CHAPTER 5.1: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR SENECA COUNTY

June 2020

SENECA
COUNTY

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The previous chapter (Chapter 4) outlines six integrated goals and related objectives that all partners participating in the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan agreed are either directly or indirectly important to each one's vision for the future. This chapter is customized to address the goals, objectives and related strategies that are directly applicable to Seneca County as a whole, with emphasis on villages and townships. The primary entities responsible for carrying out the strategies include the Seneca County Commissioners, Seneca Regional Planning Commission (SRPC), Seneca County Convention and Visitors Bureau/Chamber, Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership (TSEP) and village and township officials. This chapter includes maps and photographs to help illustrate the strategies, as well as a matrix that indicates the priorities and anticipated time frame for beginning the various strategies. Many of the plan's recommendations will require additional study and the development of more detailed action steps that go beyond the scope of this project. The vision directly applicable to Seneca County is:

Vision for Seneca County

To be an inclusive community that celebrates & brings to life both its rural & urban cultural heritage: fostering active lifestyles by improving access to existing natural resources for all county residents; & supporting a robust & innovative local economy that both integrates with & helps lead the regional economy.

This chapter focuses on the relevant strategies for the County to achieve the goals and objectives described in detail in Chapter 4. The numbering of Goals and Objectives is consistent with the numbering scheme in Chapter 4; therefore, wherever the Objectives are not numbered sequentially, it indicates that the missing objective is not applicable to Seneca County, village or township governments.

SENECA COUNTY GOALS

- Ensure we are prepared to and successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national and global economy, with an emphasis on jobs and tax revenue.

1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy

- Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living and socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

2. Attractive, Desirable, & Livable Places (Built Environment)

- Create/foster a strong sense of community & ensure social needs are met with equitable programs & access to a wide range of community and public facilities and services.

3. Quality Community Facilities and Services

- Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human and economic well-being, provide recreation and educational opportunities for locals and tourists, and significantly enhance the character of our community.

4. Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

- Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure and utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current and future residents and businesses.

5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility, & Public Utilities

- Enhance and strengthen our community character and brand to: establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit; to instill community pride; and attract new residents, businesses and visitors.

6. Strong Community Character and Image

SENECA COUNTY PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS

This chapter presents a number of strategies to advance Seneca County. Many of the strategies are place-based, and the places where the specific strategies are to be applied are presented in the Priority Improvements map on page 5.1:5. A similar map, Priority Conservation Areas, is found on page 5.1:19 and conceptually highlights areas in the county where conservation of natural resources is a priority.

Both maps are conceptual illustrations of the strategies highlighted in this chapter; the areas are not intended to be described with precise boundaries.

The Priority Improvements map illustrates where the County intends use its resources to guide future physical investment and change, as defined below and explained in more detail in this chapter

Preserve Prime Farmland

Preserve existing agricultural areas, identify ways to enhance and encourage local agriculture capacity and viability, including expanding value-added related accessory businesses and services.

Focused Growth in Fostoria and Tiffin

Continue to promote housing and business/industrial development in Fostoria and Tiffin, in line with existing and planned zoning, community facilities and infrastructure, and as further supported in Chapter 5.3 Tiffin, and Chapter 5.4 Fostoria.

Community Investments in Villages and Places

Retain the value and viability of smaller communities. Invest in villages and smaller unincorporated places in order to encourage development that maintains the existing pattern and character of the community, and to foster improvements to and investments in public and private buildings.

Downtowns Village Enhancements

Promote investments in smaller, typically historic downtowns through investments in commercial and mixed use developments that restore and repurpose existing buildings. Support local businesses, and entrepreneurial enterprises to strengthen the local economy.

River Enhancements

Continue to partner with Ohio EPA and other federal, state, and local partners on improving water quality in the Sandusky River and increased appreciation for the natural, cultural and economic benefits provided by a healthy river. Continue to promote greater recreational use of the river and obtain designation as a water trail.

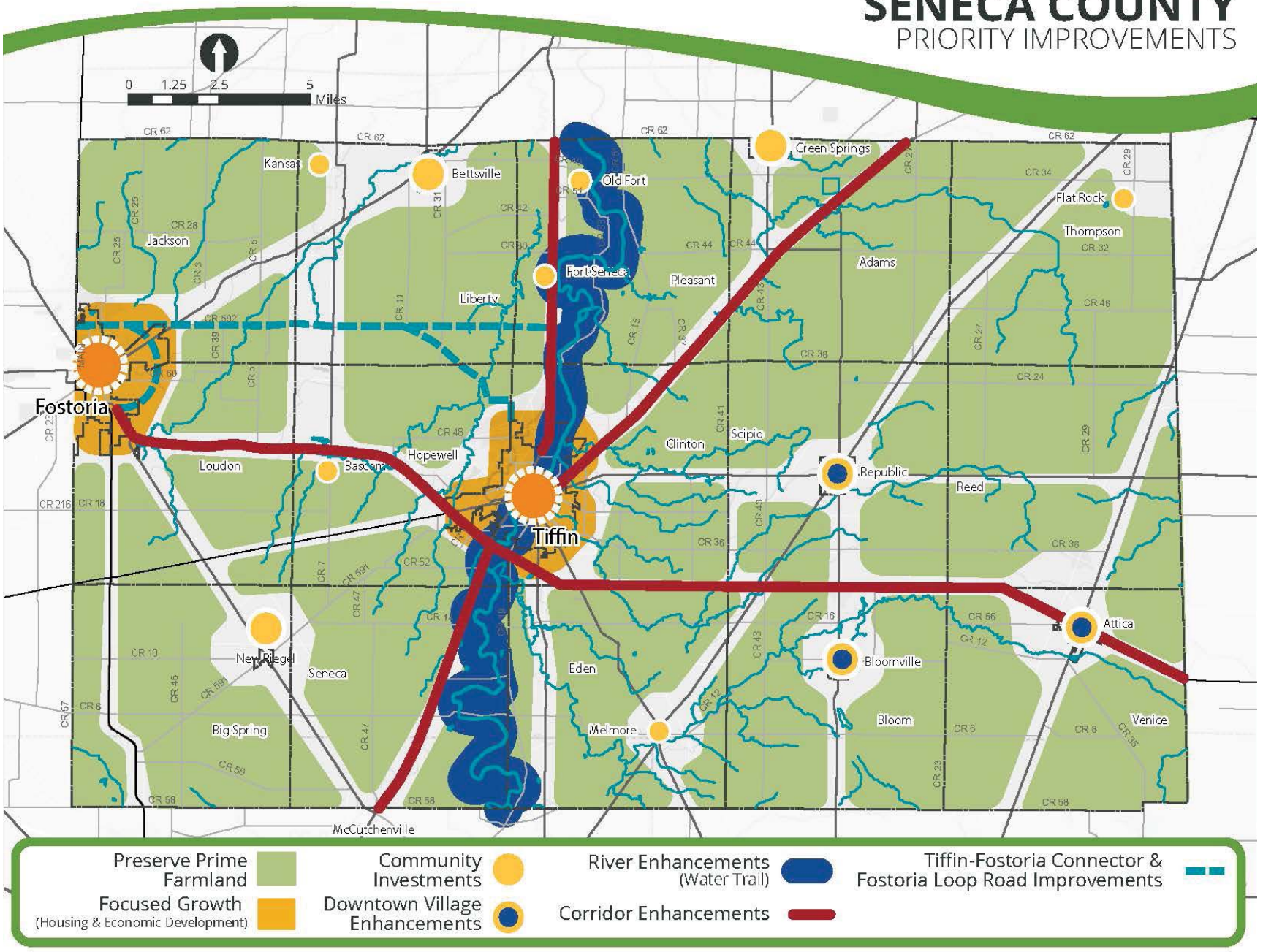
Corridor Enhancements

Strengthen the appearance of private development, public improvements and safety for all users along primary corridors to facilitate economic development and promote a positive impression of the county.

Tiffin-Fostoria Connector and Fostoria Loop Road Improvements

Support the continued implementation of the Tiffin-Fostoria Connector and Fostoria Loop Road improvements in order to enhance and promote continued economic development.

SENECA COUNTY
PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS



GOAL 1. PROSPEROUS & RESILIENT ECONOMY

Objective 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

1.1.1 Plans - Update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), first formulated in 2011, and continue to coordinate goals and objectives with the County's Comprehensive Plan. Identify the entities and organizations best capable of implementing the plan's action items.

1.1.2 Organizations - Ensure that entities and organizations assigned to oversee implementation of the plans have sufficient resources to do their work.

1.1.3 Ongoing Dialogue - Maintain and strengthen the dialogue and collaboration among elected officials and department heads with respect to development.

Objective 1.2: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 Workforce Plans - Continue to work with partners on current efforts to prepare workforce development strategic plans. Two new "plans" are currently being developed – one is through the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative and another is through the 4CG initiative (4CG represents the 4 County Group 4 Collaborative Growth), which includes the economic development and workforce development organizations in Huron, Ottawa, Sandusky and Seneca Counties. These entities began working together in 2013 to collectively address the region's workforce challenges.

1.2.2 County Collaboration - Continue to collaborate with other counties in ways that enhance and strengthen Seneca County's workforce.

1.2.3 Partnerships - Continue to facilitate engagement, collaboration, and partnerships between business, industry, education, and workforce and economic development. Link businesses with educators; focus on areas of specialization at Heidelberg and Tiffin Universities. Work toward seamless delivery of education. Refine and evaluate workforce development initiatives to ensure that they are responsive to real needs of business and labor; provide a feedback mechanism to evaluate effectiveness.

1.2.4 Marketing - Effectively market jobs, career opportunities, and employers to the local community and regionally.

1.2.5 Training and Assistance - Develop and/or strengthen educational and training programs, initiatives, and assets that increase the employability of the local workforce. This includes working to remove obstacles that make it difficult to keep and maintain a job, such as lack of transportation and childcare. Encourage increased transportation options and childcare program for the local labor force.

1.2.6 Professional Development - Continue to maintain and strengthen the research, benchmarking, networking, and professional development opportunities for professionals and organizations engaged in workforce development.

1.2.7 Attract Workers to Seneca County - Develop, strengthen, and maintain assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that attract and retain youth, retain residents and encourage in-migration of new residents.

1.2.8 Resources - Strategically allocate resources to maintain, strengthen and improve workforce development efforts. Increase resources as recommended in the current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

1.2.9 Remove Obstacles - Design and implement programs and needed support services such as transportation and childcare to remove obstacles for people who work in rural parts of the county (outside Tiffin and Fostoria), as identified in the current CEDS and other initiatives such as the Bus Transit Plan.

Objective 1.3 SUITABLE LOCATIONS

1.3.1 Sites and Buildings - Continue to identify suitable locations for future commercial and industrial development in rural parts of Seneca County, including suitable locations that may require zoning changes. Through planning, engagement, and expertise, identify and guide the development of the best existing and potential sites and facilities for industrial and commercial development. Identify and develop on an ongoing basis a sufficient inventory of potential and available commercial and industrial land, buildings and space to accommodate the current and future needs of existing and potential new business. This inventory should include information on available utilities and other key assets.

1.3.2 Capital Improvement Planning - Identify and plan for capital improvements needed to promote suitable economic development in rural Seneca County to ensure adequate infrastructure capacity to existing and new developments.

1.3.3 Infrastructure - Create and maintain an updated database inventory and condition assessment of existing infrastructure and utilities (including broadband access) and associated GIS maps in rural Seneca County. Make the information available, in real time, to Seneca County Commissioners, municipalities, TSEP and SRPC as well as current and potential businesses. Align the county's and municipalities' capital improvement plans and TSEP's strategic plans to ensure adequate infrastructure capacity to existing and new development. Coordinate with the County Engineer and municipal engineering. Pursue grants and other incentives to defray costs. Consider Public/Private Partnership (P3) arrangements where feasible. See also Goal 5. Mobility, Accessibility and Public Utilities for additional discussion on transportation and utility strategies.

1.3.4 Development Agreements - Ensure mutually acceptable annexation and development agreements are in place between municipalities and townships in order to promote and foster economic development. Review existing agreements and update as needed.

1.3.5 Redevelopment - Facilitate the revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas and obsolete sites and facilities in rural Seneca County through redevelopment, rehabilitation, and other available means.

1.3.6 Zoning - Review the existing township and village zoning regulations where applicable. Work with townships and villages to update as needed to reflect desires of each local community with respect to development. Proactively rezone locations for new business development in suitable locations identified in 1.3.1.

1.3.7 Market Priority Properties - Create a countywide map of priority development-ready properties that are available for development and market the sites and/or buildings. Maintain and make the information available online.

Objective 1.4 RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION

1.4.1 Business Retention & Expansion Programs - Continue to maintain, improve and strengthen comprehensive and effective formal business retention and expansion programs, including that of the Tiffin-Seneca Economic Partnership.

1.4.2 Incentives & Resources - Develop policies and related programs for incentives, assistance programs, and other resources for existing and new businesses. Assist businesses in adopting contemporary business practices, such as maximizing online resources such as websites and social media for marketing. Continue to promote incentive programs available through the State. An example of a potential (but difficult to implement) program is a Workforce Guarantee program, which provides technical and financial assistance directly to employers to train their workers to ensure they stay on the cutting edge of their industry.

1.4.3 Industry Groups - Continue to partner with existing, and expand as needed, industry councils or groups that provide peer-to-peer networking and that support the specific industry by identifying and addressing issues and concerns faced by that industry, especially those that prohibit growth, expansion and/or retention.

1.4.4 Targeted Industries - Develop and maintain a targeted industry sector retention, expansion, and attraction strategy.

1.4.5 Retail Strategy - Develop a countywide retail retention, expansion, and attraction strategy for rural villages, which complements and supports existing retail (e.g., "buy local" program, downtown business enhancement), and increases quality of life.

1.4.6 Marketing - Continue to effectively market the county's positive attributes, assets and competitive advantages regionally, statewide,

nationally and globally. Develop a strategy and market available industrial and commercial properties in rural Seneca County. Highlight the available incentives for each, including federal Opportunity and Foreign Trade Zone status, state Priority Investment Area designation, and local Enterprise Zone and Community Reinvestment Area availability. See also marketing strategies included in Goal 6.

1.4.7 Regulation - Create a strategic and business-friendly regulatory environment. Review existing regulations, procedures, and customer experience to improve the regulatory environment, make it more business-friendly, and eliminate any unnecessary obstacles.

1.4.8 Technology - Continue to work with local businesses, both start-up and existing, so they are better equipped to stay current on the ways technology can be used to enhance business practices.

Objective 1.5 AGRIBUSINESS

1.5.1 Agribusiness Strategic Plan - Develop an agriculture and food industry cluster strategic plan that identifies ways to enhance and encourage local agricultural capacity and viability, including expanding value-added related accessory businesses and services. Assign a group or organization to oversee its implementation, and make it a priority in public policy.

1.5.2 Local Food - Identify, maintain, strengthen and develop assets, programs, and initiatives that encourage and promote locally grown food. For example, work with local communities and producers to expand existing or create new farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs that allow consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from the producer.

1.5.3 Partnerships - Continue to maintain and strengthen relationships, collaboration, and partnerships with local, regional, state, and national partners engaged in the agriculture and food industry cluster.

1.5.4 Adaptation - Continue to identify, develop and implement assets, programs, resources, and initiatives to help farmers of all sizes improve resilience and effectively adapt to changes in the environment, including climate change and water quality concerns, as well as ways to take advantage of new technology including utilizing smart-technology that assists in tracking and monitoring ag practices.

1.5.5 Diversification - Work with farmers to diversify ag production including new crop opportunities such as hemp production, and to expand into ag-related income generating activities, such as agritourism activities.

1.5.6 Recruitment - Assist in recruiting young and beginning farmers and their families; work with the Farm Bureau, OSU Extension and other entities.

Objective 1.6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1.6.1 Entrepreneurship Plan - Develop an entrepreneurship strategic plan to foster entrepreneurs in rural Seneca County, as well as identify and/or develop a group or organization to oversee its implementation.

1.6.2 Entrepreneurship Facilities - Explore, evaluate and develop appropriate and successful entrepreneurship facilities in village centers, as recommended in the current CEDS, together with onsite support services, consulting, education, and financial support to new, developing, and experienced entrepreneurs and businesses.

1.6.3 Resources - Identify, effectively leverage and develop more resources for entrepreneurs, start-up, and tech-based businesses that choose to locate in rural Seneca County. This includes resources available through the partnership with the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership and the Entrepreneurial Communities initiative.

1.6.4 Capital - Identify and develop more seed, early-, and late-stage capital for entrepreneurs and newer businesses in Seneca County (e.g., local investment groups, angel capital, seed and venture capital, government programs).

1.6.5 Entrepreneurship Marketplace - Facilitate the identification and vetting of existing and new potential entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurs and then connect entrepreneurs with those opportunities and capital (i.e., entrepreneurship marketplace.)

1.6.6 Culture - Develop, maintain, and strengthen assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that foster and strengthen a local culture of entrepreneurship. Encourage participation by community members in entrepreneurial conferences and events like Rural Rise that address the specific challenges and opportunities of rural entrepreneurship.

1.6.7 Collaboration - Continue to strengthen collaboration with local, regional and state institutions of education, intellectual property-creating and innovative local companies, entrepreneurs and technology-based companies in order to help create new companies, attract companies, and/or help existing companies grow and increase their competitiveness. Adopt successful programs like the Midland CEO program that encourage and develop partnerships between industry and rural Seneca County high schools to develop entrepreneurs and new businesses. The Midland CEO program is a great example of what successful collaboration can do and should continue to be pursued.

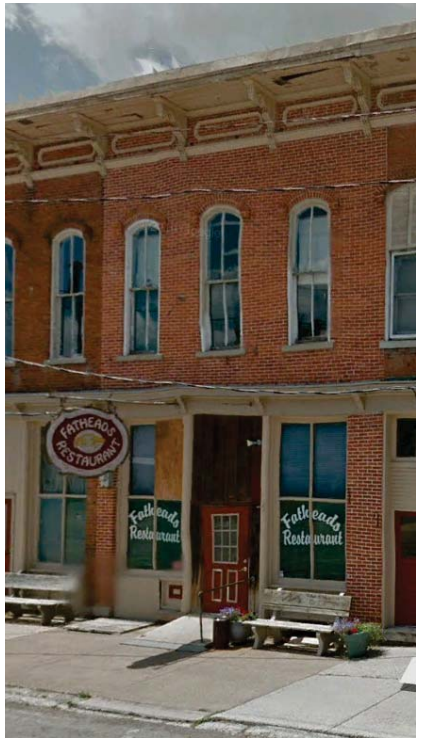
Objective 1.7 VILLAGE DOWNTOWNS

1.7.1 Plans - Develop and update strategic and development plans for village downtowns.

1.7.2 Systematic Approach - Adopt and implement a comprehensive, holistic, incremental, and proven approach to downtown revitalization, such as Main Street, that addresses the appearance, promotion, business enhancement, and organizational resources of the downtown.

1.7.3 Downtown Resources - Continue to maintain and strengthen the resources available to organizations working on downtown revitalization throughout rural Seneca County.

1.7.4 Downtown Incentives - Develop and implement appropriate incentive programs to foster downtown revitalization.



GOAL 2. ATTRACTIVE, DESIRABLE & LIVABLE PLACES (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

Objective 2.1 HOUSING OPTIONS

2.1.1 Residential Research - Conduct housing research and studies, identifying housing conditions and developing strategies to preserve existing housing resources and develop new ones.

2.1.2 Housing Development - Develop and maintain programs that facilitate the development of a sufficient quantity and desired variety of housing types, designs, and price to meet the diverse needs of existing and potential rural Seneca County residents in the most appropriate places.

2.1.3 Housing Resources - Continue to utilize existing programs and develop new programs and resources to help maintain and improve the housing stock and assist low-moderate income households attain their desired housing, including home ownership.

2.1.4 Building Reuse - Support the innovative reuse of vacant or under-utilized buildings for housing alternatives.

2.1.5 Creative and Context-Sensitive Design - Continue to encourage sensitivity to environmental considerations and natural conditions in the development of new housing and rehabilitation of existing housing. Develop regulations that allow for/encourage creative design in the development of residential areas and structures.

2.1.6 Fair Housing - Continue to educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities.

2.1.7 Downtown Upper-Floor - In villages with appropriate two- and three-story commercial buildings, encourage building owners to consider creating upper-floor residential units when renovating downtown commercial structures.

Objective 2.2 DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

2.2.1 Sidewalks & Lighting - Identify, improve existing, and develop more sidewalks, street lighting, and other assets to create more walkable neighborhoods in compact areas of villages, where the concentration of homes warrants such improvements.

2.2.2 Public Safety - Continue to maintain, strengthen, and develop programs, initiatives, and organizations that contribute to public safety and the safety of neighborhoods.

2.2.3 Neighborhood Appearance - Develop village branding, initiatives, programs, and organizations that enhance the appearance of neighborhoods in rural Seneca County (e.g., American in Bloom).

Objective 2.3 VALUED CULTURE & PLACES

2.3.1 Downtowns - Revitalize and activate village downtowns and other places into lively gathering places, with flexible multi-use spaces and event programming. Maintain and improve the overall appearance of downtowns.

2.3.2 Gathering Places - Maintain and increase village community meeting places, including outdoor gathering spaces to provide residents comfortable places to socialize and encourage visitors to linger.

2.3.3 Historic Preservation Organizational Structure - Create a county-wide organizational structure to spearhead a collaborative effort to strategically plan for and develop goals and strategies to preserve important historic assets. This organizational structure is intended to bring together all of the existing historical societies and similar entities in order to mobilize around coordinated activities.

2.3.4 Historic Preservation Resources - Create an inventory of notable historic structures and places with unique historic worth. Utilize existing databases such as the Ohio Historic Inventory database (with more than 2,100 historic, cultural and archaeological sites in the county) and the

Ohio Historic Family Farms program database (with 38 certified century farms in Seneca County). Develop resources to encourage their long-term preservation and economic well-being, informing property owners of various programs available for historic buildings, structures and places.

Objective 2.4 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

2.4.1 Building Code & Permits - Enforce a system of standard building codes and permits to ensure the structural safety and functional integrity of all buildings. Consider establishing a County Building Department to be responsible for issuing building permits. Adequately support the education of the existing process for standard building codes and permits.

2.4.2 Workshops - Create a strategy for educating residents and property owners about the various aspects of property maintenance. Identify the key topics to address and the delivery system for conduct educational workshops to provide opportunities for homeowners to learn techniques for long-term maintenance.

2.4.3 Property Maintenance Code - Continue to enforce property maintenance codes in rural Seneca County where they exist. Encourage the creation of local property maintenance code in rural Seneca County in locations where needed but do not currently exist.

2.4.4 Property Clearinghouse - Create a clearinghouse for vacant lots and blighted structures countywide. Work with the Seneca County Land Bank on maintaining once established.

2.4.5 Blight Abatement - Continue to enforce countywide blight abatement guidelines, in partnership with the Seneca County Land Bank, and work with the Seneca County Land Bank on the demolition of vacant houses and other vacant structures.

Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

2.5.1 Compact/Infill Development - Continue to promote new compact development on infill lots and adjacent to existing built up areas in order to reduce the need to expand development into important natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas, minimize the encroachment of residential development and expansion of water and sewer utilities into adjacent rural areas. Implement zoning that encourages development of vacant and underutilized properties, and brownfield sites.

2.5.2 Zoning Administration - Update village and township zoning regulations and continue to enforce local zoning where it currently exists. Train local boards and commissions on administration of local regulations. Review existing regulations to assess success relative to protecting agricultural lands, critical environmental areas, and valuable natural areas and promoting suitable/sustainable development.

2.5.3 Village Promotion - Promote balanced development in the villages, ensuring the preservation of amenities and quality of life that make rural living desirable, while also allowing for appropriate commercial and industrial development that complements each area as identified by each community.

2.5.4 Farmland Preservation - Continue to conserve existing agricultural land and limit development in agricultural areas. Develop zoning and subdivision regulations that reduce incentives to develop scattered frontage lots along rural roads.

2.5.5 Open Space Preservation - Develop zoning regulations that encourage the preservation of open space and limit development on and near critical natural areas. See also Goal 4 for Natural Resource Preservation and Conservation strategies.

2.5.6 County Subdivision Regulations - Review and update the County Subdivision Regulations as needed to ensure that the subdivision regulations advance and are in sync with local township zoning regulations.

GOAL 3. QUALITY COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Objective 3.1 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

3.1.1 Special Interest Groups - Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs, initiatives, and assets focused on addressing and serving the interests and needs of particular groups that reflect particular segments of our diverse population (e.g., young professionals, international students, religious groups, 4H, etc.)

3.1.2 Connection & Interaction - Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs and initiatives and assets that encourage interaction and foster connection between representatives of different groups and/or diverse individuals (e.g., organizations that pair young and old residents and initiatives to encourage more volunteer efforts from all students to help elderly residents).

3.1.3 Events - Create, strengthen and support events that support, foster, and celebrate diversity, inclusivity, and the uniqueness of individuals in the community.

3.1.4 Education & Training - Continue to support programs and initiatives that educate, train, communicate about, and promote diversity and inclusivity.

Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

3.2.1 Graduation Rates - Continue to support local schools in their efforts to increase the quality and capacity of public and private PreK-12 educational facilities, celebrate teaching excellence and increase the percentage of high school students graduating with college credit and/or an industry credential.

3.2.2 Skilled Trades - Advocate for increased technical and vocational study programs.

3.2.3 Libraries - Continue to support community-wide programs via the public libraries.

3.2.4 Improved Access - Continue to provide as well as improve greater access to programs to assist children from low-to-moderate income households.

3.2.5 Higher Education - Strengthen and support physical, economic and social connections to Tiffin University, Heidelberg University, and nearby Terra State Community College.

Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING

3.3.1 Village Parks - Develop strategies and programs to enable village governments to maintain and improve village parks and recreation facilities, recognizing their importance in attracting and retaining residents. Evaluate current park amenities to determine need for improvements.

3.3.2 Trails - Develop a network of trails throughout the county. See the recently completed Active Transportation Plan for detailed recommendations for locations.

3.3.3 Local History - Where applicable, assist villages in developing and telling their local "story" through interpretive signage, public art, or other media in public spaces. Conduct scavenger hunts and other events to encourage residents and visitors to have fun, be active, and learn about their community.

3.3.4 Cooperative Programs - Build strong intra-park coordination between villages and the County Park District to provide diverse programs and offer a broad range of facilities and experiences to rural Seneca County residents.

Objective 3.4 HEALTH & WELLNESS

3.4.1 Health Care - Increase countywide health and healthcare specialists/services, including mental health.

3.4.2 Assisted Living - Develop a strategy for improving/achieving adequate assisted living housing and home care.

3.4.3 Safe Communities - Continue to promote safe communities and increase safety in rural Seneca County utilizing neighborhood block watch, protective services, emergency services, etc.

3.4.4 Existing EMS - Continue to provide the existing EMS and ambulance service. Support our current EMS structure and explore ways to become more effective.

3.4.5 Countywide EMS - Investigate and work towards providing a full-time countywide paid EMS and ambulance service.

3.4.6 Gathering Places - Continue to support community gathering places in rural Seneca County to foster social interaction and reduce social isolation.

3.4.7 Police & Fire - Continue to maintain local police and fire departments in rural Seneca County, assist with acquiring updated equipment, and when necessary, explore potential for new stations.

3.4.8 Cooperative Services - Continue to streamline overlaps of services. Explore cooperative agreements with ambulance districts, sheriff's office, fire departments.

3.4.9 Technology - Continue to support the use of technology and increase use of shared services, for example, coordinate radio systems throughout the County.

3.4.10 Behavioral and Mental Health - Continue to support efforts by the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties, local emergency responders, healthcare workers, and hospitals to develop effective systems to respond to people experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis (suicide or overdose), provide effective education, and establish suitable facilities.

3.4.11 Access - Work on increasing residents' access, both financial and transportation, to health and wellness facilities.

Objective 3.5 FOOD SECURITY & ACCESS

3.5.1 Farm Markets - Continue to promote and increase farm to table and farmer's market type endeavors.

3.5.2 Local Food - Encourage institutions, including schools, hospitals, jails, etc. to use local food and to improve the nutritional quality of food served.

3.5.3 Food Access - Increase access to fresh food and promote the consumption of high quality food.

GOAL 4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – VALUED NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION

4.1.1 Priority Conservation Areas - Identify and agree on areas of the county where critical natural resources exist (such as floodplain and riparian areas) and have the highest priority for conservation efforts. See map on the next page for a map of environmental conditions that either are constraints to development or are environmentally sensitive and therefore worthy of conservation and even preservation/acquisition.

4.1.2 Cleanups - Continue to engage in river cleanups and invasive species removal campaigns.

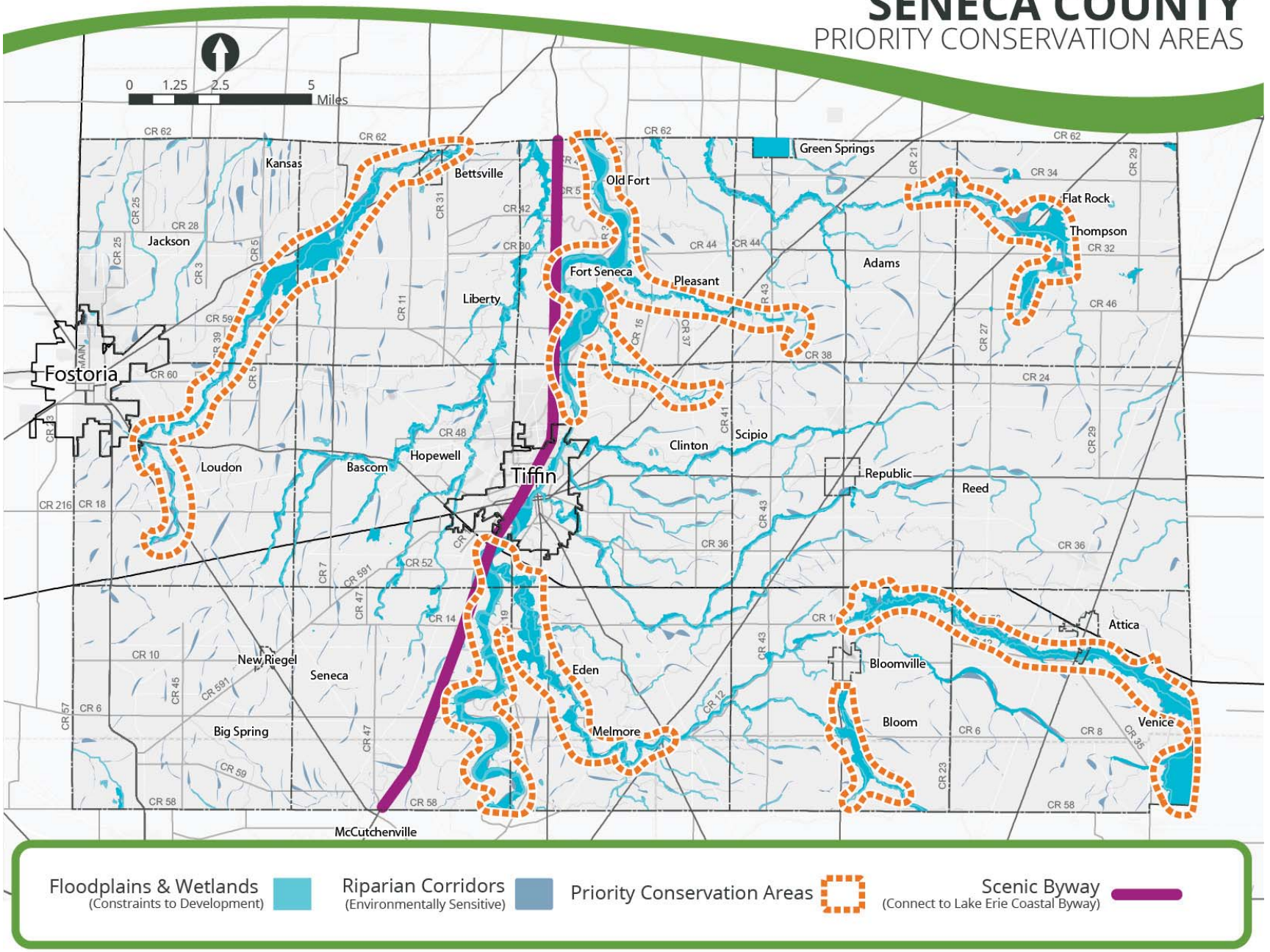
4.1.3 Site Design - Encourage site design that protects the natural terrain and groundwater, preserves or restores significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporates native vegetation into landscape plans.

4.1.4 Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) - Within rural areas that are not serviced by sanitary sewage disposal facilities, continue to evaluate proposed lots for both primary and back-up on-lot sewage disposal systems. Develop a plan to assist homeowners with failing septic systems to either get connected to sanitary sewer lines or to replace their existing system.

4.1.5 Open Space Subdivision Design - Incorporate conservation development into local zoning codes for the villages and townships in the county that have adopted zoning. Consider providing incentives for making conservation development the preferred method of residential development, giving riparian corridors, woodlands, and wetlands priority as the required opens space set aside.

4.1.6 Acquisition - Prioritize riparian corridors, woodlands, wetlands for acquisition using programs such as Clean Ohio, linking greenways to provide corridors of open space, rather that isolated pockets.

SENECA COUNTY
PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS



4.1.7 Easements - Work with appropriate private land trusts and other organizations engaged in acquiring environmentally sensitive lands and/or protective easements.

4.1.8 Tree Preservation/Restoration - Continue and increase efforts to plant and protect trees to maintain current and increase future canopy coverage.

4.1.9 Mining - Continue to balance the interest of companies or individuals wanting to extract minerals from the land with those of the surface owner and adjoining property owners so as to assure maximum benefits to all county residents.

4.1.10 Mitigation - Continue to mitigate erosion and habitat loss. Increase efforts in select areas.

Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE

4.2.1 Ecotourism - Utilize natural resources for tourism.

4.2.2 Hunting - Increase hunting opportunities as well as signage and safety of public hunting.

4.2.3 Trees - Increase participation with local shade tree commissions where they exist and encourage the creation of local shade tree commissions in communities where they don't currently exist.

4.2.4 Parks - Work with the County Park District and local villages to ensure a suitable amount of and access to community parks and park facilities.

4.2.5 Water Trails - Continue to collaborate on designating the Sandusky River as a State Water Trail, creating a water trail partnership, securing

assistance from ODNR Division of Watercraft, and inventorying existing access and hazard points as well as natural, cultural, and historic features and points of interest.

Objective 4.3 CLEAN AIR & WATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

4.3.1 Low-Impact Development - Develop appropriate materials to educate and promote low-impact development practices and other best practices that help to preserve and enhance our sensitive natural areas and important natural resources.

4.3.2 Stormwater Management - Adopt effective stormwater management regulations. Encourage the use of modern technology to reduce storm water runoff and pollutants, both urban and rural, from entering into bodies of water and promote groundwater recharge. Establish mandatory setbacks from riparian wetlands and floodplains and watercourses, in both local zoning regulations as well as the Seneca County Subdivision Regulations.

4.3.3 Wellhead Protection - Work with the Health Department to develop a Wellhead Protection Plan and Overlay Zone to protect public water supplies.

4.3.4 Prioritization - Map areas of the county that meet the criteria of a "Priority Nutrient Reduction Area".

4.3.5 Environmental Programs - Continue to encourage and promote public programs that incentivize or share in the cost of implementing environmental best management practices. Examples of existing programs include Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GRLI) and Section 319(h) grants.

4.5.6 Failing Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) - Continue to eliminate failing HSTS. Identify priority areas with failing septic systems based on ecological impact and develop a strategic plan to address these hot spots. Elements of the plan could include: establishing a field testing policy for on-lot sewage system permitting; undertaking an educational campaign to reduce the incidence of malfunctioning on-lot sewers; and establishing a mandatory pump-out schedule for septic systems by licensed haulers at least once every 3 years. Continue to require a back-up on-lot sewage disposal system for all uses relying upon such systems and establish standards and criteria that consider the cumulative impacts of on-site septic systems upon surface and groundwater quality.

Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE

4.4.1 Watershed - Continue to collaborate with Ohio EPA and other federal, state and local partners on planning for the watershed.

4.4.2 Combined Sewer Separation (CSOs) - Identify and reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to Sandusky River. Work with property owners and local communities to prioritize the locations where CSOs exist.

4.4.3 NPS-IS - Work with Sandusky River watershed organizations to develop and implement a Non-Point Source Pollution Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS) to reduce sediment and pollutant movement into the Sandusky River. Prepare an Urban Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Strategy specifically for use within urbanized areas. An up-to-date

strategy/plan is an eligibility requirement for some funding sources designed to help reduce and/or eliminate pollutants in the River and watershed, such as Section 319(h) funds.

4.4.4 Water Quality Attainment - Continue to work towards full Ohio EPA water quality attainment status.

Objective 4.5 GREEN ENERGY

4.5.1 Proper Placement - Encourage townships and villages to adopt appropriate zoning regulations to permit and properly locate small-scale renewable energy systems.

4.5.2 Solar - Encourage electric companies to give easy access to solar. Including residential, solar generation and discontinue demand-metering charge.

4.5.3 Evaluation - Carefully evaluate all proposed energy projects to determine their potential benefits and consequences.

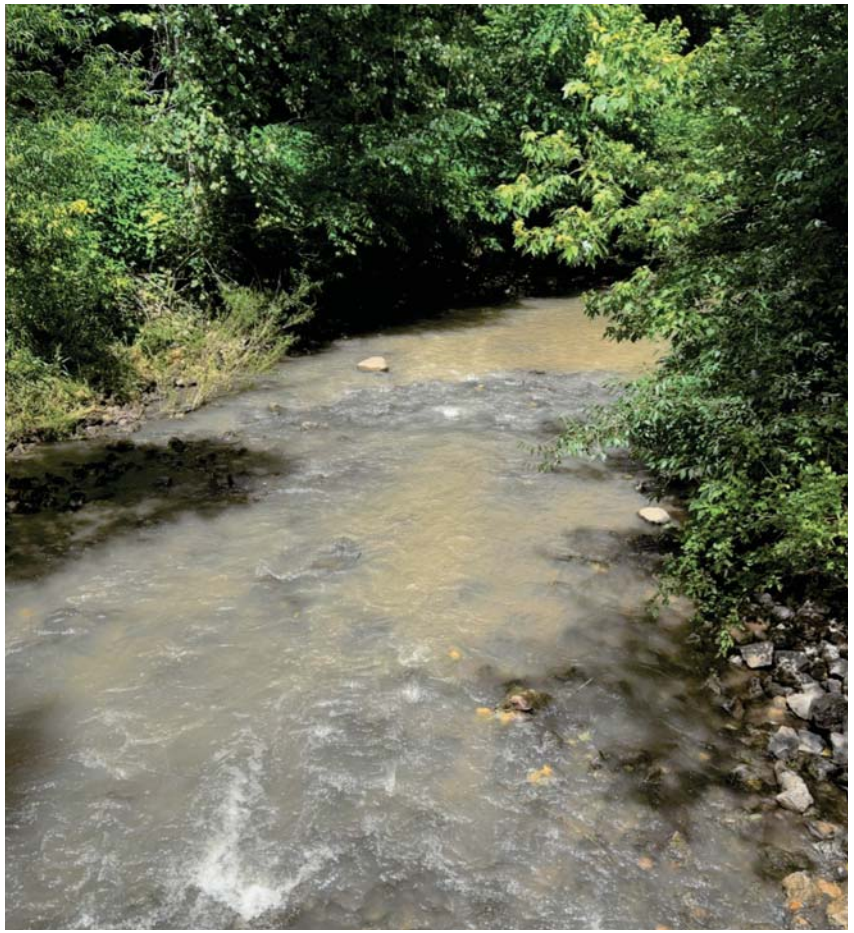
Objective 4.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.6.1 Landfills - Continue to ensure adequate landfill space and properly control and regulate.

4.6.2 Recycling - Continue to explore and encourage recycling with an emphasis on waste reduction, reuse and reduce.

4.6.3 Solid Waste - Continue to provide effective and efficient solid waste services and removal.

4.6.4 Source Reduction - Adopt standards that eliminate the initial production of wastes and pollutants at the source.



GOAL 5. ENHANCE MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY & PUBLIC UTILITIES

Objective 5.1 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

5.1.1 Repairs - Repair bridges, overpasses, roads, and sidewalks. Keep roads and utilities in good repair. Procure more funds for roads and bridges.

5.1.2 Farm Equipment - Identify and adopt preferred roadway design standards known to better accommodate farm equipment on township roads. For example, studies show that wider lane and shoulder width make it easier for drivers of passenger vehicles to maneuver around slow-moving farm equipment.

5.1.3 Thoroughfares - Work with villages leaders to create attractive thoroughfares through the center of the villages.

5.1.4 Signage - Improve signage and create a wayfinding system. Incorporate local branding into the wayfinding system.

Objective 5.2 ROADWAY NETWORK

5.2.1 Transportation System - Improve and maintain transportation system in order to address present and future traffic challenges.

5.2.2 Tiffin-Fostoria Industrial Connector – Continue to prioritize and research funding options for this $7 million project designed to create a meaningful connection between Tiffin's and Fostoria's industrial sectors.

5.2.3 Access Management - Develop access management techniques to limit points of ingress/egress, and maintain the level of service on principle and minor arterials. Adopt county level access management regulations.

5.2.4 Transportation Networks - Continue to support public transportation networks (Seneca Crawford Area Transportation, Seneca County Commission on Aging, Seneca County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Seneca County Veterans Services, Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services, and Flat Rock Homes, Inc.). Support other multi-modal transportation alternatives (biking, walking paths, etc.) to link population centers, areas with employment opportunities, and other destinations that are economically feasible.

5.2.5 Collaboration - Continue to collaborate with federal, state and local planning agencies and transportation departments to enhance transportation networks in the region. Participate in regional transportation summits and planning workshops to ensure county needs are included and prioritized on regional plans.

5.2.6 Congestion - Implement congestion management techniques at key county highway intersections through redesign, additional traffic lanes, and improved signalization.

5.2.7 Walkability - Encourage the use of safe and "walkable" streetscape design and signage standards, especially within villages and rural communities intersected by state routes.

Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

5.3.1 Walkability - Develop infrastructure that encourages people to commute to work and school on bike or on foot.

5.3.2 Bike Lanes - Create more bike lanes and "sharrows" along specific roadways, utilizing the recommendations from the recently completed Seneca County Active Transportation Plan.

5.3.3 Public Transit - Enhance public transit and mobility, and identify and procure sources of funding.

Objective 5.4 AIR & RAIL NETWORKS

5.4.1 Promote Air & Rail - Promote alternate means of transportation such as aviation and rail.

5.4.2 Highways - Reconnect rail to major highways.

5.4.3 Airport - Continue to use/promote the airport as an economic opportunity.

Objective 5.5 SMART COMMUNITIES

5.5.1 Broadband – Provide high-speed internet access to all rural areas. Work with organizations like "Connect Ohio" to improve access to areas lacking acceptable Download/Upload speeds. See the Broadband Internet Availability Map on the next page for areas of the county that currently do not have adequate internet access.

5.5.2 Telecommunications - Promote the proper placement and provision of telecommunication services.

5.5.3 Electric Charging Stations - Encourage the installation of electric car charging facilities at strategic locations throughout the county.

Objective 5.6 WATER & WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

5.6.1 Distribution & Collection - Establish acceptable water distribution/rates and wastewater collection systems in rural Seneca County.

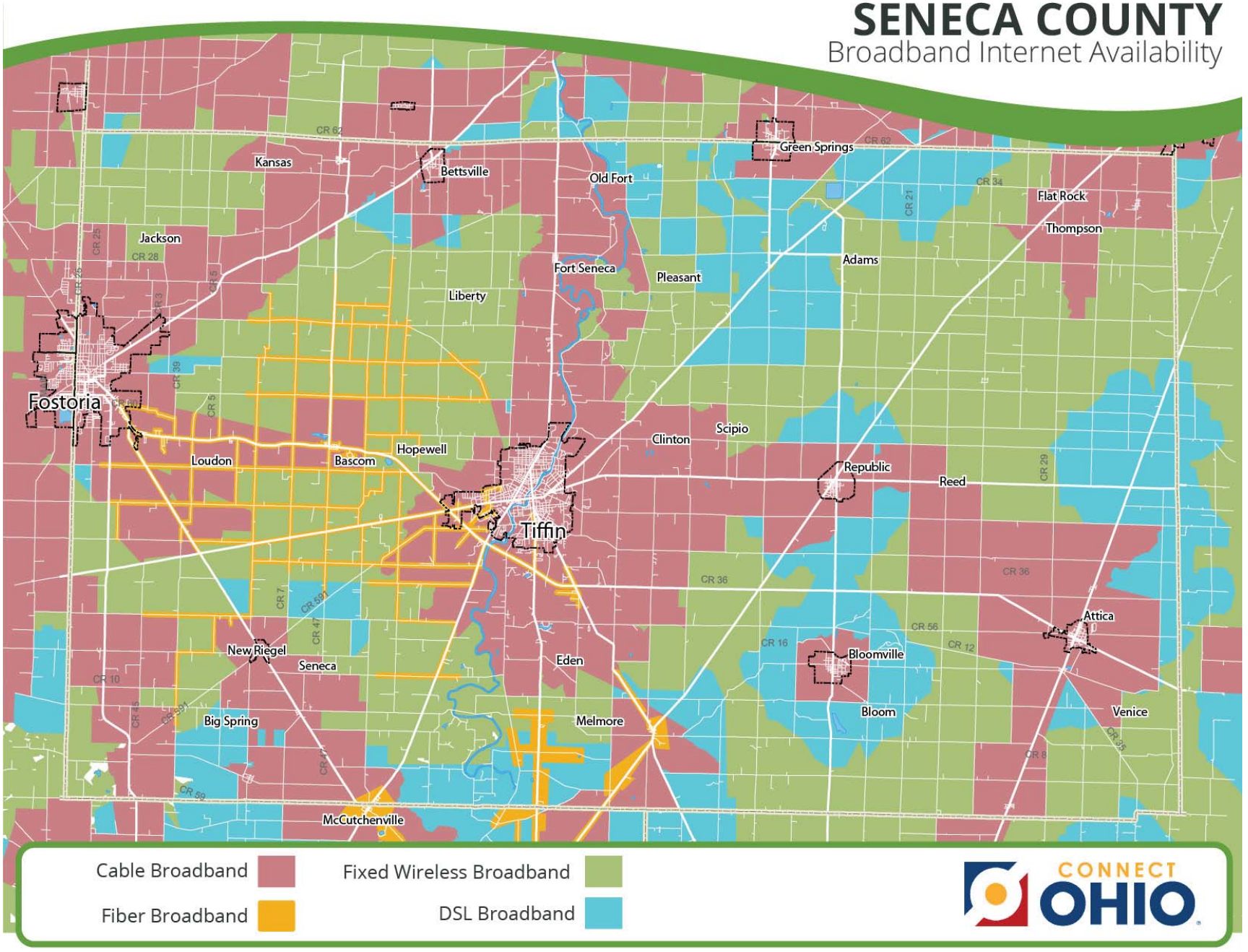
5.6.2 Extend Utilities - Strategically extend water and sewer utilities, in conjunction with planning and zoning controls, to ensure projected growth occurs in an orderly manner, i.e., growth occurring outward from existing villages and population centers.

5.6.3 Special Extensions - Pursue the feasibility of providing water of adequate quality and capacity to special areas with documented health and human safety issues.

5.6.4 Home Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) - Establish standards and criteria for consideration of cumulative impacts of on-site septic systems on surface and groundwater quality.

5.6.5 Growth Management - Develop strategies for future infrastructure in strategic/targeted locations.

SENECA COUNTY
Broadband Internet Availability



GOAL 6. STRONG COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE

Objective 6.1 CELEBRATE SENECA COUNTY

6.1.1 Inventory - Continue to identify and develop an inventory of the reasons why the County and local communities are a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business (brand reasons).

6.1.2 Documentation - Document, process and package content of the brand reasons in text, pictures, sound recording, and video. Create a central information bureau.

6.1.3 Celebration - Celebrate the brand reasons using a variety of means, including events, awards, and public relations.

6.1.4 Volunteerism - Develop volunteerism.

Objective 6.2 BRANDING & PROMOTION

6.2.1 Media Relations - Market and communicate the community brand through media relations. Encourage area businesses to participate in the distribution of marketing materials.

6.2.2 Multi-Media Materials - Develop a wide range of marketing materials, utilizing as many different platforms and methods as possible in order to reach the widest audience. Market and communicate the community brand through: social media, print publications, digital publications, websites, video, audio and podcasting.

6.2.3 Advertising - Market and communicate the community brand through advertising.

6.2.4 Marketing Campaigns - Work with Destination Seneca County to develop a coordinated and comprehensive marketing campaign.

6.2.5 Branding - Continue to develop and implement the Seneca County branding effort to enhance the reputation and experience of the county and its rural areas as a great place to live, work, and operate a business.

6.2.6 Signage - Work with village and township officials to develop a comprehensive community signage package that includes the four types of wayfinding signs: identification, directional, informational, and regulatory. Utilize state and federal guidelines when designing the system, ensuring eligibility for state and federal funding sources.

6.2.7 Public Art - Incorporate public art along trail networks to tell the story of the region.

6.2.8 Scenic Byway Designation - Create a scenic byway plan and designate qualifying routes, e.g. SR 53, as scenic byways. The Scenic Byway designation helps stimulate the tourism economy because the program recognizes, promotes and enhances scenic byways in Ohio. Designation also helps cultivate a community's image and brand, which are vital aspects of tourism promotion, and preserves historic and community character and a sense of pride. Designating SR 53 as a scenic byway in Seneca County includes the potential to connect to the existing Lake Erie Coastal Byway to the north and the existing Lincoln Highway Byway to the south.

Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

6.4.1 Strategic Planning - Develop a strategic plan for tourism development for Seneca County.

6.4.2 Organizational Resources - Ensure the organizations tasked with tourism development have the resources they need to successfully implement the strategic plan.

6.3.3 Coordination - Continue to expand and coordinate visitor and tourism activities with promotion of Heritage, Agricultural, and Ecotourism.

6.3.4 Zoning - Update local zoning ordinances to ensure they adequately address and promote appropriate lodging development, including hotels, short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts, in order to enhance the region's ability to attract overnight visitors.

Seneca County's Implementation Priority Timeframe

This plan identifies a number of strategies that the Seneca County and its partners can take to move toward the County's vision for the future. Yet, we recognize that we cannot do everything at once. To this end, the matrix below identifies ongoing programs and initiatives that are important to maintain and allocates a preferred timeframe for expanding or enhancing existing programs and starting new initiatives, programs and projects.

Note: "A", "B", "C" and "D" represents priority; A is the highest priority, D the lowest. New programs/projects and enhancements to existing programs/projects are shown in the implementation timeframe based on start date. Any new program/project that will be ongoing once started is indicated with as "/O." Implementation timeframe is when the program/project is to begin. Existing programs/projects that will continue are prioritized.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
Goal 1 Prosperous and Resilient Economy				
Objective 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING				
1.1.1 Plans – Update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); coordinate goals & objectives with County Comprehensive Plan; identify entities/organizations best capable of implementing action items.			B	
1.1.2 Organizations - Ensure that entities and organizations assigned to oversee implementation of the plans have sufficient resources to do their work.		B		
1.1.3 Ongoing Dialogue – Maintain and strengthen dialogue and collaboration among elected officials and department heads with respect to development.	A			
Objective 1.2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT				
1.2.1 Workforce Plans – Continue to work with partners to prepare workforce development strategic plans (plans currently being developed through the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative and the 4CG initiative).	A			
1.2.2 County Collaboration – Continue to collaborate with other counties in ways that enhance and strengthen Seneca County's workforce.		B		
1.2.3 Partnerships – Continue to facilitate engagement, collaboration, and partnerships between business, industry, education, and workforce and economic development.	A			
1.2.4 Marketing - Effectively market jobs, career opportunities, and employers to the local community and regionally.	B			
1.2.5 Training and Assistance - Develop and/or strengthen educational and training programs, initiatives, and assets that increase the employability of the local workforce.		C		
1.2.6 Professional Development – Continue to maintain and strengthen research, benchmarking, networking, and professional development opportunities for professionals and organizations engaged in workforce development.	C			
1.2.7 Attract Workers to Seneca County - Develop, strengthen, and maintain assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that attract and retain youth, retain residents and encourage in-migration of new residents.	C			

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe		Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.2.8	Resources – Strategically allocate resources to maintain, strengthen and improve workforce development efforts, as recommended in the current CEDS.	O		B	
1.2.9	Remove Obstacles – Design and implement programs and needed support services such as transportation and childcare to remove obstacles for people who work in rural parts of the county (outside Tiffin and Fostoria).		B		
Objective 1.3 SUITABLE LOCATIONS					
1.3.1	Sites and Buildings - Continue to identify suitable locations for future commercial and industrial development in rural parts of Seneca County, including suitable locations that may require zoning changes.	A			
1.3.2	Capital Improvement Planning - Identify and plan for capital improvements needed to promote suitable economic development in rural Seneca County.		C/O		
1.3.3	Infrastructure – Create and maintain an updated database inventory and condition assessment of existing infrastructure and utilities (including broadband access) and associated GIS maps in rural Seneca County, and make the information available online.		B/O		
1.3.4	Development Agreements – Ensure mutually acceptable annexation and development agreements are in place between municipalities and townships. Review existing agreements and update as needed.		A		
1.3.5	Redevelopment - Facilitate the revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas and obsolete sites and facilities in rural Seneca County through redevelopment, rehabilitation, and other available means.		D		
1.3.6	Zoning – Review existing zoning regulations in villages and townships that have adopted zoning; update as needed; proactively rezone appropriate locations for new business development in suitable locations identified in 1.3.1.		C		
1.3.7	Market Priority Sites – Create a countywide map of priority development-ready properties that are available for development, make available online and market the properties.		C		
Objective 1.4 Business RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION					
1.4.1	Business Retention & Expansion Programs – Continue to maintain, improve and strengthen comprehensive and effective formal business retention and expansion programs.	A			
1.4.2	Incentives & Resources - Develop policies and related programs for incentives, assistance programs, and other resources for existing and new businesses; assist businesses in adopting contemporary business practices (e.g. websites and social media for marketing); continue to promote incentive programs available through the State.			A	
1.4.3	Industry Groups – Continue to collaborate with existing, and expand as needed, industry councils or groups that provide peer-to-peer networking and that identify and address issues and concerns faced by that industry.	D			
1.4.4	Targeted Industries - Develop & maintain a targeted industry sector retention, expansion, and attraction strategy.		C		

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/O" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe		Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.4.5	Retail Strategy – Develop a countywide retail retention, expansion, and attraction strategy for retail in villages.		B		
1.4.6	Marketing – Continue to effectively market the county's positive attributes, assets and competitive advantages regionally, statewide, nationally and globally. Develop a strategy and market available industrial and commercial properties in rural Seneca County. Highlight available incentives. See also marketing strategies included in Goal 6.	A	A		
1.4.7	Regulation - Create a strategic and business-friendly regulatory environment. Review existing regulations to determine if there are ways to improve the procedures and eliminate unnecessary obstacles.		C		
1.4.8	Technology – Continue to work with local businesses, both start-up and existing, so they are better equipped to stay current on the ways technology can be used to enhance business practices.	C			
Objective 1.5 AGRIBUSINESS					
1.5.1	Agribusiness Strategic Plan - Develop an agriculture and food industry cluster strategic plan and assign a group or organization to oversee its implementation.		A		
1.5.2	Local Food - Identify, maintain, strengthen and develop assets, programs, and initiatives that encourage and promote local food.		B		
1.5.3	Partnerships – Continue to maintain and strengthen relationships, collaboration, and partnerships with local, regional, state, and national partners engaged in the agriculture and food industry cluster.	A			
1.5.4	Adaptation – Continue to identify, develop and implement assets, programs, resources, and initiatives to help farmers of all sizes improve resiliency, adapt to changes in the environment, and take advantage of new technology.	A		A	
1.5.5	Diversification - Work with farmers to diversify ag production including new crop opportunities such as hemp production, and to expand into ag-related income generating activities, such as agritourism activities.			B	
1.5.6	Recruitment – Assist in recruiting young and beginning farmers and their families; work with the Farm Bureau, OSU Extension and other entities.		A		
Objective 1.6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP					
1.6.1	Entrepreneurship Plan - Develop an entrepreneurship strategic plan to foster entrepreneurs in rural Seneca County; identify and/or develop a group or organization to oversee its implementation.		B		
1.6.2	Entrepreneurship Facilities - Explore, evaluate and develop appropriate and successful entrepreneurship facilities in village centers; provide financial and onsite support services.			B	
1.6.3	Resources - Identify, effectively leverage and develop more resources for entrepreneurs, start-up, and tech-based businesses that choose to locate in rural Seneca County.		B		

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
1.6.4 Capital - Identify and develop more seed, early-, and late-stage capital for entrepreneurs and newer businesses in Seneca County.		C		
1.6.5 Entrepreneurship Marketplace - Facilitate the identification and vetting of existing and new potential entrepreneurial opportunities and connect entrepreneurs with those opportunities and capital.			A/O	
1.6.6 Culture - Develop, maintain, and strengthen assets, programs, initiatives, and organizations that foster and strengthen a local culture of entrepreneurship.		C		
1.6.7 Collaboration – Continue to strengthen collaboration with local, regional and state education institutions, intellectual property-creating and innovative local companies, entrepreneurs and technology-based companies.	B			
Objective 1.7 VILLAGE DOWNTOWNS				
1.7.1 Plans – Develop and update strategic and development plans for village downtowns.		B		
1.7.2 Systematic Approach - Adopt and implement a comprehensive approach to address the appearance, promotion, business enhancement, and organizational resources of village downtowns.		B		
1.7.3 Downtown Resources – Continue to maintain and strengthen the resources available to organizations working on downtown revitalization throughout rural Seneca County.	B			
1.7.4 Downtown Incentives - Develop and implement appropriate incentive programs to foster downtown revitalization.			C	
Goal 2. Attractive, Desirable & Livable Places (Built Environment)				
Objective 2.1 HOUSING OPTIONS				
2.1.1 Residential Research - Conduct housing research and studies, identifying housing conditions and developing strategies to preserve existing housing resources and develop new ones.		C/O		
2.1.2 Housing Development – Develop and maintain programs that facilitate the development of a sufficient quantity and desired variety of housing types, designs, and price in the most appropriate places.		C/O		
2.1.3 Housing Resources – Continue to utilize existing programs and develop new programs/ resources to help maintain/improve the housing stock; assist low-moderate income households attain desired housing, including home ownership.	B	B		
2.1.4 Building Reuse - Support the innovative reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings for housing alternatives.			C	
2.1.5 Creative and Context-Sensitive Design – Continue to encourage sensitivity to environmental conditions in development of new housing and rehabilitation of existing housing. Develop regulations that allow for/encourage creative design in residential development.	B	D		
2.1.6 Fair Housing – Continue to educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities.	B			

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/O" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
2.1.7 Downtown Upper-Floor Housing – In villages with appropriate two- and three-story commercial buildings, encourage building owners to consider creating upper-floor residential units when renovating downtown commercial structures.			C	
Objective 2.2 DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS				
2.2.1 Sidewalks & Lighting – Identify, improve existing, and develop more sidewalks, street lighting, and other assets to create more walkable neighborhoods in villages where the concentration of homes warrants such improvements.		C		
2.2.2 Public Safety – Continue to maintain, strengthen, and develop programs, initiatives, and organizations that contribute to public safety and the safety of neighborhoods.	B			
2.2.3 Neighborhood Appearance – Develop village branding, initiatives, programs, and organizations that enhance the appearance of neighborhoods in rural Seneca County (e.g., American in Bloom).			B	
Objective 2.3 VALUED CULTURE AND PLACES				
2.3.1 Downtowns - Revitalize and activate village downtowns and other places into lively gathering places, with flexible multi-use spaces and event programming. Maintain and improve the overall appearance of downtowns.			B	
2.3.2 Gathering Places – Maintain and increase village community meeting places, including outdoor gathering spaces to encourage visitors to linger and socialize.		B		
2.3.3 Historic Preservation Organizational Structure – Create a county-wide organizational structure to spearhead a collaborative effort to strategically plan for and develop goals and strategies to preserve important historic assets.		B		
2.3.4 Historic Preservation Resources - Create an inventory of notable historic structures and areas with unique historical worth; develop resources to encourage long-term preservation.			C	
Objective 2.4 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE				
2.4.1 Building Code & Permits - Enforce a system of standard building codes and permits to ensure the structural safety and functional integrity of all buildings; consider establishing a County Building Department; adequately support the education of the existing process for building codes and permits.		C		
2.4.2 Workshops – Create a strategy for educating residents and property owners about property maintenance; identify key topics to address and the delivery system for conducting educational workshops about long-term maintenance.		C/O		
2.4.3 Property Maintenance Code – Continue to enforce property maintenance codes in rural Seneca County where they exist; encourage creation of local property maintenance code in locations where needed but do not currently exist.	O		C/O	
2.4.4 Property Clearinghouse - Create a clearinghouse for vacant lots and blighted structures countywide. Work with the Seneca County Land Bank on maintaining once established			B/O	

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
2.4.5 Blight Abatement – Continue to enforce countywide blight abatement guidelines, and collaborate with the Seneca County Land Bank on demolition of vacant houses and other vacant structures.	C			
Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE				
2.5.1 Compact/Infill Development – Continue to promote new compact development on infill lots and adjacent to existing built up areas; implement zoning that encourages development of vacant/ underutilized properties, and brownfield sites.	A	A/O		
2.5.2 Zoning Administration - Update village and township zoning regulations and continue to enforce local zoning where it currently exists; train local boards/commissions on administration of local regulations. Review existing regulations for effectiveness in protecting agricultural lands, critical environmental areas, and valuable natural areas and promoting sustainable development.	A	A/O		
2.5.3 Village Promotion - Promote balanced development in villages that preserves amenities and quality of life while also allowing for appropriate commercial and industrial development.			C	
2.5.4 Farmland Preservation – Continue to conserve existing agricultural land and limit development in agricultural areas. Develop zoning regulations and/or subdivision regulations that reduce incentives to develop scattered frontage lots along rural roads.	A	A/O		
2.5.5 Open Space Preservation – Develop zoning regulations that encourage preservation of open space and limit development on/near critical natural areas. See also Goal 4 for Natural Resource Preservation and Conservation strategies.		A/O		
2.5.6 County Subdivision Regulations – Review and update the County Subdivision Regulations as needed to ensure that the subdivision regulations advance and are coordinated with local township zoning regulations.			C	
Goal 3. Quality Community Facilities & Services				
Objective 3.1 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES				
3.1.1 Special Interest Groups - Create, strengthen, and support organizations and programs that address/serve the interests and needs of particular segments of our diverse population.		B/O		
3.1.2 Connection & Interaction - Create, strengthen, and support organizations, groups, programs, initiatives and assets that encourage interaction and foster connection between diverse groups/ individuals.			C/O	
3.1.3 Events - Create, strengthen and support events that support, foster, and celebrate diversity, inclusivity, and the uniqueness of individuals in the community.		C/O		
3.1.4 Education & Training – Continue to support programs and initiatives that educate, train, communicate about, and promote diversity and inclusivity.	C			
Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING				
3.2.1 Graduation rates - Continue to support local schools in their efforts to increase the quality and capacity of public and private PreK-12 educational facilities.	A			

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/O" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
3.2.2 Skilled Trades – Advocate for increased technical and vocational study programs.		B		
3.2.3 Libraries - Continue to support community-wide programs via the public library.	C			
3.2.4 Improved Access – Continue to provide as well as improve greater access to programs to assist children from low- to moderate-income households.	B		B	
3.2.5 Higher Education – Strengthen and support physical, economic and social connections to Tiffin University, Heidelberg University and Terra State Community College.	B	B		
Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING				
3.3.1 Village Parks – Develop strategies and programs to enable village governments to maintain and improve village parks and recreation facilities; evaluate current park amenities to determine need for improvements.			B	
3.3.2 Trails – Develop a network of trails throughout the county. See the recently completed Active Transportation Plan for detailed recommendations for locations.		B		
3.3.3 Local History – Where applicable, assist villages in developing and telling their local "story" through interpretive signage, public art, or other media in public spaces.			C	
3.3.4 Cooperative Programs – Build strong intra-park coordination between villages and the County Park District to provide diverse programs and offer a broad range of facilities and experiences to rural Seneca County residents.			C	
Objective 3.4 HEALTH & WELLNESS				
3.4.1 Health Care - Increase countywide health and healthcare specialists/services, including mental health.			B	
3.4.2 Assisted Living – Develop a strategy for improving/achieving adequate assisted living housing and home care.			C	
3.4.3 Safe Communities – Continue to promote safe communities and increase safety in rural Seneca County utilizing neighborhood block watch, protective services, emergency services, etc.	A	D		
3.4.4 Existing EMS – Continue to provide the existing EMS and ambulance service. Support our current EMS structure and explore ways to become more effective.	B			
3.4.5 Countywide EMS – Investigate and work towards providing a full-time countywide paid EMS/ ambulance service.				A
3.4.6 Gathering Places – Continue to support community gathering places in rural Seneca County to foster social interaction and reduce social isolation.	B			
3.4.7 Police & Fire – Continue to maintain local police and fire departments in rural Seneca County; assist with acquiring updated equipment, and when necessary, explore potential for new stations.	B		A	
3.4.8 Cooperative Services – Continue to streamline overlaps of services. Explore cooperative agreements with ambulance districts, sheriff's office, and fire departments.	C	A		

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
3.4.9 Technology – Continue to support the use of technology and increase use of shared services, for example, coordinate radio systems throughout the County.	C		C	
3.4.10 Behavioral and Mental Health – Continue to support efforts by the MHRSB, local emergency responders, healthcare workers, and hospitals to develop effective systems to respond to people experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis (suicide or overdose), provide effective education, and establish suitable facilities..	B	A		
3.4.11 Access – Work on increasing residents' financial and transportation access to health and wellness facilities.		B		
Objective 3.5 FOOD SECURITY & ACCESS				
3.5.1 Farm Markets – Continue to promote and increase farm-to-table and farmer's market type endeavors.	B	B		
3.5.2 Local Food - Encourage institutions, including schools, hospitals, jails, etc. to use local food and to improve the nutritional quality of food served.		D		
3.5.3 Food Access – Increase access to fresh food and promote the consumption of high-quality food.		A		
Goal 4. Environmental Stewardship –Valued Natural Resources				
Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION				
4.1.1 Priority Conservation Areas - Identify areas of the county where critical natural resources exist (such as floodplain and riparian areas) and have the highest priority for conservation efforts.			A	
4.1.2 Cleanups – Continue to engage in river cleanups and invasive species removal campaigns.	B			
4.1.3 Site Design - Encourage site design that protects the natural terrain and groundwater, preserves significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporates native vegetation into landscape plans.		A		
4.1.4 Home Sewage Treatment System - In areas not serviced by sanitary sewers, continue to evaluate proposed lots for on-lot sewage disposal systems. Develop a plan to assist homeowners with failing septic systems to connect to sanitary sewer lines or replace their existing system.	A			
4.1.5 Open Space Subdivision Design - Incorporate conservation development zoning regulations for villages and townships that have adopted zoning. Consider providing incentives to encourage conservation development that preserves riparian corridors, woodlands, and wetlands as protected open space.		A		
4.1.6 Acquisition - Prioritize riparian corridors, woodlands, wetlands for acquisition using programs such as Clean Ohio, in order to create linked greenways to provide corridors of open space instead of isolated pockets of open space.				D
4.1.7 Easements - Work with appropriate private land trusts and other organizations engaged in acquiring environmentally sensitive lands and/or protective easements.			B	
4.1.8 Tree Preservation/Restoration – Continue & increase efforts to plant and protect trees to maintain current and increase future canopy coverage.	B	B		

Timeframe Columns: Based on start date. "__/0" indicates program/project will be ongoing once started.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
4.1.9 Mining – Continue to balance the interest of companies or individuals wanting to extract minerals from the land with those of the surface owner and adjoining property owners so as to assure maximum benefits to all county residents.	A			
4.1.10 Mitigatation – Continue to mitigate erosion and habitat loss. Increase efforts in select areas.	D	C		
Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE				
4.2.1 Ecotourism - Utilize natural resources for tourism.		C		
4.2.2 Hunting - Increase hunting opportunities as well as signage and safety of public hunting.		C		
4.2.3 Trees - Increase participation with local shade tree commissions where they exist and encourage the creation of local shade tree commissions in communities where they don't currently exist.		C		
4.2.4 Parks – Work with the County Park District and local villages to ensure a suitable amount of and access to park facilities.			C	
4.2.5 Water Trails: Continue to collaborate on designating the Sandusky River as a State Water Trail, creating a water trail partnership, securing assistance from ODNR, and inventorying existing access and hazard points as well as natural, cultural, historic features and other points of interest.		C		
Objective 4.3 CLEAN AIR & WATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES				
4.3.1 Low-Impact Development - Develop material to educate and promote low-impact development practices and other best practices that help to preserve and enhance sensitive natural areas and important natural resources.			C	
4.3.2 Stormwater Management - Adopt stormwater management regulations; establish mandatory riparian setbacks in both local zoning regulations and the Seneca County Subdivision Regulations.		A		
4.3.3 Wellhead Protection – Work with the Health Department to develop a Wellhead Protection Plan and Overlay Zone to protect public water supplies.		A		
4.3.4 Prioritization - Map areas of the county that meet the criteria of a "Priority Nutrient Reduction Area.			B	
4.3.5 Environmental Programs - Continue to encourage and promote public programs that incentivize or share in the cost of implementing environmental best management practices.	B			
4.5.6 Failing Home Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) – Continue to eliminate failing HSTS; develop educational programs and requirements for ensuring existing systems are properly maintained; develop a long-term solution to address failing septic systems countywide.	A			
Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE				
4.4.1 Watershed - Continue to collaborate with Ohio EPA and other federal, state and local partners on planning for the watershed.	B			

Notes: Priority spectrum: "A" highest - "D" lowest. Ongoing Column: Existing programs/projects that will continue.

SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
4.4.2 Combined Sewer Separation (CSOs) – Identify and reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to Sandusky River. Work with property owners and local communities to prioritize the locations where CSOs exist.		A		
4.4.3 NPS-IS - Work with Sandusky River watershed organizations to develop and implement a Non-Point Source Pollution Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS) and Section 319 funding to implement priority projects.		B		
4.4.4 Water Quality Attainment – Continue to work towards full Ohio EPA water quality attainment status.	A			
Objective 4.5 GREEN ENERGY				
4.5.1 Proper Placement - Encourage townships and villages to adopt appropriate zoning regulations to permit and properly locate small-scale renewable energy systems.		C		
4.5.2 Solar - Encourage electric companies to give easy access to solar. Including residential, solar generation and discontinue demand-metering charge			D	
4.5.3 Evaluation - Carefully evaluate all proposed energy system projects to determine their potential benefits and consequences.	A			
Objective 4.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT				
4.6.1 Landfills - Continue to ensure adequate landfill space and properly control and regulate.	C			
4.6.2 Recycling – Continue to explore and encourage recycling with an emphasis on waste reduction, reuse and reduce.	C			
4.6.3 Solid Waste – Continue to provide effective and efficient solid waste services and removal.	B			
4.6.4 Source Reduction - Adopt standards that eliminate the initial production of wastes and pollutants at the source.				D
GOAL 5. Mobility, Accessibility & Public Utilities				
Objective 5.1 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE				
5.1.1 Repairs - Repair bridges, overpasses, roads, and sidewalks. Keep roads and utilities in good repair. Procure more funds for roads and bridges.	B			
5.1.2 Farm Equipment - Accommodate farm equipment on township roads.		B		
5.1.3 Thoroughfares – Work with villages to create attractive thoroughfares through the center of the villages.			C	
5.1.4 Signage - Improve signage and create a wayfinding system.			C	
Objective 5.2 ROADWAY NETWORK				
5.2.1 Transportation System - Improve and maintain transportation system in order to address present and future traffic challenges.		A		

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SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
5.2.2 Tiffin-Fostoria Industrial Connector – Continue to prioritize and research funding options for this project designed to connect Tiffin's and Fostoria's industrial sectors.				A
5.2.3 Access Management – Develop access management techniques to limit points of ingress/egress, and maintain the level of service on principle and minor arterials. Adopt county level access management regulations.			B	
5.2.4 Transportation Networks – Continue to support public transportation networks and other multi-modal transportation alternatives to link population centers with employment opportunities and other destinations.	B			
5.2.5 Collaboration - Collaborate with federal, state, and local planning agencies to enhance transportation networks in the region.	C			
5.2.6 Congestion - Implement congestion management techniques at key county highway intersections through redesign, additional traffic lanes, and improved signalization.			B	
5.2.7 Walkability - Encourage the use of safe and "walkable" streetscape design and signage standards, especially within villages and rural communities intersected by state routes.			D	
Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION				
5.3.1 Walkability - Develop infrastructure that encourages people to commute to work and school on bike or on foot.		C		
5.3.2 Bike Lanes - Create more bike lanes and "sharrows" along specific roadways, utilizing the recommendations from the recently completed Seneca County Active Transportation Plan.		C		
5.3.3 Public Transit - Enhance public transit and mobility, and identify and procure funding.		C		
Objective 5.4 AIR & RAIL NETWORKS				
5.4.1 Promote Air & Rail - Promote alternate means of transportation such as aviation and rail.		D		
5.4.2 Highways - Reconnect rail to major highways.			C	
5.4.3 Airport – Continue to use/promote the airport as an economic opportunity.	C			
Objective 5.5 SMART COMMUNITIES				
5.5.1 Broadband - Provide high-speed internet access to all rural areas. Work with organizations like "Connect Ohio" to improve access to rural areas lacking internet access with acceptable download/upload speeds.		A		
5.5.2 Telecommunications - Promote the proper placement and provision of telecommunication services.	C			
5.5.3 Electric Charging Stations - Encourage installation of electric car charging facilities at strategic locations.		C		
Objective 5.6 WATER & WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE				

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SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
5.6.1 Distribution & Collection - Establish acceptable water distribution/rates and wastewater collection systems in rural Seneca County.			B	
5.6.2 Extend Utilities – Strategically extend water and sewer utilities, in conjunction with planning and zoning controls, to ensure projected growth occurs in an orderly manner.			B	
5.6.3 Special Extensions - Pursue the feasibility of providing water of adequate quality and capacity to special areas with documented health and human safety issues.		C		
5.6.4 Home Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) - Establish standards and criteria for consideration of cumulative impacts of on-site septic systems upon surface and groundwater quality.		A		
5.6.5 Growth Management – Develop strategies for future infrastructure in strategic/targeted locations.			C	
Goal 6. Strong Community Character & Image				
Objective 6.1 CELEBRATE SENECA COUNTY.				
6.1.1 Inventory – Continue to identify and develop an inventory of the reasons why the County and local communities are a great place to live, work, visit, study, and run a business (brand reasons).	A	A		
6.1.2 Documentation – Document, process and package content of the brand reasons in text, pictures, sound recording, and video. Create a central information bureau.		A/O		
6.1.3 Celebration – Celebrate the brand reasons using a variety of means, including events, awards, and public relations.			A/O	
6.1.4 Volunteerism - Develop volunteerism.			B	
Objective 6.2 BRANDING & PROMOTION				
6.2.1 Media Relations – Market and communicate the community brand through media relations. Encourage area businesses to participate in the distribution of marketing materials.		B/O		
6.2.2 Multi-Media Materials – Develop marketing materials, utilizing as many different platforms and methods as possible.		B/O		
6.2.3 Advertising – Market and communicate the community brand through advertising.		B/O		
6.2.4 Marketing Campaigns – Work with Destination Seneca County to develop a coordinated and comprehensive marketing campaign.			B/O	
6.2.5 Branding – Continue to develop and implement the Seneca County branding effort to enhance the reputation and experience of the county and its rural areas as a great place to live, work, and operate a business.	B			
6.2.6 Signage – Develop a comprehensive community signage package that includes the four types of wayfinding signs: identification, directional, informational, and regulatory. Design the system in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines, ensuring that it can be funded through state and federal sources.		C		

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SENECA COUNTY's Priority Timeframe	Ongoing	Immediate (0-2 yrs)	Short-term (2-5 yrs)	Long-term (5+ yrs)
6.2.7 Public Art - Incorporate public art along trail networks to tell the story of the region.			D	
6.2.8 Scenic Byway Designation – Create a scenic byway plan and designate qualifying routes, such as SR 53 as scenic byways.			B	
Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT				
6.3.1 Strategic Planning – Develop a strategic plan for tourism development for Seneca County.		A		
6.3.2 Organizational Resources – Ensure the organizations tasked with tourism development have the resources they need to successfully implement the strategic plan.		B		
6.3.3 Coordination – Continue to expand and coordinate visitor and tourism activities with promotion of Heritage, Agricultural, and Ecotourism.	C			
6.3.4 Zoning – Update local zoning ordinances to ensure they adequately address and promote appropriate lodging development, including hotels, short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts in order to enhance the region's ability to attract overnight visitors.		C		

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