

Chillicothe Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045



Acknowledgements

We would like to offer our thanks to the residents, officials, and partners who shared their expertise and perspectives throughout this comprehensive planning process.

* Team member is no longer affiliated with the organization and/or participating

° Principal contributor

Special Thanks to the Residents of Chillicothe

Steering Committee

Amanda Beadles, City of Chillicothe
Andrew Ruhland (Chair), Owens Design Group, Chillicothe Plan Commission
Don White, Chillicothe City Council
Jim Benisch, Chillicothe Fire Protection District
Patricia Westerman-Connor, Chillicothe City Council
Jeremy Cooper, Chillicothe Police Department
Kevin Yates, Chillicothe Park District
Lynne A. Wright, OSF Healthcare
Mike Ratcliff, Chillicothe Township
Shaun Grant, IVC School District

City Staff

Amanda Beadles, Economic Development Director °
Denise Passage, Office Manager
Shawn Sutherland, Public Works Director

City Council

Barry Bredeman, Ward 2 Alderperson
Courtney Gehrig, Ward 2 Alderperson
Don White, Ward 1 Alderperson
Gary Sharp, Ward 4 Alderperson
Jeff Jenkins, Ward 1 Alderperson
Michael Hughes, Mayor
Patricia Westerman-Connor, Ward 3 Alderperson
Patrick Semtner, Ward 3 Alderperson
Tim White, Ward 4 Alderperson

Topical Experts

Ashley Elias, City of Peoria Code Enforcement
Chad Allison, IVC School District
Darlene Kumpf, Community Needs Agency
David Horton, Fehr Graham
Jason Marks, Peoria County Emergency Management Agency
Jeremy Cooper, Chillicothe Police Department
Katy Glynn, ENGIE Group
Mary Aylmer, Chillicothe Public Library District
Robert Culp, Fehr Graham Engineering & Environmental
Steve Kline, Jacob & Klein Ltd.
Terry Ruhland, Plum Creek Builders, Peoria County Board

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Debbi La Rue, AICP, Senior Planner °
Else Hayes, Planner I °
Eric Miller, Executive Director
Gabriel Guevara, Planner II *
Isaiah Hageman, GIS Specialist II °
Logan Chapman, GIS Specialist I *°
Lori Reynolds, Office Administrator
Ray Lees, Planning Program Manager
Rebecca Eisele, Accountant

PGAV Planners

Cristen Hardin, Senior Project Manager
Ryan Smith, Planner
Teresa Anderson, AICP, Project Manager



Executive Summary

In early 2024, the City of Chillicothe began working with Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC or “Tri-County”) to create a new comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan is a cumulative planning document that encompasses the needs of the community and emphasizes community and stakeholder input. Tri-County developed the engagement plan, reviewed and refined recommendations, and offered critical insights into the plan implementation all while being guided by a steering committee. This steering committee was composed of members of the community with diverse perspectives and insights into the needs of the City and were appointed to this position by the City Board.

Before beginning community engagement, Tri-County staff conducted stakeholder interviews, reviewed census and economic data, and began developing a community profile to summarize Chillicothe’s current conditions and assets (Section I: Community Profile). After creating a snapshot of the community, Tri-County and the steering committee sought resident input to develop a vision for Chillicothe. Throughout late summer and early fall, residents of diverse age groups and backgrounds contributed their ideas and concerns for the City through surveys, one-on-one conversations, an open house, and in high school classrooms (Section II: Chillicothe Speaks).

Tri-County organized, analyzed, and summarized the findings of these engagement strategies and presented the

results with the steering committee and PGAV Planners.

Results were then synthesized into objectives, goals, and short- and long-term strategies (Section III: Vision + Strategies) and a Future Land Use Map (Section IV: Future Land Use). Community objectives and goals were categorized by theme: development and growth; transportation, infrastructure, and services; housing; community character; parks, recreation, and natural resources; health and safety; and plan implementation. Each goal and strategy includes a timeline for project execution, an entity responsible for implementation, and potential partners to support the City.

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List of Acronyms

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act	IVC Illinois Valley Central School District
AG Agricultural (land use)	LDR Low-Density Residential (land use)
BDD Business Development District	LEPC Local Emergency Planning Committee
BRE Business Retention & Expansion Program	LRTP Long-Range Transportation Plan
CEC Chillicothe Junior High + Elementary Center	MDR Medium-Density Residential (land use)
CI Civic/Institutional (land use)	MEG Metropolitan Enforcement Group
CIL-CARP Central Illinois Coalition Active in Response Planning	M&T Marketing + Tourism
CIP Capital Improvement Plan	MSA Metropolitan Statistical Area
COAD Community Organization Active in Disaster	MU-CLI Mixed-Use Commercial/Light Industrial (land use)
CRS Community Rating System	MU-H Mixed-Use Historic District (land use)
EJPA Extra-Jurisdictional Planning Area	MU-NC Mixed-Use Neighborhood Commercial (land use)
EMA Emergency Management Agency	MU-R Riverfront Mixed-Use District (land use)
FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency	MU-UC Mixed-Use Urban Corridor (land use)
GPEDC Greater Peoria Economic Development Council	NFIP National Flood Insurance Program
GPMTD Greater Peoria Mass Transit District	OS Other Open Space (land use)
HDR High-Density Residential (land use)	PACVB Peoria Area Convention + Visitor's Bureau, "Discover Peoria"
HI Heavy Industrial (land use)	PP Public Parks + Refuges (land use)
HO Hillside Overlay (land use)	PPUA Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area
HMP Hazard Mitigation Plan	PREZ Peoria Rural Enterprise Zone
ICAC Internet Crimes Against Children	PUEZ Peoria Urban Enterprise Zone
IDNR Illinois Department of Natural Resources	ROE Regional Office of Education
IDOT Illinois Department of Transportation	SOAR Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results
IEDC International Economic Development Council	SPO Stream Protection Overlay (land use)
IEPA Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	SRCD Special Recreation + Conservation District (land use)
IGA Intergovernmental Agreement	SWOT Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
IHDA Illinois Housing Development Authority	TCRPC Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
IL SBDC Illinois Small Business Development Corporation	TIF Tax Increment Finance
	USACE U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
	W Water (land use)



I. Community Profile

INTRODUCTION

The City of Chillicothe is a charming, medium-sized community located approximately 18 miles north of Downtown Peoria, nestled along the scenic Illinois River. Established in the early 19th century, Chillicothe has maintained a stable population of just over 6,000 residents since 1970. It is part of the Peoria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and is conveniently intersected by Illinois State Route 29, providing direct access to surrounding regions.

Chillicothe is cherished for its welcoming, small-town atmosphere and strong sense of community. The City offers a diverse array of locally owned businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities, contributing to its vibrant local economy. Residents value its strategic location, which combines the tranquility of rural living with proximity to Peoria's urban amenities, cultural attractions, and employment centers.

The City also has abundant natural amenities. Surrounded by parks, forested areas, and the Illinois River, the city is an ideal destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Whether it's hunting, fishing, boating, or simply enjoying the natural beauty, Chillicothe provides abundant recreational opportunities year-round.



HISTORY

Indigenous American Beginnings

Throughout the 17th century, current-day Central Illinois was occupied by the Illiniwek, an alliance of five Indigenous American tribes: the Tamaraos, Michigameas, Kaskaskias, Cahokias, and Peorias. The French, whose presence and power in the region grew throughout the 1670s, referred to the Illiniwek as the Illinois Confederacy or Illinois. Joliet and Marquette, French explorers on a voyage down the Mississippi, encountered the Illiniwek tribes in 1673 and were treated with hospitality and aided on their travels. Later in 1675, the Illiniwek were encouraged to participate in the French fur trade. The Illiniwek accepted and soon welcomed French traders into the region. This allowed for a period of peace between the Illiniwek and French in which political, economic, and familial relationships developed.

However, conflict arose with the death of Chief Pontiac, an Ottawa chief that opposed British settlers, at the hands of a Peoria tribe member. This incited the wrath of the Ottawa nation onto the Illiniwek, resulting in a slaughter and the forced migration of the Illiniwek south. Due to this migration, the Potawatomi Indians moved southward into Illinois, where they established villages along the Illinois River and what is now Chillicothe. The Potawatomi continued the fur trade with the remaining French traders.

During the War of 1812, the Illinois militia struck against the Potawatomi as a retaliation for the raids on southern Illinois. An attack was made against a number of Potawatomi settlements, including the village of Chief Gomo in what is current day Chillicothe. Following these attacks,

Chief Gomo and other chieftains negotiated a peace treaty with Colonel George Davenport. Chief Gomo died three years later in 1815, and was succeeded by his brother Senachewine, who was more tolerable of White settlers.

Years later, the Potawatomies were encouraged by Winnebagos and Chief Blackhawk of the Sauk to attack and kill White settlers between 1829 and 1832. However, the Potawatomies declined and migrated out of the region instead. All Potawatomies left Illinois by 1835.

Early Colonial Settlement

Mahlon Lupton came to the village of Peoria in 1829, followed shortly by John Hammett and his family, along with five other Ohio families in 1830. The group crossed the Illinois River thanks to the aid of local Native Americans before settling north of the village of Peoria in what is current-day Chillicothe.

A blacksmith shop, the first shop in Chillicothe, was established in 1830. The village slowly developed over the years with the addition of more families and the development of the Village of Rome south of Chillicothe. In 1836, the now 4 blocks that made up Chillicothe were sold to Harrison Jamison and Joseph Hart. They added 20 blocks to the town and, later that same year, platted another eight block area. With the arrival of more people, the Village continued to grow and develop. In 1861, Chillicothe officially became a village.

Successes and Hardships

During the mid 1800s, the development of a mainline between Chicago and Kansas City established Chillicothe as a prominent stop at which the mainline crossed the river.

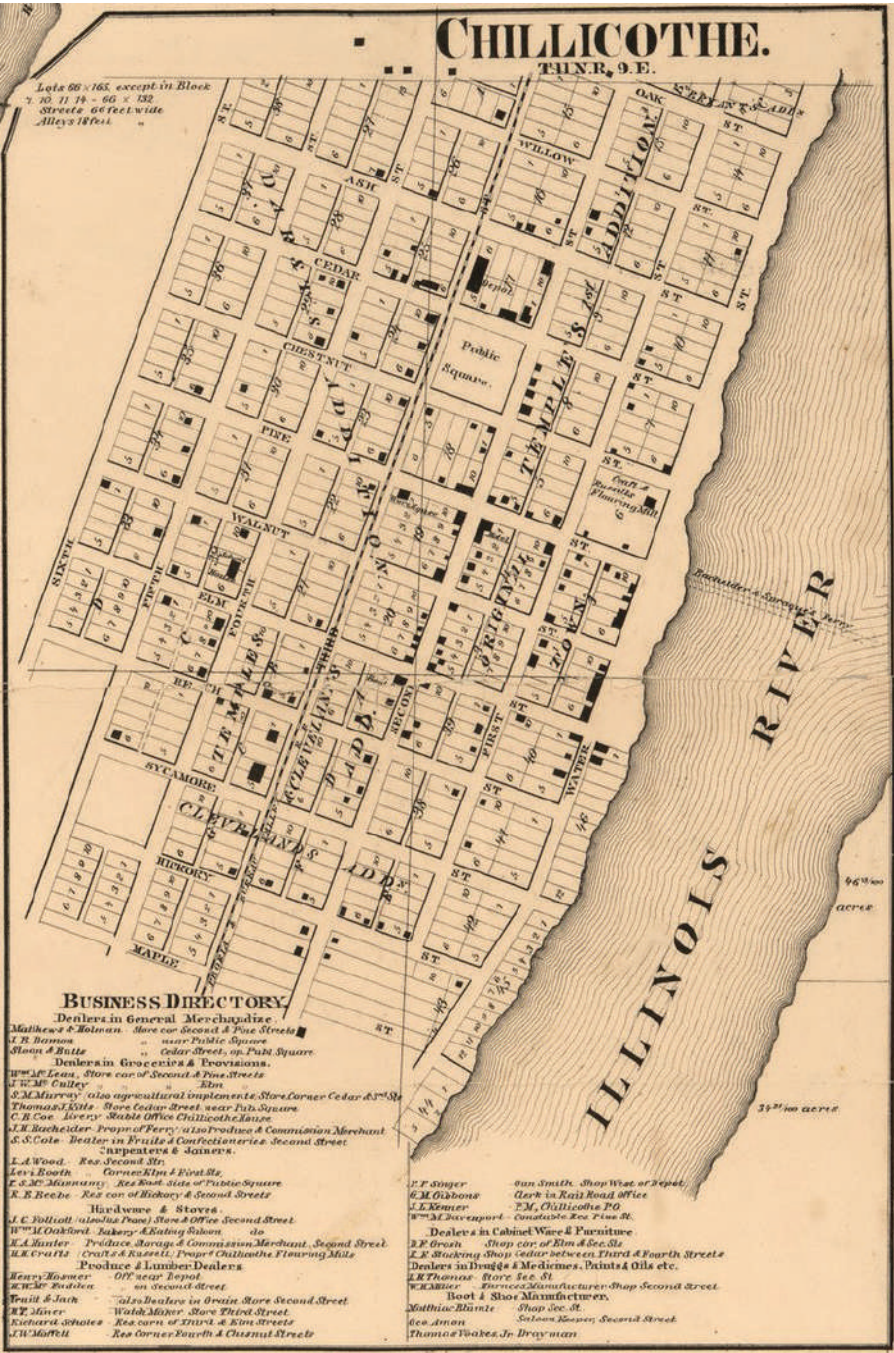
The construction of the railroad began in 1847 and continued until 1854 when the railroad was leased to the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad. Due to the ecological makeup of Chillicothe and the Greater Peoria region, railroads were able to cross the river with ease. These rails became lucrative for the area and brought in multiple freights and passengers to and through Chillicothe daily. The business district began to prosper during this time due to the influx of visitors and shoppers, as well as the job opportunities provided by the rail.

In 1874, Chillicothe implemented a city form of government, with a Mayor and Board of Alderman being elected. During this time, the Village consisted of 1,200 residents and was commercially successful. Chillicothe contained a slew of businesses, as well as multiple medical professionals and hotels.

However, the City was not without its struggles. In 1864, the grain elevator was destroyed by a fire, followed by a large steam mill and two warehouses in 1869.

Again in 1873, a store and multiple homes caught fire and were destroyed. Despite these setbacks, residents of Chillicothe prospered and the City continued to grow.

Fig. 1.1 (Below) Chillicothe Village, 1861.



20th Century Chillicothe

Throughout the 20th century, Chillicothe continued to see growth. In 1916, the Chillicothe Women’s Club and the University Club secured funding for the construction of the Chillicothe Township Library, located on Second and Walnut. By 1920, the combined population of Chillicothe and North Chillicothe was 2,988. Two years later, the new Chillicothe Township High School was opened.



Fig. 1.2 (Above) Chillicothe Library in the early 1900s.
Fig. 1.3 (Below) Caldwell Grocery Delivery Truck pictured with Dale and Helen Foster.



Railroads continued to be a source of growth for Chillicothe throughout the early 20th century. By 1931, the Illinois River railroad crossing at Chillicothe was the longest crossing in the Santa Fe System. However, in 1963 a fire broke out in the depot, resulting in the rerouting of the



Fig. 1.4 (Above) Amtrak Chillicothe Station, 1983.

passenger rail. Later in 1971, Amtrak began passenger rail service, but it was discontinued not long after in 1979.

Following World War II, Chillicothe experienced a boom in housing development which helped to fuel the economy. Notable businesses at the time included Bob Fennell’s Chillicothe Metal Company, masonry, roofing, concrete work, and construction companies that offered custom-built homes. The resurgence of construction and development following World War II allowed for decades of blue-collar job opportunities for residents.

In 1946, Chillicothe Chamber of Commerce voted for the adoption of a constitution, by-laws, and the creation of a board of directors. That same year, more plats were developed for the expansion of residential land westward and northward. Additionally, the Chillicothe Park District was created, marking a busy year for community expansion and development. The 1950s saw similar growth with the opening of North School, a new Fire Station, the modernization of the business district, the installation of a new 300,000-gallon water tank, the proposal of the Plaza Park Shopping Center, and the development of more subdivisions.

In 1968, North Chillicothe was finally annexed into Chillicothe after its third vote. An initial vote in 1952 found that residents of Chillicothe supported the merging of the two towns, however North Chillicothe residents opposed it. Again in 1966, they opposed the annexation, before agreeing to it 2 years later.

Modern-Day Chillicothe

Today, Chillicothe’s population is around 6,000 residents. The history of the village can be seen throughout the region with extensive railroads, a railroad bridge across the Illinois River, and historic buildings that still stand. Despite an increase in size, Chillicothe has maintained its small-town feel.

Fig. 1.5 (Top right) McGrath Sand Gravel Company.
Fig. 1.6 (Middle right) Lido Cafe in Chillicothe.
Fig. 1.7 (Below) Second Street, Chillicothe



POWERS OF THE CITY

The City of Chillicothe operates under a traditional municipal government framework, led by an elected Mayor and a City Council composed of two Alderpersons representing each of the city’s four wards. In addition, residents elect the City Clerk, who plays a key role in maintaining official records and supporting administrative functions.

City Alderpersons are appointed by the Mayor to serve on various committees that oversee the core functions of municipal governance. Other appointed city officer positions are filled collaboratively by the Mayor and City Council as needed to support city operations.

Unlike the nearby City of Peoria, Chillicothe is a non-home rule municipality, meaning its governmental powers are limited to those explicitly granted by the Illinois Constitution and applicable state laws. These powers include the authority to levy taxes for public services, implement local improvements, and establish the terms and selection methods for city officers (Ill. Const. art. VII, § 7).

Within these parameters, the City of Chillicothe exercises its authority to promote the general welfare of its residents, ensuring responsible governance and the delivery of essential services.



Fig. 1.8 (Right) Chillicothe City Hall

PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

Chillicothe Comprehensive Plan Update (2014)

Chillicothe last overhauled its Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 2014 as an update to their 2003 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The update established specific goals and implementation strategies covering a variety of topics: agriculture and natural resources, public infrastructure, housing, economic development, and transportation.

Chillicothe Marketing & Tourism Commission SWOT Analysis (2023)

In 2023, the Chillicothe Marketing & Tourism (M&T) Commission developed three strategic plans to support economic and residential growth in the Village: the Business Growth Strategic Plan, Residential Growth Strategic Plan, and Tourism Strategic Plan. Each plan included a SWOT analysis and outlined targeted strategies to address challenges and build on existing strengths.

Business Growth Strategic Plan

Key strengths identified include available storefronts in downtown Chillicothe and Plaza Drive, proximity to the airport and highways, and access to a local workforce—though a lack of skilled labor was noted. The plan set three main objectives: Enhance or create business incentive programs, collect data on available commercial properties, and explore annexation for future land development

Residential Growth Strategic Plan

This element focuses on improving community assets to attract new residents and developers. Objectives included: Assess available housing sites, build partnerships

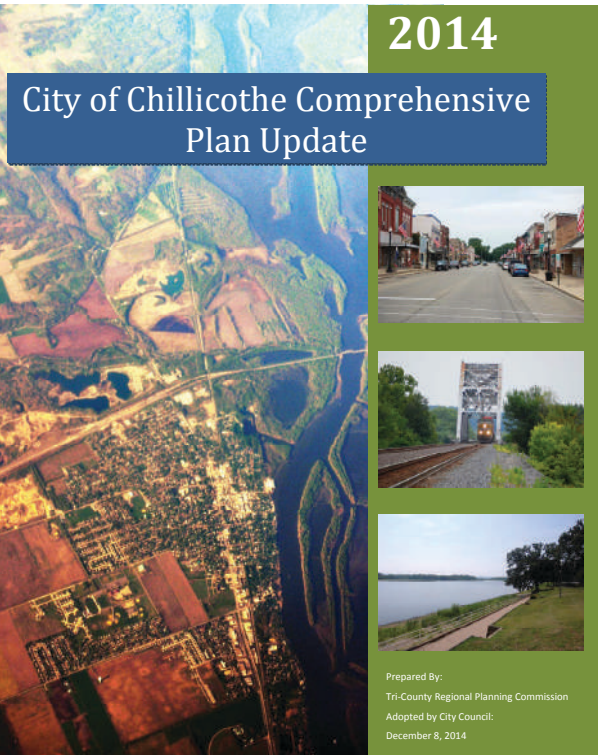


Fig. 1.9 (above) Cover of the Chillicothe Comprehensive Plan Update

with realtors and developers, and consider annexation to expand residential land opportunities.

Tourism Strategic Plan

This component emphasizes Chillicothe’s walkability, recreational amenities, and small-town charm. However, it identified gaps in tourism infrastructure, such as limited overnight accommodations and competition from nearby communities. Objectives included: Increase lodging options, improve river access, and promote tourism industries and launch marketing campaigns.

Peoria County Broadband Study (2023)

The growing demand for reliable, high-speed, and secure broadband access has made digital connectivity more essential than ever. Broadband plays a vital role in supporting businesses, educational institutions, healthcare services (including telemedicine), information sharing, social interaction, and everyday household activities such as online shopping. It has become a foundational element of modern infrastructure.

The 2023 Peoria County Broadband Study provides a comprehensive analysis of the county’s existing broadband landscape, identifies service gaps, and outlines the role of local government in expanding and promoting broadband access.

Peoria County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)

Each year, natural disasters such as tornadoes, flooding, and severe storms pose significant threats to lives, property, and infrastructure. While these events cannot be prevented, their impact can be mitigated through proactive planning. The Peoria County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is designed to reduce the severity and consequences of natural hazards through strategic mitigation efforts. Administered by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, the plan is updated every five years to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

The 2023 HMP identified severe weather, tornadoes, extreme heat, and flooding as the highest-risk hazards for the City of Chillicothe. Lower-risk threats included dam/levee failure and land subsidence. In response, the City developed several mitigation strategies, including:

- Identifying vulnerable populations at risk during extended power outages
- Training first responders for active shooter scenarios
- Updating floodplain ordinances
- Assessing the structural integrity of critical facilities and emergency shelters
- Removing structures from flood-prone areas to reduce future flood losses

By participating in and receiving approval for the HMP, Chillicothe becomes eligible to apply for federal funding to implement these mitigation measures and to access recovery assistance in the event of a disaster.

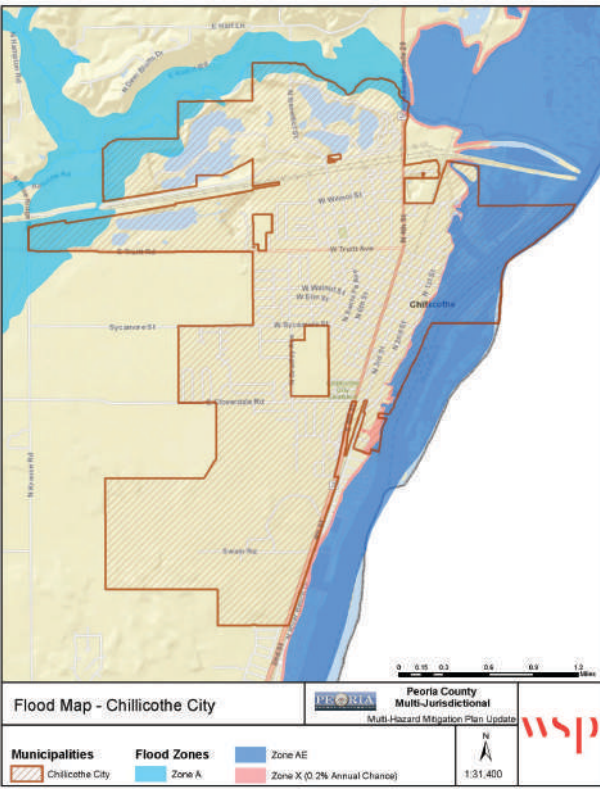


Fig. 1.10 (above) Flood Map of Chillicothe from the Peoria County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

Long-Range Transportation Plan 2045

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission updates its Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) every five years to guide transportation development across the region. The LRTP takes a comprehensive approach, analyzing transportation-related issues such as environmental impact, land use, public health, economic development, safety, security, and regional connectivity.

To ensure eligibility for federal funding, the City of Chillicothe and other municipalities within the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area (PPUA) must submit descriptions of future, regionally significant transportation projects for inclusion in the LRTP. The current plan outlines projects through the year 2045 and includes several initiatives relevant to Chillicothe:

- + Cloverdale Rd Preservation from western City limits to IL-29.
- + Chillicothe Multi-Use Trail along IL 29 from Chillicothe to South Rome.
- + IL 29 – Chillicothe Viaduct Road Improvements north of Truitt to Senachwine Creek.
- + IL 29 – Chillicothe Viaduct Reconstruction on IL 29 north of Gail St.

Grey Area Mobility Enhancement and Expansion Study (2021)

Due to the State of Illinois’ transit funding structure, rural and urban transit budgets are allocated separately. While this ensures both areas receive funding, it can create geographical gaps in service—known as “grey areas”—where residents lack access to reliable public transportation.

The Grey Area Mobility Enhancement and Expansion Study identifies these underserved zones within the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area (PPUA), focusing on

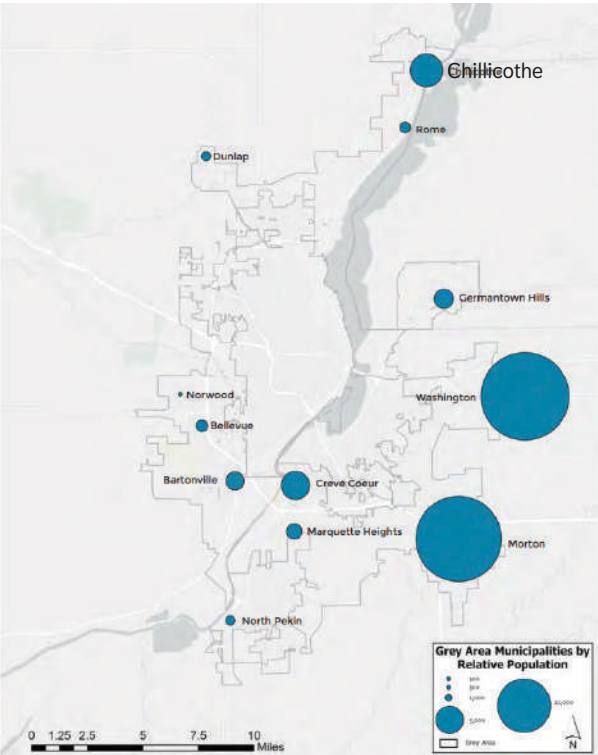


Fig. 1.11 (above) Figure of municipalities in Grey Area from the Grey Area Mobility Enhancement and Expansion Study

communities without fixed-route transit services. Chillicothe was highlighted as one such area. Before joining the PPUA, Chillicothe was served by Peoria County’s rural transit system, CountyLink. However, since its integration into the urbanized area, no urban public transit has been established.

Currently, Chillicothe Transportation, a volunteer-based service for medical appointments, is available but often unreliable. To address these mobility gaps, the study proposes several funding sources and strategies, including microtransit services—a flexible, on-demand public transit model similar to private rideshare platforms—and scalable financial solutions to support implementation.

Chillicothe Trail Master Plan (2023)

The 2023 Chillicothe Trail Master Plan is an update to the original plan drafted in July 2020, aimed at improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the city. The plan establishes clear guidelines for future trail development, identifies existing gaps and barriers, enhances wayfinding, and categorizes current and proposed routes to support grant applications.

Community-prioritized connection sites include Chillicothe’s schools, the Community Center, civic buildings, churches, and recreational areas such as Santa Fe Park, Shore Acres Park, and Moffit Park. IL Route 29 was identified as a major obstacle due to its lack of ADA-compliant crossings, poor visibility, and insufficient infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians. Additionally, sidewalk gaps—particularly in North Town and along the route from downtown to Shore Acres Park—were noted as significant mobility challenges.

Chillicothe 4th Street Corridor Plan

This corridor revitalization plan explores how zoning, redevelopment, wayfinding, and streetscaping can enhance the central corridor of Chillicothe, creating a more welcoming and accessible environment for both residents and visitors.

The plan’s primary goals include:

- Revitalizing underutilized properties along the corridor
- Establishing a cohesive visual identity through consistent signage
- Implementing wayfinding to guide visitors to key community destinations
- Strengthening the physical and visual connection between the north and south ends of the city

To support these goals, the plan proposes conceptual wayfinding signage, pedestrian safety improvements, and landscaping and beautification efforts, particularly near the historic downtown. These enhancements aim to improve both the aesthetics and functionality of the corridor, reinforcing Chillicothe’s identity and accessibility.

DEMOGRAPHICS:
POPULATION

Chillicothe’s population reflects a relatively balanced age distribution (Fig. 1.14). Baby Boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—make up the largest demographic group, accounting for 22% of the population (Fig. 1.12). Close behind are Millennials and Generation Z, each comprising 21.5%. The smallest segments are the Greatest Generation and Generation Alpha, which is expected given that one group is aging and the other is still in the early stages of being born.

Between 1960 and 1970, Chillicothe experienced a significant population boom, nearly doubling from just over 3,000 to more than 6,000 residents. Since then, the population has remained relatively stable, fluctuating slightly around the 6,000 mark. The city reached its peak population in 2015 with approximately 6,200 residents, followed by a modest decline—consistent with the minor variations observed over the past five decades.

This pattern contrasts sharply with the growth trajectory of Peoria County. While Chillicothe saw a rapid increase followed by long-term stability, Peoria County experienced a more gradual rise in population beginning in 1960. The county’s population peaked in the 1980s at around 200,000 residents and has since declined. Today, Peoria County is home to approximately 178,000 people.

Fig. 1.12 Population by Generation

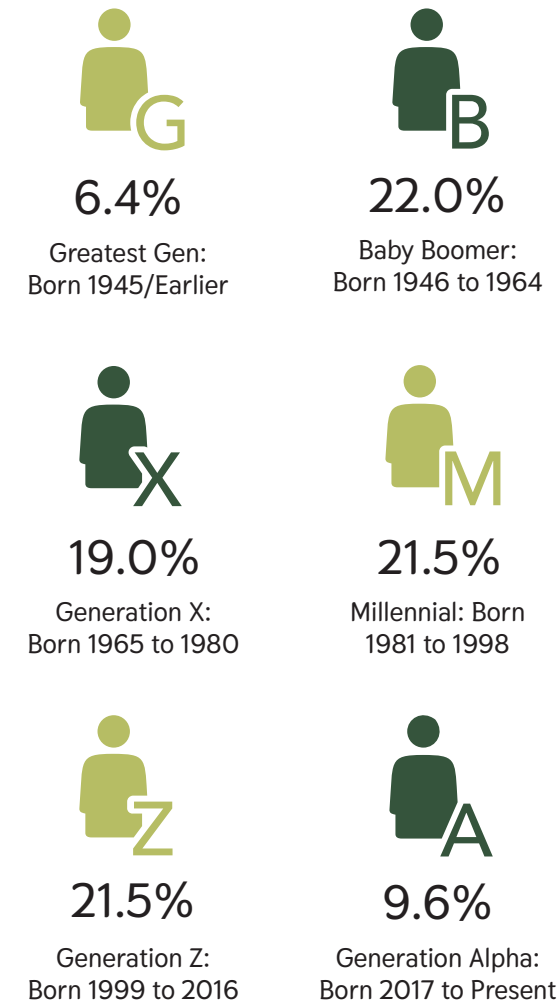
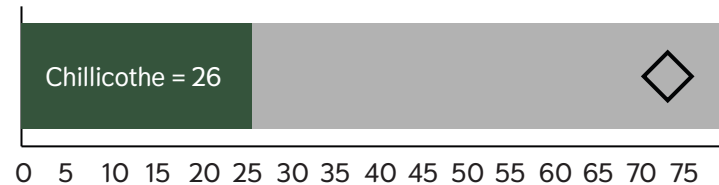


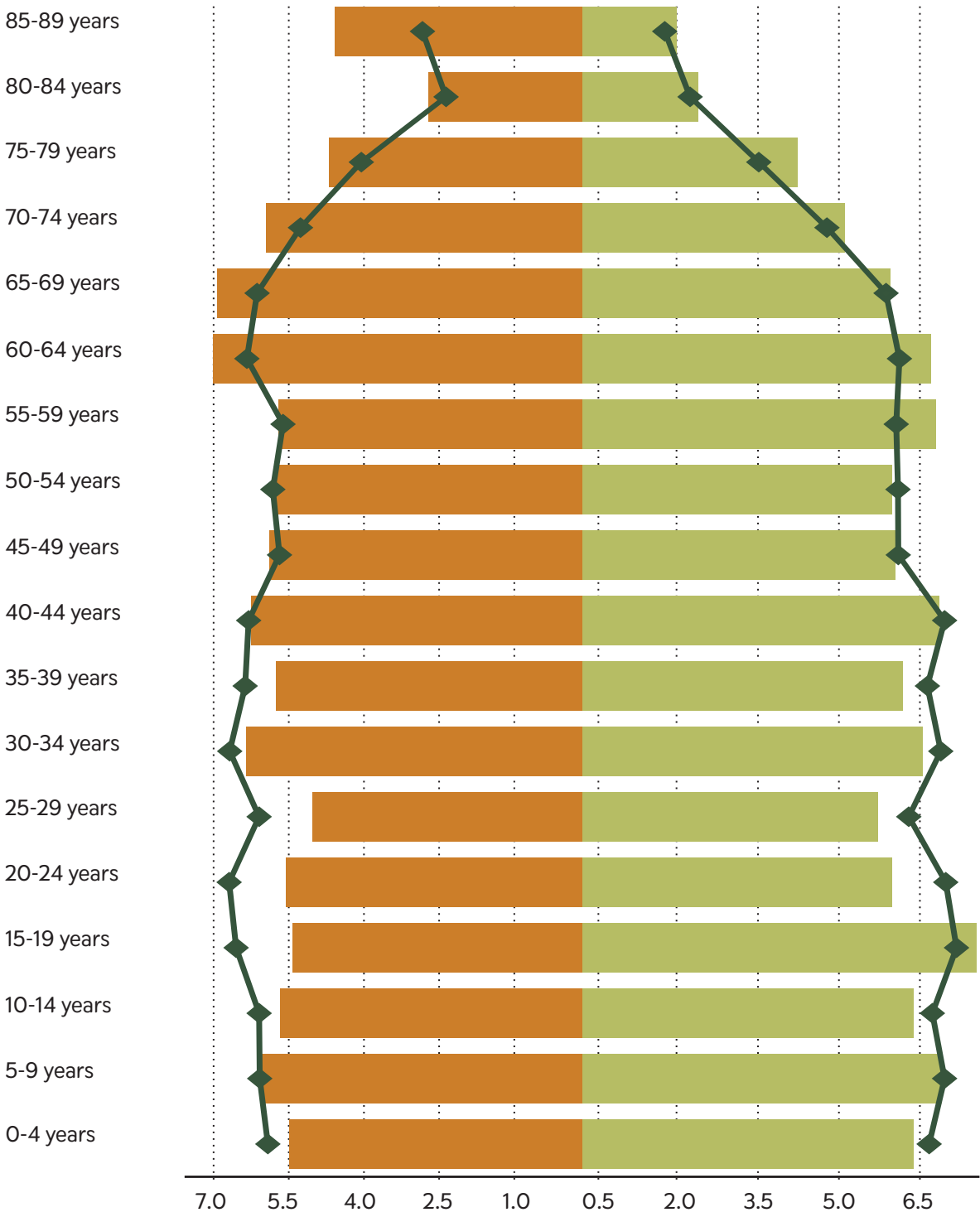
Fig. 1.13 Diversity Index

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).



Diamond shows comparison to Illinois

Fig. 1.14 Age Profile



Dots show comparison to Peoria County

DEMOGRAPHICS:
HOUSING

Housing Stock

The modernization of building codes in the 1970s made homes more energy-efficient and more accessible for older adults and people with physical limitations. However, due to this change in building codes, homes built before 1980 are now considered “aging” and tend to lack the desirable features that home buyers find attractive in today’s housing market. Two thirds of Chillicothe’s homes were built before 1980 and thus lack features that people look for like ample garage space or multiple bathrooms and bedrooms (Fig. 1.16). These aging homes also have a potential for lead paints hazards due to lead paint not being banned by the federal government until 1978.

Despite these drawbacks, the City of Chillicothe has seen many housing developments over the past three decades with nearly 15% of the City’s housing being developed in the 1990s alone. There are also several federal and state programs available to subsidize the modernization and remediation of older homes.

Fig. 1.16 Year Property Built

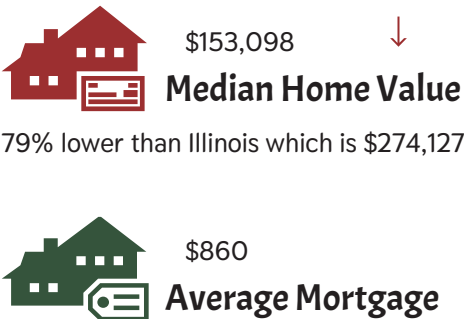
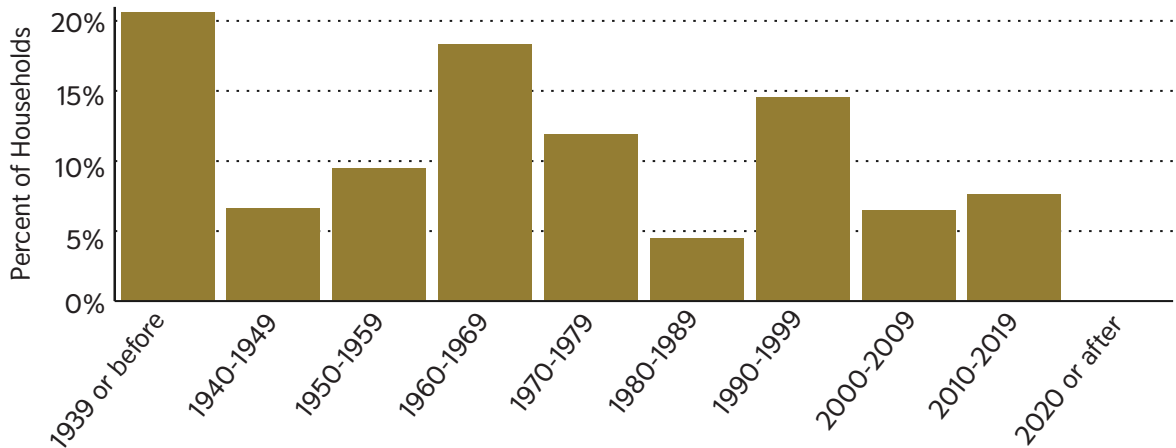
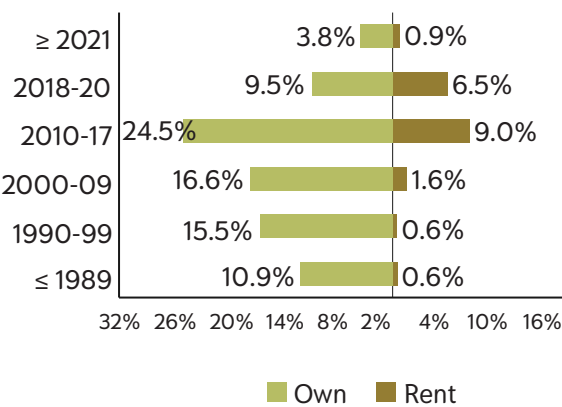


Fig. 1.15 Year Householder Moved In



Occupancy

Chillicothe’s homeowner-occupancy rate is much higher than Peoria County at 80% and 66% respectively (Fig. 1.19). While high owner-occupancy rates are often sought after for its residential stability and sense of community, it can limit the attraction and retention of those looking for diverse housing options, particularly young professionals and older adults looking to downsize.

The majority of Chillicothe’s housing stock is developed with families in mind: 64% of housing has three or more bedrooms, 24% have two bedrooms, and 8% have one bedroom. Given that 64% of owned housing and 71% of rented housing is occupied by 1- or 2-person households, the City might consider encouraging the development of more single bedroom housing, condominiums, and apartments. This would help the City retain its current small household, attract young professionals, and keep older adults who would like to downsize within the community.

Fig. 1.17 Housing Tenure by Size of Household

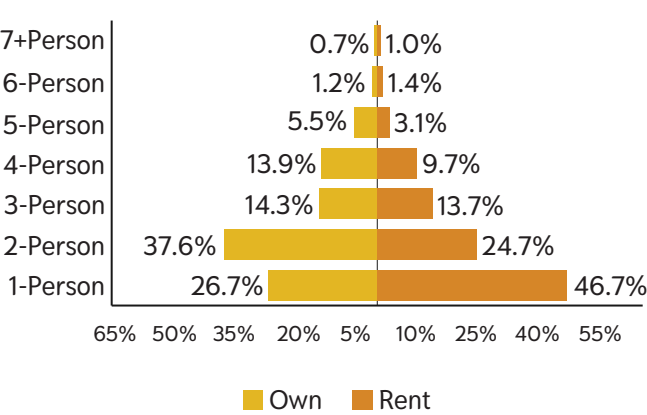


Fig. 1.18 Home Value

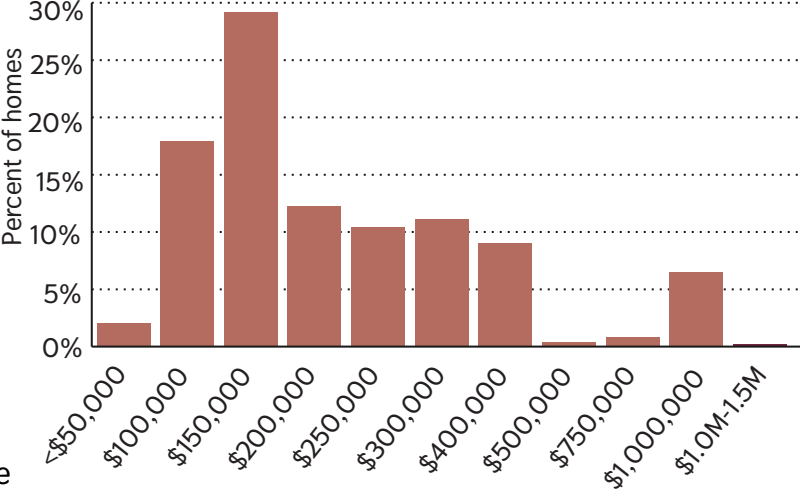


Fig. 1.20 Mortgage as Percent of Salary

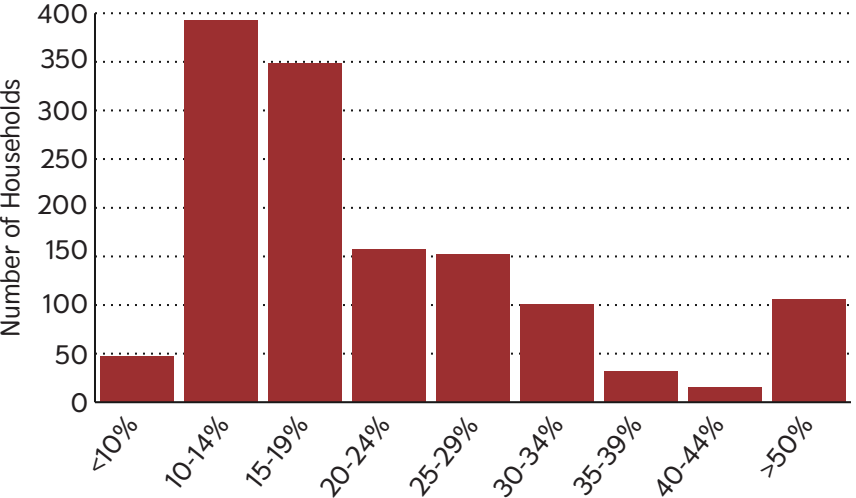


Fig. 1.19 Home Ownership Rates



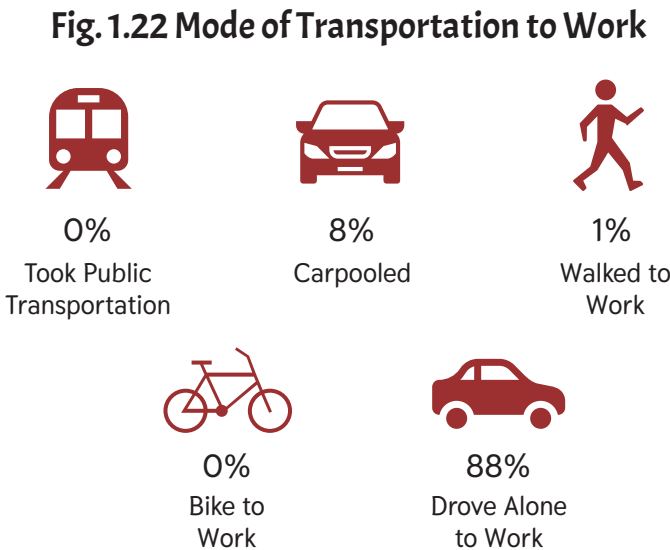
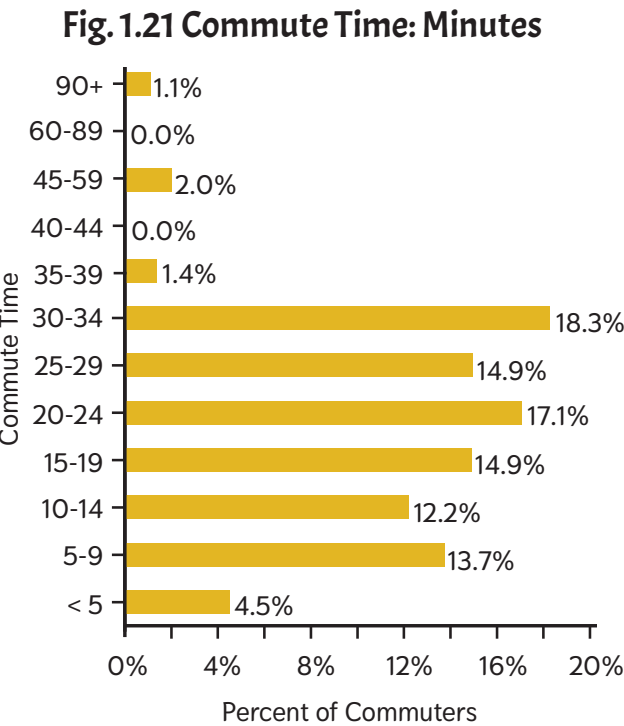
DEMOGRAPHICS:
TRANSPORTATION

The City of Chillicothe is highly car-dependent. The overwhelming majority, 96%, of Chillicothe residents commute to work via a car, truck, or van with 8% carpooling (Fig. 1.22). The other 4% consists of individuals that work from home, 3%, and those who walk to work, 1%. Additionally, 55% of residents commute more than 20 minutes to work (Fig. 1.21). There is a noticeable lack of public transportation usage due to the lack of public transportation options from Chillicothe to surrounding communities.

Typically, households without access to personal vehicles reach their destination by “active transportation,” meaning they’ll walk, bike, or take public transportation. However, unlike neighboring communities that have access to some form of active transportation, Chillicothe is relatively isolated from alternative means. Chillicothe lacks public transit to, from, or within the City, and residents are further restricted by the lack of connected bike and pedestrian infrastructure between Chillicothe and its surroundings. This can limit job access and the quality of life for residents without access to a reliable personal vehicle. The dependence on a personal vehicle can also place a financial burden on households due to surging car and maintenance costs, including gas prices and insurance.

Aside from improving transportation for current residents, a robust active transportation system is a strategy to attract and retain young people. The number of teenagers with driver’s licenses has dropped significantly over the past decades, reportedly declining from 64% in

1995 to 40% in 2021 according to the Federal Highway Administration. This is in part due to an interest in active transportation, easy access to ridesharing services, and the cost burden of owning and maintaining a personal vehicle. To appeal to young people and ensure equitable access to transportation within the City, an active transportation system should be established.



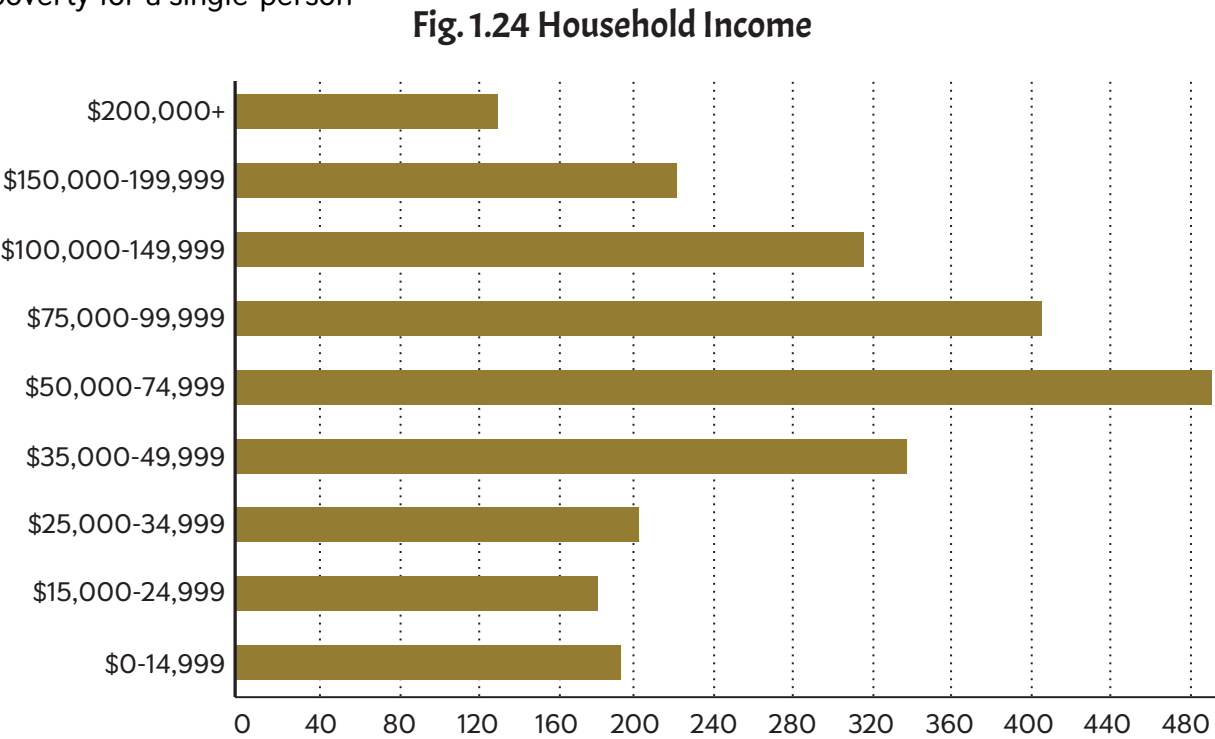
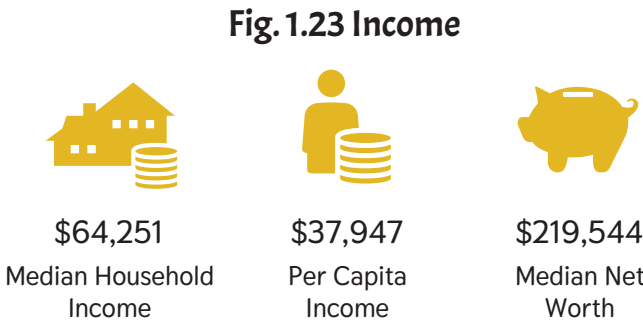
DEMOGRAPHICS:
ECONOMY + EMPLOYMENT

Median Household Income
Chillicothe’s median household income stands at \$64,251, which is comparable to the median income of Peoria County. However, it falls short of the broader Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area, indicating a relative economic gap within the region. This lower median income contributes to a significant portion of Chillicothe households—particularly those earning less than \$50,000 annually—being cost-burdened. A household is considered cost-burdened when its housing expenses exceed 30% of monthly income, making it more difficult to afford other essentials such as transportation, healthcare, and education.

Poverty
As of 2024, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services defines poverty for a single-person

household as an annual income below \$15,060, with an additional \$5,380 added for each additional household member. For example, a two-person household is considered impoverished if its income is below \$20,440.

In Chillicothe, just over 19% of households fall below the poverty line, a rate notably higher than Peoria County’s 13%. The most affected age groups are children aged 5–17, who make up 34% of those in poverty, and adults aged 35–64, accounting for 27%. In contrast, residents aged 65 and older experience the lowest poverty rates in the city.



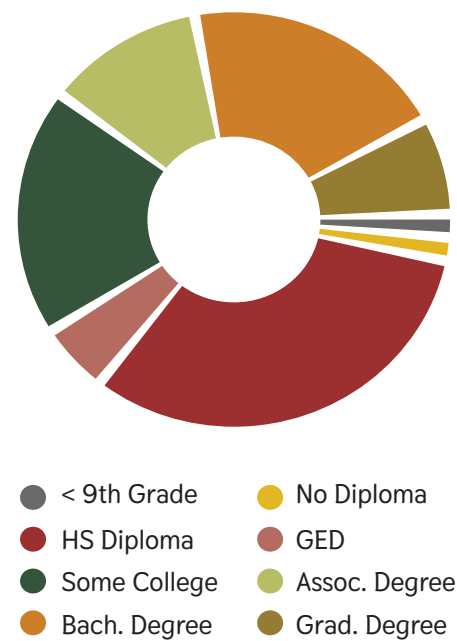
DEMOGRAPHICS:
ECONOMY + EMPLOYMENT

Educational Attainment

The educational attainment of Chillicothe residents aged 25 or older can be seen in Fig. 1.25. Of Chillicothe residents, only 3% lack a high school diploma or equivalent, lower than the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area (PPUA) at 7%. While 59% of Chillicothe residents lack a higher education degree (Associate's, Bachelor's, or Graduate or professional degree), this is still lower than the PPUA's rate of 68%. Of the 59% without a higher education degree in Chillicothe, 22% have some college education but no degree. This includes those that have dropped out of college and those that are currently enrolled.

The educational attainment of residents can be influenced by personal and community factors, including the availability of nearby schools, means of transportation to school, and socioeconomic status. Working to improve community barriers to higher education can improve the community's overall level of education and motivate the migration of business and job opportunities into the region. While not all businesses and jobs require higher education, there is a general correlation between educational attainment and higher wages.

Fig. 1.25 Educational Attainment



Unemployment

The federal government recognizes unemployment rates at and under 5% as "full employment." At 7% unemployment, Chillicothe is not considered fully employed. The unemployment rate reflects the percentage of the population that has looked for work in the last four weeks and does not currently have full-time employment. Residents who have left the workforce and are not currently seeking work are not counted in this measure. Of those currently unemployed, 8% are below the federal poverty level.

Fig. 1.26 Types of Employment

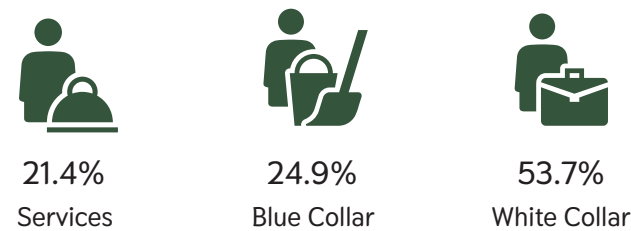
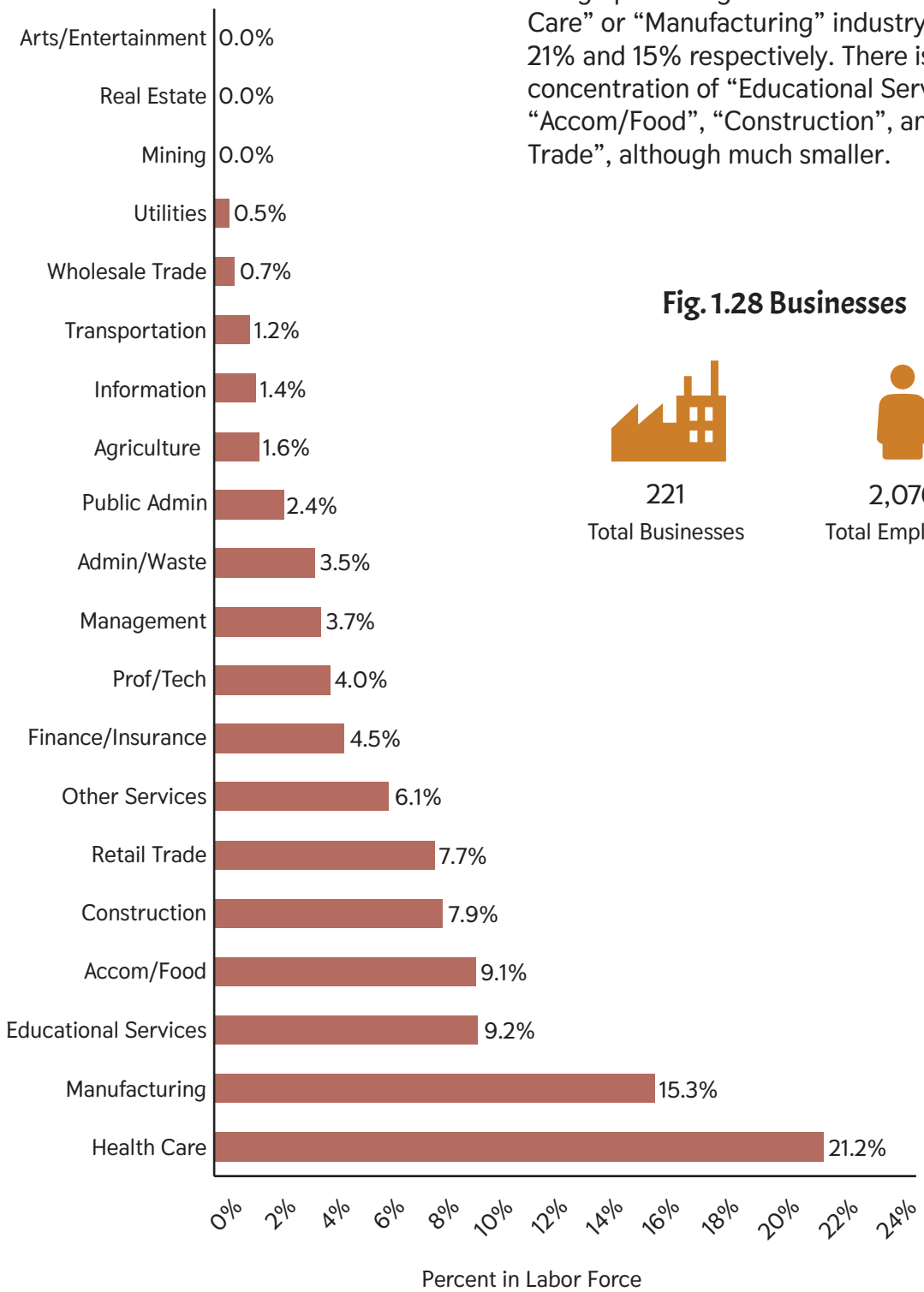


Fig. 1.27 Labor Force by Industry



Local Businesses

Chillicothe's businesses are primarily situated parallel to the Illinois River along IL Route 29. Of Chillicothe's labor force, a large percentages works in a "Health Care" or "Manufacturing" industry at 21% and 15% respectively. There is also a concentration of "Educational Services", "Accom/Food", "Construction", and "Retail Trade", although much smaller.

Fig. 1.28 Businesses



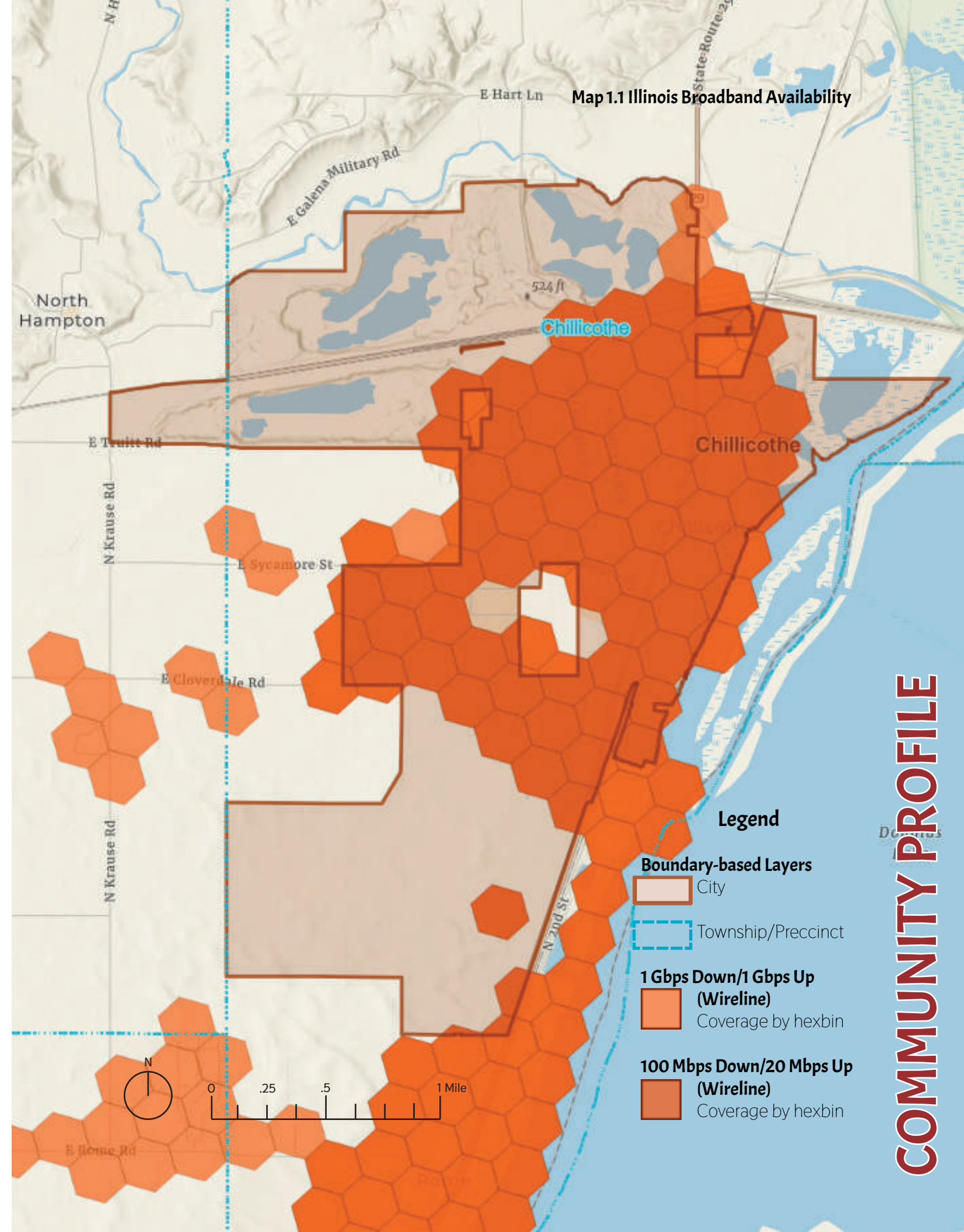
BROADBAND ACCESS

Reliable, fast, and secure broadband access has become essential for the functionality of community infrastructure. Broadband supports businesses and individuals working and learning from home, provides access to telehealth, fosters social interactions, and creates domestic amenities like online shopping.

According to the recent 2023 Peoria County Broadband Study, Chillicothe residents enjoy relatively strong broadband service. However, the map does not indicate the number of providers or the cost of service. Chillicothe should continue working with broadband carriers and the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council (GPEDC) to ensure that its residents maintain access to robust, competitive, and affordable broadband services.

Map 1.1 depicts general broadband access in Chillicothe and across the region. Generally, fixed (wired) connections over 25 megabits per second (mpbs) are considered broadband. Wireless options, such as satellite and cellular networks, are available in more areas but are not considered reliable or cost effective for economic development purposes.

Map 1.1 (Right) Illinois Broadband Availability taken from the Illinois Broadband website. An access disparity can be seen in Chillicothe and across the region. Generally, fixed (wired) connections of over 25 megabits per second (mpbs) are considered broadband. Wireless options, such as satellite and cellular networks, are available in more areas but are not considered reliable or cost effective for economic development purposes.



POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Chillicothe Police Department follows a community policing model, working closely with residents to enhance public safety and quality of life. Serving as a liaison between the community and essential services, the Department helps ensure a safe environment where businesses can thrive and individuals are held accountable. It also maintains intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) with Peoria County to support animal welfare, fire protection, and Advanced Medical Transport (AMT) services.

Primary Responsibilities and Drug Enforcement

The Department primarily responds to domestic disputes, mental health-related calls, vehicle burglaries, speeding violations, and drug-related incidents. Notably, the prevalence of drug users and dealers in Chillicothe has declined significantly in recent years, with many offenders having either relocated or been incarcerated. Chillicothe also partners with the Peoria Multi-Jurisdictional Enforcement Group (MEG) task force to investigate drug-related activity. When staffing permits, a Chillicothe detective is assigned to this task force to assist in identifying and dismantling drug houses.

Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC)

The Department has been collaborating with the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force for nearly a year. This partnership focuses on identifying and apprehending individuals involved in the sexual exploitation of minors, including grooming and attempts to meet with children. These efforts have helped the Department identify individuals who pose a threat to public safety.



Fig. 1.29 (Above) K-9 Memorial Outside the Chillicothe Police Department

Code Enforcement Practices

The City’s code enforcement is currently complaint-driven. Previously, officers monitored zones and were evaluated based on quotas, which strained community relations. The Department shifted to a complaint-based model, focusing on voluntary compliance. Offenders receive a five-day notice to correct violations, prioritizing resolution over citations.

Technology and Infrastructure Improvements

The Department continues to modernize under current leadership. Recent upgrades include electronic crash data reporting and Flock cameras, which have helped identify suspects and close cases. While the current facility remains functional, the Department envisions a new building to provide more space and improved internet connectivity.

SAFETY + EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Chillicothe’s geographic location helps minimize the impact of natural disasters, but the City must remain prepared for emergencies such as tornadoes, extreme weather, heat waves, flooding, and non-natural threats like active shooter situations.

The Peoria County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) oversees Chillicothe’s outdoor warning sirens and issues alerts

through the 911 system, including AMBER alerts. Residents can also opt into *Regroup*, a voluntary mass notification system for real-time updates.

To strengthen preparedness, the City could collaborate with EMA to audit current emergency protocols and identify areas for improvement. Chillicothe also has opportunities to engage with EMA-led coalitions, such as the Emergency Management Coalition and the Peoria Maritime Security Council.



Fig. 1.30 (Left) Chillicothe Police Department
Fig. 1.31 (Below) Marina along the Riverfront





DRINKING WATER

Chillicothe's drinking water is managed by the City's Public Works Department. As of 2025, the City operates seven up-to-date wells and maintains sufficient storage capacity to support current and future development. Water quality is regularly tested, and aging water lines are replaced as needed to ensure public health.

WASTEWATER

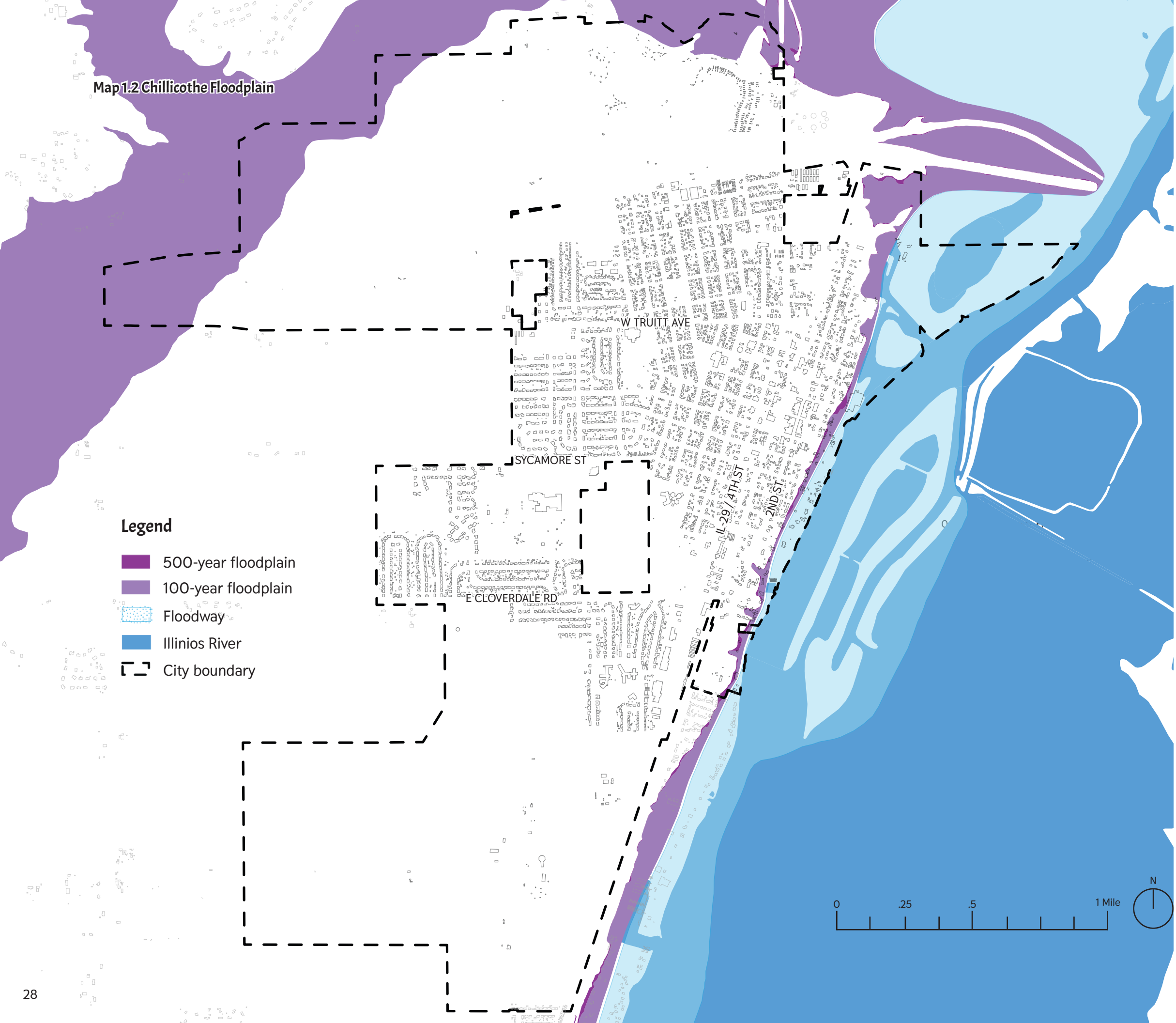
Wastewater services are also handled by Public Works, utilizing six lift stations to manage sewage throughout the City.

STORMWATER

While Chillicothe currently lacks a formal stormwater management plan or green infrastructure requirements, the City has begun retroactive improvements in key areas—such as the Bradley/Truitt intersection—to address stormwater challenges.

Fig. 1.32 (Left) View of the Illinois River from the Chillicothe Courtesy Dock.

Map 1.2 Chillicothe Floodplain



FLOODPLAIN+ WATERWAYS

The Illinois River borders the east side of Chillicothe, providing scenic and recreational value to residents. However, the increasing frequency of natural disasters due to climate change makes effective floodplain management essential.

The last major flood occurred in 2013, impacting approximately 900 residential and commercial properties between Mossville and Chillicothe. Following the 30-foot flood, 13 properties in Chillicothe were acquired under FEMA’s repetitive loss program, which targets areas prone to recurring flooding.

FEMA is currently updating its flood maps, and the revised boundaries may expand the designated floodplain—potentially increasing the number of properties requiring flood insurance.

Peoria County voluntarily participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which includes the Community Rating System (CRS). CRS rewards communities that exceed minimum floodplain management standards with reduced insurance premiums for property owners. While Chillicothe does not currently participate, future enrollment could offer financial benefits to landowners in flood-prone areas.

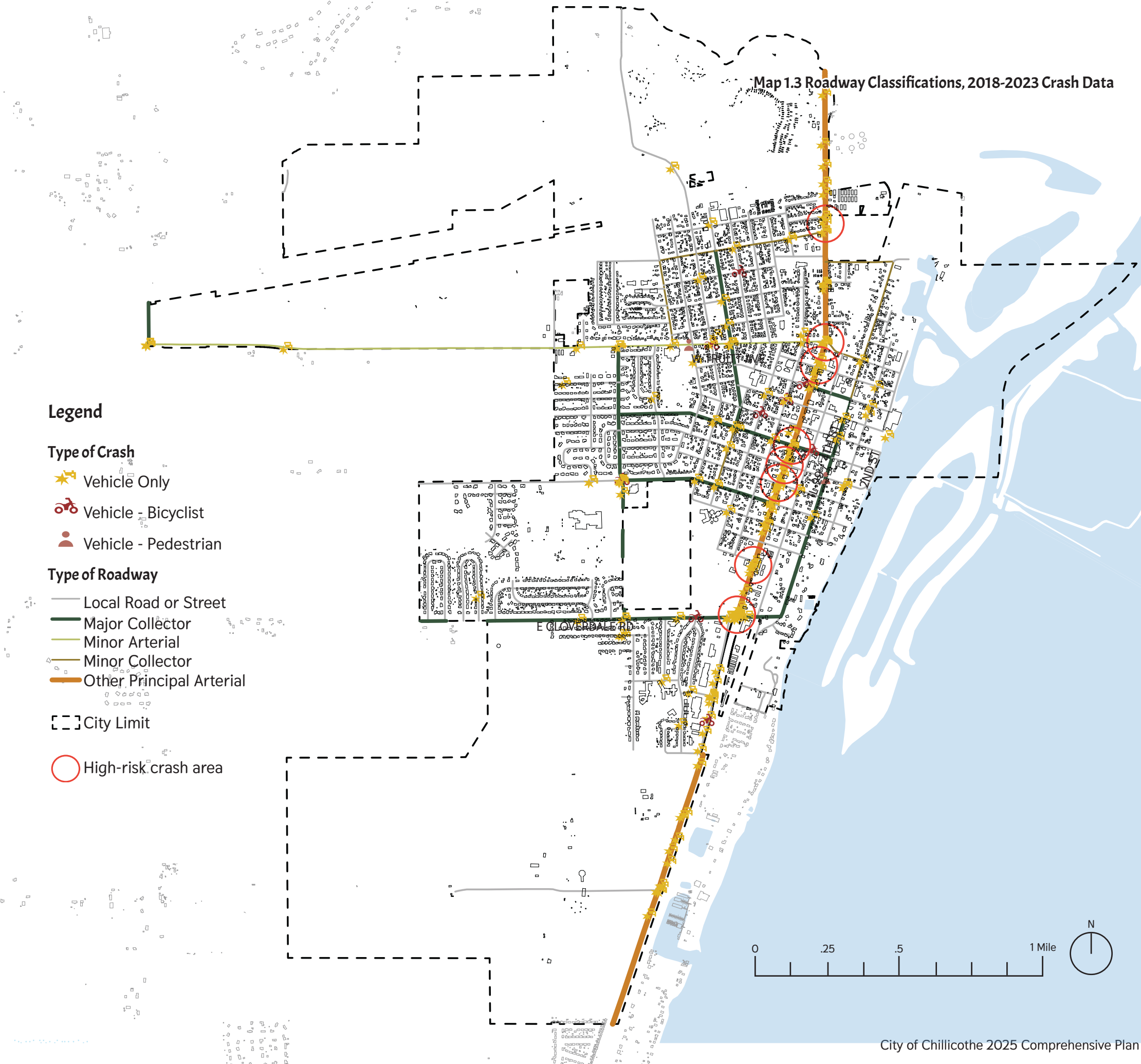
ROADWAYS

IL-29 serves as Chillicothe’s primary connection to the Greater Peoria Area, including the City of Peoria and surrounding amenities. However, its high traffic volume has led to growing concerns about speeding and collisions, especially at intersections. Out-of-town drivers unfamiliar with local speed limits often exceed them by as much as 30 mph.

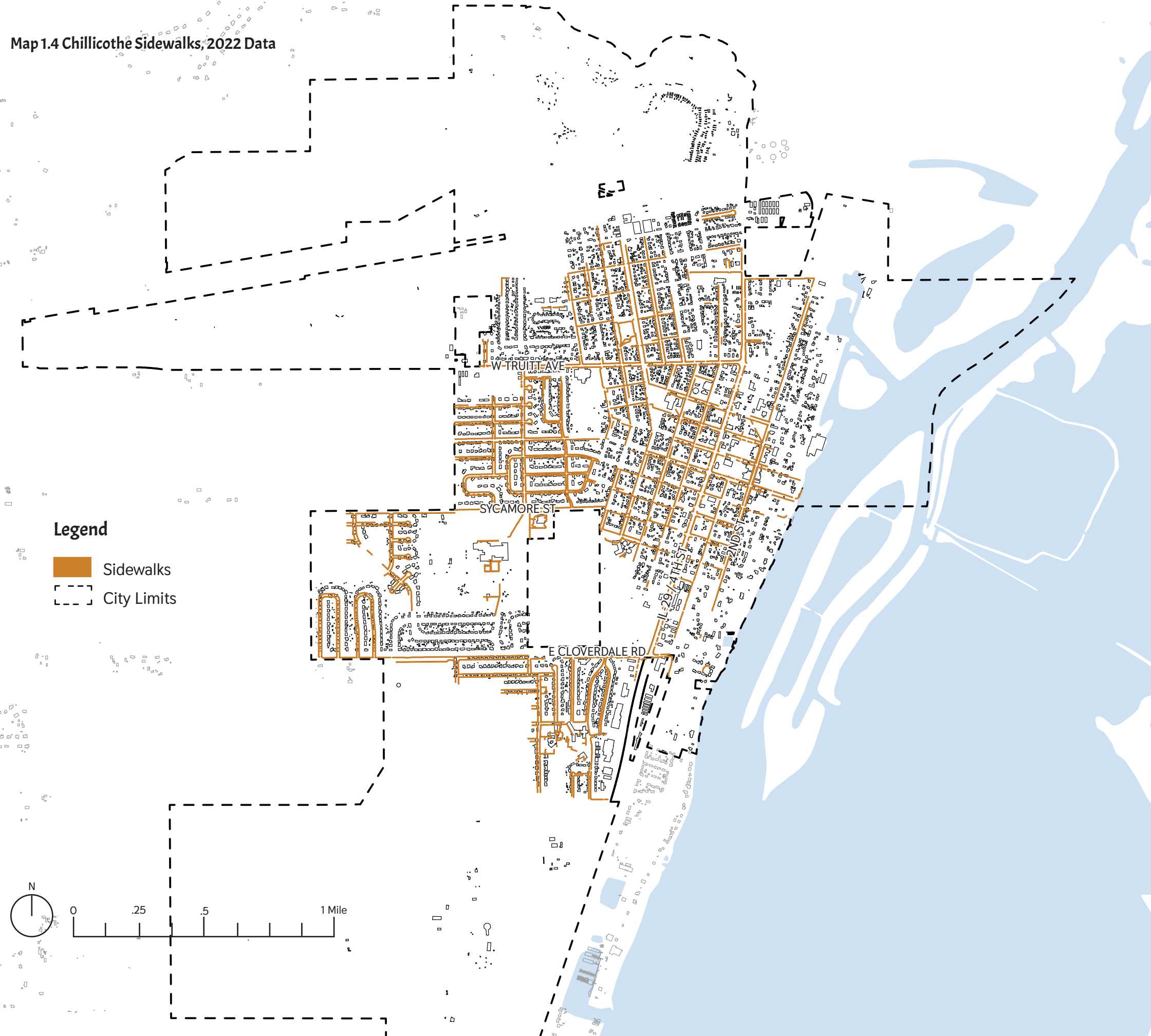
Speeding within neighborhoods has also increased, with residents reporting limited visibility at certain intersections—posing risks to drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. Data shows that vehicle-bicyclist collisions are more common in residential areas than along Main Street. Since 2018, there have been two vehicle-pedestrian collisions: one on W Truitt Ave and another at 2nd St and Walnut St.

The Chillicothe Viaduct, located north of downtown, carries a commercial freight railway over IL-29. Its outdated design results in narrow lanes, no shoulders, and limited space for pedestrians and cyclists—creating safety hazards and restricting utility extensions to areas north of the Viaduct.

To address these challenges, a corridor study of IL-29—from downtown Peoria to Chillicothe—is scheduled to begin in 2025. The study aims to develop a cohesive, multi-modal corridor that supports active transportation, economic development, and stronger urban-rural connectivity.



Map 1.4 Chillicothe Sidewalks, 2022 Data



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION + MICROMOBILITY

Sidewalks in Chillicothe are primarily located along 4th Street, in central neighborhoods, and near schools. However, areas in north Chillicothe and along the riverfront often lack connected pedestrian pathways. As shown in Map 1.4, riverfront sidewalks are mostly concentrated around Cutright Community Park and the boat launch. In recent years, the City has improved downtown pedestrian facilities by upgrading sidewalks, adding railings, and installing ADA-compliant ramps.

In 2023, Chillicothe updated its Trail Master Plan to identify gaps in active transportation, develop heat maps, and refine bike routes. The plan proposes 19 trail segments forming four loops, connecting key destinations such as schools, the library, Pearce Community Center, and parks.

Public transit options in Chillicothe are limited. A volunteer-run township bus provides local transportation, but its inconsistency makes it unsustainable long-term. The Senior Advocacy Group in Peoria offers scheduled rides for seniors needing medical care, but neither service supports regular commuting needs for employment or daily activities.

Chillicothe does not currently contract with the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District (GPMTD) for fixed-route service to and from Peoria.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

As shown in Map 1.5, Chillicothe’s commercial activity is concentrated along the IL-29/4th Street corridor and in the historic downtown along 2nd Street.

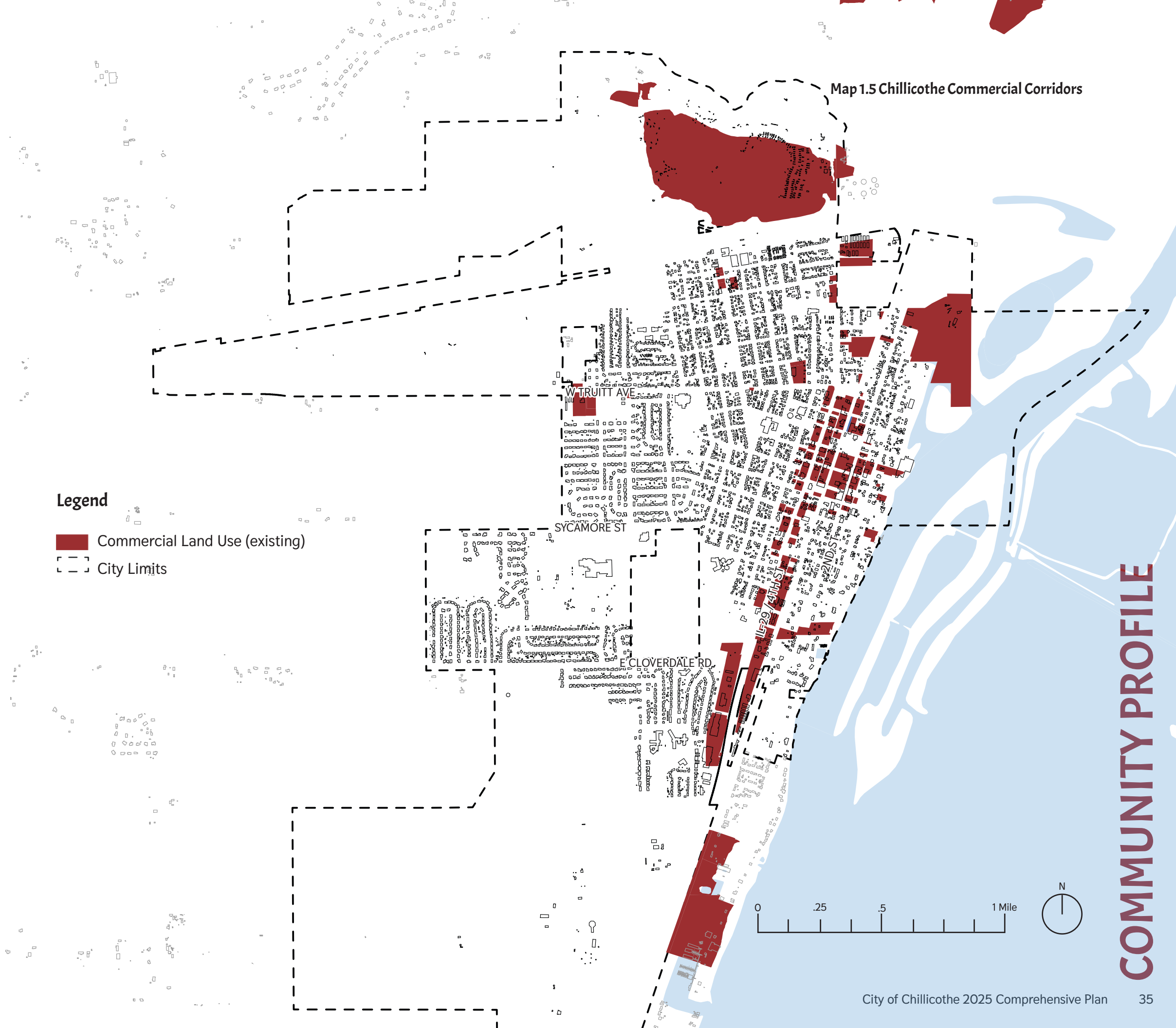
In recent years, downtown Chillicothe has evolved into a vibrant, walkable district featuring a mix of small businesses—from restaurants and bakeries to home goods and antique shops. Its proximity to the Illinois River and local parks has made it a popular destination, supported by ongoing restoration and redevelopment efforts.

While 4th Street serves as a commercial corridor, high traffic speeds along IL-29 pose challenges for attracting businesses and pedestrian activity. To address this, the Chillicothe 4th Street Revitalization Study (2018) outlines strategies for improving the corridor through zoning updates, redevelopment of underutilized lots, streetscaping enhancements, and safety improvements for active transportation.

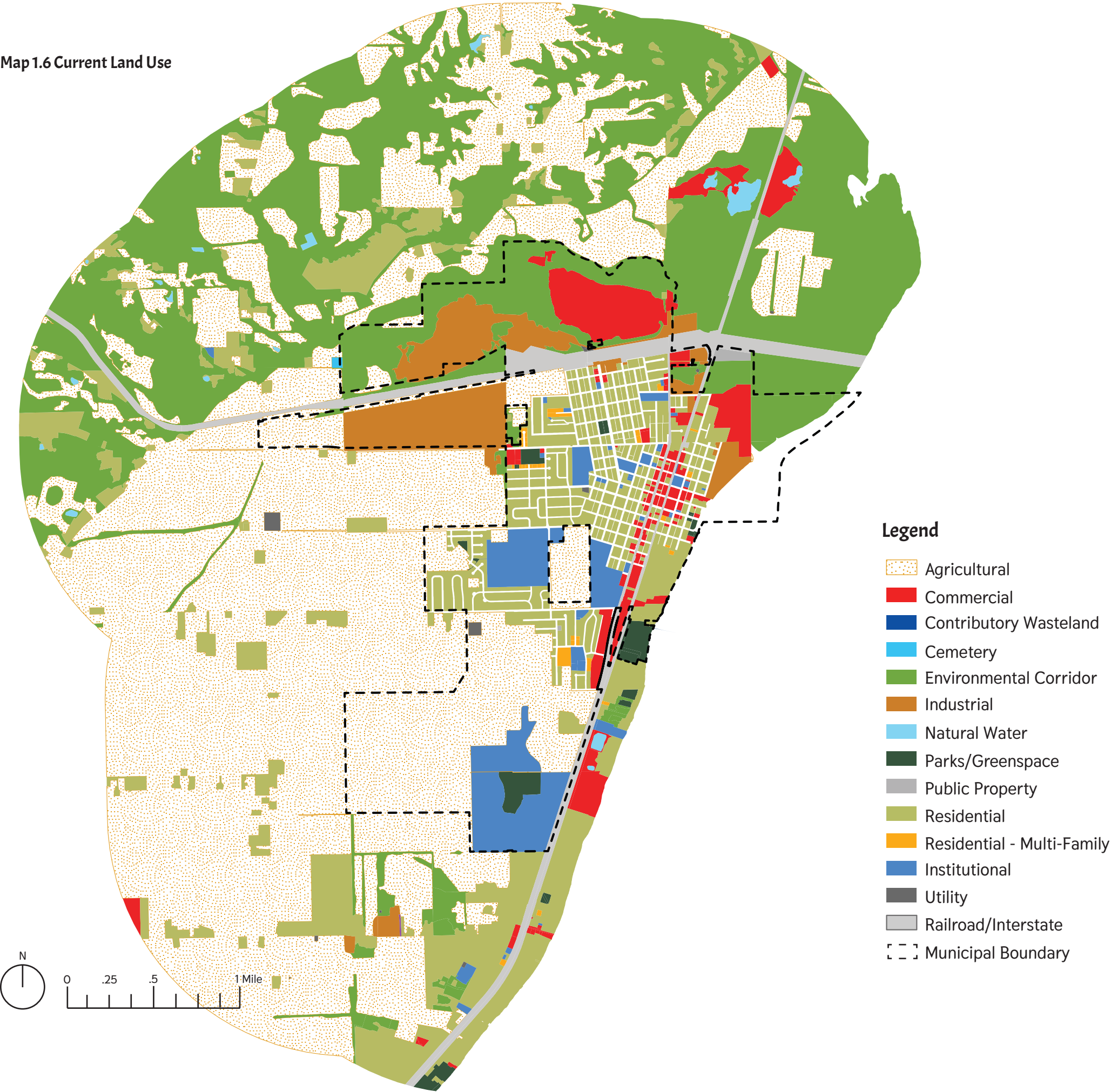
Legend

- Commercial Land Use (existing)
- City Limits

Map 1.5 Chillicothe Commercial Corridors



Map 1.6 Current Land Use



CURRENT LAND USE

The Chillicothe Future Land Use Map has not been updated since the adoption of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan. To facilitate community conversations, Tri-County staff mapped current land uses in the City and its Extra-Jurisdictional Planning Area (EJPA), which extends 1.5 miles beyond the City’s current municipal boundary, excluding incorporated areas (Map 1.6).



NATURAL RESOURCES

The Greater Peoria region along the Illinois River has long been rich in natural resources. Fertile soils, diverse habitats, and abundant wildlife have supported both ecological health and economic prosperity.

Chillicothe’s dark loam soil, enriched by the Illinoian and Wisconsin glaciation events, is highly productive and supports the region’s agricultural industry. Near rivers and streams, the soil shifts to a lighter sandy loam, further contributing to agricultural diversity.

The Illinois River plays a central role in the region’s hydrology. Chillicothe relies on groundwater for drinking water, supported by nearby streams, ponds, and marshes. However, water quality faces threats from septic systems, agricultural runoff, and stormwater—posing risks to both human health and local ecosystems. Contaminated water can also impact outdoor recreation, potentially reducing tourism and resident engagement.

Outdoor recreation is a major draw for Chillicothe, with easy access to the Illinois River for boating and fishing, and popular hunting grounds nearby. These natural amenities are key drivers of tourism and economic development, underscoring the importance of protecting local resources.

Chillicothe’s parks and reserves offer critical habitats, including forest, prairie, wetland, swamp, and floodplain ecosystems. Notably, Chillicothe Bottoms Wildlife Sanctuary and Chillicothe Island support bird conservation efforts. The Sanctuary, donated to the Illinois Audubon Society, hosts annual bird counts and provides habitat for over 150

bird species, including endangered ones. Chillicothe Island similarly supports nesting bald eagles, visible from January to March.

Another valuable resource is the land available for future development. While expansion is limited by the Illinois River to the east and Rome to the south, residents have expressed interest in developing residential areas west of the City to attract new families. The availability of land supports this potential growth.

PARKS+RECREATION

Chillicothe offers a wide range of well-maintained parks and natural areas that support recreation, community events, and environmental conservation. While not exhaustive, the following highlights some of the most popular parks in the City:

Shore Acres Park

Managed by the Chillicothe Park District, Shore Acres is the City’s most popular gathering spot. It features a swimming pool, softball field, tennis, pickleball, and basketball courts, a disc golf course, and two pavilions. Overlooking the Illinois River, it’s a prime location for summer activities with family and friends.

Santa Fe Park

Located in a historic neighborhood, this park includes a train-themed playground, splash pad, pavilion, sandlot baseball diamond, open green space, and a quarter-mile walking path—offering recreation for all ages.

Chillicothe War Memorial

Situated next to Pearce Community Center, the memorial honors past and present service members. Its accessible location within a neighborhood makes it a quiet space for reflection.

Chillicothe Bottoms Wildlife Sanctuary

Just north of downtown, this 225-acre sanctuary includes wetlands, swamps, and floodplain forests along the Illinois River. Maintained by the Illinois Audubon Society, it’s ideal for hiking, birdwatching, and nature exploration.

Chillicothe Bottoms Wildlife Sanctuary

Just north of downtown, this 225-acre sanctuary includes wetlands, swamps, and floodplain forests along the Illinois River. Maintained by the Illinois Audubon Society, it’s ideal for hiking, birdwatching, and nature exploration.

Moffit Nature Park

Adjacent to the Wildlife Sanctuary, this 40-acre park offers forested and open areas, hiking trails, a pavilion, and seating. It’s dog-friendly and perfect for casual hikes in North Chillicothe.

Chillicothe Island & Eagle Landing

A popular eagle nesting site, especially from January to March. Residents can observe eagles from designated viewing spots like Eagle Landing, located next to Cutright Community Park—a riverfront park with a playground and pavilion.



Fig. 1.33 (Right) Cutright Community Park entrance sign.



Fig. 1.34 (Top right) Playground at Cutright Park.

Fig. 1.35 (Middle right) Santa Fe Park ‘Railroad Crossing.’

Fig. 1.36 (Middle left) Eagle Landing observation deck.

Fig. 1.37 (Bottom) Shore Acres Pool.





SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Chillicothe is known for its strong sense of community, engagement, and support. Annual events and local programs reflect the City’s collaborative spirit and its commitment to families, small businesses, seniors, and visitors.

Chillicothe Corn Boil

Held downtown along 2nd Street, this annual festival features street vendors, live music, raffles, and food—drawing residents and visitors from across the region.

Coffee at the Clubhouse

Hosted at Shore Acres Clubhouse, this casual gathering offers coffee, snacks, and scenic views of the Illinois River, fostering connection among residents.

Chillicothe 2nd Saturday

A monthly shopping event that highlights small businesses along 4th, 2nd, Cedar, and Santa Fe streets, encouraging residents to shop local and support Chillicothe’s unique retail community.

The Nikolausmarkt

This German-style holiday market in City Park features music, food, crafts, a parade, and the Nikolaus 5K—bringing festive cheer and supporting local vendors.

Fig. 1.38 (Above) and Fig. 1.39 (Below) Chillicothe Corn Boil, 2024.



Shore Acres Coffee at the Clubhouse

Hosted at Shore Acres, Coffee at the Clubhouse gives residents the opportunity to chat over a cup of coffee and snacks while enjoying the views of the Illinois River.

Summer Camp at Pearce Community Center

Designed for children ages 6–10, this full-day summer program blends education and recreation through field trips, reading programs, and enrichment activities.

P.O.W.E.R. Camp

Also hosted by Pearce Community Center, this camp serves preteens ages 11–13 with outdoor adventures, STEM projects, team-building, and summer reading—helping youth build relationships and life skills.

Solshine Reverie Music Festival

Formerly the Summer Camp Music Festival, this large-scale event at Three Sisters Park features live performances, art installations, workshops, and more. In 2024, it drew an estimated 25,000 attendees.



Fig. 1.40 (Right) Sculpture at Solshine Reverie Music Festival, 2024.

Fig. 1.41 (Below) Performance at Solshine Reverie Music Festival.



ELEMENTARY + JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Chillicothe is served by a range of educational institutions that support students from early childhood through high school, including alternative learning options.

South Elementary School

Located just east of the Chillicothe Public Library, South Elementary—also known as South School—serves approximately 480 students in grades K–3.

Chillicothe Junior High and Elementary Center (CEC)

Situated north of the library and west of Pearce Community Center, CEC serves students in grades 4–8. Fourth and fifth graders attend the Elementary Center, while sixth through eighth graders attend the Junior High. Students living north of Three Sisters Park are zoned for this school.

Mossville Junior High and Elementary School

Located in north Mossville, this K–8 school serves families from Dunlap, Mossville, Peoria, Rome, and surrounding rural areas. With around 650 students and 50 faculty members, Mossville feeds into Illinois Valley Central High School.



Fig. 1.42 (Top) IVC students celebrating Veterans Day.
Fig. 1.43 (Middle) IVC Mustangs and Warriors running at the Michele Stewart XC Invite.
Fig. 1.44 (Above) Mustangs and Warriors graduating.
Fig. 1.45 (Left) IVC School District Logo.

ILLINOIS VALLEY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Both Chillicothe and Mossville junior highs feed into IVC, which enrolls approximately 600 students. The school is known for its strong academic programs, small class sizes, and supportive staff. Its size allows for a wide range of opportunities without the competitiveness often found in larger schools. IVC also offers enrichment programs during the school year and summer.

IVC Learning Center

The IVC Learning Center provides an alternative education pathway for students at risk of not completing high school. Previously, these students attended the Peoria County ROE Alternative School at Wildlife Prairie Park. The district established the Learning Center to keep students within the IVC system and better support their academic and personal growth.

Fig. 1.46 (Below) Illinois Valley Central High School.



CHILICOTHE PUBLIC
LIBRARY

The Chillicothe Public Library serves residents of Chillicothe, Rome, and South Rome. Centrally located between IVC High School and South Elementary School, the library offers a welcoming and accessible space for learning, connection, and community engagement.

The library provides a wide range of physical and digital resources, research databases, educational programming, technology access, and business services. Through partnerships with local organizations, it has expanded its outreach, hosting in-school and community-wide events.

Programming is designed to serve all age groups and interests. For youth, offerings include story times, family reading nights, and LEGO workshops. Adults can participate in AARP classes, workforce development sessions, and bilingual “Conversation Cafés” in English and Spanish. Community-wide events such as bingo, movie nights, and book clubs are open to all. The library also provides meeting spaces for study groups and local gatherings.



Fig. 1.47 (Right) Chillicothe Public Library District entrance.



II. Chillicothe Speaks

2024

2025

april

may

june

july

august

september

october

november

december

january

february

march

april

ENGAGEMENT

develop engagement plan

collate and analyze engagement data

develop survey questions

publish digital survey

distribute paper surveys at the library and City Hall

flyering at local businesses

develop project website

Community Open House

STEERING COMMITTEE

introduce comprehensive planning; discuss steering committee roles and responsibilities; review project timeline

review engagement strategies and demographic data; develop engagement plan

refine engagement plan; review current land uses; continue Open House planning

review community engagement summaries; identify topical experts

topical expert presentations

review draft plan including goals, priorities, and Future Land Use Map

review public feedback and consider revisions

RESEARCH

demographic research

data collection and analysis

conduct stakeholder interviews

best practices and peer communities research

conduct stakeholder interviews

DRAFTING AND APPROVAL

identify trends and opportunities

identify and schedule interviews with key institutions and services

develop draft goals, priorities, and Future Land Use Map

develop community profile

incorporate revisions

incorporate revisions

public approval - final City Council presentation

publish draft plan with online feedback option

public presentation of draft plan

publish final, approved plan

CHILLICOTHE SPEAKS

INTRODUCTION

Community input is the foundation of a successful comprehensive plan. To ensure equitable representation, the steering committee developed and implemented a robust engagement strategy aimed at gathering feedback from a diverse cross-section of Chillicothe residents. Demographic and accessibility considerations—including race, ethnicity, gender, age, and physical ability—guided the outreach approach to ensure inclusive participation.

The engagement plan was designed to accommodate varying levels of technical access, personal schedules, and comfort with public meetings. It included digital and paper surveys, stakeholder interviews, a dedicated website, and a public open house.

Surveying provided an accessible, low-barrier method for collecting public input. Launched in late July and promoted through flyers and digital channels, the survey remained open until mid-September. It featured 20 questions covering topics such as housing, recreation, and economic development.

To bridge the digital divide, the survey was offered both online and in print. Digital access was promoted via QR codes, social media, and email lists from local institutions. Paper copies were distributed at the open house, the Chillicothe Public Library, and to students at IVC High School to ensure youth representation.

Feedback from all engagement efforts was reviewed by the steering committee and used to shape the community vision, identify key issues and opportunities, and inform implementation strategies.

Fig. 2.1 (Right) Promotional Open House flyer that was posted across the City.

THE CITY OF CHILLICOTHE PLAN COMMISSION INVITES YOU TO ATTEND A

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE



The City of Chillicothe wants your help to update its long-term vision for the community. The final plan will identify strategies that deal with housing, parks, safety, roadways and so much more. This is a great opportunity to advocate for what matters most to you.

JULY 25

5:00-7:00PM

CHILLICOTHE PUBLIC LIBRARY

430 N Bradley Ave



Scan this code to visit our website and learn more!

SURVEY

The Chillicothe Comprehensive Plan Survey offered an easily accessible and low-commitment option for residents to share their options on a variety of topics essential to understanding the assets and issues of Chillicothe. Respondents were given multiple choice, ranking, and free response questions for a total of 20 questions. The questions were designed to allow for a comprehensive understanding of different aspects of Chillicothe, including demographics, employment, housing, infrastructure, development, and the City and its elected officials. There were a total of 289 respondents, of which 74% live in Chillicothe and 8% live in Rome.

Questions regarding employment and opportunities in the area were used to gauge the availability and quality of jobs, as well as understand where Chillicothe residents typically work. When asked about employment opportunities in Chillicothe, only 9% of respondents reported there were enough jobs that pay a livable wage with the City. In another question, 57% reported there being enough employment opportunities within a reasonable driving distance to Chillicothe. Despite these statistics, of the respondents that are currently employed, 40% reported working in Chillicothe, 24% work in the City of Peoria, and the remaining 36% work elsewhere.

Fig. 2.2 Where do you live?

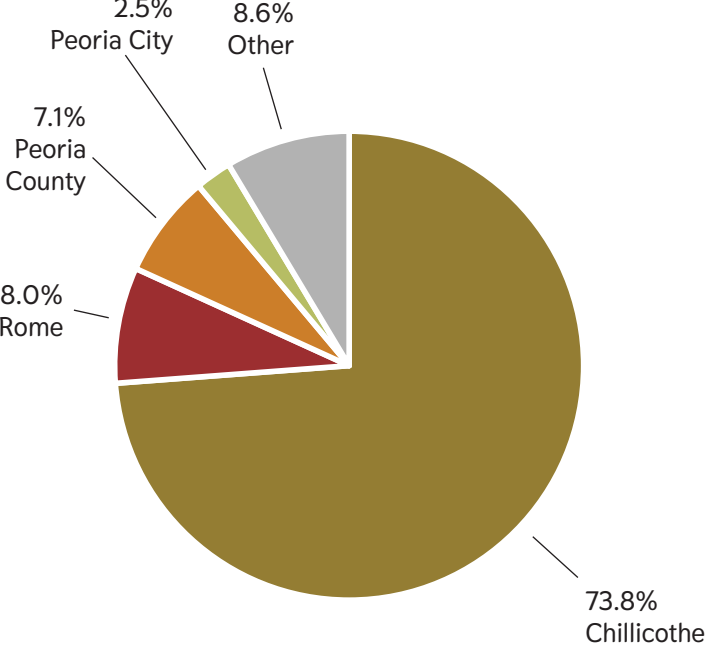


Fig. 2.3 What is your age?

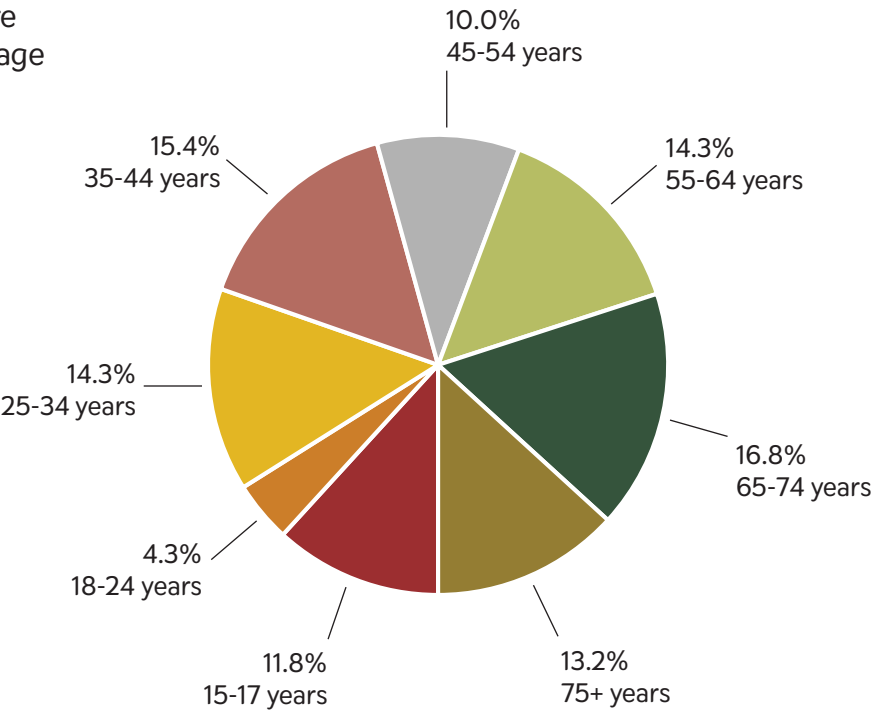


Fig. 2.4 Where do you work?

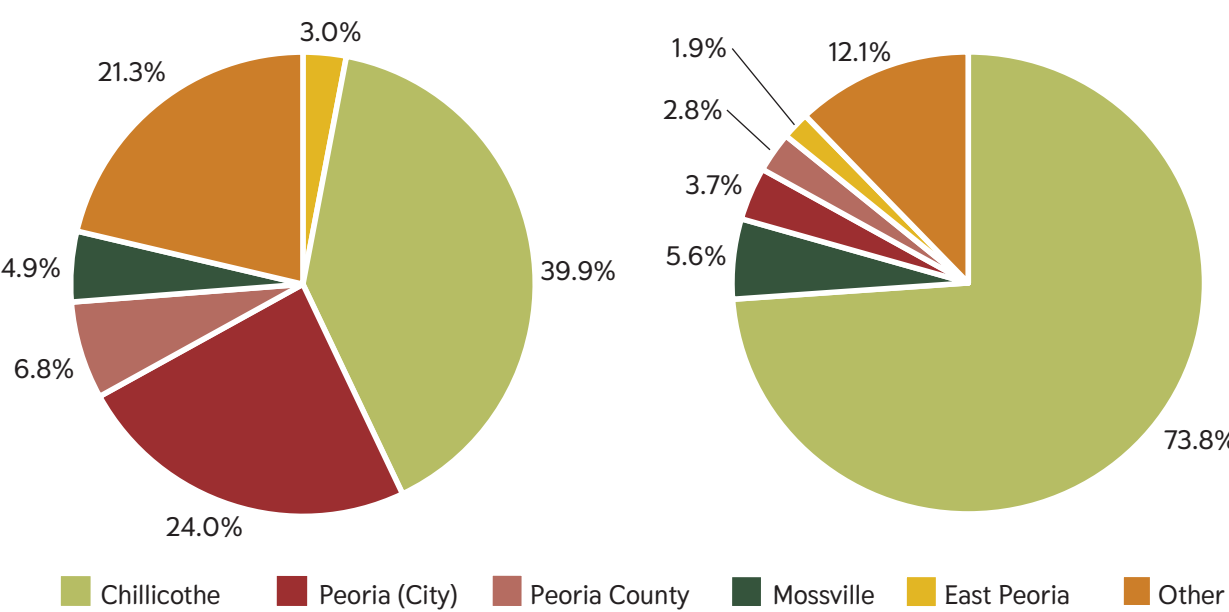


Fig. 2.5 Where do you attend school?

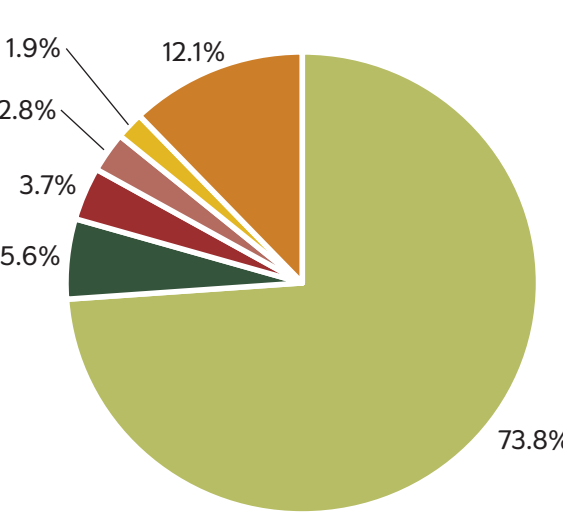
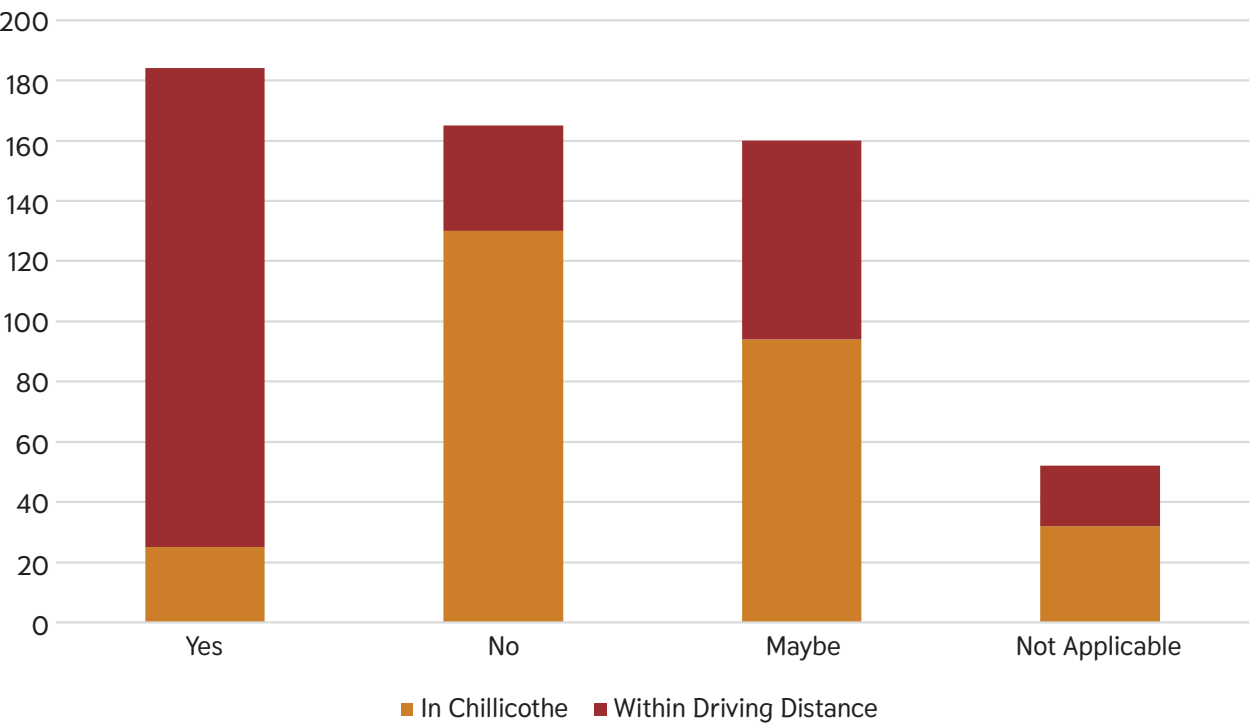


Fig. 2.6 Are there enough opportunities that pay a living wage and provide comfortable living in Chillicothe? Within a reasonable driving distance of Chillicothe?



Services in Chillicothe were rated quite high with the majority of services being rated as good or excellent including the library, parks and recreation, fire protection, education, the public pool, and law enforcement. The high quality of services is reflected in the purchasing or use of services in Chillicothe, in which the majority of residents purchase Chillicothe groceries and gas and use Chillicothe's parks, banking, and pharmacy facilities. However, Chillicothe's retail, entertainment, and fitness centers are not utilized by as many residents, possibly due to the diversity of options available in neighboring communities. The lowest rated services were code enforcement and stormwater drainage which were rated as fair or poor by 54% and 50% of respondents respectively.

Fig. 2.7 Would respondents like to see the population increase, decrease, or remain the same?

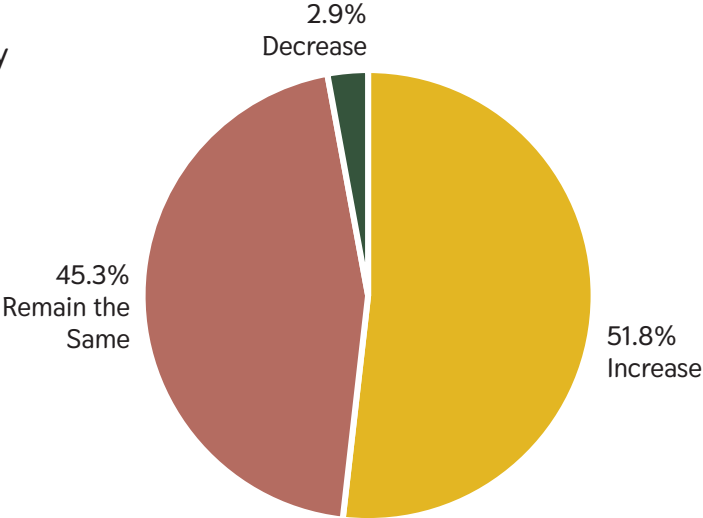


Fig. 2.9 In what direction would respondents like to see the City of Chillicothe grow?

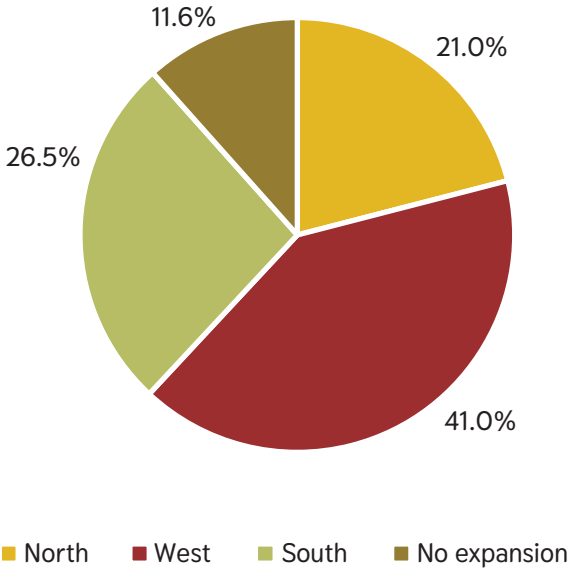


Fig. 2.8 How do respondents rate the quality of the following services in Chillicothe?

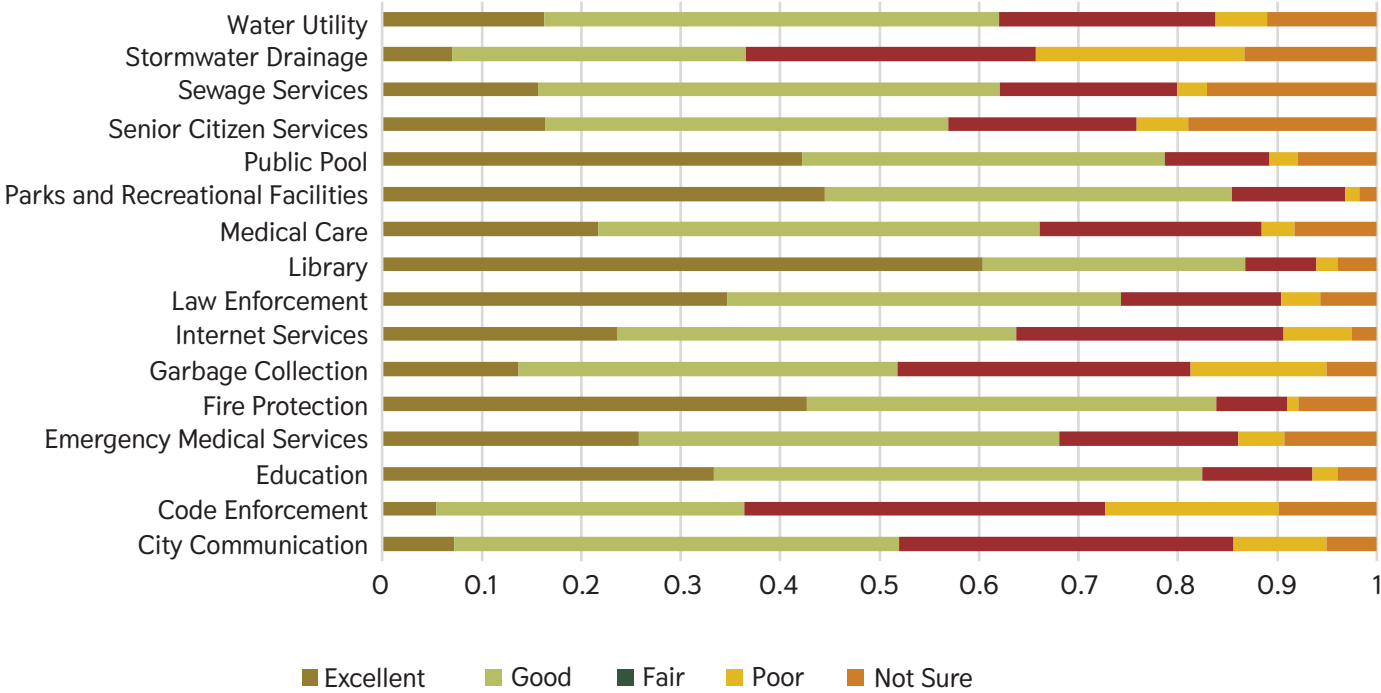
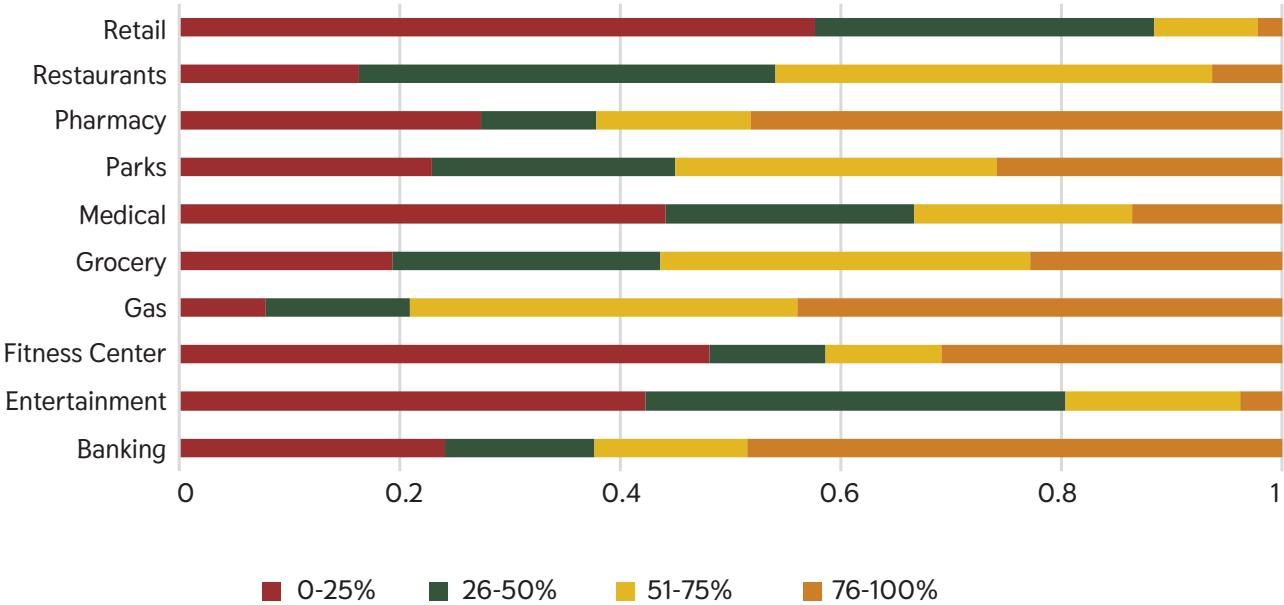


Fig. 2.10 How much of respondent purchasing takes place in Chillicothe?



Another topic that was addressed was the growth and development of Chillicothe. 41% of respondents are interested in seeing Chillicothe grow westward. In regard to facilities, there is a strong interest in construction or improvements to 2nd St, a movie theater and 4th St. There is also substantial interest in construction or improvements of the Track Inn/Old Train Station and a Riverfront City Park/ Stage. Residents are also interested in food and drink, recreational, and commercial development in the City. Regarding transportation infrastructure, there is a strong interest in the construction or improvement of Chillicothe’s streets and roads, the Viaduct, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and trains.

Based on responses, there seems to be a general need for more housing options, especially rentals and independent senior living. When asked what housing development respondents are most interested in, 66% of respondents reported interest in, 66% of respondents reported interest in 2-bedroom single family and apartment housing, 64% want more 3-bedroom single family housing, and 57% want more independent senior living.

Fig. 2.11 Do respondents support the construction or improvement of the following facilities?

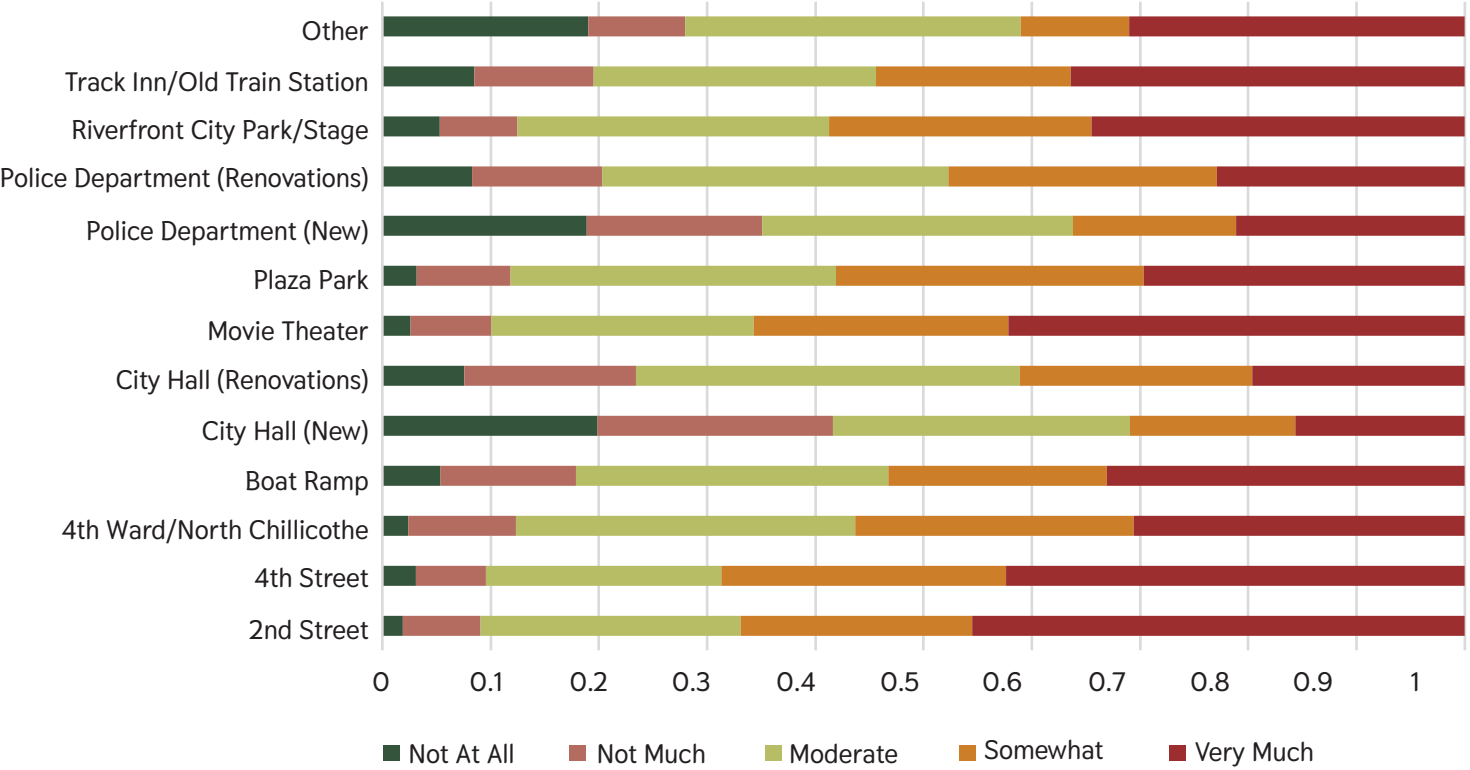


Fig. 2.12 Would respondents like to see more or less of the following types of development in Chillicothe?

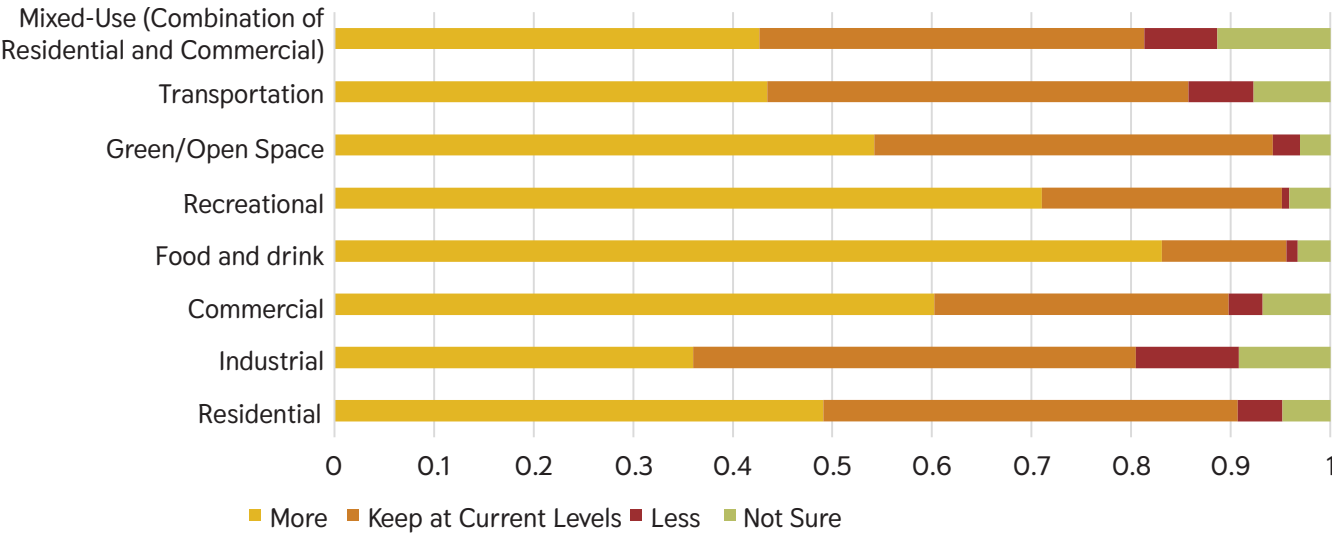


Fig. 2.13 How much do respondents support the construction or improvement of the following transportation infrastructure?

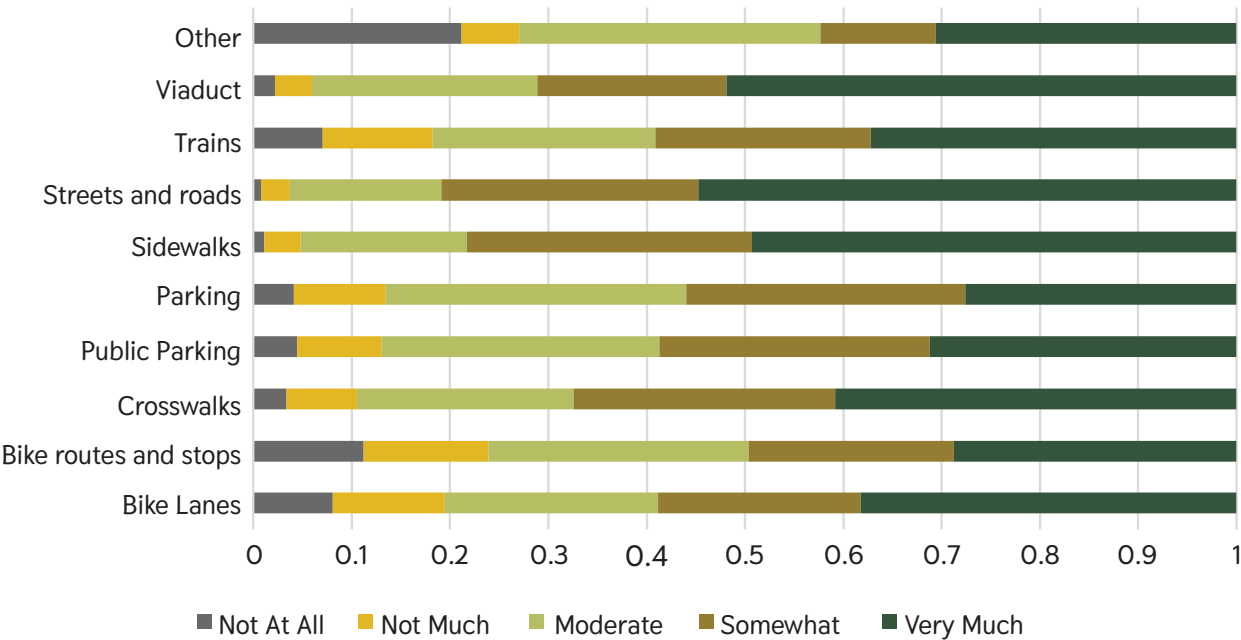


Fig. 2.14 How do respondents rate the availability of the housing supply in Chillicothe?

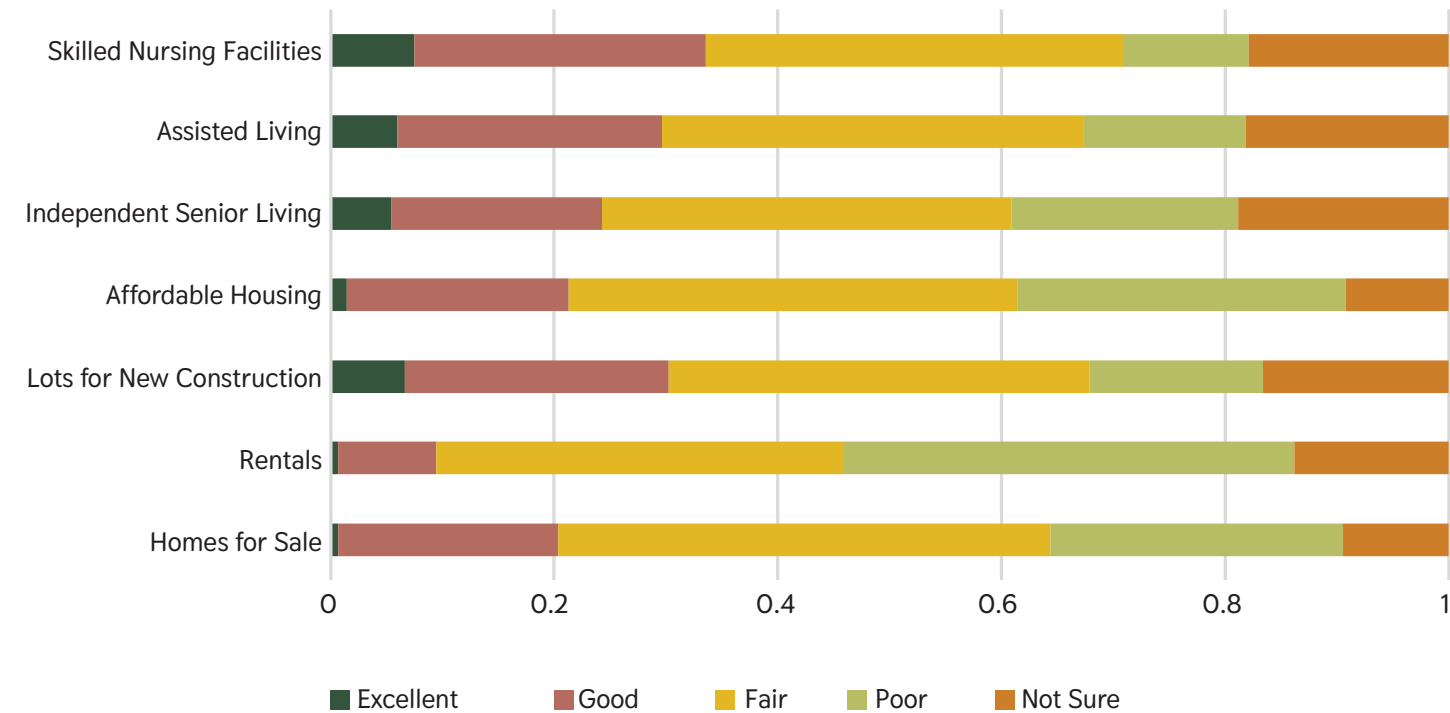
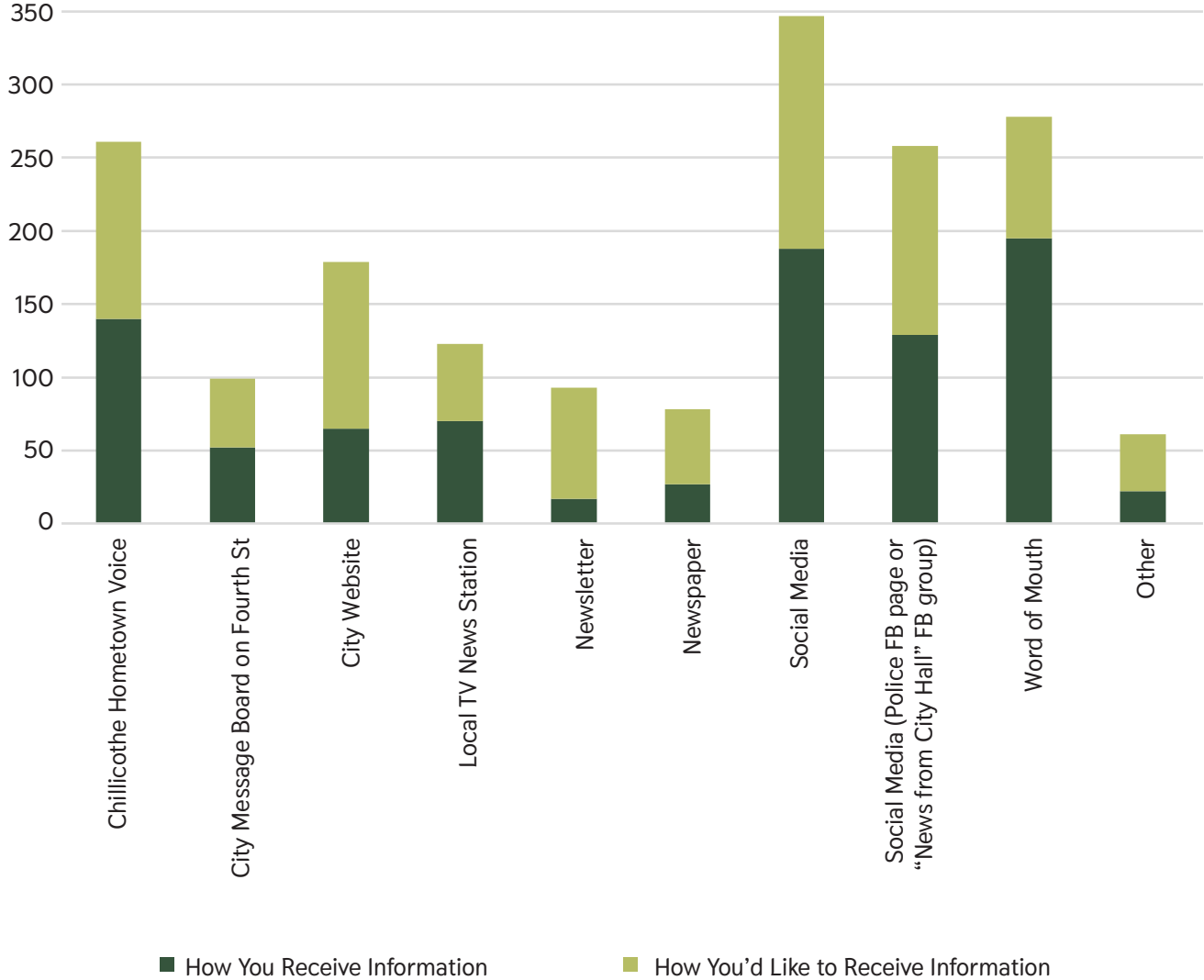
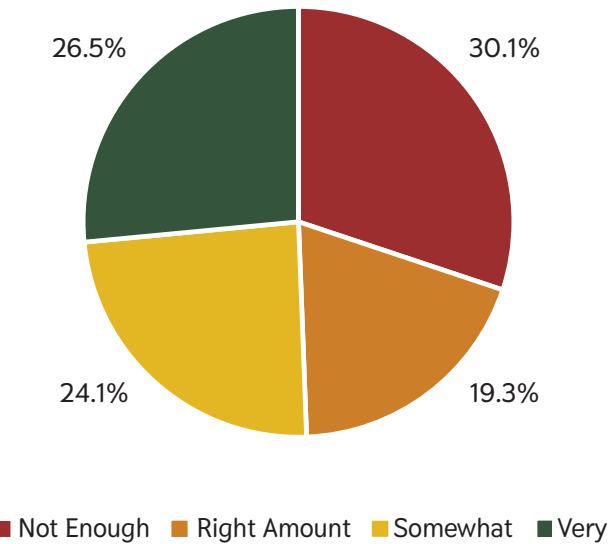


Fig. 2.16 How do you receive information about the City?
How would you like to receive information?



Questions about the City and its elected officials aimed to understand the quality of communication between residents and city officials and how residents receive information. 77% of respondents reported not communicating with their alderperson. Of those that do communicate with their alderperson, there is a near even split of people who think they are or aren't responsive enough with a slight bias towards being not responsive enough. The majority of residents receive information about the City through word of mouth, social media, Chillicothe Hometown Voice, and the Police or "News from City Hall" Facebook groups. Respondents agreed that they'd prefer to continue receiving information these ways alongside information from the City Website.

Fig. 2.15 How responsive do respondents think their alderpeople are?



In addition to the topics mentioned prior, respondents were given the opportunity to give open-ended responses to prevent the exclusion of issues not previously mentioned. Respondents were asked to write about what they like and dislike about Chillicothe and any additional comments they had related to the City and the Comprehensive Plan. There were roughly 220 submissions for each question. This data was tallied based on how often certain topics were mentioned to give us the most common comments from respondents.

When asked what they like about Chillicothe, the overwhelming majority mentioned the small town feel and supportive community. Respondents appreciate the close-knit and reliable community they have found in Chillicothe and wish to keep this aspect of the City going forward. Respondents also enjoy the parks and nature surrounding Chillicothe, the school district, and the City’s convenient proximity to Peoria and its amenities. When asked what they disliked, the most common response was the lack of options in the City, including the lack of dine-in restaurants, grocery stores, activities for kids and teens, and shopping options. Respondents also had issues with property maintenance, a lack of code enforcement, and the disrepair or lack of sidewalks throughout the community.

What do you like about Chillicothe?

90x	Small Town Feel
83x	The Community (friendly and supportive)
29x	Excellent Parks/Nature
26x	School District
21x	Shops and Eateries
19x	Convenient Location to Larger Communities/Amenities
16x	The Riverfront
14x	Safety/Low Crime
11x	Historic Downtown
10x	Library
10x	Amenities/Opportunities
9x	City Activities/Events
9x	Ease of Access
7x	Pearce Community Center
7x	Police Department
7x	Peace and Quiet
6x	Churches
3x	Great Place to Raise a Family

What do you dislike about Chillicothe?

26x	Lack of Restaurants (particularly sit-down)
23x	Property Maintenance/Garbage
21x	Lack of Entertainment (particularly for kids/teens)
20x	Limited Grocery Store Options
16x	Lack of Code Enforcement
16x	Lack of Shopping Options
14x	Lack/Disrepair of Sidewalks
14x	Lack of Affordable Housing
14x	Lack of Affordable Rental Options
14x	Roads in Disrepair
13x	Speeding/Distracted Driving
12x	Alcohol and Drugs
9x	Poor Water Drainage
9x	Lack of Third Places
8x	Lack of Good Paying Jobs
8x	City Communication with Residents
8x	Viaduct
7x	Quality of Leadership
6x	Lack of Senior Living
6x	Street View on Rt 29
6x	Disruptive/Unruly Children
6x	Lack of Diverse Housing Options

Additional Comments

- + Continued growth of bike trails and green space
- + Change summer camp hours to fix the noise at night
- + Code enforcement is nonexistent
- + Issues with youths harassing mothers and grandparents
- + Organizations need younger volunteers
- + Should have another community event with results of this survey and visuals
- + Make downtown a pedestrian area - no parking or traffic there
- + There is a lack of water recreation opportunities for people without a boat. Consider rentals

OPEN HOUSE

On July 25th, Tri-County and the Steering Committee hosted an open house at the Chillicothe Public Library from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

The open house was designed to engage the community in interactive stations to understand what changes they would like to see implemented in Chillicothe. This gave residents the opportunity to ask questions about the planning process, expand on their responses from the survey, and provide further context for their ideas. The interactive stations were used to evaluate broad and specific assets and identify priorities for Chillicothe. Activities included:

- + The Money Game
- + Idea Bank
- + Mapping Station
- + Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (“SOAR”)
- + Surveys
- + Innovation Station

Stations were managed by Tri-County staff or members of the steering committee. This gave participants the opportunity to meet and speak with those guiding the planning process as well as request assistance or additional information about stations. To advertise the event, flyers were dropped off in local businesses, organizations, and posted to the regularly visited Chillicothe Facebook groups. Approximately 40 community members attended and participated in the open house.

Fig. 2.17 (Below) Participants of the Chillicothe Open House.



Results: Money Game

The Money Game is used to gauge community support for potential or aspirational projects in the City. Designed to encourage participants to consider budgeting constraints, participants were given 500 “dollars” to allocate towards projects of their choice. Participants voted on five potential projects: bike trails, housing, senior housing, riverfront development, and teen hang-out places. Participants could elect to distribute the money any way they choose, putting all their “dollars” towards a single project or distributing it among multiple projects.

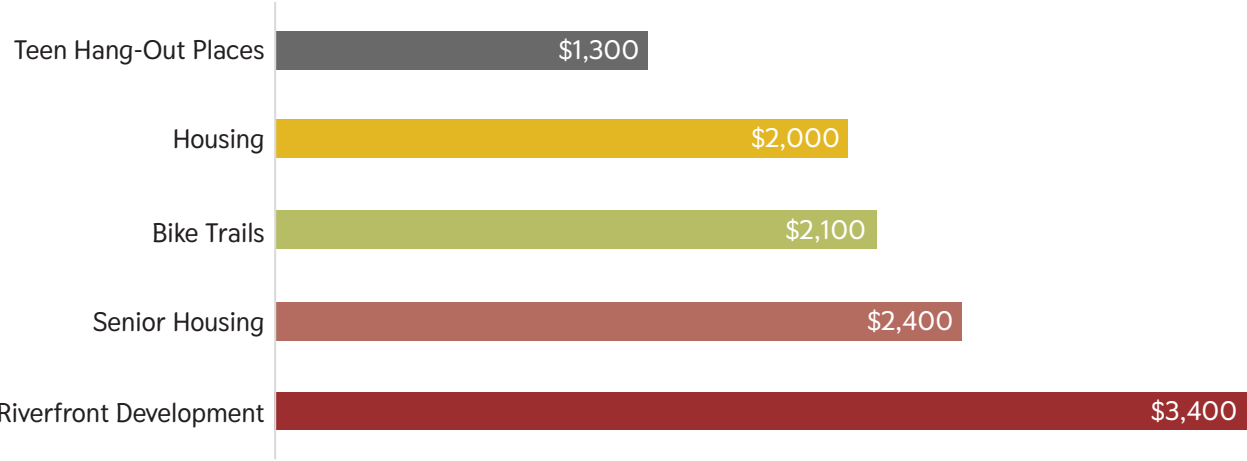
Riverfront development won the Money Game by a significant margin at \$3,400 followed by senior housing at \$2,400 and bike trails at \$2,100.

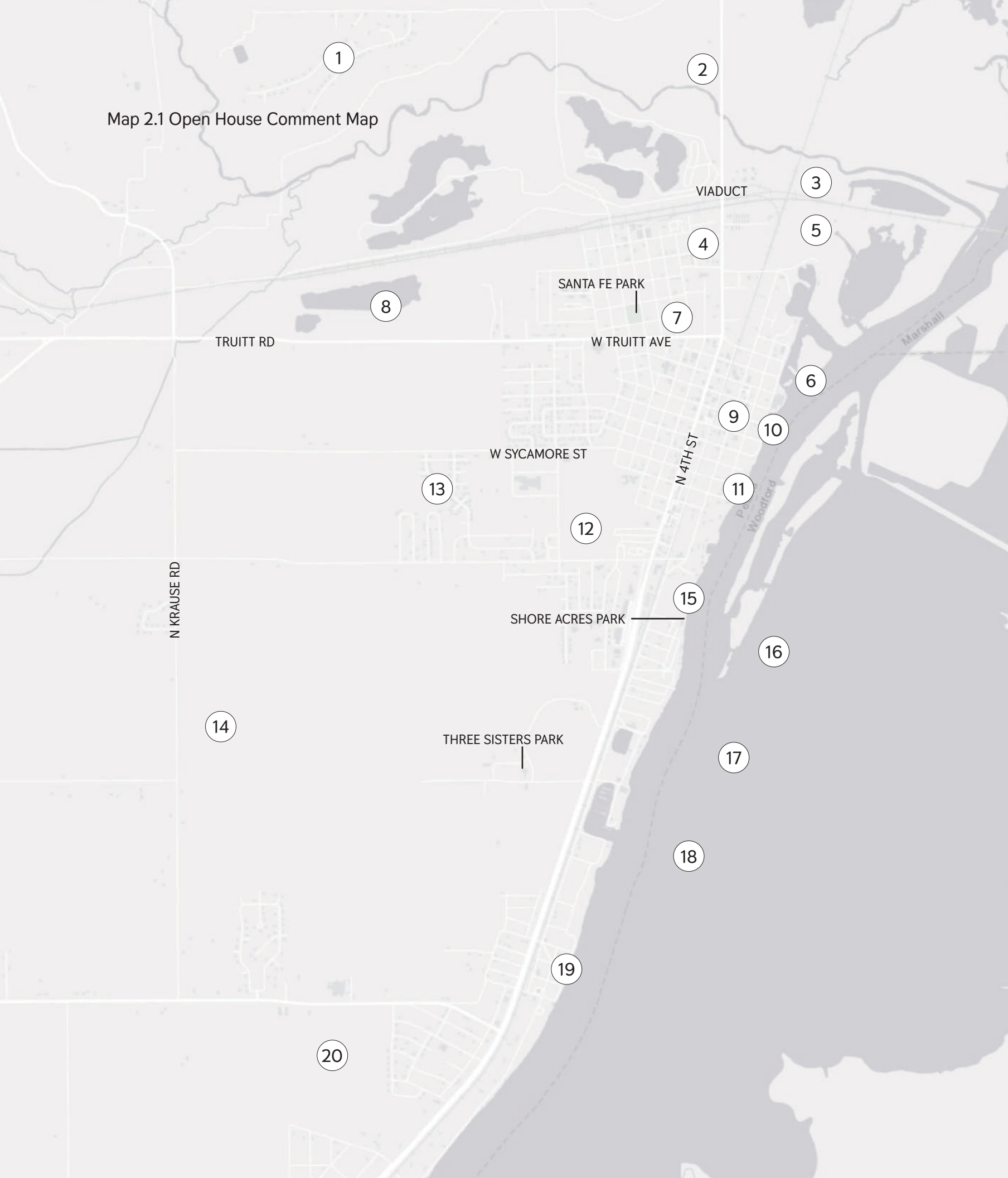
Results: Idea Bank

The Idea Bank is designed to capture miscellaneous ideas or concerns that were not identified in the other stations. This station allowed for anonymous and independent responses to be submitted by participants.

- + “Need City Council to pay attention to housing up-keep issues!”
- + “Tourism on the river. Boat rides, fishing, etc.”
- + “Chillicothe needs to work on bullying and racism.”
- + “We need to enhance tourism opportunities and quality of life along the river. We are a river town. Need dining experiences and entertainment opportunities along the river. Places that boats can dock and be able to walk the area for dining and shopping. Maybe a river walk that’s lit with benches for viewing the river activities. Start with the river walk and build from there.”
- + “More music on City Stage. Promote live music more.”
- + “Riverfront development 3 areas: 1. Eagle Landing 2. Jackson Park 3. Empty lot”
- + “Have another event at the high school once the school year starts to get teen feedback.”
- + “Some sort of traffic control at the Bradley-sycamore intersection. As someone who walks to school that intersection is very stressful to cross.”
- + “Better control of rainwater Truitt and Bradley”

Fig. 2.18 Money Game Results





Results: Mapping Exercise

Participants recorded what they like, dislike, or want to change in the built environment on two maps of Chillicothe. This gave residents the opportunity to draw out ideas for the City within the municipal boundary and Extra-Jurisdictional Planning Area (EJPA).

Comment Key:

1. Street corners have a lack of view
2. Promote parks
3. Ice rink in winter
4. Need sidewalks in North Town
5. Chillicothe Bottom is awesome! Deserves more attention
6. Develop comp plan for city-owned river front
7. It would be nice to see this building (615 W Truitt Ave) turned into something. Preferably another entertainment space
8. Take control of this area
9. Improve alleys
10. Weeds + trees growing in rip-rap, blocking view
11. Riverfront dining + entertainment
12. Additional space needed to expand graveyard? No space for family plots
13. Fix road (Prairie Springs Dr)
14. I like Moffit Park
15. Improvements at Shore Acres
16. Lack of reflective and updated street signs
17. No more gambling machines
18. Only having one grocery store. Empty stores on 4th street
19. Flooded streets
20. Like that they are implementing a bike path, but would like it to connect to other communities. Ex. to Coal Hollow.

Results: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (“SOAR”)

The SOAR analysis station helps residents to focus on assessing the community’s assets, how these assets can be used for positive change, and the results that residents would like to see come to fruition. This station featured four poster boards, each labeled with the categories of SOAR. Participants were given the opportunity to list their ideas and support the ideas of others by adding check marks next to those they agree with.

Strengths describe existing community assets, characteristics, or resources that participants appreciate and would like to see emphasized. These include aspects of the City that residents are proud of or that can be used to achieve the goals of the comprehensive plan. Chillicothe’s strengths lie in its small-town feel, inviting community, and ideal location.

Comments recieved:

- + Volunteers
- + Location to river
- + Close to Peoria
- + School good condition
- + Museums
- + Very giving community
- + OSF local doctor
- + Library and programming
- + Pearce Community Center
- + Park District-Shore Acres
- + Golf karts

Opportunities describe the potential projects, developments, programming, or features of Chillicothe that could be utilized to improve the City’s quality of life. The most common sentiment among participants was the opportunity for more outdoor recreation through Chillicothe’s parks, bike trails, boating opportunities, and the Shore Acres pool. Participants also identified a larger capacity for OSF, increased volunteer engagement, and the renovation of the Viaduct.

Comments recieved:

- + Loans as a county town
- + Great parks
- + Larger capacity for OSF
- + Bike trails
- + More accessibility for boaters
- + Service and volunteer organizations need more membership
- + Renovation of the viaduct
- + More affordable rates for Shore Acres Pool
- + Affordable daycare

Aspirations describe what residents would like the City to achieve in the future. This allows for an exploration of what issues residents are passionate about within their community. Respondents identified a variety of aspirations, including more bike and pedestrian infrastructure, better utilization of Chillicothe’s parks, and more options for entertainment, housing, and grocery shopping.

Comments recieved:

- + Volunteer trees
- + City river parks-developed entirely
- + More sidewalks
- + Expand to the west
- + Aldi (competition for Kroger)
- + Bike trail
- + More events at Three Sisters Park
- + More entertainment opportunities-especially for teenagers!
- + Santa Fe railroad running through Chilli again (Amtrack)
- + 55+ housing project single level development
- + Tea room
- + Bus tours

Results refer to the tangible and practical outcomes of the planning process in Chillicothe. After considering the strengths, opportunities, and aspirations of residents, results gauge how far Chillicothe is from achieving its goals. Residents identified increased tourism and increased business as results they would like to see. These answers were also reflected in the survey.

Comments recieved:

- + Increased tourism for food and shopping
- + Bring more business



III. Vision + Strategies

DEVELOPMENT + GROWTH

Chillicothe looks to capitalize on existing amenities by supporting economic development along the Riverfront, Historic Downtown, and Fourth Street Corridor.

Objective 1: Establish economic development policies to support business growth.

1. Work with the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council (GPEDC) and Bradley University’s Small Business Development Corporation (IL SBDC) to establish a business retention, development, and attraction program to create a forum for consistent conversations with businesses. This program should assist the City to:

- Proactively learn the challenges and needs of the business community; and
- Create an opportunity for the City to close gaps, modify policy, or facilitate connections to regional resources.

2. Collaborate with Greater Peoria Economic Development Council and Distillery Labs to identify and expand business incubation resources for Chillicothe entrepreneurs, including actively promoting IL SBDC and Distillery Labs small business events in the community.

3. Establish Business Development Districts (BDD) or Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts in the Historic Downtown District, Riverfront District, and Fourth Street Corridor, or other areas that meet the eligibility criteria; districts should further Chillicothe’s economic and development goals and create a plan for ongoing investments in business corridors.

4. Evaluate opportunities to leverage Peoria Rural Enterprise Zone (PREZ) tax benefits to incentivize commercial and mixed-use development or improvements in priority areas such as the Historic Downtown, Riverfront District, and Fourth Street Corridor.

5. Evaluate opportunities to leverage Peoria Rural Enterprise Zone (PREZ) tax benefits to encourage the development of desired residential development, including mixed residential subdivisions.

6. Further develop the Economic Development page on the City’s website to inform current and prospective businesses, developers, and property owners of available incentives, development-related policies, available properties, and other resources.

7. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow mixed-use development in the Historic Downtown District, Riverfront District, and other mixed-use areas identified on the Future Land Use Map.

8. Support local businesses in utilizing advertisement opportunities with Discover Peoria and the Peoria Area Convention Visitor’s Bureau (PACVB).

Objective 2: Create a Riverfront District.

1. Designate a Riverfront District on the Future Land Use Map to encourage mixed-use development. This will:
- Accentuate the City’s relationship with the Illinois River;
 - Expand recreational access; and
 - Encourages ecotourism.

2. Create a subarea plan to define the vision and priorities for redevelopment of the Riverfront District, address land acquisition, long-term ownership, desired land uses and improvements, funding strategies, and conceptual site plans and renderings.
3. Create an overlay district with zoning and development design standards specific to the Riverfront.

Objective 3: Develop a public marina in the Riverfront District.

1. Work with Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to identify any potential grant opportunities to support development of the marina.
2. Develop a conceptual plan that delineates the marina location, size, slips, cost estimates, project phasing.
3. Engage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to determine the Scope of Services for the permitting and design process.
4. Hire a consultant to lead the design and construction process.

Objective 4: Develop a planning and economic development strategy to enhance the Historic Downtown District.

1. Develop a subarea plan to define the vision and priorities for redevelopment and improvements in Chillicothe’s historic downtown area. The plan should include:

- Overlay and design guidelines;
- Recommendations for capital improvements;
- Cost estimates and funding strategies;
- Programmatic recommendations;
- Long-term ownership recommendations;
- District branding; and
- Conceptual renderings.

2. Identify and establish appropriate economic development incentives, tools, Business District, Tax Increment Financing District, etc. to fund implementation of the subarea plan.

3. Coordinate with regional partners to identify supplemental funding sources to support subarea plan implementation.

Objective 5: Establish economic development policies to attract employers and support a diversified workforce.

1. Collaborate with GPEDC’s Workforce Solutions program to identify opportunities for upskilling the local workforce and form a task force to help build a local strategy that supplements regional workforce alliance goals.
2. Partner with GPEDC to advertise available commercial properties on GPEDC’s website and highlight key properties in the Greater Peoria Feature Properties Flyer.
3. Partner with the GPEDC to encourage local businesses to advertise employment opportunities on the Greater Peoria Job Board.
4. Conduct a feasibility study to assess medical service needs.

5. Partner with regional medical providers to expand medical offices and job opportunities in Chillicothe.

Objective 6: Enhance tourism opportunities.

1. Conduct a hotel market analysis to determine the demand for traditional overnight accommodations in Chillicothe.
2. Promote the Short-term Rental Ordinance to encourage new short-term rentals near Downtown and the Riverfront.
3. Consider amending the Short-term Rental Ordinance to include houseboats as a permitted type of short-term rental.
4. Hire a marketing consultant to develop a Tourism Marketing Plan to identify eligible uses of the City's Hotel/Motel Tax. The plan should:
 - Follow evidence-informed processes;
 - Holistically evaluate the experiences and services needed to increase community tourism, including activities to improve wayfinding, support local entrepreneurship, develop local workforce opportunities; and
 - Promote the City's history and heritage, recreational and natural resources, major events, and authentic experiences.
5. Work with the Peoria Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau to promote local events.

Objective 7: Establish priorities for future growth via annexation.

1. Conduct an annexation study to understand the community and economic impacts, and evaluate the suitability of annexing land within the City's 1.5-mile planning area.
2. Designate the future land use for all parcels within the City's 1.5-mile planning area on the Future Land Use Map to establish priority areas for the future residential, commercial, and industrial development, public spaces, conservation areas, etc.

Objective 8: Enhance the Fourth Street Corridor.

1. Promote redevelopment of underutilized properties.
2. Update the sign ordinance to improve the uniformity and aesthetics of signage throughout the corridor.
3. Establish an overlay area with landscape requirements that include establishment of a vegetative buffer in places where parking lots abut the right-of-way.

TRANSPORTATION,
INFRASTRUCTURE, +
SERVICES

Chillicothe will advocate for and advance public services and infrastructure that promote safe and accessible active transportation options for its residents.

Objective 1: Collaborate with Peoria County and service providers to enhance broadband access to the community.

1. Partner with the school district, library, and health providers to promote digital literacy across the community.
2. Address issues of affordability and utilization through Digital Equity Programming. Share and utilize programs that help lower costs of household internet services.
3. Work with local providers to develop a marketing strategy to actively promote broadband services.

Objective 2: Plan for long-range transportation projects.

1. Include regionally-significant projects in Tri-County’s Long-Range Transportation Plans.
2. Proactively coordinate with Tri-County to assess potential funding sources for regionally-significant transportation projects.

3. Evaluate the existing conditions and capacity of the water system, including the capacity and condition of wells and pipes. Consider future growth opportunities in capacity analyses and planning. Develop and implement a capital improvement plan in coordination with roadway, Sanitary District, and broadband capital improvement planning.

4. Proactively coordinate with the Chillicothe Sanitary District to assess the feasibility and potential costs of network expansion in the growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Map. Utilize findings to inform Zoning Ordinance updates.

5. Coordinate with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and BNSF Railway to replace the Viaduct along Illinois 29. Advocate for the reduction of lanes in IDOT’s current roadway redesign.

6. Partner with IDOT to develop pedestrian and bicyclist facilities that enhance safety and comfort along IL-29, including the identification of potential pedestrian islands.

7. Create an engaging, user-friendly Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that:

- Prioritizes and forecasts capital improvement needs;
- Provides projected costs and anticipated timeframes;
- Includes external funding sources; and
- Is comprehensive and encompasses the capital needs for all City departments and recommended projects from adopted plans.

8. Proactively coordinate with the IVC School District #321 to study, design, and construct roadway improvements along E Cloverdale Avenue and W Sycamore Street to support expanded School District facilities.

Objective 3: Enhance public transit access in Chillicothe.

1. Partner with the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District (GPMTD) and Tri-County to implement identified public transit services needed to close the mobility gaps identified by the 2021 Grey Area Mobility Enhancement and Expansion Study.
2. Partner with GPMTD and Tri-County to pursue state, federal, and private funding opportunities to support the expansion of public transit services.
3. Partner with GPMTD to conduct a transit study to evaluate demand for services like microtransit, paratransit, etc. to improve transit access and connectivity within Chillicothe.
4. Partner with GPMTD to study demand for an express route from Chillicothe to the Downtown Peoria Transit Center.

Objective 4: Enhance walkability and bikeability in Chillicothe.

1. Support regional efforts to connect Chillicothe’s existing and planned trails to regional networks in Peoria County.
2. Create a Sidewalks Master Plan to construction and maintain sidewalks City-wide along with an ADA Transition Plan to ensure access for all residents.

3. Amend Zoning Code Article VIII, Division 2. Off-street Parking and Loading to require bike parking facilities at new commercial and multifamily developments.

4. Establish a Complete Streets design policy or standard for new roadway construction or reconstruction. Policy should include minimum timeframes for the restriping of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

5. Educate residents and business owners about their responsibilities to keep sidewalks clear from snow, ice, vegetation, and other structures that might impede pedestrian use.

6. Notify Tri-County when new bike racks are installed in public spaces.

7. Apply the Vision Zero Safe Systems approach to address problem intersections. Collaborate with Tri-County to identify potential planning or implementation funding opportunities.

8. Coordinate with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

- Identify potential locations for pedestrian islands on 4th Street; and
- Include IDOT in any future revisions of the 4th Street Corridor Revitalization Study or development of Corridor Overlay Standards that impact the location or number of driveways connected to 4th Street.

Objective 5: Enhance the quality of public services.

1. Develop a stormwater management plan that includes standards for evaluating the impacts of new development and the amount of water that should be held on site.
2. Regularly evaluate opportunities to expand, improve, or reduce the cost of trash, recycling, and compost services.
3. Increase staff capacity to address code violations during peak seasons by hiring an intern or seasonal worker to help proactively identify environmental code compliance issues (e.g., long grass) in the summer months.
4. Develop educational materials (e.g., pamphlets) that provide an overview of common code compliance issues and solutions.

Objective 6: Enhance the Fourth Street corridor.

1. Implement a wayfinding program described in the 2018 Chillicothe 4th Street Corridor Revitalization Study to direct visitors to Downtown, the Pearce Community Center, and other key community anchors.
2. In accordance with the 2018 Chillicothe 4th Street Corridor Revitalization Study, improve pedestrian safety and accessibility by constructing an 8' pathway along Plaza Drive from Cloverdale Road to McGrath Street. Include installation of decorative lighting and a landscape buffer in the design and construction process.

4. Complete downtown gateway improvements on W Walnut Street as described in the 2018 4th Street Corridor Revitalization Plan.

Objective 7: Maintain and improve municipal facilities.

1. Conduct an energy audit and identify grant opportunities to fund capital improvements that increase the City's resilience to fluctuations in utility prices.

HOUSING

Chillicothe will encourage the growth and diversification of its housing stock, pursue opportunities for senior housing, and promote higher density development.

Objective 1: Protect Chillicothe’s existing housing stock.

- 1. Annually provide a report to City Council on code violation and compliance. This report should:
 - Summarize the City’s code violations including the number and type of complaints;
 - Include the City’s success in gaining property compliance; and
 - Discuss opportunities for sustainable solutions to improve or maintain the overall safety of the City.
- 2. Develop and implement a rental registration and inspection program.
- 3. Complete an infill housing study to encourage infill of vacant properties with smaller housing units.

Objective 2: Grow and diversify the Chillicothe’s housing stock.

- 1. Collaborate with IHDA to complete a local Housing Needs Assessment or participate in a regional Housing Needs Assessment to:
 - Identify market opportunities for new residential development;
 - Determine the type, price, and quantity of homes needed; and
 - Develop policy recommendations to support housing stability.

- 2. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to promote higher density residential development by replacing the existing R-3 Multifamily District with two new districts: R-3A Low Density Multifamily and R-3B High Density Multifamily.
- 3. Designate areas on the Future Land Use Map where multifamily development will be encouraged.
- 4. Inventory, consider acquiring, and market priority multi-family housing or mixed-use development sites.
- 5. Amend Article IV - Residential Districts of the Zoning Ordinance to specifically call out nursing/assisted living facilities as a permitted use in the proposed R-3A Low Density Multifamily and R-3B High Density Multifamily.
- 6. Update the Zoning Ordinance to require multifamily developments in the proposed R-3B High Density Multifamily District and mixed-use developments to provide recreation or green space amenities.
- 7. Allow modular home construction for single-family homes and duplexes in all applicable residential districts.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The City will continue to boost community pride by celebrating Chillicothe’s rich history and improving communications with its residents and the region.

Objective 1: Foster better communication between residents and the City, and internally between City departments and committees.

- 1. Create a combined Chillicothe Events Calendar on the City’s website.
- 2. Conduct building permit reviews to create a monthly report for Finance Committee and the City Council.
- 3. Create a section on the City’s Economic Development webpage that details ongoing public and private developments.
- 4. Continue hosting regular “1st Tuesay Business Connection” events.

Objective 2: Solidify Chillicothe’s brand identity.

- 1. Create a new annual event to celebrate Chillicothe’s rich history.
- 2. Update the City’s brand and style guide; ensure it embodies community values and aspirations.
- 3. Beautify entrances to the City by improving existing or installing new monument-style welcome signs at key entrances.

- 4. Construct wayfinding signage in the City’s historic downtown area.
- 5. Continue support of the downtown business façade program to create a clear downtown identity.

PARKS, RECREATION, +
NATURAL RESOURCES

Chillicothe will support its natural resources; the Illinois River, parks and preserves, and the Park District; by enhancing the natural environment, encouraging youth programming, and establishing a Recreation District. The City will continue to ensure access to recreational opportunities for all residents.

Objective 1: Create programming options, especially for youth.

- 1. Partner with IVC School District #321 to establish a Youth Council to advise and help the City and Chillicothe Park District create youth-focus events and activities.
- 2. Work with the Chillicothe Park District and Library to support identification, implementation, and advertisement of new programs for various age cohorts (youth, adults, families, and seniors).

Objective 2: Improve the City’s parks and recreation environment.

- 1. Designate land for future public sites or open spaces (parks, open spaces, recreational, trails, etc.) on the Future Land Use Map. In accordance with the Subdivision Ordinance Sec. 82-116 Dedication of Land for Public Sites and Open Spaces, this will help the City plan for future public site and open space needs as subdivisions or planned developments are established.

- 2. Create a new tent camping destination (public) in the Special Recreation and Conservation District as a lodging option to support the City’s ecotourism assets.
- 3. Partner with Chillicothe Bottoms Wildlife Sanctuary to create a local Bird Watching Festival.
- 4. Create a new outdoor music series or festival in Downtown or at City park.
- 5. As part of the Riverfront District, create a Riverfront Park with an outdoor stage or amphitheater.

Objective 3: Protect and enhance the natural resources of Chillicothe.

- 1. Update the Zoning Code to prohibit uses which use or create groundwater contaminants within a certain distance of water supply sources or facilities.
- 2. Work with IEPA to assess and clean-up brownfield sites, specifically existing quarries and converting them into parks or conservation areas once they’re exhausted.
- 3. Create a best practice guide identifying activities that residents, businesses, and the City should implement to protect the City’s natural resources, including on-site stormwater treatments and native landscaping.
- 4. Amend Sec. 105-289 Landscaping and Screening to encourage the use of native grasses, plants, wildflowers, and other plant materials to support the natural environment and wildlife habitats.

- 5. Establish a Stream Protection Overlay to protect sensitive areas and mitigate development risks.
- 6. Work with private property owners to acquire repetitive loss flood properties and restore them as conservation areas for public use.

Objective 4: Establish a Special Recreation and Conservation District (SRCD).

- 1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish a Recreation and Conservation District (SRCD) and associated development and use regulations. Land uses that are appropriate for this new zoning district should be indicated on the Future Land Use Map.
- 2. Work with the Chillicothe Park District to determine what entity is best suited to development and manage recreational sites within the SRCD.
- 3. Develop a subarea plan for the SRCD including Chillicothe Island, Chillicothe Bottoms Wildlife Sanctuary, and other natural areas to be preserved. The deliverables should include:
 - Programmatic recommendations;
 - Identification of priority areas for property acquisition;
 - Conceptual renderings and site plans;
 - Phasing recommendations;
 - Cost estimates; and
 - Funding strategies.
- 4. Consider establishing a Transfer of Development Rights policy for private property owners to encourage conservation and renaturalization of designated properties within the SRCD.

- 5. Work with private property owners and the Chillicothe Park District as appropriate to secure future land uses in alignment with the conservation SRCD subarea plan.
- 6. Publish future plans on Chillicothe’s website and share with recreation, tourism, and economic development entities.
- 7. Solicit funds to support conservation and redevelopment activities in alignment with the subarea plan and begin implementation.

HEALTH + SAFETY

Chillicothe looks to improve the health of its residents by implementing additional public safety services and reducing the impact of flooding on infrastructure and people.

Objective 1: Reduce risk of and impact of flooding in the community.

- 1. Consider participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to reduce flood insurance rates for impacted property owners.
- 2. Amend the City’s Code of Ordinances to establish a floodplain management ordinance that specifies building (e.g., minimum freeboard standards) and development regulations that mitigate risk to buildings in flood hazard areas.
- 3. Maintain a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) that specifies strategies to limit loss of life, injury, and property damage.
- 4. Evaluate equipment and personnel capacity to handle flood relief events.
- 5. Participate in the Central Illinois Coalition Active in Response Planning (CIL-CARP) to foster collaborative relationships with healthcare organizations, emergency responders, regional emergency management directors, public health and other emergency responders, etc.
- 6. Participate in the Central Illinois Weather Net to ensure efficient and accurate exchanges of information during severe weather events.

- 7. Participate in Peoria County/City of Peoria Emergency Management Council meetings to facilitate continuous improvement of the community’s all-hazards preparedness for disasters.
- 8. Remove structures from flood-prone areas to minimize future flood losses.
- 9. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish a Stream Protection Overlay to regulate development in areas containing or near water bodies.

Objective 2: Enhance public safety protection services.

- 1. Provide regular training for first responders.
- 2. Create a youth police academy or camp to cultivate positive relationships between youth and the Police Department.
- 3. Collaborate with regional resources such as the Center for Prevention of Abuse, House of Hope, or Dream Center to educate the public and reduce the incidence of domestic batteries and assaults.
- 4. Support the Police Department participation in the Multi-County Narcotics Enforcement Group to facilitate prioritization of local cases.
- 5. Support the Police Department participation in the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.
- 6. Fund critical updates to Police Department facilities and tools to improve the security of systems and buildings.

- 7. Consider participation in quarterly Peoria Area Maritime Security Council meetings following construction of a marina in the Riverfront District.
- 8. Participate in quarterly Peoria County Fire Chief Association meetings.
- 9. Participate in regular Tri-County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meetings to encourage awareness of chemical hazards and their associated response plans.

Objective 3: Implement the recommendations of Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan and other strategies to reduce public safety risks.

- 1. Develop a local disaster response and recovery plan, including approaches to expedite relief for identified at-risk populations that may be exceptionally vulnerable during a long-term power outage.
- 2. Budget for annual maintenance of critical facilities/shelters and resources needed for natural disaster relief efforts.
- 3. Participate in regular Tri-County Coalition Active in Disaster (COAD) meetings to foster relationships with local organizations that collaborate to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters in Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Chillicothe will advance the Objectives and Key Results identified in this comprehensive plan, create and share annual progress reports on the status of each goal, and update the workplan as needed.

Objective 1: Monitor the progress of objectives and key results.

- 1. Create a system for each Department/ Responsible Party to track the progress of the objectives and key results they are primarily responsible for leading.
- 2. Department Heads: Annually report on the status of objectives and key results by the Primary Responsible Parties to the Mayor.
- 3. Mayor: Annually report on the status of objectives and key results to the City Council.

Objective 2: Update objectives and key results as needed to account for changing conditions.

- 1. Host an annual work session among Primary Responsible Parties to:
 - Evaluate progress;
 - Discuss changing conditions; and
 - Decide on necessary changes to the OKRs to reflect new challenges or opportunities.

Objective 3: Incorporate recommended projects into the annual municipal budget.

- 1. Identify comprehensive plan projects in the annual budget.
- 2. Include major capital and infrastructure projects in the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Objective 4: Seek Local, State, and Federal Grant Funding to Support Plan Implementations.

- 1. Include regionally-significant projects in Tri-County’s Long-Range Transportation Plans.
- 2. Submit major projects as Regional Priorities in Tri-County’s prioritization processes.
- 3. Attend Tri-County Full Commission and Technical Committee meetings to ensure that the City is aware of funding opportunities.
- 4. Regularly research potential grant sources and funding opportunities for City projects.

Objective 5: Amend the City’s code of ordinances to align with the Comprehensive Plan.

- 1. Complete a comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan vision and recommendations, and incorporate modern planning and zoning trends.
- 2. Complete a comprehensive review of the Subdivision Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan vision and recommendations, and incorporate modern planning and zoning trends.
- 3. Update other relevant chapters of the Code of Ordinances to implement the Comprehensive Plan vision and recommendations, and incorporate modern planning and zoning trends.



IV. Future Land Use

LAND USE DEFINITIONS

AG Agricultural

This is rural / agricultural in character and includes farms and large tracts of undeveloped land.

CI Civic / Industrial

Land used for major public and quasi-public institutions, including schools, colleges, the university, churches, correctional facilities, hospitals, utilities and similar uses.

HI Heavy Industrial

Typically consists of older industrial areas used for the heavy manufacturing and assembling of goods. Heavy industrial uses include processes used in the production of steel, automobiles, chemicals, cement, and animal by-products, and are viewed as clearly not compatible with areas designated for residential, institutional, office, and retail uses. Substantial landscaped buffers are expected between uses of lesser intensity, particularly residential, office, and agricultural uses.

HO Hillside Overlay

This designation includes areas with slopes that exceed 15%. Development within or including these areas will be subject to additional regulations that mitigate risks such as erosion, landslides, sedimentation, and wildfire. Development regulations should promote regional resiliency.

HDR High-Density Residential

This land use is residential in character with a density greater than 24 units per acre. Primary land uses included in this class are medium and high-rise attached multi-family developments. There should be an emphasis on aesthetics, open space, and recreational amenities in such developments.

LDR Low-Density Residential

This land use is primarily residential in character at a density of less than 6 dwelling units per acre, including detached single-family dwellings and duplexes. The primary residential pattern should be neighborhoods. The main neighborhood form should be detached residential development that is of sufficient size and design to promote neighborhood formation and land use stability.

MDR Medium-Density Residential

This land use is primarily residential in character with a density ranging from 6 to 24 dwelling units per acre. Primary land uses include detached single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhouses and attached multi-family dwellings.

MU-H Mixed-Use Historic District

This district is established to promote the development of mixed institutional, cultural, commercial, residential, office, and recreational uses in Chillicothe’s historic downtown area. Uses and design guidelines should promote the preservation of the district’s unique, historic character and promote comfortable and safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

MU-NC Mixed-Use Neighborhood Center

This land use is the least intense of the mixed-use classifications. It is intended for medium-density, mixed-use development with housing densities of 6 to 12 dwelling units per acre. Businesses typically serve one or a few neighborhoods and might include small shops, restaurants, drugstores, small markets, salons, or convenience stores. Buildings should be designed with a residential character and scale that complements the surrounding neighborhoods.

MU-CLI Mixed-Use Commercial/Light Industrial

A wide range of commercial and industrial uses can join to make complementary employment centers, including offices, light industry, services, general business, retail, and restaurants

MU-R Mixed-Use Riverfront District

This district envisions the creation of mixed-use area that enhances the City’s relationship with the Illinois River, expands ecotourism options, and creates opportunities for medium- or high-density housing with a mix of businesses. This district will expand opportunities for residents and tourists to interact with the Illinois River. Design guidelines should emphasize comfortable and safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities and include the creation of outdoor public amenities.

MU-UC Mixed-Use Urban Corridor

This land use consists of urban streets that have potential for redevelopment and vertical mixed uses such as shops at ground level and apartments above. Commercial cores or nodes should be created along these corridors. Nodes should not be more than 4 blocks.

OS Other Open Space

Primary uses include cemeteries, private golf courses, and similar uses. Open space areas should serve as buffers or conservation and recreation areas.

PP Public Parks and Refuges

This classification contains existing parks, wildlife refuges or similar public or quasi-public parks, open spaces, and greenways.

ROW Right-of-Way

Land used for local, state, or federal roadways and transportation easements.

SPO Stream Protection Overlay

Areas subject to flooding as indicated by their location in the floodplain or the 100-year or 500-year flood fringe. Development within these areas will be subject to additional regulations that mitigate flood risk and promote regional resiliency.

SRCD Special Recreation and Conservation District

This district promotes ecotourism and recreation through the preservation, conservation, or renaturalization of ecosystems and wildlife habitats. Allowable uses in this district should support this primary objective and allow for the maintenance or creation of ecological corridors, and may include low-impact ecotourism-serving uses such as camping, hiking, fishing, and other outdoor activities.

W Water

These are areas designated to protect river and creek channels, lakes, or ponds from development.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

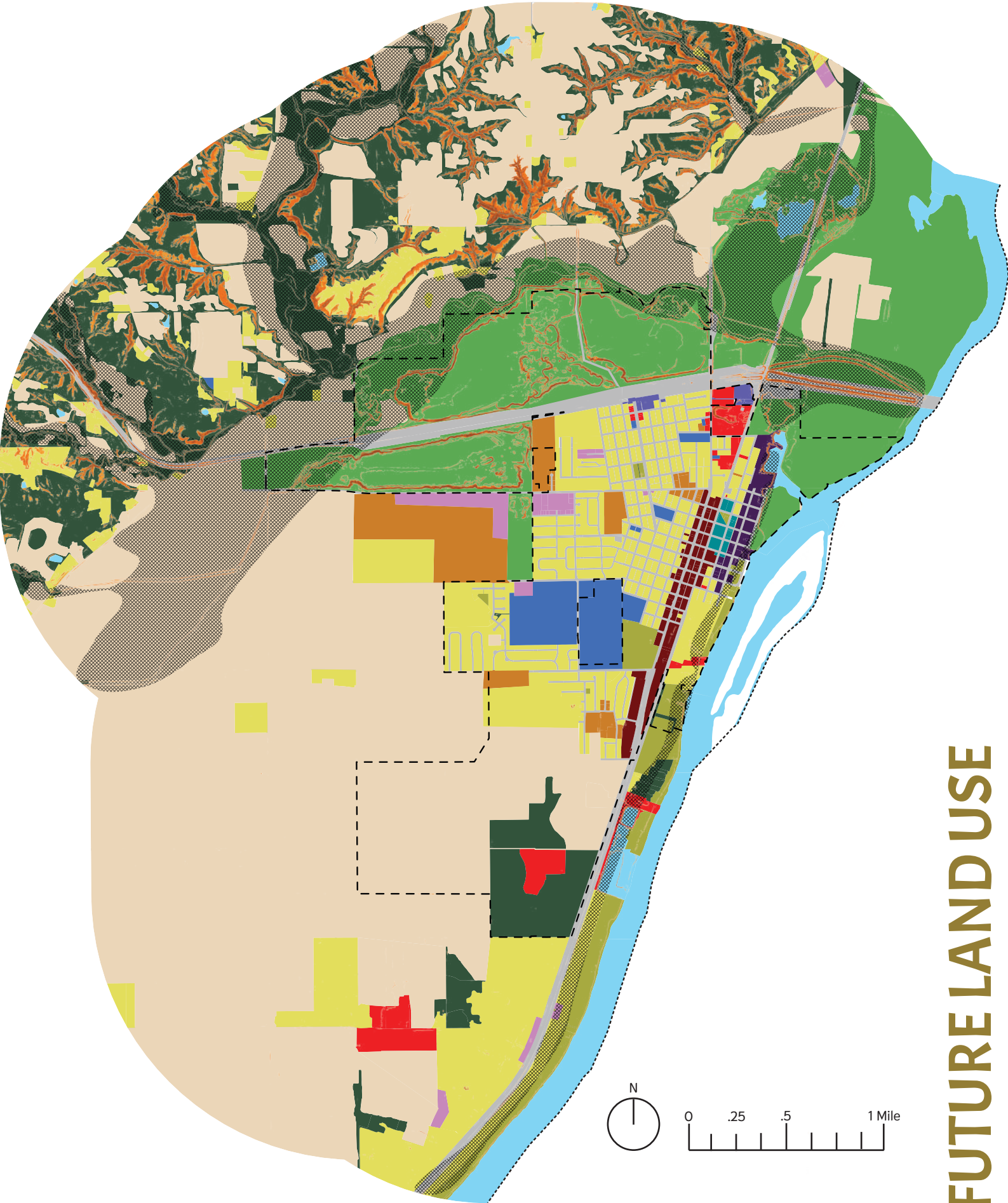
Legend

Peoria County Boundary [dashed line]

Chillicothe Municipal Boundary [thick dashed line]

Land Uses

AG Agricultural	[light tan]
CI Civic/Institutional	[blue]
HI Heavy Industrial	[dark blue]
HO Hillside Overlay (Moderately steep slope, 16°-20°)	[orange]
HO Hillside Overlay (Steep slope, 21°-30°)	[dark orange]
HO Hillside Overlay (Very steep slope, 31°-90°)	[brown]
LDR Low-Density Residential	[yellow]
MDR Medium-Density Residential	[dark yellow]
MU-H Mixed-Use Historic District	[teal]
MU-NC Mixed-Use Neighborhood Center	[purple]
MU-CLI Mixed-Use Commercial/Light Industrial	[red]
MU-R Riverfront Mixed-Use District	[dark purple]
MU-UC Mixed-Use Urban Corridor	[dark red]
OS Other Open Space	[dark green]
PP Public Parks + Refuges	[olive]
ROW Right-of-Way	[grey]
SPO Stream Protection Overlay	[cross-hatched]
SRCD Special Recreation and Conservation District	[green]
W Water	[light blue]



FUTURE LAND USE



V. Appendices

Appendix A:

References

- [1] Chillicothe Historical Society. 2025, <https://chillicothehistorical.org/>
- [2] B. Fislar. Chillicothe, IL. The Chillicothe Hometown Voice. 2025, <https://www.chillicothevoice.com/>
- [3] The ILGenWeb Project. Peoria County, Chillicothe Township. 2025, <https://peoria.illinoisgenweb.org/town-hist/chillicoth.html>
- [4] Genealogy Trails History Group: Chillicothe Township. 2025, <https://genealogytrails.com/ill/peoria/hx/chillicothetwp.html>
- [5] Illinois Department of Commerce. “Illinois Broadband Map.” 2025, <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9eaa0908b32142b89efec99ed430a590>
- ★ Demographic information provided by Esri (2024). Esri pulled data from the following sources: ACS (2018-2022).

Appendix B: Survey

1. Where do you live? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Bloomington-Normal | ☐ Peoria County |
| ☐ Chillicothe | ☐ Peoria Heights |
| ☐ Dunlap | ☐ Rome |
| ☐ East Peoria | ☐ South Rome |
| ☐ Hopewell | ☐ Sparland |
| ☐ Lacon | ☐ Tazewell County |
| ☐ Mossville | ☐ Woodford County |
| ☐ Pekin | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Peoria (City) | ☐ Other: _____ |

2. Where do you work? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ None | ☐ Peoria (City) |
| ☐ Bloomington-Normal | ☐ Peoria County |
| ☐ Chillicothe | ☐ Peoria Heights |
| ☐ Dunlap | ☐ Rome |
| ☐ East Peoria | ☐ South Rome |
| ☐ Hopewell | ☐ Sparland |
| ☐ Lacon | ☐ Tazewell County |
| ☐ Mossville | ☐ Woodford County |
| ☐ Pekin | ☐ Other: _____ |

3. Where do you attend school? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ None | ☐ Peoria (City) |
| ☐ Bloomington-Normal | ☐ Peoria County |
| ☐ Chillicothe | ☐ Peoria Heights |
| ☐ Dunlap | ☐ Rome |
| ☐ East Peoria | ☐ South Rome |
| ☐ Hopewell | ☐ Sparland |
| ☐ Lacon | ☐ Tazewell County |
| ☐ Mossville | ☐ Woodford County |
| ☐ Pekin | ☐ Other: _____ |

4. Do you work from home?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Hybrid
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Are there enough employment opportunities that pay a living wage and provide a comfortable living in Chillicothe?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Not applicable

6. Are there enough employment opportunities within a reasonable driving distance of Chillicothe?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Not applicable

7. How much of your purchasing or patronage takes place in Chillicothe? Select one box for each row.

	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Banking				
Entertainment				
Fitness center				
Gas				
Grocery				
Medical				
Parks				
Pharmacy				
Restaurants				
Retail				

8. How do you rate the quality of the following services in Chillicothe?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure
City communication					
Code enforcement					
Education					
Emergency medical services					
Fire protection					
Garbage collection					
Internet services					
Law enforcement					
Library					
Medical care					
Parks and recreational facilities					
Public pool					
Senior citizen services					
Sewage services					
Stormwater drainage					
Water utility services					

9. How do you receive information about the City? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Chillicothe Hometown Voice
- ☐ City message board on Fourth St
- ☐ City website
- ☐ Local TV news station
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Social media (Police FB page or “News from City Hall” FB group)
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Other: _____

10. How would you *like* to receive communication from the City? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Chillicothe Hometown Voice
- ☐ City message board on Fourth St
- ☐ City website
- ☐ Local TV news station
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Social media (Police FB page or “News from City Hall” FB group)
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Other: _____

11. Do you support the construction or improvement of the following facilities?

	Not at all	Not much	Moderate	Somewhat	Very much
2 nd Street					
4 th Street					
4 th Ward – North Chillicothe					
Boat Ramp					
City Hall (New)					
City Hall (Renovations)					
Movie Theater					
Plaza Park					
Police Department (New)					
Police Department (Renovations)					
Riverfront City Park / Stage					
Track Inn / Old Train Station					
Other: _____ _____					
Other: _____ _____					

12. Do you support the construction or improvement of the following transportation infrastructure?

	Not at all	Not much	Moderate	Somewhat	Very much
Bike lanes					
Bus routes and stops					
Crosswalks					
Public parking					
Parking					
Sidewalks					
Streets and roads					
Trains					
Viaduct					
Other: _____ _____					
Other: _____ _____					

13. Would you like to see more or less of the following types of development in Chillicothe?

	More	Keep at current levels	Less	Not sure
Residential				
Industrial				
Commercial				
Food and drink				
Recreational				
Green/open space				
Transportation				
Mixed-use (combination of residential and commercial)				

14. The current population of the City of Chillicothe is approximately 6,130 people. Would you like to see the population increase, decrease, or remain the same?

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Remain the same
- ☐ Decrease

15. In what direction would you like to see the City of Chillicothe grow? Circle all that apply.

North	West	South	No expansion
-------	------	-------	--------------

16. Do you support the development of the following types of housing for sale? Check all the housing types that you support.

- ☐ Single-family dwellings
 - ☐ 1-bedroom
 - ☐ 2-bedrooms
 - ☐ 3-bedrooms
 - ☐ 4-bedrooms
 - ☐ 5+bedrooms

☐ Duplexes

☐ Independent Senior Living

☐ Assisted Living

☐ I do not support any of these

17. Do you support the development of the following types of rental housing? Check all the housing types that you support.

- ☐ Single-family dwellings
 - ☐ 2-bedrooms
 - ☐ 3-bedrooms
 - ☐ 4-bedrooms
 - ☐ 5+bedrooms

☐ Accessory Dwelling Units

☐ Duplexes

☐ Apartments
 - ☐ Studio
 - ☐ 1-bedroom
 - ☐ 2-bedrooms
 - ☐ 3-bedrooms
 - ☐ 4-bedrooms
 - ☐ 5+ bedrooms

☐ Independent Senior Living

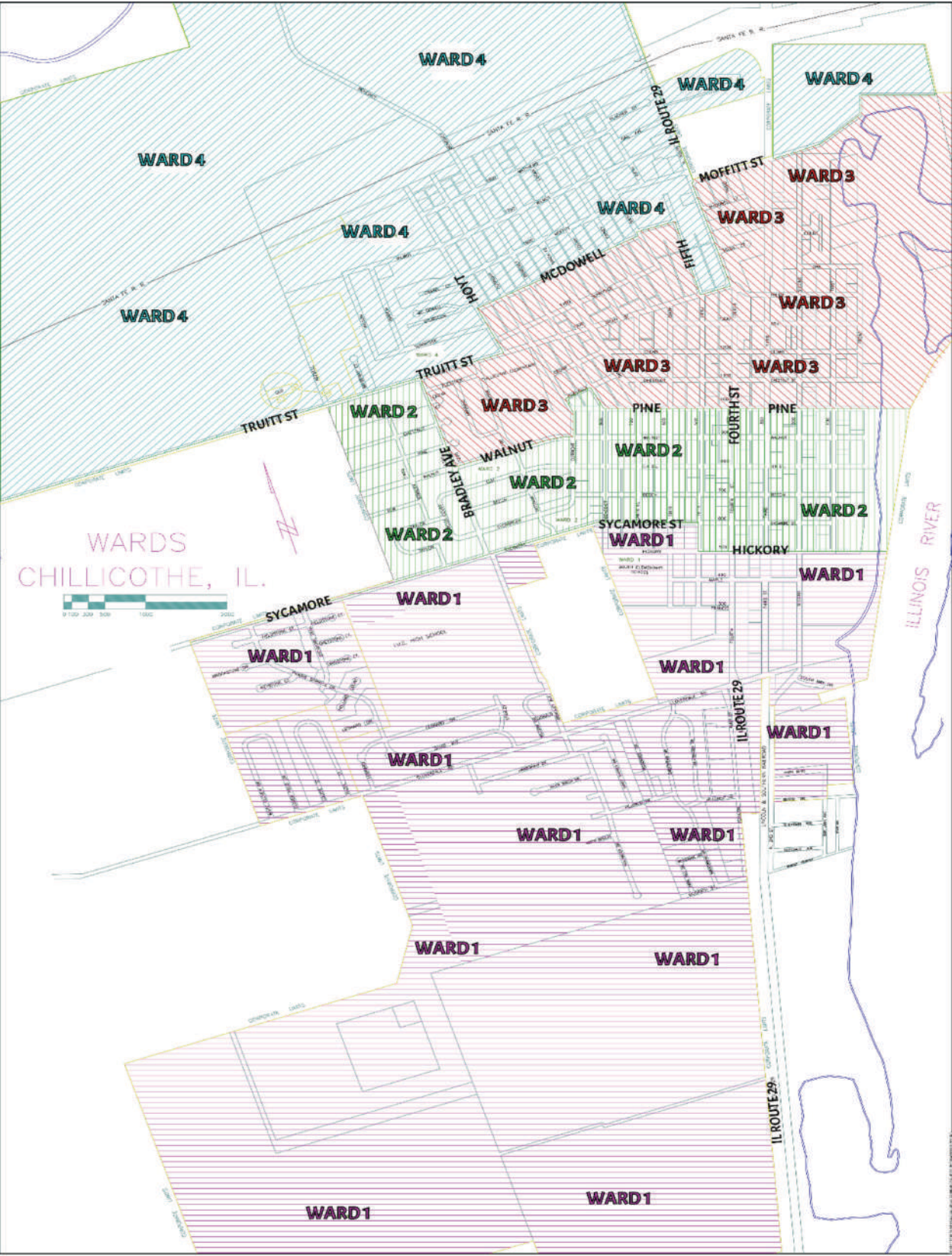
☐ Assisted Living

☐ Skilled Nursing Facility

18. How do you rate the availability of the housing supply in Chillicothe?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
Homes for sale					
Rentals					
Lots for new construction					
Affordable housing					
Independent Senior Living					
Assisted Living					
Skilled Nursing Facilities					

Map of Chillicothe’s Wards



19. Do you communicate with your alderperson? Circle one.

Yes	No
-----	----

20.If you answered yes to question 19, how responsive are your alderpeople? Circle one.

Not enough	Right amount	Somewhat	Very	Too responsive
------------	--------------	----------	------	----------------

21. What do you like about Chillicothe?

22. If any, what are the biggest issues that Chillicothe has?

23. What age group do you fall into?

☐ 0-9	☐ 35-44
☐ 10-14	☐ 45-54
☐ 15-17	☐ 55-64
☐ 18-24	☐ 65-74
☐ 25-34	☐ 75 and over

24. Do you belong to any of the following service organizations?

☐ Circle of Service	☐ Rotary Club
☐ Lion’s Club	☐ Other: _____
☐ Optimist Club	☐ Other: _____

25. Do you have any other comments to contribute to the comprehensive plan process?