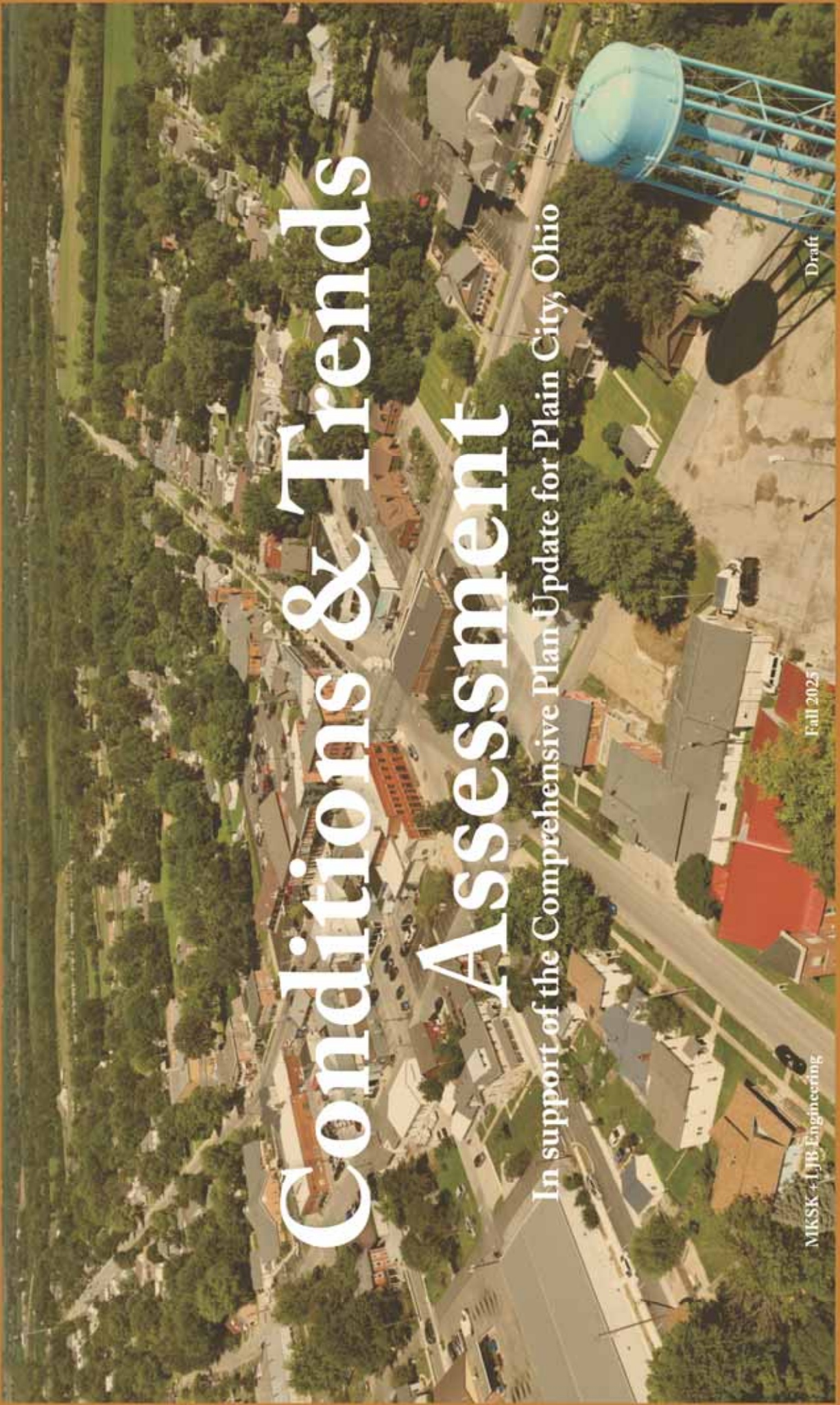


An aerial photograph of a suburban town, likely Plain City, Ohio. The image shows a mix of residential houses, green trees, and commercial buildings. A prominent feature is a large blue water tower with a black satellite dish on top. The town is surrounded by green fields and a road runs through the center.

Conditions & Trends Assessment

In support of the Comprehensive Plan Update for Plain City, Ohio

MKSK + JJB Engineering

Fall 2025

Draft

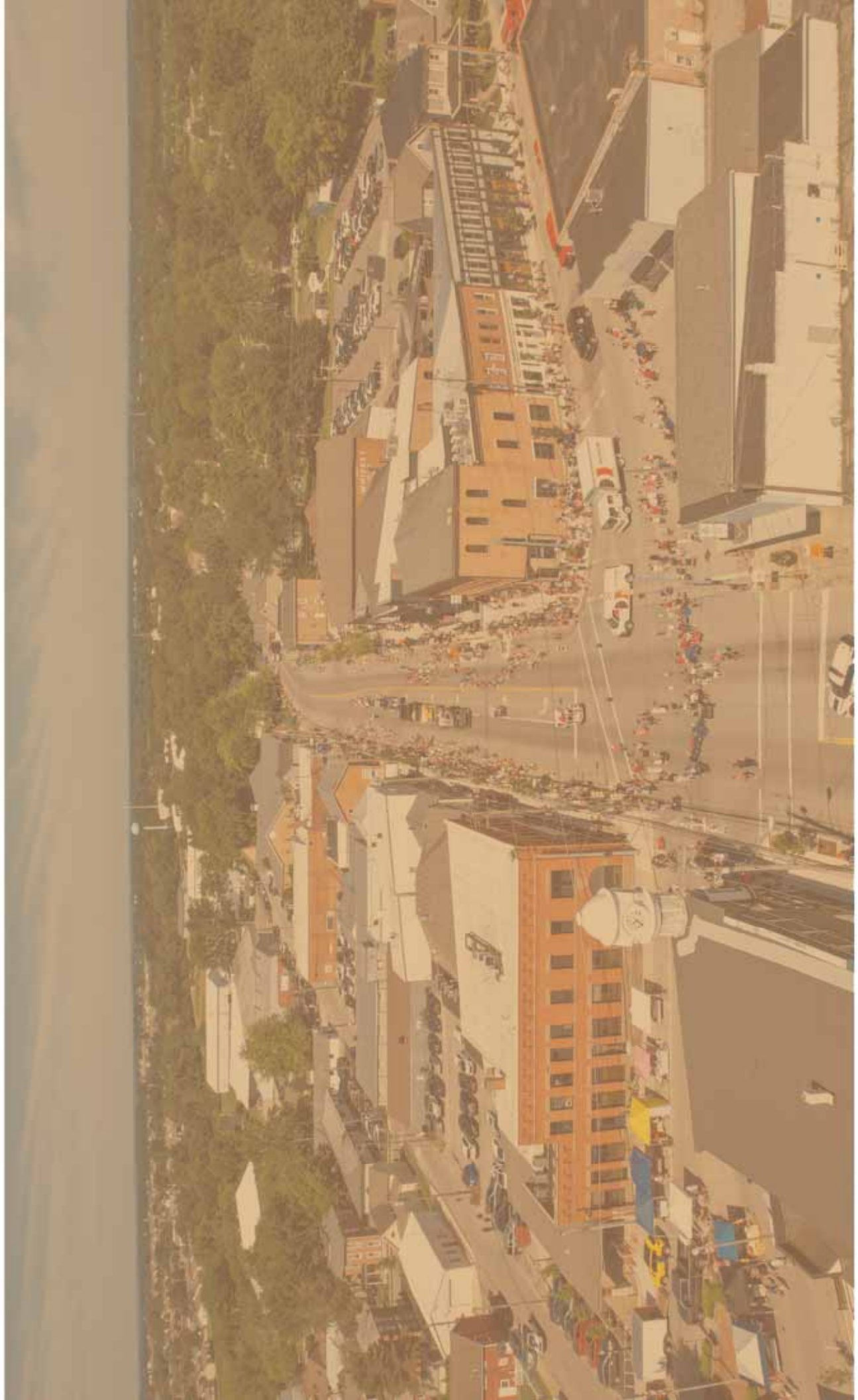
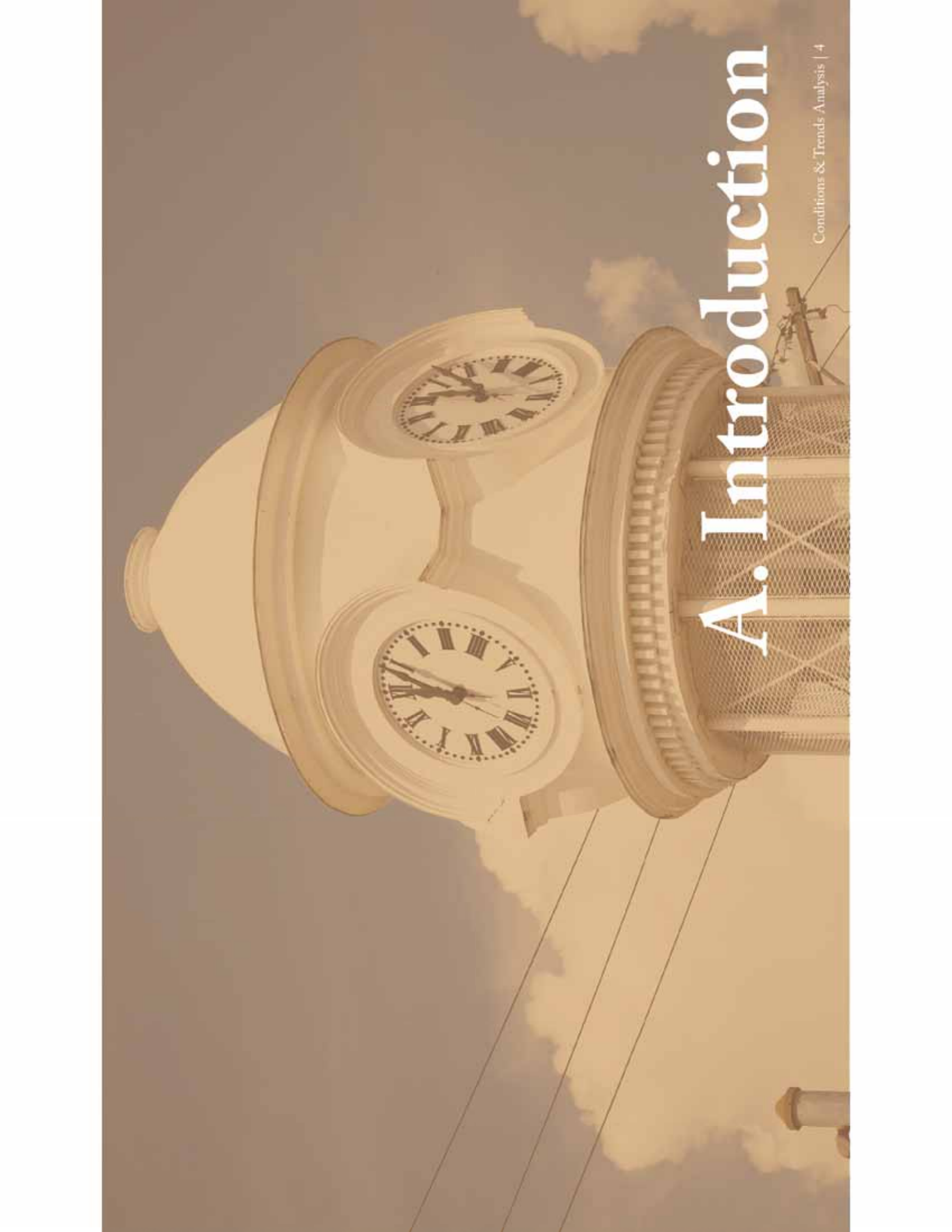


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E. Appendix





A. Introduction

Conditions & Trends Analysis | 4

Introduction

The Conditions and Trends Assessment serves as a reference document to the Comprehensive Plan update. This report provides a focused analysis of current conditions and emerging trends since the previous Plan was adopted in 2018. Its purpose is to provide a compendium of updated data and research related to the village and its surroundings. This document is a tool for residents, staff, and elected leadership as they engage in discussions throughout the planning process regarding future investments and recommendations to be outlined in the Plan update.

Included in this Report:

Quantitative Research – Use of Census data, regional trends and forecasts, and other data sources.

Regional Context – Understanding the regional forces driving growth and change in Plain City.

GIS Analysis – Updated mapping and spatial analysis of demographic, land use, infrastructure, and environmental data.

Audit of Previous Plans & Studies – Tracking previous and ongoing planning efforts to monitor progress and alignment with current conditions.

Why Update the Comprehensive Plan?

In the midst of growth and change, Plain City is preparing for the future, while protecting what makes Plain City special.

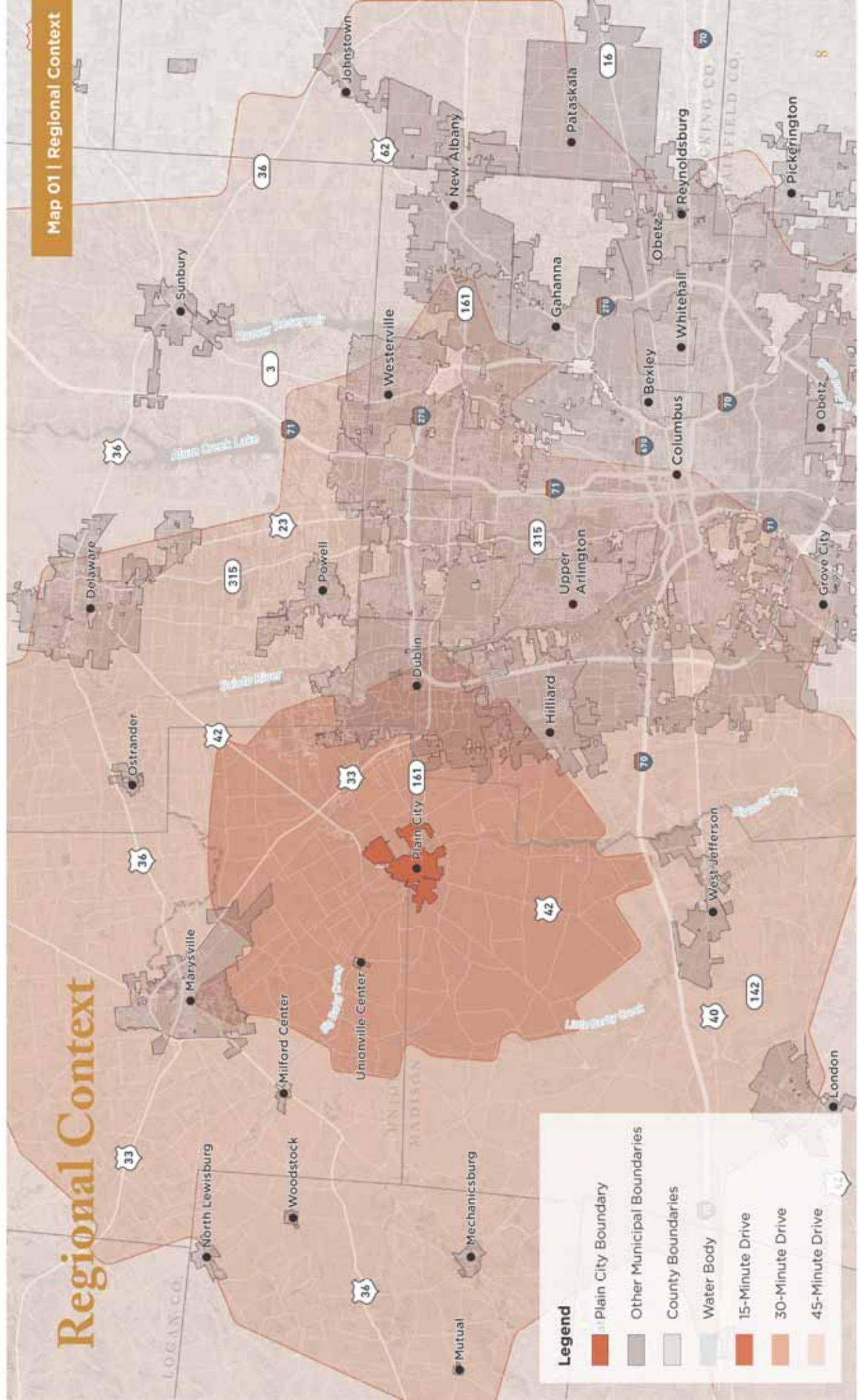
- + **Strategic Growth:** Guide new development in a way that reflects community values and maintains the village's small-town character.
- + **Infrastructure Investment:** Align land use and infrastructure improvements—like water and sewer upgrades—to support sustainable, long-term growth.
- + **Economic Development:** Position Plain City to attract new businesses, support existing ones, and create a strong local economy.
- + **City Status Readiness:** Plan for the transition to city status by 2030 with the services, governance, and amenities to match.
- + **Regional Leadership:** Strengthen Plain City's role in the growing Central Ohio region by planning intentionally for opportunity and change.

Community Context

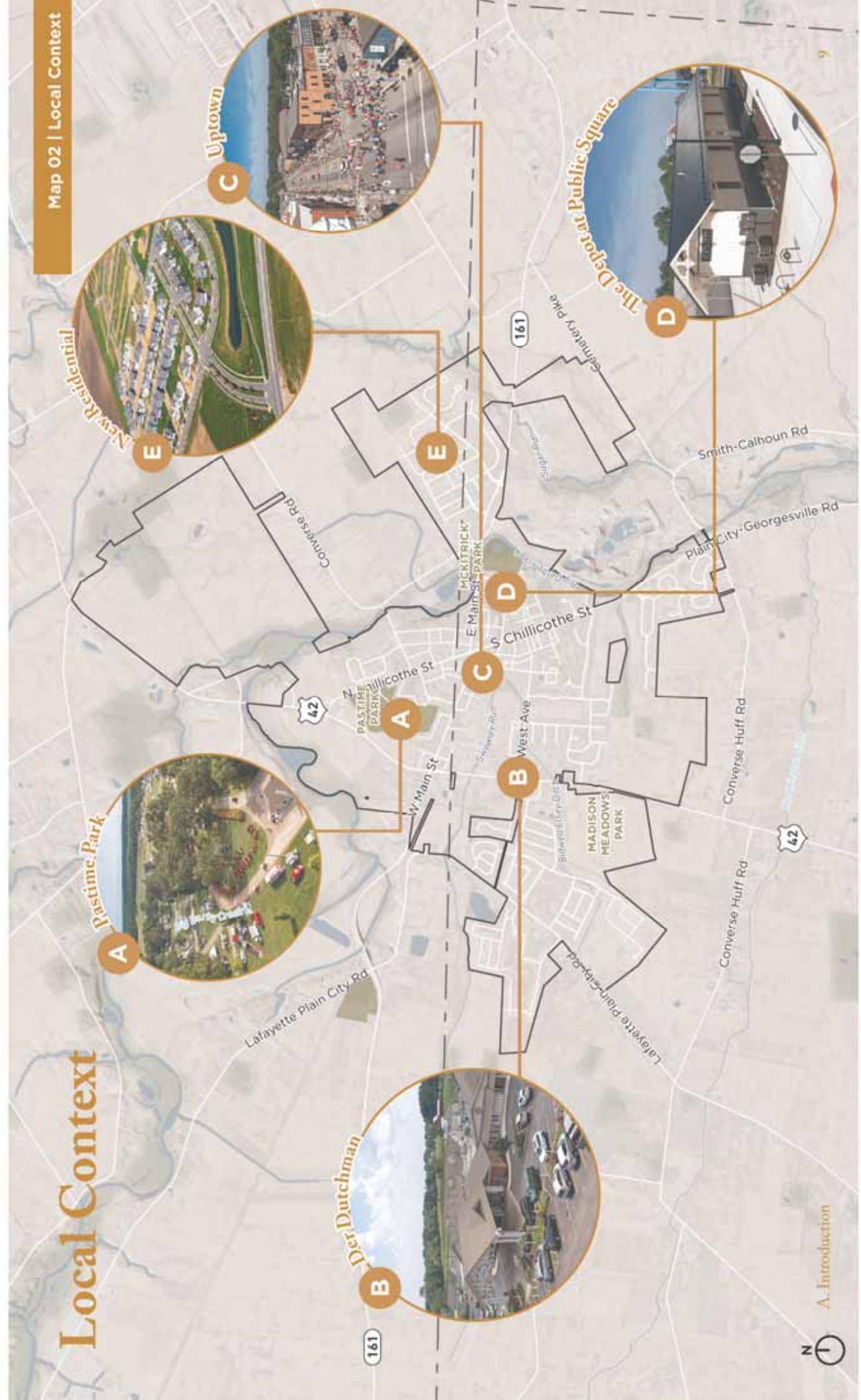
- + **Plain City is located at the western edge of the Columbus Metropolitan Area, one of the fastest-growing regions in the Midwest.** The village is experiencing significant residential and commercial development as development pressure from the greater Columbus area moves westward. Despite recent growth, Plain City retains a distinct small-town character rooted in its historic Uptown core, strong agricultural heritage, and scenic rural landscapes.
- + **Regional connectivity is key.** U.S. Route 42, US-33, State Route 161, and I-270 provide direct access to regional job centers, with most major employment hubs less than a 45-minute commute. This accessibility positions Plain City as both a desirable residential community and an emerging employment center.
- + **The community is closely tied to its natural environment.** Big Darby Creek, a nationally recognized scenic river, flows through the village and provides both a unique recreational amenity and an environmental stewardship responsibility. Protecting this natural resource while accommodating growth is a key priority for the community.
- + **Plain City is at a pivotal moment.** Recent projects and plans underscore the village's efforts to balance growth with preservation of community character. Together, these efforts envision a future where Plain City serves as both a thriving residential destination and a vibrant local economy that reflects its heritage, identity, and regional role.

Regional Context

Map 01 | Regional Context



Local Context



A night photograph of a town with a large firework exploding in the sky. The firework is a large, multi-colored burst of light, primarily yellow and orange, with some red and green streaks. The town below is illuminated by streetlights and house lights, with a river or body of water visible in the foreground. The sky is dark with some clouds.

B. Key Findings

Conditions & Trends Analysis | 10

Key Findings

The following section highlights the key findings from the Conditions and Trends Assessment. These findings illustrate how the community has evolved over time, its current conditions and challenges, and the opportunities that will shape Plain City's growth in the years ahead.

Quick Facts

4,338

Population, 2023

2.3

Average Household Size

4,900

Estimated Population, 2025

\$87,018

Median Household Income

+895

New Housing Units Since 2021

\$325,400

Median Home Value

+56%

Land Area Growth Since 2022

1,095

Jobs, 2022

40.1

Median Age, 2023

96%

Commute Elsewhere For Work

Key Findings

From Rural Roots to Rapid Growth...

- + **Once a quiet village in Central Ohio, Plain City has undergone a profound transformation in the past two decades.** Since 2000, Plain City's population has nearly doubled, growing from just over 2,000 residents in 2000 to nearly 5,000 today.
- + **Plain City functions largely as a bedroom community**, with 96% of residents commuting elsewhere for work and only 8.3% of local jobs filled by residents. This imbalance places added demand on local services and amenities without capturing the full benefit of employment growth.
- + **Housing construction, which slowed following the Great Recession, has since exploded.** 895 new housing units were permitted in the past five years, nearly all of them single-family homes.



Key Findings

From Rural Roots to Rapid Growth...

- + **Plain City's housing market has experienced significant appreciation.** Home values have more than doubled since 2000, rising over \$200,000 in median value, outpacing nearby communities. The rising cost reflects both growing demand and limited supply of housing.
- + **Great schools, employment proximity, and available land all contribute to housing demand in Plain City.** Central Ohio's development community is increasingly looking west, where projects can be delivered more quickly, at lower cost.
- + **Job creation has not kept pace with population growth.** Jobs growth has stagnated since 2012, and nearby closures such as RANCO in 2004 has impacted growth in complementary manufacturing jobs.



Key Findings

A Community in Motion...

- + **Plain City is well-positioned within a booming metropolitan region.** As Central Ohio expands toward a projected population of 3.15 million by 2050, Plain City's role is shifting from rural crossroads to a maturing small town. The village is seeing sustained residential growth, infrastructure upgrades, and increasing development pressure.
- + **Infrastructure investments are reshaping the development landscape.** Major upgrades to water and sewer systems are already underway, led by the Mid-Ohio Water and Sewer District, which now maintains and operates Plain City's water and wastewater facilities. These improvements are essential to meeting environmental standards and supporting future capacity.



Key Findings

A Community in Motion...

- + **Uptown Plain City, the community's historic core, continues its revitalization efforts guided by the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and the 2023 Uptown Master Plan.** Key efforts include Main Street streetscape enhancements, expanded public spaces, and infill development. These projects aim to preserve the village's identity while adapting to growth.
- + **At the same time, Plain City is investing in the quality of life.** Public services, park amenities, and trail systems are being expanded. Community pride remains strong, with residents valuing traditions, civic events, and natural features like Big Darby Creek. These investments and amenities now face the challenge of keeping pace with the expectations of a growing population.



Key Findings

Looking Ahead...

- + **Plain City is projected to exceed 5,000 residents by 2030, slated to become a city under Ohio law.** This milestone will mark more than a change in municipal status, it reflects the community's long-term evolution and increasing regional influence.
- + **The next phase of growth will bring both opportunity and complexity.** As housing costs rise and population diversifies, the Village will need to address issues of affordability, job growth, and adequate delivery of services. Upgrading facilities and staffing, expanding housing types, attracting local employment, enhancing transportation infrastructure, and multi-modal connections are all key topics to contemplate.





Public Engagement

Input from residents, business owners, and stakeholders will shape the plan's direction—ensuring it reflects what matters most to the community and leads to thoughtful and supported outcomes. This process includes two public workshops, online surveys, and focused stakeholder group discussions.

A photograph of a group of people fishing in a river. The scene is set in a wooded area with trees lining the banks. Several people are standing in the shallow water, holding fishing rods. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The overall tone is peaceful and recreational.

C. Regional Conditions

Regional Conditions

Plain City is located in one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the Midwest. Understanding the broader economic and demographic context of the Central Ohio region is crucial to planning for Plain City's future.

Included in this Section:

Population & Job Growth – Rapid job gains in modern industries are fueling sustained population growth across Central Ohio, reshaping communities region-wide.

Emerging Employment Sectors – Central Ohio continues to attract Fortune-500 companies, logistics, and data centers.

Regional Housing Shortage – Central Ohio is not building enough homes to keep pace with population and job growth.

Regional Infrastructure Improvements – Mid Ohio Water Sewer District is planning substantial centralized utility expansions in Madison County, and Marysville continues invest in water/wastewater expansion near Plain City.

Regional Dynamics



Mid-Ohio Water Sewer District (MOWSD)

Established in 2023, the MOWSD will improve sewer infrastructure and oversee water distribution, operation, and treatment in Plain City and parts of Madison County. Future expansion of county-wide water and wastewater lines will have major impacts on Madison County's growth potential.



Emerging Regional Employment and Industry Sectors

Many companies are establishing logistics facilities, manufacturing, and data centers in Central Ohio. Most of these job centers are within a 45-minute commute from Plain City. Examples include Intel in Licking County, Amazon Web Services in Union County, retail distribution centers in West Jefferson, EV investments in Fayette County, and recently announced Anduril in Pickaway County.



Big Darby Creek Protections

The 2024 update to Ohio EPA's State Water Quality Management (208) Plan, specifically Appendix 9-3, extends Darby-related permit requirements beyond Franklin County, applying them to all counties within the Big Darby watershed. Additionally, pollutant discharge into Big Darby Creek is reaching its regulatory limit, which sparked a region-wide solution for future growth in Madison County.

Regional Dynamics



Regional Housing Shortage

Housing construction in the region has not kept pace with job growth, particularly in Franklin County. This shortage contributes to sharp increases in housing prices and land value throughout the region. As a result, development pressure has shifted further out to rural counties, like Madison and Union Counties, where land prices are more affordable and large-acre parcels are readily available. Combined with future water and sewer improvements along US-42 and SR-161, Madison County is positioned to absorb growth as one of the few remaining underdeveloped counties in the metro.



Zoning, Policy, and Infrastructure Updates Across the Region

Many communities across the region are preparing for projected growth by updating zoning regulations and policy documents. For example, Columbus is modernizing its major road corridors holistically to jumpstart urban housing development. In July 2024, they introduced “ZoneIn” districts along major corridors that allow for higher densities and building heights. Additionally, COTA’s LinkUS program aims to deliver Bus Rapid Transit lines along high-capacity corridors like West Broad Street and West Main Street. Nearby local governments, like the City of Dublin and Jerome Township, are also exploring ways to provide meaningful connections between neighboring communities through roadway, parks, and trails investments.

Regional Population and Job Growth

The number of jobs in Plain City decreased since 2010, one of the only municipalities to lose jobs as population increased.

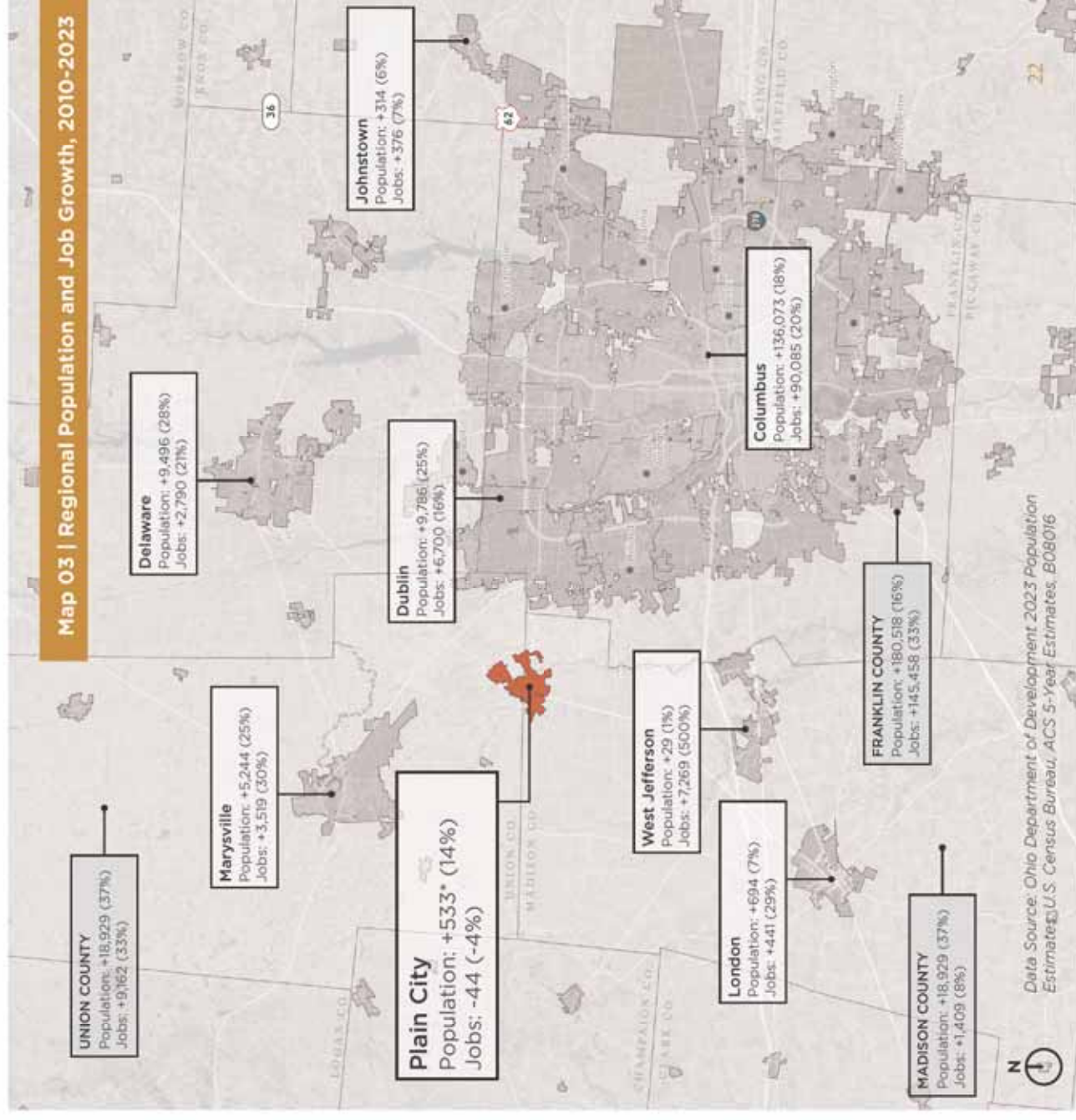
Legend

Plain City Boundary

Other Municipal Boundaries

*Note: Population estimate from Ohio Department of Development's 2023 Population Estimates. Since 2021, residential permits for 895 additional housing units have been approved. Once these units are built and fully occupied, this could add an additional 1,500-1,800 residents to Plain City.

C. Regional Conditions



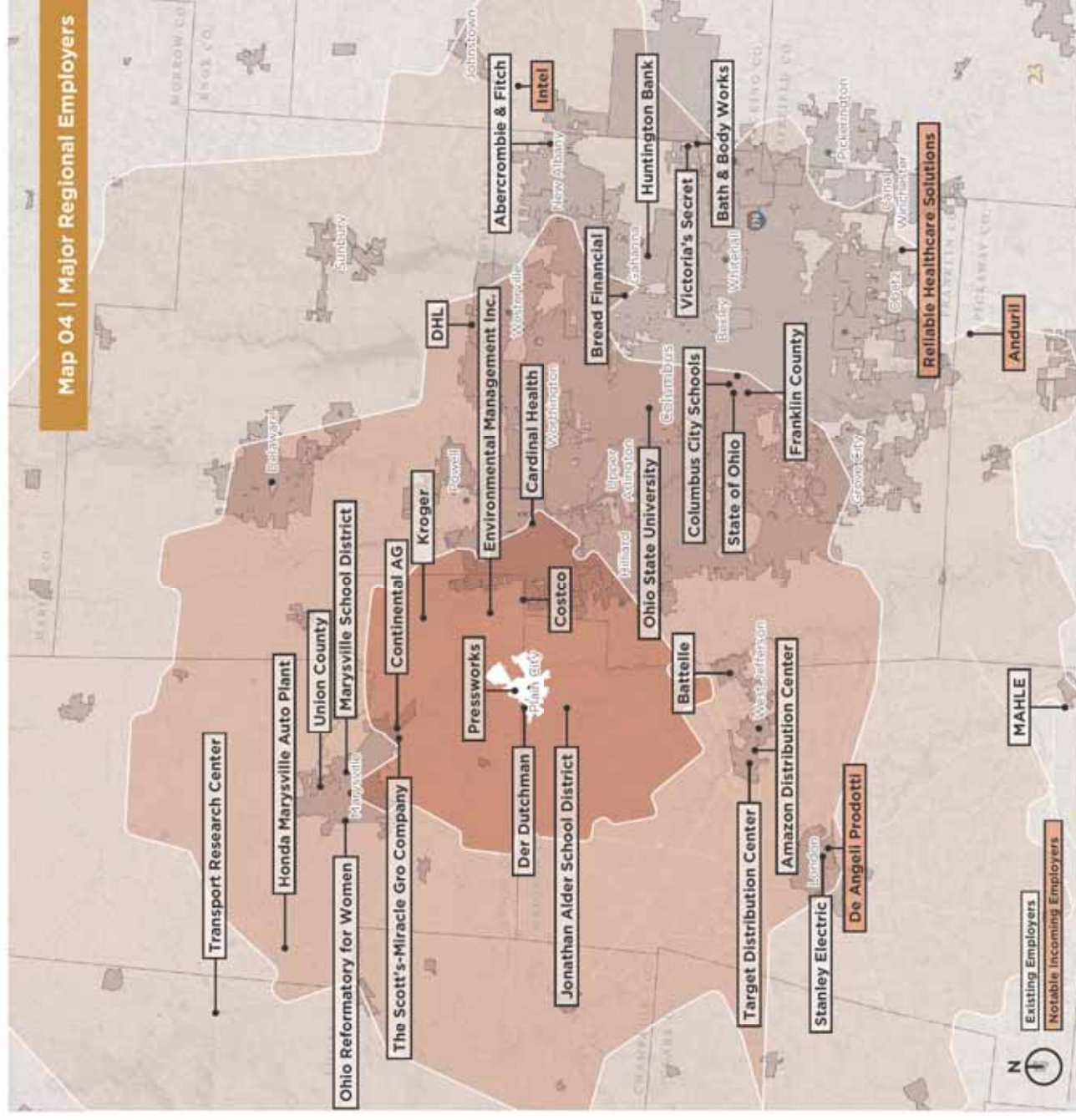
Major Regional Employers

Plain City is within a 45-minute commute of most of Central Ohio's largest employers.

Legend

- 15-Minute Drive
- 30-Minute Drive
- 45-Minute Drive
- Plain City Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries

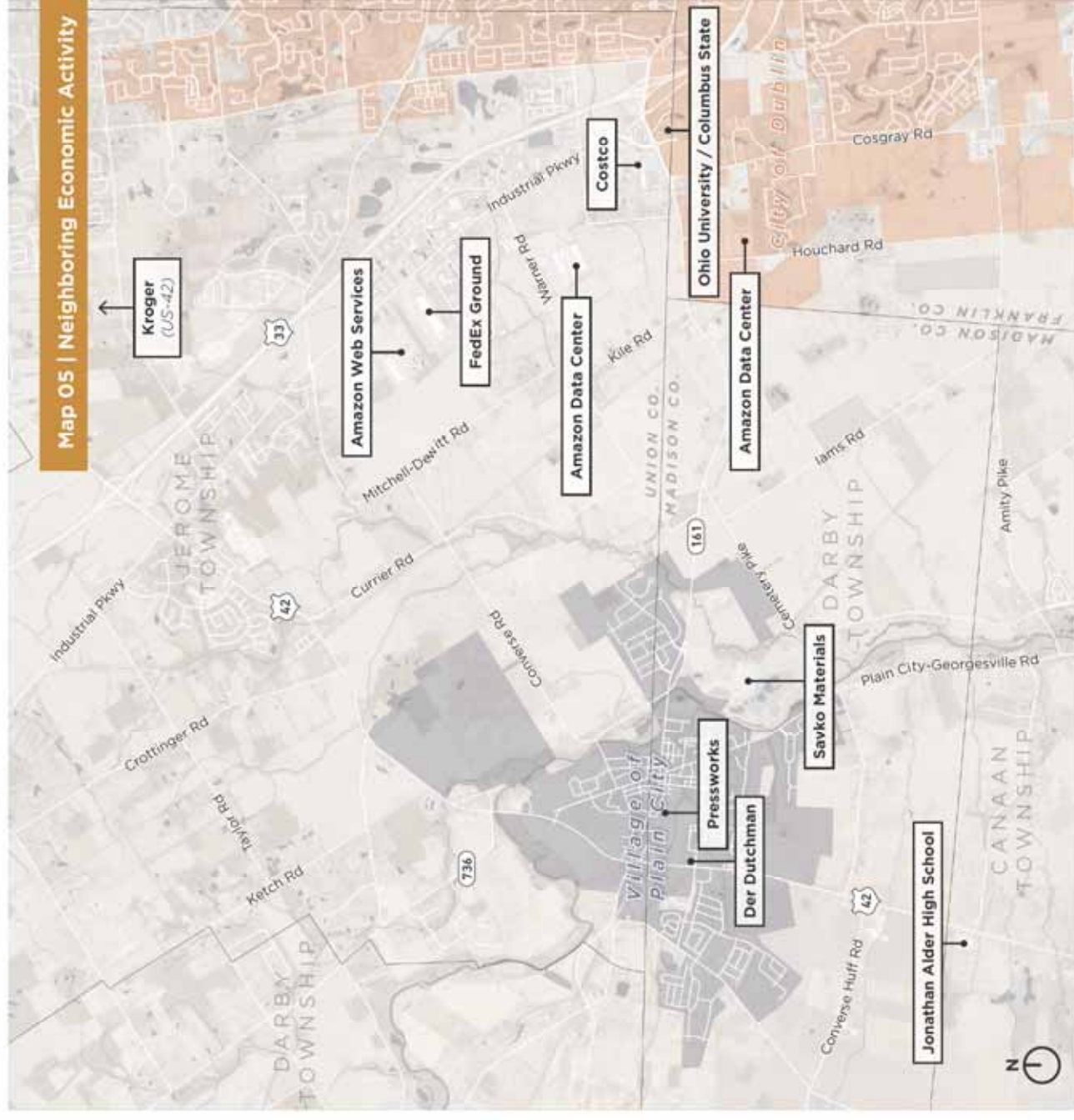
C. Regional Conditions



Neighboring Economic Activity

Plain City is adjacent to an emerging economic development hub along Industrial Parkway and SR-161.

There has been significant employment and commercial growth along Industrial Parkway over the last decade. New development along SR-161 in the City of Dublin has seen recent growth in medical, research, educational, and data uses to the area. Future water and sewer investments will enable additional growth in unincorporated areas along SR-161.

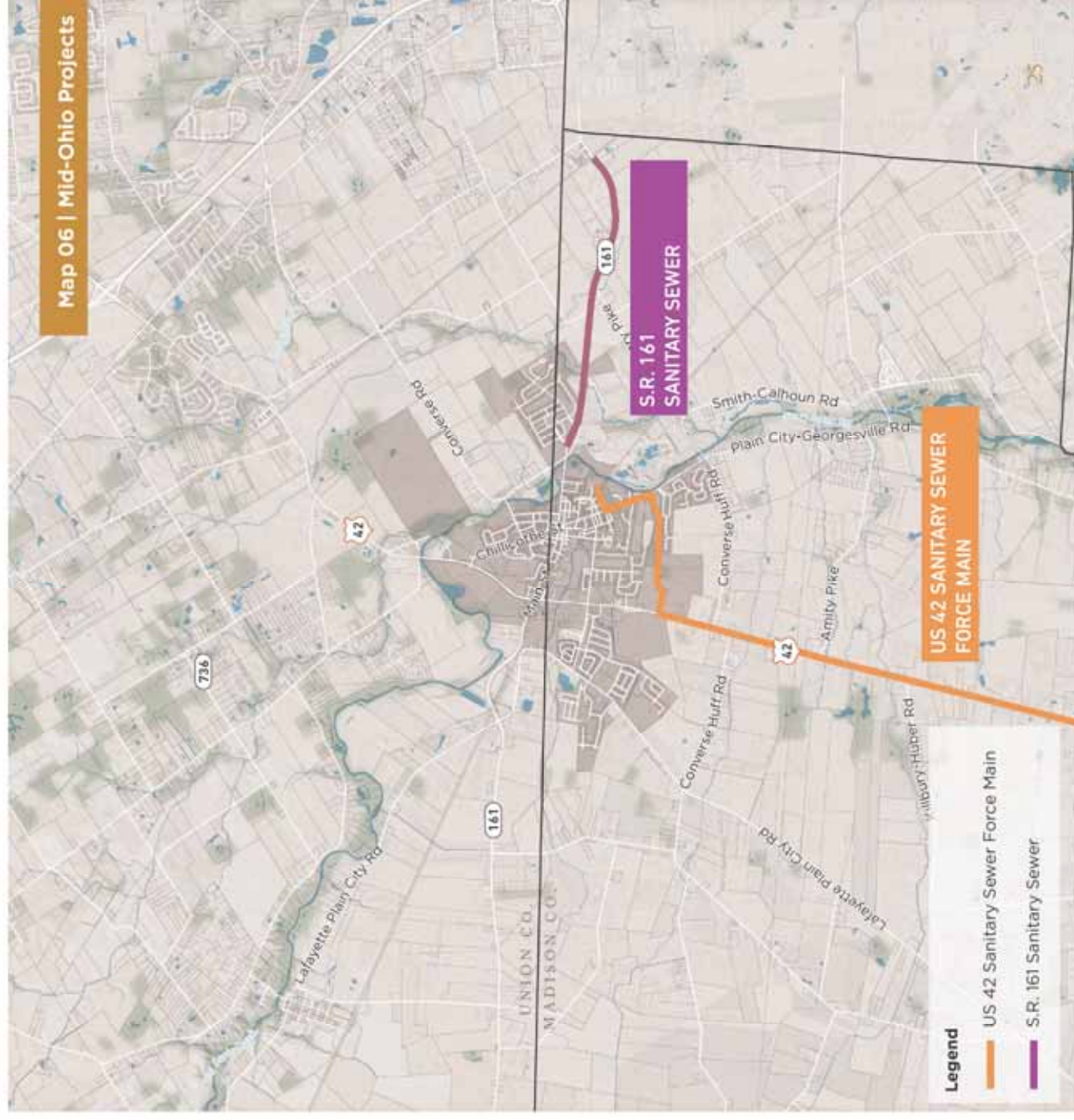


MOWSD Projects

Mid-Ohio Water and Sewer District is planning to extend sanitary sewer along State Route 161, with a force main also planned along US-42.

In the interim, the SR-161 line will connect to Plain City's existing treatment plant. Long-term, flows will be redirected south through the US-42 force main to a new regional treatment facility currently under construction near London.

C. Regional Conditions

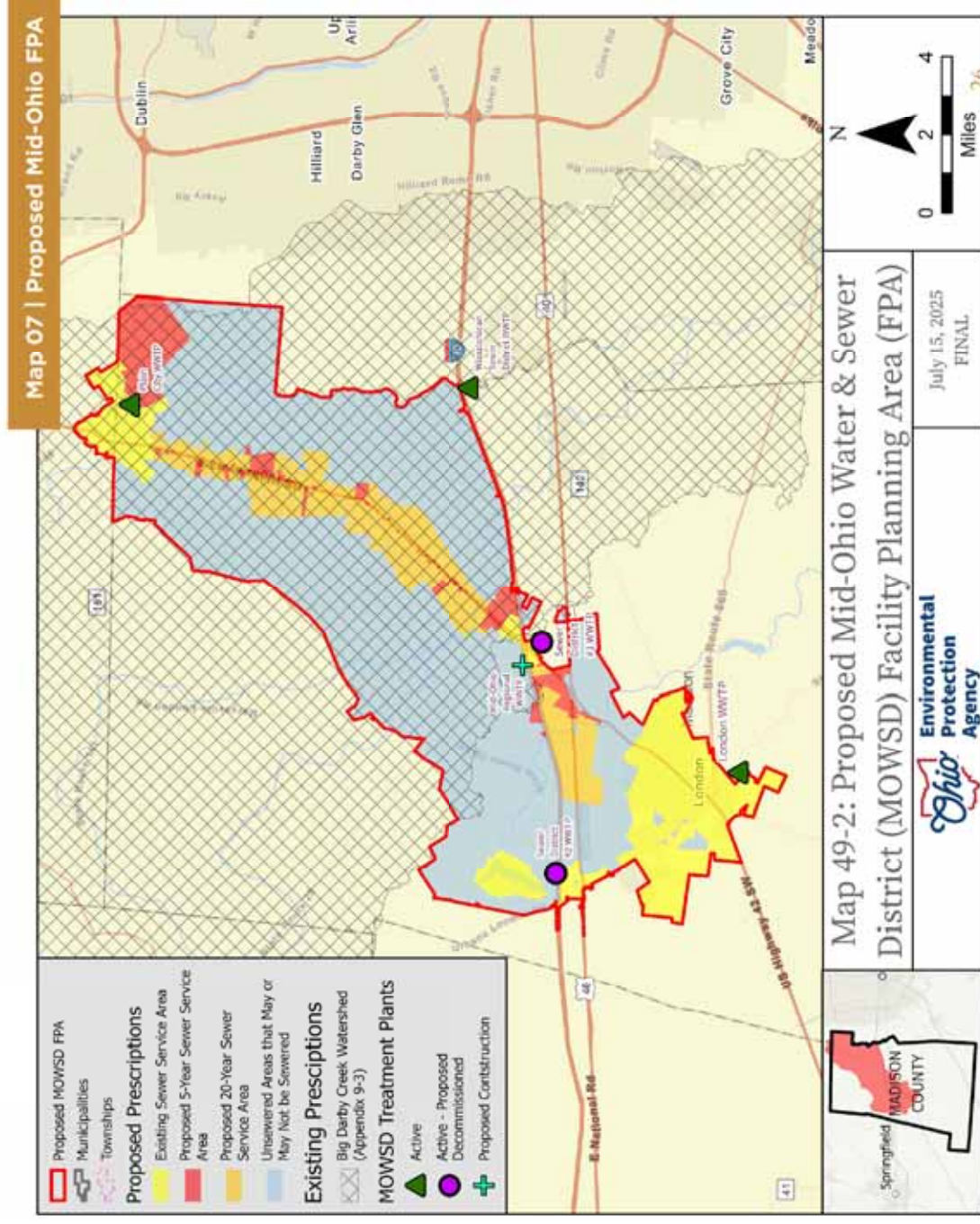


MOWSD Projects

Mid-Ohio's proposed 5-year sewer service area enables substantial growth along S.R. 161 and US-42.

It is anticipated that some of the resulting developed enabled by centralized utilities may request annexation into Plain City. However, areas not contiguous to Plain City's boundaries may develop within unincorporated areas of Madison County. These investments threaten the village's ability to control growth responsibly and prevent incompatible uses.

C. Regional Conditions



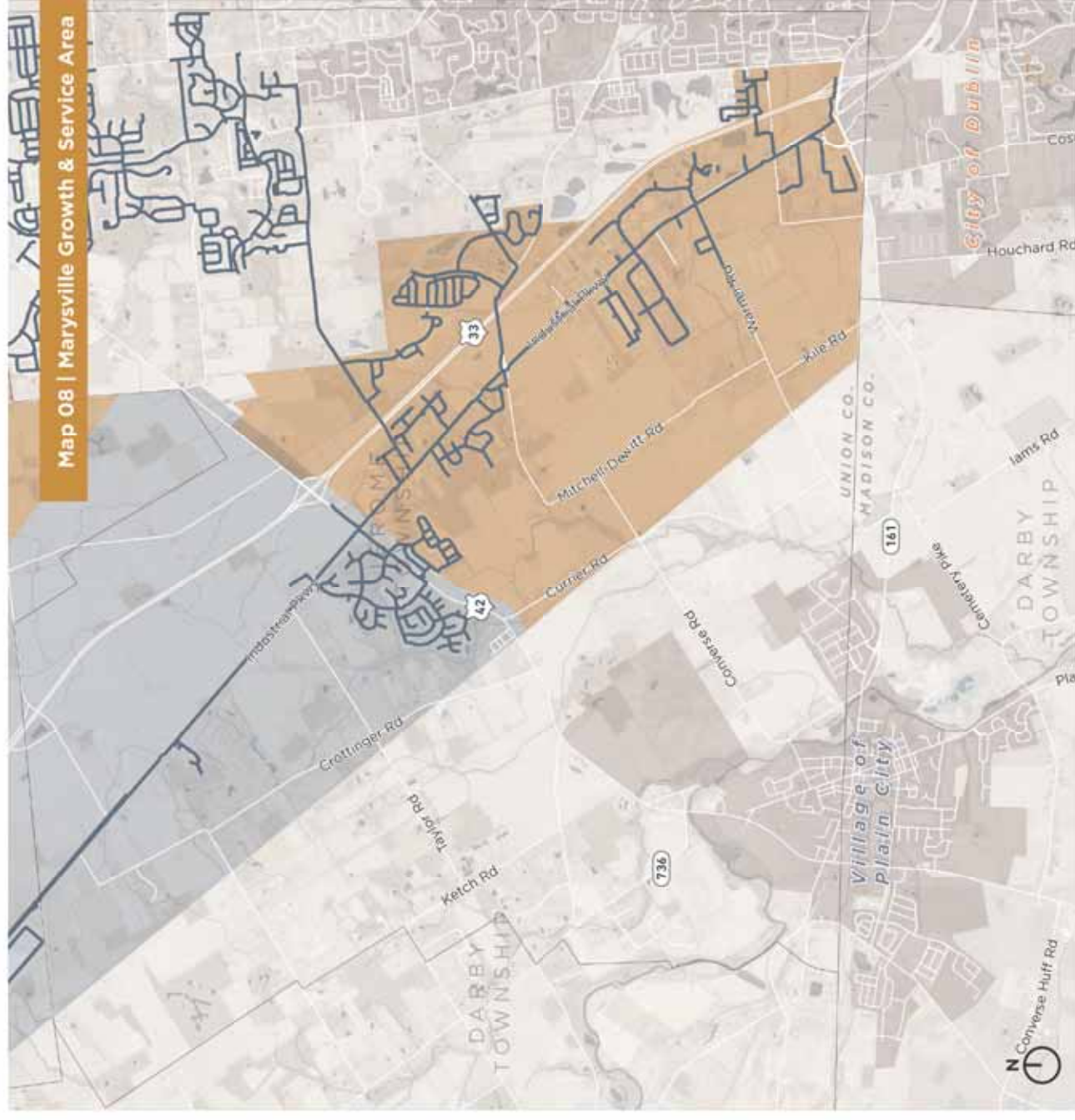
Marysville Growth & Service Area

Marysville is a potential partner in providing additional water and wastewater capacity in Union County.

Marysville provides centralized water and wastewater utilities to unincorporated areas in Jerome and Mill Creek Townships.

Legend

-  Marysville Growth Area
-  Marysville Exclusive Service Area
-  Marysville Water Main
-  C. Regional Conditions



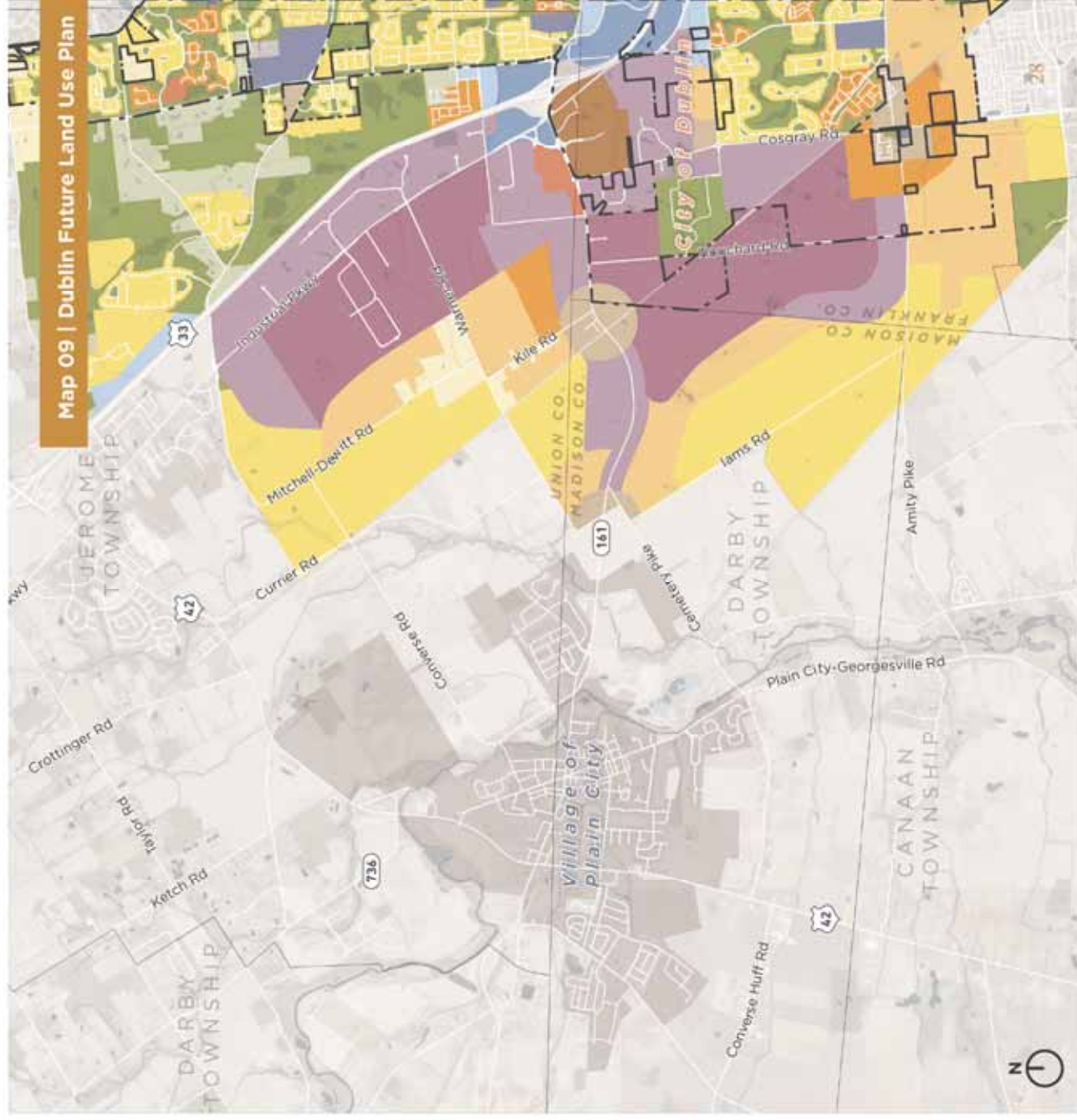
Dublin Future Land Use Plan

Dublin's Future Land Use Plan establishes an extraterritorial planning area along SR-161 that approaches Plain City's municipal boundary.

Legend

	Agriculture		Residential Medium Density
	Civic/Community		Residential Mixed Density
	Flex Innovation		Residential Suburban Density
	Industrial		Neighborhood Office
	Mixed Use Center		Suburban Office
	Mixed Use Neighborhood		Suburban Commercial
	Park/Open Space		
	Residential Low Density		

C. Regional Conditions

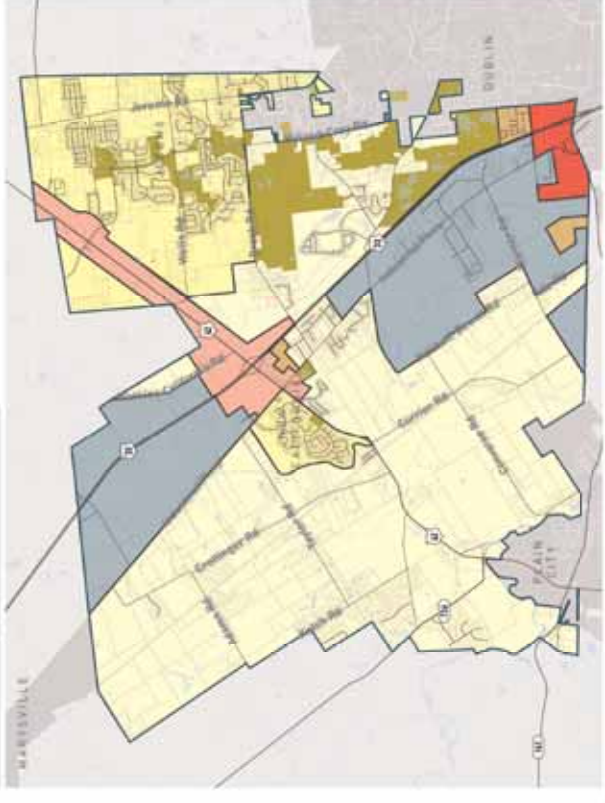


Jerome Township and Darby Township Land Use Maps

Neighboring townships have recently updated their future land use maps.

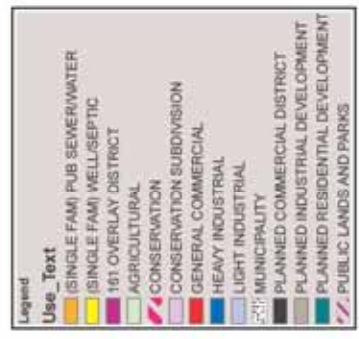
To prepare for annexation requests from private landowners, it is common for cities and villages to have extraterritorial planning areas that overlap with land areas currently under township or county jurisdiction. This helps guide inquiries and decision making, especially during the rezoning process.

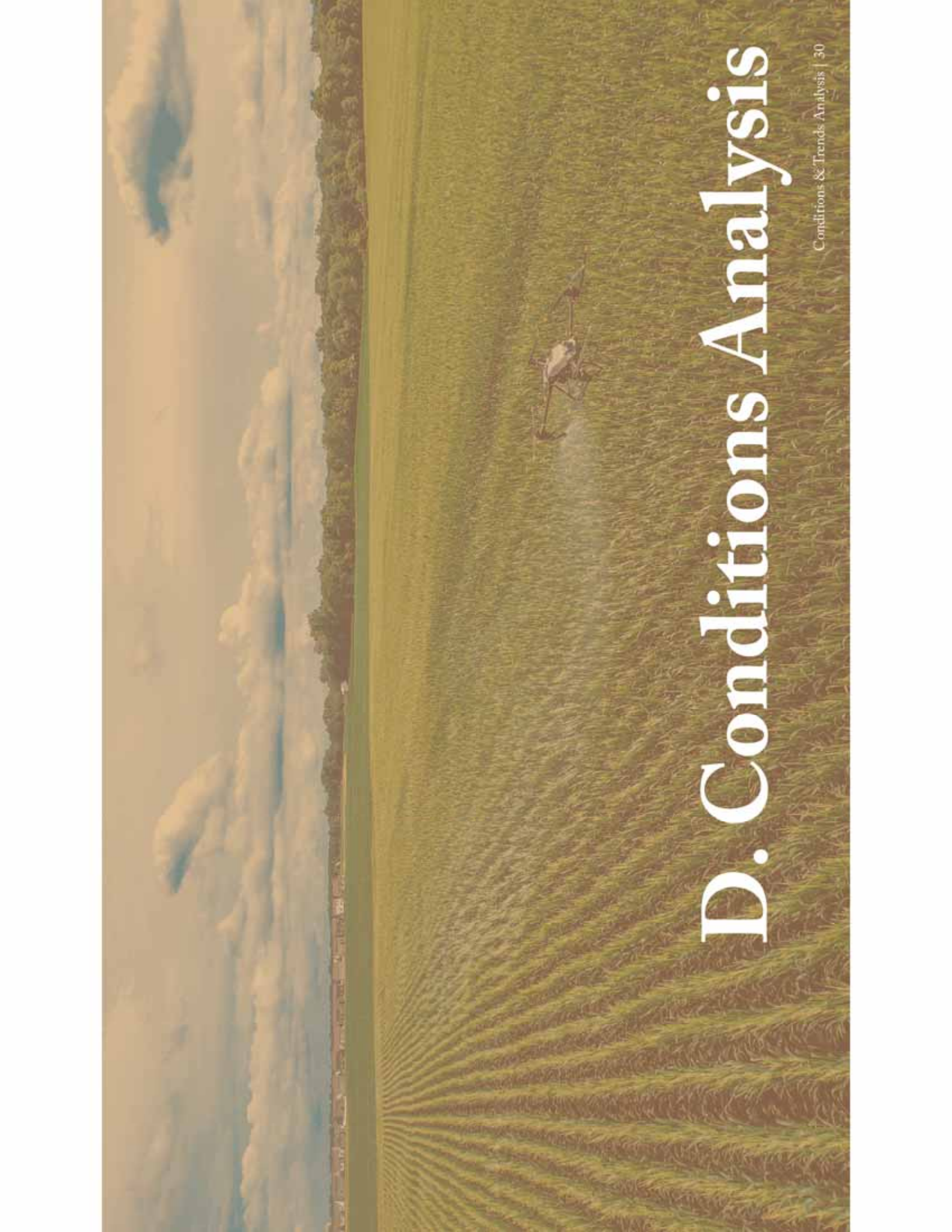
FIGURE 35
Future Land Use Map



Madison County, Ohio 2025 Comprehensive Plan
Darby Township

PROPOSED



An aerial photograph of a large agricultural field with rows of tall, golden-brown crops. A small drone is flying in the center of the field, spraying a fine mist. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and a line of trees is visible on the horizon.

D. Conditions Analysis

Conditions & Trends Analysis | 30

Conditions Analysis

This section presents a focused scan of current conditions and emerging trends in Plain City, organized across seven topic areas essential to understanding how the community has evolved and where it's headed. Each topic pairs concise key findings with supporting data, maps, and sources. Together, they provide a shared baseline for decisions ahead.

Topics Covered in this Section:



Demographics
& Workforce



Water & Utilities



Housing &
Neighborhoods



Parks, Recreation &
Open Space



Land Use, Development,
& Conservation



Governance

+ Uptown Progress

+ Creekview Commerce
Park

Demographics & Workforce

Key Findings

- + **Plain City is growing rapidly.** The village is on track to reach city status by 2030 (>5,000), reflecting sustained residential and population growth.
- + **Increase in families and school-aged children.** Rising enrollment in Jonathan Alder Local School District point to an increase in the number of families with children moving to Plain City.
- + **Most of Plain City's residents work elsewhere.** Growth in new housing has increased this dynamic; attracting new residents from nearby communities.
- + **Jobs in Plain City are not held by local residents.** This indicates a mismatch between job types, their respective wages, and the education attainment of residents.
- + **Household income is rising faster than the region.** Since 2000, median income has doubled—outpacing trends in both Union and Madison Counties.



The village is on track to reach city status by 2030, reflecting sustained residential and population growth.

- + **Significant population growth between 2000-2010.** Plain City's population **grew by 51%** between 2000 to 2023, from nearly 2,900 to over 4,300 residents, though 92% of that growth occurred between 2000 and 2010.

- + **Looking ahead, new development is expected to push the population above 5,000 before 2030.** The current 2025 estimate is approximately 4,900 residents.

- + **Union County is growing much quicker than Madison County.** Since 2000, Madison County grew by 9.7% (3,900 residents), while Union County grew by 70.2% (28,700 residents).

*Note: Population estimate from Ohio Department of Development's 2023 Population Estimates. Since 2021, residential permits for 895 additional housing units have been approved. Once these units are built and fully occupied, this could add an additional 1,500-1,800 residents to Plain City.

D. Conditions Analysis

