% of total units in the county. And mobile homes accounted for an additional 4.2% of housing units. Burton Village, Middlefield Village and the City of Chardon had the highest percentages of multifamily units in the county. Hambden, Thompson and Troy townships had the largest concentrations of mobile homes.

Table 8**Number of Units In Structure: 2000 Geauga County**

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Total Units</u>	<u>1 Unit Detached</u>		<u>1 Unit Attached</u>		<u>Multi-Family Units</u>		<u>Mobile Homes</u>		<u>Other</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Aquilla Village	145	136	93.8	3	2.1	4	2.8	2	1.4	0	0.0
Auburn	1,866	1,702	91.2	89	4.8	55	2.9	20	1.1	0	0.0
Bainbridge	3,980	3,593	90.3	239	6.0	144	3.6	4	0.1	0	0.0
Burton	980	905	92.3	7	0.7	27	2.8	41	4.2	0	0.0
Burton Village	624	345	55.3	19	3.0	258	41.3	2	0.3	0	0.0
Chardon	1,740	1,576	90.6	0	0.0	6	0.3	158	9.1	0	0.0
Chester	4,038	3,830	94.8	34	0.8	58	1.4	116	2.9	0	0.0
City of Chardon	2,276	1,428	62.7	86	3.8	755	33.2	0	0.0	7	0.3
Claridon	1,047	867	82.8	7	0.7	30	2.9	143	13.7	0	0.0
Hambden	1,506	1053	69.9	43	2.9	8	0.5	402	26.7	0	0.0
Hunting Valley Village	63	63	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Huntsburg	876	828	94.5	9	1.0	39	4.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Middlefield	1,235	862	69.8	76	6.2	120	9.7	177	14.3	0	0.0
Middlefield Village	1,008	510	50.6	65	6.4	433	43.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Montville	731	708	96.9	0	0.0	12	1.6	11	1.5	0	0.0
Munson	2,170	2,154	99.3	0	0.0	16	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Newbury	2,192	2,042	93.2	64	2.9	86	3.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Parkman	1,010	864	85.5	74	7.3	59	5.8	13	1.3	0	0.0
Russell	2,121	2,063	97.3	18	0.8	40	1.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
South Russell Village	1,401	1,328	94.8	67	4.8	6	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Thompson	906	713	78.7	0	0.0	45	5.0	142	15.7	6	0.7
Troy	890	682	76.6	33	3.7	38	4.3	137	15.4	0	0.0
Total	32,805	28,252	86.1	933	2.8	2,239	6.8	1,368	4.2	13	0.0

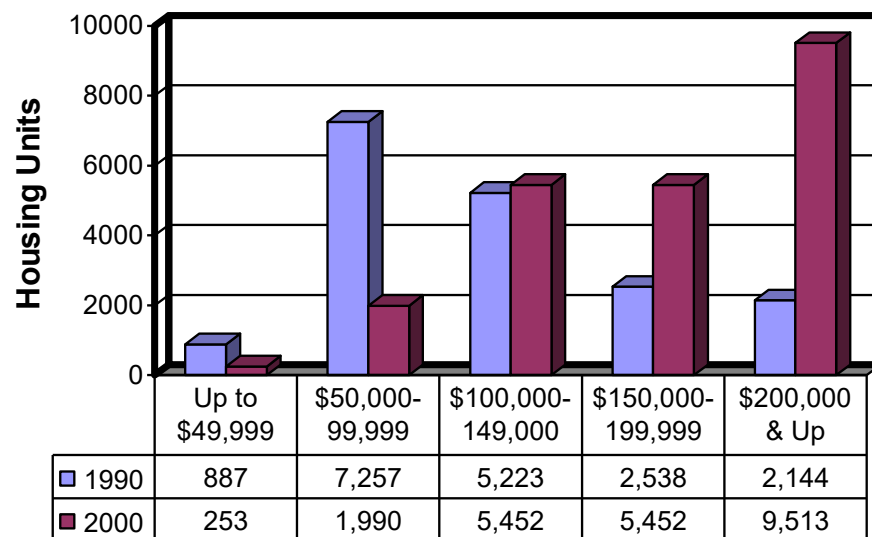
Source: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (Table DP-4 Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics)

Housing Value and Cost

The value of the housing stock in the county has increased substantially from 1990 to 2000 (see Figure 2). In 2000, the value of occupied housing units in the \$200,000 and over range represented about 42% of the housing available compared to only 12% in 1990. Housing units valued at \$100,000 – \$199,999 reflected 48.2% of the housing stock. According to the 2000 Census, only 10% of the housing in the county is in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 range.

Figure 2

Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units
Geauga County: 1990-2000

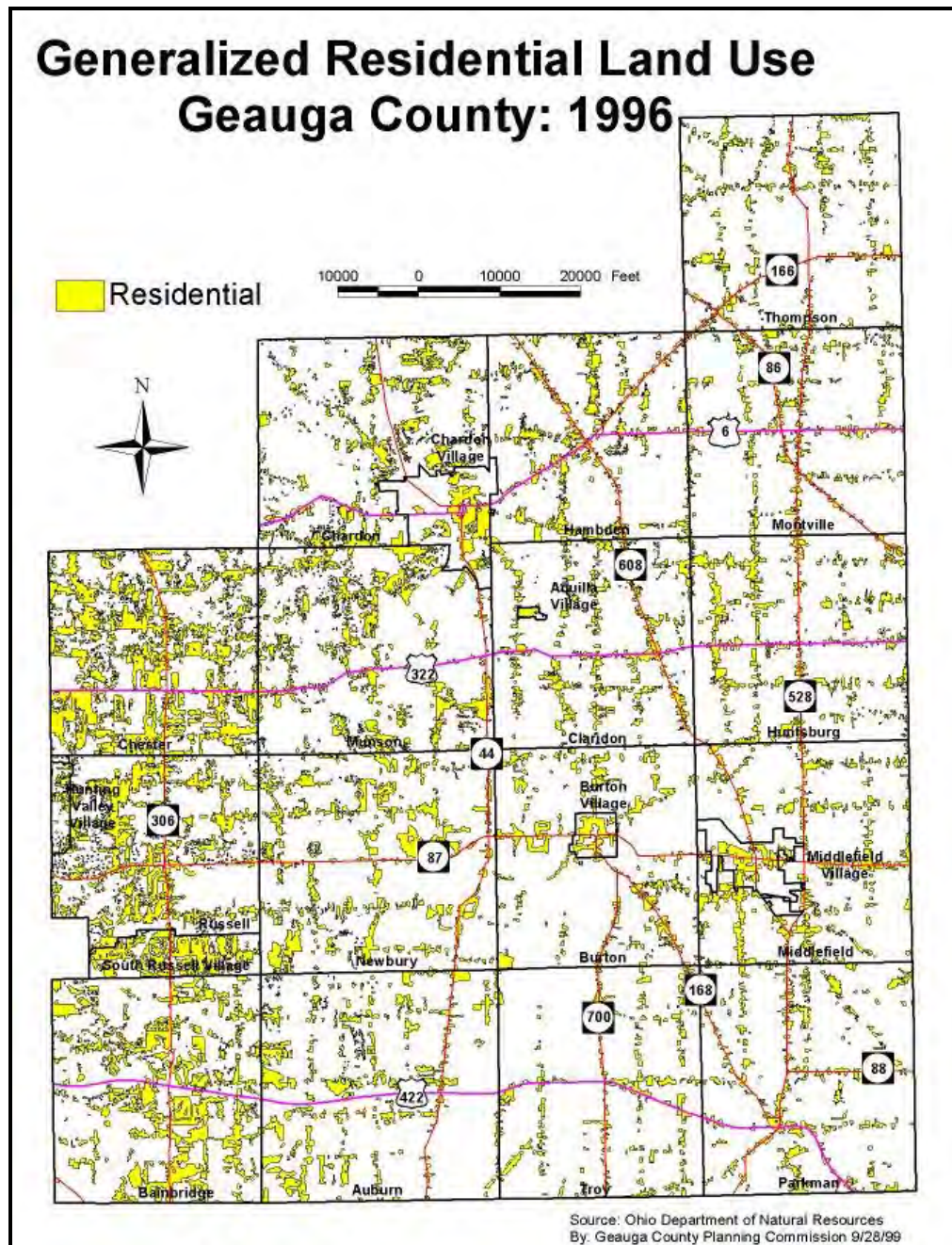


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Residential Land

Based upon the ODNR land use data, over 17,000 acres of land in the county were developed for residential purposes during the time frame of 1975 to 1996. The western portion of the county experienced the highest amount of residential development activity and this is expected to continue in the future. Map 12 depicts the generalized pattern of residential development as of 1996 in the county.

Map 12

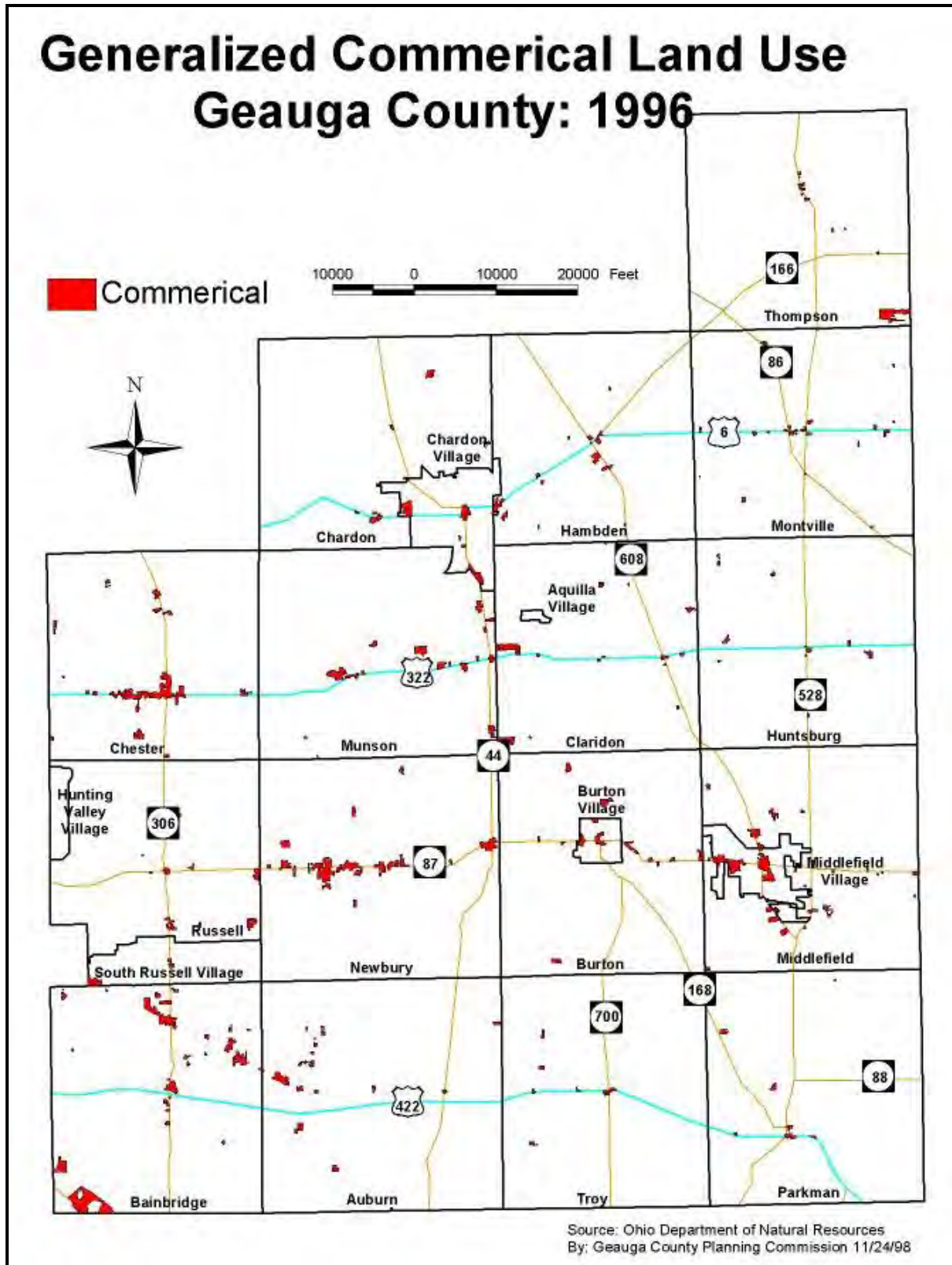


Commercial Land

Commercial development has traditionally occurred within the municipalities. The municipalities generally have the infrastructure (central sewer and water lines) to support more intensive business uses. Chardon and Middlefield Villages have experienced the bulk of the commercial growth in the 1990's. Within the unincorporated area of the county, portions of Bainbridge, Chester, and Newbury Townships have absorbed the most new commercial activity. Map 13 shows generalized commercially developed areas as of 1996 in Geauga County.

Within the municipalities, it is expected that Chardon and Middlefield will continue to experience new commercial activity due to the availability of supportive infrastructure. The U.S. Route 422 corridor, particularly the Auburn Corners area, may be impacted by business expansion due to the installation of a sanitary treatment plant, availability of vacant commercially zoned land, and the access afforded by the state highways to major local and regional markets. Other locations that may see additional growth are portions of Bainbridge, Chester, and Newbury Townships.

Map 13



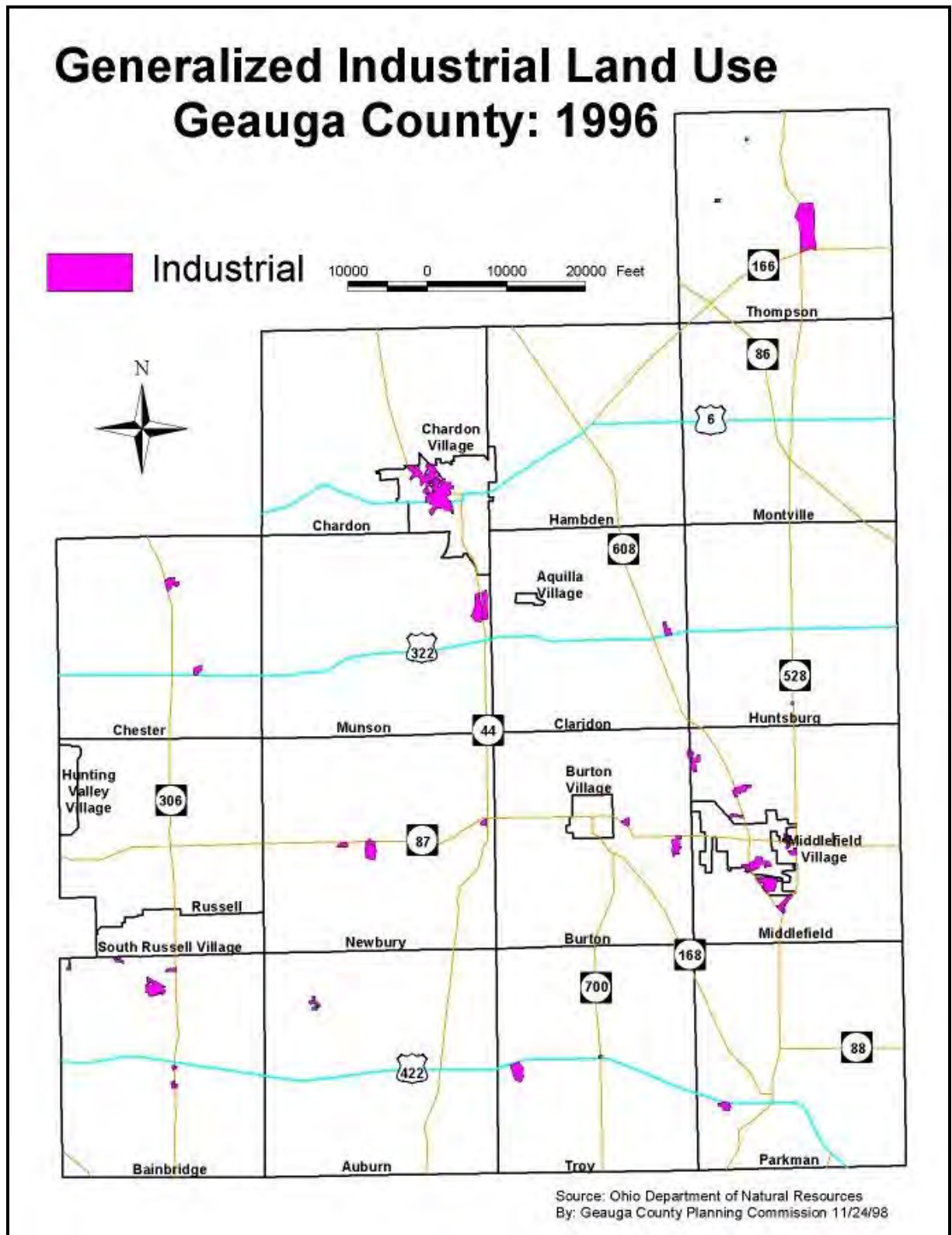
Light Industrial Land

Light industrial development has typically been concentrated in the municipalities, particularly Chardon and Middlefield. This is a result of available infrastructure (sewer and water lines) to support it. In Chardon, the industrial area is generally located in the northwestern portion of town. In Middlefield, the industrial parks are located on the east side of the village, along S.R. 608, S.R. 87, and S.R. 528.

Within the unincorporated area of the county, light industrial development has occurred in portions of Auburn, Bainbridge, Burton, Chester, Munson, Newbury, Parkman, Troy, and Thompson Townships. Map 14 shows generalized light industrial development locations in the county as of 1996.

The municipalities of Chardon and Middlefield are expected to continue to absorb the majority of future light industrial expansion in the county due to the presence of infrastructure, prevailing zoning, vacant land inventory, and tax abatement availability. Within the unincorporated areas, Burton Township (along S.R. 87 between Middlefield and Burton Villages), Newbury Township (near S.R. 87, west of Auburn Road), Parkman Township (on U.S. Route 422, west of S.R. 528), and Troy Township (along U.S. Route 422, west of Rapids Road) may experience additional light industrial development. Some of these locations, however, do not have the sewage treatment facilities in place yet to support any substantial industrial activities.

Map 14



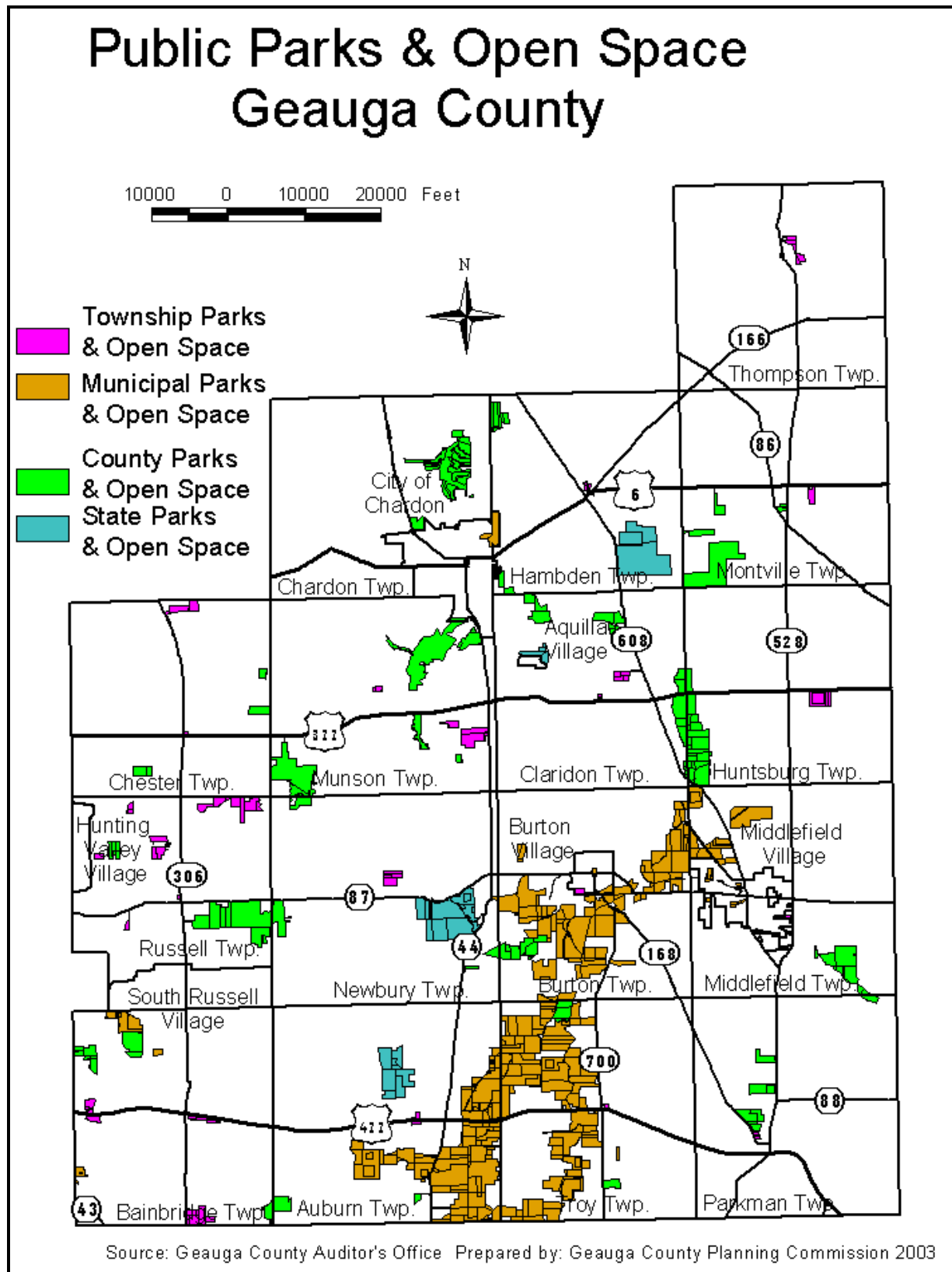
Parks Recreation

There are a multitude of public and private parks and recreation areas located in the county. Most of the facilities are of the outdoor variety and are owned and/or operated by the State of Ohio, the Geauga Park District, Boards of Township Trustees, Township Park Commissions, Joint Recreation Districts, and municipalities (Map 15). Not to be overlooked is the county fairgrounds in Burton Township and Village owned by the Board of County Commissioners.

The Geauga Park District was established in 1961 and the first park was the Woodin Road Park consisting of about four acres. Today, the Geauga Park District has about 6,715 acres under its jurisdiction. Its mission is “to preserve, conserve, and protect the natural features of Geauga County and to provide the opportunity for people to enjoy and appreciate these resources.”

Private recreational facilities also abound in the county. Private recreational opportunities include golf, skiing, camping, fishing, and horseback riding. The Geauga YMCA is a significant indoor facility located in Munson Township.

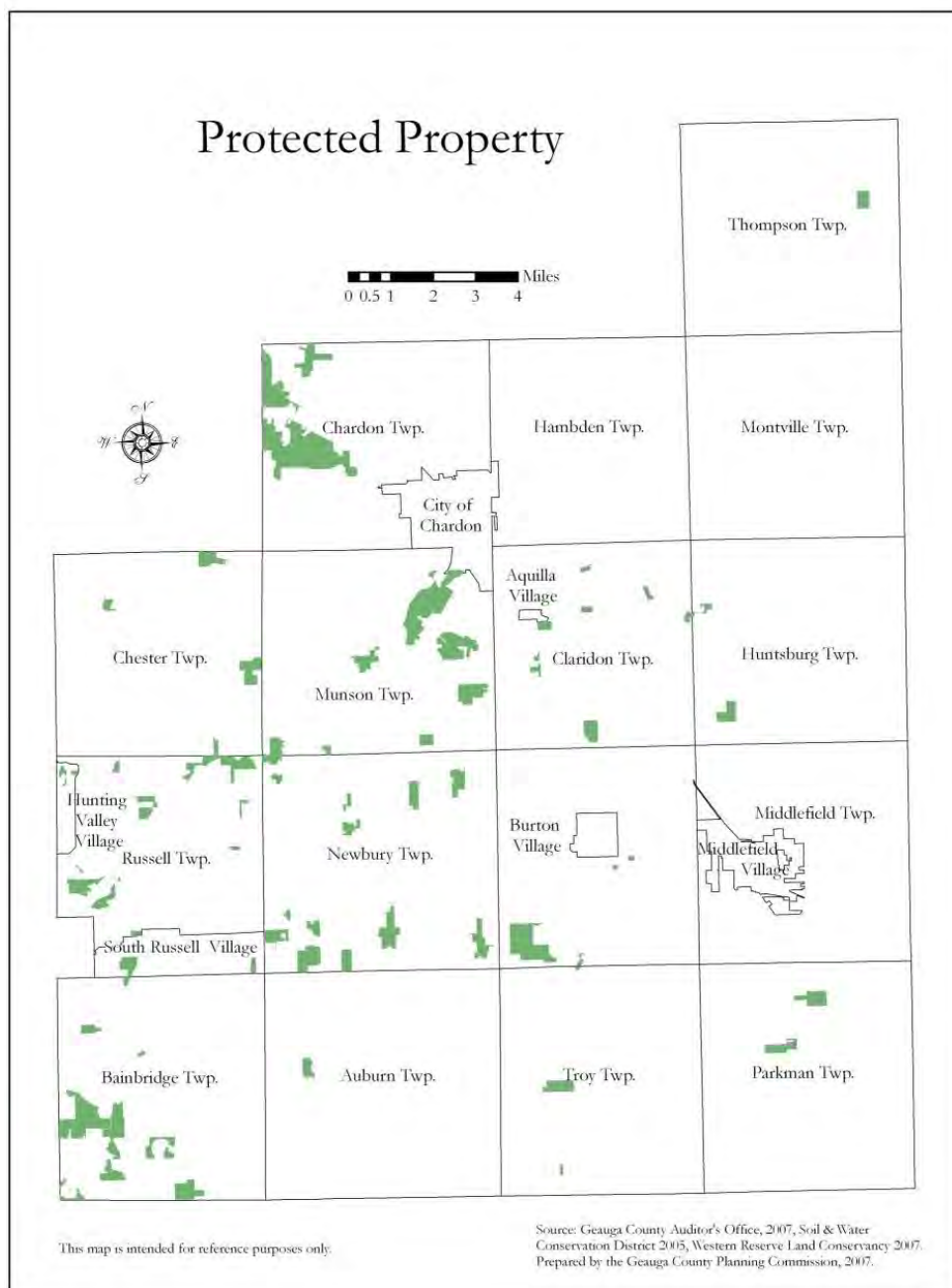
Map 15



Conservation and Open Space (Protected Lands)

Conservation and open space (protected lands) areas are held by various private and non-profit entities in the county. Conservation efforts related to sensitive wetlands, river corridors, and the like have been initiated by various private and non-profit organizations. Such efforts typically relate to the acquisition of easements to ensure preservation (see Map 16).

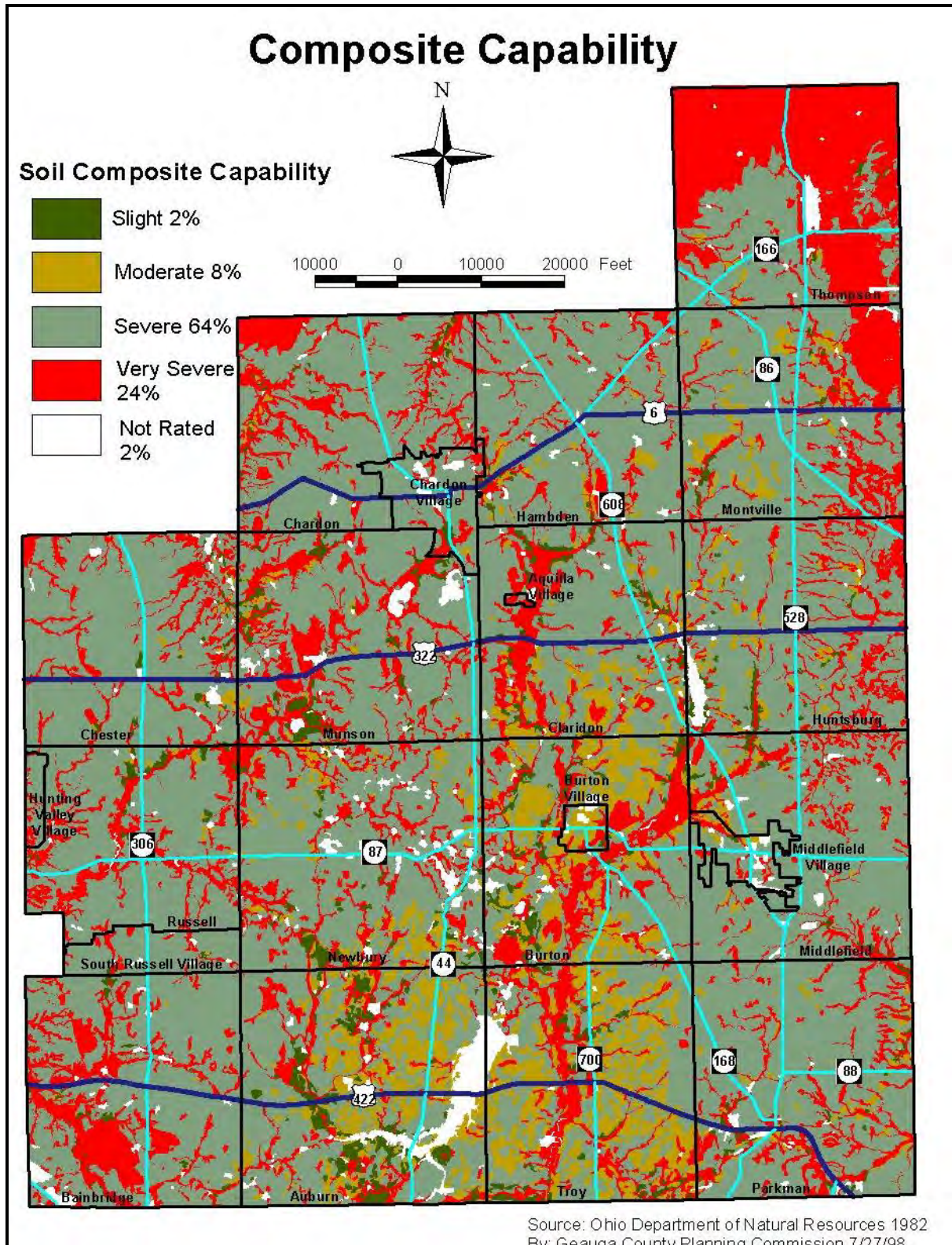
Map 16



Environmentally Sensitive Land

Environmentally sensitive land includes floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and shallow depth to bedrock locations. The following composite capability map (Map 17) depicts a rating system, devised by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) of key soil variables that takes into consideration environmentally delicate land. A “slight” rating means that few environmental limitations exist with respect to a particular area for development purposes, whereas a “very severe” rating relates to the existence of a number of factors that may make the affected site highly susceptible to ecological damage. Based upon the ODNR data, 64% (168,000 acres) of the county’s land base is rated “severe” and 24% (61,000 acres) is classified as “very severe.” Locations rated slight/moderate accounted for only 10% (27,000 acres) and the “not rated” category (disturbed soils, etc.) included 2% (6,000 acres) of Geauga’s geographic area.

Map 17



Agricultural Land

Land In Active Agricultural Use

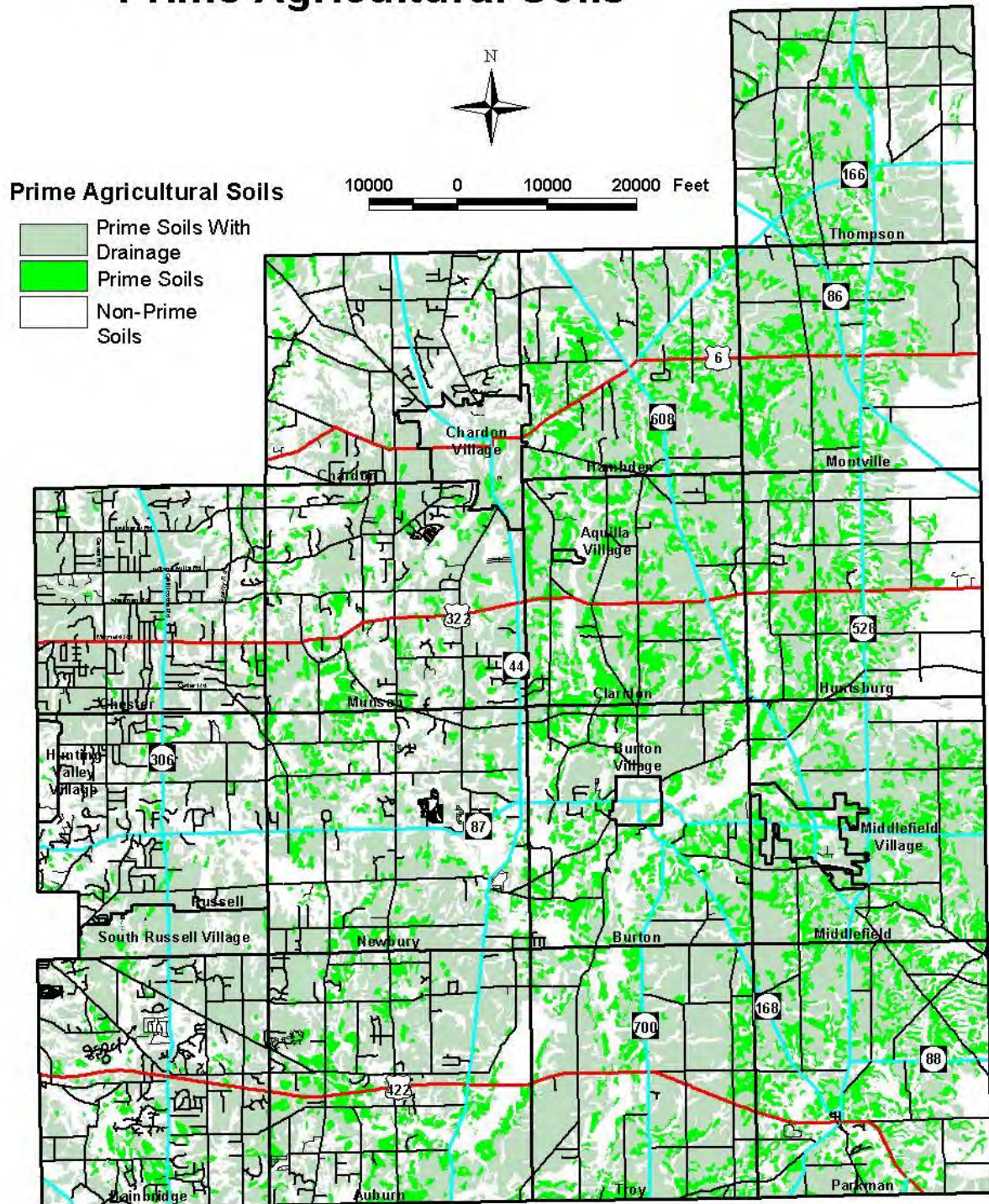
According to various sources, the amount of land in agricultural use in the county has declined. The ODNR data (Map 7) provide that nearly 12,000 acres of farmland were lost in Geauga from 1975 to 1996, representing a decrease of 19%. Information from the U.S. Census of Agriculture also indicates a reduction in farm acreage. From 1982 to 2002 approximately 8,000 acres of land were removed from agricultural production or a downward change of 11%. The information on agricultural use differs due to the definition of "agriculture" and the manner in which the information is collected.

Prime Agricultural Land

"Prime" agricultural soils have the appropriate quality, moisture supply, and attendant growing season to produce a high crop yield when treated and managed in accordance with modern farm methods. Generally, prime agricultural soils will be more productive under intense cultivation than other soil types using similar management practices. As shown on Map 18, the majority of the county (67% or 174,521 acres) is covered by prime agricultural soils and soils that are considered prime if artificially drained. Table 10 reflects a breakdown by township of the acreage and percentage of each with prime agricultural soils and soils considered prime with proper drainage. With the exception of Russell Township, all of the townships in the county have more than 50% of their land mass in the "prime" and "prime with artificial drainage categories." Table 10 lists the soil types found in the county that are a part of the prime agricultural land classification system outlined in the "Soil Survey of Geauga County, Ohio" (1982). The number designation reflects a degree of limitation on choice of crops, the letter "E" means there may be an erosion restriction, and "W" indicates that water may exist at or near the surface of the soil.

Map 18

Geauga County Prime Agricultural Soils



Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources 1982
Prepared By: Geauga County Planning Commission 4/20/98

Table 10

Acres In Prime & Non-Prime Agricultural Soils
Geauga County

<u>Township</u>	<u>Acres of Prime Soils With Drainage</u>	<u>Acres of Prime Soils</u>	<u>Acres of Non-Prime Soils</u>	<u>% of Township Prime Soils With Drainage</u>	<u>% of Township Prime Soils</u>	<u>% of Township Non-Prime Soils</u>
Auburn	6,972.9	6,168.3	6,015.1	36.4	32.2	31.4
Bainbridge	9,037.9	1,321.8	6,162.9	54.7	8.0	37.3
Burton	2,887.5	6,571.0	6,149.5	18.5	42.1	39.4
Chardon	8,329.3	755.7	7,707.8	49.6	4.5	45.9
Chester	10,041.2	1,899.7	3,136.0	66.6	12.6	20.8
Claridon	4,247.6	7,240.0	3,109.1	29.1	49.6	21.3
Hambden	7,280.2	3,582.8	3,468.1	50.8	25.0	24.2
Huntsburg	4,399.0	3,395.7	7,640.4	28.5	22.0	49.5
Middlefield	8,475.6	1,914.9	6,261.0	50.9	11.5	37.6
Montville	8,488.2	2,984.9	4,073.0	54.6	19.2	26.2
Munson	8,436.7	1,632.9	6,939.9	49.6	9.6	40.8
Newbury	7,816.0	2,933.2	7,469.8	42.9	16.1	41.0
Parkman	6,081.1	2,153.4	8,992.5	35.3	12.5	52.2
Russell	8,713.9	558.2	6,233.1	56.2	3.6	40.2
Thompson	10,271.5	1,867.5	4,535.5	61.6	11.2	27.2
Troy	5,235.6	7,408.9	3,819.7	31.8	45.0	23.2
Totals	116,714.1	52,388.9	91,713.4	45.60	21.4	33.0

Source: Geauga County Soil Survey 1982

Table 11

Prime Agricultural Soils
Geauga County

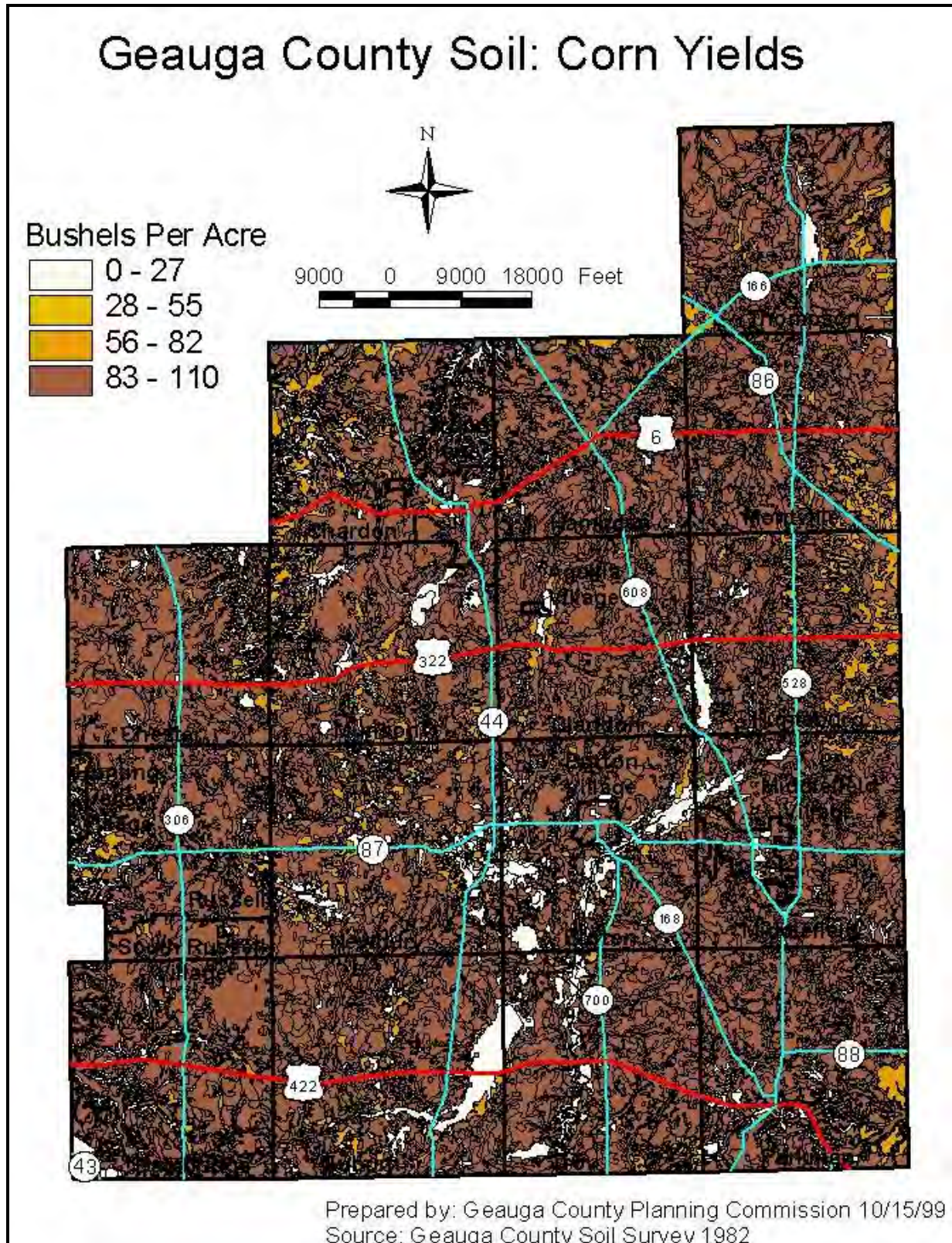
<u>Soils</u>	<u>Agricultural Rating</u>
Bogart	2E
Caneadea	3W*
Canfield	2E
Chili	2E
Damascus	3W*
Darien	3W*
Ellsworth	2E
Fitchville	3W*
Glenford	2E
Haskins	2E*
Jimtown	3W*
Lordstown	2E
Loudonville	2E
Mahoning	3E*
Mitiwanga	3E*
Oshtemo	2E
Ravenna	3E*
Rawson	2E
Rittman	2E
Sebring	3W*
Wadsworth	3E*
* Require Artificial Drainage	

Source: Geauga County Soil Survey 1982

Crop Yields Per Acre

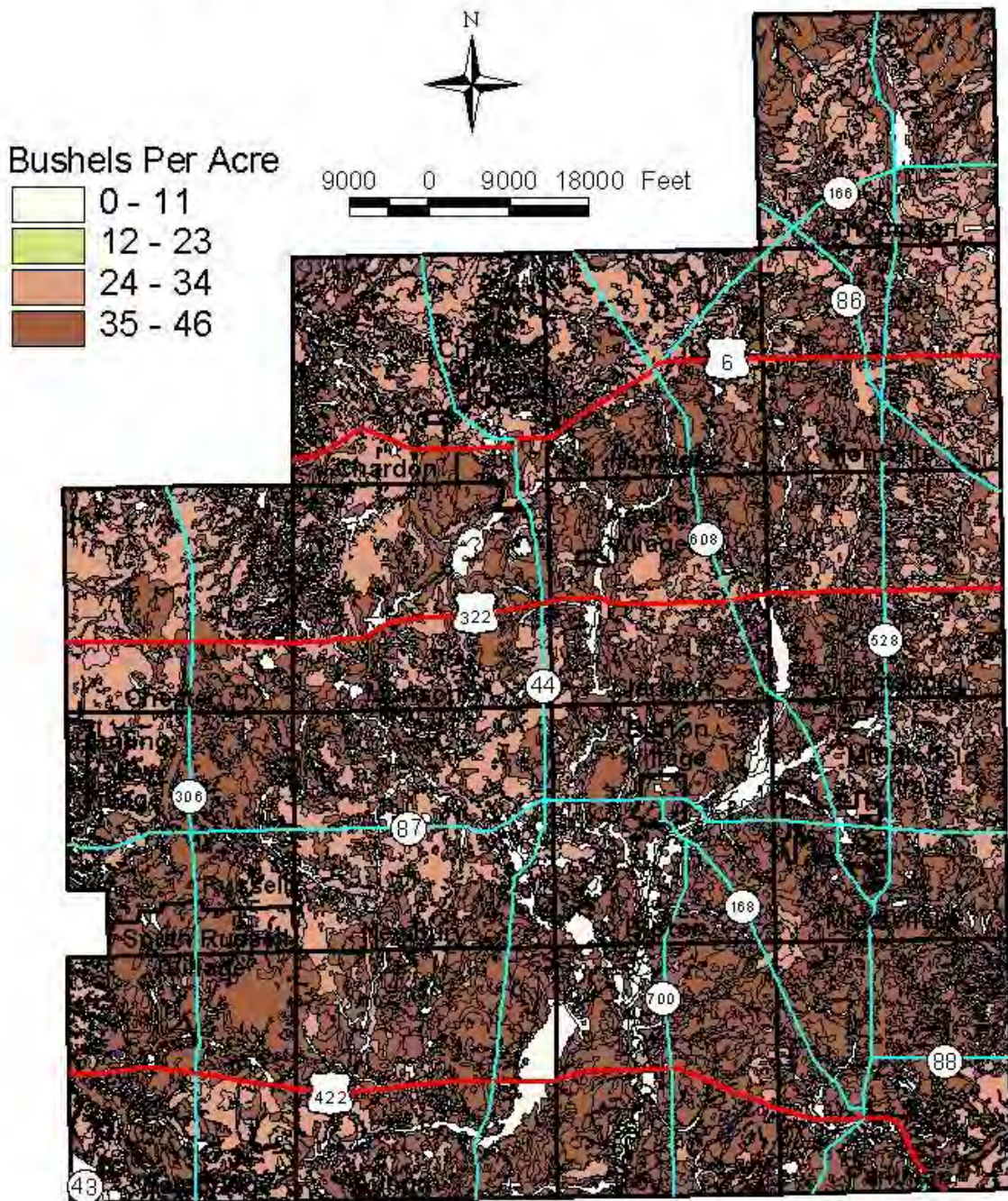
The average yields per acre that can be expected of the principal crops in the county are shown on Maps 19, 20, 21 and 22. The management practices employed to achieve the yields noted in the map depend on the type of soil and crop involved.

Map 19



Map 20

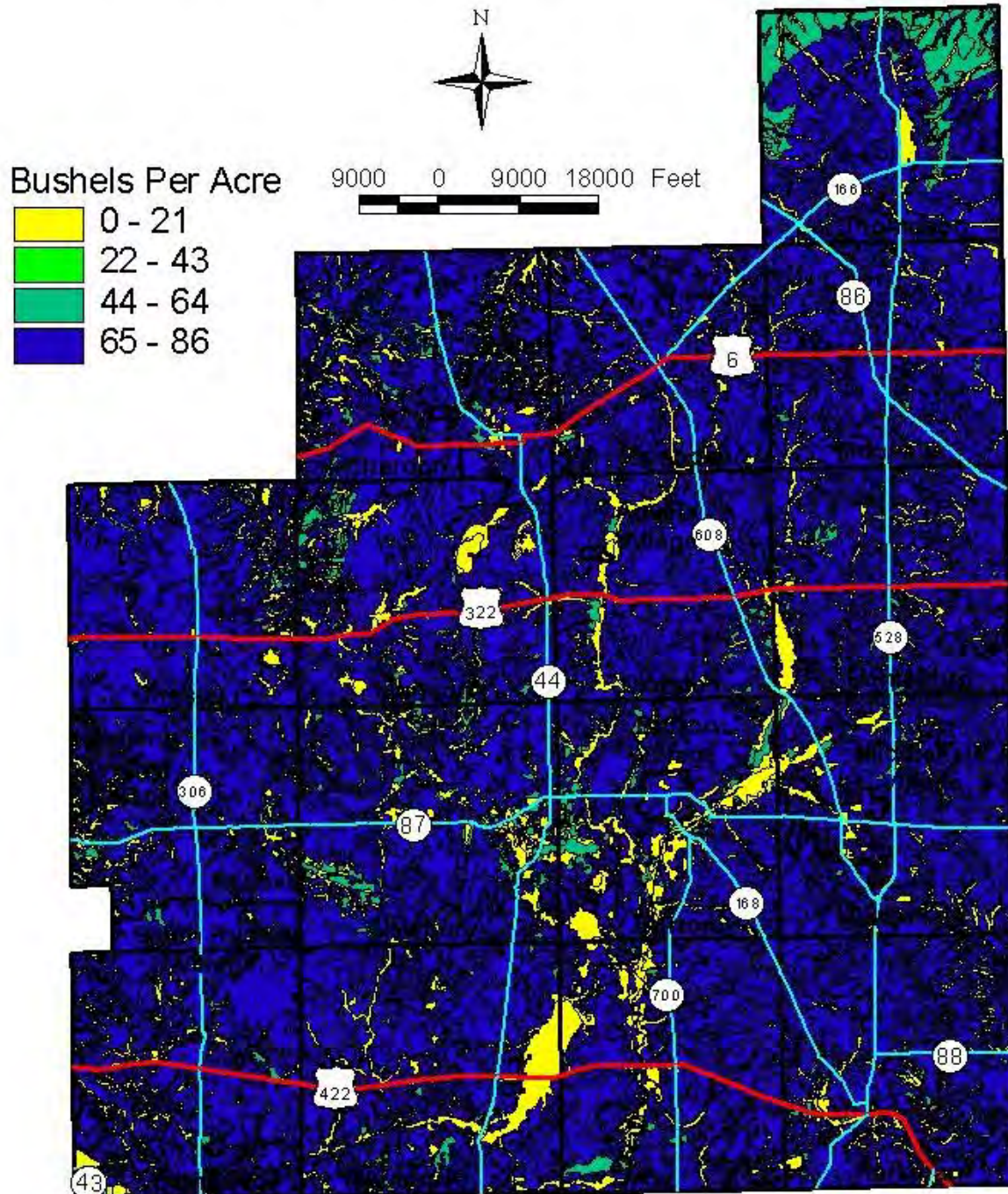
Geauga County Soil: Winter-Wheat Yields



Prepared by: Geauga County Planning Commission 10/15/99
Source: Geauga County Soil Survey 1982

Map 21

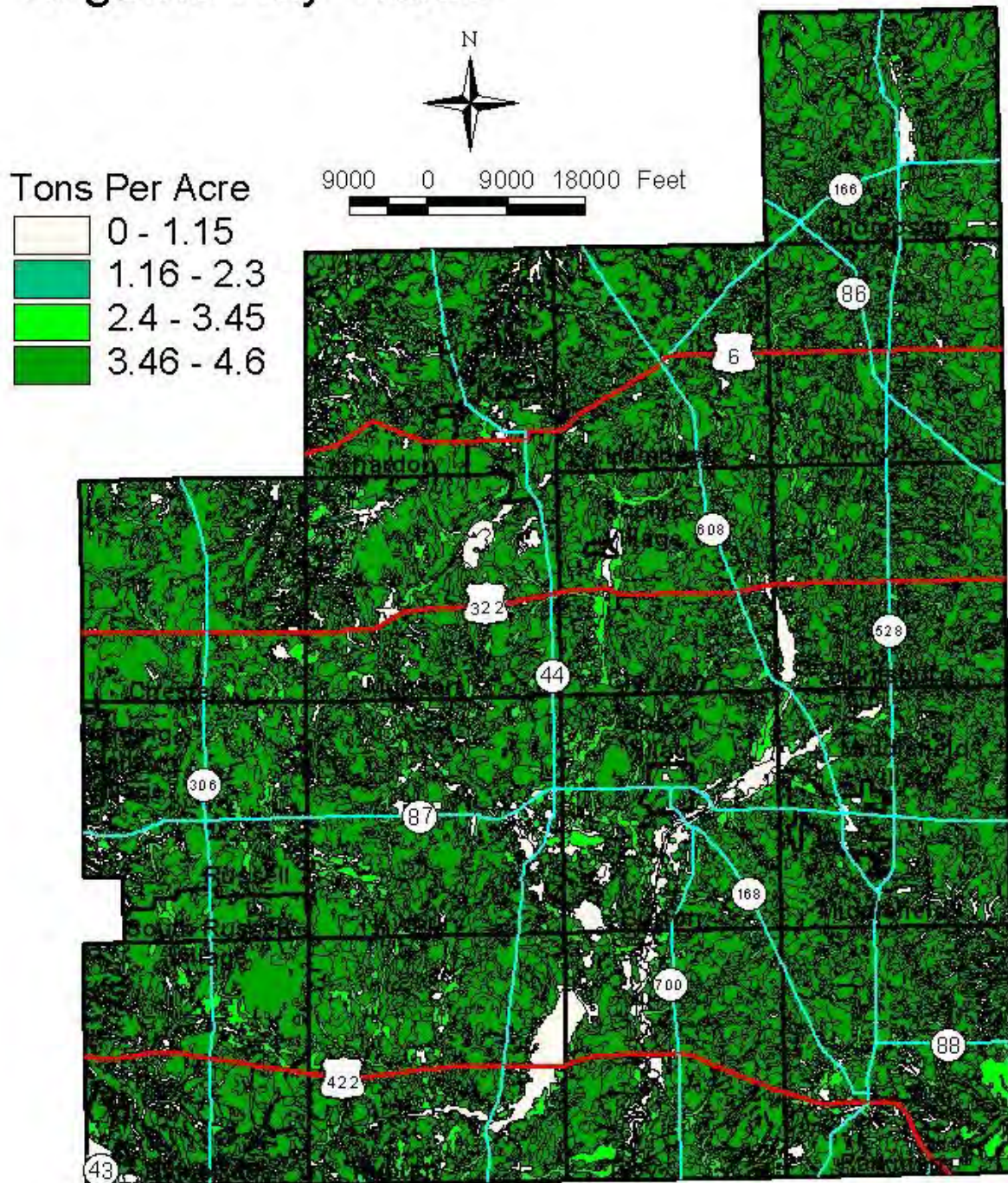
Geauga County Soil: Oat Yields



Prepared by: Geauga County Planning Commission 10/15/99
Source: Geauga County Soil Survey 1982

Map 22

Geauga County Soil: Grasses & Legume Hay Yields

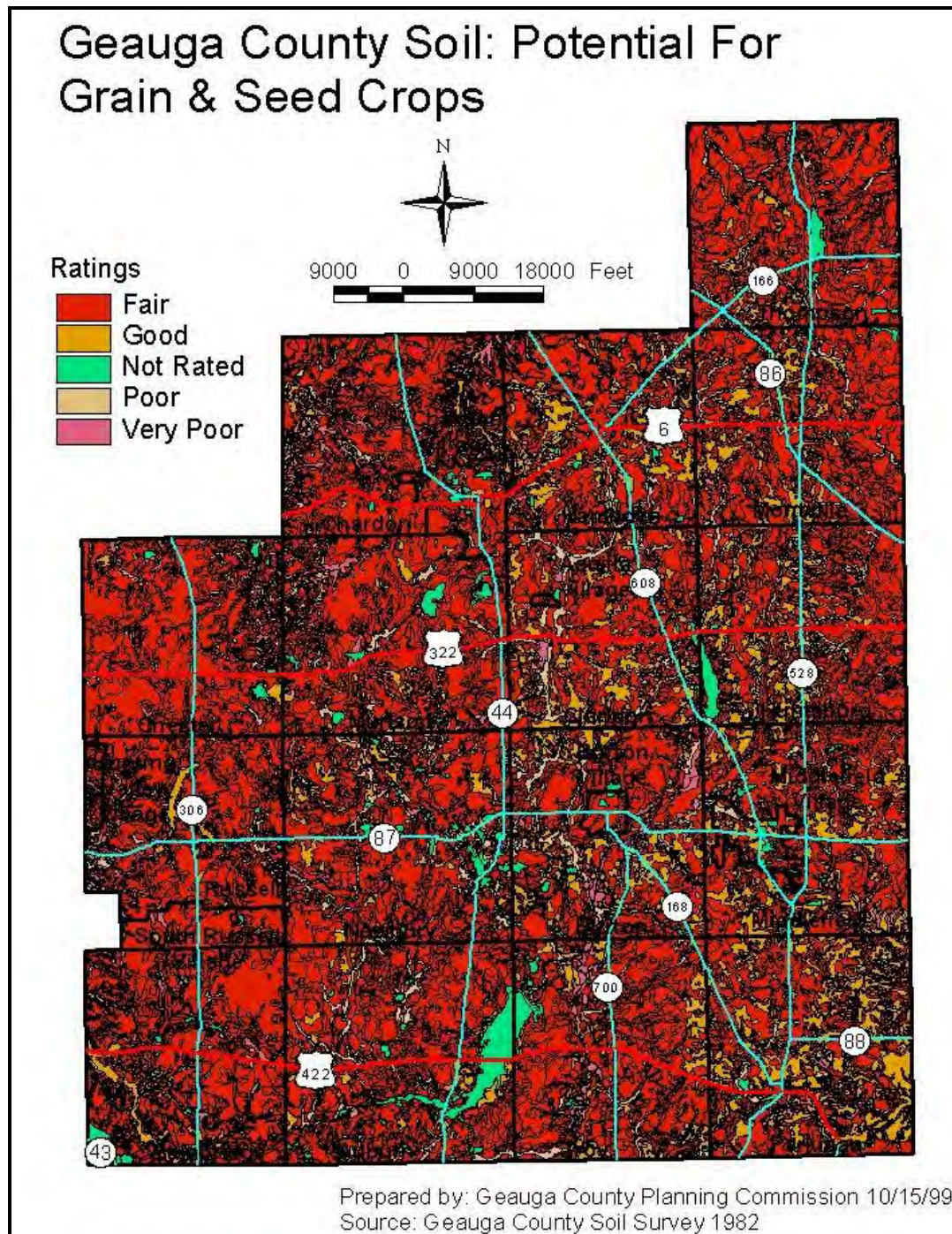


Prepared by: Geauga County Planning Commission 10/15/99
Source: Geauga County Soil Survey 1982

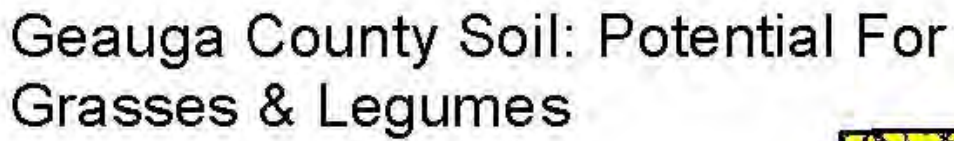
Ratings For Grain/Seed Crops and Grasses/Legumes

Soil ratings for grain and seed crops as well as grasses and legumes are provided on Maps 23 and 24. Examples of grain and seed crops are corn, wheat, and oats. Grasses and legumes may include timothy, fescue, clover, and alfalfa.

Map 23



Map 24

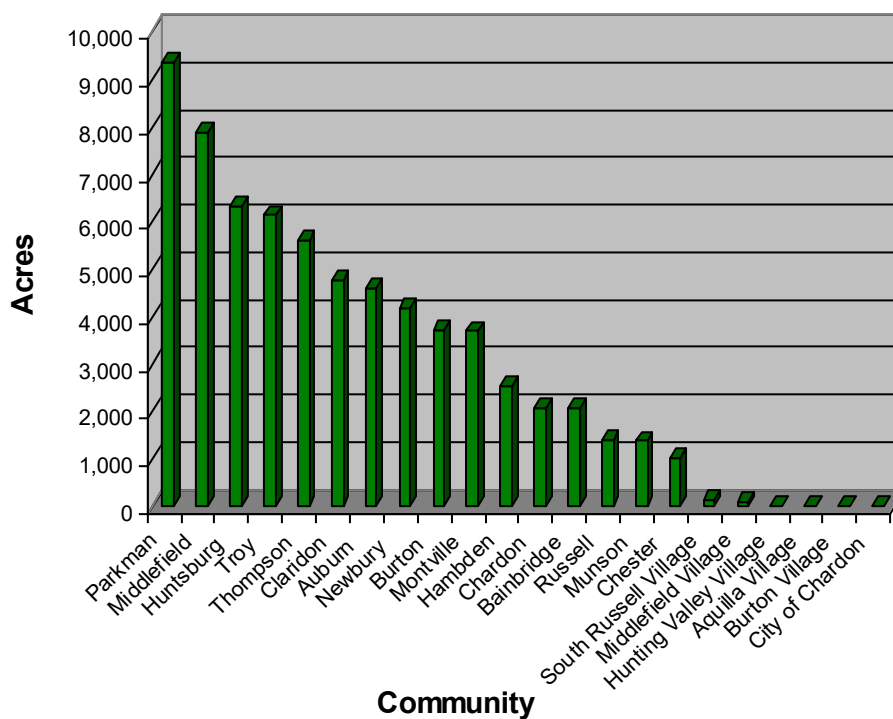


CAUV Parcels

Map 25 reflects the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) parcels from the 2007 Geauga County Auditor's database. The top five townships, in terms of total acreage in the CAUV program, are: Parkman (9,338 acres), Middlefield (7,878 acres), Huntsburg (6,308 acres), Troy (6,049 acres) and Thompson (5,594 acres) (see Figure 3). Table 12 offers a comparison of 2001 and 2007 CAUV data for each community in the county and the percentage change in acreage over this time frame. About 26% of the county's total land area is currently in the CAUV program representing 66,977 acres.

Figure 3

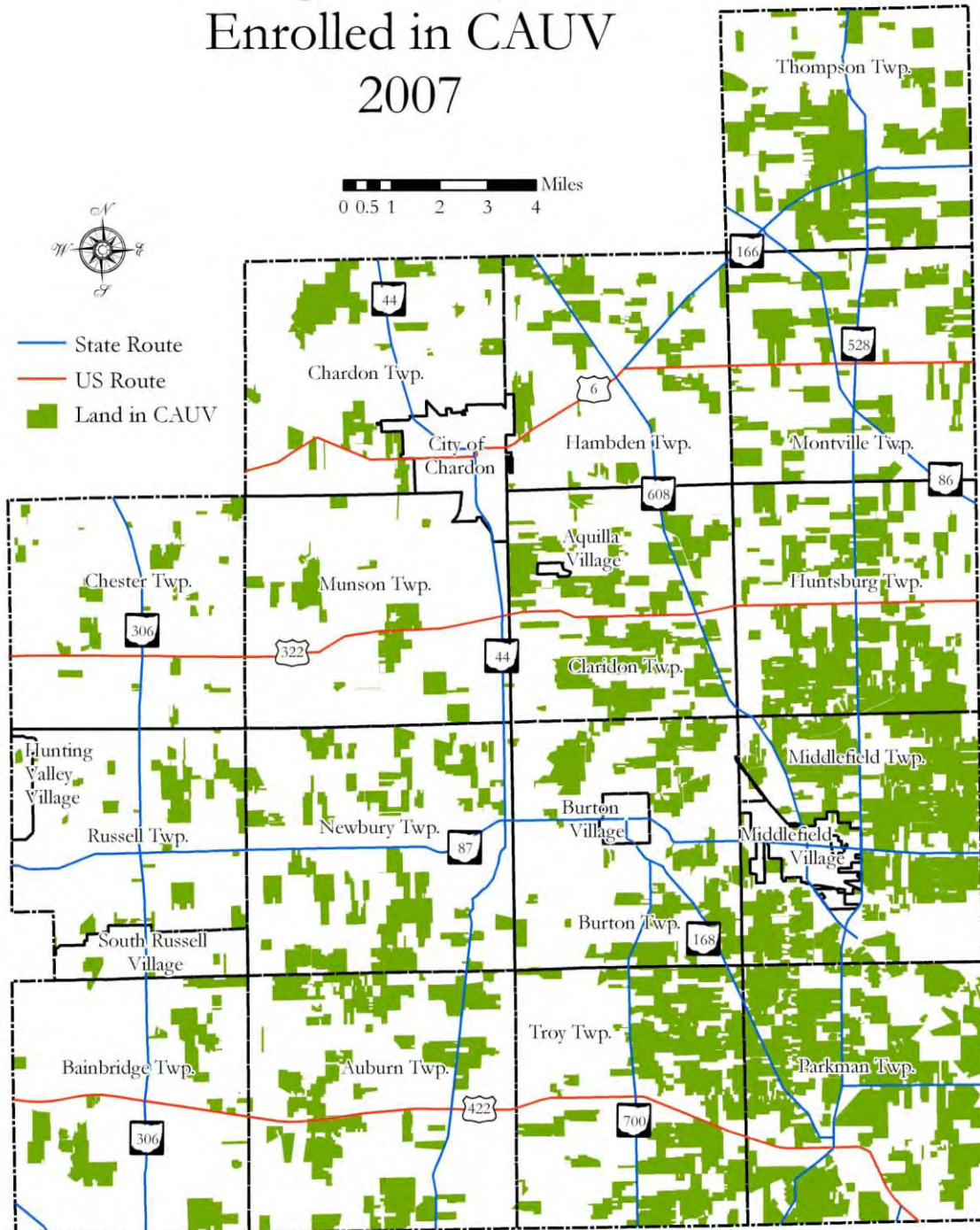
CAUV Acreage By Community
Geauga County: 2007



Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office

Map 25

Geauga County Land Enrolled in CAUV 2007



This map is intended for reference purposes only.

Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office, 2007
Prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission, June 2007.

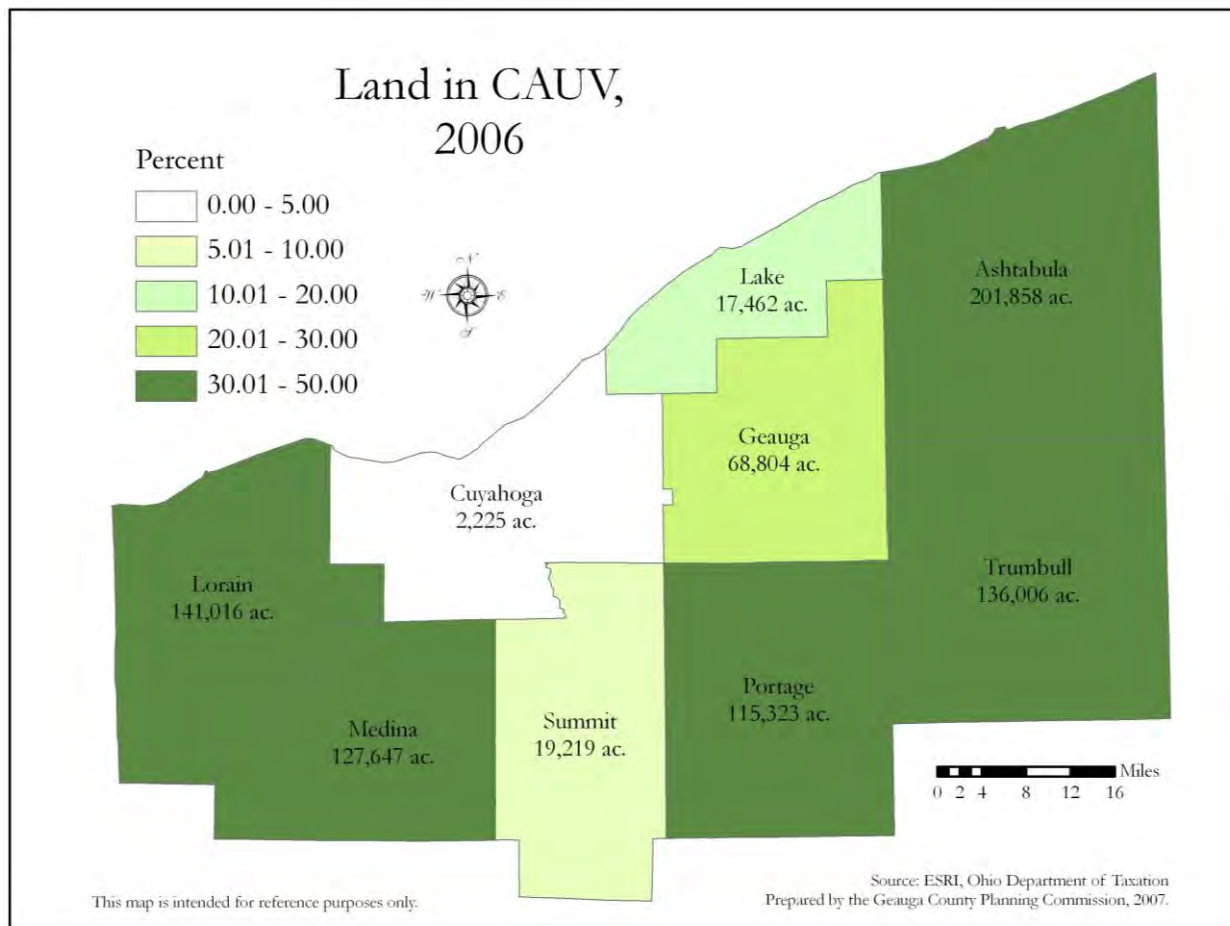
Table 12
CAUV Land
Geauga County
For Years 2001 and 2007

<u>Community</u>	<u>2001 Acres</u>	<u>2007 Acres</u>	<u>% Change 2001 to 2007</u>
Aquilla Village	0	0	0.0
Auburn	5,413	4,617	-14.7
Bainbridge	1,972	2,064	4.7
Burton	3,802	3,701	-2.7
Burton Village	16	0	-100.0
Chardon	1,454	2,081	43.1
Chester	828	1019.8	23.2
City of Chardon	0	0	0.0
Claridon	4,770	4,781	0.2
Hambden	2,459	2,544	3.4
Hunting Valley Village	0	24.16	0.0
Huntsburg	5,999	6,319	5.3
Middlefield	8,059	7,879	-2.2
Middlefield Village	340	93.81	-72.4
Montville	4,039	3,695	-8.5
Munson	1,674	1,383	-17.4
Newbury	3,791	4,181	10.3
Parkman	9,187	9,338	1.6
Russell	1,464	1,393	-4.8
South Russell Village	109	136.03	24.8
Thompson	5,750	5,594	-2.7
Troy	6,520	6,134	-5.9
Total	67,646	66,977	-1.0

Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office

By comparison, the other counties in northeast Ohio typically have a higher percentage of their total land area enrolled in the CAUV program. For example, according to the Ohio Department of Taxation, in 2006 Ashtabula, Trumbull, Portage, Medina, and Lorain counties all had higher percentages of total land area enrolled in the CAUV program (Map 26).

Map 26



Agricultural Districts

Map 27 represents the parcels in the county enrolled in the Agricultural District program per the County Auditor's records in 2007. A comparison from 2001 and 2007 of the data representing land in an Agricultural Districts by community is provided in Table 13. The top five townships in terms of the amount of land area included in this program are: Thompson (1,827 acres), Parkman (1,818 acres), Claridon (1,610 acres), Auburn (1,610 acres), and Bainbridge (1,296 acres). Currently, the total amount of land in the county in an Agricultural District is 14,324 acres or 5.5% of the total land area. This represents a 27.5% increase from the 2001 figure.. According to 1995 data from the state of Ohio, Geauga County generally had less land included in Agricultural Districts than other counties in northeast Ohio. For instance, the counties of Ashtabula (163,088 acres), Portage (40,642 acres), Medina (16,573 acres), and Lorain (60,657 acres) all had more land than Geauga in the program.

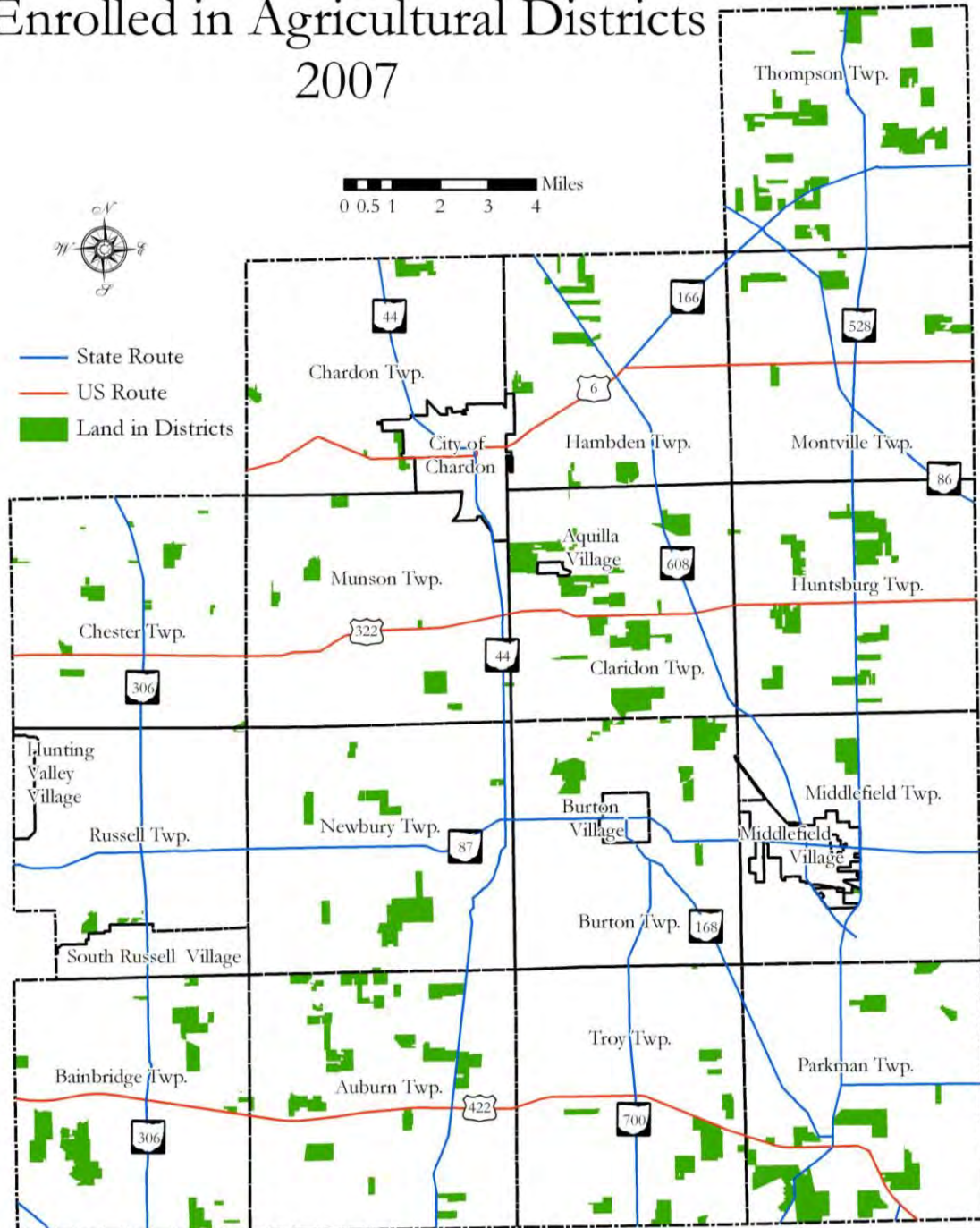
Table 13
Land In Agricultural Districts
Geauga County
For Years 2001 and 2007

<u>Community</u>	<u>2001 Acres</u>	<u>2007 Acres</u>	<u>% Change 2001 to 2007</u>
Aquilla Village	0	0	0.0
Auburn	1,493	1,610	7.9
Bainbridge	1,057	1,296	22.6
Burton	794	722	-9.0
Burton Village	0	0	0.0
Chardon	293	293	0.1
Chester	495	398	-19.6
City of Chardon	0	0	0.0
Claridon	1,496	1,610	7.6
Hambden	719	651	-9.4
Hunting Valley Village	0	0	0.0
Huntsburg	286	1,243	334.7
Middlefield	218	214	-1.8
Middlefield Village	0	0	0.0
Montville	408	503	23.2
Munson	393	381	-3.2
Newbury	571	845	48.0
Parkman	1,017	1,818	78.8
Russell	235	111	-52.8
South Russell Village	0	0	0.0
Thompson	979	1,827	86.6
Troy	785	802	2.1
Total	11,239	14,324	27.5

Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office

Map 27

Geauga County Land Enrolled in Agricultural Districts 2007



This map is intended for reference purposes only.
This map does not include any property within a municipality that may be enrolled.

Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office, 2007
Prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission, June 2007.

Woodlands

ODNR compared woodlands data from years 1975 and 1996 (Map 7 and Table 5). According to their findings, there were about 105,300 acres in forest in 1975. This increased to 139,700 acres or 13% by 1996. Under Ohio law, eligible property owners may obtain a 50% reduction in taxes for land included in the forestry program. Map 28 and Table 14 provide information by community relative to enrollment in this program.

Table 14

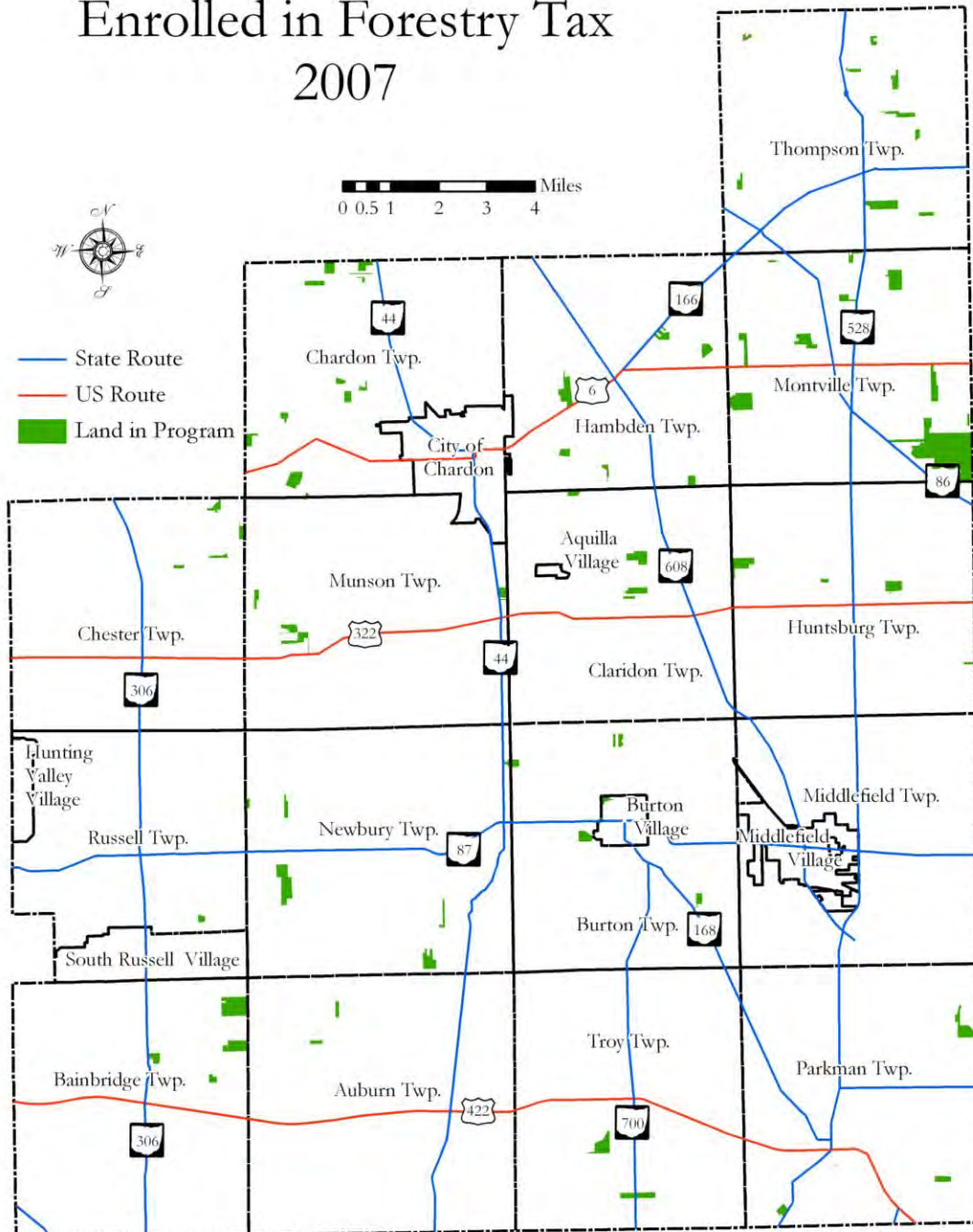
Land In The Forestry Tax Program
Geauga County
For Years 2001 and 2007

<u>Community</u>	<u>2001 Acres</u>	<u>2007 Acres</u>	<u>% Change 2001 to 2007</u>
Aquilla Village	0	0	0.0
Auburn	1,647	28	-98.3
Bainbridge	2,086	252	-87.9
Burton	1,488	92	-93.8
Burton Village	47	17	0.0
Chardon	3,561	252	-92.9
Chester	1,750	66	-96.2
City of Chardon	299	0	0.0
Claridon	2,038	117	-94.3
Hambden	2,526	190	-92.5
Hunting Valley Village	96	6	0.0
Huntsburg	1,740	165	-90.5
Middlefield	1,065	0	-100.0
Middlefield Village	12	0	0.0
Montville	3,620	1,097	-69.7
Munson	2,546	119	-95.3
Newbury	3,539	220	-93.8
Parkman	1,512	118	-92.2
Russell	1,462	13	-99.1
South Russell Village	89	0	0.0
Thompson	2,269	225	-90.1
Troy	1,463	99	-93.3
Total	34,855	3,077	-91.2

Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office

Map 28

Geauga County Land Enrolled in Forestry Tax 2007



This map is intended for reference purposes only.

Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office, 2007
Prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission, 2007.

Existing Zoning

Zoning is a local matter. Each township and municipality has its own zoning regulations and zoning inspector. Map 29 provides an overview of existing zoning districts in the county. Only one community in Geauga, Middlefield Township, does not have zoning in effect. About 86% of the county or 224,475 acres are zoned for residential purposes. In the townships, the required minimum lot size for a dwelling ranges from 1.5 to 5 acres. Most of the townships in the county have land use plans that are heavily based upon the land capability concept. This methodology is particularly valid in those locations dependent upon on-site septic systems for sewage treatment and groundwater for water supply. The minimum single-family residential lot size in the municipalities is usually from one-fourth to one acre. In multi-family zones, the maximum number of units per acre is about four.

The areas zoned commercial represent about 2% of the total land area or 4,969 acres in the county. The spread of minimum lot sizes is from one to three acres in the unincorporated areas. In the municipalities, the minimum lot size is typically less than one acre.

Land zoned industrial reflects approximately 3% of the total land area in the county or 7,261 acres. The minimum lot size in the unincorporated areas is typically three to five acres. Within the municipalities, the minimum lot size is two acres and under. Institutional zoning is about 0.4% of land area or 917 acres.

There are some townships and municipalities with special zoning categories for unique land uses. For instance, a district for recreational uses is utilized in some communities in recognition of land that may be publicly owned and used for parks or open space. This makes up about 3% of county total land area or 8,085 acres.










No township in Geauga County has adopted an exclusive agricultural protection zoning district as a part of its zoning resolution. The Ohio Revised Code, Section 519.21(A), generally exempts the use of land for agricultural purposes from township zoning regulation as well as the construction or use of any buildings or structures incidental to farming. The exception to this statute is lots used for agriculture within platted subdivisions may be regulated under certain conditions as well as areas with 15 or more contiguous lots that have been approved by a county planning commission. However, if such lots are more than five acres in size, then no township zoning power exists to control agricultural uses, buildings and structures. Municipalities, with home rule authority, do have the ability to regulate agriculture. Animal raising and care (livestock) is either prohibited or strictly regulated within certain zones in municipalities.

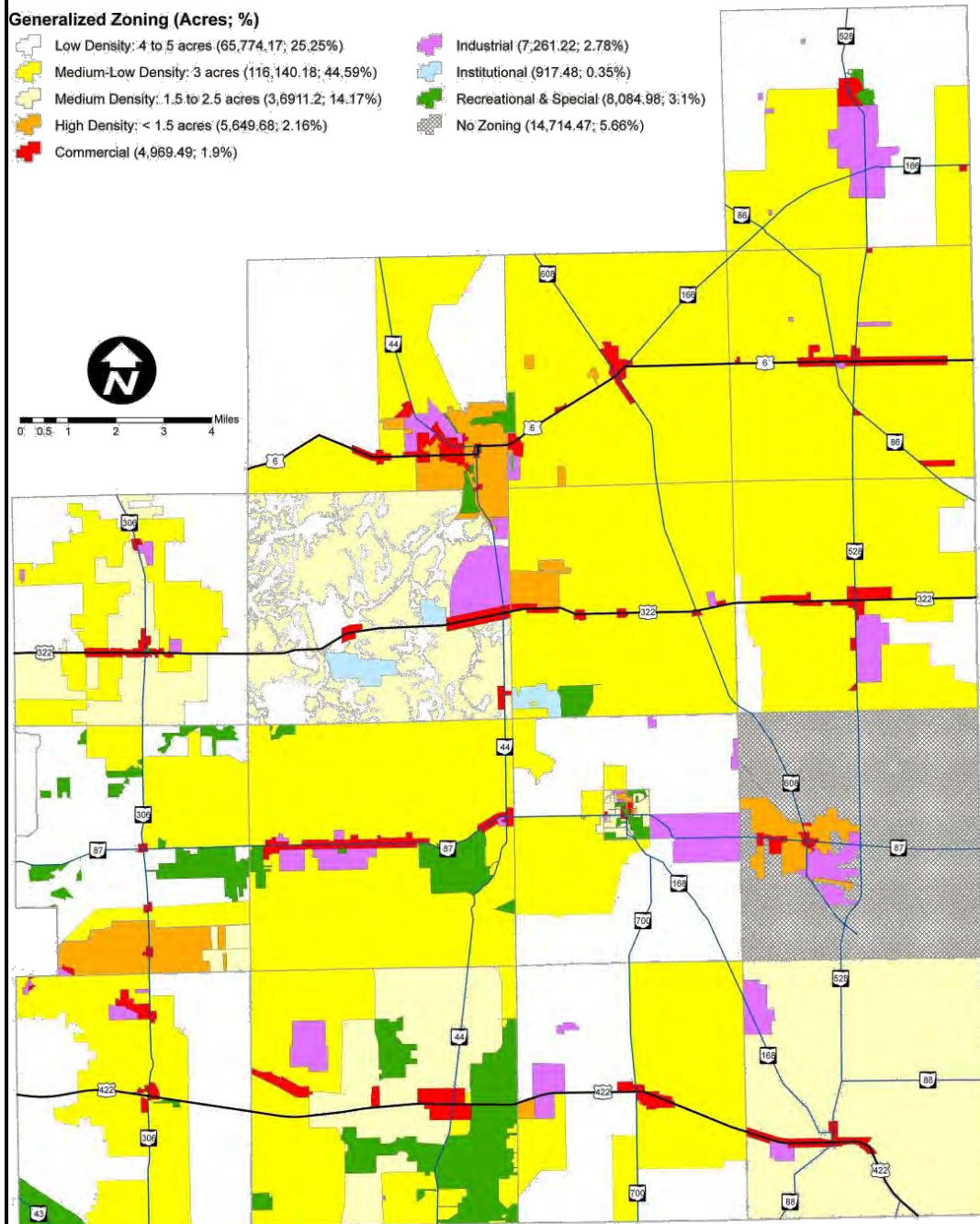
Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code a farm market is allowed in any zoning district where 50% or more of the gross income received by the farm market is from produce raised on land owned or operated by the market operator in a normal crop year. Basic health and safety related regulations on a farm market may be adopted, however, pertaining to building setbacks, parking, and the like.

Map 29

Geauga County Generalized Zoning

Generalized Zoning (Acres; %)

	Low Density: 4 to 5 acres (65,774.17; 25.25%)		Industrial (7,261.22; 2.78%)
	Medium-Low Density: 3 acres (116,140.18; 44.59%)		Institutional (917.48; 0.35%)
	Medium Density: 1.5 to 2.5 acres (3,6911.2; 14.17%)		Recreational & Special (8,084.98; 3.1%)
	High Density: < 1.5 acres (5,649.68; 2.16%)		No Zoning (14,714.47; 5.66%)
	Commercial (4,969.49; 1.9%)		



Prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission, March 2007.
This map is for general reference purposes only and shall not
serve as an official zoning map for any township or municipality
shown hereon.

Source: Township &
Municipal Zoning Maps.

Generalized Future Growth Areas

Map 30 represents expected residential, commercial, and light industrial generalized growth areas in the county. The map is based upon current zoning, historical growth patterns, and expected future trends. Residential development may continue to occur within areas defined and mapped as “prime” agricultural land (Map18). Future commercial and industrial growth should not significantly impinge on “prime” farmland due to the limited scope of such areas coupled with their general location within and adjacent to the municipalities.

Map 30

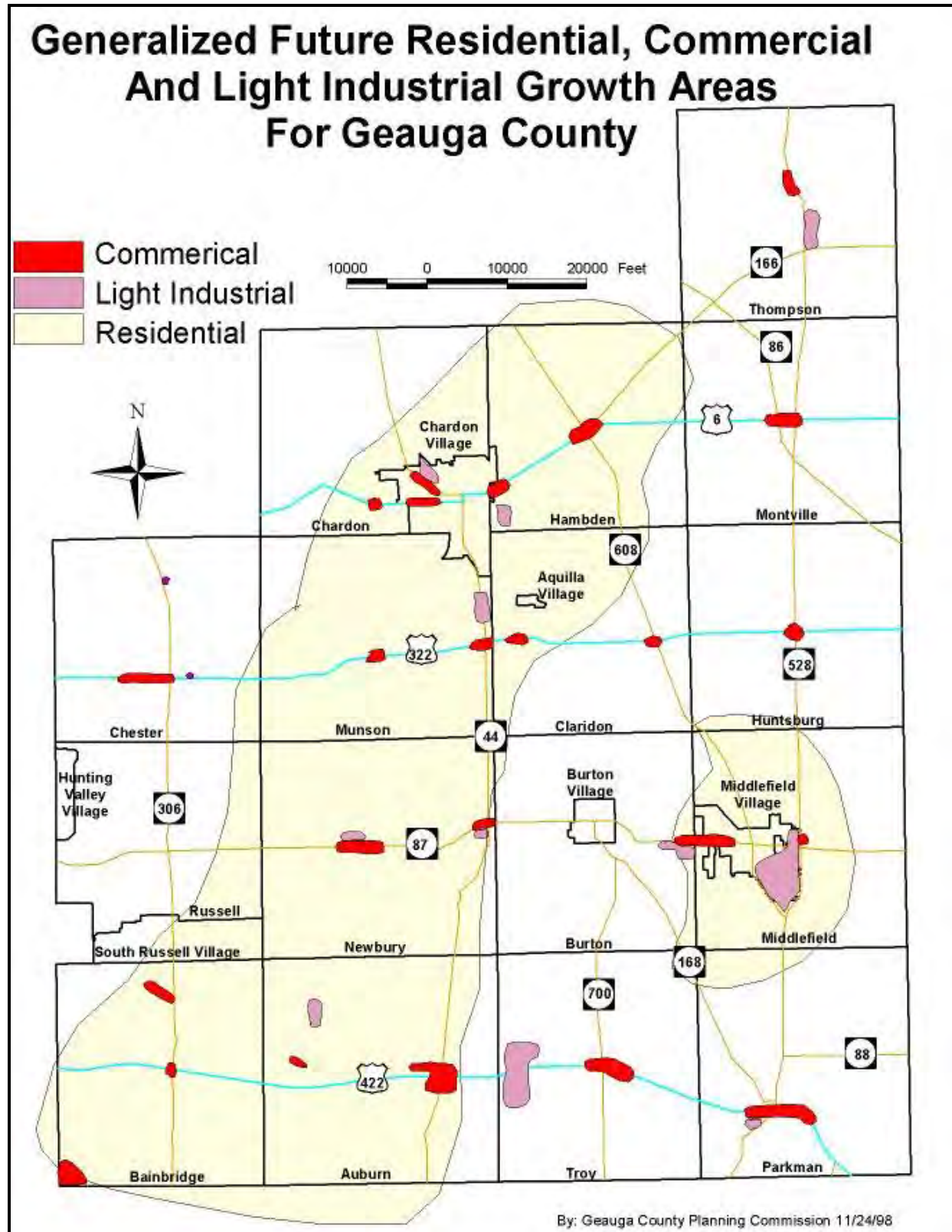


Table 15 provides projections for single family housing units by community. The townships with the highest expected growth are Auburn, Bainbridge, Hambden, and Munson Townships. Household projections (Table 16) were devised as well. Countywide, the number of households may increase by about 40% by 2030.

Table 15
Projected Single Family Housing Units
Geauga County
2005 to 2030

<u>Community</u>	<u>2000*</u>	<u>2001- 2005</u>	<u>2006- 2010</u>	<u>2011- 2015</u>	<u>2016- 2020</u>	<u>2021- 2025</u>	<u>2026- 2030</u>	<u>Difference 2000-2030</u>
Aquilla Village	136	141	146	151	156	161	166	30
Auburn	1,702	2,004	2,234	2,464	2,694	2,924	3,174	1,472
Bainbridge	3,593	3,841	4,096	4,351	4,606	4,861	5,116	1,523
Burton	1,250	1,307	1,347	1,387	1,427	1,467	1,507	257
Burton Village	345	355	365	375	385	395	405	60
Chardon	1,576	1,674	1,809	1,944	2,079	2,214	2,249	673
Chardon City	1,428	1,541	1,651	1,761	1,871	1,981	2,091	663
Chester	3,830	3,925	4,025	4,125	4,225	4,325	4,425	595
Claridon	1,003	1,062	1,117	1,172	1,227	1,282	1,337	334
Hambden	1,053	1,218	1,338	1,458	1,578	1,698	1,818	765
Huntsburg	828	919	994	1,069	1,144	1,219	1,274	466
Hunting Valley Village	63	83	93	103	113	123	133	70
Middlefield	862	949	994	1,039	1,084	1,129	1,184	322
Middlefield Village	510	563	613	663	713	763	813	303
Montville	708	768	828	888	948	1,008	1,068	360
Munson	2,154	2,322	2,487	2,652	2,817	2,982	3,147	993
Newbury	2,042	2,138	2,238	2,338	2,438	2,538	2,638	596
Parkman	864	950	1,020	1,090	1,130	1,200	1,270	406
Russell	2,063	2,125	2,185	2,245	2,305	2,365	2,425	362
South Russell Village	1,328	1,354	1,379	1,404	1,429	1,454	1,479	151
Thompson	713	766	816	866	916	966	1,061	303
Troy	682	739	779	819	859	899	939	257
County	28,252	30,636	33,111	35,586	38,061	40,536	43,011	14,759

Source: Geauga County Planning Commission

* Single detached housing units, U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000)

Table 16**Projected Households
Geauga County
2000 to 2030**

<u>Community</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>2000-2030</u>
Aquilla Village	138	138	138	138	138	N/A
Auburn	1,758	2,418	3,078	3,408	3,738	112.62%
Bainbridge	3,835	4,335	4,835	5,085	5,335	39.11%
Burton	964	1,004	1,044	1,064	1,084	12.44%
Burton Village	585	645	705	735	765	30.76%
Chardon	1,673	1,973	2,273	2,423	2,573	53.79%
Chardon City	2,147	2,477	2,807	2,972	3,137	46.11%
Chester	3,952	4,152	4,352	4,452	4,552	15.18%
Claridon	1,136	1,216	1,296	1,376	1,456	28.16%
Hambden	1,450	1,680	1,910	2,025	2,140	47.58%
Hunting Valley Village (pt.)	284	284	284	284	284	N/A
Huntsburg	858	1,028	1,198	1,283	1,368	59.44%
Middlefield	1,200	1,300	1,400	1,450	1,500	25.00%
Middlefield Village	955	1,115	1,275	1,355	1,435	50.26%
Montville	697	817	937	997	1,057	51.64%
Munson	2,105	2,425	2,745	2,905	3,065	45.60%
Newbury	2,112	2,292	2,472	2,562	2,652	25.56%
Parkman	954	1,104	1,254	1,329	1,404	47.16%
Russell	2,084	2,214	2,344	2,409	2,474	18.71%
South Russell Village	1,364	1,554	1,744	1,839	1,934	41.78%
Thompson	866	976	1,086	1,141	1,196	38.10%
Troy	871	1,061	1,251	1,346	1,441	65.44%
County Total	31,630	35,900	40,170	42,305	44,440	40.49%

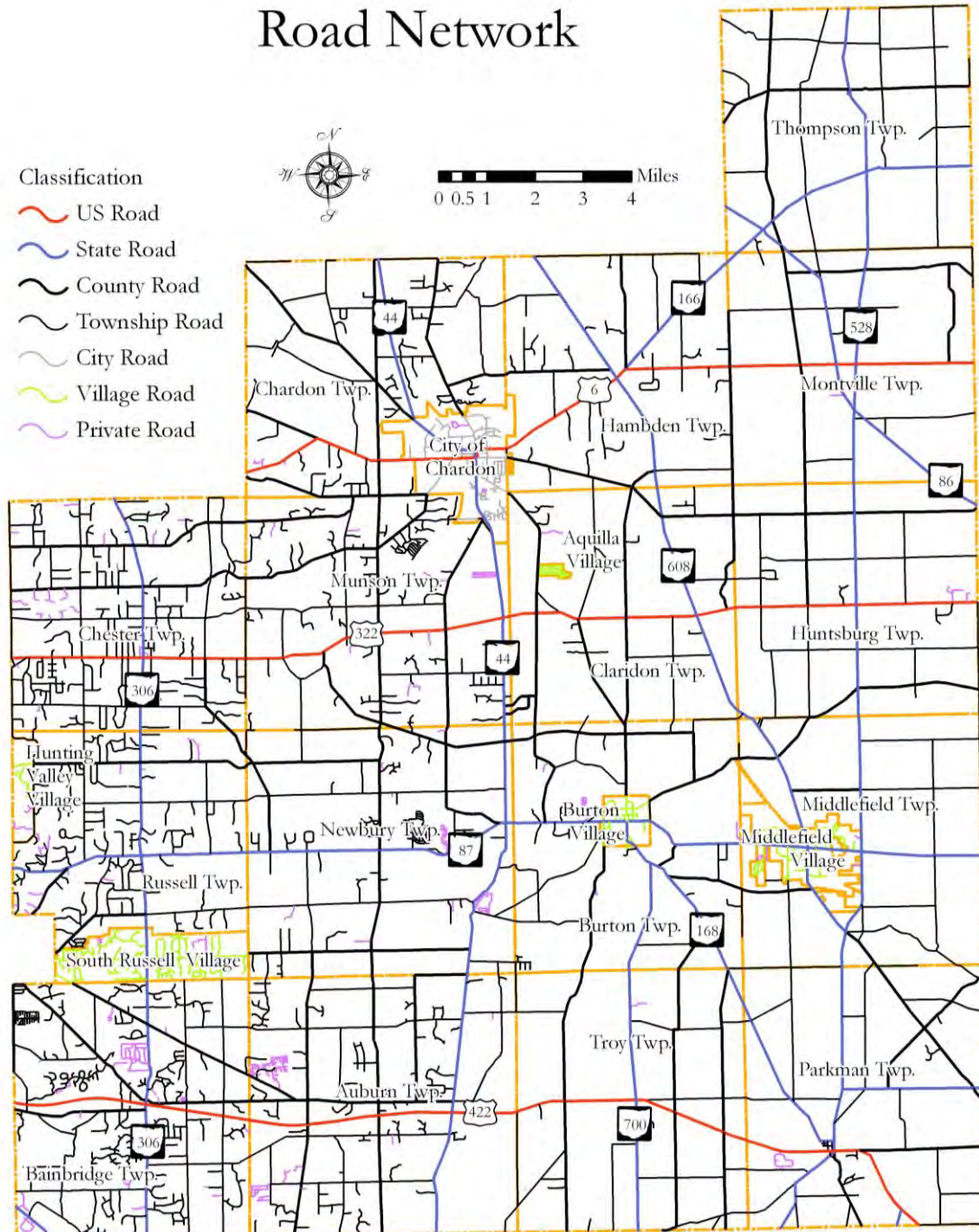
Source: Geauga County Planning Commission

Existing Infrastructure**Roads**

The efficient movement of people, goods, and services is a basic concern in the county. The road network consists of a hierarchy of federal, state, county, municipal, township and private routes (Map 31). Table 17 provides a breakdown of road mileage by community and links it to the latest population estimates available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Map 31

Geauga County Road Network



This map is intended for reference purposes only.

Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office, 2007
Prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission, 2007.

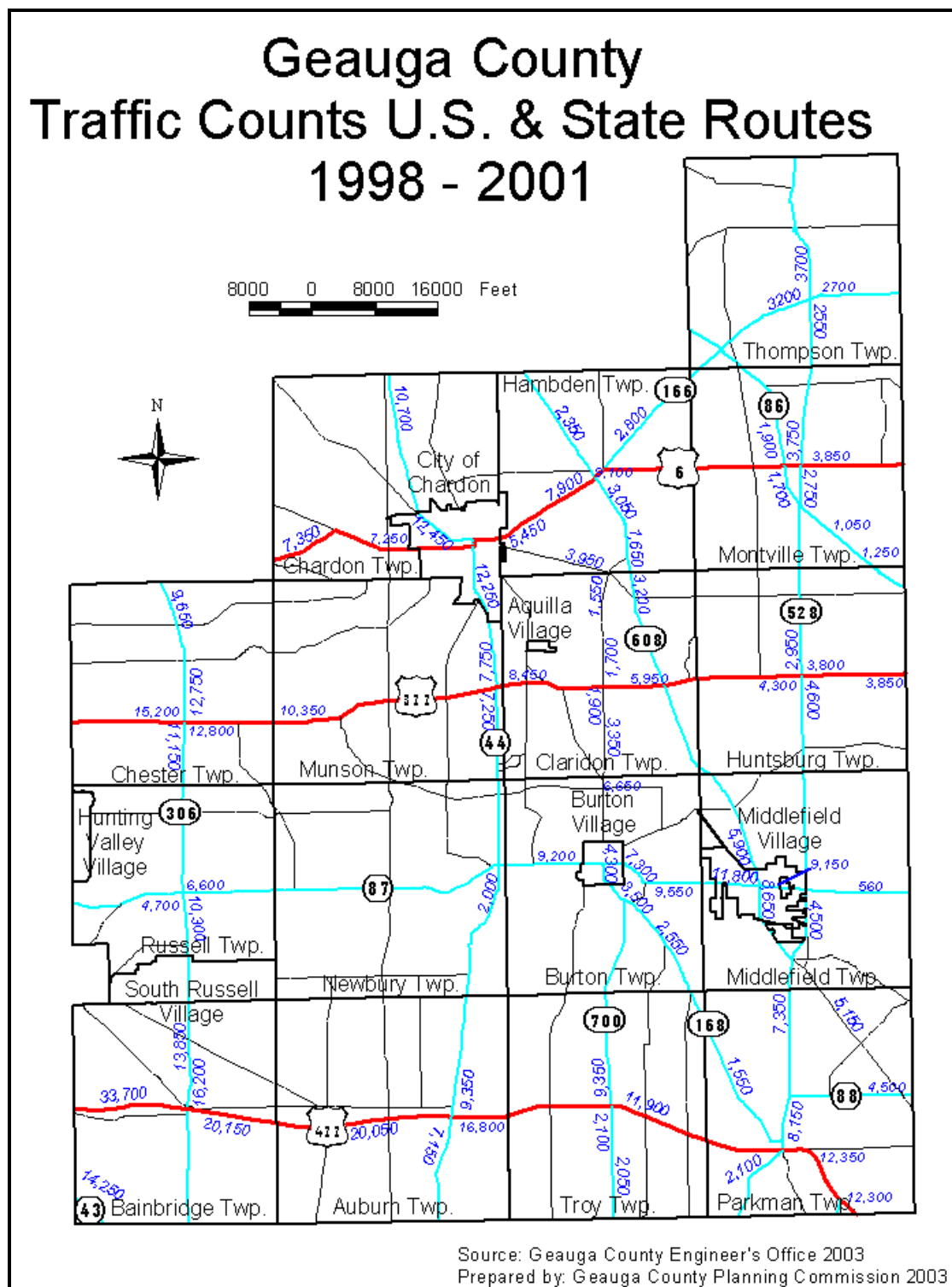
Table 17
Road Mileage By Community: 2007
Geauga County

	Road Mileage							Population
<u>Community</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>City / Village</u>	<u>Private</u>	<u>2006 Estimate</u>
Aquilla Village	2.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.96	0.00	371
Auburn	94.46	5.59	5.47	19.87	55.01	0.00	8.51	5,997
Bainbridge	120.04	4.94	6.29	14.44	84.24	0.00	10.14	11,283
Burton	49.77	0.00	9.54	16.73	20.74	0.09	2.68	3,075
Burton Village	7.37	0.00	1.47	0.00	0.00	5.90	0.00	1,446
Chardon	64.17	3.51	3.36	19.71	36.84	0.00	0.75	4,941
Chester	106.80	4.87	4.94	11.81	80.48	0.00	4.69	11,048
City of Chardon	26.25	2.39	3.42	0.10	0.23	19.15	0.96	5,284
Claridon	42.75	4.73	4.97	18.53	14.02	0.00	0.50	2,984
Hambden	50.79	5.15	8.64	11.46	25.54	0.00	0.00	4,615
Hunting Valley Village	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.59	0.91	144
Huntsburg	48.15	5.04	6.10	11.26	24.78	0.00	0.97	3,637
Middlefield	42.40	0.00	11.77	5.89	24.18	0.00	0.55	4,674
Middlefield Village	15.66	0.00	3.55	0.00	0.00	11.58	0.54	2,414
Montville	39.50	5.08	11.21	10.99	11.93	0.00	0.29	2,161
Munson	77.46	5.64	3.96	19.29	44.20	0.00	4.37	6,751
Newbury	79.18	0.00	11.21	21.21	40.67	0.00	6.09	5,980
Parkman	56.96	4.43	12.83	11.48	26.83	0.00	1.39	3,927
Russell	75.69	0.00	9.05	8.59	54.91	0.00	3.14	5,631
South Russell Village	24.89	0.00	1.11	0.00	0.01	22.29	1.49	3,986
Thompson	49.15	0.00	12.33	10.47	26.26	0.00	0.09	2,552
Troy	43.87	4.97	6.25	16.72	15.55	0.00	0.38	2,775
County Total	1,120.76	56.35	137.48	228.54	586.41	63.54	48.45	95,676

Source: Geauga County Auditor's GIS. Note: Numbers do not include Mobile Home Park Roads and streets on record but not built.

Traffic counts throughout the county are climbing on all of the major arterial routes. Map 32 reflects the latest information available.

Map 32



Accidents in most of the townships and municipalities have risen over previous years. Table 18 provides the latest figures available.

Table 18
Accidents By Community: 2005
Geauga County

Community	Fatal Crashes	Injury Crashes	PDO* Crashes	Unknown Crashes	Total Crashes
Aquilla Village	0	0	1	0	1
Auburn	1	36	108	1	146
Bainbridge	0	97	195	2	294
Burton	0	20	58	1	79
Burton Village	0	6	34	0	40
Chardon	0	35	140	0	175
Chester	0	80	205	1	286
City of Chardon	0	32	147	1	180
Claridon	1	22	95	2	120
Hambden	1	18	90	1	110
Hunting Valley Village	0	1	35	0	36
Huntsburg	0	15	32	0	47
Middlefield	0	40	67	1	108
Middlefield Village	0	10	55	0	65
Montville	0	25	50	0	75
Munson	2	57	169	0	228
Newbury	0	38	156	3	197
Parkman	2	26	83	0	111
Russell	2	23	89	0	114
South Russell Village	0	9	15	0	24
Thompson	0	35	45	1	81
Troy	0	19	60	1	80
Total County	9	644	1,929	15	2,597

Sources: Ohio Department of Public Safety, 2005 Reports, Total Crashes by Township & Ohio Traffic Crash Facts

All of the data noted in this section point to the side effects of development. There generally is a direct relationship between development activity (and the associated increase in population) and road mileage, traffic counts, and accidents.

Central Sanitary Sewage and Water Treatment

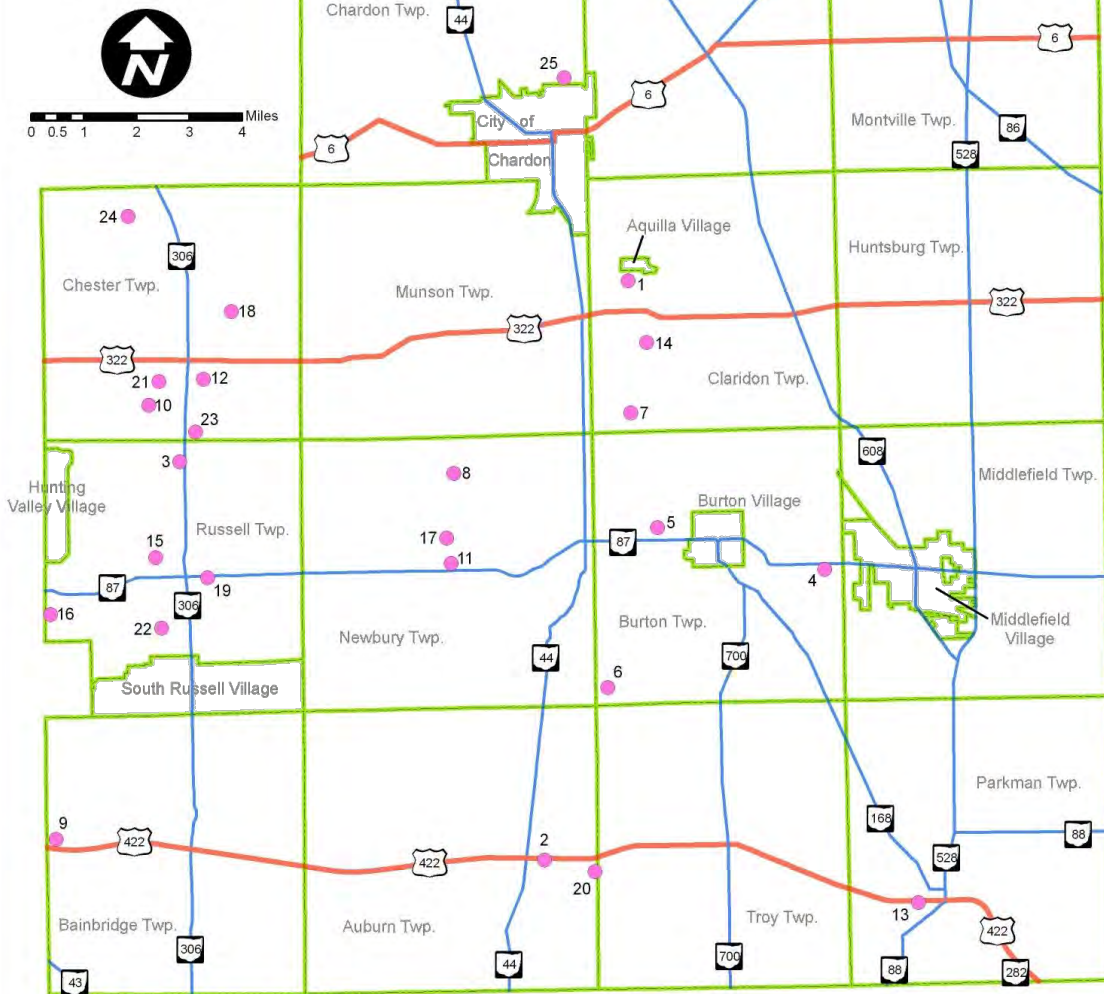
Publicly operated central sanitary sewer service in the townships is very limited. Map 33 displays the location of waste water treatment plants operated by the county. Most of the lines are connected to a particular development. All of the municipalities, with the exception of Hunting Valley Village, have central sewer lines. The City of Chardon and the Village of Middlefield operate the largest treatment plants. The McFarland Creek plant operated by the county water resources department and located in Bainbridge Township covers a multi-jurisdictional area and has more capacity (1.8 million gallons per day) than any other county run facility, making it the largest county operated plant. The Parkman wastewater treatment plant is almost completed as of October 2007. The plant was designed to treat 200,000 gallons per day. According to the Department of Water Resources, as of May 2006 they estimated there were approximately 5,700 sewer connections, serving about 7,100 units.

Map 33

Geauga County Operated Wastewater Treatment Plants

Wastewater Treatment Plant Locations

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Aquilla Village | 12. Opalocka | 19. Surrey Downs |
| 2. Auburn Corners | 13. Parkman | 20. Troy Oaks |
| 3. Belle Vernon | 14. Plymouth Acres | 21. Valley View |
| 4. Berkshire | 15. Russell Park | 22. Wenhaven |
| 5. Broadwood | 16. Scarsdale | 23. West Geauga High School |
| 6. Burton Lakes | 17. Scranton Woods | 24. Willow Hills |
| 7. Infirmary | 18. Sherman Hills | 25. Wintergreen |
| 8. Kimberly Estates | | |
| 9. McFarland Creek | | |
| 10. Metzenbaum | | |
| 11. Newbury HS | | |



Source: Geauga County Department of Water Resources, 2006.
Map prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission, August 2006.

Central water supply systems operated by a public entity are also limited in scope in the county (Map 34). As of May 2006, there were 738 total water connections to centralized drinking water facilities in the unincorporated areas, while the remaining population had to rely on on-site water wells. Three of the municipalities in the county have central water service: Chardon, Middlefield, and Burton. All three rely on well fields as a source of supply. Chardon City has the most service connections (1,790), followed by Middlefield (705), and Burton (395).

The Geauga County Department of Water Resources owns and operates three water facilities. One is located in Claridon Township, known as the County System (Ravenwood Drive and Merritt Road), another in Bainbridge Township, and Scranton Woods in Newbury Township. The County maintains approximately 20 miles of water lines in addition to the three water facilities. These lines range in diameter between 8 and 16 inches. Table 19 indicates the number of connections and design capacity of each county operated water facility.

Table 19
Public Water Connections
Geauga County

County Facility	Connections	Design Capacity (GPD)
County Services	12	160,000
Scranton Woods	38	200,000
Cloverdale*	48	20,000
Bainbridge**	640	500,000


* County maintains the lines only.

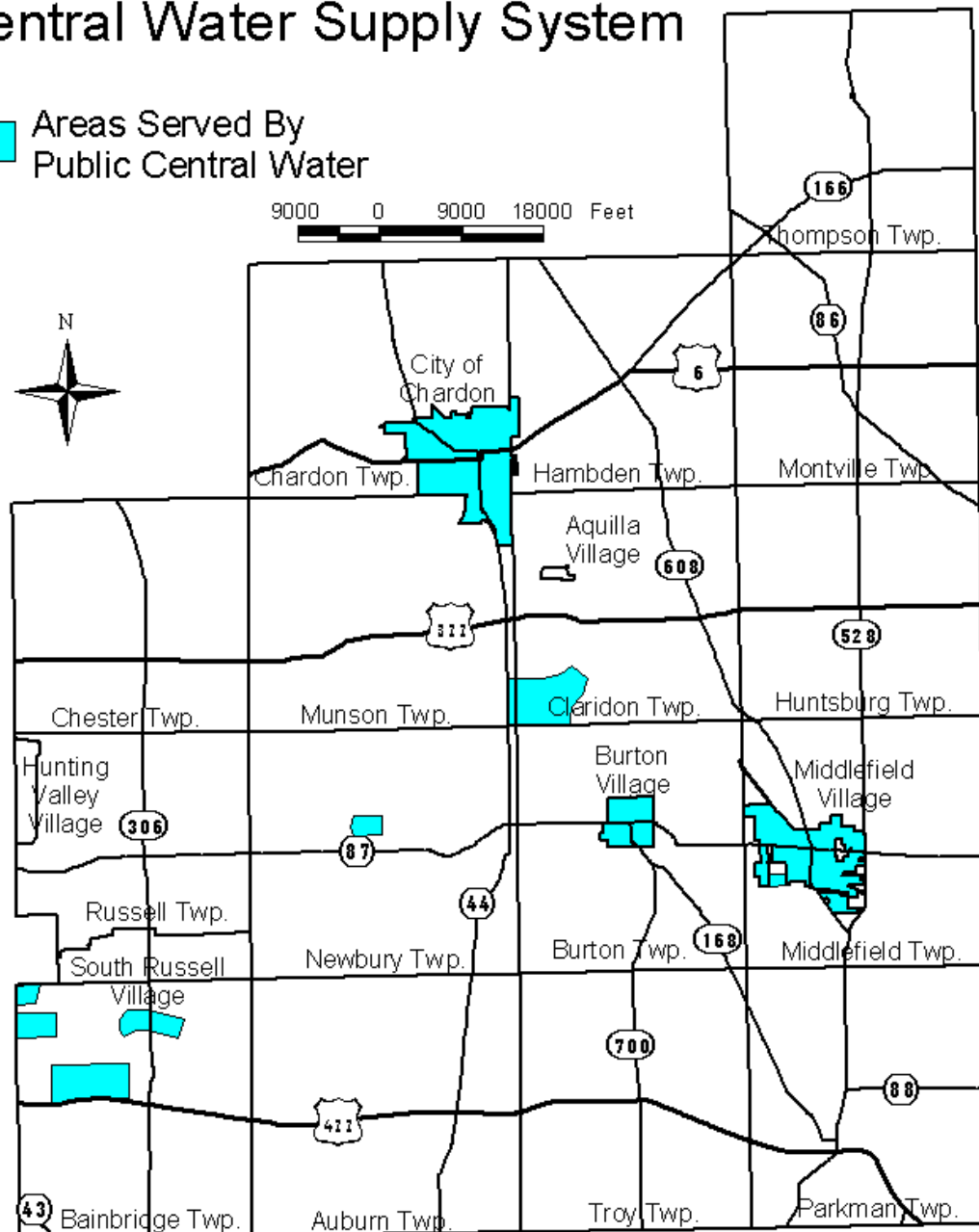
** The lines are connected to the Cleveland water system.

Source: Geauga County Department of Water Resources, 2006

Map 34

Generalized Areas Served By A Publicly Operated Central Water Supply System

 Areas Served By
Public Central Water

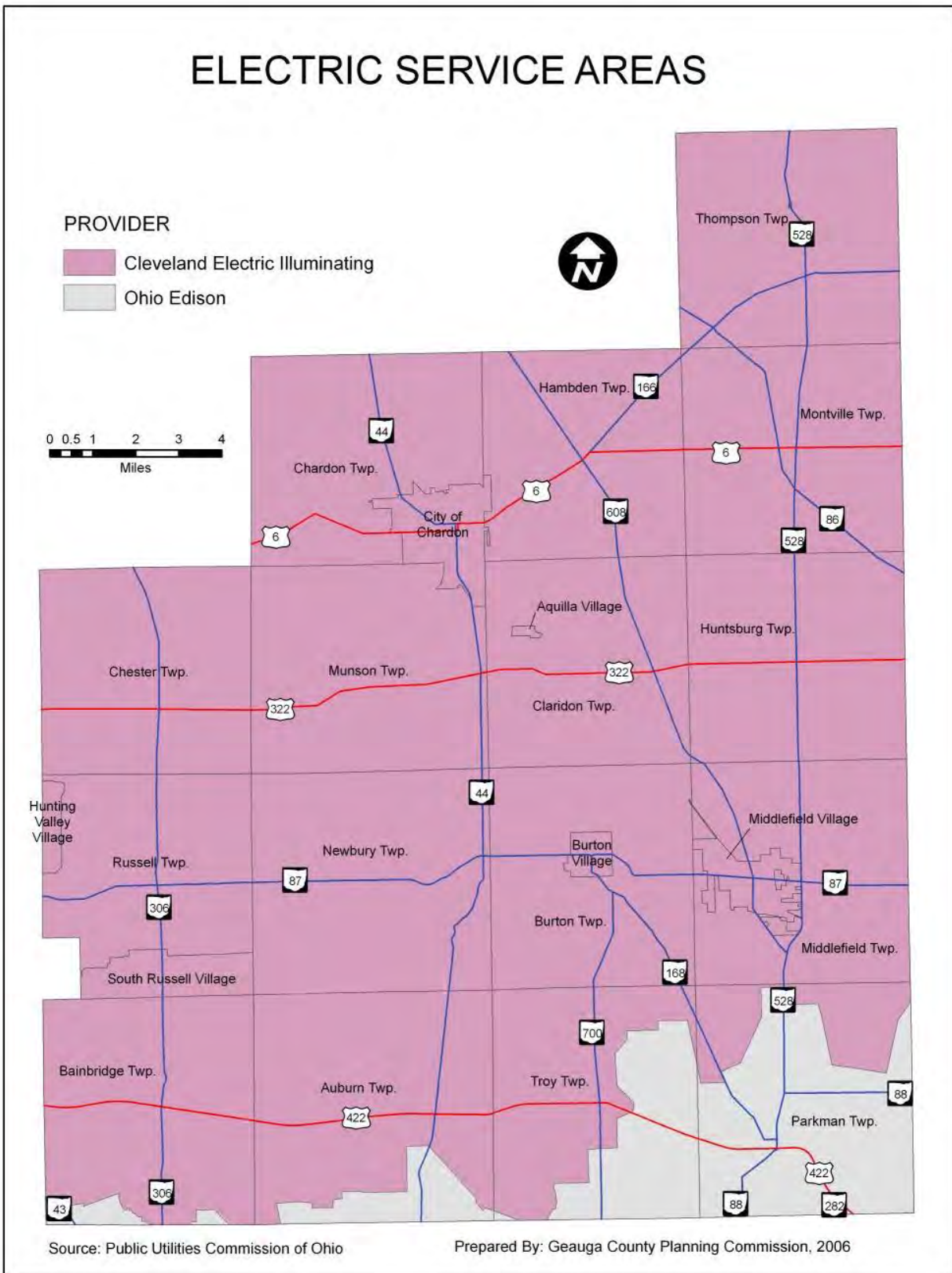


Source: Geauga County Department of Water Resources 2003
Prepared by: Geauga County Planning Commission 2003

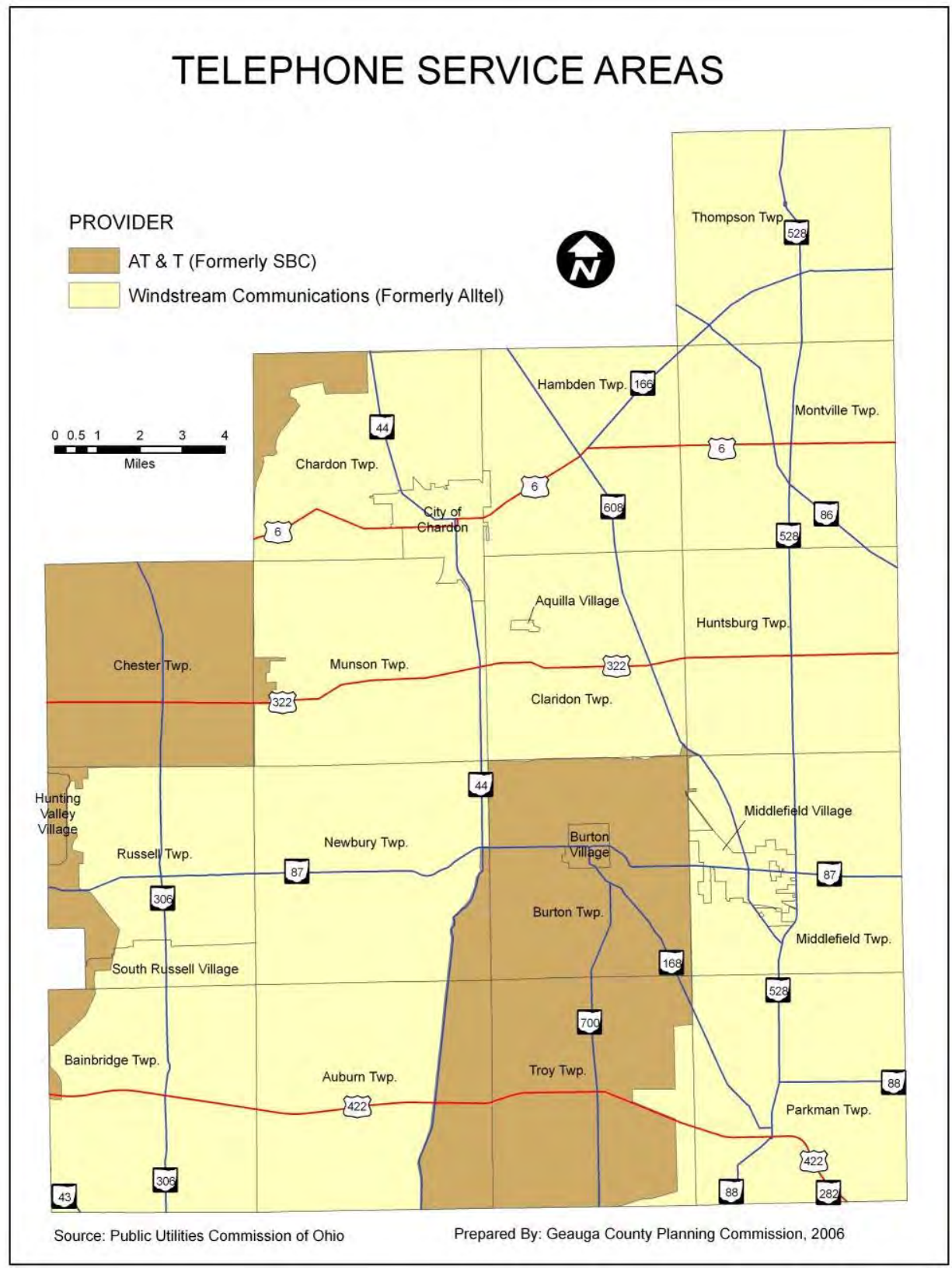
Electric, Telephone, and Natural Gas Service

Private companies that are considered “public utilities” and are currently regulated by the PUCO provide electric, telephone, and natural gas services (Maps 35, 36, and 37). The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company and the Ohio Edison Company (both are under FirstEnergy) furnish electricity. Telephone service is by AT&T and Windstream Communications (there are other “wireless” carriers in the county as well). The Dominion East Ohio Gas Company and Orwell Natural Gas Company deliver natural gas.

Map 35

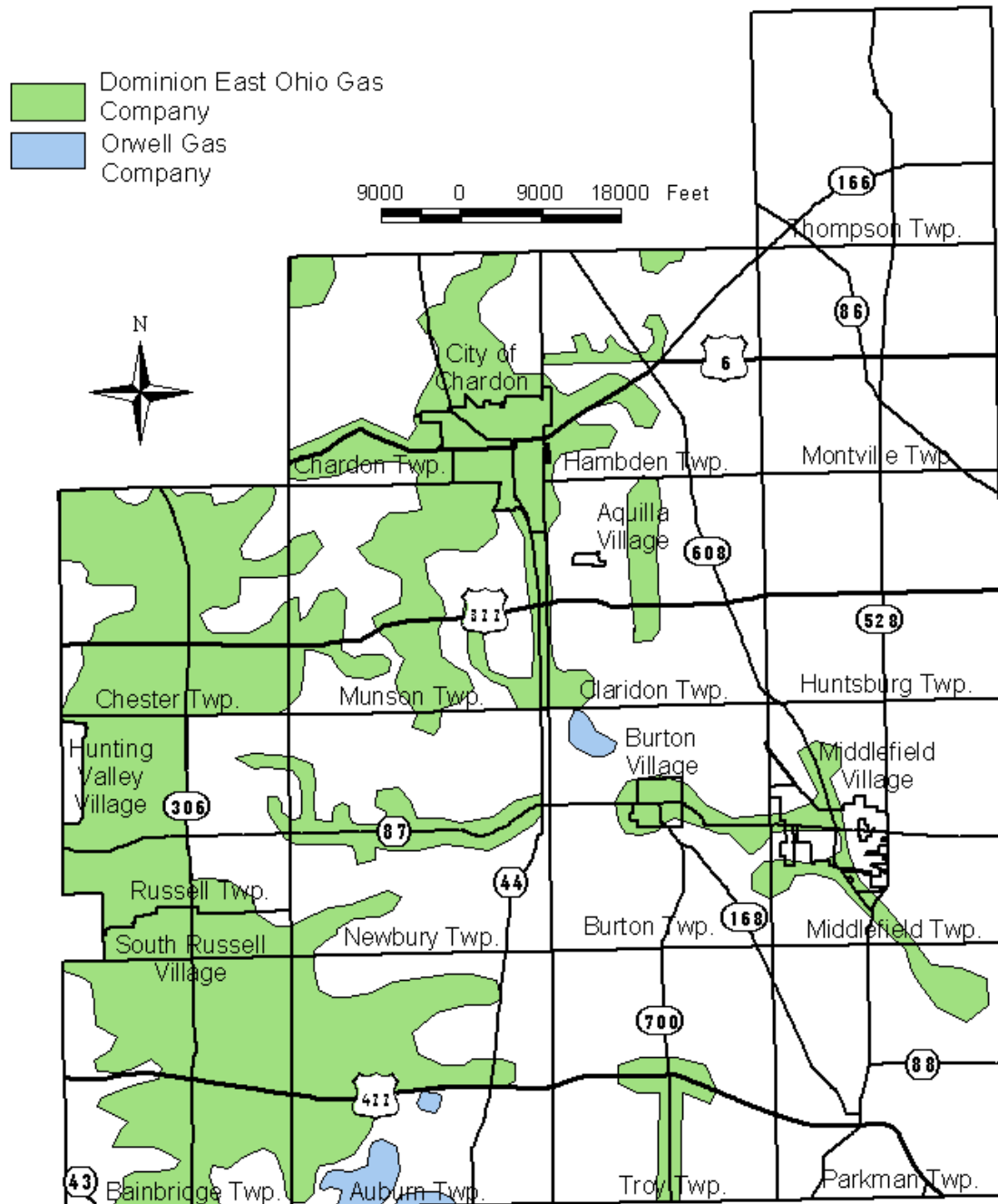


Map 36



Map 37

Generalized Natural Gas Service Areas For Geauga County



Source: Orwell Gas & Dominion Ohio Gas
Prepared by: Geauga County Planning Commission 2003

Planned Infrastructure

Roads

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) serves as the metropolitan planning organization for the planning of highways, public transit and bikeways within Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. NOACA's long-range transportation plan, known as Connections 2030, establishes short and long range strategies and actions for future transportation improvements. One major project in Bainbridge Township was identified. This project includes interchange improvements at the US-422 and SR-306 interchange. All of the other items noted in the long-range plan relate to maintenance of the existing road network, bridges, and culverts. No plans exist on the county or township level to initiate any new road projects. Paving existing roads and maintaining bridges and culverts is the primary focus.

Central Sanitary Sewage and Water Treatment

Township service area plans are in the process of being devised by the county water resources department in conjunction with the township trustees and the board of county commissioners. Map 38 reflects the plans adopted as of April 2007. Service area plans are meant to guide decision-making at both the local and state levels on the potential future installation of water and sewer lines. If a development proposal is made in an area outside of the service plan boundaries, then the Ohio EPA in conjunction with the county will advise the applicant that no facility or lines are planned for the area and on-site systems must be installed.

Electric, Telephone, and Natural Gas Service

Only one new power line corridor has been installed in the county by CEI within the last five years. It parallels relocated S.R. 44 in Chardon Township and is known as the "Pawnee" 138kV transmission line.

Wireless telephone communications systems are a burgeoning business in the county and region. Wireless providers are generally public utilities and may erect towers and associated facilities in any nonresidential zoning district.

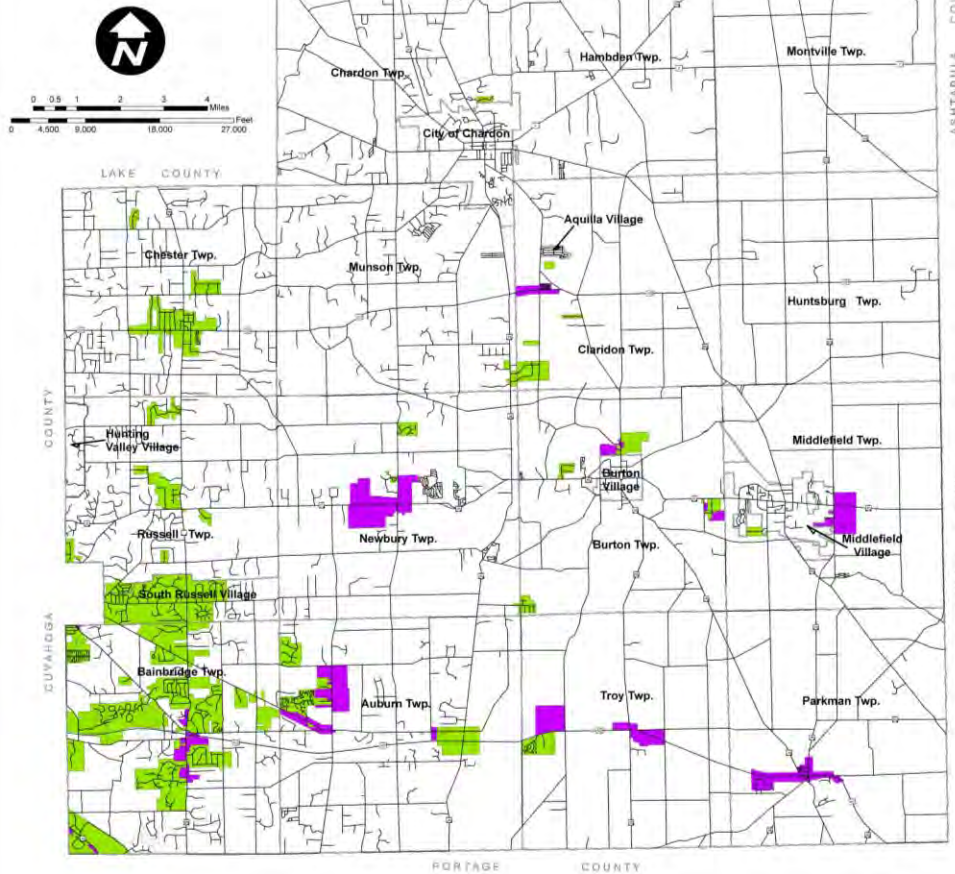
Natural gas pipelines have followed the growth corridors in the county and will likely continue to be installed in the same pattern in the future. The East Ohio Gas Company is the primary natural gas provider in the county.

Map 38

Community Plans for Wastewater Treatment in Geauga County Gauga County, Ohio

Service Areas

- Existing Sewers: 9,907 acres; 3.8%
- May Be Sewered: 2,594 acres; 1.0%
- No Service*, Area to Remain Served By On-Site Systems: 247,979 acres; 95.2%



Sources:
Auburn Township Board of Trustees June 4, 1998 & Board of County Commissioners July 14, 1998.
Bainbridge Township Board of Trustees August 7, 2006 & Board of County Commissioners September 7, 2006.
Burton Township Board of Trustees December 3, 2001 & Board of County Commissioners December 6, 2001.
Chester Township Board of Trustees April 1, 1999 & Board of County Commissioners April 27, 1999.
Claridon Township Board of Trustees March 12, 2007 & Board of County Commissioners April 10, 2007.
Hamden Township Board of Trustees July 24, 2002 & Board of County Commissioners September 2, 2002.
Huntsburg Township Board of Trustees April 17, 2001 & Board of County Commissioners July 31, 2001.
Newbury Township Board of Trustees April 6, 2005 & Board of County Commissioners April 28, 2005.
Parkman Township Board of Trustees September 19, 1995 & Board of County Commissioners April 10, 1997.
Russell Township Board of Trustees August 3, 2009 & Board of County Commissioners August 31, 2006.
Thompson Township Board of Trustees February 7, 2007 & Board of County Commissioners February 15, 2007.
Troy Township Board of Trustees August 21, 2001 & Board of County Commissioners August 28, 2001.

Map update prepared by the
Gauga County Planning
Commission, March 2005.
Revised: July 2005, November 2005,
February 2006, April 2006,
October 2006, January 2007, April 2007.
For reference purposes only.

*The following municipalities have their own central sanitary sewer service and are included in "No Service" since they operate their own treatment facilities: City of Chardon, Burton Village, Middlefield Village.

Northeast Ohio 208 Water Quality Management Plan

CHAPTER III

AGRICULTURAL CENSUS DATA

Introduction

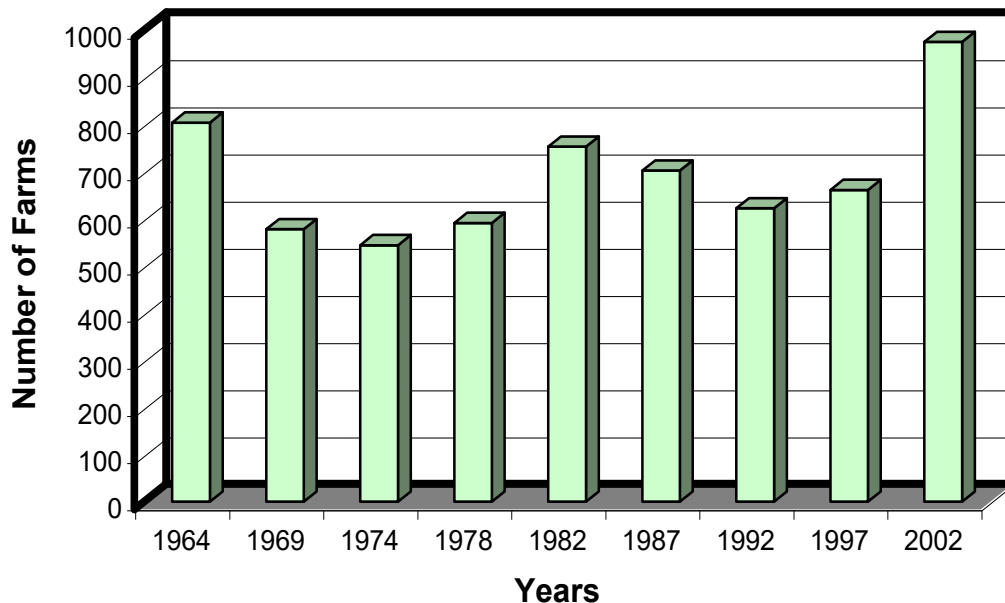
The U.S. Census of Agriculture is taken every five years. The census details a number of statistics ranging from the number of farms to market value of products sold. The most current census was taken in 2002. Some of the data in this chapter may conflict with statistics in previous chapters of the plan. This may be due, in part, to the data collection methodology. The following is a summary of the information available for Geauga County.

Number of Farms

A “farm,” according to the census, is defined as a unit producing at least \$1,000.00 worth of gross sales of agricultural products annually. Since the 1960’s, the number of farms has fluctuated in the county with each census period (Figure 4). A substantial decline occurred in the 1964 to 1974 time period, with a subsequent recovery through the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. This trend was followed by another decline in farm numbers from the late 1980’s through the early 1990’s. After the 1992 census, the number of farms in the county began to increase yet again. The 1997 census counted 661 farms representing an increase of 39 (or 6%) since 1992. The 2002 census counted an additional 314 farms bringing the total to 975 farms, representing a 48% increase in the last five years.

Figure 4

Total Number of Farms In Geauga County



Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

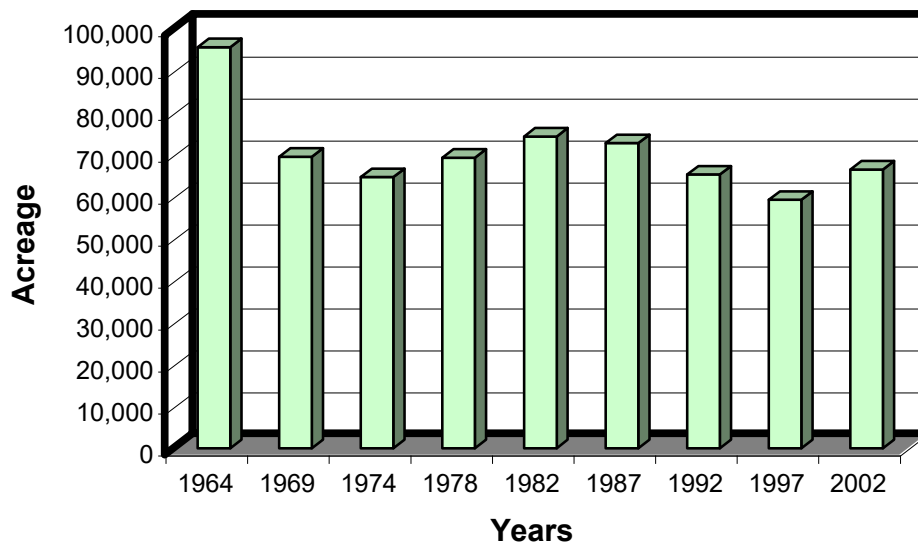
Geauga County Farmland Preservation Plan

Farmland

The census defines “land in farms” as acreage primarily used for crops, pasture, or grazing. Beginning in the 1960’s to 1974 the amount of land in farms in Geauga County diminished significantly (Figure 5). There was a slight recovery in the early 1980’s, however, the 1997 census data indicated that farmland was at its lowest level in about 30 years (59,000 acres) and has declined by 6,000 acres (-9%) since 1992. Land devoted to farms increased 12% from 59,238 acres in 1997 to 66,474 acres in 2002, however.

Figure 5

Total Farmland (Acreage) **Geauga County**



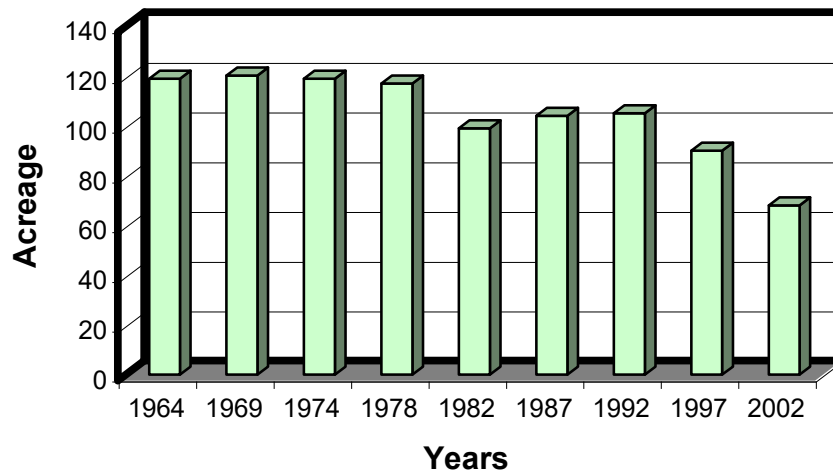
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Average Size of Farms

The average size of a farm in the county has decreased since 1997 from 90 to 68 acres (-24%) in 2002 per the census (Figure 6). While more farms may exist, their size is apparently shrinking. This may be a reflection of the type of agricultural operations being conducted in the county. For example, it appears that livestock operations (which take more land to support) may be in decline in Geauga County, whereas vegetable farming is on the rise (which may be conducted on smaller plots).

Figure 6

Average Size of Farms (Acreage)
Geauga County



Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Farms by Size

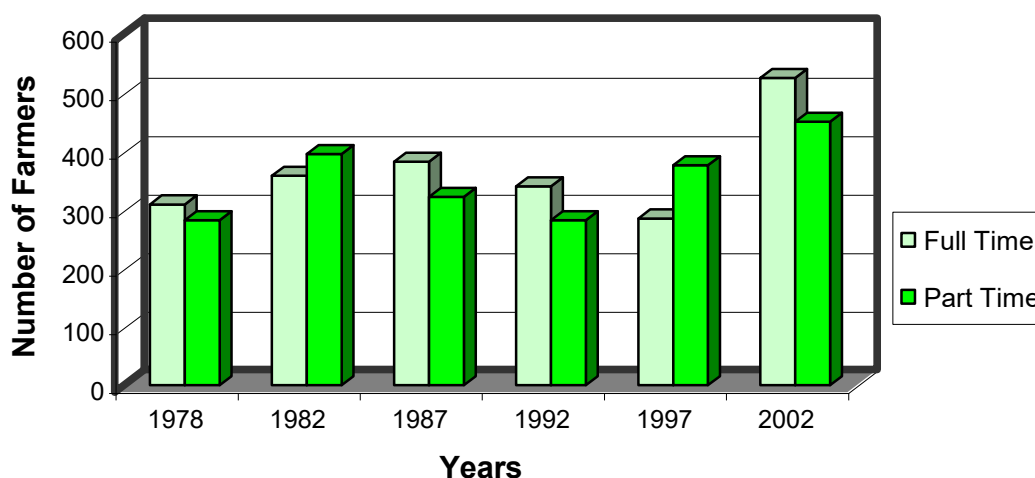
The information from the census confirms that the size of farms in Geauga is diminishing. In 2002, most farms, 40%, were in the range of 10 to 49 acres. There were 225 farms in this category in 1997 or about 34% of all farms. There was an increase of 132% in farms between 1 and 9 acres from 1997 and 2002 (72 to 167 farms). Farms between 50 and 179 acres increased by 64 or 21%. Farms greater than 180 acres have been declining. In 2002 there were 45 farms between 180 and 499 acres, down 12% since 1997. Farms between 500 and 999 acres declined by 21% from 14 to 11. In 1997 there were no farms 1000 acres or more. However, in 2002 there were 3 farms in this category.

Farm Operators

Between the time frame of 1982 to 1997 the number of full-time farm operators decreased from 358 to 285 (-20%). However, in 2002 this figure shot up to 525 full time farm operators, representing an 84% increase since 1997. Principal farm operators having another occupation have continued to increase over time. From 1992 to 2002, farm operators having another occupation than farming rose from 282 to 450 representing a 60% increase (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Full & Part Time Farm Operators
Geauga County



Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

The following table provides information concerning the tenure of farm operators, characteristics, and type of organization from the U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Table 20

Geauga County Farm Operators
Tenure, Characteristics, and Type of Organization
1997 to 2002

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>Change</u> <u>1997-</u> <u>2002</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Change</u> <u>1997-</u> <u>2002</u>
TENURE							
Full Owners							
Farms	463	434	369	422	740	318	75.4
Acres	32,408	32,385	28,224	27,730	35,274	7,544	27.2
Part Owners							
Farms	210	206	199	172	210	38	22.1
Acres	33,874	32,369	30,726	27,280	28,766	1,486	5.4
Owned land in farms	20,034	16,019	15,834	13,833	14,836	1,003	7.3

Table 20 Continued

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>No. Change 1997- 2002</u>	<u>% Change 1997- 2002</u>
Rented land in farms	13,840	16,350	14,892	13,447	13,930	483	3.6
Tenants							
Farms	80	62	54	47	25	-22	-46.8
Acres	8,065	8,012	6,316	4,228	2,434	-1,794	-42.4
PRINCIPAL OPERATOR CHARACTERISTICS							
Place of residence							
On Farm Operated	636	605	540	539	872	333	61.8
Not On Farm Operated	58	51	46	74	103	29	39.2
Days worked off farm							
None	238	256	288	169	339	170	100.6
1-199 Days	156	126	136	165	202	37	22.4
200 Days or More	322	275	224	286	434	148	51.7
Years On Farm							
0-9	292	216	178	175	306	131	74.9
10 >	344	406	350	384	669	285	74.2
Average Years	15	17	17.5	18.4	18.6	0	1.1
By Age Group							
< 25	14	7	8	7	9	2	28.6
25-34	125	68	66	45	47	2	4.4
35-44	192	193	156	148	188	40	27.0
45-54	146	184	181	205	322	117	57.1
55-64	150	125	92	140	245	105	75.0
65 >	126	125	119	116	164	48	41.4
Average Age	49	50	50.7	52.7	52.8	0	0.2
TYPE OF ORGANIZATION							
Individual or Family							
Farms	636	599	533	571	866	295	51.7
Acres	52,271	52,304	47,349	45,890	56,180	10,290	22.4
Partnership							

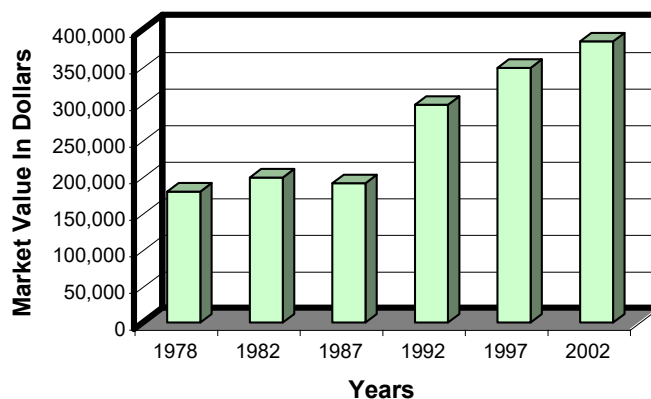
<u>Table 20 Continued</u>							
	<u>1982</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>No. Change 1997- 2002</u>	<u>% Change 1997- 2002</u>
Farms	94	84	67	53	48	-5	-9.4
Acres	18,480	16,877	12,935	9,596	6,256	-3,340	-34.8
Corporation							
Family Held							
Farms	18	16	18	27	54	27	100.0
Acres	--	--	4,026	2,696	2,249	-447	-16.6
Other							
Farms	2	2	3	6	1	-5	-83.3
Acres	--	--	--	958			
Other (Coop., Estate, Trust)							
Farms	3	--	1	4	6	2	50.0
Acres	461	--	0	98			0.0

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Estimated Market Value of Land and Buildings

The census asked respondents to provide an estimate of current market value of land and buildings owned or rented (from or to others) per farm. The estimates show dramatic increases (Figure 8). The average value per farm was \$198,328 in 1982 and it jumped to \$384,254 by 2002 (\$185,926 or 94%). On a per acre basis, the estimated average value rose from \$1,853 to \$6,207 (\$4,354 or 235%) during the same time frame.

Figure 8
Estimated Market Value of Land & Buildings
Geauga County



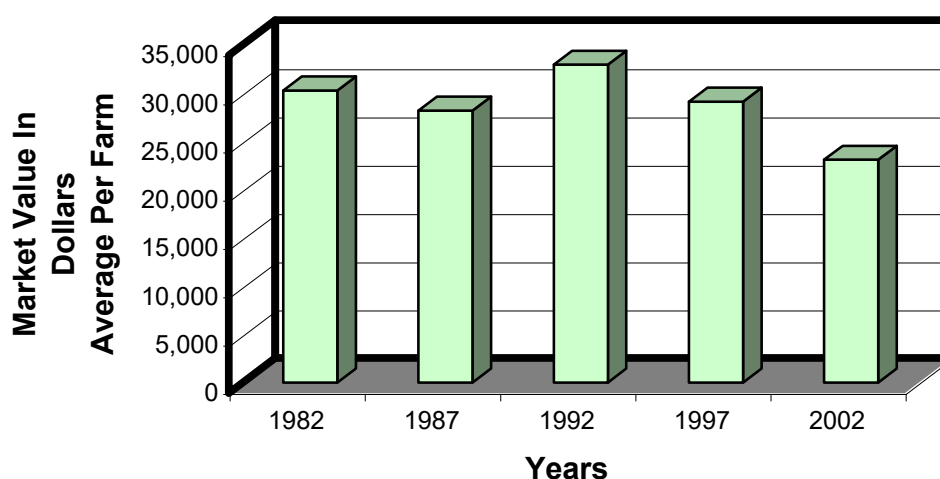
Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Estimated Market Value of Machinery and Equipment

The estimated current market value of machinery and equipment per farm has remained somewhat stable, according to the census with a slight decline since 1992 (Figure 9). The average market value of machinery and equipment per farm was \$30,271 in 1982 and it was somewhat lower in 2002, at \$23,082 (or -24 %). The estimated value of all farm machinery and equipment in the county was \$22.8 million in 1982 and it was \$19.2 million in 1997.

Figure 9

Estimated Market Value of Machinery & Equipment **Geauga County**



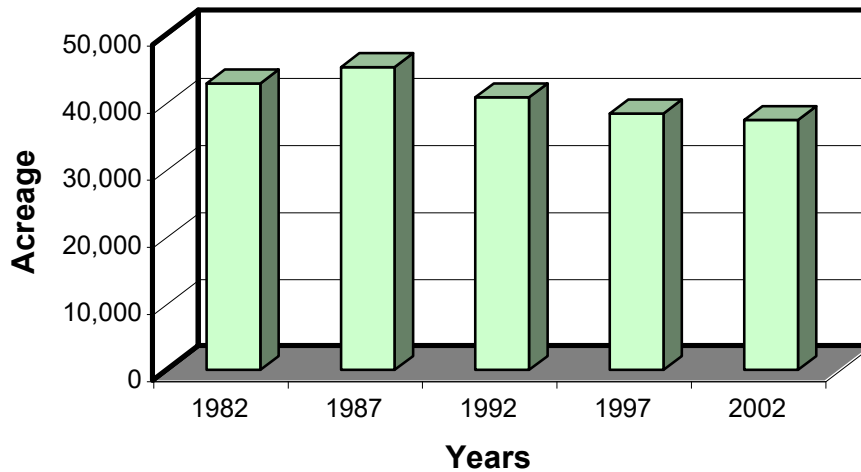
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Total and Harvested Cropland

The information concerning total cropland includes land from which crops were harvested (including hay) and land in orchards, nurseries, and greenhouses (Figure 10). Land from which two or more crops were harvested was counted only once, even though there was more than one land use. The number of farms raising crops has been stable in the 1990's, with a slight increase in the number harvesting cropland (531 in 1997 and 639 in 2002). Total cropland has decreased in the county. In 1987 it was 45,109 acres and by 2002 it stood at 37,225 acres (a loss of 7,884 acres or 17%). Harvested cropland has consistently diminished since 1982, when it stood at 32,218 acres. By 2002, this figure was 27,814 acres (a loss of 4,404 acres or 14%).

Figure 10

Total Cropland
Geauga County



Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

The market value of agricultural products sold in the county has consistently risen since the 1980's (Table 21). In 1982, the figure was \$15.1 million and by 2002 it had risen to \$22.7 million (50%). The average per farm for agricultural products sold increased 16 % from \$20,088 in 1982 to \$23,318 in 2002. The market value of crops has been increasing while the market value of livestock has diminished. In 1982, crop sales were about \$4 million and livestock was \$11 million. In 2002, crop sales reached \$13.3 million (233% growth) and livestock was down 15% to \$9.4 million.

Most of the farms in the county (375) had a total sales value of products under \$2,500 in 2002. This was followed by the \$5,000 to \$9,999 category (161 farms), and the \$2,500 to \$4,999 range (149 farms). Only 77 farms had sales of \$50,000 or more.

Table 21
Geauga County
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold
1982 to 2002

<u>Item</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>No. Change 1982- 2002</u>	<u>% Change 1982- 2002</u>
Total Sales (\$1,000)	15,126	15,433	16,086	18,282	22,735	7,609	50.3
Average Per Farm	20,088	21,984	25,862	27,658	23,318	3,230	16.1
Farms by Value of Sales (No. of Farms)							
< \$2,500	285	231	185	216	375	90	31.6
\$2,500-\$4,999	98	108	81	91	149	51	52.0
\$5,000-\$9,999	78	71	82	100	161	83	106.4
\$10,000-\$19,999	102	80	73	88	105	3	2.9
\$20,000-\$39,999	91	121	113	67	85	-6	-6.6
\$40,000-\$99,999	70	55	55	52	54	-16	-22.9
\$100,000-\$249,999	25	30	25	34	33	8	32.0
\$250,000 >	4	6	8	13	13	9	225.0
SALES BY COMMODITY							
Total Crop Farms	356	317	323	372	516	160	44.9
Total Sales (\$1,000)	4,094	4,163	6,106	8,953	13,323	9,229	225.4
Corn							
Farms	113	123	88	69	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	671	931	544	537	(X)	-	-
Wheat							
Farms	49	34	50	37	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	95	51	213	80	(X)	-	-
Soybeans							
Farms	14	10	14	32	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	36	78	107	433	(X)	-	-
Oats							
Farms	56	67	40	30	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	100	113	65	39	(X)	-	-
Other Grains							
Farms	24	8	23	5	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	26	-	26	-	(X)	-	-
Hay							
Farms	193	183	148	196	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	607	559	711	1,002	(X)	-	-
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas							
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	124	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	1,162	-	-
Vegetables							
Farms	41	38	69	51	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	149	249	573	544	(X)	-	-
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes							

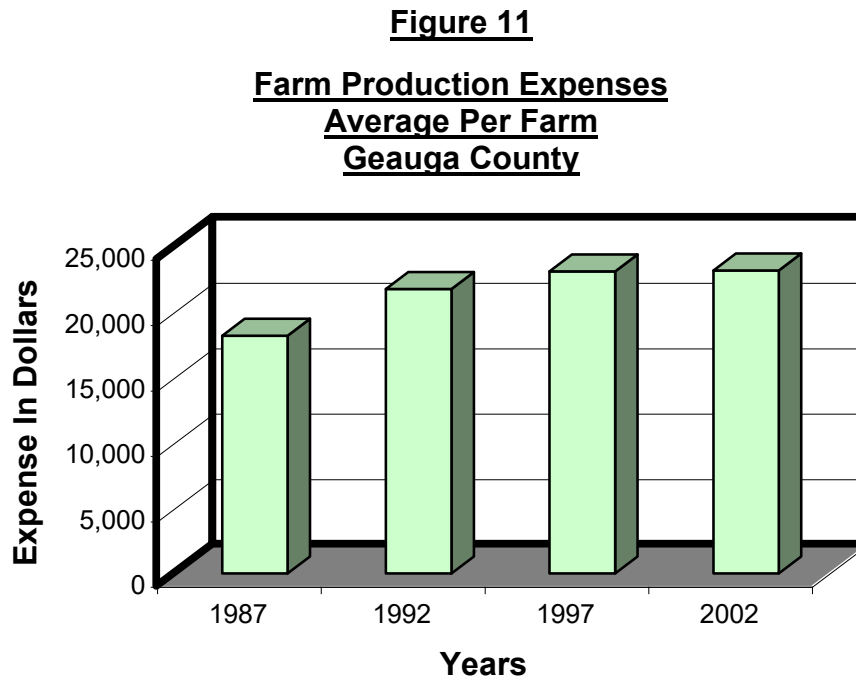
Table 21 Continued

Item	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	No. Change 1982- 2002	% Change 1982- 2002
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	91	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	1,277	-	-
Fruits/Berries							
Farms	42	32	38	25	61	19	45.2
Sales (\$1,000)	746	642	514	540	807	61	8.2
Nursery/Greenhouse							
Farms	31	31	39	71	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	1,635	1,510	3,335	5,464	(X)	-	-
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod							
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	71	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	8,102	-	-
Cut Christmas trees and short-rotation woody crops							
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	25	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	207	-	-
Other Crops							
Farms	9	8	4	67	(X)	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	29	19	4	306	(X)	-	-
Other Crops & Hay							
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	327	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	1,768	-	-
LIVESTOCK/ POULTRY							
Total Farms	519	496	421	394	545	26	5.0
Sales (\$1,000)	11,032	11,270	9,981	9,329	9,412	-1,620	-14.7
Poultry & Eggs							
Farms	70	61	42	49	80	10	14.3
Sales (\$1,000)	206	103	31	76	71	-135	-65.5
Milk & Dairy Products							
Farms	222	213	195	124	94	-128	-57.7
Sales (\$1,000)	7,755	7,990	7,637	6,114	5,908	-1,847	-23.8
Cattle & Calves							
Farms	396	369	309	246	229	-167	-42.2
Sales (\$1,000)	1,617	1,612	1,510	1,745	1,635	18	1.1
Hogs & Pigs							
Farms	103	78	71	49	71	-32	-31.1
Sales (\$1,000)	778	535	243	232	119	-659	-84.7
Sheep/Goats & Products							
Farms	39	39	30	34	46	7	17.9
Sales (\$1,000)	33	33	42	42	39	6	18.2
Horses, ponies, mules, burros and donkeys							
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	239	-	-
Sales (\$1,000)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	1,309	-	-
Other Livestock/Livestock Products							
Farms	155	154	120	134	53	-102	-65.8
Sales (\$1,000)	643	991	158	1,120	331	-312	-48.5

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms
 (N) Not available (X) Not Applicable
 Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Farm Production Expenses

Average farm production expenses are rising in the county (Figure 11). The average expense figure per farm in 1987 was \$18,153 and in 2002 it was \$23,157. This represents a difference of \$5,004 on average per farm or a 28% increase in 15 years.



Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Table 22
Geauga County
Farm Production Expenses
1982 to 2002

<u>Item</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>No. Change 1982- 2002</u>	<u>% Change 1982- 2002</u>
Livestock/Poultry Purchased							
Farms	305	219	306	206	265	-40	-13.1
Expenses (\$1,000)	1,418	1,252	1,252	1,354	574	-844	-59.5
Feed Purchased							
Farms	492	478	461	401	576	84	17.1
Expenses (\$1,000)	2,412	2,334	2,700	461	2,616	204	8.5

Table 22 Continued							
Item	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	No. Change 1982- 2002	% Change 1982- 2002
Seeds/Bulbs/Plants/Trees							
Farms	449	418	455	368	417	-32	-7.1
Expenses (\$1,000)	447	480	663	950	1,563	1,116	249.7
Commercial Fertilizer/Lime							
Farms	480	427	458	400	492	12	2.5
Expenses (\$1,000)	794	863	621	619	810	16	2.0
Chemicals							
Farms	367	454	441	302	436	69	18.8
Expenses (\$1,000)	193	285	235	343	316	123	63.7
Energy & Petroleum Products							
Farms	741	657	583	623	(X)	-	-
Expenses (\$1,000)	1,584	(N)	(N)	819	(X)	-	-
Gasoline Fuel/Oils							
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	961	-	-
Expenses (\$1,000)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	961	-	-
Utilities							
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	575	-	-
Expenses (\$1,000)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	777	-	-
Hired Farm Labor							
Farms	175	214	170	190	164	-11	-6.3
Expenses (\$1,000)	941	1,196	1,708	1,960	3,719	2,778	295.2
Contract Labor							
Farms	37	76	28	57	41	4	10.8
Expenses (\$1,000)	52	93	214	284	294	242	465.4
Custom Work, Machine Hire, & Rental of Machinery							
Farms	141	164	171	164	289	148	105.0
Expenses (\$1,000)	134	286	160	247	990	856	638.8
Interest							
Farms	283	207	167	244	241	-42	-14.8
Expenses (\$1,000)	1,129	1,042	863	164	1378	249	22.1

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms

(N) Not available

(X) Not Applicable

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

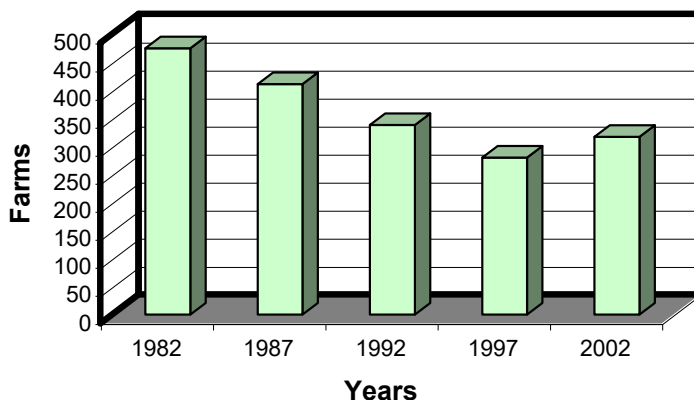
Livestock and Poultry Inventory

Cattle and Calves

The overall inventory of cattle and calves as well as the number of farms with such livestock are changing in Geauga County per the census data. The inventory has continued to decline. In 1982 there were a total of 12,095 head of cattle and calves in the county and in 2002 there were 7,419 (4,676 less or 39%). The number of dairy cattle decreased 47% from 5,438 in 1982 to 2,885 by 2002. Beef cattle inventory also

declined from 1,063 to 967 or 9%. The number of farms with cattle and calves declined during the same time period from 475 to 317 158 33% fewer farms (Figure 12). However, from 1997 to 2002 the county saw an increase in the number of farms with cattle and calves.

Figure 12
Number of Farms With Cattle & Calves
Geauga County

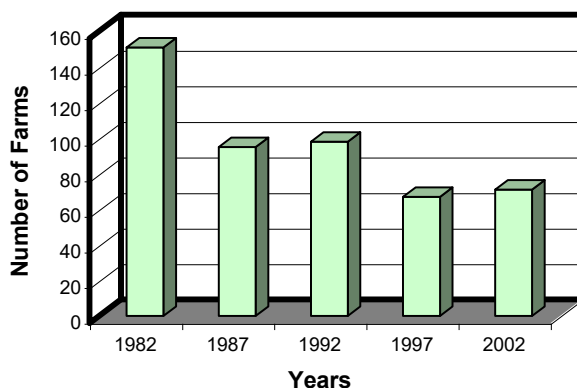


Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Hogs and Pigs

The number of hogs and pigs and the inventory of farms raising such livestock from 1982 to 1997 were shrinking (Figure 13). There were 4,020 hogs and pigs on 151 farms in 1982 and 1,528 on 67 farms in 1997 (2,492 fewer hogs or -62% and 84 less farms or -56%). The county did experience an increase since 1997. The 2002 data revealed four more farms with hogs and pigs. However, inventory declined by 732 or nearly 48%.

Figure 13
Number of Farms With Hogs & Pigs
Geauga County



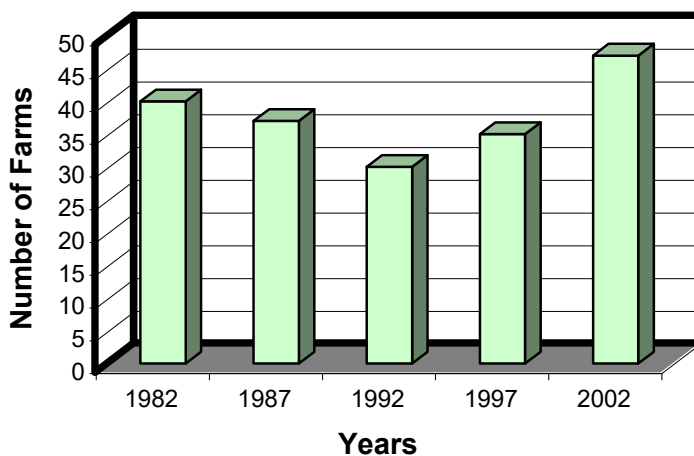
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Sheep and Lambs

The sheep and lamb inventory is up slightly from the 1982 figure of 736 to 796 in 2002 (60 more sheep/lambs or 8%). The number of farms raising sheep increased by only seven, from 40 in 1982 to 47 in 2002 (Figure 14).

Figure 14

Number of Farms With Sheep & Lambs **Geauga County**



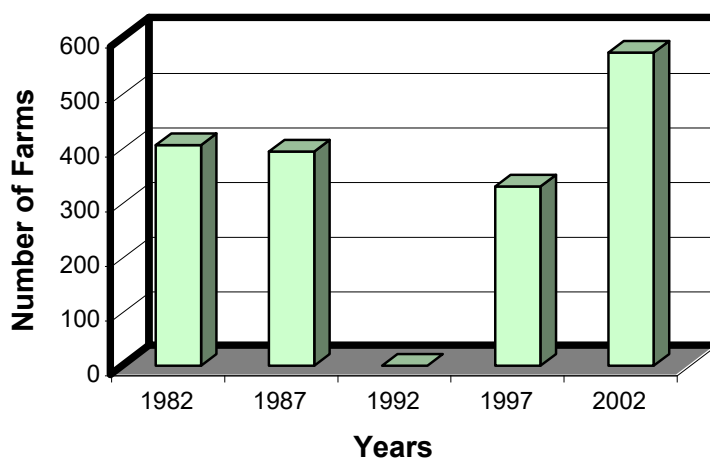
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Horses and Ponies

In 1982, the census counted 2,626 horses and ponies in the county on 404 farms (Figure 15). By 2002, horses and ponies had increased 67% to 4,392 on 573 farms.

Figure 15

Number of Farms With Horses & Ponies **Geauga County**



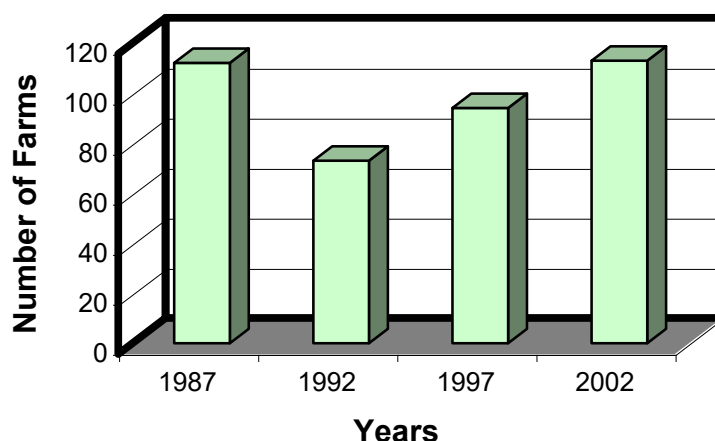
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture
Data not available for 1992

Poultry (layers 20 weeks old and over)

In 1987, the inventory of layers, 20 weeks and older, was 11,147 dispersed upon 112 farms in the county. Since then, the number of farms with poultry dropped dramatically, however it is on the rise since the 1997 census. The number of farms raising poultry increased from 94 in 1997 to 113 in 2002 (20%) (Figure 16). Despite an increase in the number of farms with poultry, layers 20 weeks and older in 2002 were reported to be down by 2,051 or 36% since the 1997 census.

Figure 16

Number of Farms With Poultry
Geauga County



Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Miscellaneous Poultry and Livestock Inventory

Miscellaneous poultry and livestock inventories are as follows.

Table 23

Miscellaneous Poultry and Livestock Inventory
Geauga County

<u>Inventory</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>No. Change 1982- 2002</u>	<u>% Change 1982- 2002</u>
MISC POULTRY							
Turkeys							
Number	42	89	161	58	436	394	938.1%
Farms	7	14	14	8	16	9	128.6%

Table 23 Continued

Inventory	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	No. Change 1982- 2002	% Change 1982- 2002
Ducks							
Number	350	119	91	139	250	-100	-28.6%
Farms	17	9	10	4	32	15	88.2%
Emus							
Number	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(D)	-	-
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	3	-	-
Geese							
Number	108	(N)	(N)	(N)	111	3	2.8%
Farms	13	4	2	(N)	9	-4	-30.8%
Pheasants							
Number	(N)	80	(N)	(D)	698	-	-
Farms	(N)	4	(N)	3	9	-	-
Pigeons or Squab							
Number	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	76	-	-
Farms	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	4	-	-
Quail							
Number	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	130	-	-
Farms	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	4	-	-
MISC LIVESTOCK							
Bison							
Number	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(D)	-	-
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	2	-	-
Deer							
Number	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	246	-	-
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	14	-	-
Goats							
Number	98	237	240	75	205	107	109.2%
Farms	33	33	38	31	43	10	30.3%
Llamas							
Number	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	135	-	-
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	17	-	-
Mules, burros, and donkeys							
Number	(N)	19	9	(D)	53	-	-
Farms	(N)	6	6	4	10	-	-
Rabbits and their pelts							
Number	70	638	219	47	62	-8	-11.4%
Farms	8	17	17	9	9	1	12.5%
Bee Colonies							
Number	175	1,139	362	377	382	207	118.3%
Farms	44	29	26	30	32	-12	-27.3%

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms

(N) Not available

(X) Not Applicable

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Crops

Major crops harvested were identified by the Census of Agriculture in terms of acres and number of farms. Geauga County farms and acres harvested has been decreasing in nearly every crop category since 1982. However, soybeans have shown an increase as well as vegetables.

Table 24
Major Crops
Geauga County

<u>Crop</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>No. Change 1982- 2002</u>	<u>% Change 1982- 2002</u>
Corn (Grain/Seed)							
Acres	8,436	8,056	6,445	4,956	4,094	-4,342	-51.5%
Farms	371	349	284	190	213	-158	-42.6%
Corn (Silage/Green Chop)							
Acres	2,577	2,123	2,122	2,261	2,138	-439	-17.0%
Farms	213	178	175	131	119	-94	-44.1%
Wheat (Grain)							
Acres	898	530	1,270	641	958	60	6.7%
Farms	70	45	63	48	49	-21	-30.0%
Oats (Grain)							
Acres	4,703	4,526	3,020	1,843	1,786	-2,917	-62.0%
Farms	302	301	243	172	196	-106	-35.1%
Soybeans (Beans)							
Acres	328	408	660	2,417	2,242	1,914	583.5%
Farms	16	10	15	32	21	5	31.3%
Hay (All)							
Acres	14,656	17,019	15,070	14,842	14,164	-492	-3.4%
Farms	530	507	425	420	527	-3	-0.6%
Vegetables (Harvested For Sale)							
Acres	207	255	516	297	452	245	118.4%
Farms	41	38	69	51	91	50	122.0%
Orchards							
Acres	402	400	386	300	237	-165	-41.0%
Farms	60	40	40	25	39	-21	-35.0%
Strawberries (Harvested For Sale)							
Acres	30	54	21	10	17	-13	-43.3%
Farms	22	12	17	14	16	-6	-27.3%
Nursery/Greenhouse Crops							
Acres (Open)	225	84	113	437	(X)	-	-
Sq. Ft. (Under Glass)	233,800	200,867	359,363	484,692	(X)	-	-
Farms	31	31	39	71	(X)	-	-
Nursery, greenhouse*							

Table 24 Continued

Crop	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	No. Change 1982- 2002	% Change 1982- 2002
Acres (Open)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	298	-	-
Sq. Ft. (Under Glass)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	503,355	-	-
Farms	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	72	-	-

*Includes floriculture, aquatic plants, mushrooms, flower seeds, vegetable seeds, and sod harvested

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms

(N) Not available

(X) Not Applicable

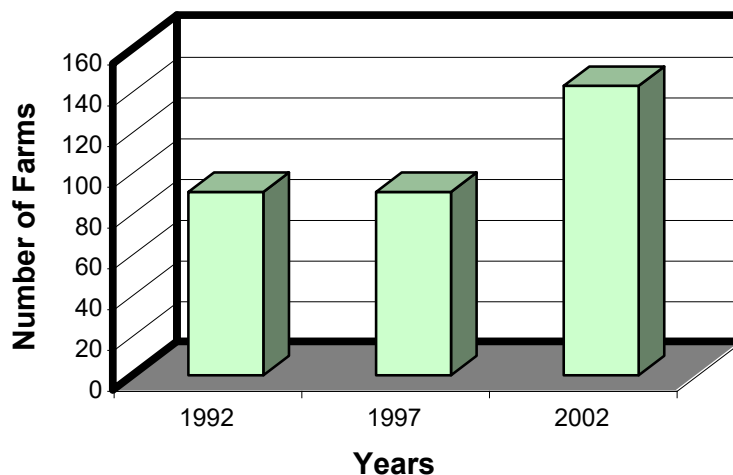
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Maple Syrup Producers

Information from the OSU Extension Office and the Census of Agriculture indicate that the number of farms involved with maple syrup production (gross annual sales over \$1,000) has increased 58% from 1997 to 2002 (Figure 17).

Figure 17

Number of Farms In Maple Syrup Production Geauga County



Source: OSU Extension Office, U.S. Census of Agriculture

The 2002 Agricultural Census now reports more detailed information regarding maple syrup production. The 2002 data provided there were 142 farms with a maple syrup operation. Geauga farmers produced approximately 21,500 gallons of syrup with 110,665 taps in place. The number of taps from 1997 to 2002 increased by 27,897 or 38% in just five years.

Geauga County ranked number one in the state for gallons of maple syrup produced while accounting for nearly 28% of total state production.

Labor Force

The U.S. Census provides data concerning occupations of residents 16 years old and over in the county. For employed people, the data reflects the person's job during the reference week. For those who worked two or more jobs, the data refers to the job at which the person worked the greatest number of hours during the reference week (Table 25).

Farm employment dropped 64% or by 562 jobs from 1980 to 2000. Employment in farming represented less than one percent of occupations for those employed in the county.

Table 25
Geauga County
Occupations of Residents
16 Years Old and Over
For Years 1980, 1990 and 2000

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2000 Percent of Total</u>	<u>Net Change 1980- 2000</u>	<u>% Change 1980- 2000</u>
Management, professional, and related occupations	8,848	12,201	17,504	38.8%	8,656	97.8%
Service occupations	3,332	3,834	5,150	11.4%	1,818	54.6%
Sales and office occupations	9,095	11,793	11,572	25.6%	2,477	27.2%
Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	878	1,097	316	0.7%	-562	-64.0%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	5,812	5,456	4,791	10.6%	-1,021	-17.6%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	5,634	5,434	5,791	12.8%	157	2.8%
Total	33,599	39,815	45,124	100.0%	11,525	34.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The census data does not capture all those employed in farming. In terms of those employed in farming operations, these figures reflect mainly principal, full-time operators. As shown in Figure 7 and Table 20, farming is more of a part-time occupation and a higher number of workers are working additional days off the farm. According to the 2002 census of agriculture, there were 1,465 total farm operators in the county. There were 975 principal operators of which 525 said farming was their full-time occupation.

Also, there were 434 hired farm workers on 175 farms in 1982 representing a total payroll of \$941,000. In 1997, there were 656 hired farm workers on 190 farms with a total payroll of \$1,960,000. In 2002, there were 546 hired farm workers on 164 farms with a total payroll of \$3,719,000.

CHAPTER IV

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION TOOLS AND PROGRAMS

The following is a summary of agricultural land preservation tools and programs.

Agricultural Conservation Easements

- Initiated by: A property owner through a governmental entity or a private, nonprofit land trust.
- Description: R.C. 5301.67 (C) defines an agricultural easement as “an incorporeal right or interest in land that is held for the public purpose of retaining the use of land predominantly in agriculture [and] that imposes any limitations on the use or development of the land that are appropriate at the time of creation of the easement to achieve that purpose.” An easement is a conveyance of one or more property rights to another legal entity for a specific purpose. The holder of the easement has certain rights to the affected land within the bounds of the easement, while the underlying ownership of the land remains with the legal entity that has record title to it. An easement runs with the land and is recorded in the office of the county recorder.
- Advantages:
 - ◆ Granting the easement is a voluntary act by the property owner.
 - ◆ Whereas the owner may relinquish his development rights by granting an agricultural easement, he still retains ownership of the property as well as the right to sell or lease it.
 - ◆ Regardless of who owns the property, the easement remains in effect to protect the agricultural use of the premises.
 - ◆ An agricultural easement may be tailored to meet the needs of the specific landowner. For instance, it may allow for the construction of buildings and dwellings on the parcel related to agricultural use. Certain sections of land not conducive to farming may be eliminated from the easement area.
 - ◆ An easement may be in effect in perpetuity or be extinguished within a specified time period.
 - ◆ An easement does not alleviate the landowner’s responsibility to pay property taxes, maintain buildings or land, or make improvements.

- ◆ Acquiring an easement is less costly for the entity receiving it than an outright purchase of the entire fee interest in the land.
- ◆ Certain tax benefits may accrue to the landowner. These may include a possible reduction in state and federal income taxes, capital gains tax, and estate tax. Real property taxes may be reevaluated as well. An easement that has been donated may meet criteria under IRS code section 170 (h) and the donor may deduct an amount equal to 30% of adjusted gross income in the year of the gift. Federal tax law may also permit an executor of an estate to exclude 40% of the value of land subject to the donation of an easement from the taxable estate.
- ◆ Proceeds from the easement may be used by the property owner to enhance the farming operation.
- Disadvantages:
 - ◆ To receive tax benefits, the easement may have to be granted in perpetuity. This may limit the decision-making process.
 - ◆ The organization receiving the easement must be prepared to maintain it and enforce the restrictions recorded with the land. The costs associated with this issue must be addressed.
 - ◆ A Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program is expensive to undertake and must have a secure funding source.
 - ◆ Acquisition of easements may be very time consuming and legally complex.
 - ◆ Standing alone, PACE may not protect enough land to eliminate development pressure on farms.
 - ◆ Land under a conservation easement may become a magnet for nearby development, because it represents protected open space.

Agricultural Districts

- Initiated by: Private landowners, on a voluntary basis, must contact the County Auditor's office to complete the necessary documentation (or if the land is within a municipality, then contact the affected office).
- Description: The program is meant to provide relief to farmers from nuisance suits and utility assessments. Under current law, a farmer has the ability to join the program if he has at least ten acres of land that has been in active agricultural use for the prior three-year time frame. However, farmers with less acreage may qualify if their land provided at least \$2,500 in gross farm income over the last three years

or can submit documentation that the required minimum income level will be achieved at the time of application. The land must be devoted exclusively to agriculture and farmed as a unit or be within a federal government sponsored land retirement or conservation program. The minimum time frame for participation is five years from the date of application.

- Advantages:
 - ◆ The program is voluntary, at the election of the property owner, and there is no application fee.
 - ◆ Utility assessments may be deferred while the land is farmed and in the program.
 - ◆ Some legal protection against private nuisance claims may be provided.
 - ◆ The use of eminent domain by government is limited. A governmental entity may only appropriate 10 acres or 10% of the land within an Agricultural District.
 - ◆ Farm market owners may be protected from certain zoning regulations.
 - ◆ The Ohio Power Siting Commission must consider the impact of new power facilities and power transmission lines on the affected land.
 - ◆ A landowner may join the Agricultural District program and the CAUV program simultaneously for the same farm (however, a separate application to the County Auditor is needed for each program). Other protection programs, such as PACE may be applied within an Agricultural District as well.
 - ◆ Land conveyed to a new owner may remain in the program unless the new owner voluntarily elects to discontinue participation.
 - ◆ Public costs to operate the program are generally low.
 - ◆ The penalty provisions for changing the use of the land or early withdrawal from the Agricultural District program before the termination of the required five-year time period are very stringent. These include:
 - If the land was also in the CAUV program, taxes are collected for the prior three-year period and a penalty of an additional percentage equal to the prime rate of the tax savings.
 - If the land was not in the CAUV program, the penalty entails a percentage equal to the prime rate of the amount of tax savings if it had been in the CAUV program for the time frame that the land was in an Agricultural District.

- Any deferred utility assessments are immediately collectable as well as interest charges.
- Disadvantages:
 - ◆ The benefits provided by the program may not be enough of an incentive to enroll.
 - ◆ Conversely, once enrolled, the sanctions for withdrawal may not be substantial enough to prevent conversion.

Bargain Sales

- Initiated by: A landowner in conjunction with a governmental entity or a private, nonprofit land trust.
- Description: A bargain sale may represent a balance between an outright sale of the property at fair market value and a land donation. An outright sale makes the conveyance more expensive for the entity acquiring it, whereas the donation may not be attractive to the landowner. The landowner may, with a bargain sale arrangement, sell the land to a trust at a lower price and contribute the balance of the value of it as a charitable gift. Some property owners may wish to devise a phased sale whereby the land is conveyed over an extended period of time as well.
- Advantages:
 - ◆ The sale is voluntary.
 - ◆ The property owner may convey the land to a governmental entity or land trust while, in turn, receiving monetary compensation.
 - ◆ The owner may be able to receive capital gains and income tax benefits on the percentage of the land's value that was donated.
 - ◆ The recipient of the land does not have to pay fair market value for the property.
- Disadvantages:
 - ◆ The landowner receives less compensation than if the property were sold on the open market.
 - ◆ The entity acquiring the land must be prepared to fund its acquisition.

Conservation Reserve

- Initiated by: The landowner in conjunction with NRCS.
- Description: The objective of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is to protect land that may be subject to high erosion levels as well as adjacent waterways and public wellheads by offering governmental rental payments to farmers to convert cropland to appropriate protective vegetative cover. The CRP is a federal government program implemented in conjunction with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office. Applicants must own the affected land for three years prior to enrollment. The contract period is ten years and rental payments may be up to \$50,000 annually.
- Advantages:
 - ◆ The program is voluntary.
 - ◆ A conservation plan for the land is developed in cooperation with the Soil and Water Conservation Service.
 - ◆ Up to 50% of the cost of planting appropriate vegetative cover may be paid for by the federal government.
 - ◆ Rental payments are made to the farmer as a financial inducement to stay in the program and to protect sensitive land.
- Disadvantages:
 - ◆ A farmer may not receive any economic benefits from plantings while in the program.
 - ◆ Any changes to the plan may require resubmission and re-approval.
 - ◆ If the program is discontinued prematurely, all federal payments must be refunded plus interest. A liquidation penalty equal to 25% of the payments received is due as well.
 - ◆ Land is taken out of production for ten years.

Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program

- Initiated by: The property owner, on a voluntary basis, contacts the County Auditor's office to complete an application.

- Description: To be eligible, the parcel or unit of land must consist of ten acres or more and be in exclusive agricultural use for the previous three years. A smaller piece of property, however, may be included under the program if it produced an average gross income of \$2,500 or more in sales of agricultural products during the prior three years or there is anticipated gross income of \$2,500 at the time of application. A one-time application fee is required and the property owner must reapply for the program annually. If the application is accepted, a farmer pays taxes based on the agricultural value of the land, not its development or appraised market value. Major factors to be considered in determining agricultural use values are decided by the state of Ohio and include soil types and capability classifications. Agricultural commodity prices are also examined. Tax value is set at 35% of the CAUV. The values applied in determining CAUV are based on a three-year rotation by the State Tax Commissioner to take into consideration changing conditions relative to production costs and commodity prices.
- Advantages:
 - ◆ The program is voluntary.
 - ◆ Economic viability of farming may be improved by reducing financial pressure (high taxes) that may be influenced by development.
 - ◆ Provides more tax relief than the Ohio Forestry Tax program alone.
 - ◆ The property owner may also join the Agricultural District program for the same parcel of land.
 - ◆ Generally helps correct inequities in the tax system.
- Disadvantages:
 - ◆ The owner must reapply annually.
 - ◆ Failure to reapply, a change in use, or withdrawal from the program results in a recoupment penalty equal to the tax savings for the prior three years.
 - ◆ Long-term protection of farmland is not ensured.
 - ◆ Real estate speculators may abuse the program, keeping land in agriculture to secure tax advantages, pending development of it.

Forestry Tax

- Initiated by: Private landowners through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

- Description: Ohio tax law stipulates that real property be appraised at its fair market value and periodically reevaluated to keep its appraised value in line with modifications to fair market value. The taxable rate is applied to 35% of the appraised value, which is known as the tax value. One method of reducing the amount of taxes due on real property is through the Ohio Forestry Tax Law. To qualify, the tract must be 10 or more acres in size, be outside of a municipality, and be certified as forestland by the state forester. In addition, the land must be protected from fire, cannot be used for grazing, and cannot be enrolled in the CAUV program. The land, however, may be used for commercial cutting of timber.
- Advantages:
 - ◆ The program is voluntary, at the request of the landowner.
 - ◆ The tax reduction is 50%.
 - ◆ The initial application fee is \$50.00; however, there is no subsequent renewal fee.
 - ◆ There is no recoupment penalty if the land is removed from the program.
- Disadvantages:
 - ◆ The program does not apply in conjunction with the CAUV program. Farmers may receive higher tax benefits by enrolling woodlots in the CAUV program.
 - ◆ A change in ownership requires recertification and reapplication.
 - ◆ The lack of a penalty for withdrawal from the program means there is no disincentive to develop the property or change it to another use.

Land Banking/Outright Purchase

- Initiated by: Governmental entities or private, nonprofit land trusts.
- Description: Selected undeveloped parcels are acquired as a means to discourage speculation and arrest development of sensitive parcels. The land is placed in a “bank” for future disposition. The land is bought in “fee simple,” in other words, all of the rights to the land are purchased and a deed for the property is recorded with the county recorder.
- Advantages:
 - ◆ The entity owning the land has substantial ability to ensure that it is protected, since it holds full title to the property.

- ◆ Land speculation in the affected area may be diminished.
- ◆ If the land is withdrawn from the bank and resold, any increase in value is returned to the community. Restrictions on the land may be included in the deed to ensure that it is protected before it is conveyed.
- Disadvantages:
 - ◆ Such a program may be very expensive to initiate, implement, and maintain. Funding it could be problematic.
 - ◆ Due to cost, not as much land area may be protected as may be the case with an agricultural easement approach.
 - ◆ The land is removed from the tax rolls.
 - ◆ Opposition may arise concerning costs, organization, and property selection criteria.

Land Trusts

- Initiated by: Local citizens.
- Description: A land trust is a private, nonprofit corporation formed for the purpose of protecting and preserving real property. The nonprofit corporate status allows a land trust to take title to real estate or accept donations. Examples of such organizations in Geauga are the Headwaters Land Trust, the Chagrin River Land Conservancy, and the Russell Land Conservancy. At the state and national level, such organizations include the Land Trust Alliance, the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, and the American Farmland Trust. There are various methods available for a land trust to acquire land. These may include agricultural conservation easements, direct purchase in fee simple, life estate plans, and land donations. Once, the land is obtained, the trust is responsible for monitoring it to ensure that the recorded restrictions on the property are maintained.
- Advantages
 - ◆ The program is voluntary.
 - ◆ Prompt response time.
 - ◆ Less regulatory and statutory constraints.
 - ◆ Confidentiality with clients.

- ◆ Tax exempt status.
- ◆ Professional organizational services.
- Disadvantages
 - ◆ Initial start-up costs, legal fees, and organization.
 - ◆ Heavy reliance upon volunteers, particularly at start-up.
 - ◆ Possible lack of funding sources to carry out organizational objectives over a lengthy time span.

Outright Donation

- Initiated by: A property owner, typically in cooperation with a governmental entity or land trust.
- Description: The landowner transfers agricultural land to a governmental entity or to a land trust in the form of a charitable gift. The owner may reserve a life estate as a part of the transfer to ensure that he may remain on the property until death. The landowner may will the property to a land trust as well. Donors should, of course, work closely with the recipient organization and thoroughly review any tax implications of such a transfer before any agreement is reached.
- Advantages:
 - ◆ An outright donation is private and completely voluntary.
 - ◆ Long-term agricultural land protection is assured. Finances needed for acquisition are eliminated and only minor maintenance costs are involved.
 - ◆ Tax benefits may accrue to the donor, such as state and federal income taxes, capital gains, and estate taxes.
- Disadvantages
 - ◆ This tool may have limited usage due to the absence of monetary benefits.
 - ◆ Maintenance and organizational costs exist to manage the property by the recipient organization.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

- Initiated by: A landowner in cooperation with governmental entities or private, nonprofit organizations.
- Description: A property owner has a right under the law to use and develop land (within the scope of applicable zoning and subdivision regulations). Private, nonprofit corporations such as a land trust or a governmental entity may make an offer to acquire the development rights on a parcel of land. The landowner may accept such an offer or may decline it and attempt to negotiate a higher price. However, once an agreement is consummated, a restriction or agricultural conservation easement is placed over the affected land to legally restrict its use and development either in perpetuity or for a specified length of time. The deed restriction or easement is recorded in the office of the county recorder.

A significant reason why farmland is converted to other uses may be that its value as agricultural land is less than its fair market value for development purposes. As an example, a piece of land may generate \$100 per acre annually in agricultural use. Using a procedure known as income capitalization, the value of the land for agricultural purposes may be, for instance, \$2,000 per acre (\$100 divided by the interest rate, for example, 5%). If the same piece of property comes under development pressure, a developer may be willing to pay up to \$5,000 per acre for it. As a result, the development value is \$3,000 per acre or the difference between the market value and the agricultural value. As development pressure mounts, it may become difficult for a farmer to resist selling out to a developer.

However, if an organization is in place to operate a PDR program, then an offer may be made to the farmer to acquire the development rights to the affected land at \$3,000 per acre. This approach is a “win-win” situation for the farmer and the community from the perspective that the landowner is compensated for the development rights to the property (its development potential at the time the offer is made) and the land is kept in agricultural use. The landowner may sell the property or pass it on to his heirs; however, the restriction keeping it in agricultural use remains in place and runs with the land (unless there is a termination or reversion clause). A PDR program then, is a means to address the farmers’ dilemma of being “cash poor” and “land rich.” The farmer need not sell all or parts of a farm to a developer to pay down debt or address other financial needs. The farmer can utilize the PDR funds to buy necessary equipment or livestock to continue the farm operation.

The enabling legislation (S.B. 223) to enact a PDR program was recently passed by the Ohio legislature and signed into law by the governor. It authorized the director of the state department of agriculture, a county, township, municipality, or charitable organization to spend funds to acquire development rights (an agricultural conservation easement) to retain land in agricultural use or obtain such land by gift, devise, or bequest. The new law also created a state “agricultural easement

purchase fund” to provide a mechanism to acquire easements or matching funds to local governmental units to purchase easements. Counties may issue bonds to purchase agricultural easements and levy or increase a sales tax to retire the bonds; or, counties, townships, and municipalities may, by a vote of the electors, issue general obligation bonds or levy a property tax to acquire easements.

In other states where PDR programs have already been organized, a countywide agricultural preservation board is typically appointed, as volunteers, to oversee it. The board may review applications, negotiate agricultural conservation easements, and monitor the program. Such programs have worked most effectively in areas where a comprehensive approach was undertaken to secure large contiguous tracts (a “critical mass”) so as to preserve agriculture as a profitable endeavor. A “piecemeal” technique with smaller tracts may not be as successful. Finally, a long-term view of any PDR program is necessary in order for it to be successful. The experience from other states is that it may take 10 to 15 years for such a program to begin to have an impact. Therefore, a stable source of funding is critical to the success of the program.

- Advantages
 - ◆ It is completely voluntary.
 - ◆ Acquisition costs are generally less (if an easement is obtained) than outright purchase of the land.
 - ◆ Tax liability is generally reduced; however, the land stays on the property tax rolls.
 - ◆ Terms may be flexible and tailored to the affected land.
 - ◆ The program may be operated by a public entity or privately by, for example, a nonprofit land trust.
- Disadvantages
 - ◆ Potential costs.
 - ◆ Possible tax increases (if operated publicly) to raise funds for acquisition and program maintenance (for example, sales taxes or property taxes).
 - ◆ Opposition to private market “interference.”

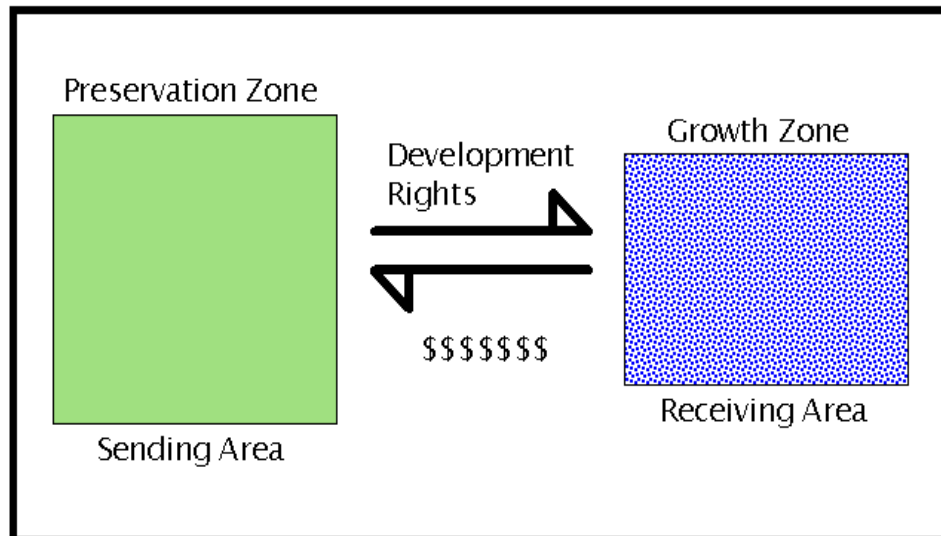
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

- Initiated by: A landowner in cooperation with governmental entities and/or the private sector.

- Description: TDR involves a transfer of the rights to develop a parcel of land from one area (the “sending area”) to another (the “receiving area”) as a means to preserve agricultural land (see Figure 18 below). It should be noted that there is no clear authority under existing Ohio law to establish a local TDR program.

Figure 18

Transfer of Development Rights



Source: OSU Extension Fact Sheet, Transfer of Development Rights

To be effective in preserving farmland, a TDR program should incorporate the following.

- Simplicity
 - ◆ In order to be viable, a TDR program should be readily understandable to public officials, developers, and the public. TDR is a mandatory, not a voluntary, program that requires a strong commitment by political leadership to initiate and implement. It also is important to note that the zoning component must be very stringent and requests for variances, for example, by developers need to be carefully scrutinized so that the process is not short-circuited.
- Growth management
 - ◆ A TDR program must be a part of a comprehensive growth management program that intertwines county, township, and municipal regulations. Close cooperation and coordination must remain in place between the “sending” and “receiving” areas. Those in the preservation (sending) area must be assured that the value of their development rights will be upheld

and those in the development (receiving) area must be willing to make policy and regulatory adjustments (for example, a development density bonus) to accommodate additional growth. Capital improvements must be planned and implemented for sewer, water, roads, and other infrastructure improvements. The impact on the school district may be an important consideration in the development area as well.

- Appropriate incentives
 - ◆ To encourage farmers to participate, they must be assured that their development rights will be recognized and truly reflect the value of the affect land for nonagricultural purposes. In a receiving area, developers may desire a density bonus or other incentives to acquire development rights and build there.
- Program management
 - ◆ A professional office staff must be retained to administer the TDR program.
- Advantages
 - ◆ The exchange of development rights does not involve the sale of real property.
 - ◆ A TDR program may be operated on a public or private basis.
 - ◆ Program costs may be extracted from developers, who pay for development rights to preserve farmland but receive development density bonuses as an incentive to build in receiving areas.
 - ◆ The land is not removed from the tax rolls.
 - ◆ Orderly growth may be promoted, be concentrating development in areas with adequate public services and infrastructure to support it.
 - ◆ A TDR program is market driven.
 - ◆ Landowners in an APZ may retain their equity without developing their land.
- Disadvantages
 - ◆ A TDR program may be very complicated and involves an investment in staff time and resources to effectively implement it.

- ◆ There is no clear statutory authority in Ohio for the establishment of a TDR program.
- ◆ TDR programs have been used sparingly in the United States and seem to work best in more urbanized counties. A lengthy and perhaps expensive public education campaign to explain it to residents is usually needed.
- ◆ Organizing the program and determining sending and receiving areas may be problematic. Current residents in receiving areas may resist higher density development.
- ◆ Equity issues may arise in the determination of development rights and their value.
- ◆ The pace of the program depends on private market demands for development rights. Supply may be greater than demand, particularly if the density is not high enough in the receiving area to create a demand for development rights.

Zoning

- Background

Zoning regulations govern the use of real property. In Geauga County, 15 out of the total 16 townships have zoning in effect. All of the municipalities in the county have adopted zoning regulations as well. As shown on Map 26, the county is broken into various zoning districts. The zoning classification with the most land area is residential. Far smaller amounts of land are zoned for commercial or light industrial uses.

Under Ohio law (O.R.C. Section 519.01), the term “agriculture” is defined, for the purposes of township zoning, as follows: “farming; ranching; aquaculture; apiculture; horticulture; viticulture; animal husbandry, including, but not limited to, the care and raising of livestock, equine, and fur-bearing animals; poultry husbandry and the production of poultry and poultry products; dairy production; the production of field crops, tobacco, fruits, vegetables, nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees, flowers, sod, or mushrooms; timber; pasturage; any combination of the foregoing; the processing, drying, storage, and marketing of agricultural products when those activities are conducted in conjunction with, but are secondary to, such husbandry or production.”

Agriculture and buildings and structures incidental thereto are generally exempt from township zoning regulations per Ohio Revised Code Section 519.21. However, agriculture, subject to certain conditions, may be regulated in platted subdivisions. Farm markets are also allowed in any zoning district within a township, provided that 50 percent or more of the gross income received from the market is derived from produce raised on farms owned or operated by the market operator in a normal crop year.

Townships obtain their power to zone through state enabling legislation (O.R.C. Chapter 519). This power permits township government to protect the health, safety, and morals of residents. Zoning should be based upon a plan, which sets forth the goals and objectives of the community and outlines a course for future growth. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution prohibits government from taking private property for public use without just compensation. Therefore, zoning regulations must allow a private landowner some economically viable use of his land. In addition, the Fourteenth Amendment provides that no state shall “....deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.” Consequently, governmental land use decisions must be justified through careful planning and appropriate zoning regulations.

- Types of Zoning

- ◆ Agricultural Protection Zoning (In General)

- Initiated by: Local government through the township zoning commission and board of township trustees.
 - Description: A zoning regulation is adopted to limit the use of land to agriculture or activities directly related thereto. Density of development is severely restricted in the form of a very large minimum parcel size (for example, 10 acres per lot). Such a lot size should be based upon a study of local agricultural operations to determine the amount of land needed to support a viable farm. In addition, it must be demonstrated that a stringent minimum lot area requirement is rationally related to the promotion of public health and safety. APZ is typically enacted in concert with a PACE program due to the legal implications surrounding “downzoning” real property.
 - Advantages:
 - ❖ Development is controlled.
 - ❖ Land uses incompatible with farming are not permitted.
 - ❖ Enforcement is handled by the township zoning inspector and legal matters through the county prosecutor’s office.
 - ❖ Costs related to delivery of public services are typically lower in such districts and, as a result, taxes are usually less.
 - ❖ The land is not removed from the tax rolls.
 - ❖ Prime agricultural soils may be protected from development.
 - ❖ Land uses that may cause a conflict with farming operations are discouraged.

- ❖ Minimum lot sizes and setbacks may be established to protect farms and to limit the effects of farming on nearby nonfarm landowners.
 - ❖ A zoning district may be devised to form a “critical mass” of land area to ensure the continued viability of farming activities and to provide additional assurance to the public that farmers participating in other agricultural preservation programs, such as PACE, are protected.
- Disadvantages:
- ❖ A township board of zoning appeals may grant variances.
 - ❖ Requests for rezoning by landowners may be filed with the township.
 - ❖ The regulations may be repealed by referendum.
 - ❖ Legal challenges, particularly claims pertaining to a “taking” of real property may be filed when “downzoning” occurs. If such challenges prevail, a township is exposed to potentially significant monetary judgements.
 - ❖ Public costs related to enforcing the regulations may be higher.
 - ❖ Land costs may increase.
 - ❖ There is no protection against annexation by municipalities.
- ◆ Agricultural District Zoning (Quarter/Quarter Zoning)
- Initiated by: Local government through the township zoning commission and the board of township trustees.
 - Description: A zoning regulation is adopted to limit the use of land to agriculture or activities directly related thereto. Development is limited to a single residential lot consisting of one acre per every 40 acres of farmland. The “quarter/quarter” identification is based upon one-fourth of an original tract of 640 acres, which equals 160 acres, and further dividing it by one-fourth, yielding 40 acres. Consequently, a landowner may build, for example, two homes on two acres (one acre per lot) on an 80-acre parcel. Upon dividing the two house lots, the balance of the land is held for agricultural purposes.
 - Advantages:
 - ❖ Development is controlled. Farmland may be “buffered” from encroaching development.

- ❖ Land uses incompatible with farming are not permitted to be scattered throughout the affected site.
- ❖ The township zoning inspector handles enforcement and legal matters are addressed through the county prosecutor's office.
- ❖ Costs related to delivery of public services are typically lower in such districts and, as a result, taxes are usually less.
- ❖ Land prices may be kept at reasonable levels.
- ❖ The land is not removed from the tax rolls.
- Disadvantages:
 - ❖ A township board of zoning appeals may grant variances.
 - ❖ Requests for rezoning by landowners may be filed with the township.
 - ❖ The regulations may be repealed by referendum.
 - ❖ Legal challenges, particularly claims pertaining to a "taking" of real property may be filed when "downzoning" occurs. If such challenges prevail, a township is exposed to potentially significant monetary judgements.
 - ❖ Public costs related to enforcing the regulations may be higher. Careful tracking of lot split activity is important.
 - ❖ Based upon case studies, the quarter/quarter zoning technique seems to work best in very rural areas that are not under intense development pressure.

◆ Agricultural District Zoning (Sliding Scale Zoning)

- Initiated by: Local government through the township zoning commission and the board of township trustees.
- Description: A zoning regulation is adopted to limit the use of land to agriculture or activities directly related thereto. Development is limited depending upon the size of the original parcel. As the size of the original parcel increases, the number of homesites allowed in relationship to the overall acreage decreases. For example, if the parent parcel contains 20 acres or less then one lot split for a home may be allowed, an original parcel with 40 acres or less may have two lot splits, 80 acres and under three lot

splits, and over 80 acres not more than four lot splits for homesites may be permitted.

➤ Advantages:

- ❖ Development is controlled. Farmland may be “buffered” from encroaching development.
- ❖ Land uses incompatible with farming are not permitted to be scattered throughout the affected site.
- ❖ The township zoning inspector handles enforcement and legal matters are addressed through the county prosecutor’s office.
- ❖ Costs related to delivery of public services are typically lower in such districts and, as a result, taxes are usually less.
- ❖ Land prices may be kept at reasonable levels.
- ❖ The land is not removed from the tax rolls.

➤ Disadvantages:

- ❖ A township board of zoning appeals may grant variances.
- ❖ Requests for rezoning by landowners may be filed with the township.
- ❖ The regulations may be repealed by referendum.
- ❖ Legal challenges, particularly claims pertaining to a “taking” of real property may be filed when “downzoning” occurs. If such challenges prevail, a township is exposed to potentially significant monetary judgements.
- ❖ Public costs related to enforcing the regulations may be higher. Careful tracking of lot split activity is important.

◆ Cluster Zoning (also known as Conservation Open Space Zoning)

- Initiated by: Local government through the township zoning commission and the board of township trustees.
- Description: The objective is to “cluster” the development of homesites within a specific area on a parcel and thereby preserve the prime soils for agricultural purposes and keep existing farming operations intact. The cost of providing services (and thereby taxes) is typically less due to the compact

nature of the development. The overall density of development on the site is not changed. For example, if the township zoning requires a minimum lot size of five acres per lot, and the total parcel to be developed is 200 acres, then no more than 40 homesites may be created. Under the cluster option, the minimum lot size may be reduced to, for instance, 2.5 acres and the residual acreage (representing 50% of the total acreage or 100 acres) is placed in common open area for agricultural purposes. The maximum development density has been maintained as well (40 homes on 2.5 acre lots equals 100 acres plus 100 acres of common open farmland equals one dwelling unit per five acres).

➤ Advantages:

- ❖ Farmland is voluntarily protected by the owner/developer and the cost of preserving it is included in the selling price of the lots.
- ❖ Development is controlled. Farmland may be “buffered” from encroaching development and with careful planning, linked together.
- ❖ The farmland is permanently protected by private deed restrictions as well as by zoning regulations.
- ❖ Land uses incompatible with farming are not permitted to be scattered throughout the affected site.
- ❖ The township zoning inspector handles enforcement and legal matters are addressed through the county prosecutor’s office.
- ❖ Costs related to delivery of public services are typically lower in such districts and, as a result, taxes are usually less.
- ❖ Land prices may be kept at reasonable levels.
- ❖ The land is not removed from the tax rolls.

➤ Disadvantages:

- ❖ A township board of zoning appeals may grant variances.
- ❖ Requests for rezoning by landowners may be filed with the township.
- ❖ The regulations may be repealed by referendum.
- ❖ Deed restrictions may not be enforced.
- ❖ Public costs related to enforcing the regulations may be higher.

- ❖ Careful attention must be paid to site design; particularly the installation of on-site-septic systems, replacement areas for such systems, and water well locations. Therefore, the development review process may be extended and be more costly than for a traditional design.
- ❖ Certain farming operations may not be compatible with nearby homes.

Recommendations by County Farmland Preservation Task Force

The Farmland Preservation Task Force met numerous times and developed recommendations as presented herein. While sometimes not unanimous on various points, the consensus of the group is tendered. Some members are concerned with the future need for food and timber production, others are more concerned just with maintaining open space for aesthetic purposes. These recommendations endeavor to provide the basic ideas for the preservation of farmland in Geauga County.

Establish a Farmland Preservation Program That:

- Works to maintain a viable agricultural presence in Geauga County that is mindful of individual private property rights and has community-wide support through positive relationship building and education among residents, farmers, and public officials.
- Supports state and national initiatives that benefit farms; e.g. Inheritance tax changes.
- Continues to promote an understanding of the importance of the agricultural community to Geauga County through support of voluntary methods such as CAUV and agricultural districts. Pursue legislation that continues to support these powerful tools for the agricultural producers' use in helping to maintain their economic viability.
- Encourages public officials to consider the impact of their actions on the vitality of the agricultural industry before making decisions affecting community, economic, and social development in the county, region, and state. Secondly, work to provide effective tools for planning on the local levels of government.
- Designates countywide resources to help increase the appreciation and awareness of the importance of agriculture among the residents of Geauga County. Funds would funnel through such related offices as Community Development, OSU Extension, and Soil and Water Conservation.
- Establishes a staff position to coordinate Geauga County's farmland preservation effort. Community support for this position would come through creation of a voluntary advisory committee to guide efforts to educate:
 - ◆ the farm community
 - ◆ the non-farm community, and
 - ◆ public officials

Responsibilities For A Staff Person As Well As An Advisory Committee For Farmland Preservation Could Include:

- Remaining aware of all efforts to educate; identifying concerns not covered; finding a group who will address the identified need in education. If a piece of the whole were missing, it would be this body that sees to it that this void is addressed.
- Becoming familiar with information sources and their hand-outs, brochures, willingness to speak before groups, etc., so duplication of efforts and costs are lessened and all groups are working toward education in a coordinated manner.
- Disseminating information to member groups so that they do not duplicate efforts as they move toward the common goal of farmland preservation in Geauga County. Maintain an updated list that would help groups know what resources are available.
- Working to provide public news sources with accurate information.
- Helping interested parties apply for grants through Community Development and other local, regional, state, and nation-wide sources, which appreciates the value of local control and voluntary use of those dollars.
- Addressing the marketing issue as an important component of a program designed to protect and maintain agriculture in Geauga County.
- Identifying, recognizing, and developing educational efforts which include knowledgeable understandings between the farming and non-farming community of Geauga County in consideration of the following important issues:
 - ◆ Cost of Community Service/Infrastructure
 - ◆ Quality of Life
 - ◆ Availability of food sources
 - ◆ Profitability for agriculture-beyond the scope of this task force
- Work would acknowledge 3 areas of concentration
 - ◆ Farm Community
 - Build a community spirit of support within the agricultural community.
 - Develop awareness of the increasing need to build good relationships with neighbors and ways to accomplish that.
 - Develop an awareness and appreciation of the look of agriculture now in Geauga County.
 - Increase awareness of the importance of agriculture to Geauga County community and economy.

- Increase the awareness of support resources available to farmers and how to access them, including ideas for diversifying to more acres/income intense crops; distance learning opportunities that a farmer can take advantage of in keeping up with what is happening in marketing, business decision making, more efficient production methods, etc.
- Create awareness of the positive impact all farmers have on the environment.
- Build awareness of ways to permanently or generationally protect their farm voluntarily from development as these ideas are developed and received by the community. This could include PDR, TDR, and LDR. Disseminate current information on the possibilities of using private and public dollars as well as donated options and benefits.
- Develop an awareness of the importance of making agricultural decisions through the 4-sided pyramid screen recognized by the Ohio Farmland Task Force and the Ohio Plant Agriculture Task Force: economic viability, environmental soundness, production efficiency, and public acceptability.

◆ Non-Farm Community

In order to increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of agriculture in Geauga County (and in Ohio) with both adults and school age children in mind:

- Develop a packet of information that is given to each realtor, builder, new resident, social and community organization to pass along to their membership, which includes the topics of
 - ❖ Welcome to the Geauga County countryside where agriculture blends with residential and open space areas to create a positive environment for living a healthy life.”
 - ❖ “Did you know” facts on agriculture in Geauga County
 - ❖ “Can you define a farm?”
 - ❖ “What is acceptable farm behavior?”
 - ❖ Appreciating the difference between a farm and open space
 - ❖ Appreciating the impact agriculture has on a community’s cost of services, including a simple positive explanation of CAUV
 - ❖ A listing of agricultural businesses, farm markets, events
 - ❖ Resources for further information
 - ❖ Awareness of the positive impact farms has on the environment.

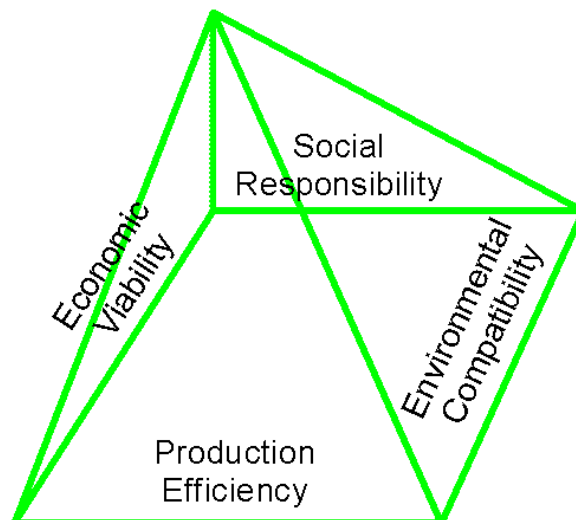
❖ Appreciate that a farm is also a business.

- Plan on-going interactive methods to follow up on this packet of information using rural-urban meetings, events, newspaper articles, internet, video CD's and other publicity; meeting with social and community groups; looking at the Geauga County Fair and any outreach this tool could be.

◆ Public Officials

Work together to:

- Understand the impact agriculture has on the county's economy (including cost of services studies)
- Understand and promote the importance of voluntary means of accomplishing farmland protection including promotion of CAUV and Agriculture districts.
- Continue to dialogue on ways to finance permanent or generational preservation of blocks of farmland through private philanthropy as well as township, county, and state financing, such as PDR, TDR, and LDR.
- Value Farmland Preservation over Open Space.
- Make agricultural programs as a priority in budget: extension and farmland preservation efforts
- Insist that decisions impacting agriculture be screened through the "4-sided pyramid screen" of economic viability, environmental soundness, production efficiency and public acceptability. Regulatory decisions must be based upon sound science.



CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

An examination of survey results taken in nearly all of the townships, as well as a county-wide survey of registered voters conducted in 1998 by the Geauga County Planning Commission in conjunction with Kent State University (KSU), revealed that the respondents overwhelmingly desire to see the rural atmosphere maintained in the county. As a corollary, there is a general consensus that agricultural land preservation is an issue that should be addressed. However, there appears to be disagreement over the implementation of certain preservation programs, particularly if tax dollars are utilized to pay for them. The KSU survey analysis indicated that 59% of the respondents did not wish to see a tax increase of any kind (property, transfer, income, or sales tax) to raise funds to acquire agricultural land or to obtain conservation easements over real property to preserve it for farming. It would appear that local officials should examine economic development issues, voluntary incentives, the enhancement of existing programs, continuing education, and private sector initiatives as methods to promote and preserve agriculture in Geauga County. If funding becomes available for the initiation of a farmland acquisition or PACE program, the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) map (see Map 39) and Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) criteria (see appendix) should be used as a guide.

Agricultural Security Areas (ASA's)

Agricultural Security Areas (ASA's) are locations where farmland preservation activities are encouraged. Map 39 was used as a guide in determining such areas. Parcels currently in the CAUV program, an Agricultural District, and the Forestry Tax program were mapped. These parcels were overlaid on the prime agricultural soils identified in the county soil survey. Map 39 revealed that the highest concentration of farms enrolled in the CAUV, Agricultural District, and Forestry Tax programs appeared to be in the southeasterly portion of the county (Parkman and Middlefield Townships). Several other areas depicted on the map had similar concentrations, but were smaller in size.

Map 40, identified as "Generalized Agricultural Security Areas," was devised taking into consideration the following items (Map 39 in particular was used as a reference tool).

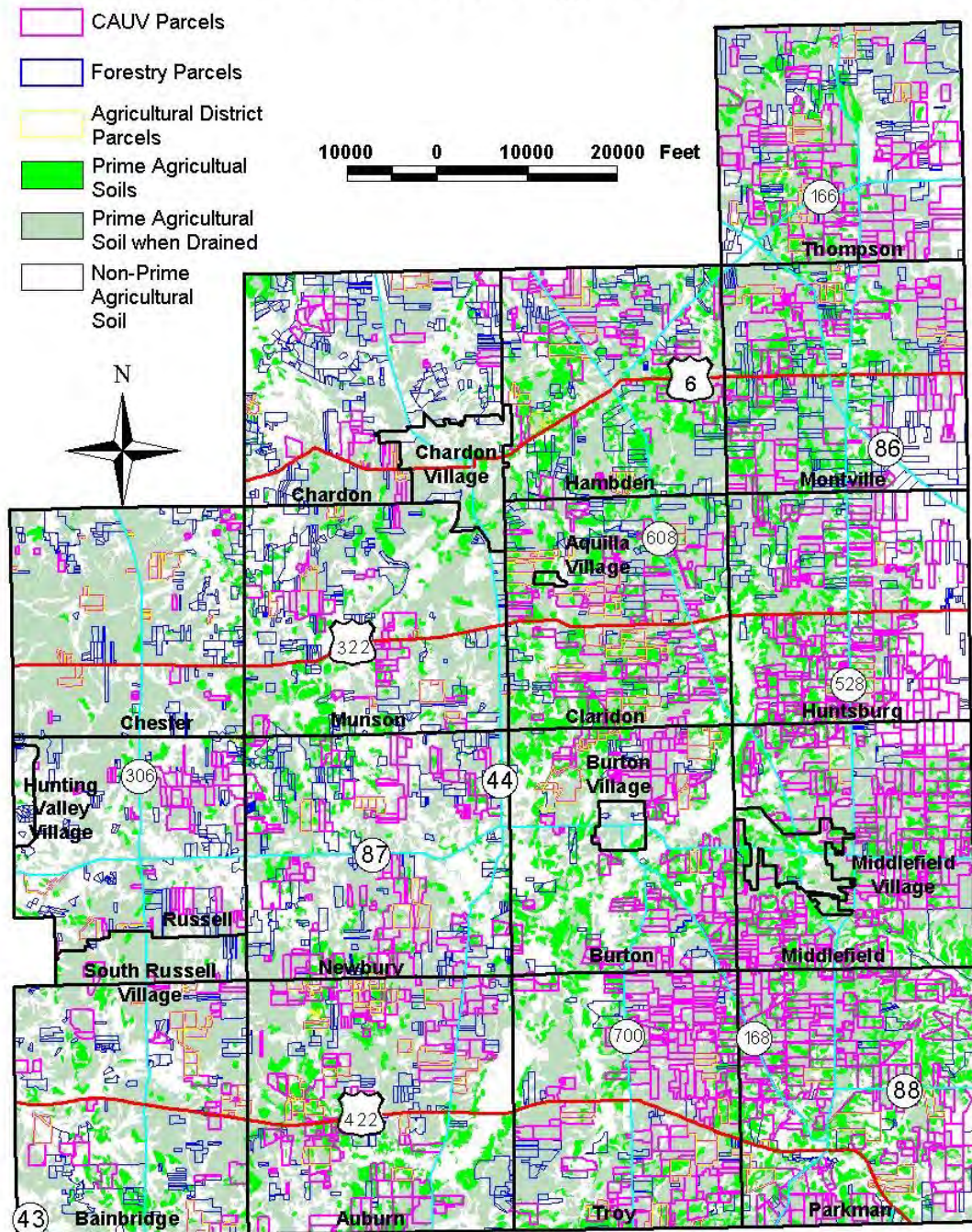
- The affected area must be enrolled in the CAUV program, an Agricultural District, or the Forestry Tax program pursuant to Ohio law.
- An ASA should include about 200 contiguous acres or more of prime agricultural land. Such land may encompass more than one parcel and may be under more than one ownership.

- Zoning regulations (if any) should permit agricultural activities

It should be stressed that the ASA's shown on Map 40 represent generalized locations. The map is meant as a reference guide only and is subject to amendment. If a farmland preservation program is established in the county, a more detailed examination of ASA's should be undertaken on a parcel level basis. The voluntary cooperation of the affected land owner(s) is an obvious consideration. In addition, a scoring system (such as the LESA program or some derivative) should be devised to refine the ASA's in the county.

Map 39

Geauga County Agricultural District, CAUV, & Forestry Program Parcels With Prime Agricultural Soils

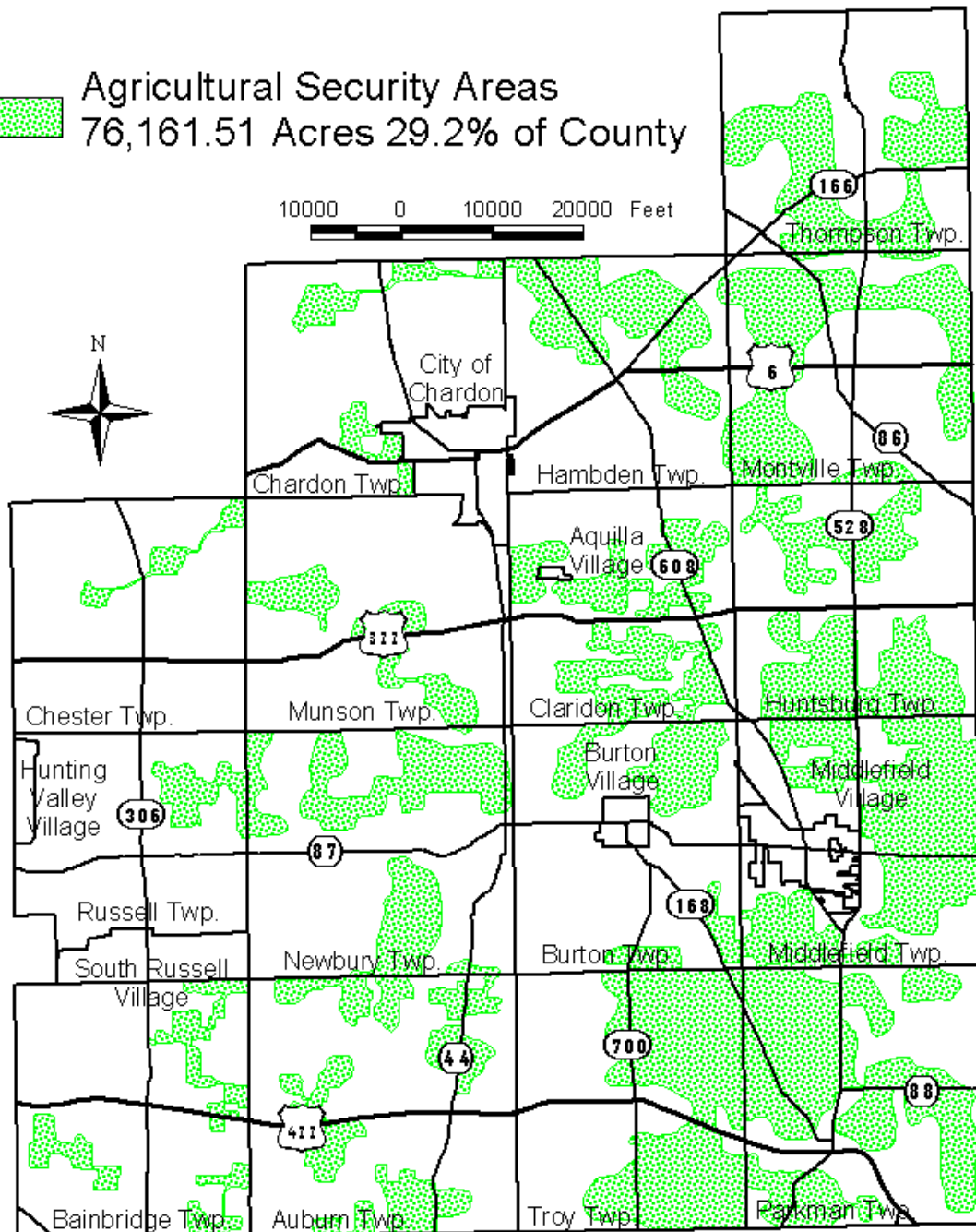


Source: Geauga County Auditor's Office
Prepared by: Geauga County Planning Commission 10/20/99

Map 40

Geauga County Generalized Agricultural Security Areas

 Agricultural Security Areas
76,161.51 Acres 29.2% of County



Source: Geauga County Soil Survey 1982
Prepared by: Geauga County Planning Commission 2003

Recommendations

No single program or tool may achieve farmland protection goals in the county. A protection program should be in accord with the desires of the community and its landowners, the status of farming in the area, and a clear strategy on which land to preserve and how to do so. Farmland preservation should be focused not simply on saving land from development, but on ensuring that agriculture is a profitable venture that enhances the local economic base. Lastly, farmland protection is a long-term process. It may take many years of careful planning, public and private investment, and most of all landowner support to be successful.

As shown through the COCS study included in this report, (see Appendix) the conversion of active farmland into residential development places a financial burden on a community. Growth needs to occur carefully, taking into consideration the impacts on property taxes, schools, safety forces, roads and other infrastructure. Growth management, however, does involve costs. If farmers keep their land undeveloped, they may need a package of financial and other incentives to do so. Regulations and other land use controls must be compatible with the business of farming as well.

The following is a menu of recommendations for consideration. The recommendations of the Geauga Farmland Task Force are provided as well, beginning on page VI-1.

Education

- Provide concise statistics in the form of an article, a pamphlet, or brochure to the general public relative to the economic impacts and benefits of agriculture in the county.
- Convey information to the general public about farming activities in the county. Work with the media on creating a series of articles in the local newspapers and/or formulate a website about area farmers—what they grow or raise and how they market their products or livestock.
- Encourage coexistence between farmers and nonfarmers by periodically offering programs on farming methods and impacts.
- Work with local law enforcement personnel on chronic nuisance issues such as trespassing and vandalism of crops, etc. Educate neighbors to be cognizant of such criminal activities and promptly report it to authorities.
- Invite farmers to local schools to describe their work, its importance to the community, and the need to protect farmland.
- Conduct seminars on existing programs including CAUV, Agricultural Districts, and the Forestry Tax.

- Encourage farmers to examine the benefits of estate tax planning and have experts provide forums on this issue. (For example, the federal estate tax rate is 37% and up on an estate valued at over \$600,000).

Public Sector Initiatives

- Encourage farmers to sign-up for the CAUV, Agricultural District, and Forestry Tax programs through the County Auditor's Office.
- Examine land use and zoning regulations. COCS criteria should be considered, particularly when an application to rezone real property is under review. Proposed state enabling legislation should be supported that promotes comprehensive planning and gives local political subdivisions the means to devise regulations to protect agriculture and to guide growth toward urban areas.
- Specific service area plans for central sanitary sewer and water facilities, as a means to control and manage growth, should be adopted and enforced. ASA's should be recognized as a component in preparing such plans.
- Township land use plans should identify key agricultural security areas and avoid the extension of infrastructure into such locations, while guiding development towards zones where it may be supported.
- Local and regional officials should carefully examine the impacts of transportation projects, particularly any new road corridors, on development in general and agriculture in particular.
- Be prepared to apply for any potential state or federal grant funding pertaining to, for example, the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements, utilizing the ASA map and LESA criteria as a guide.
- The NRCS, Geauga SWCD, and the County Extension Service should give program priority to farms within ASA's.
- Consider establishing a local farmland preservation office with an agricultural advisory committee to assist in implementation of the recommendations set forth in the plan.
- Promote economic development initiatives within the agricultural industry.
- Initiate an exploratory study of various funding sources for a local PDR program. In order to capitalize on state and federal acquisition programs, local matching funds may be necessary.

Private Sector Initiatives

- Study the feasibility of forming a local non-profit land trust for the purpose of receiving voluntary donations of land or easements for agricultural preservation.
- Local suppliers and farm related businesses should consider forming an organization to convey to elected officials and to the general public the positive impacts of agriculture on the local economy as well as the food and fiber chain.
- Local farmers, through private organizations such as the Farm Bureau, may examine ways to promote agriculture, increase profitability, and elevate the overall level of importance of farming in the county from an economic, political, and social perspective. Maintaining the semi-rural atmosphere treasured by residents is largely dependent upon the success of agriculture.
- Economic development initiatives should be examined by farmers, such as:
 - ◆ Promoting the sale of locally grown food.
 - ❖ Explore establishing hotlines and websites to offer information to consumers on where to buy produce.
 - ❖ Hold special events (such as “Farm Appreciation Days” sponsored by the Northeast Ohio Family Farms organization or other programs through the Geauga Growers Association).
 - ❖ Enhance coops to directly market produce.
 - ◆ Loans for beginning or high-risk farmers. For example, the Family Farm Loan Program through the Ohio Department of Agriculture.
 - ◆ Creation of a directory of local suppliers and others involved with agricultural activities as a means to network and enhance marketing efforts.
 - ◆ Formulating farm enterprise zones.
- Support the formation of a local farmland preservation office to be staffed by interested volunteers.
- Examine the implementation of a “farm link” program to connect farmers who may be contemplating retirement with other farmers interested in start-up operations.

CHAPTER VI
RECOMMENDATIONS
BY
COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION TASK FORCE

Preface

The Farmland Preservation Task Force met numerous times and developed recommendations as presented herein. While sometimes not unanimous on various points, the consensus of the group is tendered. Some members are concerned with the future need for food and timber production, others are more concerned just with maintaining open space for aesthetic purposes. These recommendations endeavor to provide the basic ideas for the preservation of farmland in Geauga County.

ESTABLISH A FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM THAT:

- 1) Works to maintain a viable agricultural presence in Geauga County that is mindful of individual private property rights and has community-wide support through positive relationship building and education among residents, farmers, and public officials.
- 2) Supports state and national initiatives that benefit farms; e.g. Inheritance tax changes.
- 3) Continues to promote an understanding of the importance of the agricultural community to Geauga County through support of voluntary methods such as CAUV and agricultural districts. Pursue legislation that continues to support these powerful tools for the agricultural producers' use in helping to maintain their economic viability.
- 4) Encourages public officials to consider the impact of their actions on the vitality of the agricultural industry before making decisions affecting community, economic, and social development in the county, region, and state. Secondly, work to provide effective tools for planning on the local levels of government.
- 5) Designates countywide resources to help increase the appreciation and awareness of the importance of agriculture among the residents of Geauga County. Funds would funnel through such related offices as Community Development, OSU Extension, and Soil and Water Conservation.
- 6) Establishes a staff position to coordinate Geauga County's farmland preservation effort. Community support for this position would come through creation of a voluntary advisory committee to guide efforts to educate:

- a) the farm community
- b) the non-farm community, and
- c) public officials.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR A STAFF PERSON AS WELL AS AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION COULD INCLUDE:

- A. Remaining aware of all efforts to educate; identifying concerns not covered; finding a group who will address the identified need in education. If a piece of the whole were missing, it would be this body that sees to it that this void is addressed.
- B. Becoming familiar with information sources and their hand-outs, brochures, willingness to speak before groups, etc., so duplication of efforts and costs are lessened and all groups are working toward education in a coordinated manner.
- C. Disseminating information to member groups so that they do not duplicate efforts as they move toward the common goal of farmland preservation in Geauga County. Maintain an updated list that would help groups know what resources are available.
- D. Working to provide public news sources with accurate information.
- E. Helping interested parties apply for grants through Community Development and other local, regional, state, and nation-wide sources, which appreciates the value of local control and voluntary use of those dollars.
- F. Addressing the marketing issue as an important component of a program designed to protect and maintain agriculture in Geauga County.
- G. Identifying, recognizing, and developing educational efforts which include knowledgeable understandings between the farming and non-farming community of Geauga County in consideration of the following important issues:
 - 1. Cost of Community Service/Infrastructure
 - 2. Quality of Life
 - 3. Availability of food sources
 - 4. Profitability for agriculture—beyond the scope of this task force
- H. Work would acknowledge 3 areas of concentration
 - 1. Farm Community
 - a. Build a community spirit of support within the agricultural community.
 - b. Develop awareness of the increasing need to build good relationships with neighbors and ways to accomplish that.

- c. Develop an awareness and appreciation of the look of agriculture now in Geauga County.
- d. Increase awareness of the importance of agriculture to Geauga County community and economy.
- e. Increase the awareness of support resources available to farmers and how to access them, including ideas for diversifying to more acres/income intense crops; distance learning opportunities that a farmer can take advantage of in keeping up with what is happening in marketing, business decision making, more efficient production methods, etc.
- f. Create awareness of the positive impact all farmers have on the environment.
- g. Build awareness of ways to permanently or generationally protect their farm voluntarily from development as these ideas are developed and received by the community. This could include PDR, TDR, and LDR. Disseminate current information on the possibilities of using private and public dollars as well as donated options and benefits.
- h. Develop an awareness of the importance of making agricultural decisions through the 4-sided pyramid screen recognized by the Ohio Farmland Task Force and the Ohio Plant Agriculture Task Force: economic viability, environmental soundness, production efficiency, and public acceptability.

2. Non-Farm Community

In order to increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of agriculture in Geauga County (and in Ohio) with both adults and school age children in mind:

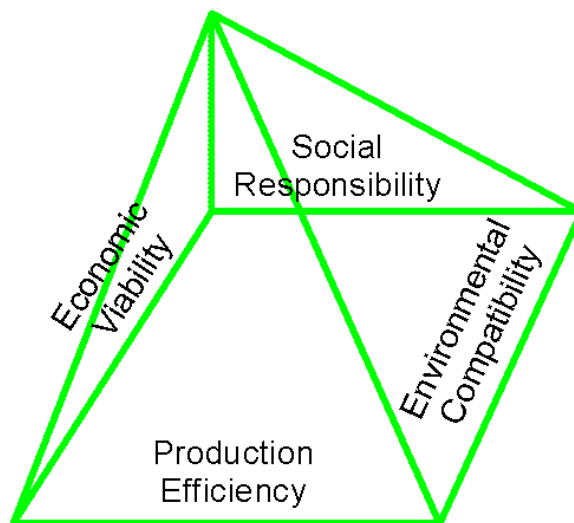
- a. Develop a packet of information that is given to each realtor, builder, new resident, social and community organization to pass along to their membership, which includes the topics of
 - 1. Welcome to the Geauga County countryside where agriculture blends with residential and open space areas to create a positive environment for living a healthy life.”
 - 2. “Did you know” facts on agriculture in Geauga County
 - 3. “Can you define a farm?”
 - 4. “What is acceptable farm behavior?”
 - 5. Appreciating the difference between a farm and open space
 - 6. Appreciating the impact agriculture has on a community’s cost of services, including a simple positive explanation of CAUV
 - 7. A listing of agricultural businesses, farm markets, events
 - 8. Resources for further information
 - 9. Awareness of the positive impact farms has on the environment.
 - 10. Appreciate that a farm is also a business.

- b. Plan on-going interactive methods to follow up on this packet of information using rural-urban meetings, events, newspaper articles, internet, video CD's and other publicity; meeting with social and community groups; looking at the Geauga County Fair and any outreach this tool could be.

3. Public Officials

Work together to:

- a. Understand the impact agriculture has on the county's economy (including cost of services studies)
- b. Understand and promote the importance of voluntary means of accomplishing farmland protection including promotion of CAUV and Agriculture districts.
- c. Continue to dialogue on ways to finance permanent or generational preservation of blocks of farmland through private philanthropy as well as township, county, and state financing, such as PDR, TDR, and LDR.
- d. Value Farmland Preservation over Open Space.
- e. Make agricultural programs as a priority in budget: extension and farmland preservation efforts
- f. Insist that decisions impacting agriculture be screened through the "4-sided pyramid screen" of economic viability, environmental soundness, production efficiency and public acceptability. Regulatory decisions must be based upon sound science.



Subcommittee Reports

The Farmland Preservation Task Force was divided into three subcommittees: public support, private tools, and education (and its role in preserving farmland). The following is the commentary and documentation from each subcommittee.

PUBLICLY SUPPORTED WAYS TO PRESERVE FARMLAND

1. Formation of a countywide Agricultural Land Trust that will be able to accept easements on farmland in Geauga County. Initially these easements would be donated, but the trust should be set up to have the authority to purchase easements in the future if funding would become available. We suggest that possibly the Geauga SWCD administer this land trust for the following reasons: 1) They currently hold easements and are familiar with the easement process, 2) Preserving farmland goes hand in hand with protecting our soil and water resources, 3) They are a county funded agency. We suggest that the commissioners provide funding to Geauga SWCD for the additional administrative and support services that will be needed for this Land Trust. A separate Farmland Preservation Board could be established to guide the staff members that would be directly involved with this program.
2. New purchases of farmland could be eligible for a 100% property tax abatement if the new owner will agree to keep the land in farming for 10 years. A system similar to CAUV could be used if the land comes out of agriculture before the 10-year period is expired (A program like this is used in New York).
3. The county should establish agricultural security areas that would be included in the county comprehensive land use plan. These would be areas where the county would encourage agriculture. These areas could be the only areas eligible for the tax abatement listed in #2.
4. All county agencies should take into consideration the impact that their actions and future plans will have on agriculture in the county. This charge should be similar to the one that all state agencies now have to follow.
5. The County Community and Economic Development office should recognize agriculture as an industry in the county and include the retention and expansion of agriculture in its efforts along with the other industries in the county.
6. The County Commissioners could help to support, in conjunction with OSU Extension and SWCD, educational programs to help residents understand the importance of agriculture to not only the quality of life in the county, but also to the fiscal benefits of having farms in the community (Cost of Community Services Issues).

7. Finally at some future time, after the above mentioned options are investigated and if there is indication that the residents of Geauga County are supportive of preserving farmland, a PDR program should be investigated to allow the protection of the greatest amount of farmland in the county.
8. Encourage local townships to adopt alternative zoning practices that can help to maintain the availability of open land for agriculture.

These suggestions include both funded programs as well as non-funded ways that the county government and agencies could work towards preserving farmland and agriculture in Geauga County.

PRIVATE TOOLS

The land we are concerned with is the remaining prime agricultural land that already has not been converted to some use other than agricultural. It may now or in the future be crop or pasture land, in timber, or vacant. The concern is that the land be kept available for future food/fibre production. Proper maps have been requested to determine which land this is.

The program consists of retiring of developmental rights from certain pieces of property whether it be by donation, purchase, or trading of those rights.

This raises several questions:

1. Who determines the developmental values of the farmland and the agricultural value of the same land?
2. Should the developmental rights be obtained for the whole property or only that portion designated prime?
3. Would frontage lots be allowed?

Private financing could be obtained from donations (both of the rights and of money) and from philanthropic and conservancy organizations.

Requirements include the land being kept in production or land bank state. Development rights could be repurchased at the then current value. Should there be a time requirement or penalty?

Needed legislation:

1. State help with cost.
2. Agricultural tax relief—as a 1%/an reduction in taxes for each year the farm remains in the family and keeps it in production or land bank.

3. Eliminate the inheritance tax.
4. Allow the trading of development rights.
5. Allow better zoning.

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE EFFORT TO PRESERVE FARMLAND IN GEAUGA COUNTY

- 1) Work to maintain a viable agricultural presence in Geauga County that is mindful of individual private property rights and has community-wide support through positive relationship building and education among residents, farmers, and public officials.
- 2) Continue to promote an understanding of the importance of the agricultural community to Geauga County through support of voluntary methods such as CAUV and agricultural districts.
- 3) Designate county-wide resources to help increase the appreciation and awareness of the importance of agriculture among the residents of Geauga County. Funds would funnel through such related offices as Community Development, OSU Extension, and Soil and Water Conservation.
- 4) Create an advisory committee to coordinate education of
 - a) the public (adult and school age),
 - b) persons interested and involved in agriculture including farmers and
 - c) public officials.

Responsibilities would include:

- A. Remaining aware of all efforts to educate; identifying concerns not covered; finding a group who will address the identified need in education. If a “piece” of the whole is missing, it would be this body that sees to it that this void is addressed.
- B. Becoming familiar with information sources and their hand-outs, brochures, willingness to speak before groups, etc., so duplication of efforts and costs are somehow lessened and all groups are working toward “education” in a coordinated manner.
- C. Disseminating information to member groups so that they are not “re-inventing the wheel” as they move toward the common goal of farmland preservation in Geauga County. It would be this constantly updated “list” that would help groups know what is available.

- D. Monitoring information that is disseminated for accuracy and duplication of effort. It would be responsible for intercepting reckless journalism which promotes ideas that are premature, not yet researched and validated for Geauga County and, if possible, presenting the “other” factual side.
- E. Helping interested parties apply for grants through Community Development and other local, regional, state and nation-wide sources emphasizing the importance of maintaining local control servicing voluntary actions and interests.
- F. Evaluating the employment of a “marketing” agent (possibly through Extension) to help farmers either collectively or individually as desired increase their “presence” through interaction of farmers and citizenry in a way that the cost is not borne by the farmer; rather, support is sponsored and desired by the entire community.
- G. Identifying, recognizing and developing educational efforts which include knowledgeable understandings between the farming and non-farming community of Geauga County in consideration of the following important issues:
 - 1. Cost of Community Service/Infrastructure
 - 2. Quality of Life
 - 3. Availability of food sources
 - 4. Profitability for agriculture

For Farmers

- 1. Build a “community spirit” of support within the agricultural community;
- 2. Develop awareness of the increasing need to build good relationships with neighbors and ways to accomplish that;
- 3. Develop an awareness and appreciation of the “look” of agriculture now in Geauga County;
- 4. Increase awareness of the importance of agriculture to Geauga County community and economy;
- 5. Increase the awareness of support resources available to farmers and how to access them, including ideas for diversifying to more acres/income intense crops; distance learning opportunities that a farmer can (or eventually can) take advantage of in keeping up with what is happening in marketing, business decision making, more efficient production methods, etc.

6. Create awareness of the positive impact farmers, be they big or small, part-time or full-time, have on the environment;
7. Build awareness of ways to permanently or generationally protect their farm voluntarily from development as these ideas are developed and embraced by the community. Disseminate current information on the possibilities of using private and public dollars as well as donated options and benefits.
8. Develop an awareness of the importance of making agricultural decisions through the 4-sided pyramid screen recognized by the Ohio Farmland Task Force and the Ohio Plant Agriculture Task Force: economic viability, environmental soundness, production efficiency and public acceptability.

For Residents

In order to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of agriculture in Geauga County (and in Ohio) with both adults and school age children in mind:

1. Develop a packet of information that is given to each realtor, builder, new resident, social and community organization to pass along to their membership which includes the topics of
 - a. "Welcome to the Geauga County countryside where agriculture blends with residential and open space areas to create a positive environment for living a healthy life."
 - b. "Did you know" facts on agriculture in Geauga County
 - c. "Can you distinguish a farm"
 - d. "What is acceptable farm behavior?"
 - e. Appreciating the difference between a farm and open space
 - f. Appreciating the impact agriculture has on a community's cost of services, including a simple positive explanation of CAUV
 - g. A listing of agricultural businesses, farm markets, events
 - h. Resources for further information
 - i. Awareness of the positive impact farmers, be they big or small, part-time or full-time, have on the environment. A farm is also a business.
2. Plan on-going interactive methods to follow up on this "packet" of information using rural-urban meetings, events, newspaper articles and other publicity, meeting with social and community groups, looking at the Geauga County Fair and any outreach this tool could be.

For Government Officials

Work together to:

1. Understand the impact agriculture has on the county's economy (including cost of services studies)
2. Promote the importance of voluntary means of accomplishing farmland protection including promotion of CAUV and ag districts
3. Continue to dialogue on ways to finance permanent or generation blocks of farmland preservation through private philanthropy, township, county state-wide financing
4. Continue to understand the differences between open space and agricultural preservation
5. Keep agricultural interests as a priority in budget considerations; e.g. extension programs, coordination of efforts between agricultural groups and the public for education purposes including viability of agriculture as well as awareness of agricultural programming and the effect of community development on this.
6. Insist that decisions impacting agriculture be screened through the 4-sided pyramid of economic viability, environmental soundness, and production efficiency and public acceptability. Regulatory decisions must be based upon sound science.

Support Commentary and Documentation for Education Portion of the Geauga County Farmland Task Force Report

Marketing of Agriculture

Working with farmers to provide tour and experiences on the farm for interactive relationship building is an example. The cost is at either end—to the farmer and, if in the case of school groups, to the school and/or children. Cleveland schools typically are financially strapped to cover these costs leaving either no opportunities or a farmer absorbing the cost. Liability concerns as well as little training in handling groups and educational delivery of a message also keep the agricultural community from being enthusiastic about rural-urban interfacing on their farms.

Suggested Members of Educational Committee

Community Development office, OSU Extension, Farmland Preservation group, Farm Bureau, Soil and Water Conservation Office, Grange, Ruritan. Groups such as Middlefield Cheese, Great Lakes Cheese and Western Reserve Farm Coop may like to become a partner in this group as well. Private trust groups such as the American Farmland Trust and more local and regional efforts could be members on a consulting basis if not regular members.

Suggested Questions to be Addressed by This Committee

Questions and decisions to be addressed by this group include: what does each group bring as resources both financial and material; what is the overlap of membership and outreach; build a time-line of first things first; divide goals using each group's strengths; meet on regular basis to strengthen communication—react to progress and assess goals as time moves along.

Follow-up on Statistical Report and Questionnaire with Farmers

Ascertain if the following assumption is correct then address the following questions: "Agriculture contributes \$18 million value of ag crops (\$9 million in livestock and products and \$9 million in crops to the Geauga County economy with 661 farms, 531 harvested cropland with 519 having income of \$25,000 or less. Average of all farms size is 90 acres. Average income for all is \$23,000. Looks like 285 have farming as their principal occupation which is 55 fewer than 1992 (5 years). 376 farmers do something off the farm (94 more than 5 years ago) and 286 spend more than 200 days off farm". Taken from 1997 Ohio Agricultural Statistics Report

- Question: CAUV and off farm income is keeping smaller farms in operation. It is these farms that also probably are the ones that the average resident (especially western Geauga County) sees as the "farm" that makes this county "country". Is this "look" misleading when we look at the economic picture of agriculture in Geauga County? The bulk of income comes from a small number of larger farms. Are we doing what we should to help those farmers who look at agriculture as a business first, way of life second? Think again, of distance learning opportunities, seminars that are specific to sophisticated and timely updates and education on an advanced level from the perspective of economics. Build an awareness of the pyramid through which agricultural decisions should be made: economic viability, environmental soundness, production efficiency and public acceptability.
- Question: Do we know what the statistics would look like without the Amish population and will the Amish population involve themselves in any programs we might develop?
- Question: Once we have defined the understanding of factors attributing to the change in look of agriculture in Geauga County, ask if there is something we can do to help?
 - 1) rural-urban relations (abuse of open fields with snowmobilers, dumping trash, impatience with moving equipment along highways, complaints of activity in early morning or late evening, complaints of odors, putting up buildings that are necessary to continued business
 - 2) economics, a) getting price needed for products to stay in business, b) having any one to buy the farm with or without the support of a preserved farm status (rural youth not feeling it is possible to come back and farm the way they want to farm—not everyone wants to grow vegetables, c) concern that the "rules" may change as move through what is perceived as "infinity" in preserving a farm into perpetuity.

- 3) Competition in perceived sources of fresh food—food is everywhere (Marc's even): does population support “fresh” as local, quick from field to table to lessen the loss of nutrient values, understand the importance of dealing with food safety issues only as research-based on science rather than emotion, nostalgia? Have trips to the country become a once a year or occasional adventure and “something to do” only with the bonus of bringing home fresh produce rather than their reason for the trip. Will urban lifestyle changes affect our viability even though we have the ultimate plus in our wonderful location close to the Cleveland area?
- 4) Skeptical farmers when it comes to farmland preservation. Tying the hands of those who would stay by preserving forever. Making a commitment for a length of time (a generational commitment seems far more likely—no repay. No holds. One commitment ends and another one can begin. Start from scratch. Will the community still be interested enough in 30 years to support a farm? It becomes a way that those who want to see agriculture stay can work with the farmers to “make their case” and try to get the buy-in of the community. Yet does not leave the farmer “holding the bag”, especially when concerned that regulation and rules may change.)
- 5) Will a community really still love a farmer if he decides to have pigs, chickens. Who will be the decision-maker—the farmer who wishes to remain a farmer or the community? Does a farmer think of this as a private property rights issue while the community sees it as their right to decide and set the “rules”.
- 6) Estate tax issues will need to be resolved statewide and nationally before the economic issue is ever resolved.
- 7) Others?

Farm Community

To help build good neighbor relations, consider:

- a. use fencing to indicate boundaries of fields
- b. if prudent, use guard dogs to protect from predators
- c. ask neighbors to please inform you when they are intending to have a special event so spreading of manure at an appropriate time doing the work in the most environmental manner so nutrients reabsorbed by the crops
- d. avoid spreading operations of Fridays or just before holidays
- e. manure injection and proper storage can reduce or eliminate “run-off”, problems and greatly reduce odor
- f. never move equipment of public roads during rush hour
- g. keep equipment clean and operational condition to minimize dropping/manure on highway

Non-Farm Community

“Did you know” facts on agriculture in Geauga County.

- a) The need of spreading manure and knowing the odors will decrease in a few days.
- b) Farmers plant/harvest within a narrow window of time. When weather and crops are ready it will undoubtedly mean that within this time slot the farmer will be working from early dawn until long into the night. Movement of equipment is often necessary while serving alternate fields. This may entail traffic problems, dust and some noise.

“What is acceptable farm behavior?”

- a) If you are invited to visit the farm, clear with owner about any petting or feeding of animals.
- b) Never make sudden motions
- c) Stay away from farm machinery
- d) Closely supervise children
- e) Inquire how and what farm animals are fed, cared for and handled
- f) How the farm's growing season is going
- g) Show interest in their farming problems
- h) Express your pleasure of their being a good neighbor or being a good host.

Appreciating the difference between a farm and open space

- a) Do not trespass farmland without permission
- b) Control your pets, so doing will protect the farm animals. Hunting endangers livestock
- c) During planting and harvesting time, be cautious driving
- d) Reduce speed in hilly areas or when machinery is slow moving.
- e) Pass only with extreme caution.

Appreciating the impact agriculture has on a community's cost of services, including a simple positive explanation of CAUV.

- a) Smaller schools (better ratio of teacher to student)
- b) Less bus service, less maintenance, lower taxes, plus better opportunity for learning. Also closer student teacher relationships.
- c) Environmental impact:
Ground water recharge, surface water run-off, in requiring less services, roads, schools, fire protection, police resulting in less crime, less air pollution, less noise level, better quality of life and scenic enhancement.
- d) Infrastructure:
Less septic tanks, sewer and water plants. Fewer roads for county responsibility, reductions of maintenance and liability cost.

For all involved:

Settlement, Negotiate, Conflict and Compromise

- 1) Listen and define problems and research the pros and cons
- 2) Work together to reach an agreement
- 3) Check on how the solution is working
- 4) If things are not working and the other person is not living up to the agreement—try once more?
- 5) Consider legal action only after all else has failed. Remember you will be living next door to one another for a long time.

“Government Officials”

Understand the impact agriculture has on the county’s economy (including cost of services studies)

Taxes: It has been analytically shown that for every \$1.00 of residential tax paid \$1.54 is consumed for required service. (Included: education, health, human services, police, fire and public works.) This amounts to 54% more cost than what is provided.

For farms the \$1.00 tax paid only \$.34 is needed to cover the same services. In comparison this means 66% of that tax dollar can be used to subsidize the residential short fall for the above listed services.

Conclusion: Residential growth is a “tax consumer”
Farmland growth is a “tax generator”

Consequently, establishing a substantial tax base with rural school districts of smaller numbers and reflecting a lower tax base.

Keep agricultural interests as a priority in budget considerations...agricultural programming:

Nutritional information including

- a) (i.e.) Nutritional values of vegetables and herbs reflect the content of the minerals and nutrients with the composition of the soil in which they are grown.
- b) All fresh/processed farm produce will reflect nutritional values in relationship to the soil in which they are grown.
- c) Loss of nutrients in vegetables and herbs is in ratio of time from harvest to the dinner plate.
 - i) highest nutritional value
 - ii) farm fresh directly to the dinner plate

- iii) store purchased, flash frozen produce (frozen has the advantage of being processed quickly and so retaining the highest percentage of food value)
- iv) store purchased can produce next choice

Notes

Geauga has prime soil which accounts for a high mineral/nutrient quality, quick accessibly to the consumer demands top value in content.

Many Geauga residents will travel miles to Cleveland Central/Westside markets just to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables—possibly grown locally. However, much has been “shipped-in” and you have no idea how long it has been in transit. Perhaps we should think about enlarging the Middlefield market idea.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Agriculture plays a vital role in Geauga County. Over 67% of the county is rated as prime farmland. Out of a grand total of 260,480 acres in the county, 66,474 acres or 25.5% is in farms according to the latest agricultural census data (2002). As of 2007 about 66,977 acres are enrolled in the CAUV program.

The types of agricultural activities in the county are changing. The continuing development activity outside of the municipal corporations in the county may have the effect of diminishing the role of traditional agriculture (raising feed and livestock) and replacing it with more direct marketing of produce and related items (fruits, vegetables, and nursery stock). In order for farmers to survive, they must adapt to the demands of the private market.

Private and public sector cooperation will be needed to curb agricultural disinvestment in the county and to ensure that farming remains a viable economic activity. Towards that end, the following general concepts are offered for consideration and guidance.

- **Geauga County's agricultural industry should be recognized for its contribution to the local and regional economy.** Public policy should encourage the protection and promotion of farming as a business. This may be accomplished through increased public/private sector cooperation, educational outreach, and enhanced marketing and economic development efforts.
- **The business climate for agriculture should be improved.** Obsolete regulations must be repealed or amended. Taxes and fees should be examined. Reporting and permitting processes may be streamlined. Funding for agricultural businesses should be encouraged through the state of Ohio.
- **Agricultural research and development activities should be advanced.** U.S. consumers enjoy the lowest cost of food in the world (about 14% of disposable income). If this is to continue, governmental research needs to be closely linked to industry needs.
- **Educational outreach is critical.** Both the public and private sectors need to have a better understanding of agricultural issues so that rational decisions may be made concerning use of resources, environmental policies, and basic farm management. The general public must be made aware of the ongoing transition of agriculture from traditional "cow and plow" operations to that of a high technology industry.
- **A mix of tools may be needed to preserve prime farmland.** Voluntary efforts to protect agricultural land are preferable. However, it should be recognized that if farming becomes unprofitable and development pressure continues to increase, conversion to other land uses may be inevitable and irreversible.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

A. GLOSSARY.....	A-1
B. FARMLAND PROTECTION ACTIVITIES BY STATE.....	B-1
C. OVERVIEW OF AMENDED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 223.....	C-1
1. Purchasing Agricultural Easements.....	C-2
2. Acquiring Agricultural Easements By Gift, Devise or Bequest.....	C-4
3. Supervising and Enforcing Agricultural Easements.....	C-4
4. Extinguishing Agricultural Easements.....	C-4
5. Financing the Acquisition of Agricultural Easements.....	C-5
6. Additional Duties of the Director of Agriculture.....	C-7
AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS AND S.B. 223 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS...	C-8
D. MODEL AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT.....	D-1
E. SAMPLE EASEMENT SALE APPLICATION RANKING SYSTEM AND APPLICATION.....	E-1
Introduction.....	E-1
Criteria.....	E-1
F. SAMPLE TESTAMENTARY EASEMENT.....	F-1
G. THE COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR 1998 FOR AUBURN TOWNSHIP, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO.....	G-1
Background for Cost of Community Services Studies.....	G-1
Other COCS Studies in Northeast Ohio.....	G-2
Auburn Township.....	G-3
Study Purpose and Methodology.....	G-5
Data Collection and Analysis.....	G-6
Conclusion.....	G-12
Bibliography.....	G-14
H. LAND EVALUATION AND SITE ASSESSMENT (LESA).....	H-1
Overview.....	H-1
Land Evaluation.....	H-1
Site Assessment.....	H-1
Combining the LE and SA Ratings.....	H-2
Applying LESA.....	H-2
Making Decisions.....	H-2
Using GIS.....	H-2
Summary.....	H-3
LESA Hands-On Exercise.....	H-3
Conclusion.....	H-11

TABLES

Page No.

1.	Population Change: Auburn Township and Geauga County, 1970 to 1998.....	G-4
2.	Fire Department, 1998 Responses in Auburn Township.....	G-8
3.	Sheriff's Department, 1998 Responses in Auburn Township.....	G-9
4.	Auburn Township Revenue 1998.....	G-10
5.	Auburn Township Expenditure 1998.....	G-11
6.	Township Budget Balance by Land Use Category.....	G-13
7.	Comparison of Ratios of Revenue to Expenditures for Northeast Ohio Townships.....	G-13
8.	Gauga County Soils With Agricultural Rating & The Relative Value.....	H-4
9.	Land Evaluation Categories.....	H-5
10.	Worksheet For Land Evaluation.....	H-7
11.	Worksheet For Site Assessment.....	H-8
12.	Worksheet For Land Evaluation.....	H-9
13.	Worksheet For Site Assessment.....	H-10

APPENDIX

A. GLOSSARY

The following words and phrases are common in farmland and open-space protection.

Agricultural District: An area in which farming is the preferred land use. A district is voluntarily created by landowners who receive a number of benefits (such as exemption from sewer and water assessments, greater protection against eminent domain, possibly use-value taxation, and eligibility to sell development rights) usually in return for not developing the land for a certain number of years.

Agricultural Protection Zoning: A zoning regulation and zoning district designed to protect farmland from incompatible nonfarm uses. There are several types of agricultural zoning, which vary according to: 1) the uses allowed in the zone—exclusive or nonexclusive farm use; 2) the minimum farm size allowed; 3) the number of nonfarm dwellings allowed; and 4) the size of setbacks or buffer areas between farms and nonfarm properties.

Appraisal: A systematic method of determining the market value of property.

Assessment: The process of determining the worth, or the market value, of land and buildings for taxation purposes.

Bargain Sale: The sale of property or development rights for less than fair-market value. The seller may use the difference between the appraised fair-market value and the bargain sale price paid by a public agency or qualified nonprofit organization as a charitable contribution for an income tax deduction.

Basis: An accounting term that refers to the portion of a sale of property or development rights that is not subject to capital gains tax. The basis in a property is the original cost plus improvements minus depreciation.

Buffer Area: A space between a farm and a nonfarm property that is kept undeveloped and often put in trees and bushes to minimize the spillover of noise, dust, and odors from the farm. The buffer is usually located on the nonfarm property.

Build-Out Scenario: When zoning farmland or open space at a certain density, it may be helpful to determine the maximum number of dwelling units that are actually allowed in that area. A build-out scenario can show on a map or series of maps whether the area would contain too much, too little, or the desired amount of development under the proposed zoning density.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP): A program of when, where, and how much a community or county plans to invest in public services over the next five to ten years. The program presents a capital budget each year, which is useful in drafting the community or county budget.

Cluster Development: Grouping houses on part of a property while maintaining a large amount of open space on the remaining land.

Community-Supported Agriculture: Consumers buy shares in a farm's output and receive food directly from the farm. The farmer eliminates the intermediary and can earn a higher profit on what is grown.

Comprehensive Plan: Also known as a master plan or a general plan. A comprehensive plan summarizes the current condition of a community or county, projects future needs, and develops general policy goals and objectives.

Conditional Use: A land use in a zoning district that is neither permitted outright nor prohibited outright. A conditional land-use permit may be granted after review by the planning commission and approval of the governing body. A conditional use usually has wide impacts, such as a telecommunications tower in an agricultural zone. The term "conditional use" may also refer to certain conditions placed in the permit that the holder of the permit must meet.

Conservation Easement: A legally recorded document that restricts the use of land to farming, open space, or wildlife habitat. A landowner may sell or donate an easement to a government agency or a private land trust.

Cost-Of-Services Study: A case study method of determining the cost of services demanded by residential and commercial/light industrial development as compared to farmland for each dollar of property taxes generated by each land use.

Density: The number of buildings or housing units on an acre of land.

Development Right: The right to develop land, which is one of several rights that come with landownership. The development right may be sold or given away separately from the other rights. If the development right is removed, the land is still private property, though the uses that are allowed are typically limited to farming and open space.

Differential Assessment: Determining the value of farmland for property tax purposes, based on its use-value for farming rather than on its "highest and best" use for potential development. There are three types of differential assessment: preferential assessment, deferred taxation, and restrictive agreement.

Downzone: A change in a property's zone designation to a lower density or a less intensive use. For instance, a downzoning might change the allowed density on a piece of land from two houses per acre to only one house per 20 acres; or change the zoning on land from an industrial zone to an agricultural zone.

Easement: See Conservation Easement.

Ex-Urban: Refers to a region of countryside outside of cities and suburbs that is experiencing residential growth.

Farm: Land and buildings devoted to the production of crops and / or livestock. The U.S. Census of Agriculture defines a farm as producing at least \$1,000 a year in crops and / or livestock.

Farm Bureau: A national, not for profit organization advocating agricultural issues.

Fee Assessment: A charge to landowners when a sewer or water line is extended along their property, based on the linear footage of the line.

Fee Interest and Fee Simple: Fee interest and fee simple refer to the ownership of all the rights to owning a property. Less than fee means that one or more rights to the property are not owned. For example, a development right held by a land trust is a less than fee interest in a certain property.

Geographic Information System (GIS): A method of placing data into a computer to create a map or a series of maps. The data can also be used to predict what will happen under certain changes. Data might include: soils, parcels, roads, waterways, sewer and water lines, buildings, and zoning districts.

Greenbelt: An area of protected open space around a city or town, or an area that separates two built-up places.

Growth Management: The use of regulations and incentives to influence the rate, timing, location, density, type, and style of development in the community.

Land Trust: A private nonprofit organization that qualifies as a charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. A land trust may receive donations of property, development rights, or money. Donations may qualify as tax deductions. A land trust may also purchase property and development rights.

Land Use: The function to which land is put or is classified for future uses: that is, for housing, agriculture, commercial, industrial, etc.

Land-Use and Development Controls: Ordinances, resolutions, and codes enacted by communities, townships, and counties under the authority of state enabling legislation. Such controls are designed, and intended to be used, for the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. Common land-use controls are: (1) zoning,

which separates the planning area into zones and districts and regulates the use to which land can be put in those districts; and (2) subdivision regulations, which guides and controls the division of land for building purposes and the addition of new building areas to the community.

Lease of Development Rights (LDR): A governmental entity or non-profit land trust may consummate a lease agreement with a landowner to acquire the development rights to agricultural land for a specified length of time. For example, a length of 30 years (representing a generation) may be encouraged. Upon the completion of the specified time period, the landowner may elect to extend the lease or terminate it. The landowner may be compensated, however, such compensation covers only the time period included in the lease. Additional compensation may be necessary upon the extension of the lease. Utilizing LDR, the landowner makes a commitment that is a generation in length without impacting the land use decisions (or generational development rights) of succeeding generations. LDR is an alternative PDR technique that offers a landowner the flexibility to either continue or terminate agricultural activities depending upon economic, social, and other conditions.

Lot: A piece of land divided from a larger parcel.

Minimum Lot Size: The smallest lot or parcel that can be built on in a particular zoning district. Also, the smallest lot that can be created by dividing a larger parcel.

National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): A federal agency within the USDA that provides technical assistance to farmers and funds soil conservation and farmland protection programs.

Nuisance: The use of land that brings harm or bother to adjacent property owners or the general public. Nuisances typically include noise, odors, visual clutter, and dangerous structures.

Option: The right to buy land or development rights at a certain price within a certain amount of time. A potential seller sells an option to a potential buyer.

Parcel: A piece of land under single ownership or control.

Planning Commission: An official panel appointed by the governing body of a municipality or county that is responsible for drafting the comprehensive plan and subdivision regulations. The planning commission reviews proposed changes to zoning and subdivision regulations, makes recommendations on the comprehensive plan, and acts on development proposals.

Police Power: The right of government to restrict an owner's use of property to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. Restrictions must be reasonable and be conducted according to due process.

Pre-Acquisition: The purchase of land or development rights by one organization for eventual resale to another organization. For example, a government agency may ask a land trust to pre-acquire a conservation easement; then the agency will purchase the easement from the land trust. Pre-acquisitions are often done in urgent situations.

Prime Agricultural Land: Farmland that has a gentle slope and well-drained soils and requires a minimum of conservation practices. It is the easiest land to farm. Class I and II soils, as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are considered prime agricultural soils.

Professional Planner: A professional planner is a person who is qualified to make comprehensive plans for a community and to draft zoning and subdivision regulations. A professional planner usually will hold a master's degree in community planning and often will have obtained a professional registration.

Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE): PACE programs pay farmers to keep their land available for agriculture. Landowners sell an agricultural conservation easement to a qualified government agency or private conservation organization. Landowners retain full ownership and use of their land for agricultural purposes. PACE programs do not give government agencies the right to develop land. Development rights are extinguished in exchange for compensation. PACE is also known as purchase of development rights (PDR).

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR): The voluntary sale of the rights to develop a piece of property by the landowners to a government agency or a land trust. The sale price is determined by an appraisal. The land is restricted to farming or open space.

Real Estate Transfer Tax: A state and / or local tax on the sale of real property. On occasion, transfer taxes have been used to finance land conservation programs. Transfer taxes normally do not apply to the sale or donation of a conservation easement.

Receiving Areas: Designated growth areas to which a developer may transfer development rights from a sending area in order to build more houses there than would normally be allowed.

Region: An area including one or more counties that contain certain geographical, economic, and social characteristics in common.

Rezoning: See Zone Change.

Right-To-Farm Law: A state law that denies nuisance suits against farmers who use standard farming practices. The law may also prevent local governments from enacting nuisance ordinances that prohibit normal farming practices.

Right-Of-Way: The right to cross over property. Rights-of-way across private property are usually for utility lines or driveways.

Rural Residential Zone: A zoning district in a rural area in which housing is the preferred land use. On-site septic and well systems are commonly used.

Sending Areas: Areas in which landowners have transferable development rights. The rights may be sold to private developers or to a government TDR fund.

Setback: The required distance of a building from a road, property line, or other building. This distance is specified in the zoning regulations and may differ among zones.

Spot Zoning: The zoning of a particular parcel of land for a use that is different from the uses permitted in the surrounding zone. This practice should be avoided.

Sprawl: Residential and commercial development that may take either of two forms: 1) a wave of urban or suburban expansion; or 2) scattered housing, offices, and stores throughout the countryside.

Subdivision: The division of a parcel of land into lots for future sale and / or development.

Taking: A taking occurs when government takes private property without paying compensation to the landowner, in violation of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution. A zoning regulation that removes virtually all of the useful economic value of a property will be judged a taking by the courts.

TDR Fund: A local government fund for purchasing and selling TDRs to keep the TDR market active. The fund may buy TDRs from landowners in sending areas and also sell TDRs to private developers for use in receiving areas.

Tract: A parcel of land under single ownership or control. A tract usually covers a large acreage and has the potential to be subdivided into lots.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): Property rights that may be used on the land from which they come. TDRs may be sold to be used on a designated site in a receiving (growth) area. When TDRs are sold, the land they came from is then restricted to farming.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) or Village Growth Boundary: A line agreed upon by a city and county, a village and county, or a village and township within which there is enough buildable land to accommodate development for up to twenty years. The governments agree not to extend urban-type services, especially public sewer and water, beyond the growth boundary. This encourages development inside the boundary.

Use-Value Assessment: See Differential Assessment.

Variance: Alteration of the provisions of a zoning resolution, usually on a single piece of land. An area variance involves changing the zoning requirements for building height, lot coverage, setbacks, and yard size.

Zone: An area or areas of the community or county in which certain land uses are permitted and other uses are prohibited by the zoning regulations. Common zones are residential, commercial, and industrial.

Zone Change: An action taken by the local governing body to change the type of zoning on one or more pieces of land. If a zone change is approved, the zoning map must also be amended. Some zone changes may require amending the land use plan.

Zoning Resolution: A set of land-use regulations and a map adopted by the local governing body (board of township trustees) to create zoning districts that permit certain land uses and prohibit others, for example, an R-1 single-family residential district or a C-1 low-density commercial district. Land uses in each district are regulated according to type, density, height, and the coverage of buildings.

APPENDIX

B. FARMLAND PROTECTION ACTIVITIES BY STATE

<u>State</u>	<u>Agricultural Districts</u>	<u>Agricultural Protection Zoning</u>	<u>Circuit Breaker</u>	<u>Differential Assessment</u>	<u>PACE</u>	<u>Right- to- Farm*</u>	<u>TDR</u>
Alabama				▲		▲	
Alaska				▲		▲	
Arizona				▲		▲	
Arkansas				▲		▲	
California	▲	■		▲	▲■	▲	■
Colorado		■		▲	▲■	▲	■
Connecticut				▲	▲■	▲	■
Delaware	▲			▲	▲	▲	
Florida		■		▲	■	▲	■
Georgia				▲		▲	
Hawaii		▲		▲		▲	
Idaho		■		▲		▲	■
Illinois	▲	■		▲		▲	
Indiana		■		▲		▲	
Iowa	▲	■	▲	▲		▲	
Kansas		■		▲		▲	
Kentucky	▲			▲	▲	▲	
Louisiana				▲		▲	
Maine				▲	▲	▲	
Maryland	▲■	■		▲	▲■	▲	■
Massachusetts	▲			▲	▲	▲	■
Michigan		■	▲		▲■	▲	
Minnesota	▲■	■		▲		▲	■
Mississippi				▲		▲	
Missouri				▲		▲	
Montana		■		▲		▲	■
Nebraska		■		▲		▲	
Nevada				▲		▲	
New Hampshire				▲	▲	▲	
New Jersey	▲			▲	▲■	▲	■
New Mexico				▲		▲	
New York	▲		▲	▲	■	▲	■
North Carolina	▲			▲	■	▲	
North Dakota		■		▲		▲	
Ohio	▲	■		▲	▲	▲	
Oklahoma				▲		▲	
Oregon		■		▲		▲	
Pennsylvania	▲	■		▲	▲■	▲	■
Rhode Island				▲	▲	▲	
South Carolina				▲		▲	

<u>State</u>	<u>Agricultural Districts</u>	<u>Agricultural Protection Zoning</u>	<u>Circuit Breaker</u>	<u>Differential Assessment</u>	<u>PACE</u>	<u>Right- to- Farm*</u>	<u>TDR</u>
South Dakota		■		▲		▲	
Tennessee	▲			▲		▲	
Texas				▲		▲	
Utah	▲	■		▲		▲	■
Vermont				▲	▲	▲	■
Virginia	▲ ■	■		▲	■	▲	
Washington		■		▲	■	▲	■
West Virginia				▲		▲	
Wisconsin		■	▲	▲	■	▲	
Wyoming		■		▲		▲	
Total	16	24	4	49	21	50	15

▲ State Program

■ Local Program

* A number of local jurisdictions also have enacted right-to-farm ordinances. We do not have a complete inventory.

Source: Soils Information for Decision-Making presented by Association of Ohio Pedologists

Geauga County Farmland Preservation Plan

APPENDIX

C. OVERVIEW OF AMENDED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 223

Amended Substitute Senate Bill 223 (SB 223) of the 122nd General Assembly, which became effective on April 5, 1999, changes state law to authorize the acquisition of agricultural easements by a board of county commissioners (“county”), a board of township trustees (“townships”), the legislative authority of a municipal corporation (“municipal corporation”), the state Director of Agriculture (“director”) and a charitable organization (“organization”) dedicated to the preservation and protection of land.

The bill was enacted to provide specific statutory authority for these entities to acquire and hold easements to preserve the agricultural use of land. Concern had arisen in recent years that the law authorizing these entities to acquire and hold conservation easements did not specifically permit them to acquire and hold agricultural easements.

With the passage of SB 223, the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) now contains separate definitions for conservation easements and agricultural easements. Holders of conservation easements are authorized to use the land for agriculture only when agricultural use is consistent with and furthers the purpose of retaining the land 1) in a natural, scenic, open or wooded condition or 2) as a suitable habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife. ORC 5301.67 (A). Holders of agricultural easements have broader authority to retain the use of the land “predominantly in agriculture.” ORC 5301.67 (C).

Under provisions of SB 223, landowners may grant agricultural easements to counties, townships, municipal corporations, the director, or organizations only for land that is valued for purposes of real property taxation at its current agricultural use valuation (CAUV) at the time the easement is granted.

SB 223 authorizes a county to take the following actions:

1. Purchase agricultural easements with money from the county general fund, a special fund for purchasing easements, or with matching grant money from the state’s agricultural easement purchase fund (AEPF).

SB 223 also authorizes townships, municipal corporations, the director and organizations to purchase agricultural easements. The purchasing provisions are described in Section 1 below.

2. Acquire agricultural easements by gift, devise, bequest as well as by purchase. This provision is described in Section 2 below.
3. Name an officer, department or division to supervise and enforce any agricultural easement it may purchase or otherwise acquire. This provision is described in Section 3 below.

4. Extinguish any agricultural easement it may acquire, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the contract conveying the easement and in accordance with the provisions of SB 223. This provision is described in Section 4 below.
5. Finance the purchase of agricultural easements by a number of methods, including:
 - Receiving and spending matching grant money from the state's AEPF, in accordance with procedures and eligibility criteria established by the director.
 - Levying a property tax, for up to five years with voter approval, for the purpose of acquiring, supervising or enforcing agricultural easements.
 - Levying a sales and use tax, with voter approval, to raise revenue to acquire agricultural easements by debt service on bonds issued to finance those purchases, or to supervise or enforce any agricultural easements held by the county.
 - Issuing revenue bonds and notes for the purpose of acquiring easements, with repayment pledged with sales and use tax revenues. These bonds are exempt from the statutory county debt limits.
 - Issuing general obligation bonds, with voter approval, for the sole purpose of acquiring agricultural easements. Debt service on the bonds would be financed by the levy of a voter – approved property tax.

The financing provisions are described in Section 5 below.

6. SB 223 also imposes a number of additional duties on the director. These duties are listed in Section 6 below.
7. SB 223 raises a number of questions and concerns of interest to counties. Attached to this CAB is a series of questions and answers on agricultural easements and SB 223.

1. PURCHASING AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS – ORC 5301.69 (B) (1), (C) AND (E)

Counties, Townships, Municipal Corporations

A county is authorized under SB 223 to purchase agricultural easements in the name of the county. To purchase an easement, a county may use money from its general fund that is not required by law or charter to be used for another specified purpose. A county also may use money from a special county fund created for the purpose of purchasing agricultural easements or matching grant money received from the director and the AEPF. ORC 5301.69 (B) (1).

A municipal corporation and a township also are authorized under SB 223 to purchase agricultural easements under the same terms and conditions as a county.

An agricultural easement purchased by a county, township or municipal corporation without the use of money from the state's agricultural easement purchase fund may be perpetual or may be for a specified period of time. The easement also must "run with the land" – that is, it must be transferred to any new owner.

An agricultural easement purchased wholly or in part by a county, township or municipal corporation with money from the AEPF must be perpetual and must run with the land. ORC 5301.691 (C) (1).

A contract for an agricultural easement purchased by a county, township or municipal corporation for a specified period of time must at a minimum include provisions specifying:

- 1) The price or other consideration to be paid by the county, township or municipal corporation for the agricultural easement, as well as the manner of payment;
- 2) Whether the agricultural easement is renewable, and, if so, the procedures for renewal;
- 3) The circumstances under which the agricultural easement may be extinguished; and
- 4) The method for determining the amount of money, if any, that will be due to the county, township or municipal corporation upon extinguishment. ORC 5301.691 (C) (2).

Director of Agriculture

SB 223 also authorizes the director of agriculture to purchase agricultural easements in the name of the state. These purchases must be made with moneys credited to the agricultural easement purchase fund (AEPF) created in the bill in ORC 901.21. Agricultural easements purchased by the director with moneys from the AEPF must be perpetual and must run with the land.

At least 30 days before purchasing an agricultural easement, the director must provide written notice of its intention to purchase to the county and either the township or the municipal corporation in which the land is located. ORC 5301.691 (A) (2).

If any notified county, township or municipal corporation requests an informational meeting within 30 days of receiving notice, the director must meet with the entity requesting the meeting. The director cannot proceed with any proposed purchase of an agricultural easement until after the meeting is over. ORC 5301.961 (A) (1) (2). The director also may initiate a meeting without being asked to do so.

Charitable Organizations

SB 223 also authorizes certain charitable organizations to acquire and hold agricultural easements. These organizations must be exempt from federal taxation, described as an exempt organization, and organized for land preservation or protection purposes. ORC 5301.68, 5301.69.

2. ACQUIRING AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS BY GIFT, DEVISE OR BEQUEST – ORC 5301.691 (B) (2).

SB 223 authorizes a county, township, municipal corporation, organization or the director to acquire easements by gift, devise or bequest. Like an easement acquired by purchase, an easement acquired by gift, devise or bequest must be on land that qualifies for the CAUV reduction at the time it is granted by the owner.

3. SUPERVISING AND ENFORCING AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS – ORC 5301.691 (D)

After a county acquires an agricultural easement, it must name an appropriate administrative officer, department or division to supervise and enforce the easement. This duty also applies to the director, a township and a municipal corporation.

A county may contract with a board of park commissioners of a metropolitan or township park district or a board of supervisors of a soil and water conservation district having jurisdiction in the county, or with a charitable organization to supervise the agricultural easement on behalf of the county. The contract must specify a method for determining the amounts of money, if any, that will be paid by the county as the holder of the easement to the supervising entity.

4. EXTINGUISHING AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS – ORC 5301.691 (F)

A county that acquires an agricultural easement under the authority of SB 223 also may extinguish the easement if certain conditions are met. Municipal corporations, townships, organizations and the director also are granted the authority to extinguish agricultural easements.

A county may extinguish an agricultural easement in two situations: 1) if an unexpected change in the condition on the land or surrounding the land make it impossible or impractical to continue to use the land for the purposes described in the easement; or 2) if the requirements of the easement are extinguished by judicial proceedings.

When extinguishing an agricultural easement, a county also must adhere to any terms and conditions of the contract that conveyed the easement. Any contract that extinguishes an agricultural easement must be executed and recorded in the same manner as any other contract that conveys or terminates an interest in real property. ORC 5301.691 (F).

In the case of an agricultural easement held by the director and purchased with monies from the AEPF, the director must notify a county, municipal corporation or township in which the land is located at least 30 days before extinguishment. The director must also conduct an informational meeting with the affected county, municipal corporation or township if one is requested. ORC 5301.691 (A) (2).

5. FINANCING THE ACQUISITION OF AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS

SB 223 provides a number of methods by which revenue may be raised by counties and other entities for the purchase of agricultural easements.

A county may purchase an agricultural easement with a matching grant from the state's AEPF, with money in the county general fund that is not required by law or charter to be used for another specified purpose, or with money in a special fund for purchasing easements.

To raise money to acquire an agricultural easement, a county may impose a voter-approved property or sales tax and may issue revenue or general obligation bonds. The bill also authorizes a county to receive and expend grants from any public or private source for the purpose of purchasing, supervising and enforcing an agricultural easement.

Matching Grants – ORC 901.22 (A)

A county may use matching grants provided by the director from the AEPF to acquire agricultural easements. Any easement purchased by a county with these matching grants must be in accordance with criteria and procedures established by the director.

Any instrument that conveys an agricultural easement purchased wholly or in part with money from the AEPF must include the provisions incorporated into SB 223 in ORC 901.22 (A) (2).

These provisions require:

- 1) that an agricultural easement may be extinguished only in two circumstances. The first circumstance is if an unexpected change in the conditions of and land—or the conditions surrounding the land—makes it impossible or impractical to continue using the land for the purposes described in the easement. The second circumstance is if the requirements of the agricultural easement are extinguished by judicial proceedings.
- 2) that a county or other holder of an agricultural easement must be paid money whenever the land subject to the easement is sold, exchanged or passed by involuntary conversion. The amount of money paid must be “at least equal to the proportionate value of the easement compared to the total value of the land at the time the easement was acquired.”

- 3) that a county or other holder of an agricultural easement must return a percentage of any money it receives from a sale of land to the director. The percentage returned must be equal to the percentage of the easement purchase price that was financed by the director through the state matching grant program.

Property Tax Revenue – ORC 5705.19 (QQ)

SB 223 authorizes a county, as well as a township or municipal corporation, to levy a property tax for the purposes of acquiring, supervising or enforcing an agricultural easement. Any property tax proposed for this purpose is outside the ten-mill limitation and must be approved by voters. The property tax may be levied for up to five years.

Sales and Use Tax Revenue and Revenue Bonds – ORC 5739.026 (A) (9), 133.60 and 5739.026 (C) (2) (d)

SB 223 authorizes counties to levy a sales and use tax for the purposes of providing revenue to acquire agricultural easements, paying debt service on bonds issued to finance the purchase of easements or providing revenue for the cost of supervising or enforcing an agricultural easement held by the county. This sales and use tax must be approved by voters.

The bill authorizes a county to help issue bonds and notes for the purpose of acquiring easements and to pledge sales and use tax revenues for repayment of the bonds and notes.

The issuance of these bonds and notes is subject to the provisions of the state's uniform bond law (ORC Chapter 133), except that the maturity periods cannot extend beyond the expiration of the sales and use tax revenue pledged to their repayment. These bonds and notes are not general obligations of the county. All moneys raised must be used exclusively for the acquisition, supervision or enforcement of easements, after the payment of issuing and financing costs.

Bonds issued by a county for the purpose of acquiring easements, and to which sales and use tax revenues have been pledged for repayment, are exempt from the statutory county debt limits in the ORC.

General Obligation Bonds – ORC 133.61

SB 223 authorizes a county, as well as a municipal corporation or township, to issue general obligation bonds, with voter approval, for the exclusive purpose of acquiring agricultural easements. These bonds must be issued in accordance with the provisions of the uniform bond law that governs the issuance of voted general obligation bonds by political subdivisions. Debt service on these bonds is provided through the levy of a property tax.

6. ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE ORC 901.22 (B) (C) AND (E)

In addition to the establishing procedures and criteria for the matching grant program, the director is required to monitor the effectiveness of the easement program in furthering farmland preservation and submit an annual report on that subject to the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate.

The report must include the following information to determine the effectiveness of the agricultural easement program: 1) the number of agricultural easements purchased during the preceding year; 2) the location of these easements; 3) the amount of local government monies used by counties, townships and municipalities to purchase agricultural easements; and 5) the number and amount of state matching grants given to purchase agricultural easements.

The report must also include the following information on each Ohio county: 1) the total number of acres in the county, 2) the number of acres in current agricultural use, 3) the number of acres preserved for agricultural use in the preceding year, and 4) the average cost per acre of land preserved for agricultural use in the preceding year.

SB 223 authorizes, but does not require, the director to provide technical assistance to counties, townships, municipal corporations or organizations that are developing a program to acquire agricultural easements.

AGRICULTURE EASEMENTS AND S.B. 223 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q-1 WHAT IS AN AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT?

A-1 An agricultural easement is a legal document between two parties that imposes limitations on the use or development of agricultural land for the purpose of retaining the use of the land predominantly in agriculture. The legal document may be in the form of articles of dedication, an easement, covenant, restriction or coordination, and must be executed and recorded like other instruments that convey interests in land. An agricultural easement also includes provisions whereby the holder of the easement may enter the property to ensure compliance with the provision of the easement. Agricultural easement is defined in ORC Section 5301.67 (C).

Q-2 I'VE HEARD OF CONSERVATION EASEMENTS. HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT FROM AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS?

A-2 Conservation easements and agricultural easements are similar, but there are important distinctions. Under an agricultural easement the limitations on use or development are for the purpose of "retaining the use of land predominantly in agriculture." Under a conservation easement, the purpose of the limitations on use or development are for the purpose of "retaining land, water, or wetland areas in their natural, scenic, open, or wooded condition..... or retaining their use predominantly as suitable habitats for fish, plants, or wildlife." Under a conservation easement the use of the land in agriculture is allowed if it is consistent with furthering the retention of the land for the specified purposes, but not if the predominant purpose is to retain the use of land in agriculture. The definition of conservation easement is in ORC Section 5301.67 (A).

Q-3 I HEAR A LOT OF TALK ABOUT PDR. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS TO PDR?

A-3 PDR stands for Purchase of Development Rights. Under a PDR program, a landowner may be willing to place development limitations on his/her land in return for a cash payment to compensate for the reduced value of the land with the development limitations.

Under this situation, an agricultural easement is the mechanism or procedure used to place the limitations on the land in return for the cash payment.

However, agricultural easements may also be granted by landowners without cash payment or other forms of compensation to the landowner. For example, SB 223 specifically allows counties to acquire agricultural easements by "gift, devise, or bequest." In these cases any terms may be included in the easement to preserve estate tax advantages of such a bequest by a landowner.

Q-4 ON WHAT LAND MAY AN AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT BE GRANTED?

A-4 The land must be valued for real property tax purposes at current agricultural use value (CAUV) under ORC Section 5713.31.

Q-5 WHICH ENTITIES MAY ACQUIRE AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS?

A-5 If a landowner desires to grant an agricultural easement it may only be executed with and held by: (1) the legislative authority of a county, municipality or township; (2) the Director of Agriculture; or (3) a charitable organization, often known as a non-profit land trust, that is tax exempt and meets the requirements of ORC 5301.69 (B).

Agricultural easements can not be acquired or held by organizations that may acquire conservation easements, including metropolitan and township park districts, conservancy districts, and soil and water conservation districts.

Q-6 AFTER AN AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT IS RECORDED, HOW IS THE COUNTY SURE THE OWNER IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE EASEMENT?

A-6 The county must name an administrative officer, department or division to supervise and enforce provisions included in the easement. This could include an employee or officer under the county commissioners. The law also specifically authorizes the commissioners to contract with a metropolitan or township park district, or a qualified non-profit charitable organization to supervise and enforce the easement. It appears that conservancy districts were inadvertently left out of SB 223 for this purpose.

Q-7 HOW LONG DOES AN AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT LAST?

A-7 It depends on how the instrument conveying the easement is worded. If a county is the holder of an easement and state monies (from the Agricultural Easement Purchase Fund – AEPF) are used, the easement must be perpetual and run with the land.

If a county is the holder of an easement and the transaction does not involve the use of AEPF funds, the easement may be perpetual or for a specified period of time. The easement must also run with the land, meaning it remains applicable to the land even after sale or transfer of ownership.

Q-8 WHAT PROVISIONS NEED TO BE INCLUDED IN AN INSTRUMENT CONVEYING AN AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT TO A COUNTY?

A-8 It depends on whether the easement is being donated or purchased. It also depends on whether state monies from the AEPF are being used to purchase the easement.

Q-8A WHAT IF THE EASEMENT BEING CONVEYED TO THE COUNTY IS A GIFT OR BEQUEST?

A-8A The law does not specifically require any provisions be included in such an instrument. The easement is essentially a private transaction between the county and the landowner. The statute does authorize that any terms may be included in the easement needed to preserve favorable income and estate tax consequences for the landowner or his/her estate.

Q-8B WHAT IF THE COUNTY IS PURCHASING THE EASEMENT WITH ITS OWN MONEY AND THE EASEMENT IS FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF YEARS, NOT PERPETUAL?

A-8B Where the easement is time limited, the instrument conveying the easement must include provisions that address the following topics: (1) what will be paid and manner of payment; (2) if the easement is renewable and procedures for renewal; (3) circumstances under which easement may be extinguished; and (4) the method to determine the amount of money, if any, due the county by the landowner upon extinguishment.

Q-8C WHAT IF THE EASEMENT IS PURCHASED USING MATCHING MONIES FROM THE STATE?

A-8C First, remember that the easement must be perpetual and not for a specified period of time in order to qualify for state funding.

SB 223 also requires the Director of Agriculture, by rule, to establish provisions that counties must include in instruments conveying an agricultural easement to a county. These rules must include the following provisions:

1. A provision stating that the easement may be extinguished only if an unexpected change in "the conditions of or surrounding the land....." makes it impossible or impractical to continue the use of land as specified in the easement, or if the requirements of the easement are extinguished by a court.
2. A provision requiring that upon sale, exchange, or involuntary conversion of land subject to the easement that the landowner must pay the county an amount of money equal to at least the proportionate value of the easement compared to the total value of the land at the time the easement was acquired.
3. A provision that requires the county to remit to the state an amount of money equal to the percent of the original cost of the easement it received from the state for the purchase of the easement.

Q-9 THAT IS REALLY CONFUSING. CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE?

A-9 Sure, Let's say a county decides to purchase an easement on land that is valued today at \$1 million. Let's assume the county has agreed to pay the landowner \$250,000 for the easement, and the state has agreed to provide \$125,000 in matching monies from the Agricultural Easement Purchase Fund (AEPF). In this case the original financing package looks like this:

Total Value of Land	\$1,000,000
Value of Easement	\$250,000
Easement as Percent of Total Value	25%
State Matching Monies from AEPF	\$125,000
State Matching Monies as a Percent of Value of Easement	50%

Under this example, the instrument conveying the easement to the county must include a provision that requires the county to be paid 25% of the future value of the land if the land is sold, exchanged, or involuntarily converted after execution of the easement. The instrument conveying the easement must also contain a provision requiring the county to pay the state 50% of any money it receives, should such a situation occur in the future.

For now let's assume that 15 years after the easement is executed that a court extinguishes the easement. The landowner sells the land that is now valued at \$2.5 million.

Under this example, the landowner must repay the county \$625,000 (25% of \$2.5 million). The county, in turn, would repay the state \$312,500 (50% of \$625,000) which would be redeposited in the AEPF.

Q-10 IN THE PREVIOUS EXAMPLE, DO THE REQUIRED PROVISIONS RELATING TO REPAYMENTS BY THE LANDOWNER ALSO APPLY TO INSTRUMENTS CONVEYING EASEMENTS WHERE ONLY COUNTY MONIES ARE USED?

A-10 No. SB 223 does not require the inclusion of any such provisions in instruments conveying easements to counties if the easement is perpetual and involves no state monies. The county could, however, include such a provision within an easement assuming the landowner consents. In such a situation, however, the relative percentages are subject to negotiation between the county and the landowner. In the previous example, state monies are involved. These repayment percentages were calculated as required by the statute and must be included in the instrument conveying the easement to the county, if state monies are involved.

In the case of easements held by the county that are time limited and involve no state matching monies, the law requires the instrument conveying the easement to include such a provision.

The law, however, does not require any repayment to the county upon extinguishment of a time limited easement. Unlike situations where state funds are involved, the law does not specify any formula by which repayment must take place. Any such provisions are solely subject to negotiation between the county and the landowner.

So what does the law require in such situations? A specific provision in the instrument conveying the easement that includes the method of determining repayment upon extinguishment of the easement if such a provision is negotiated. If no payments to the county are a part of the negotiation, the instrument must include a provision that explicitly states this fact.

Q-11 HOW MUCH MONEY IS IN THE STATE AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT PROTECTION FUND AND HOW DO I APPLY FOR A MATCHING GRANT?

A-11 No state funds have been appropriated to this fund. Some federal funds may become available for purchase of easements, and it is anticipated that these monies will go to this fund. The Director of Agriculture has responsibility to establish procedures and eligibility criteria for matching grants. It is not anticipated that this fund will include significant funds.

Q-12 SO IF THE STATE IS NOT COMING UP WITH MAJOR FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAM, HOW WILL COUNTIES PAY FOR EASEMENTS?

A-12 SB 223 gives counties broad authority to generate money to purchase agricultural easements. Counties may use general fund monies, although it is not anticipated that many will use this authority.

Counties may also submit to the electors the question of an increase in the real property or sales and use tax for the purpose of acquiring agricultural easements. Counties may also issue vote approval general obligation bonds and may pledge sales tax revenue enacted for the purchase of agricultural easements to repay revenue bonds which may also be issued by the county.

APPENDIX

D. MODEL AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT

The model agricultural conservation easement presented below is for a lump-sum payment.

To use a bargain sale (part-payment, part-charitable donation), add the following language in paragraph 3 after "WHEREAS, the value of this grant of easement is defrayed by consideration to the GRANTOR of _____ Thousand Dollars (\$ _____)":

and said consideration is below the appraised fair-market value of the agricultural conservation easement. The GRANTOR intends that the difference between the consideration and the fair-market value of the easement be a charitable gift to GRANTEE; and

For an installment sale, you can list the schedule of interest and principal payments on a settlement sheet, in a separate contract of sale, or in the Grant of Easement. For a like-kind exchange, an exchange agreement must be drafted by an attorney in addition to the model grant of easement.

GRANT OF EASEMENT

County of _____ Farmland Preservation Board

This grant of easement in the nature of a restriction on the use of land for the purpose of preserving productive agricultural land and open space is made by and between _____ ("GRANTOR") of _____ County, State, and the _____ County Farmland Preservation Board ("GRANTEE"), an agency of _____ County with its offices at _____.

WHEREAS, GRANTOR is the owner in fee of a farm located in _____ County, State, more fully described in a deed recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of _____ County, State in Deed Book _____, Page _____, and attached hereto as Exhibit A (the "Property"). The Property consists of _____ acres on which is located one (1) single-family dwelling unit; and

WHEREAS, the value of this grant of easement is defrayed by consideration to the GRANTOR of _____ Thousand Dollars (\$ _____); and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of _____ (hereinafter "Legislature") authorizes the State of _____ and counties thereof, as well as nonprofit conservancies, to preserve, acquire, or hold lands for open-space uses, which specifically included farmland; and that actions pursuant to these purposes are for the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the State of _____ and for the promotion of sound land development by preserving suitable open spaces; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has declared that public open-space benefits result from the protection and conservation of farmland, including the protection of scenic areas for public visual enjoyment from public rights-of-way; that the conservation and protection of agricultural lands as valued natural and ecological resources provide needed open spaces for clean air as well as for aesthetic purposes; and that public benefit will result from the conservation, protection, development, and improvement of agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products; and

WHEREAS, GRANTEE has declared that the preservation of prime agricultural land is vital to the public interest of _____ County, the region, and the nation through its economic, environmental, cultural, and productive benefits; and

WHEREAS, GRANTOR desires and intends that the agricultural and open-space character of the Property be preserved, protected, and maintained; and

WHEREAS, GRANTOR, as owner in fee of the Property, intends to identify and preserve the agricultural and open-space values of the Property; and

WHEREAS, GRANTOR desires and intends to transfer those rights and responsibilities of protection and preservation to the GRANTEE in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, GRANTEE is a qualified conservation organization under State of _____ acts and the Internal Revenue Code, whose primary purposes are the preservation and protection of land in its agricultural and open-space condition; and

WHEREAS, GRANTEE agrees by acquiring this grant of easement to honor and defend the intentions of GRANTOR stated herein and to preserve and protect in perpetuity the agricultural and open-space values of the Property for the benefit of this generation and the generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the specific agricultural and open-space values of the Property are documented in an inventory of relevant features of the Property, dated _____, 19____, on file at the offices of the GRANTEE and incorporated by this reference ("Baseline Documentation"), which consists of reports, maps, photographs, and other documentation that the parties agree provide, collectively, an accurate representation of the Property at the time of this grant of easement and which is intended to serve as an objective information baseline for monitoring compliance with the terms of this grant of easement;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing and intending to be legally bound, the undersigned GRANTOR grants and conveys to GRANTEE an easement on the Property for which the purpose is to assure that the Property will be retained forever in its agricultural and open-space condition and to prevent any use that will impair the agricultural and open-space values of the Property. To carry out this purpose, the following deed restrictions are recorded.

COVENANTS, TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND RESTRICTIONS

With the preceding background paragraphs incorporated by reference and intending to be legally bound, GRANTOR declares, makes known, and covenants for himself, his heirs, successors, and assigns, that the land described in the deed book and page mentioned above shall be restricted to agricultural and directly associated uses as hereafter defined. However, more restrictive applicable State and local laws shall prevail in the determination of permitted uses of land subject to these restrictions.

1. Agricultural uses of land defined for the purposes of this grant of easement, as: the use of land for the production of plants and animals useful to man, including, but not limited to, forage, grain, and field crops; pasturage, dairy and dairy products; poultry and poultry products; other livestock and fowl products, including the breeding and grazing of any or all such animals; bees and apiary products; fruits and vegetables of all kinds; nursery, floral, and greenhouse products; silviculture; aquaculture; and the primary processing and storage of the agricultural production of the Property and other similar and compatible uses.
2. Directly associated uses are defined as customary, supportive, and agriculturally compatible uses of farm properties in _____ County, State, and are limited to the following:
 - a. The direct sale to the public of agricultural products, of which at least half of the proceeds are accounted for by products produced on the farm;
 - b. Any and all structures contributing to the production, primary processing, direct marketing, and storage of agricultural products at least half of which are produced on the farm, so long as the total surface coverage of the farm by impervious surfaces for existing pavement, buildings, and all other permitted structures does not exceed _____ feet of the Property;
 - c. Structures associated with agricultural research;
 - d. The provision, production, and sale of, by persons in residence, or agricultural goods, services, supplies, and repairs—including the conduct of on-farm businesses, traditional trades, home businesses, and the production and sale of home occupation goods, arts, and crafts—so long as these uses remain incidental to the agricultural and open-space character of the farm and are limited to occupying residential and / or principally agricultural structures of the Property;
 - e. Structures associated with the production of energy for use principally on the farm, including wind, solar, hydroelectric, methane, wood, alcohol fuel, and fossil fuel systems and structures and facilities for the storage and treatment of animal waste;

- f. Structures and facilities associated with irrigation, farm pond impoundment, and soil and water conservation;
 - g. The accommodation of tourists and visitors within existing residential and / or agricultural structures (see exhibit B) of the farm Property so long as this use is incidental to the agricultural and open space character of the Property;
 - h. Religious uses including the conduct of religious ceremony on the Property;
 - i. Other similar uses considered upon written request to the GRANTEE.
3. Residences permitted on the Property subject to these restrictions are: 1) the preexisting single-family dwelling, or, in the event of its destruction, its replacement with a single-family dwelling; and 2) one (1) additional single-family dwelling permitted for use by someone directly involved in the farm operation or for use as a principal residence for the owner of the Property. Other residential uses are prohibited.
 4. Agricultural subdivisions are subject to the prior written approval of the GRANTEE.
 5. Any conveyance of land from the Property shall include a clause in the Deed of Conveyance indicating the disposition and allocation of permitted residences between the subdivided portion and the balance of the Property. Upon a conveyance of all or a portion of the Property, any new Deed shall recite verbatim the terms of the Easement.
 6. Institutional, industrial, and commercial uses other than those associated uses described in restrictions 1 and 2 are prohibited.
 7. Commercial recreational development and uses, involving structures or extensive commitment of land resources (i.e., golf courses, racetracks, and similar uses), shall be prohibited.
 8. The commercial extraction of minerals by surface mining and the extraction and removal of topsoil from the Property are prohibited. The extraction of subsurface or deep-mined minerals, including natural gas and oil, and the noncommercial extraction of minerals, including limestone, shale, and other minerals for on-farm use, shall be permitted, but may occupy, at any time, no more than one percent (1%) of the total surface acreage. GRANTOR shall promptly repair any damage to the Property caused by the extraction of subsurface or deep-mined minerals and replace the surface of the ground to the state that existed immediately prior to the mining so as not to affect the agricultural viability and uses of the Property.
 9. Use of the Property for dumping, storage, processing or landfill of nonagricultural solid or hazardous wastes generated off-site is prohibited, including, without limitation, municipal sewage sludge and / or bio solids application.

10. Signs, billboards, and outdoor advertising structures shall not be displayed on the Property; however, signs, the combined area of which may not exceed twenty-five (25) square feet, may be displayed only to state the name of the Property, to announce the existence of this conservation easement, and to commemorate the importance of the Property, the name and address of the occupant, to advertise an on-site activity permitted herein, and to advertise the Property for sale or rent.
11. Agricultural lands shall be managed in accordance with sound soil and water conservation practices in a manner that will not destroy or substantially and irretrievably diminish the productive capability of the Property.
12. GRANTOR reserves to him- or herself, and to his or her personal representatives, heirs, successors, and assigns, all rights accruing from his or her ownership of the Property, including the right to engage in or permit or invite others to engage in all uses of the Property that are not expressly prohibited herein and are not inconsistent with the purpose of this Easement.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. No right of public access is provided for, nor will result from the recordation of these restrictions.
2. The GRANTEE, its successors or assigns, jointly or severally, shall have the right to enforce these restrictions by injunction and other appropriate proceedings, including, but not limited to, the right to require the GRANTOR to restore the Property to the condition existing at the time of this Grant in order to correct any violation(s) of this Grant of Easement. Representatives of the GRANTEE, their successors or assigns, may at reasonable times and after appropriate notice to the GRANTOR and any persons residing on the Property, enter the Property from time to time for the purposes of inspection and enforcement of the terms of the Easement.
3. Any cost incurred by GRANTEE in enforcing the terms of this easement against GRANTOR, including court costs and attorneys' fees, and any cost of restoration necessitated by GRANTOR's violation of the terms of this Grant shall be borne by the GRANTOR.
4. The restrictions contained herein shall apply to the land as an open-space easement in gross in perpetuity. The covenants, terms, conditions, and restrictions of this easement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the parties hereto and their respective personal representatives, heirs, successors, and assigns and shall continue as a servitude running in perpetuity with the Property. A party's rights and obligations under this Easement terminate upon transfer of the party's interest in the Easement or Property, except that liability for acts or omissions occurring prior to transfer shall survive transfer.

5. If circumstances arise in the future such as to render the purposes of this easement impossible to accomplish, this easement can only be terminated or extinguished, whether in whole or in part, by judicial proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction.
6. If the easement is taken, in whole or in part, by the exercise of the power of eminent domain, GRANTEE shall be entitled to compensation in accordance with applicable law.
7. GRANTOR agrees to incorporate the terms of this easement in any deed or other legal instrument by which he or she divests him or herself of any interest in all or a portion of the Property, including, without limitation, a leasehold interest. GRANTOR further agrees to give written notice to GRANTEE of the transfer of any interest at least ten (10) days prior to the date of such transfer. The failure of GRANTOR to perform any act required by this paragraph shall not impair the validity of this Easement or limit its enforceability in any way.
8. GRANTOR shall hold harmless, indemnify, and defend GRANTEE and its members, directors, officers, employees, agents, and contractors and their heirs, personal representatives, successors, and assigns (collectively "Indemnified Parties") from and against all liabilities, penalties, costs, losses, damages, expenses, causes of action, claims, demands, or judgments, including without limitation, reasonable attorneys' fees arising from or in any way connected with: (1) the result of a violation or alleged violation of any state or federal environmental statute or regulation including, but not limited to, the Act of October 18, 1988 (P.L. 756, No. 108), known as the Hazardous Waste Sites Cleanup Act, and statutes and regulations concerning the storage or disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals or materials; (2) injury to or the death of any person, or physical damage to any property, resulting from any act, omission, condition, or other matter related to or incurring on or about the premises, regardless of costs, unless due solely to the gross negligence of any of the Indemnified Parties; and (3) existence and administration of this easement.
9. GRANTOR retains all responsibilities and shall bear all costs and liabilities of any kind related to the ownership, operation, upkeep, and maintenance of the premises, including the maintenance of adequate comprehensive general liability insurance coverage and payment, as and when due, of all real estate taxes.
10. GRANTEE shall record this instrument in a timely fashion in the official records of _____ County, State, and may re-record it at any time as may be required to preserve its rights in this easement.
11. This Grant of Easement in the nature of a restriction is intended to be an easement in gross so as to qualify for a Qualified Conservation Contribution under the applicable provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

12. GRANTEE agrees that they will hold this easement exclusively for agricultural conservation purposes and that they will not assign their rights and obligations under this easement except to an entity (a) qualified, at the time of the subsequent assignment, as an eligible donee under applicable state and federal statutes and regulations to hold and administer this easement, and (b) that has the commitment, resources, and ability to monitor and enforce this easement so that the purposes of this easement shall be preserved and continued. GRANTEE further agrees to obtain the new entity's written commitment to monitor and enforce this Grant of Easement.
13. If any provisions of this easement, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is found to be invalid, the remainder of the provisions of this easement, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is found to be invalid, as the case may be, shall not be affected thereby. TO HAVE AND TO HOLD unto GRANTEE, its successors, and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF GRANTOR AND GRANTEE have set their hands on the day and year written.

Signed _____
GRANTOR GRANTEE

Date _____ Date _____

Notary Public _____

Attach Exhibit A—Description of the Property

Attach Exhibit B—Sketch of Property Layout

Source: Holding Our Ground, Protecting America's Farms and Farmland by Tom Daniels and Deborah Bowers, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1997, Page 272-278

Geauga County Farmland Preservation Plan

APPENDIX

E. SAMPLE EASEMENT SALE APPLICATION RANKING SYSTEM AND APPLICATION

County of _____

Farmland Preservation Board

RANKING SYSTEM FOR CONSERVATION EASEMENT SALE APPLICATIONS

Introduction

The ranking system is used to rate and set in priority applications for conservation easement sale. The main purpose of the easement program is to preserve high-quality farms in large blocks. Preference is given to farms under moderate development pressure.

Criteria

Quality of the Farm. 50% of the overall points. Five factors are related to the productivity of the farm and stewardship and historic features. Each factor is assigned to a weight (from 1 to 10) and a range of possible point values (from 1 to 10).

The sum of all the factors yields a score for the Quality of the Farm category. That score is adjusted to reflect the Quality category points on a scale from 0 to 50 possible points.

Likelihood of Conversion to Nonfarm Use. 50% of the overall points. Five factors are related to the development pressure on the farm. Each factor is assigned a weight (from 1 to 10) and a range of possible points (from 1 to 10). The weight times the points determines the value for a factor.

To find the total points for a farm, add the points for the Quality of the Farm to the points for the Likelihood of Conversion. Quality of the Farm + Likelihood of Conversion = TOTAL SCORE.

QUALITY OF THE FARM

FACTORS

	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. <u>Size of Farm:</u>			
100 acres or more	6	10	60
75 to 99.9 acres	6	7	42
40 to 74.9 acres	6	4	24
Less than 40 acres			0
2. <u>Soils:</u>			
75% or more Class I, II	10	10	100
50-74% Class I, II	10	8	80
50% or more Class I-III	10	5	50
Less than 50% Class I-III			0
3. <u>Gross Annual Farm Product Sales:</u>			
\$65,000 or more	5	10	50
\$25,000-\$64,999	5	7	35
Less than \$25,000 a year	0		
4. <u>Stewardship:</u>			
NRCS soil conservation plan on farm	3	10	30
No plan on farm	0		
5. <u>Historic and Environmental Value:</u>			
Exceptional	1	10	10
Significant	1	6	6
Some	1	3	3

TOTAL Maximum points for Quality of the Farm: 250 points multiplied by the adjustment factor (1/5) – 50 points maximum

LIKELIHOOD OF CONVERSION TO NONFARM USE

FACTORS

	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. <u>Nonfarm Development in the Area:</u>			
10 or more nonfarm lots adjacent	10	7	70
20 or more nonfarm lots within ½ mile	10	10	100
Scattered nonfarm lots within 1 mile	10	4	40
No significant nonfarm development in area			0

FACTORS

	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Score</u>
2. <u>Zoning:</u>			
Residential, commercial, or industrial zoning within ¼ mile	5	6	30
Between ¼ and ½ mile away	5	10	50
Agricultural or rural zoning within ½ -mile radius	5	4	20
Agricultural zoning covering more than ½ -mile radius			0
3. <u>Distance to Sewer Service (existing or planned within 5 years):</u>			
Existing capacity within ¼ mile	5	6	30
Existing capacity within ½ mile	5	10	50
Existing capacity within 1 mile	5	4	20
No capacity within 1 mile			0
4. <u>Road Frontage:</u>			
Over ¼ mile of buildable frontage	5	10	50
400-1,320 feet of buildable frontage	5	5	25
Less than 400 feet of buildable frontage	0		
5. <u>Distance to a Farm with an Easement or Easement Sale Application:</u>			
Adjacent	10	10	100
Within ½ mile	10	7	70
More than ½ mile			0

TOTAL Maximum points for Likelihood of Conversion: 350 points multiplied by the adjustment factor (1/7) = 50 points maximum.

Example: Farm A is a 250-acre dairy farm with 50% Class II soils and gross annual sales of \$200,000. The farm has a soil conservation plan and provides beautiful scenic views. It is not near a farm under easement and is beyond 1 mile of sewer service. There are some scattered nonfarm houses in the area. The farm has 4,000 feet of road frontage.

Quality of the Farm Factors

	<u>Score</u>
1. Size	60
2. Soils	80
3. Sales	50
4. Stewardship 30	
5. Environment 10	
TOTAL	230
times 1/5 =	46
TOTAL SCORE	46

Likelihood of Conversion Factors

	<u>Score</u>
1. Nonfarm Development	40
2. Zoning	0
3. Distance to Sewer	0
4. Road Frontage	50
5. Distance to Easement	0
TOTAL	90
time 1/7	12.86
+ 12.86 =	<u>58.86</u>

Office Use: File # _____

County of _____

CONSERVATION EASEMENT SALE APPLICATION

SEND TO: _____

Telephone: _____

I/We, _____, landowner(s), hereby offer to sell a perpetual agricultural conservation easement on farm property located at _____ in _____ County, (State). The property is identified in the land records of _____ County, Deed Book, _____, Page _____. The Conservation Easement Sale to the _____ County Farmland Preservation Board is offered in consideration of

- 1) an amount to be based on an appraisal and acceptable to buyer and seller or
- 2) \$_____ (circle choice).

Signatures of Landowner(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Date: _____

Social Security Number(s): _____

Total Acreage of Farm: _____

Acres Proposed for Easement Sale: _____

CROPS GROWN ON LAND PROPOSED FOR EASEMENT SALE
FOR THE PAST SEASON

<u>19</u> _____	<u>CROP</u>	<u>ACRES GROWN</u>	<u>YIELDS PER ACRE</u>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

NUMBER AND KIND OF LIVESTOCK ON THE FARM:

GROSS FARM INCOME IN LAST YEAR: _____

LIST ANY MORTGAGE OR LIEN HOLDER: _____

THE DATE OF THE USDA SOIL CONSERVATION PLAN, IF ANY:

IF FARM IS NOT OWNER OCCUPIED, TENANT'S NAME:

NAME, ADDRESS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF PERSON TO BE CONTACTED
TO VIEW THE FARM (if different from landowner):

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date Received: _____

USGS Topographical Map Showing the Farm: _____

Property Tax Map with Tax Parcel Number of Farm: _____

County Soil Survey Map Number: _____

Source: Holding Our Ground, Protecting America's Farms and Farmland by Tom Daniels and Deborah Bowers, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1997, Page 289-292

APPENDIX

F. SAMPLE TESTAMENTARY EASEMENT

The following language was suggested by Attorney Stephen J. Small for a testamentary easement on real estate. The easement may either be included in a new will or added as a codicil to an existing will. The terms of the easement take effect upon the death of the donor.

Before the donor passes away, the Grantee (either a qualified land trust or a government agency) of the easement should write a letter thanking the donor and notifying the donor that the land trust or government agency will accept the easement.

There should be language in the codicil allowing the executor of the donor's estate to make adjustments to the easement language but nothing that would weaken the easement.

Finally, the value of the easement is determined on the donor's date of death.

CODICIL

I, _____, make this codicil to my last will dated _____, hereby ratifying, confirming, and republishing my said last will in all respects except as modified by this codicil and by codicils dated _____.

1. I give, grant, and devise a conservation easement upon the real property I own in (County and State), in form and content as set forth in the Deed of Conservation easement immediately following with (Name of Trust or Government Agency), (referred to herein and in the Deed of Conservation Easement as "Grantee"), provided that at the time of my death Grantee constitutes a "qualified organization" as defined in Section 170(h)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and the regulations thereunder (the "Code"), or comparable provision of successor federal revenue laws. If Grantee does not constitute an organization that conforms to the requirements of the preceding sentence at the time of my death or does not receive the foregoing devise for any other reason, then I give, grant, and devise said conservation easement to such one or more qualified organizations as my personal representatives shall select.

I intend that the foregoing devise be deductible as a charitable gift under Section 2055(a) of the Code as in effect at the time of my death. I authorize and direct my personal representatives to execute, seal, acknowledge, deliver, and record such Deed of Conservation Easement and such confirmatory instruments and to take such other actions as my personal representatives may deem appropriate to effectuate my intentions in this regard, any and all of which instruments and actions

shall be effective and binding as of, and relate back to, the time of my death. I further authorize and direct my personal representatives as follows:

- (a) To make such modifications, if any, in the terms and conditions of the conservation easement as may be necessary to conform to the requirements of Sections 170(h) and 2055 of the Code or to carry out my intentions, but no such modification shall permit additional residences to be constructed on said land other than residences permitted by the Deed of Conservation Easement set forth below.
 - (b) To secure the acceptance and approval of the grant, if necessary or desirable, by Grantee and any appropriate governmental authority.
 - (c) To cause surveys or plans to be made of said real estate or any portion thereof if and to the extent of my personal representatives determine the same to be useful or advisable to clarify or otherwise effectuate this grant in any respect, and to pay the costs thereof, and of any service they deem necessary to implement the easement, as an expense of administration. The foregoing shall include specifically (but without limitation) the authority to determine and lay out by survey the locations of and the definitive boundary lines between the various lots and / or Limited Building Areas contemplated by or referred to in the Deed of Conservation Easement set forth below.
2. The interpretation and construction of the provisions of this codicil shall be governed by the laws of the State of _____.

Source: Holding Our Ground, Protecting America's Farms and Farmland by Tom Daniels and Deborah Bowers, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1997, Page 282-283

APPENDIX

G. THE COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR 1998 FOR AUBURN TOWNSHIP, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO

Background for Cost of Community Services Studies

Studies of the cost of community services (COCS) attempt to determine the net impact of different land uses on a community's ability to generate sufficient income to pay for community services. Thus these studies are commonly referred to as "cost of community services" or COCS studies.

COCS studies compare revenues generated by particular land uses with their fiscal needs as measured in expenditures for public or community services they require. A local municipality may be experiencing significant increases in revenue resulting from rapid residential development, but it may also experience significant increases in service costs required by new development. New development may require the local school district to operate more classes and local government to spend more on road and bridge maintenance. COCS studies compare revenues generated with expenditures required for each major land use category within a community. "Only by considering the revenues and expenditures associated with a land type can you identify its overall impact."¹

In undertaking COCS studies, a local government's land area is divided into major use categories. These are usually the following:

- 1) residential
- 2) agricultural
- 3) commercial
- 4) industrial

By comparing the net impact of different land uses on the need for community services, citizens and local government officials are in a better position to make decisions about community growth. Seeking and encouraging growth may not be the best policy for every community. But pressures to accommodate new growth are extremely difficult for local communities to resist, especially those located in what is sometimes called the "urban-rural fringe." Prime farm land may not generate the tax revenue of residential development, but it does not require the same level of expenditure for community services. The conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses is an irreversible process involving the loss of a major resource. Before it occurs, careful analysis of the "pros and cons" of development versus preservation should be undertaken and the results used to inform local decision-making.

¹ Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses: The Pennsylvania Experience. Extension Circular 410, College of Agricultural Sciences. The Pennsylvania State University (1997), p 1.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the first COCS studies were carried out. Several of these were concerned with areas in New England undergoing rapid transformation from rural to urban development. Property developers promised local communities lower taxes if their prime farmland was subdivided into residential plots. In western Massachusetts, more than 7000 acres of farmland were converted into non-rural development in the 1980s. In response to this on-going transformation, American Farmland Trust and the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture undertook COCS studies of three towns in western Massachusetts. These studies revealed that “Farm, forest and open lands far more than paid for themselves. They helped support increasing demand for residential services. For every dollar of revenue raised from the residential sector, Massachusetts towns spent \$1.12 on public services. But for every dollar raised by undeveloped lands, towns spent 33 cents, leaving 67 cents to offset other expenses.”²

Other COCS Studies in Northeast Ohio

In October 1993, American Farmland Trust (AFT) published a report titled “The Cost of Community Services in Madison Village and Township Lake County, Ohio.” The report discusses the unique agricultural environment of Lake County with its “sandy soils, lake-effect weather and abundant water supply” making it particularly appropriate for nursery plants, trees and grapes. Lake County and the communities studied are experiencing strong development pressures as a result of suburbanization out of Cleveland. Thus the issue of farmland conversion is a particularly important one for Lake County residents and officials. The results of this analysis confirmed the earlier set cited in Massachusetts. Farm, forest and open land in Madison Township require only \$.38 worth of services for each \$1.00 of taxes generated while residential land required \$1.40 worth of services for \$1.00 generated.

A more recent COCS study of Shalersville Township in Portage County was carried out by staff of the Center for Public Administration and Public Policy at Kent State University. Although not experiencing the same degree of land conversion pressure evident in the Madison Village and Township study, Shalersville is beginning to experience the impact of suburbanization. This impact will intensify as a result of the recent opening within the township of an interchange with Ohio Route 44 and the Ohio Turnpike. Thus, this improvement in Shalersville’s locational accessibility is being translated into increased pressure for conversion of farmland and open space into non-rural and, especially, residential land uses.

Revenue/expenditure ratios calculated for Shalersville correspond closely to those that were calculated for Madison Village and Township. For agricultural land the ratio was \$1.00 of revenue for each \$.31 of expenditure while for residential land the ratio was \$1.00 of revenue for each \$1.58 of expenditure. Here, as in the Madison case, residential land use is highly subsidized by non-residential land uses.

² Is Farmland Protection a Community Investment? American Farmland Trust (Spring 1993) p 2.

Auburn Township

Auburn Township has experienced a rapid increase in population in recent decades (see Table 1). Its overall growth rate has been three to four times more rapid than Geauga County as a whole; its share of the total population of the county has more than doubled since 1970, from 2.5% to a currently estimated 5.1%.

This rapid growth was not always the case. In fact up to 1970, Auburn Township had a gradually declining share of the county's total population. (Auburn Township Land Use Plan, p. 21). A population projection prepared by NOACA cited in the Plan projected a township population of 3,700 by the year 2005. The 1998 estimate of Auburn's current population by the Bureau of the Census puts the total at 4,551. Thus, Auburn is growing much more rapidly than previously projected.

Suburban development accounts for most of this growth. Auburn is in the path of outward movement from the Cleveland metropolitan area. This suburban growth is reflected in the rapid increase in housing starts in the township, with Auburn moving from 4th to 2nd place in the county rankings (see Economic Analyses for the Geauga County, Ohio General Plan, p. 34 and Map 9, p. 34A). The housing being built in Auburn is substantially higher in value than the county average for new construction (Economic Analyses, Map 5, p. 26A). Auburn's proportionate share for total assessed valuation is above the county average level by the ratio of 1.00 to 1.23 which translates into a 23% higher assessed valuation than its population share using the 1998 population estimates. Generalizing from these facts, Auburn is experiencing an influx of above county average income households buying or building above county average valued housing.

Another indicator of residential growth in the township is the length in miles of township maintained roadways. In 1989, when the Auburn Township Land Use Plan was prepared, there were 36.76 miles of township roads (see p. 5 of Plan). Currently there are 46.9 miles of township roads, a 10.14 mile increase in ten years, for a percentage growth of 28%. The bulk of these new roadways service new residential land use.

Auburn's growth is due in part to its favorable geographic location and improved transportation linkages. Lying in the eastern portion of the suburban belt or fringe area of the Cleveland metropolitan area, Auburn is undergoing a development process commonly associated with this type of location. Additionally, this "normal" development pressure has been strengthened by the recent extension of the US Route 422 expressway into Geauga County and the location of an interchange with Ohio Route 44 and the expressway within the township. Of less importance but still significant is the recent opening of another interchange with Ohio Route 44 and the Ohio Turnpike (I-80) to the south of Auburn in northern Portage County (Shalersville Township).

The land use impacts of these population trends are easy to discern. Agriculture and open space land is being converted into residential land throughout the township. This is occurring despite the fact the largest percentage of land within Auburn received a "severe" development constraint designation in the capability analysis included as part

of the 1989 Auburn Township Land Use Plan. Given this environmental situation, agriculture and open space preservation makes sense for Auburn Township both from economic and environmental perspectives. Residential development in environmentally fragile areas can be costly because of the infrastructure costs associated with developing land with “severe” constraints. Also in areas without central water and sewer, the possibility of well contamination can become an issue.

Agriculture is still an important component of the Auburn economy. According to Economic Analyses (p. 48), the number of farms in Auburn Township actually increased between 1990 and 1997. CAUV parcels (Current Agricultural Use Value) grew from 152 in 1996 to 165 in 1998. Effective land use planning can work to protect Auburn’s agricultural community.

Table 1

Population Change: Auburn Township and Geauga County
1970 to 1998

<u>Year</u>	<u>Auburn</u>	<u>% +</u>	<u>Gauga</u>	<u>% +</u>	<u>Auburn as % of Gauga</u> <u>Total</u>
1970	1,587	- - -	62,977	- - -	2.5%
1980	2,351	+ 48.10%	74,474	+ 18.30%	3.2%
1990	3,298	+ 40.30%	81,129	+ 8.90%	4.1%
1998 (est)	4,551	+ 38.0%	88,788	+ 9.40%	5.1%

Study Purpose and Methodology

“Cost of community services studies reorganize financial data at the local level to show the demand for services by different land uses. . . COCS studies should not be confused with traditional fiscal impact studies that project the future cost of services incurred by new developments. Instead, COCS studies look at individual fiscal periods and analyze the current contributions of various land use sectors.”³

The basic steps in carrying out a cost of community services study are five-fold. The first step involves the identification of the major land use categories to be utilized in the analysis. Preferably this identification is done in consultation with local planners. Once the major categories of land use are defined, the second step is data collection and analysis. As much information as possible should be collected about the revenue sources and expenditure patterns of the community under study. These include local budget and financial reports, information about taxes from the county auditor, expenditures for various services including safety, public works, education and general government operations. There is not one source of information but rather several. These various sources must be contacted and information collected about the type of service provided, where the service is provided and the costs for services. This information is derived from a variety of sources including the police department, the fire department, the engineering or public works office, the county auditor, the local board of education, etc.

Once the financial information is obtained, it is then allocated to the major land use categories identified in step one. This is a two-part procedure (making up steps three and four). The first part involved grouping and allocating revenue to the land use categories. Revenue sources commonly include property tax receipts, state aid and locally generated revenue. The second part involved allocating expenditures to the land use categories. This is usually the more difficult part because a detailed analysis of services rendered is required. For example, the response patterns for police and fire services must be analyzed in order to make an allocation of time or effort by these departments to different geographic areas of the community, this is necessary to determine the allocation of their expenditures for services in the various land use categories. The most common set of expenditures subjected to this type of locational analysis are:

- 1) education
- 2) general government
- 3) public safety (including both police and fire protection)
- 4) public works (primarily roads and bridges)
- 5) health and human services

³ Is Farmland Protection a Community Investment? How to do a cost of Community Services Study. American Farmland Trust (Spring 1993) p 4.

Data analysis and the calculation of the ratios of revenue and expenditure for each land use category constitutes the fifth and final step in the COCS analysis. These ratios are useful because they provide a “point in time” analysis of the fiscal contribution and the fiscal requirements of various land uses in a community. These ratios help to explain the extent some land use categories subsidize the provision of services to other categories.

In Auburn Township, step one resulted in the identification of three major land use categories. These are residential, agricultural and a combined category including commercial industrial and public utility property. The agricultural category was subdivided into two parts. These are land and improvements. For the purpose of analysis, the improvements part which includes the farm house or residence was removed from the agricultural land use category and added to the residential land use category. The rationale for this shift is that the farm house is a residential use and, as such, has the same demand for services characteristics as a typical residential property.

Data Collection and Analysis

Information used in this study was obtained from several sources. David Dietrich, Planning Director and Denise Januska of the Geauga County Planning Commission provided reports, maps and names of people and agencies who should be contacted for data needed in this analysis.

Jeffrey P. Nokes, Deputy Auditor, provided information about tax dollars generated by the various property classes in Auburn Township for the year 1998. These classes are:

- 1) agricultural
- 2) residential
- 3) commercial
- 4) industrial
- 5) public utility
- 6) tangible personal property (e.g. the tax on the value of inventories for businesses and industries)

The subdivision of the agricultural property class into land and improvements was made with the assistance of Louis Marion who manages the County Auditor's GIS office. Marion also provided information about the number and tax value of all CAUV parcels in Auburn Township.

Denis Squire, Clerk of Auburn Township, provided information on township finances including the 1998 Year end Financial Report. Mr. Squire also provided information about the servicing of township roads and bridges, which is the primary activity of township government. The bulk of the 1998 expenditures on township roads and bridges was for resurfacing and snow removal. Squire also detailed internal sources of revenue for the township. These include fees (primarily for zoning permits), the sale of cemetery lots, building footers for cemetery headstones, fees associated with the siting and sizing of culverts for driveways and rental fees for the use of the township hall. One important item of information provided by Squire was that 100% of the township's expenditures for roads and bridges in 1998 went to roads.

Peter Seliskar of the County Engineer's Office in Chardon provided information about the location and length of township-maintained roads and the location of township-maintained bridges within Auburn Township. Township maintenance is responsible for 46.9 miles of roads and six bridges.

John Phillips, Township Fire Chief, provided information about the number and location of responses for assistance by the Auburn Township Fire Department. These are summarized in Table 2. Phillips also identified the major land use character for each of the township-maintained roads in Auburn Township. This information was used in determining the percentage of township-maintained roads in each land use category.⁴

Information obtained from the County Sheriff was analyzed to determine the land use for each of the points of response for assistance within Auburn Township during 1998. This required an assessment of each response and an assignment based upon the assessment of each response to a land use category. This information for the County Sheriff is shown in Table 3.

In the case of incidents which occurred on roadways, an assignment to a land use category was made utilizing the percentages of tax dollars generated by each land use category which, as discussed earlier, was obtained from the county auditor.

Tables 4 and 5 provide a detailed breakdown of revenues and expenditures, respectively, for Auburn Township for the year 1998. Expenditures exceeded revenues by approximately \$360,000.00. This is accounted for by including a portion of the overall budget of the County Sheriff (Department of Public Safety) as an Auburn Township expenditure. Table 6 contains the ratios calculated between revenues and expenditures for each land use category. The ratio for residential is \$1.00 of revenue for each \$1.34 of expenditure. This compares closely with the results obtained in similar analyses of Madison Village and Township in Lake County and Shalersville Township in Portage County (see Table 7). The ratio for agriculture is \$1.00 of revenue for each \$.37 of expenditure. Agriculture requires far less in public expenditure than it provides in revenue. Thus, agriculture provides a subsidy for support of residential land use within Auburn Township. The ratio for the combined category is \$1.00 of revenue for each \$.10 of expenditure. This is a somewhat lower figure than those found for Madison and Shalersville. The primary explanation for the difference is in the amount of township public works expenditure devoted to this combined category in Auburn Township. All commercial land use in Auburn Township is serviced by non-township roads and most industrial land use is similarly serviced by non-township roads.

⁴ The breakdown is 88.35% residential, 9.90% rural or agricultural and 1.75% combined (primarily industrial).

Table 2
Fire Department
1998 Responses in Auburn Township

Motor vehicle / traffic related =	60
Residential	212
Combined	44
Farm / Open	<u>25</u>
	341

Allocated motor vehicle / traffic related incidents per % of land use tax value

Residential	76.68	x	60	=	7
Combined	12.43	x	60	=	45
Farm / Open	<u>10.89</u>	x	60	=	<u>8</u>
	100.00				60

Totals

Residential	212	+	45	=	257	=	75.37
Combined	44	+	8	=	52	=	15.25
Farm / Open	25	+	7	=	<u>32</u>	=	<u>9.38</u>
					341		100.00

Table 3

Sheriff's Department
1998 Responses in Auburn Township

Traffic & Road Incidents	=	386
Residential Incidents	=	789
Combined	=	99
Agricultural	=	<u>27</u>
		1,301

Allocate traffic & road incidents per % of land use tax value

Residential	76.68	x	386	=	296
Combined	12.43	x	386	=	48
Agricultural	<u>10.89</u>	x	386	=	<u>42</u>
	100.00				386

Totals

Residential	789	+	296	=	1,085	=	83.40%
Combined	99	+	48	=	147	=	11.30%
Agricultural	27	+	42	=	<u>69</u>	=	<u>5.30%</u>
					1,301		100.00%

Table 4**Auburn Township Revenue 1998**

	<u>Land Use Category</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Combined</u>	
<u>Tax Receipts</u>				
1. School	3808645.71	304182.29	962076.00	5074904.00
2. Property ¹	654267.82	52228.69	128901.99	835398.50
3. Estate	70261.06			70261.06
4. Motor Vehicle			16988.88	16988.88
5. Gasoline			47273.79	47273.79
TOTAL	4533174.59	356410.98	1155240.66	6044826.23
<u>Licenses/Fees</u>				
1. Cemetery	3787.50			3787.50
2. Cable	15597.36			15597.36
3. Zoning	20693.51		1089.13	21782.64
4. Roads/Bridges	175.00			175.00
TOTAL	40253.37		1089.13	41342.50
<u>Intergovernmental²</u>				
1. Local Gov't Distribution	61460.95	4571.35	7109.37	73141.67
2. Rollback	14896.87	1108.00	1723.17	17728.04
3. Roads/Bridges	38573.36	2869.02	4461.89	45904.27
4. Fire	29812.95	2217.43	3448.56	35478.94
TOTAL	144744.13	10765.80	16742.99	172252.92
<u>Other</u>				
1. Cemetery	2700.00			2700.00
2. Roads/Bridges	16737.11	1244.88	1936.03	19918.02
3. Fire	4158.72	309.32	481.05	4949.09
4. Misc.	1142.00			1142.00
TOTAL	24737.83	1554.20	2417.08	28709.11
<u>Interest³</u>				
GRAND TOTAL	4766429.91	370557.95	1181319.95	6318307.73

¹ Agriculture was divided into land and improvements with improvements moved to residential land use; improvements account for 42.59% of total revenue for the agriculture land use category.

² Not reimbursed on public utility and tangible property; reimbursed at 10% for other land uses except single family owner-occupied which is reimbursed at 12.5%: a.) residential 84.03% of total rollback
b.) agriculture 6.25% of total rollback
c.) combined 9.72% of total rollback

³ Calculated by applying total percentages for all previous receipts by land use category:
a. residential 75.44%
b. agriculture 5.86%
c. combined 9.72%

Table 5**Auburn Township Expenditure 1998**

	<u>Land Use Category</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Combined</u>	
<u>Education</u>	5074904.00			5074904.00
<u>General Government</u>¹	164494.94	16648.34	13802.13	194945.41
<u>Public Safety</u>				
1. Fire	239845.85	29849.46	48529.25	318224.56
2. Sheriff	283550.86	18019.43	38418.76	339989.05
TOTAL	523396.71	47868.89	86948.01	658213.61
<u>Public Works</u>	586458.68	65715.23	11616.34	663790.25
<u>Health</u>	19129.74			19129.74
<u>Bond Principal Payment</u>²	9243.01	1035.72	183.08	10461.81
<u>Capital Outlay</u>²	50921.53	5705.98	1008.63	57636.14
GRAND TOTAL	6428548.61	136974.16	113558.19	6679080.96

¹ Calculated as % total for all general activities including public safety, public works, health, capital outlay and bond principal payment: a. residential 84.38%
b. agriculture 8.54%
c. combined 7.08%

² Calculated using the same percentages derived for allocation of public works expenditures.

Conclusion

Farmland preservation has become an important issue in Ohio and in Geauga County. Current methods consisting primarily of large lot zoning have not been able to stem the tide of urbanization in rural areas. Several changes in the current system have been proposed. These include:

1. Agricultural Zoning. Twenty-nine Ohio counties permit some form of agricultural zoning and several townships have adopted a 20 acre minimum parcel size. (Most preservationists advocate a 40 acre minimum.) Nearly fifty townships in Ohio have exclusive agricultural zoning districts in which non-agricultural uses are not permitted.⁵ (County planning commission staff believe that agricultural zoning, if enacted within the county, should be accompanied by a purchase of development rights (PDR) program in order to avoid a taking issue).
2. CAUV Rollbacks. Several studies have advocated applying CAUV rollbacks to farm buildings and facilities as a way to make farming more profitable.
3. Eliminating CAUV rollbacks for non-agricultural operations.
4. Study funding the development on a county-wide level of a purchase of development rights (PDR) program which would have as its objective the preservation of prime farmland by severing its development potential for non-agricultural uses.
5. Examining, when state enabling legislation permits, a transfer of development rights program (TDR) in conjunction with low density planned unit developments (PUD). Essentially, development potential would be transferred from farm land to areas where higher density non-agricultural development is being encouraged.
6. Assessing the possibility of providing tax abatements for new farmers who agree to keep their land in agriculture for a minimum number of years (at least ten).
7. Consider the impact of new road and sewer infrastructure on the land use conversion process and limit the impact of such infrastructure in prime agricultural areas.

Portions of Auburn Township may qualify for one or more of the above techniques.

Non-residential land uses in Auburn Township, including agriculture, subsidizes (through an excess of revenues over expenditures) residential land use. This is the major conclusion of this analysis. Similar studies have produced similar results. Corroborative support for this conclusion can be found in the operating receipts / operating expenses per capita for Geauga County political subdivisions contained in

⁵ The Ohio Zoning and Land Use Survey. Ohio State University Extension (September 1999), pp. 10-14.

Economic Analyses (see Map 8 from this document). The more rural southeast quadrant of the county including Burton, Middlefield, Troy and Parkman Townships all have revenues per capita which exceed their expenditure per capita. Given this conclusion, land use planning should strive for an appropriate balance among land uses. Allowing the unplanned conversion of non-residential land to residential development can result in future fiscal difficulties for a community. The protection of agricultural land is a crucial part of this process of creating an appropriate land use balance.

Table 6

Township Budget Balance by Land Use Category

	<u>Land Use Category</u>			
	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Combined</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue	4766429.23	370557.95	1181319.95	6318307.13
Expenditure	6428548.61	136974.16	113558.19	6679080.96
Balance	(1662119.38)	233583.79	1067761.76	(360773.83)
Ratio	1 : 1.34	1 : .37	1 : .10	

Table 7

Comparison of Ratios of Revenue to Expenditures for Northeast Ohio Townships

	<u>Ratios</u>		
<u>Township</u>	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Industrial/Commercial</u>
Auburn (Geauga Co.)	1 : 1.34	1 : .37	1 : .10
Madison (Lake Co.)	1 : 1.40	1 : .38	1 : .25
Shalersville (Portage Co.)	1 : 1.58	1 : .31	1 : .15 (commercial only)

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Source: Frank J. Costa and Gail Gordon Sommers, Center for Public Administration and Public Policy
Kent State University

APPENDIX

H. LAND EVALUATION AND SITE ASSESSMENT (LESA)

Overview

LESA is a numerical system designed to determine the quality of land for agricultural uses and to assess sites for their agricultural economic viability. It consists of two parts, land evaluation (LE) and site assessment (SA). LESA can be used to help identify and protect important agricultural land and to assist in implementing farmland protection policies.

Analysis of a site using the LESA system will produce a score or rank. The score can be used to compare different sites to determine which should be protected. The score can also be used to assist in the decision to convert a site to a non-agricultural use.

One or more committees may develop the LESA system. The committee(s) should contain knowledgeable local people with a range of expertise. Local officials should appoint members to the committee(s). The LE committee should consist of a soil scientist to help with soil survey factors. Other members may include local planners, farmers, extension personnel, and NRCS or SWCD staff. The SA committee members may include local farmers, planners, realtors, zoning officials, NRCS, SWCD, and extension personnel.

Land Evaluation

Information from the soil survey is used to develop the land evaluation (LE) portion of the system. This information may include land capability class and subclass, important farmland designation, soil productivity, or soil potential. A soil potential rating, if available, is the recommended LE factor. Soil potential ratings incorporate the costs of overcoming limitations into soil productivity and net returns.

After the land evaluation factors are chosen, the soils are rated from best to worst and placed into one of ten groups. A relative value is determined for each group, with the best group receiving a value of 100 and the worst a value of 0.

Sites with multiple soils use a weighted LE value. This is determined by multiplying the relative value of each soil type by its respective area. The product of each soil type is then divided by the total area of the site to get a weighted value for each soil type. The weighted values of each soil type are added to arrive at the weighted value of the site.

Site Assessment

Site assessment identifies other non-soil factors that are determined by local people to be important in making decisions in protecting agricultural land. They are the factors

that contribute to the quality of a site for its agricultural use. Factors selected measure site characteristics related to farming practices or potential agricultural productivity, development or conversion pressure on a site, or historic, cultural, scenic, or environmental values. The existing and future land use needs of an area must be considered when determining agricultural economic viability of a site. Factors other than the value of the land for crop production must be measured.

Before the factors are selected, the local committee needs to determine its goals and objectives. These could include assessing the agricultural viability of a site, assessing alternate sites, regulating land use, or acquiring development rights. The factors selected should assist the local decision-makers to meet the objectives.

After the factors are selected by the local site assessment committee, a scaling or weighted value is assigned to each site assessment factor based on the relative importance of each factor. Factors are scaled in such a way that the factors that are more desirable for retaining a site in agriculture receive the higher value.

Combining the LE and SA Ratings

Most LESA systems have assigned a maximum of 100 points to the LE portion and a maximum of 200 points to the SA portion, for a total maximum of 300 points. This is based on the recommendations of the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, 1983, National Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Handbook, Issue 1. Research has shown that this ratio may need to be adjusted for local needs and conditions. In areas with diverse soils, the LE may need to be given a greater weight. In areas with more homogenous soils, the SA may be more significant in determining the importance of the site.

Applying LESA

Making Decisions

Information from a LESA system can be used several different ways. LESA scores are used as a tool to help set policy or to make land-use decisions. LESA scores can be ranked and used to compare several sites as an aid in decision making. Thresholds can be devised for applying LESA scores. Thresholds can be applied for the designation of land for retention in agricultural uses in comprehensive plans and local zoning. A threshold can be devised for selecting farms for purchase of development rights.

Using GIS

Most LESA systems use paper maps, soil survey, and other hardcopy information. The use of geographic information systems (GIS), where available, could make the process of site evaluation faster and easier. A GIS could be developed for site assessment factors and digital soil maps can be used for the land evaluation.

Summary

The soil survey is one of the most comprehensive sources of natural resource data in the United States. The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment system utilizes this technical information along with other local data to provide a tool for land-use decisions making that is defensible and objective.

LESA is a numerical rating system designed to aid decision-makers in determining the quality of the land for agricultural uses. LESA is not intended as a stand-alone technique to make decisions, but as a tool to evaluate sites in the decision making process.

LESA consists of two parts, land evaluation (LE) and site assessment (SA). A relative rating is derived based on factors identified by local committees. The LE portion uses information from the soil survey. The SA portion uses information other than soils that affects the quality of a site for agricultural use.

LESA Hands-On Exercise **(This is a hypothetical example)**

The _____ farm is exploring the possibility of building a _____ in northeastern Ohio. They have options for two sites in Geauga County. You are a member of the Geauga County _____ Committee. You are responsible for evaluating the two proposed sites and preparing a ranking based on the local LESA system.

Site 1:

This site contains 160 acres in the southwest quarter of section ____ in _____ Township, about 2 miles from the Village of _____ and 4 miles from the Village of _____. The area surrounding the perimeter of the site is in agricultural use for a distance of more than one mile. The site currently has no zoning and is enrolled in CAUV. The site has frontage on township roads on three sides. Two county roads are within 1 mile of the site. The nearest state or federal highway is 2 miles from the site.

Site 2:

This site is about 103 acres in the southwest quarter of section ____ in _____ Township, on the east side of the Village of _____. The site is adjacent to the corporation limits. The land use within one mile of the perimeter of the site is a mixture of agricultural, commercial, residential, and other. About 60 percent of this area is in agricultural use. The site currently is enrolled in CAUV and is not zoned. The historic _____ runs along the edge of the site.

Table 8

Geauga County Soils
With Agricultural Rating & The Relative Value

<u>Soil Name</u>	<u>Agricultural Rating</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Relative Value</u>
Bogart (Bg)	2E	6	73
Brecksville (Br)	7E	10	0
Canadice (Ca)	4W	9	40
Caneadea (Cc)	3W*	7	69
Canfield (Cd)	2E	6	73
Carlisle (Cf)	5W	9	30
Chili (Cn)	2E	6	73
Chili gravelly (Co)	2E	6	73
Chili-Oshtemo (Cy)	2E	6	73
Damascus (Da)	3W*	7	69
Darien (Dr)	3W*	7	69
Ellsworth (Eh)	2E	6	73
Ellsworth shale (Em)	2E	6	73
Fitchville (Fc)	3W*	5	80
Geeburg (Gb)	4E	9	40
Glenford (Gf)	2E	6	73
Holly (Ho)	3W	7	69
Haskins (Hs)	2E*	6	73
Jimtown (Jt)	3W*	7	69
Lordstown (Lr)	2E	6	73
Lordstown-Rock (Lx)	2E	6	73
Loudonville (Ly)	2E	6	73
Mahoning (Mg)	3E*	9	40
Mahoning shale (Ms)	3E*	9	40
Mitiwanga (Mt)	3E*	9	40
Orrville (Or)	2W	2	96
Oshtemo (Os)	2E	6	73
Pits, gravel (Pg)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pits, quarry (Pq)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Platea (Ps)	3W	3	90
Ravenna (Re)	3E*	9	40
Rawson (Rm)	2E	6	73
Rittman (Rs)	2E	6	73
Sebring (Sb)	3W*	3	90
Sheffield (Sf)	3W	7	69
Tioga (Tg)	2W	2	96
Udorthents (Ud)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Urban land (Ur)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Water (W)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wabasha (Wa)	5W	10	0
Wadsworth (Wb)	3E*	7	69
Wallkill (Wc)	5W	10	0
Willette (Wt)	5W	10	0
Wooster (Wu)	4E	9	40

*Require Artificial Drainage

Table 9

Land Evaluation Categories

<u>Agricultural Value Group</u>	<u>Land Capability Class</u>	<u>Farmland Designation</u>	<u>Relative Value</u>
1	2W	Prime	100
2	2W, 2E	Prime	96
3	3W	Prime	90
4	1, 2E, 2W	Prime	83
5	3E, 3W	Prime	80
6	2E, 2W	Prime, Non-Prime	73
7	3E, 3W	Prime	69
8	3W	Non-Prime	60
9	3E, 4E, 4W, 6E	Non-Prime	40
10	6E, 7E	Non-Prime	0

Site Assessment Factors

Agricultural Economic Viability

Point Value

1. Size of site (weight 2.0)
 - 160 acres or more 10 pts
 - 40 to 159 acres 5 pts
 - less than 40 acres 0 pts
2. Agricultural land use (weight 3.0)
 - Percentage of area in agricultural use within 1 mile of the perimeter of the site
 - 75% or more 10 pts
 - 50 - 74% 5 pts
 - 25 - 49% 3 pts
 - less than 25% 0 pts
3. Enrolled in CAUV or is designated an Agricultural District (weight 2.4)
 - Site is enrolled in CAUV or is designated an agricultural District 10 pts
 - Not enrolled in CAUV or not designated an agricultural district 0 pts

Regulatory

4. Zoning for site (weight 2.0)
 - Proposed use conflicts with current zoning 10 pts
 - Proposed use conforms with current zoning or no zoning 0 pts

Urban Infrastructure

Point Value

5. Distance to State Highway (weight 1.8)
 - Within 1 mile of township road and greater than 1 mile to county, state, or federal highway 10 pts
 - Within 1 mile of county roads and greater than 1 mile to State or Federal Highways 5 pts
 - Within 1 mile of State and Federal Highways 0 pts
6. Distance to incorporated areas (weight 1.6)
 - Greater than 5 miles 10 pts
 - Between 1 and 5 miles 7 pts
 - Within 1 mile 0 pts

Environmental

7. Impact on wetlands (weight 1.0)
 - Site contains wetlands as identified on ODNR_REALM Land Use Data Map 10 pts
 - Site contains hydric soils as identified on soil survey map and no wetlands as delineated on ODNR_REALM Land Use Data Map 5 pts
 - Site Contains no wetlands as identified on ODNR_REALM Land Use Data Map or hydric soils 0 pts
8. Impact on drainage (weight 2.2)
 - Conversion of site will have adverse effect 10 pts
 - Conversion of site will have no adverse effect or slight effect 0 pts

Social

9. Compatibility with surrounding land uses (weight 2.6)
 - Ratio of number of conflicting parcels within 1/2 mile of perimeter to parcel size
 - 0 10 pts
 - 0.01 - 0.25 7 pts
 - 0.26 - 0.50 5 pts
 - > 0.50 0 pts
10. Scenic/historic values on site (weight 1.4)
 - Scenic or historic feature present 10 pts
 - No scenic or historic feature present 0 pts

Table 10

Worksheet For Land Evaluation

Agricultural Land Evaluation of Site # **1**

Location of Site _____

Soil Survey Sheet # _____ Prepared by _____

Date _____

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Agricultural Value Group</u>	<u>Map Units</u>	<u>Relative Value of Group</u>	<u>Acres of Group on Site</u>	<u>Column 3 X Column 4</u>
2	Or	2W 96	15	1440
3	Ps	3W 90	60	5400
6	Cy	2E 73	28	2044
7	Da	3W 69	57	3933
		Total	160	12817

Total of Column 5 = Relative Site Value
Total of Column 4

$$\frac{12817}{160} = \frac{80}{(\text{Relative Site Value})}$$

Table 11**Worksheet For Site Assessment**

<u>Site 1</u> Site Factors	Maximum Points	Weight	Weighted Maximum Points	Assigned Points	Column 2 X Column 4
	1	2	3	4	5
Agricultural Economic Viability					
Factor 1: Size of site	10	2.0	20	10	20
Factor 2: Agricultural land use	10	3.0	30	10	30
Factor 3: Enrolled in CAUV / Ag district	10	2.4	24	10	24
Regulatory					
Factor 4: Zoning for site	10	2.0	20	0	0
Urban Infrastructure					
Factor 5: Distance to State Highway	10	1.8	18	5	9
Factor 6: Distance to incorporated areas	10	1.6	16	7	11
Environmental					
Factor 7: Impact on wetlands	10	1.0	10	5	5
Factor 8: Impact on drainage	10	2.2	22	10	22
Social					
Factor: 9 Compatibility with surrounding land uses	10	2.6	26	10	26
Factor 10: Scenic or historic values on site	10	1.4	14	0	0
Site Assessment Subtotal					147
Land Evaluation Subtotal					80
Total Points Accrued by Site					227
Total Points Possible					300

Table 12

Worksheet For Land Evaluation

Agricultural Land Evaluation of Site # **2**

Location of Site _____

Soil Survey Sheet # _____ Prepared by _____

Date _____

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Agricultural Value Group</u>	<u>Map Units</u>	<u>Relative Value of Group</u>	<u>Acres of Group on Site</u>	<u>Column 3 X Column 4</u>
3	Ps	3W 90	2	180
5	Fc	3W 80	101	8080
		Total	103	8260

Total of Column 5 = Relative Site Value
Total of Column 4

$$\frac{8260}{103} = \frac{80}{\text{(Relative Site Value)}}$$

Table 13**Worksheet For Site Assessment**

<u>Site 2</u> <u>Site Factors</u>	Maximum Points	Weight	Weighted Maximum Points	Assigned Points	Column 2 X Column 4
	1	2	3	4	5
Agricultural Economic Viability					
Factor 1: Size of site	10	2.0	20	5	10
Factor 2: Agricultural land use	10	3.0	30	5	15
Factor 3: Enrolled in CAUV / Ag district	10	2.4	24	10	24
Regulatory					
Factor 4: Zoning for site	10	2.0	20	0	0
Urban Infrastructure					
Factor 5: Distance to State Highway	10	1.8	18	5	9
Factor 6: Distance to incorporated areas	10	1.6	16	0	0
Environmental					
Factor 7: Impact on wetlands	10	1.0	10	5	5
Factor 8: Impact on drainage	10	2.2	22	10	22
Social					
Factor: 9 Compatibility with surrounding land uses	10	2.6	26	0	0
Factor 10: Scenic or historic values on site	10	1.4	14	10	14
Site Assessment Subtotal					99
Land Evaluation Subtotal					80
Total Points Accrued by Site					179
Total Points Possible					300

Conclusion

In conclusion, this example shows the preferred site is number one. Site one had a rating of 227 out of 300 while site two had a rating of 179 out of 300. The higher number reflects the site that is more suitable for a farm operation. The LESA system may be used in conjunction with a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program as a guide for decision-making.

Source: Soils Information for Decision-Making presented by Association of Ohio Pedologists

Geauga County Farmland Preservation Plan

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