



Richfield Township

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Approved 12/01/11



Richfield Township, Ohio – 2025

Comprehensive Land Use Plan



Richfield Township, Ohio – 2025 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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Richfield Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Richfield Township 2025 Planning for the Future

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Defined

The Richfield Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan (the Plan) is an official document which sets forth major goals concerning physical development and use of land within the Township to the year 2025. It shows the relationships among different types of land use, taking into account the physical characteristics of the land and considers the potential for development and forecasts population change.

The Plan is a guide – not a blueprint, and as such must be reviewed and adjusted as conditions change. It is intended this Plan guides those responsible for determining public planning policy in the future.

An objective of the Township Plan is to support the greater goals of the Summit County General Land Use Development Plan (SC Plan) and the intention of this document is to examine characteristics of Richfield Township that may be in close alignment with the goals of that Plan, while pointing out characteristics of the Township that may not support certain SC Plan elements.

Location

Richfield Township is located in the northwest corner of Summit County and is bounded on the west by Medina County and the north by Cuyahoga County. Adjacent communities include Bath & Boston Townships (Summit County), Hinckley Township (Medina County, to the west), the Village of Richfield (Summit), which bisects Richfield Township and the Cities of Brecksville and Broadview Heights (Cuyahoga County, to the north). Summit County is named for the highest point along the Ohio-Erie Canal and Richfield has the geographic distinction of being the highest elevation point in Summit County.

Vision Statement

The development of this Plan is being done, in part, so that Richfield Township may continue to be a peaceful top-rated primarily residential community incorporating limited mixed use zoning with a high quality of life in a rural setting with modern conveniences.

The 200th anniversary of Richfield Township was observed in 2009 and this planning effort focuses on the next fifteen years from 2011 through 2025. Questions to be addressed by this Plan include the following: How should the undeveloped land within the township be used? What are the desires of the Township regarding land use, especially regarding density and non-residential uses? What are the qualities most important to be nurtured and maintained? How many residents and businesses are expected to be in the Township in the next fifteen years?

This Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Richfield Township attempts to answer these questions and others as the Township considers problems and opportunities and formulates the following land use planning goals:

Goals

- Preserve the Rural Character of the Township by promoting establishment of small farms, monitoring present residential densities, without increasing net density and considering other areas for conservation district zoning.
- Maintain and Preserve Open Space by encouraging conservation development that allows for preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and promoting trails and bikeways that connect to regional parks.
- Promote Non-Residential Development by encouraging development of the existing Light Industrial-Office District.

The Planning Process

This Plan was instituted through the processes outlined in Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 519.12. Although development of a Land Use or Comprehensive Plan is not equivalent to an Amendment to the Zoning Resolution, it was felt that adherence to these procedures provided the most solid and consistent approach to formulation of a Plan that best serves Township interests. As such, the Plan was initiated by the Township Trustees, developed by the Township Zoning Commission, reviewed by the Summit County Planning Commission and adopted by the Township Trustees, all in compliance with the notice, public hearing and other requirements of ORC 519.12. To encourage public input, all discussion of the Plan was conducted in open meetings, with notice and advertising, and as the plan neared final development, it was placed on the Township website for a period of two months before final approval.

The process of Plan development began in the mid 2000's, as the Township Zoning Commission discussed the need for a comprehensive plan and reviewed plans for other local communities to determine a preferred format for the Township Plan. In 2008, Planning Consultant Kenneth Crandall, AICP, was hired to work with the Zoning Commission on development of a Comprehensive Plan. In the next three-year period, Zoning Commission members and alternates, including Kurt Kocias, Jerry Ryba, Claudia Gindraw, Arlene Pepera, Douglas Mory, Dennis Skoda, John Myer, John Paulett, Bill Wendling, Patti Dorsett and Annie Demko worked with the Planning Consultant on development of the Plan, which was reviewed by the Summit County Planning Commission on January 27, 2011 and a recommendation to approve the draft Plan was made by the Commission in May, 2011. The Trustees opened a public hearing for discussion of the Plan in July, 2011 and revised the plan over the next four-month period. A joint public meeting was held between the Trustees, Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals in November, 2011 and the plan was approved for adoption on December 1, 2011 by vote of the Trustees.

The Township has identified several issues facing the Township:

- Certain areas of the Township with unique physical characteristics may warrant low density residential conservation type development.
- The rural residential character of the Township should be maintained.
- The possibility of increasing Township revenues through development of commercial/industrial uses should be investigated, if it is possible to achieve without negatively impacting the residential/agricultural feel of the Township.
- It is important to encourage preservation of existing agricultural uses and development of additional agricultural uses.
- The large amount of existing park land should be capitalized on as a benefit to the Township.
- Urban sprawl should be discouraged by cautiously reviewing proposals for increased densities in residential development.
- Possible actions to discourage annexation should be investigated.

Chapter 2: History

Richfield Township – History and Relationship to the Region

The township was founded in 1809 and originally was 25 square miles in size. Since that time, the number of acres lost to annexation and separation totals 5536. In 1967, the Village of Richfield was formed and incorporated, adopting a Charter, which allows for the voting of a Mayor and seven council members.

In addition to land area lost through several annexations to the Village of Richfield, the Township separated from the Village of Richfield in 2003, leaving the Township with its current area of 16.35 square miles. The separation action was initiated in early 1998, with a submission to Summit County Council of a petition signed by Township property owners requesting the erection of a new township excluding territory of the incorporated Village of Richfield. The petition was filed under the requirements of Ohio Revised Code Sections 503.09 through 503.12 and was signed by more than four hundred township landowners. Township records state that the reason for the separation action was the failure of Village of Richfield voters to pass a general fund operating levy when it was on the ballot twice in the last three elections. Subsequent to the filing of the separation petition, Summit County Council allowed the request of 119 residents to have their names removed from the petition, bringing it below the minimum 360 signatures required for approval. In 2000, the Summit County Court of Common Pleas ruled the signature removal as an improper procedure and ordered the Summit County Council to take immediate action to form a new township excluding the village.

The action ordering erection of a new township was taken on August 12, 2003, with Summit County Council Resolution #2003-429. The Summit County Council approved the agreed apportionment of the existing Township's indebtedness to the Village, with the following distribution of assets:

Ownership transferred to the Village of Richfield:

<u>Property Description</u>	<u>Value-Land and Buildings</u>
Triangle Park	\$5,010
Fellowship Hall	\$82,030
Old Town Hall	\$153,250
Streetsboro Road (7 acres)	\$283,330
Richfield Park (21 and 303)	\$29,500
Richfield Town Hall Building	\$250,000
Total Assets Transferred	\$803,120

Ownership retained by Richfield Township:

Cash on Hand Approximately \$352,128
Tools & Equipment \$28,713

Real Property
Rising Valley Park \$743,900
3038 Boston Mills Road \$82,610

Total Assets Retained \$1,207,351

Since the first settler arrived, the Township has evolved to become home to a population of 2517, as shown in the table below.

Exhibit 1: Population of Richfield Township 1980-2010

Year	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	1504	1893	2138	2517
% Change	-12.3%	+25.9%	+12.9%	+17.7

The City of Cleveland to the north and City of Akron to the south have had an impact on the Township. The location of the Ohio Turnpike (I-80) and I-77 and I-271 have provided opportunities for commercial and industrial growth in the general area and high-value residential development in the Township.

Several parks systems own acreage within the township, including the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, with 1461 acres, Metro Parks Serving Summit County, with 637 acres and the Cleveland Metroparks, with 134 acres. The forty-three acres that constitutes Rising Valley Park is owned and maintained by the Township.

While the Township enjoys an excellent location between two major cities and access to three interstate highways, the steep topography and lack of utilities, i.e., sewer and water, have allowed the Township to maintain a low density, rural character. A typical lot size in new developments is four or more acres.

Chapter 3: Cultural/Historic Resource Preservation

In terms of cultural and historic resource protection, the SC Plan addresses issue such as community character and identity, smart growth and preservation and historic and modern cultural resources. Richfield Township shares many desirable qualities of other Summit County communities surveyed for the SC Plan, such as “sense of community” “small town atmosphere” and “community atmosphere”.

Many acres of land within the Township have been preserved through park acquisition and public and private preservation easements. As supported by the SC Plan, the Township has participated since the 1990’s in smart growth residential development, approving zoning for the Deer Creek subdivision, which has since annexed to the Village of Richfield and the Glencairn Forest subdivision. Historic and modern cultural resources are not a significant feature of the Township landscape. The SC Plan notes the Township has one property on the National Register of Historic Places, which is the James Kirby Mill, located on the site of the current Great Trail Girl Scout Camp property, near S.R. 303 and Oviatt Roads. Additionally, there are six Ohio Archeological Inventory Sites and nine Ohio Historic Inventory Sites, most of which are unidentified by name. This is a lower number of significant historic places than most Summit County communities. Part of this is due to the fact that the Township is completely bisected north to south by the Village of Richfield, as result of the 2003 separation action. The “center of town” located within the Village contains the majority of historical sites in Richfield. Exhibits 2 and 3 show the historic places for Richfield Township and for the county as a whole.

While Township residents are supporters of many area modern cultural resources, there are none to speak of actually located within the Township. Resources named by the SC Plan include the Blossom Music Center, National Inventors Hall of Fame, Akron Art Museum, Akron Civic Theatre, Akron Arts Alliance and Lock 3. These and most other modern cultural resources are located within larger municipal communities.

Page left blank – insert pdf – Exhibit 2 historic places and districts, Richfield Township

Page left blank – insert pdf – Exhibit 3 historic places and districts, Summit County

Chapter 4: Demographics

Population changes 1980-2010

The U.S. Bureau of the Census reported an increase in the Township population of 1013 between 1980 and 2010. Growth of the Township is shown in Exhibit 4.

Since 2000 population of the Township has increased by 379 for a total of 2517 representing an increase of 17.7 percent. This compares to an increase of 245 or only 12.9 percent from 1990 to 2000.

The Township population increased at a higher rate than most of the jurisdictions close to Akron but at a much lower rate than the developing areas of the County.

The figures in Exhibit 5 indicate an aging population with the largest increase in the 55 to 79 age group and a decline in the 20-34 age group. Median age in the Township is approximately 48 years.

Exhibit 4: Population Trends Summit County 1980-2010

					2000-2010	2000-2010
Cities	1980	1990	2000	2010	# Change	% Change
Akron	237,177	223,019	217,074	199,110	-17,964	-8.28%
Barberton	29,751	27,623	27,899	26,550	-1,349	-4.84%
Cuyahoga Falls	50,526	48,950	50,272	49,652	-620	-1.23%
Fairlawn	6,100	5,779	7,307	7,437	130	1.78%
Green	17,625	19,179	22,817	25,699	2,882	12.63%
Hudson	12,645	17,128	22,439	22,262	-177	-0.79%
Macedonia	6,571	7,509	9,224	11,188	1,964	21.29%
Munroe Falls	4,731	5,359	5,314	5,012	-302	-5.68%
New Franklin	16,142	14,910	14,530	14,227	-303	-2.09%
Norton	12,242	11,475	11,512	12,085	573	4.98%
Stow	25,303	27,998	32,139	34,837	2,698	8.39%
Tallmadge	15,269	14,870	16,180	17,537	1,357	8.39%
Twinsburg	7,632	9,606	17,006	18,795	1,789	10.52%
Villages						
Boston Heights	781	733	1,186	1,300	114	9.61%
Clinton	1,277	1,175	1,337	1,214	-123	-9.20%
Lakemore	2,744	2,684	2,561	3,068	507	19.80%
Mogadore	3,061	2,967	2,951	3,853	902	30.57%
Northfield	3,913	3,624	3,827	3,677	-150	-3.92%
Peninsula	604	562	602	565	-37	-6.15%
Reminderville	1,906	2,163	2,347	3,404	1,057	45.04%
Richfield	3,437	3,117	3,286	3,648	362	11.02%
Silver Lake	2,915	2,756	3,019	2,519	-500	-16.56%
Townships						
Bath	8,476	9,015	9,635	9,702	67	0.70%
Boston	1,460	1,317	1,062	707	-355	-33.43%
Copley	9,810	11,130	13,641	17,304	3,663	26.85%
Coventry	11,951	11,295	10,900	10,945	45	0.41%
Northfield Center	4,294	3,982	4,931	5,839	908	18.41%
Richfield	1,504	1,893	2,138	2,517	379	17.73%
Sagamore Hills	7,189	6,503	9,340	10,947	1,607	17.21%
Springfield	16,125	14,773	15,168	14,644	-524	-3.45%
Twinsburg	1,157	1,896	2,153	2,828	675	31.35%
S.C. Total *	524,418	514,990	543,797	541,781	-2,016	-0.37%

*portion of Norton is in Wayne Co; portions of Tallmadge & Mogadore are in Portage Co.

Exhibit 5: Richfield Township Age Distribution 1990-2010

				2000 - 2010	2000 - 2010
Age	1990	2000	2010	# Change	% Change
Under 20	439	518	578	60	11.58%
20-34	355	267	227	-40	-14.98%
35-54	399	769	777	8	1.04%
55-79	361	455	768	313	68.79%
80+	107	139	167	28	20.14%
Totals	1661	2148	2517	369	17.18%

Projected Population 2025

New construction of three dwelling units in 2010 was the lowest in many years, as shown in Exhibit 6. The number of zoning certificates issued annually for construction of new residences ranged from 41 to 46 in the years 2003 to 2006. Although more than one half were cluster homes, there were 78 single-family dwellings constructed in the R-1 and CD zoning districts.

It is doubtful the Township can expect to recover or maintain the 42 average new residences constructed in the boom years between 2003 and 2006. The number of units will depend upon the nation’s economy in general and Northeast Ohio’s economy in particular. At this point a high and low projection is suggested. A range of eight to fifteen units will provide some basis for projecting population as well as income for the year 2025.

- Population in 2010 is 2,517.
- The population projected for the Township in 2025 ranges from to 2829 to 3102, as shown in Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 6: Richfield Township Zoning Permits – Cluster and Single-Family Homes 2003-2010

Number of Zoning Certificates for New Residences

Year	Cluster Homes	Single Homes	Family	Total
2003	18	23		41
2004	24	16		40
2005	22	24		46
2006	26	15		41
2007	12	10		22
2008	0	6		6
2009	0	9		9
2010	0	3		3
Total	102	106		208

Exhibit 7: Population Projections to 2025

New Dwellings/Year	No. Years	Total Dwellings	Persons/Dwelling	Additional Population
8	15	120	2.6	312
15	15	225	2.6	585

Chapter 5: Housing

As shown in Exhibit 8, the number of households in the Township grew from 568 in 1990 to 706 in 2000 – an increase of 138 unit or 24%. Based on the Census data, there were 899 units in the Township in 2010, which is an increase of 193 units or 27% over Census year 2000 numbers .

Construction in a cluster-phase area of the Glencairn Forest subdivision accounted for approximately one half of all dwelling units constructed from 2003 to 2010.

Since this cluster area is completed, construction of new homes will be on already platted lots or in new subdivisions in the R-1 or Conservation Districts and in areas planned for cluster housing..

Exhibit 8: Occupied Housing Units 1990 – 2010

Year	# of Households
1990	568
2000	706
2010	899

Household Value 2000

The Census Bureau reported the median home value of owner occupied units in the Village and Township combined was \$185,700. There were six residences in the Township valued at more than one million dollars and 84 units in the Township valued at \$500,000 to \$999,999, as shown in Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 9: Median Home Values – 2000

Value	# of Homes
\$50,000-99,999	6
\$100,000-\$149,999	70
\$150,000-\$199,999	95
\$200,000-\$299,999	117
\$300,000-\$499,999	139
\$500,000-\$999,999	84
\$1,000,000 or more	6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

Age of Housing

When the number of housing units constructed since 2000 are included almost 55 percent of the housing units in the Township are less than 30 years old, as shown in Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 10: Dates of Residential Construction

Year	# of Homes
1999 to March 2010	73
1990 to 1998	156
1980 to 1989	98
1970 to 1979	96
1960 to 1969	47
1940 to 1959	131
1939 to earlier	68

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Richfield Township Zoning

Household Income

Median household income in the Township, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau indicates a higher figure than for Summit County. This is shown on Exhibit 11: 1999 Median Household Income.

Values of Richfield Township residences are compared with other jurisdictions in the map, Exhibit 12.

Exhibit 11 is pdf insert – insert here/see hard copy - 1999 Median Household Income.

Exhibit 12 is pdf insert – insert here/see hard copy - Values of Richfield Township residences are compared with other jurisdictions in the map, Exhibit 12.

Capacity Analysis Methodology

In 2005, the Village of Richfield undertook a project to classify all parcels in the Village and Township according to existing land use and projected capacity analysis. The Township did not participate in this project, although there was some limited input into existing land use identification. An outcome of the 2005 Village project was to project capacity for both the Village and Township, and the results of this analysis are presented in this section of the Land Use Plan.

The potential for future development was calculated by measuring the vacant land and applying present zoning requirements. Land that might be considered available for development was classified into three levels as follows:

- Level 1 – parcels large enough to permit development with little or no assembly of other parcels. They have few, if any, environmental constraints.
- Level 2 – parcels that must be combined with other parcels in order to be developed. They may have more environmental constraints.
- Level 3 – parcels requiring assembly of many parcels in order to be developed. They contain many environmental constraints.

The results of the Village analysis indicated that the number of additional dwelling units that may reasonably be expected over the next 20 to 30 years within Richfield Township is 763 units. The addition of 763 dwelling units to the 899 existing dwellings is 1,662. Assuming a continued household size of 2.6 persons per household, there is potential for a Township population of 4321.

Currently Proposed or Approved, but Undeveloped Residential Subdivisions

Killarney Woods, a subdivision of 15 lots off of Southern Road has been approved, but no residences constructed to date.

In 1983 the Summit County Court of Common Pleas ordered the Township to approve a development of 280 dwelling units on 125 acres south of SR 303, east of I-77 and west of I-271. Of the total, not more than 72 units were to be single family dwellings and 208 units were to be Townhouse or Garden Apartments. Since 1994, developers have been negotiating with the Township on a plan that is different from that ordered by the court. In 2010, a plan including 68 single family lots and 156 apartment units was approved by the Summit County Planning Commission. At this time, no further action has been taken toward development of the property and it is unknown whether the owner/developer will proceed with the approved plan.

There are a number of undeveloped lots remaining in the Glencairn Forest, Kings Forest and Forest at Kings Creek subdivisions, as well as many unbuilt lots that are not in platted subdivisions.

The SC Plan enumerates the following eleven goals and objectives in its housing section:

A. Encourage housing development that supports the principles of smart growth. The American Planning Association defines Smart Growth as using comprehensive planning to guide, design, develop, revitalize and build communities for all that have a unique sense of community and place; preserve and enhance valuable natural and cultural resources; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; expand the range of transportation, employment and housing choices in a fiscally responsible manner; value long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over short term incremental geographically isolated actions; and promotes public health and healthy communities.

B. Promote the development of a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels, life stages and age groups, as well as for persons with special needs.

C. Support local planning that identifies essential housing needs with respect to development of new housing and the rehabilitation of existing housing.

D. Increase the supply of affordable housing for the elderly and non-elderly populations in those areas of the county where need is identified.

E. Facilitate homeownership.

F. Increase public awareness about the various homeowner assistance and loan programs available.

G. Facilitate coordination of housing efforts between local communities and private and public agencies/organizations.

H. Provide the homeless and those threatened with homelessness with a range of housing options and appropriate supportive services.

I. Identify and rehabilitate vacant, abandoned or substandard buildings in appropriate locations for housing.

J. Ensure that new housing is properly and safely constructed.

K. Ensure the existing housing stock is properly maintained.

The Township has had success in meeting many of these goals, including encouraging smart-growth development, facilitating home ownership, reducing vacant or abandoned buildings and ensuring that new housing is properly and safely constructed. Other goals may be difficult for the Township to take an active role in supporting, due to limitations in applicability, authority to regulate or available resources.

Chapter 6: Land Use

Richfield Township contains 10,465 acres, about twice the area of the Village of Richfield. The Village is located in the center of the original township (east and west of Brecksville Road) and is comprised of 5,300 acres stretching from the Cuyahoga County line on the north to Bath Township on the south.

Existing Land Use

The Township has not conducted an in-depth analysis on actual use of land in the Township. Therefore, the best estimates may be based on the Village’s interpretation of the results of their 2005 classification project for land use and capacity in greater Richfield. Raw numbers differ somewhat from Township data, but the Village analysis provides a useful insight into land use projections.

According to the Village analysis, the Township contains 10,387 acres. Exhibit 13 shows acreage and percent of the total acreage by use within the Township.

Exhibit 13: Existing Land Use

<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Residential		
- one family		
- two family		
	3,084	29.6
Agriculture	475	4.6
Business		
- office		
- retail stores & services-Sunoco		
	12	< .1
Industrial		
- light manufacturing		
- office/warehouse		
	26	.3
Institutional Lodges		
- religious facilities		
	150	1.5
Parks and Open Space		
- Public		
- Private		
	2,899	27.9
	465	4.5
Vacant	2,626	25.2
Road – Rights of Way	650	6.3
Totals	10,387	100.0

In the 2005 Village analysis, the use of each parcel was determined by examining aerial photographs and by field inspection. The results were tabulated and recorded on the map, Exhibit 14 on the following page. According to a color code, two dominant uses are visible – residential (yellow) and park land – both public and private (green).

Vacant, undeveloped land is shown in gray. These areas may be large undeveloped parcels, individual lots, or unused portions of large lots.

As expected, residences are the principal land use occupying almost 3,100 acres or 29.7 percent of the Township land area.

Public and private parks (not including open space within developments) account for 3,364 acres or 32.4 percent of the Township.

Vacant land is the third largest category accounting for 2,626 acres or 25.2 percent of the Township area.

Exhibit 14: Existing Land Use (2005)

Insert copy of pdf

Zoning Districts

There are 10,465 acres in the Township, of which 9733 acres or 93 percent are in the Conservation District or the R-1 Rural Residential District, as shown in Exhibit 15.

Exhibit 15: Acreage Within Each Zoning District, Richfield Township

<u>District</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Conservation	CD	3,760
Rural Residential	R-1	5,973
Residential	R-2	78
Residential	R-3	0
Planned Residential	R-4	446
Local Commercial	C-1	14
Highway Commercial	C-2	35
Regional Commercial	C-3	0
Amusement, Entertainment & Recreational	C-4	0
Light Industrial/Office	LI-O	159
	Total	10,465 (includes adjustment for rounding)

Current zoning districts, permitted and conditional uses are reviewed in Exhibit 16 so they may be compared to the uses proposed in the plan. A map showing the district locations is shown in Exhibit 17.

The stated primary land use goal in the SC Plan is the practice of smart growth management techniques to balance development with the preservation of critical, sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, riparian corridors and prime farmland. The Township is in alliance with each element of this stated goal and supports the goal through implementation of its land use regulations.

Exhibit 16: Description of Districts

- **Conservation District (CD)** This district is created to preserve and protect certain distinctive physical characteristics of the land by requiring a minimum residential lot area of five acres. A one family dwelling is the principal permitted use
- **Rural Residential District (R-1)** Single family dwellings are permitted in this district on lots of not less than two acres in net lot area and 200 feet in width. In order to meet yard requirements, lots typically exceed the two acre minimum.
- **Residential District (R-2)** This district has been retired and only those few properties already zoned R-2 utilize the Zoning Regulations for this district. The district was originally created to accommodate single-family dwellings as a permitted use and also allowed for two-family dwellings under specific circumstances.
- **Residential District (R-3)** This district is in the zoning text, but there are no properties currently zoned R-3 on the zoning map. It is a planned residential district that permits two family or multifamily dwellings of not more than four units per building as well as one family dwelling. The minimum development area is 100 acres. Forty percent of the area must be in open space.
- **Planned Residential Development District (R-4)** This district requires a development area of not less than 50 acres and permits a density of one unit per acre. Provision is made for “cluster” phases where densities may be increased to four units per acre. There is a limit on the percentage of units permitted in each development phase. Overall density in the development cannot exceed one dwelling unit per acre, and a public water supply and sanitary sewers are required.
- **Local Commercial District (C-1)** All uses in this district must be conditionally approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals. The minimum lot area is 40,000 square feet and the minimum lot width is 100 feet.
- **Highway Commercial District (C-2)** All uses in this district must be conditionally approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Minimum lot area is 75,000 square feet. Minimum lot width is 100 feet.
- **Regional Commercial District (C-3)** All uses must be conditionally approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Minimum lot area is 100,000 square feet and the minimum lot width is 100 feet.
- **Amusement, Entertainment and Recreation (C-4)** No acreage is presently zoned C-4. The minimum development area is 200 acres having a minimum 500 feet of frontage on a dedicated public road.
- **Light Industrial/Office District (LI-O)** Uses permitted include certain commercial establishments such as banks, nurseries, medical clinics, business and professional offices, and restaurants. Light industrial operations include manufacturing, processing and packaging. Research, distribution centers, warehousing are included.

Exhibit 17 is a pdf insert – insert here/see hard copy – zoning districts map

Chapter 7: Natural Resources

Existing Public Parks

Almost one third (3,364 acres) of the land area of the Township is devoted to public and private parks and open space, as shown in Exhibit 18.

Within the Township are parts of three major park systems, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Metro Parks Serving Summit County, and Cleveland Metro Parks.

- Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Many recreational opportunities exist with this national park of more than 33,000 acres. Just less than 2,000 acres of owned or easement-restricted lands are located within the Township.
- Metro Parks Serving Summit County. The Furnace Run Park contains about 815 acres of owned or easement restricted land in the Township and is a passive park with trails, shelter and lake. It is an important conservation area of the Furnace Run watershed.
- Cleveland Metro Parks Hinckley Reservation. This is a large park of 2,256 acres offering a variety of active and passive recreational activities. Approximately 150 acres are in Richfield Township.

Other recreational facilities include:

- Rising Valley Township Park. Located on Newton Road this Township Park of approximately 40 acres provides areas for passive and active recreation. The park also provides access to the Cleveland Metro Parks Hinckley Reservation.
- Private Recreation Area. Another significant recreation area is the Girl Scouts of America property in the western part of the Township. Access to the 292 Township acres on the site is from Oviatt Road.

Exhibit 18 is a pdf insert – insert here/see hard copy – map, parks & open space

Summit County Trail and Greenway Plan

Metro Parks Serving Summit County has proposed a system for trails and greenways. In the Richfield area, connections are proposed to Furnace Run and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Some routes involve use of existing roads while others would require creation of trails on separate rights-of-way.

- Southwest

Use of existing right-of-way along Everett, Southern, Medina Line and Hawkins Roads.

Trail on a separate path along Interstate 271.

- Northwest

Trail connecting Richfield Woods Park to Rising Valley Park using a trail through the Girl Scout property then exiting at Oviatt Road. The trail would then extend across Broadview Road on a separate right-of-way.

- Northeast

Trails are proposed in Furnace Run Park and along Brush Road to provide a connection to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Use of existing roadway on Black and Columbia Roads.

- Southeast

Use of Everett Road to provide access to CVNP Riding Run Conservation Area.

The Summit County Trails and Greenways Plan is also shown on Exhibit 18. Trails in the Township could be planned to connect with trails in other communities

Changes have been made in recent years to the ability of local communities to zone for oil & gas production wells. At this time, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources holds all authority for regulation of oil & gas.

There are eleven goals and objectives in the SC Plan natural resources section, as follows:

A. An overall open space network should be created to conserve and protect important natural resources and to assist in structuring the form of urban development.

B. Using the Summit County Trail & Greenway Plan as a guide, each community should develop a local plan for linking these areas with sidewalks, bikeways and/or trails

C. Promote compact mixed use developments thereby relieving growth pressures on remaining open space

D. Invest in the rural economy to preserve agricultural lands. Encourage local communities to utilize land use tools to protect agricultural land and uses.

E. Use land management techniques and acquisition to protect drinking water

sources. Preserving open space upstream can help protect drinking water resources by filtering out contaminants before they enter the community's water system. Critical areas for water quality protection include wetlands, riparian corridors and floodplains.

F. Educate local communities on the need for groundwater resource protection based on the new mapping information from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources that shows the groundwater pollution potential for Summit County. The groundwater pollution potential mapping program (DRASTIC) ranks areas with respect to relative vulnerability to groundwater contamination.

G. Preservation of floodplains is an essential component of a good storm water management program. Green infrastructure such as floodplains and wetlands should be preserved because they provide free natural services for flood control.

H. Encourage the use of low impact design best management practices for better storm water management, to reduce runoff and increase groundwater recharge.

I. Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive parklands and open space areas, including critical wildlife habitats for the benefit of future generations.

J. Make sure the entire County is evenly distributed with parks and recreation opportunities.

K. Preserve the visual integrity of significant scenic views.

The Township has had success in meeting many of these goals, including encouraging open space in development, supporting the Summit County Trail & Greenway Plan, preserving agricultural lands, using land management and education techniques to protect drinking water resources and groundwater protection, protecting environmentally sensitive areas and preserving the visual integrity of scenic views. The map of Summit County Environmental Features shown in Exhibit 19 highlights the environmental challenges of land use development in Richfield Township, which is characterized by areas of extreme topography change and significant wetland and floodplain areas. Other goals of the SC Plan may be difficult for the Township to take an active role in supporting, due to limitations in applicability, authority to regulate or available resources.

Exhibit 19 - PDF Insert – SC Environmental features map

Chapter 8. Utilities & Storm Water Management

The Township has limited availability of public sewer and water and does not control the extension of utilities. There are limited areas that are served by private utility providers. The SC Plan includes goals and objectives related to the extension of public utilities. Despite limitations to authority over public utilities, the Township has cooperated with other entities for the extension of utilities in crucial areas and will continue to seek a coordination of efforts in this matter.

The Township is divided into several watersheds which eventually flow into the Cuyahoga or Rocky rivers. A map of Township watersheds is shown in Exhibit 20. The principal watershed is Furnace Run. Much of the developed area of the Village is within this watershed as well as the Township's Glencairn Forest community. Other lands in the watershed include the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Akron Metro Parks Serving Summit County.

Yellow Creek eventually flows into the Cuyahoga River and is primarily in the Village except for a small portion in the southwest portion of the Township. Along the western side of the Township is the Rocky River watershed characterized by numerous tributaries and very steep slopes.

The northeast part of the Township is in a watershed that drains directly into the Cuyahoga River. Soils are characterized by glacial debris including sand, gravel, silt, clay and large rocks.

In the area of storm water management, a regional storm water group was formed in 2009 and there is township member participation on this committee. The Northeastern Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) has proposed a program for storm water utility fees. The Township has participated in a county-wide NPDES permit group and conducted education efforts since the group's inception.

Exhibit 20 – pdf insert – Richfield Township Watersheds

Chapter 9: Economic Development

The majority of Township income is property-tax based, with nearly all property tax revenues coming from residential uses. In a typical year, seventy-five percent of income is from property taxes. Other income is derived from fuel and motor vehicle registration taxes, fees and leases, to mention a few sources. In 2005, the Township entered into a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) Agreement with the Village of Richfield; see Exhibit 21 for a map of the JEDD area. The agreement permits the Village of Richfield to collect a 2 percent income tax, which is distributed between Richfield Township, the Village of Richfield (each receiving 35 percent of collections) and the City of Cleveland (receiving 30 percent of collections). The 2.1 mill inside millage general fund property tax collected by the township is divided equally between the township and village, with the entirety of the outside millage property tax (currently 1.3 mills road & bridge, 3.5 mills police and 2.2 mills fire/ems) is retained by the Township

The SC Plan enumerates eight goals for economic development, as follows:

- A. Expand and diversify the Summit County and local tax bases while efficiently using land.
- B. Support the philosophy that Northeast Ohio functions economically as one large region rather than a collection of small, individual economies based on political boundaries.
- C. Utilize incentives to enhance regional economic development, not to poach from other Northeast Ohio communities.
- D. Formulate local and regional plans to communicate economic development goals and objectives.
- E. Encourage smart growth and sustainable business development best practices.
- F. Encourage communication between businesses, secondary, trade and technical schools, and local colleges and universities to identify necessary employee skills, business development needs and corresponding educational requirements.
- G. Revitalize existing commercial and industrial areas before developing new facilities wherever possible.
- H. Create and/or retain jobs that result in household incomes at or above the area median household income.

Development of the Existing JEDD and openness to other economic incentive and tax-sharing programs is in alignment with the SC Plan goals for economic development. The township has also agreed to adhere to a Model Code of Conduct in economic development through adoption of a resolution accepting the Job Creation and Retention Memorandum of Understanding with Summit County and other local signatory communities.

Location is an attraction for many uses that draw from a wide geographic area, many of which are quasi-commercial in nature but non-profit and provide little or no property tax income. On one hand, these uses demand little resources from township-provided services, however, there is lost opportunity for property taxes from future development.

Exhibit 21 – pdf insert – map of JEDD area

Chapter 10: Transportation

Richfield Township is well served by three interstate highways, Interstates 77, 271 & 80 (the Ohio Turnpike), as shown in Exhibit 22. The three interstates are easily accessible to Township residents, although only one full interchange (I-271 and S.R. 303) and part of another (I-77-Wheatley Road) are in the Township.

There are currently no public-transportation options within the Township.

Due to the limited control of townships over public rights-of-way and the fact that the township is bisected by the Village of Richfield, it may be difficult for the Township to contribute significantly to SC Plan goals and objectives for transportation within the greater Summit County area. The Township's role will be to maintain its own local public roads, take steps to maintain and improve traffic safety and encourage development of walkways and bikeways.

Exhibit 22 is a pdf insert – insert here/see hard copy – Richfield Township Highways

Chapter 11: Implementation & Policy

Implementation Strategies

Actions to implement the goals of the Plan should focus on the general guideline of maintaining the rural character of the Township, focusing on the current status as a mostly residential and agricultural community. Limited commercial/industrial opportunities exist on properties already zoned for those uses. The large amount of park-controlled lands contribute to the conservation focus, which may be expanded through limited conservation type development.

Specific Implementation strategies include:

- Update the Township Zoning Resolution to reflect the goals of the Land Use Plan. This includes eliminating the R-3 and C-4 Districts, combining other Commercial Districts and revising permitted and conditional uses in the Light Industrial/Office District.
- Expand the area of the Conservation District to include some additional properties of five or more acres.
- Work with land developers, property owners and local public agencies to create linkages with the Summit County Trail and Greenway Plan.
- Take active steps to promote regionalism by exploring working in conjunction with other communities or combining services or departments.
- Assume an active role in educating and assisting residents and local community organizations to promote greater goals, such as preserving and expanding Township farmland and improving waste and storm water management.

Chapter 12: Conclusion

The goals and implementation strategies respond to many of the issues identified. The pressure of annexation and increasing residential density is likely to continue but the Township goals are clear. The goals for the Township are very much in alignment with goals of the SC Plan:

As Richfield Township looks to the future, it is clear that it is advantageous to maintain itself as a low density community offering the advantages of rural-type living in close proximity to two major Ohio cities. This low density development is what regional planners identify as a “primary conservation area” that prevents the common practice of developing all the land between major cities at higher densities that create urban sprawl. Development proposed to continue in the Township enhances the openness created by the three major parks that are located in the Township. As in the past, the future of the Township is dependent on the future of the region.