

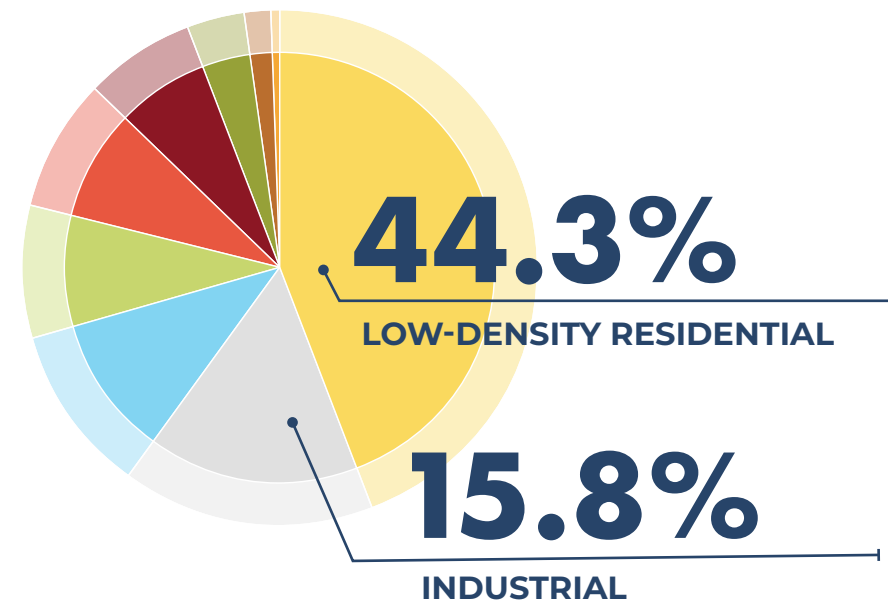
CHAPTER 4: FUTURE LAND USE

EXISTING LAND USES IN COLUMBUS

Figure X.x illustrates the types and locations of land uses in Columbus today. Not surprisingly, low-density residential is the dominant land use at 44.3% of the total shares. Industrial (15.8%), Public/Semi-Public (10.7%), Agriculture (8.4%), and Commercial (7.0%) round out the remaining top five land uses by share in Columbus. As noted in Chapter 2: Existing Conditions, the growing presence of vacant parcels is a critical component of this comprehensive plan and will be further investigated in the recommendations.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN CHAPTER

The remainder of this chapter presents the planning boundary, future land use categories and definitions, future land use plan, and concluding recommendations.



There are roughly 83 acres of vacant land in Columbus today. Most vacant parcels are concentrated to the residential areas of town.

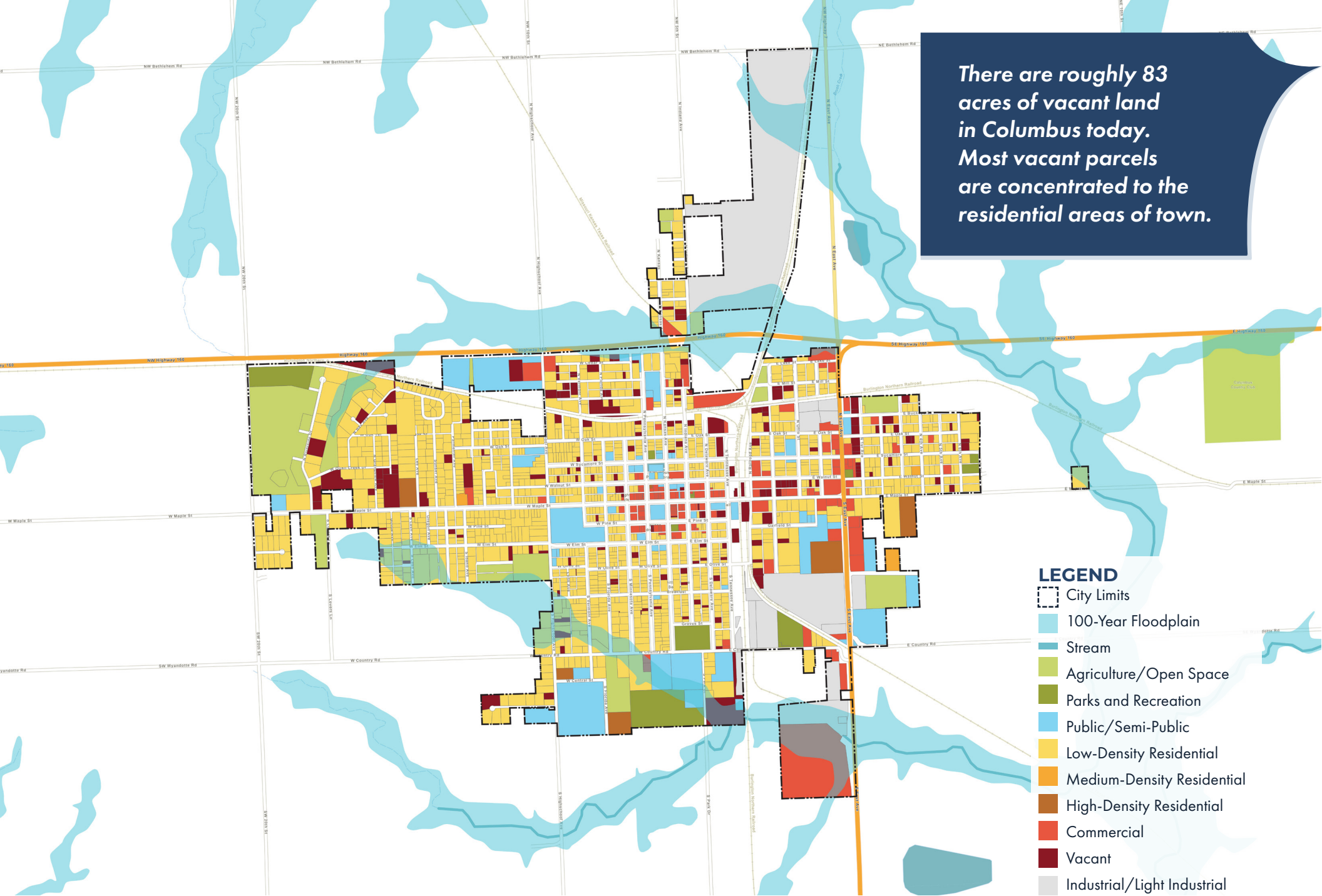


FIGURE X.X // EXISTING LAND USE MAP
 SOURCE: CHEROKEE COUNTY WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

PLANNING BOUNDARY

DEFINING THE PLANNING BOUNDARY

It is typical practice for Future Land Use Plans to plan beyond city limits and have a planning boundary. A planning boundary is a growth boundary; providing parameters for development discussions, infrastructure improvements, and visioning for ideal development patterns.

The planning boundary for the Columbus Future Land Use Plan is presented in Figure X.x. The intention of this planning boundary was to provide realistic growth areas that could be serviced by city infrastructure and to clean up city limits, promoting more contiguous and consistent growth. The extents of the planning boundary are:

- North to NW Bethlehem Road
- West to SW 20th Street
- South to Messer Road
- East, almost to the Brush Creek Golf + Grill

LEGAL BASIS

The Columbus Comprehensive Plan was prepared in accordance with Kansas Statute, Chapter 12-Cities and Municipalities, Article 7-Planning and Zoning (K.S.A. 12-741 through 12-775). This statute enables cities to adopt comprehensive plans and Future Land Use Plans to guide decision-making within the planning boundary.

To ensure the Future Land Use Plan remains relevant and applicable to the community, it is recommended that the governing bodies of Columbus annually review and update the Plan as needed.

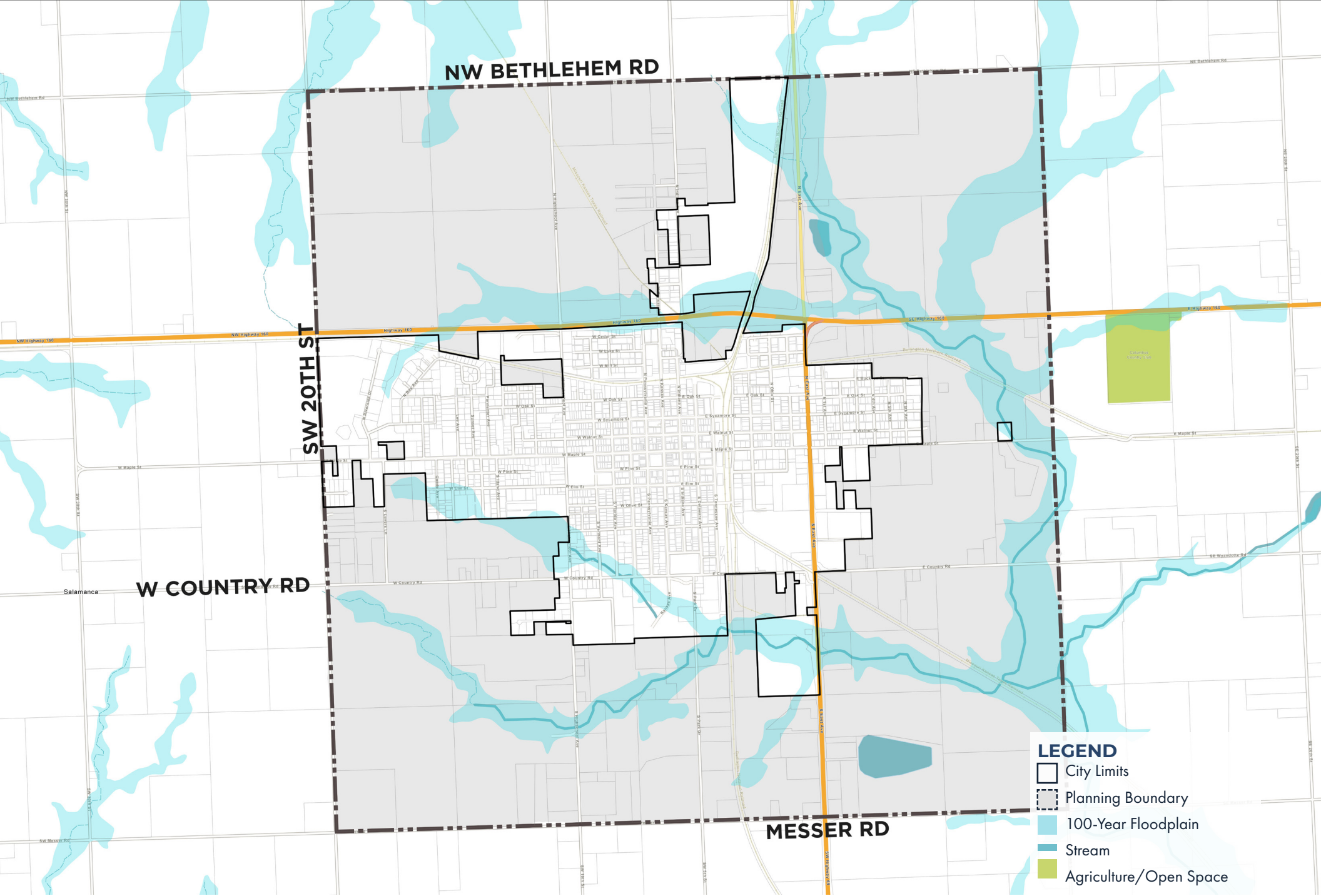


FIGURE X.X // PLANNING BOUNDARY MAP

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Future Land Use Plan utilizes a series of land use categories to better define characteristics, densities, and types of land uses throughout the planning boundary. These categories differ from zoning districts, however, these new categories should serve as a guide for any relevant updates and amendments the code may need over time.

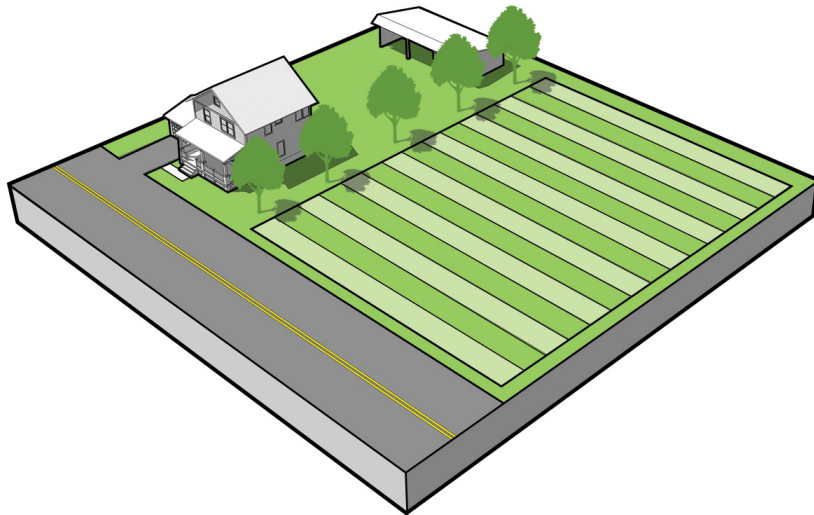
The following pages detail the future land use categories and provide supplemental 3D definition graphics to help illustrate what each of these could look like in the built environment. Each definition includes:

- Land use category and supporting definition
- Corresponding color represented on the Future Land Use Plan
- 3D graphic representation land use components and characteristics



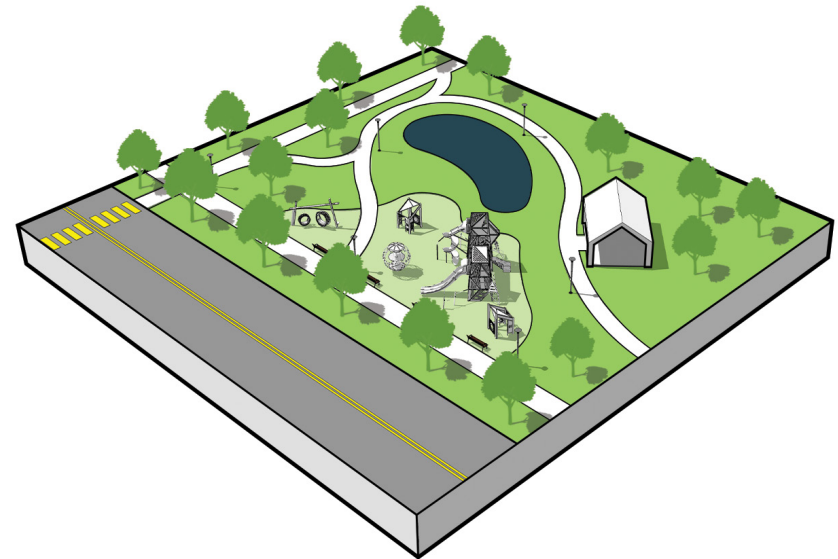
AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE

Land set aside for existing agricultural uses and undeveloped properties consisting of significant tree cover, floodplain, wetlands, and/or stream corridors. May include single family residential dwellings with a minimum lot size of 10 acres (maximum density of 0.1 dwelling units per acre).



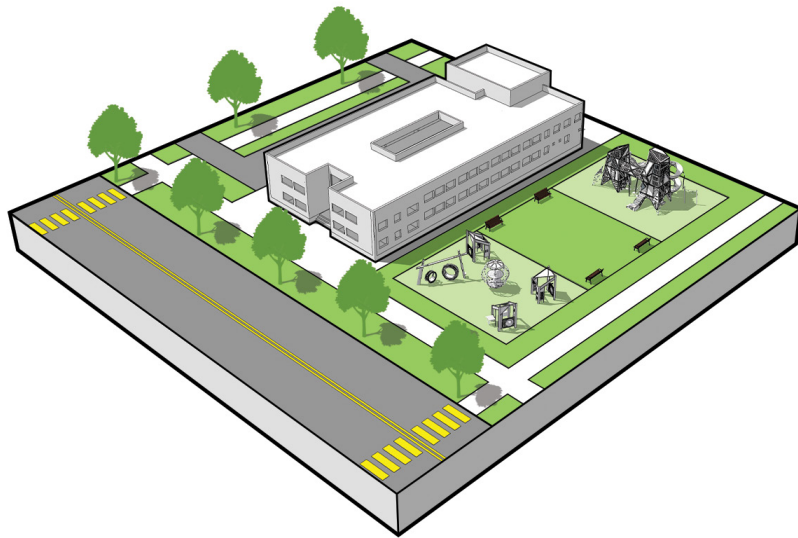
PARKS AND RECREATION

Public and semi-public land dedicated for active and passive recreation including parks, greenbelts with trails, golf courses, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, and playfields.



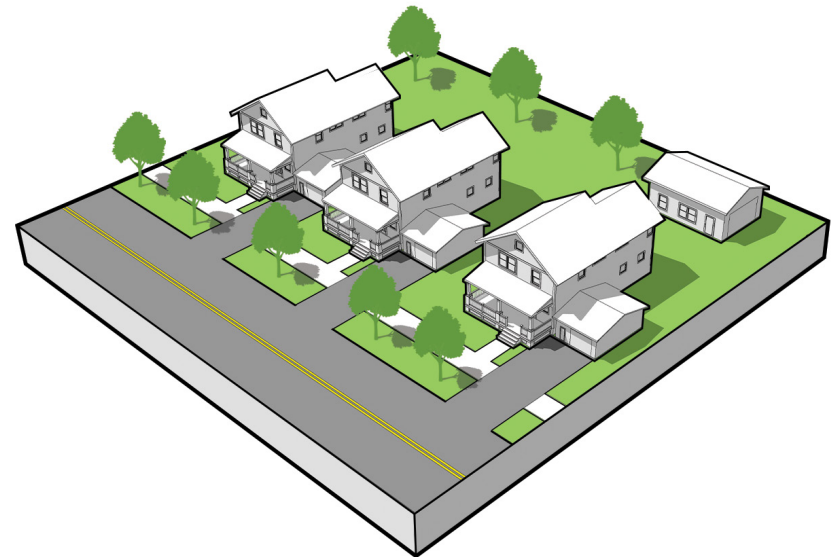
PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

Includes government-owned land, schools, churches, museums, and other institutional uses.



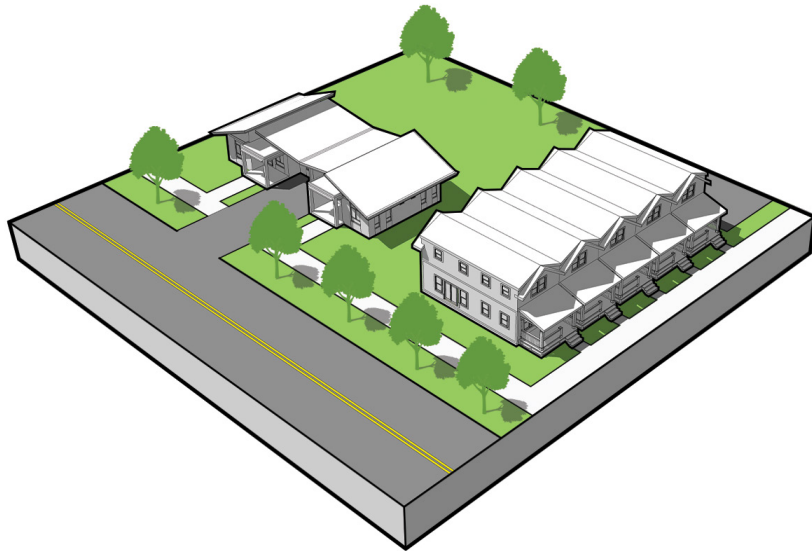
LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land reserved for single family detached residential dwellings and may include accessory dwelling units. Densities range from 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre. This land use category may also include schools, churches, civic uses, childcare centers, and residential care facilities.



MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land reserved for a mix of detached and horizontally attached single family residential dwellings including single-family detached homes, cottage courts, duplexes, triplexes, rowhouses, and townhomes of various designs and layouts. Densities range from 3 to 6 dwelling units per acre. This land use category may also include schools, churches, civic uses, childcare centers, and residential care facilities.



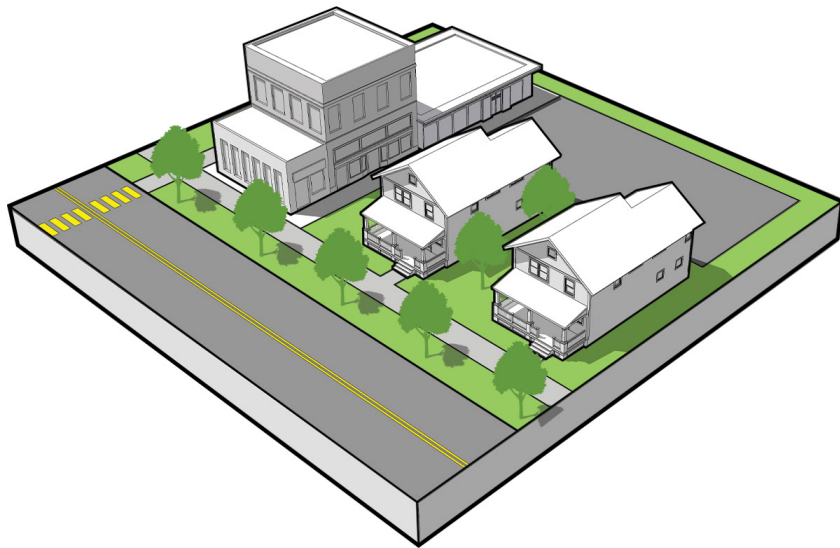
HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land designed for horizontally and vertically attached residential dwellings including rowhouses, townhomes, apartments, condominiums, and senior oriented housing with a density of 6 to 16 or more dwelling units per acres. Uses include schools, churches, civic uses, child care centers, and residential care facilities and may include manufactured home parks, where approved.



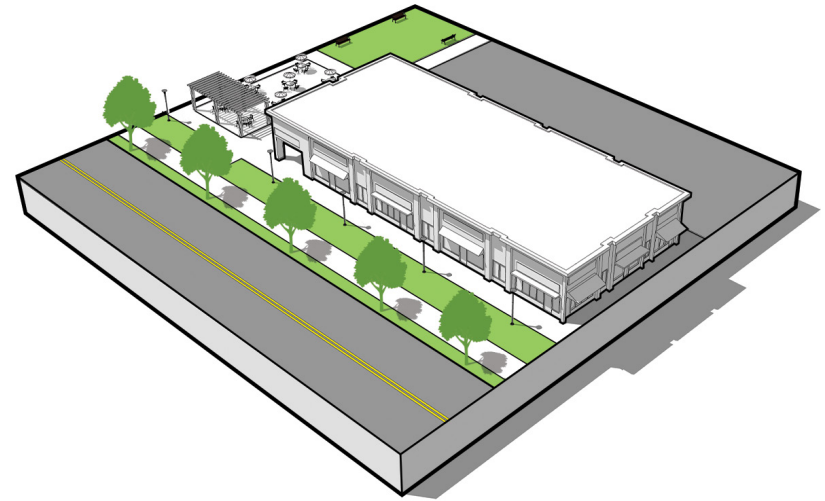
DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL

Land set aside for a pedestrian-friendly mix of retail, office and upper-story in the form of multi-story, mixed-use buildings, but could also include single-use, retail and office buildings. Parking is typically located on-street or in shared parking areas located to the rear of the buildings.



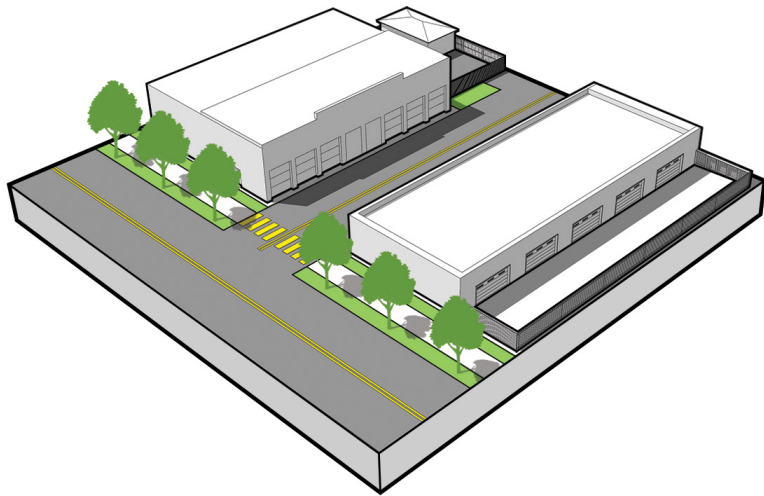
COMMERCIAL

Land designated for retail and office uses that provide services to the local community, visitors, and the motoring public. Uses include shopping centers, office parks, medical centers, large box retailers, drive-thru restaurants, and other auto-oriented retails. Sites are generally 5 or more acres in size and located along major roadways.



INDUSTRIAL

Land reserved for industrial uses such as manufacturing and assembly of goods, warehousing, shipping and distribution centers, railyards, and transload/intermodal facilities. Uses may include outdoor storage of bulk materials, goods, and equipment with adequate screening.



COMMERCIAL INFILL OVERLAY

Commercial infill overlay are areas that should be prioritized for commercial reinvestment and redevelopment in the heart of Columbus. Uses may include offices, small and large retailers, drive-thru restaurants, and other similar uses. Some flexibility should be granted to support desired infill development and creative reuses of the given parcel.

RESIDENTIAL INFILL OVERLAY

Residential infill overlay are areas intended to fill in gaps throughout neighborhoods with needed residential development. Redevelopments are encouraged to be low- or medium-density land uses, supporting single-family, duplex and greater, and townhome units. Flexibility in application should be granted to support creative reuses of the given parcel(s).

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

COLUMBUS FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Figure X.x presents the Future Land Use Plan for the Columbus Comprehensive Plan. Following the limits of the planning boundary, the land uses present a cohesive mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and open space uses. Areas located within the 100-year floodplain intentional show Agriculture/Open Space land uses to preserve these sensitive features. Much of the planning boundary maintains its current function and character with Agriculture/Open Space (55.6%) and Low-Density Residential (24.9%) being the two highest shares of land uses. Some opportunities for added residential densities provided as well to encourage housing diversity. Commercial and industrial land uses are focused to the highways to support access and activity. Public/Semi-public uses reflect current uses and operations. Downtown Commercial is focused around the core of Columbus, highlighting some opportunities for the district's expansion.

Infill Overlay

The Future Land Use Plan also includes residential and commercial infill overlays as shown in Figure X.x. These areas are concentrated around the core of the community and where the highest shares of vacant parcels are today. The intent of these overlays is to encourage infill growth to meet residential and commercial needs in the community without straining existing infrastructure capacity.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY	ACRES	SHARE
Agriculture/Open Space	2,893.2	55.6%
Parks + Recreation	57.1	1.1%
Low-Density Residential	1,298.4	24.9%
Medium-Density Residential	69.8	1.3%
High-Density Residential	21.9	0.4%
Downtown Commercial	17.4	0.3%
Commercial	211.0	4.1%
Industrial	573.7	11.0%
Public / Semi-Public	61.9	1.2%
TOTAL	5,204.4	100.0%

**TABLE X.X // COLUMBUS FUTURE LAND USE PLAN
ACRES AND SHARES**

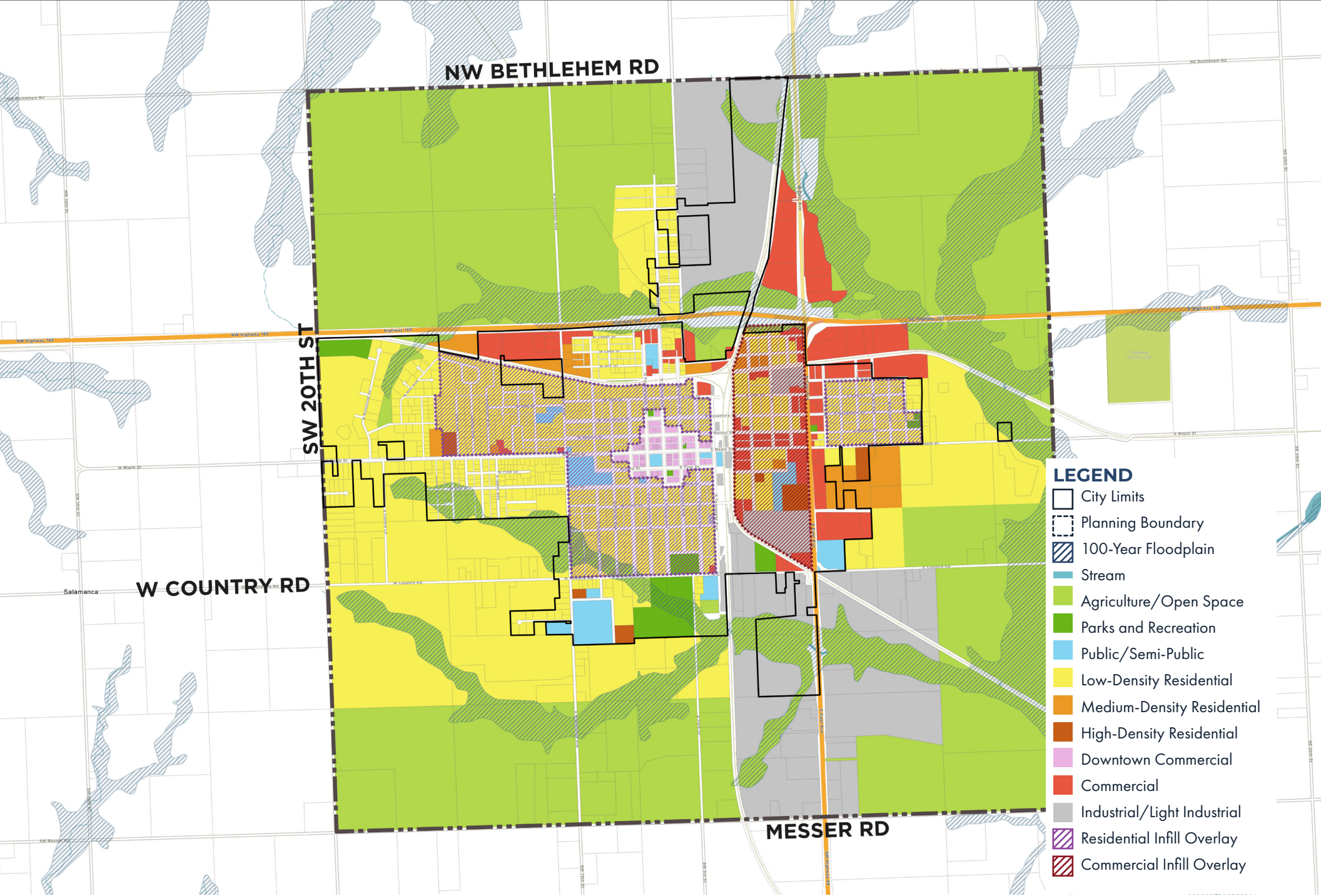


FIGURE X.X // COLUMBUS FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITIES

PLANNING FOR FUTURE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

The Downtown Commercial, Commercial, and Industrial land uses identified in the Future Land Use Plan will serve as the key economic drivers for Columbus. The Commercial and Industrial land is primarily located along the highways and railroad to leverage the higher traffic volumes found here. These developments are and are likely to be larger commercial businesses and franchises, as opposed to the Downtown Commercial core that is centered upon local small business activity. It is important to balance investments, signage and directives, and other related items between the highway corridors and downtown core to support all scales of economic development in Columbus.

Economic Drivers in Columbus Today

Building on Existing Industries

Construction and healthcare are the two primary industries supporting a large share of the jobs market in Columbus today. Retail, education, and manufacturing are three additional industries that are active in the economy as well. These industries are important to note, so that marketing campaigns can be focused on attracting supportive or similar businesses to the area.

RURAL OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The State of Kansas has a Rural Opportunity Zone (ROZ) program that designates 95 counties throughout the state as areas with added financial incentives and support for new residents. For new residents in relocating to one of the qualifying zones, they are potentially eligible for:

- Student Loan Repayment Assistance and/or
- 100% State Income Tax Credit

Columbus is a participating community in the ROZ program and should heavily market and educate prospective residents on this opportunity. This program makes rural living achievable and incentivizes residents to continue to choose Kansas communities as their home.

To learn more, click the link below or scan the QR code:

[Kansas Rural Opportunity Zones](#)



CITY OF COLUMBUS COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION GRANT

The City of Columbus offers a Commercial Rehabilitation Grant to support the rehabilitation and preservation of commercial buildings, support new local businesses, and expand business activity throughout the community. The program is funded and administered by the City of Columbus under the Commercial Rehabilitation and Matching Grant Program. Project assistance can range from a minimum of \$1,000 and shall not exceed \$5,000 per building. Eligible projects include exterior renovations, signage, lighting, awnings, and other related improvements.

To learn more about the existing program details, click the link below or scan the QR code:

[Commercial Rehabilitation Grant](#)



CITY OF COLUMBUS DEMOLITION GRANT PROGRAM

The City of Columbus has a Demolition Grant Program (DGP) to support the removal of residential, commercial or other out-buildings within city limits. The DGP is a voluntary program available to property owners with land within corporate city limits of Columbus. The primary intent of the DGP is to improve the appearance of housing and the health and assure the protection of the public's health, safety, and welfare. Following the application process, and once a property is approved, the applicant must complete the demolition work, cleanup, and backfill within 60 days of the application approval.

To learn more about this program, click the link below or scan the QR code.

WILL ADD ONCE UPLOADED TO THE CITY'S WEBSITE TO CREATE LINKS.

GROWTH CONSIDERATIONS FOR CITY SERVICES

IMPACTS TO PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICES

Growth is a primary focus of any comprehensive plan and how cities can plan for it; however, further consideration for Columbus' rural location, limited capacity for expanding services, and ability to sustain growing operations and maintenance costs are critical to this plan and its recommendations. The impacts of growth, specifically on emergency services and infrastructure, are the primary focus of this section.

Emergency Services in Columbus

Today, the Columbus Fire Department (CFD) provides fire and EMT services to Columbus and an additional 260 square miles of mutual aid territory. Table X.x summarizes the current staffing, equipment and facilities for CFD. As a rural community, it is critical the city has access to these services and is able to maintain call rates long-term. Any increase in population or built structures will have an impact on the CFD's ability to provide service. Considerations for future growth and the ability to maintain service should include:

- Efficient and dependable route patterns for calls and limiting blockages on railroads.
- Water flow and sprinkler capacity for new built structures.

- Staffing levels to support city and mutual aid service area growth.
- Considerations for future facility locations and potential satellite sites.

STAFF TITLE	COUNT
Full-Time Fire Chief	1
Full-Time Drivers	3
Part-Time Drivers	2
Paid Per Call Firefighters	16
TOTAL	22

TABLE X.X // COLUMBUS FIRE STAFFING LEVELS

EQUIPMENT	COUNT
Fire Engine	1
75' Ladder Truck	1
Water Rescue Units	2
Engine/Rescue Unit	1
Tanker	1
Brush Units	4
Command Unit	1
TOTAL	11

TABLE X.X // COLUMBUS FIRE EQUIPMENT SUMMARY

Infrastructure Services

Quality infrastructure is necessary to support quality of life and growth of all kinds in a community. These services include water, sewer, stormwater, and roads; all of which are needed to support a high-functioning city. The cost to providing, improving, and expanding such services can be costly and serve as an obstacle for rural communities to fund, therefore, limiting much of their growth capacity. There are grant assistance options available through the Kansas Department of Commerce and USDA Department of Rural Development that can help combat the high cost associated with infrastructure projects the City of Columbus should explore for future projects.

Planning for Future Infrastructure Growth

Future infrastructure planning should be completed to identify immediate growth areas, infrastructure expansion projects needed to support growth, and identification of preliminary funding opportunities or capital improvement timelines. These conversations should take place frequently to properly plan for and thoughtfully consider impacts to the community's long-term level of service. Incremental improvements and infill developments are likely to be a more sustainable and approachable method for infrastructure projects in Columbus.

Taking the Incremental and Infill Approach

Incremental improvements can support city-led initiatives to maintain momentum and progress toward sustainable growth. It is often easier to gather funds and smaller grants for portions of long-term projects to snowball efforts and push the needle toward full project completion. Infill development leverages pre-existing infrastructure to support immediate development and can lead to more cost-effective efforts from the City with minor modernization projects. The [Housing Chapter](#) discusses infill development and its benefits in greater detail. The City of Columbus should prioritize and encourage incremental and infill development projects to support the long-term functions and success of the community.

RELATION TO ZONING

RELATION TO THE ZONING CODE AND REZONING PROCESS

The Future Land Use Plan helps determine appropriate zoning for properties being developed or annexed into city limits. Table XX identifies the various zoning districts that are compatible (C) or partially compatible (PC) for each of the future land use categories. Any rezoning decisions should be made consistent with the Future Land Use Plan and the guidance provided in this compatibility matrix. This table should be regularly reviewed and updated as may be necessary to address amendments and changes to the City’s zoning districts and regulations.

NOTE: THIS MATRIX WILL BE UPDATED FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION OF THE CITY’S ZONING CODE.

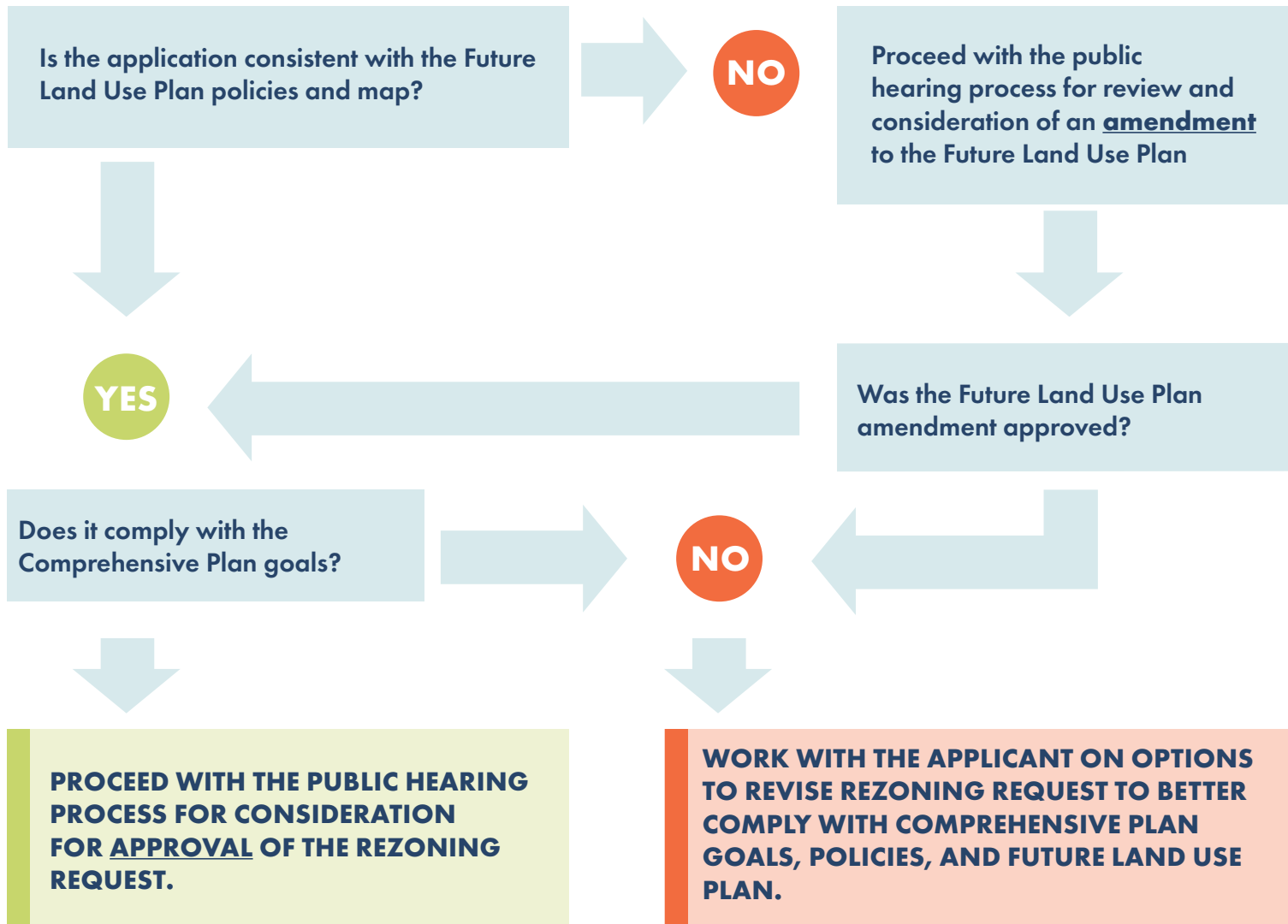
LAND USE AND ZONING DISTRICT COMPATIBILITY MATRIX

EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS	FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES							
	AGRICULTURAL/OPEN SPACE	PARKS AND RECREATION	LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL

C = Compatible
PC = Partially Compatible

FIGURE X.X // ZONING COMPATIBILITY MATRIX

REZONING APPLICATION RECEIVED



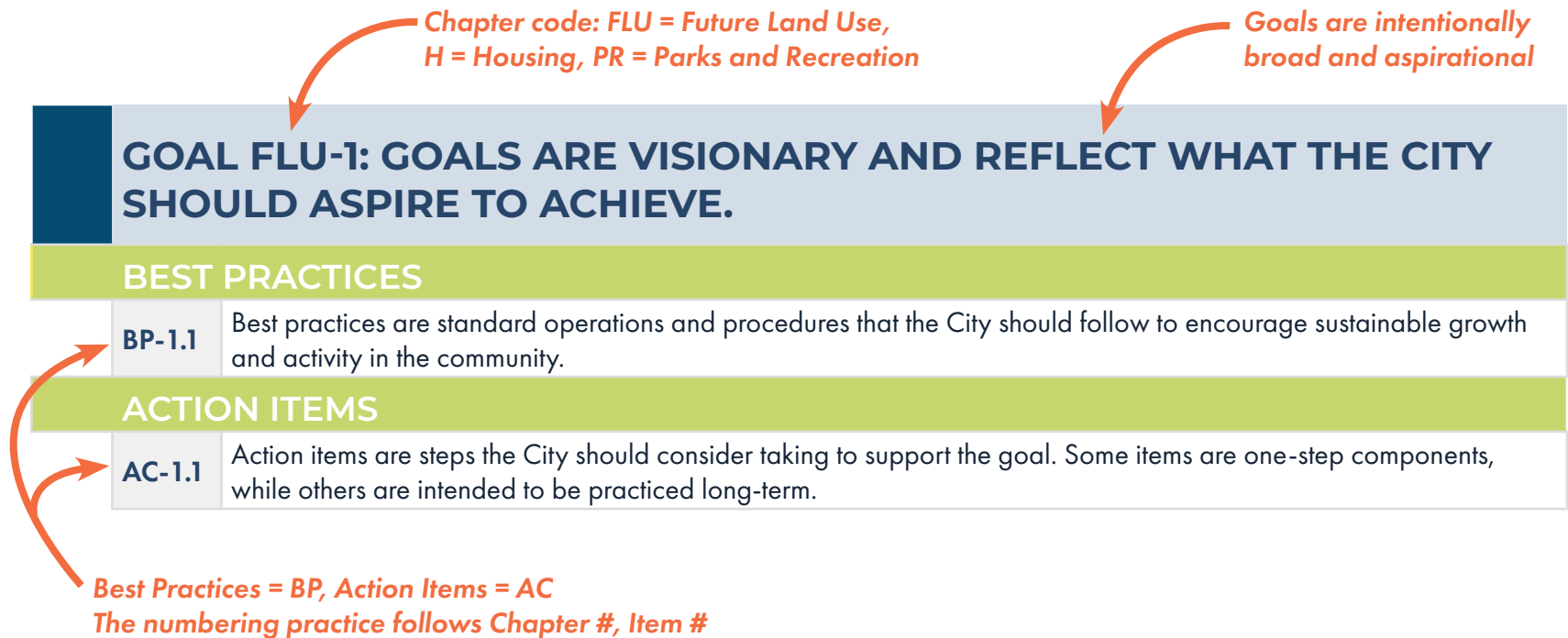
The process for a rezoning is detailed in a flow chart to the left. This chart serves as a reference guide for steps that need to be taken with a rezoning based on the Future Land Use Plan.

FIGURE X.X // REZONING PROCESS FLOW CHART

GOALS, BEST PRACTICES AND ACTION ITEMS

GOALS, BEST PRACTICES AND ACTION ITEMS

Each core chapter within the Columbus Comprehensive Plan concludes with a list of goals, best practices and action items. A sample chart and definitions is provided below to better summarize how these recommendations are intended to be used. The recommended goals, best practices, and action items for the Future Land Use Chapter are provided on the opposite page.



GOAL FLU-1: PROMOTE SMART AND BALANCED GROWTH THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING BOUNDARY

BEST PRACTICES

BP-1.1	Preserve sensitive environmental areas, such as streams, floodplains, and areas with significant tree cover. Future regulatory tools for this could include a floodplain and/or stream buffer ordinance and others.
BP-1.2	Encourage a mix of residential typologies to promote housing choice in Columbus.
BP-1.3	Concentrate higher intensity developments, such as commercial and industrial uses, along major roads and locate less intense developments, such as residential and public spaces, on local roads.
BP-1.4	Utilize transition land uses, as presented in the Future Land Use Plan, to gradually change densities and intensities of uses. Landscape buffers should also be considered for buffering uses and spaces throughout the community.
BP-1.5	Do not support or allow island annexations and developments.
BP-1.6	Increase infrastructure capacity as growth and development demands and require all new developments to be fully served by city services (water, sewer, and paved roads).

ACTION ITEMS

AC-1.1	Adopt and implement a zoning code to support the comprehensive plan and Future Land Use Plan recommendations.
AC-1.2	Practice flexibility with the zoning code and Future Land Use Plan to encourage right-sized growth and activity in Columbus.
AC-1.3	Coordinate with local developers to discuss preferred development products and locations within the planning boundary.
AC-1.4	Support and encourage infill redevelopment in commercial and residential infill overlays as defined on the Future Land Use Plan.
AC-1.5	Preserve right-of-way easements for future utilities and streets.
AC-1.6	Identify immediate and long-term growth areas based upon infrastructure availability and serviceability.
AC-1.7	Host a round table with local and regional developers to discuss residential and commercial needs and potential land assembly.

CHAPTER 5: HOUSING

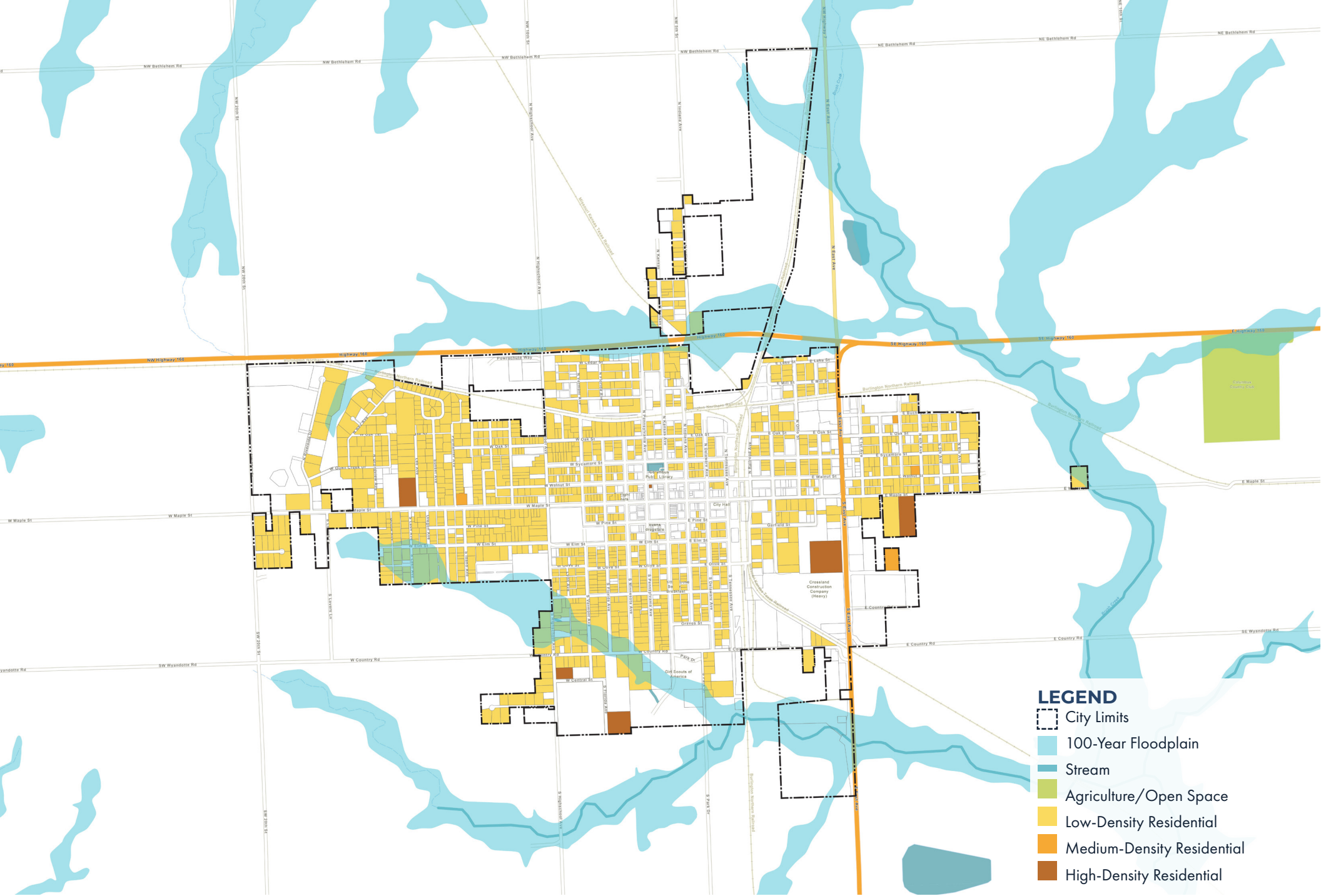
EXISTING RESIDENTIAL COMPOSITION IN COLUMBUS

Figure X.x illustrates the types and locations of residential land uses in Columbus today. Low-density residential is the dominant residential land use type at 95.4% of the stock. Medium-density and high-density residential types comprise only 4.6% of the total stock and take the form of garden style apartments and small townhomes. Due to the high rental housing tenure rate in Columbus today, it can be assumed that many of these rentals are also single-family homes.

The public input indicated a strong desire to maintain the low-density dominance, though there was some support for cottage style developments and smaller, single-family homes that could be an efficient way to add small amount of density to the residential stock. These preferred housing types are discussed more in the following pages.

RESIDENTIAL TYPE	ACRES	SHARE
Low-Density Residential	524.3	95.4%
Medium-Density Residential	4.2	0.8%
High-Density Residential	21.0	3.8%
TOTAL	549.6	100.0%

TABLE X.X // EXISTING RESIDENTIAL ACRES + SHARES



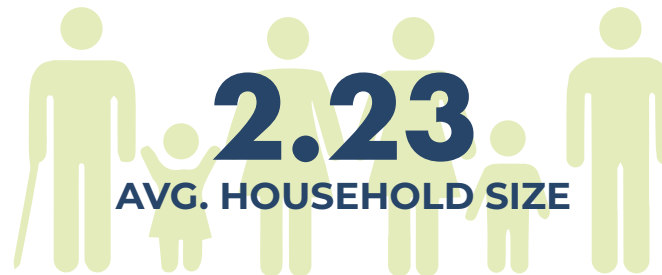
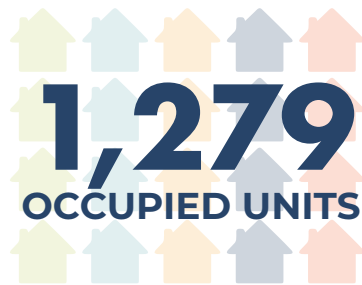
- LEGEND**
- City Limits
 - 100-Year Floodplain
 - Stream
 - Agriculture/Open Space
 - Low-Density Residential
 - Medium-Density Residential
 - High-Density Residential

FIGURE X.X // EXISTING LAND USE MAP
 SOURCE: CHEROKEE COUNTY WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

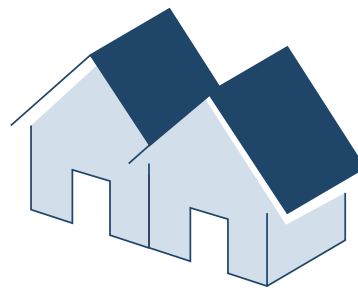
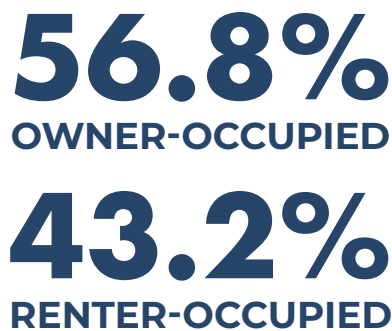
HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS IN COLUMBUS TODAY

During the existing conditions analysis, a thorough review of the existing household characteristics was completed. The figures and graphs presented on the following pages highlight some of these findings and provide guidance on needed housing types and characteristics in the Future Land Use Plan. All datasets utilize the U.S. Census Bureau's ACS 5-year 2022 Estimates.



There are an estimated 1,279 occupied residential units in Columbus today. A unit can be anything from a single-family home to an apartment unit. An average household size of 2.23 persons indicates that there are more two- and three-person households in the community than single-household occupants.



Columbus has an atypical share of owner vs. renter occupied units. In most rural communities, there is a significantly larger share of owner-occupied units; however, the Columbus housing tenure presents fairly even shares between owner vs. renter.

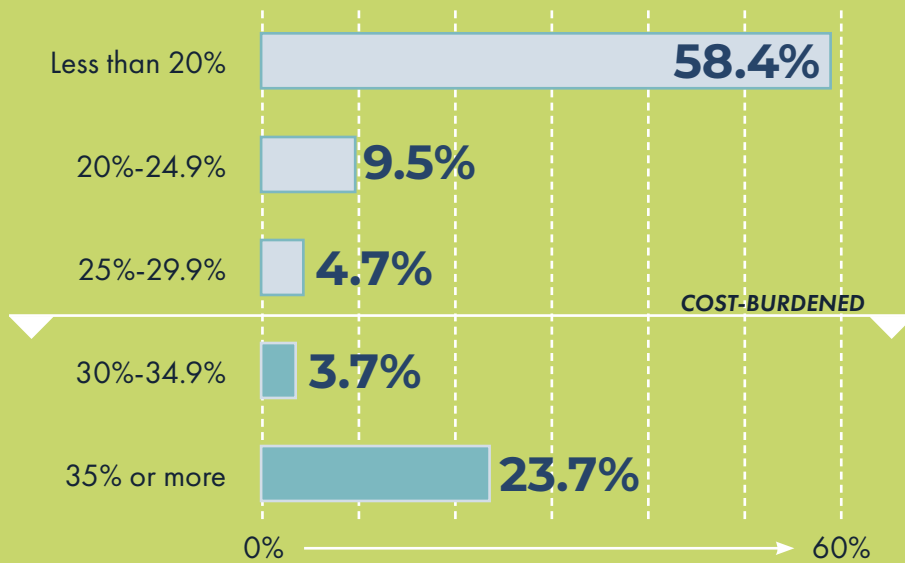


The median household income in Columbus is lower than most neighboring communities in southeast Kansas. Most households earn between \$25,000-\$75,000 a year. These income ranges will be important to track and respond to with new housing developments in the community to ensure they remain affordable to residents.

COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS IN COLUMBUS

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines cost burdened households as those spending more than 30% or more of their gross income on housing. The graphs below in Figures X.x and X.x present the cost-burdened renter- and owner-occupied households for Columbus.

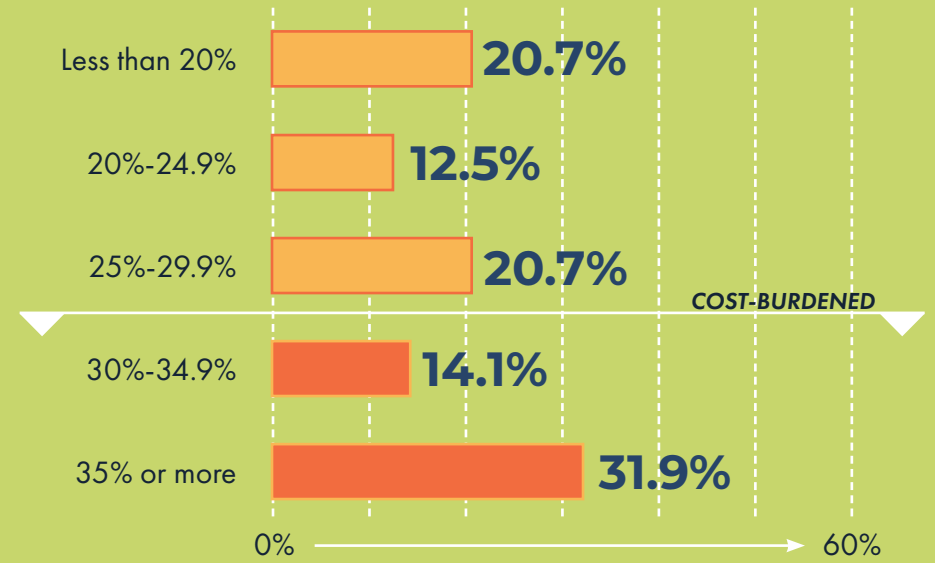
OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS



The majority of homeowners spend less than 20% of their income on housing; however, there are an estimated 24.7% of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing, resulting in many cost-burdened households. With new owner-occupied developments, it will be important to track price points and in comparison to income ranges in the community to ensure there is an affordability factor considered. Maintaining affordable housing should help attract people to the community as well.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ACS 5-YEAR 2022 ESTIMATES

RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS



There is more variability in rental occupancy and spending than owner-occupied units. Nearly half of the renters in Columbus are spending more than 30% of their income on housing, with the large majority spending more than 35% on housing. There are more housing programs and incentives available to ensure affordable units are provided in new rental developments that should be considered for future projects.

DESIRED HOUSING TYPES AND PROGRAMS

HOUSING-RELATED PUBLIC INPUT

Phase 2 of this planning process included a public engagement period where the consultant team met with members of the community to gain a better understanding of the community's needs, strengths and opportunities. At the public workshop, the engagement activities featured a series of housing questions to guide recommendations. The following pages summarize the results from the public workshop.

PRIORITY RANKING EXERCISE RESULTS

- 1 ENTRY-LEVEL SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES
- 2 HOUSING REHABILITATION/PROGRAMS
- 3 MID-LEVEL SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

TOP VOTE NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

The public workshop featured a city bucks activity, asking residents to share where they think priority should be given for programs, developments, and other activities in the community. New housing construction was the top vote in the activity with 37 votes. Neighborhood road improvements were also a top voted item with 30 votes.

PREFERENCE SCALE RESULTS

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Residents support efforts to attract growth and development to the community.

INFILL REDEVELOPMENT

Residents believe the City should support infill redevelopment within the community.

HOUSING OPTIONS

Residents were generally unhappy with the housing options available today.

MOST PREFERRED RESIDENTIAL STYLES



LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
COTTAGE STYLE DEVELOPMENT



HISTORIC PRESERVATION/REHAB
OF EXISTING HOMES



LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
MEDIUM LOT SIZE



LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
SINGLE-STORY HOME

Feedback related to most preferred images for residential styles and types indicated support for some cottage style developments, the preservation or rehabilitation of existing homes, medium lot size developments, and single-story homes. Each of these images either reflect what exists in Columbus today or would easily fit within the existing neighborhood fabric of the community. These images should be referred to as new developments are proposed in the community to ensure they reflect the community's needs and desires.

LEAST PREFERRED RESIDENTIAL STYLES



VERY LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
3-STORY MAX. APARTMENTS



LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
LUXURY MOVE-UP HOUSING



MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
ROWHOUSES

The least preferred images highlight the community's lack of interest in large-lot residential, larger multi-family apartments, luxury housing, and rowhouses.

INFILL REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

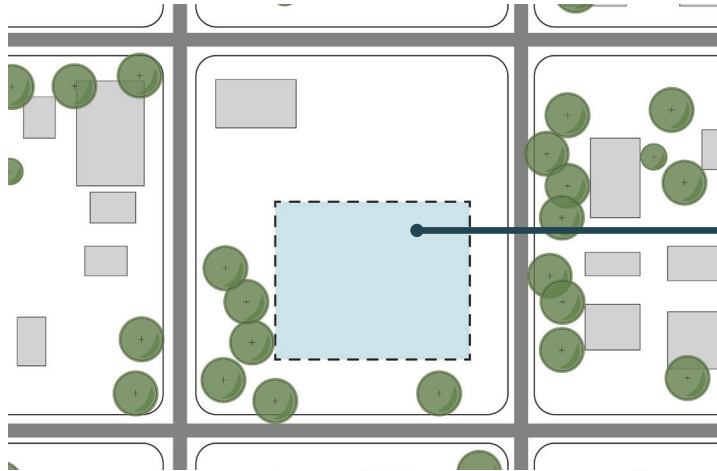
WHAT IS INFILL REDEVELOPMENT?

Infill redevelopment projects repurpose land already located within city limits to provide needed uses and services. The graphics in Figure X.x illustrate an example scenario of an infill redevelopment project in which a parcel with vacant structures is purchased and redeveloped to include housing and commercial uses that meet the needs of the community and returns the parcel to productive uses, rather than sitting vacant. Infill projects provide a variety of benefits outside of returning parcels to active uses. Some of these include efficient use of pre-existing infrastructure or lower-cost tie-ins to infrastructure, increases activity in areas and generally improves aesthetics, and provides an opportunity for creative solutions and development approaches to best serve the site.



FIGURE X.X // EXAMPLES OF RESIDENTIAL INFILL

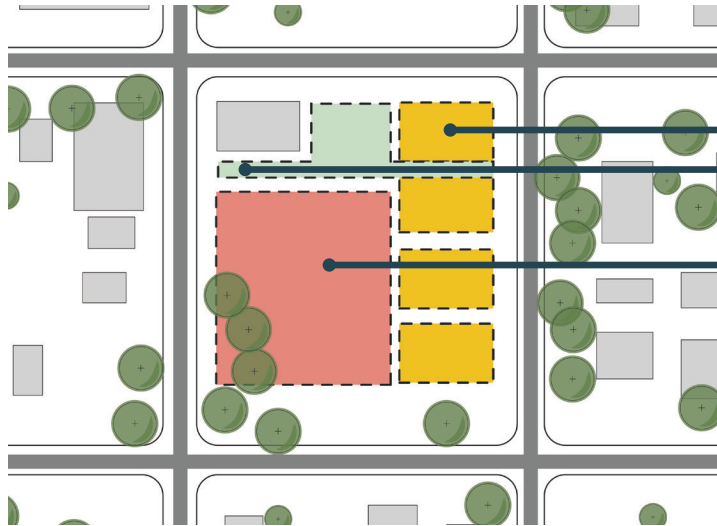
BEFORE INFILL REDEVELOPMENT



Example Application:
An existing parcel with a vacant structure located on it, not in use or occupied.

Due to the large quantity of vacant parcels within neighborhoods in Columbus today, infill redevelopments are ideal reuses of land that can respond to the need for increased housing choice and availability.

AFTER INFILL REDEVELOPMENT



Through infill redevelopment, the parcel provides needed residential units, greenspace, and additional areas to develop more commercial or retail amenities.

FIGURE X.X // EXAMPLE BEFORE/AFTER OF INFILL

HOUSING PROGRAMS AND CASE STUDIES

HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

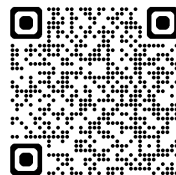
The public input presented strong support for housing rehabilitation programs to enhance the quality of the existing housing stock. These types of programs can take a number of forms and introduce a number of organizations and partnerships to the community. Below and on the opposite page are some ideas and case studies for such a program could be formed in Columbus.

EXTERIOR HOME IMPROVEMENT MICROGRANT

In recent years, the City of Columbus offered an Exterior Home Improvement Microgrant Program that provided financial assistance to exterior home improvement projects within city limits. Recipients were eligible to receive up to \$500 in reimbursement for their project. The grant is currently on pause due to funding but should be a priority to revive and deploy back to the community as soon as possible.

To learn more about the program click the link below or scan the QR code:

[City of Columbus Exterior Home Improvement Microgrant Program](#)



CASE STUDY:

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS

NEIGHBORHOOD EXTERIOR GRANT PROGRAM

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM?

The City of Independence offers a Neighborhood Exterior Grant Program for residents wishing to make improvements to their property and neighborhoods. The City contributes anywhere between \$50,000-\$100,000 annually toward the program. Eligibility requires that residents must:

- Be located within one of the qualifying districts.
- Have a home value at or below \$100,000.
- Have an average minus or lower rating from the County Assessor.

Each of these projects requires a minimum of two property owners contributing to the improvements, with a minimum investment of \$1,000 and maximum reimbursement of \$5,000. Eligible project types can range from facade restoration and window/door repair or replacement to tree removal and driveway repair or installation.

To learn more about Independence's program, click the link below or scan the QR code:

[Independence Neighborhood Exterior Grant Program](#)



HOW CAN COLUMBUS APPLY THIS?

The City of Columbus may not be currently equipped to introduce a program of this size quite yet; however, it is important to begin identifying future programs and initiatives the City can work toward. This program would expand the existing Microgrant and provide residents with additional funds to improve their properties and eligible project types.

As the City works to expand the existing program, special consideration for the types of improvements most needed in the community should be given. Additionally, creating a map for qualifying districts, similar to the Independence model, would ensure the program is providing funds to areas of the community that need the most improvements.



HOUSING TOOLKIT

HOUSING TOOLKIT

There are a number of programs and initiatives to help provide funds for home and neighborhood improvement projects at all scales of government. This toolkit helps identify these programs and initiatives and direct residents to the proper resources available.

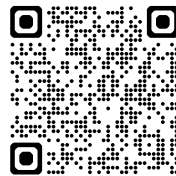
CITY OF COLUMBUS DEMOLITION GRANT PROGRAM

As discussed on page 55, the City provides grant funding for the demolition and cleanup of residential and commercial properties and out-buildings throughout city limits. To learn more, click the link below or scan the QR code:

COLUMBUS LAND BANK

Created in 2019, this program focuses on converting vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent, or otherwise underused property for productive uses. To learn more, click the link below or scan the QR code:

[City of Columbus Land Bank](#)



CHEROKEE COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN PROGRAM

Cherokee County offers the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) program that incentivizes residential improvement projects that increase the property's assessed value by at least \$20,000 with a 95%, five-year tax rebate. There are a series of qualifying projects, ranging from rehabilitation to new construction, that would allow property owners to be eligible for the rebate. To learn more, click the links below or scan the QR codes for the brochure or plan.

[Cherokee County NRP Brochure](#)

[Cherokee County NRP Detailed Plan 2023-2027](#)

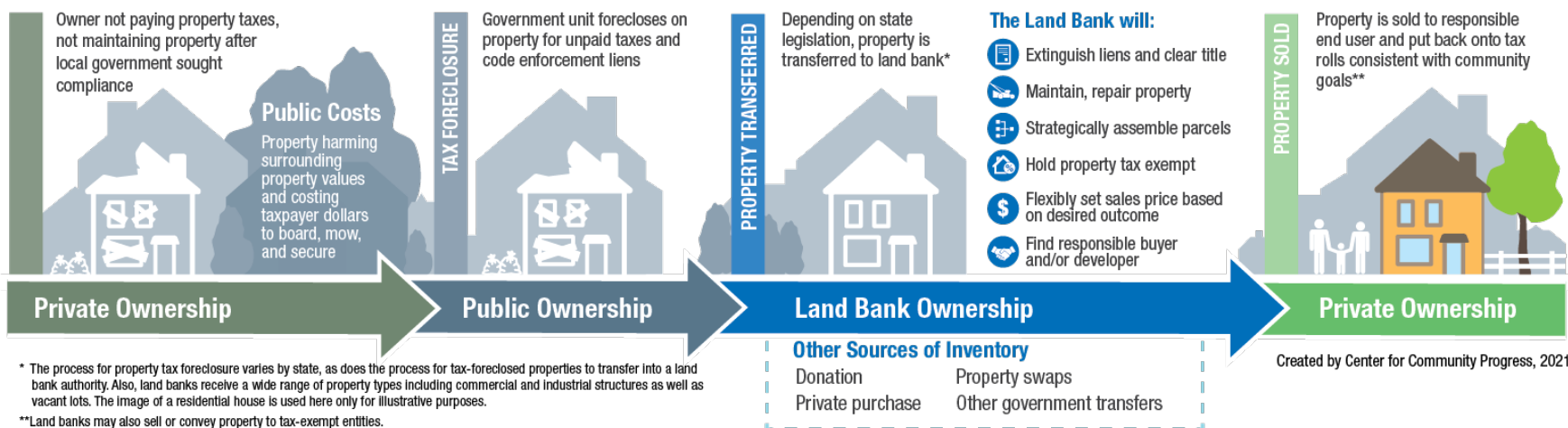
BROCHURE



DETAILED PLAN



How a Land Bank Works



* The process for property tax foreclosure varies by state, as does the process for tax-foreclosed properties to transfer into a land bank authority. Also, land banks receive a wide range of property types including commercial and industrial structures as well as vacant lots. The image of a residential house is used here only for illustrative purposes.

**Land banks may also sell or convey property to tax-exempt entities.

STATE OF KANSAS PROGRAMS AND GRANTS

The State of Kansas offers a variety of programs and grants to support residents and housing initiatives throughout the state, especially in rural areas like Cherokee County. The Kansas Department of Commerce and Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) are two of the primary organizations providing the funding and resources to residents. Existing programs cover a wide range of needs and improvements including:

- First Time Homebuyer Program
- Community Services Block Grant
- Home Loan Guarantee Program
- Weatherization Assistance Grant
- Tenant Base Rental Assistance
- Reinvestment Housing Incentive District
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Education
- Rural Opportunity Zones (ROZ)
- Housing Rehabilitation + Demolition or Neighborhood Development Grant
- Historic Tax Credits

Eligibility varies for each program and should be further explored on a case-by-case basis. To learn more about programs and resources, click the links below or scan the QR codes.

[Kansas Department of Commerce Programs + Services](#)
[Kansas Department of Commerce Grants Calendar](#)

[Kansas Department of Commerce CDBG Information](#)
[Kansas Housing Resources Corporation Resources](#)

KS DEPT. OF COMMERCE



GRANTS CALENDAR



CDBG INFO



KHRC PROGRAMS



STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

STRIVING FOR STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

Figure X.x defines some of the primary characteristics that help contribute to strong neighborhoods. The City of Columbus should explore how to integrate these characteristics into its zoning code and subdivision regulations to support strong neighborhood characteristics in new developments throughout the community.

WHAT DEFINES A STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD?

- A STREET-FRONTED HOMES** help keep residents connected and engaged with one another. Activity along the neighborhood street is enhanced through yard maintenance, garages and driveways, and play.
- B LANDSCAPING + BUFFERS** between the road and sidewalk provide a sense of safety to pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing the dedicated sidewalks. Trees and plantings should be dispersed throughout the buffer for added soft-scaping.
- C SIDEWALKS** should be located on one or both sides of the neighborhood street to promote walkability and connectivity to nearby amenities, such as parks and schools.
- D LIGHTING** should be placed throughout the neighborhood support to safety and security for residents and their homes. Additional consideration for placement and light pollution is needed so as not to disrupt neighborhood character.
- E VARIED HOUSING DESIGN** encourages diverse character and identity throughout the neighborhood. The greater the varied design of housing, the greater the character of the community.
- F QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES** such as parks, trails, schools, community gardens, and other activity centers support a high quality of life for residents. New neighborhoods should be located near pre-existing amenities or new amenities should be added to support walkability and connectivity to these quality of life amenities.



FIGURE X.X // EXAMPLES OF STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

NEW RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH IN COLUMBUS

Figure X.x identifies the residential land uses from the Future Land Use Plan. These areas intentionally plan for a mix of low-, medium-, and high-density developments, maintaining the majority of the stock in low-density typologies to reflect the desired housing types from public input.

Strategic Placement of Land Uses

Due to the floodplain covering large areas of land throughout the planning boundary, the Future Land Use Plan strategically places residential land to avoid the floodplain and promote growth elsewhere. The western portion of the planning boundary features the highest quantities of low-density acres to build off recent developments and maintains contiguous growth of neighborhoods throughout Columbus.

There are pockets of medium- and high-density residential land uses to ensure there is some variability in housing types and options for all lifestyles and life cycles. The locations of these land uses is concentrated to major corridors, such as Highway 69 and 160. Medium-density residential developments can take the form of duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and townhomes. High-density residential developments can take the form of apartments and condominiums.

RESIDENTIAL TYPE	ACRES	SHARE
Low-Density Residential	1,298.4	93.4%
Medium-Density Residential	69.8	5.0%
High-Density Residential	21.9	1.6%
TOTAL	1,390.1	100.0%

TABLE X.X // FUTURE LAND USE RESIDENTIAL ACRES + SHARES



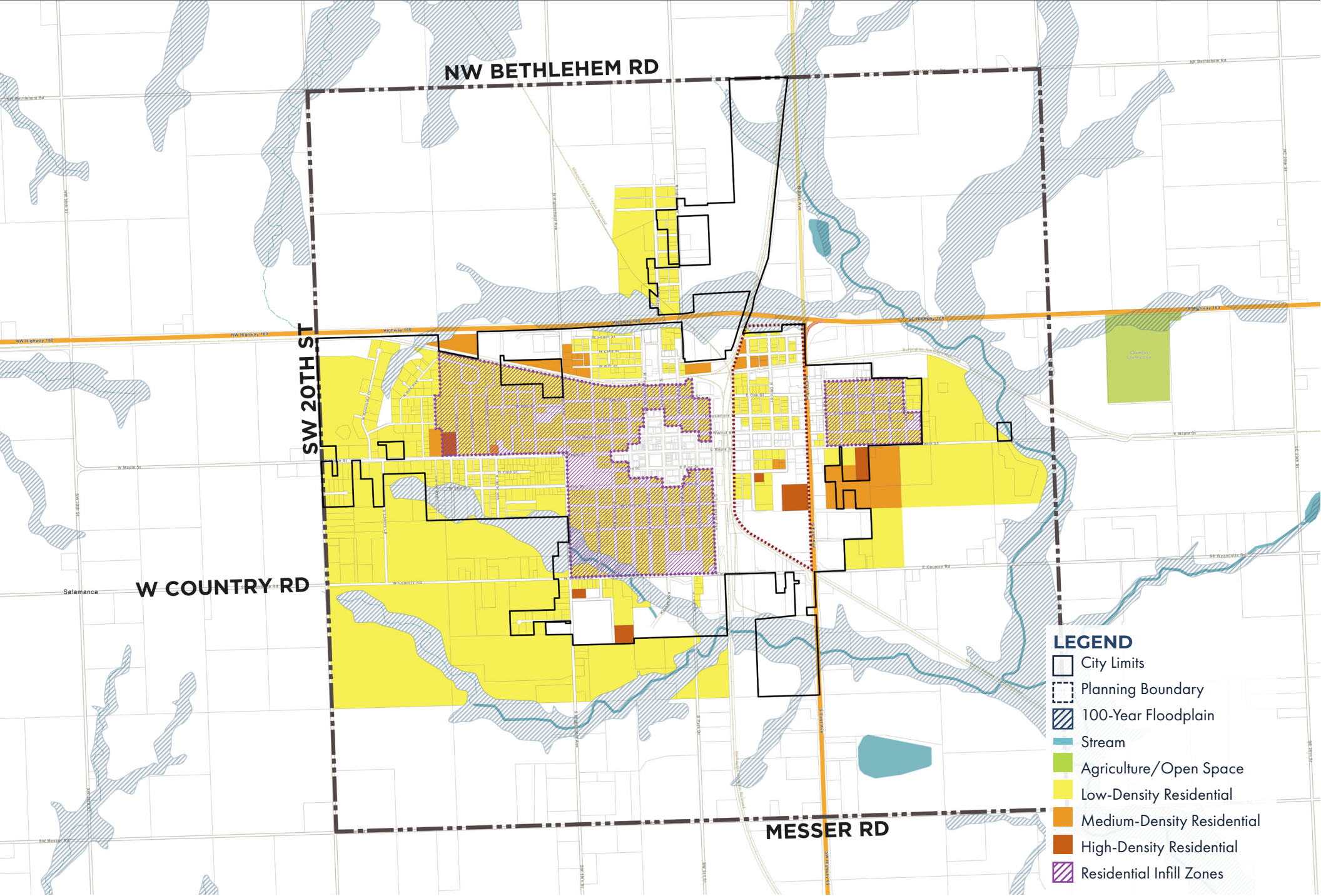


FIGURE X.X // FUTURE RESIDENTIAL LAND USE MAP

GOALS, BEST PRACTICES AND ACTION ITEMS

GOAL H-2: ATTRACT QUALITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS TO COLUMBUS THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS.

BEST PRACTICES

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BP-2.1 | Follow the recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan for proposed residential developments. |
| BP-2.2 | Balance quality residential developments with flexibility in the zoning code by providing some variation in parking requirements, minimum lot sizes, and creative lot configurations, especially for residential infill developments. |
| BP-2.3 | Maintain an open-door policy with developers to discuss potential residential development projects in Columbus. |

ACTION ITEMS

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AC-2.1 | Add a development-ready webpage to the City's website to highlight the Future Land Use Plan and ready to develop land or infill potential sites in the community. |
| AC-2.2 | Support and encourage medium- and high-density developments to broaden housing choice and increase access to quality rentals. |

GOAL H-3: PROMOTE BEST PRACTICES AND RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION TO CREATE STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS.

BEST PRACTICES

BP-3.1	Do not allow any residential development within the floodplain to maintain the safety and welfare of current and future residents.
BP-3.2	Prioritize contiguous boundaries and limit leapfrog development to reduce strains on infrastructure.
BP-3.3	Limit cul-de-sacs to allow for greater thru connections to the roadway network.
BP-3.4	Preserve the existing housing stock to maintain community character and unique nodes of development.
BP-3.5	Promote walkability and connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists.
BP-3.6	Encourage strong neighborhood characteristics throughout new residential developments with varied residential design, sidewalk connections, landscaping, lighting, and other quality of life features.

ACTION ITEMS

AC-3.1	Consider requiring sidewalks to be constructed on at least one side of the roadway with any new residential developments.
AC-3.2	Explore partnerships or funding opportunities to create a small-scale housing fund for rehabilitation projects.
AC-3.3	Allow for residential infill redevelopment projects to leverage vacant lots and provide much needed housing.

CHAPTER 6: PARKS AND RECREATION

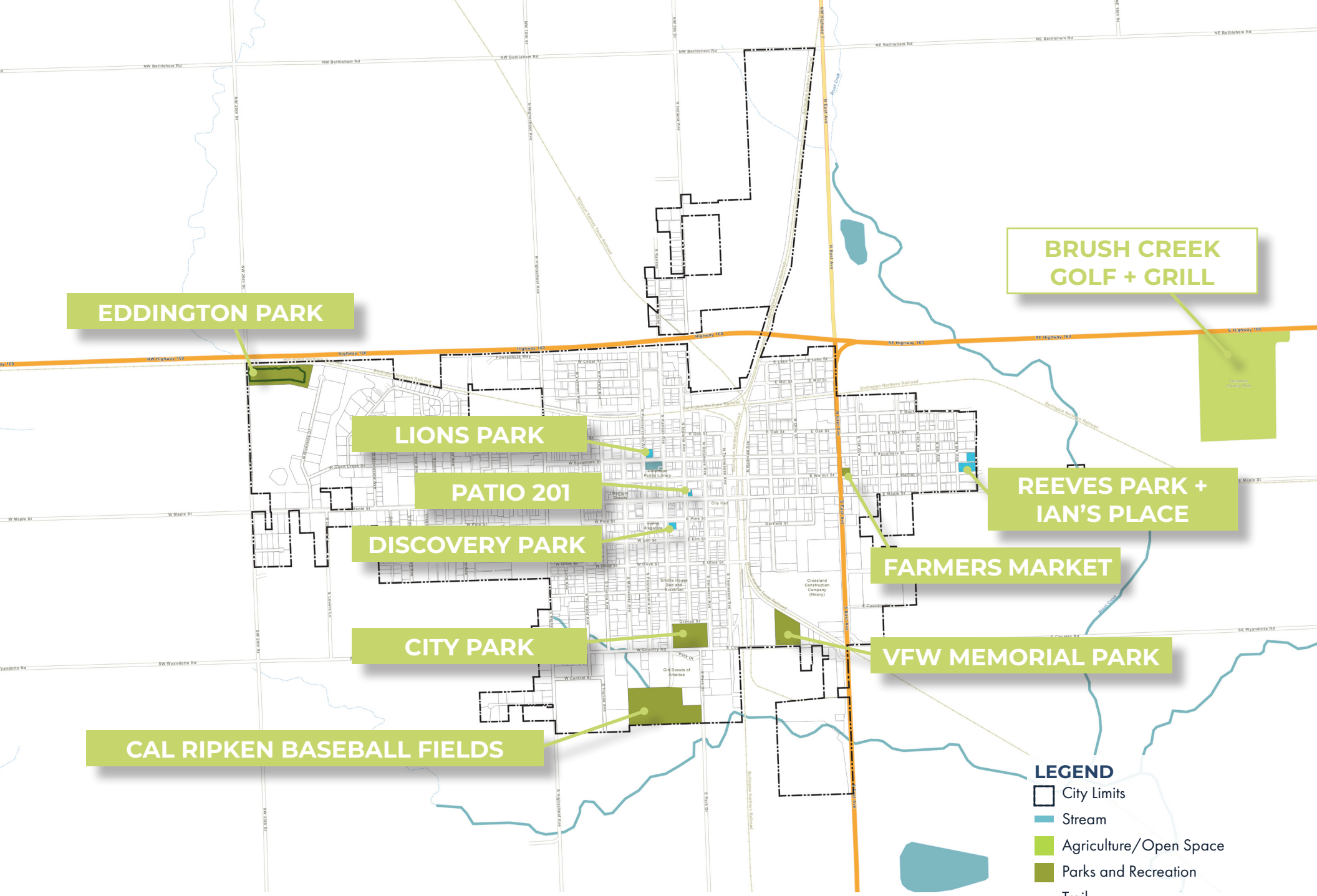
EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Parks and recreation facilities greatly contribute to the quality of life experienced by residents of all ages and abilities. Figure X.x identifies the current park locations within Columbus today. The locations of parks is fairly spread out throughout city limits, providing an ease of access no matter the neighborhood location. This will be an important factor to consider with any new park space in Columbus and making sure it responds to gaps in the system or provides unique amenities not already present in the community.

This chapter is intended to highlight existing facilities and features, identify gaps in the system and how the City may respond to these, and provide some framework with future parks and trails systems.



FIGURE X.X // IAN'S PLACE PARK



**BRUSH CREEK
GOLF + GRILL**

EDDINGTON PARK

LIONS PARK

PATIO 201

DISCOVERY PARK

**REEVES PARK +
IAN'S PLACE**

FARMERS MARKET

CITY PARK

VFW MEMORIAL PARK

CAL RIPKEN BASEBALL FIELDS

- LEGEND**
- City Limits
 - Stream
 - Agriculture/Open Space
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Trail

FIGURE X.X // EXISTING PARK + RECREATION FACILITIES MAP
 SOURCE: CHEROKEE COUNTY WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

PARKS BY TYPE

PARKS BY TYPE IN COLUMBUS

Figure X.x categorizes the parks in Columbus by facility types. These include neighborhood, community, and special use parks. Neighborhood parks are typically less than 5 acres in size and provide minimal facility amenities. Community parks are larger than 5 acres and typically feature a variety of on-site amenities and attractions. Special use parks have no size descriptions as these are generally wide-ranging in amenities. Special use parks can be dedicated sports fields, dog parks, skate parks, etc.

Columbus currently has a fairly healthy mix of park types that provide a variety of recreation opportunities. Another strong component of Columbus' park system is that the variety of park types caters to a large audience of residents: baseball fields for competitions, neighborhood park for playgrounds and walking, and the food truck court and farmers market for social events.

School Facilities as Added Recreation Sites

In rural communities, it is not uncommon to see school facilities also contribute to the recreation system. In Columbus, there are four schools that have on-site amenities available for public use. These facility locations are highlighted on Figure X.x. As new facilities are planned for, the City should examine surrounding parks and school facilities to try and provide updated or distinct amenities, further expanding the service types in Columbus.

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	ACRES
City Park	Community	6.2
Cal Ripken Baseball Fields	Special Use	17.2
Discovery Park	Neighborhood	0.4
Eddington Park	Community	9.3
Farmers Market	Special Use	0.5
Lions Park	Neighborhood	0.4
Patio 201	Special Use	0.2
Reeves Park + Ian's Place	Neighborhood	1.7
VFW Memorial Park	Community	5.4
TOTAL	-	41.2

TABLE X.X // EXISTING PARKS BY TYPE AND ACRE

The Brush Creek Golf + Grill is located outside of existing city limits but still provides recreation opportunities to local residents.

HIGHLAND EDUCATION CENTER

Features a small playground, swing set, and open space.

COLUMBUS JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL

Features a grass football field and gymnasium. At the time of writing this plan, a wrestling facility was under construction.

CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Features a small playground, swing set, sport courts, open space, track, and sports field.

PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Features a small playground, swing set, and small sport court.

LEGEND

-  City Limits
-  Stream
-  Agriculture/Open Space
-  Neighborhood Park
-  Special Use Park
-  Community Park
-  Trail

FIGURE X.X // PARKS BY TYPE MAP

SOURCE: CHEROKEE COUNTY WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

LEVEL OF SERVICE

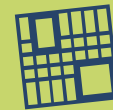
PARK ACRES PER THOUSAND RESIDENTS

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends cities have 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This measure quantifies the level of service (LOS) for a community and a baseline understanding of their current services. Table X.x builds upon the data presented in the Parks by Type map, calculating the current LOS to be 14.1 acres per 1,000 residents. For a community of Columbus' size, location, and staffing, this is an excellent baseline LOS to maintain into the future.



PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE PARKS SYSTEM

Due to limited staffing and the increasing costs of maintenance, Columbus should consider approaching its parks system with a focus on planning for a sustainable parks system. This could be accomplished primarily through neighborhood park additions, rather than larger community parks, to increase access to parks in the community without placing a strain on City staff. Benefits to neighborhood parks and smaller concentrated facilities include:



Activates Vacant Space

The transition of vacant space to an active, gathering space provides a benefit to the immediate neighborhood for the increased amenities and recreation potential of additional open space.



Increases Access to Activity Spaces

Additional park space increases resident access to programmed spaces. These pocket parks can be versatile - providing small playgrounds or unique amenities to a neighborhood.



Link to Greater Recreation Systems

Linking added neighborhood parks to pre-existing park spaces could produce a green corridor and a larger, connected parks system. Ensuring the current and new parks provide a mix of recreation amenities is also important to create a diverse parks system that serves all segments of the community.

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	ACRES
City Park	Community	6.2
Cal Ripken Baseball Fields	Special Use	17.2
Discovery Park	Neighborhood	0.4
Eddington Park	Community	9.3
Food Truck Court	Special Use	0.2
Farmers Market	Special Use	0.5
Lions Park	Neighborhood	0.4
Reeves Park + Ian's Place	Neighborhood	1.7
VFW Memorial Park	Community	5.4
TOTAL	-	41.2
EXISTING POPULATION	2,922	
RECOMMENDED LOS	10.5	
COLUMBUS LOS	14.1	

TABLE X.X // EXISTING PARKS BY TYPE AND ACRE

FUTURE PARKS AND TRAILS CONSIDERATIONS

The items below help provide additional context for the parks and trail considerations and the Parks and Recreation Strategic Opportunities Map on the following page. School facilities, 100-year floodplain, railroads and railroad crossings, and neighborhood connections are the key drivers for planning out future parks and trails in Columbus.



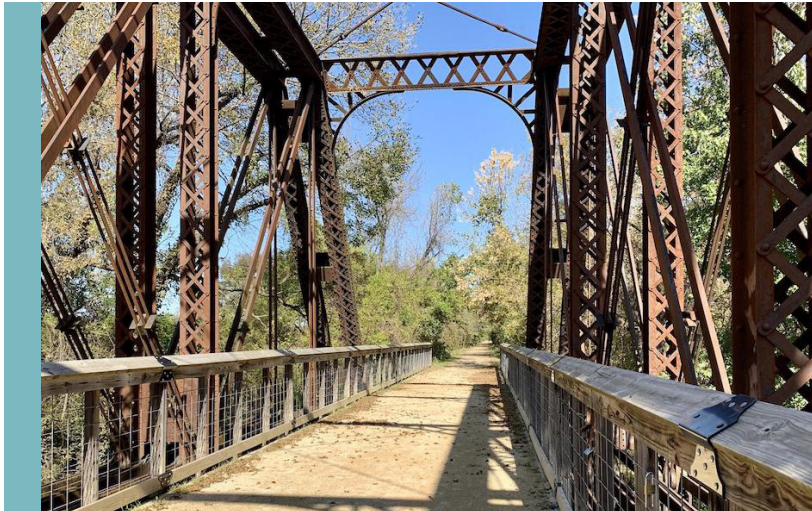
SCHOOL FACILITIES

It is important to recognize the contributions of school facilities to the greater parks and recreation system. In some cases, these are the closest facilities some neighborhoods have to park space. The Parks and Recreation Strategic Opportunities Map considers how to further connect these facilities via trails and shared-use paths.



100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

The 100-year floodplain surrounds city limits today and serves as a natural resource for the region. General development is discouraged in the floodplain; however, floodplains are great locations for trail routes as they can handle flooding without severe damage, unlike homes.



RAILROAD + CROSSINGS

If either of the rail lines in Columbus are ever retired or experience prolonged periods of no activity, the City should begin discussions of a Rails to Trails project, utilizing the rail right-of-way for pedestrian and bicyclist trails. Additionally, some railroad crossings should be given further improvements to enhance crossing from east to west.



NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Neighborhoods in Columbus today are strictly connected by roadways. By expanding the sidewalk and trail network in the core of the community, where most residents live, neighborhoods can further improve quality of life amenities in the community. High-level consideration for areas with future park needs are considered as well.

PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

Building upon the future considerations on the previous page, the map in Figure X.x presents the strategic opportunities for parks and recreation in Columbus. Many of these recommendations expand upon the existing facilities and amenities in the community today, identifying incremental improvements that can sustain a high LOS and quality parks and recreation system for current and future residents. It is important to note that this map is high-level and should be viewed as flexible with its alignments, locations, and trail path types. These are likely to change as further analysis and design takes place.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK ZONES are identified on the western edge of the planning boundary where the majority of residential growth in the Future Land Use Plan is focused.

The **RAILROAD CROSSINGS** identify intersections that could link potential pathways that need improved surfacing and crossing measures. The rail alignment chosen for the **POTENTIAL RAILS TO TRAILS PROJECT** links Eddington Park to the Brush Creek Golf + Grill, as well as the greater core path network.

EXISTING SCHOOL FACILITIES are highlighted to further connect these areas into the greater parks system.

The **DOWNTOWN SQUARE** is where many local businesses are located and attracts pedestrian activity as people move

around the district. The crossings at the primary core should be priority zones for improved crossing markings, signage, and lighting in the future to maintain pedestrian safety.

The **HIGH, MODERATE, AND LOW-PRIORITY TRAIL PATHWAYS** identified on the map leverage existing parks and school facilities, activity zones, and the floodplain to determine preliminary alignments, further connecting the community. These are likely to be a mix of sidewalks, shared use paths, and trails, depending on the location.

The **HIGH-PRIORITY PATHS** focus on creating a core loop of approximately 3-mile trail path. This would improve pedestrian connectivity and connect residents to three schools, the Downtown, and five parks, with the ability to build on more as the community grows.

The **MODERATE AND LOW-PRIORITY PATHS** identify future connections following the completion of the high-priority paths. These would connect residents to all remaining parks, the potential Rails to Trails project, future parks, and utilize the floodplain for recreation use.

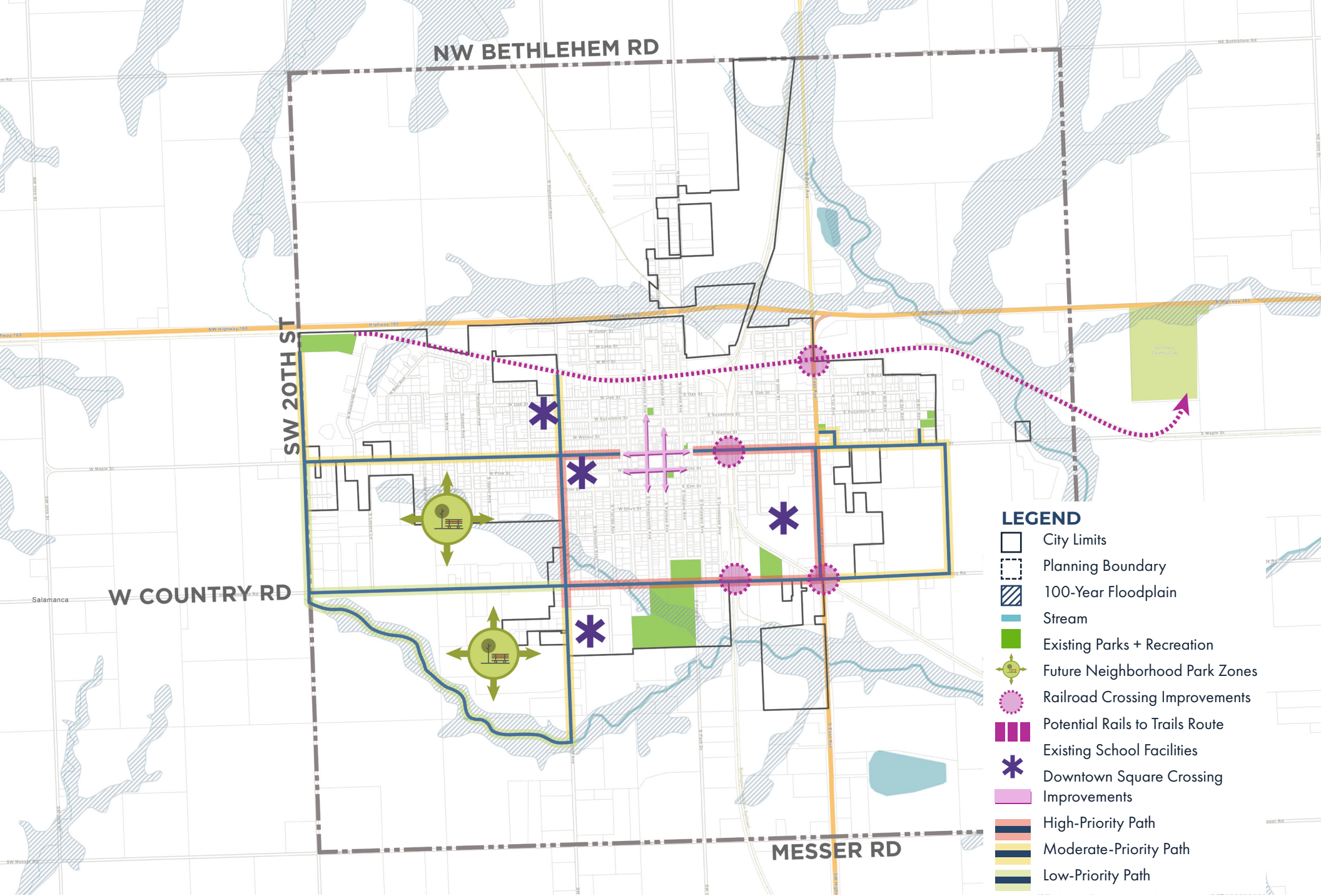


FIGURE X.X // PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES MAP

GOALS, BEST PRACTICES AND ACTION ITEMS

GOAL PR-4: MAINTAIN A HIGH-QUALITY PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM AND LEVEL OF SERVICE.

BEST PRACTICES

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BP-4.1 | Complete facility upgrades throughout the parks system as often as fiscally possible. |
| BP-4.2 | Stagger improvements so that the City is not cost-burdened with numerous upgrades. |

ACTION ITEMS

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AC-4.1 | Consider a wayfinding/signage package for all parks and trails in the community to help direct people throughout the system. |
| AC-4.2 | Explore cost-sharing opportunities for new and current facility improvements. |
| AC-4.3 | Incrementally improve parks and trails in the community as identified in the Parks and Recreation Strategic Opportunities Map. |
| AC-4.4 | Continue to grow recreation programming as needed to serve the community. |
| AC-4.5 | Take inventory and routinely reassess existing facilities to identify priority improvements. |

GOAL PR-5: INCREMENTALLY IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE PARKS AND TRAIL FACILITIES IN COLUMBUS.

BEST PRACTICES

BP-5.1	Include residents in the planning for all future parks and trails systems to ensure the new facilities meet current and future needs.
BP-5.2	As new developments or road improvements occur, explore opportunities to build upon the construction and include pedestrian facilities.
BP-5.3	Ensure all improvements are fiscally sustainable for the City long-term.

ACTION ITEMS

AC-5.1	Complete cost-benefit analyses for all future facilities.
AC-5.2	Meet with developers to discuss the inclusion of trails and parks in new subdivisions.
AC-5.3	Explore the addition of a parkland dedication ordinance as Columbus grows to ensure any new developments also provide park space for new residents.
AC-5.4	Establish an improvement and expansion timeline to set benchmarks for completion.