



COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT/TOURISM PLAN

NORTHERN MIAMI COUNTY TRAIL SYSTEM

March 14, 2017

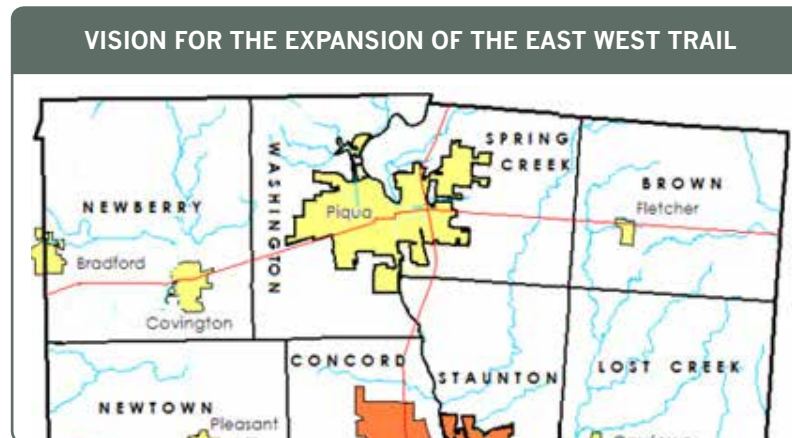




BACKGROUND

To encourage the expansion of the Trail System in Northern Miami County, the Miami County Park District initiated the formation of a partnership. The partnership applied for funding from the State of Ohio under the Local Government Innovation Fund (LGIF) Program to support the planning effort. The partnership included the Park District, the City of Piqua, the Village of Bradford, the Village of Covington and the Johnston Farm and Indian Agency. The expansion of the trail system would connect various existing trails traversing through Piqua and other parts of the county to the Simon Kenton Trail in Champaign County to the east, to the Tecumseh Trail in Darke County to the west and to the Johnston Farm and Lockington Locks historical sites and the City of Sidney to the north.

In December 2014, the partnership applied for a \$50,000 LGIF Grant and in February 2015 received notice of a grant award. The plan must be completed and submitted to the state by July 2017.



The expansion of an east-west trail would connect various existing trails



PLANNING PROCESS

The process included the appointment of a planning steering committee to work with the consultant and to oversee the completion of the plan, convening a kick-off meeting with the steering committee to review the scope of work, plan outcomes and schedules, conducting community engagement activities to solicit input on the proposed route, the drafting of a vision statement for the expanded trail, preparation of a draft the plan with community input and finalizing the final plan for submittal to the state. The final document will include the following:

- a consensus on a vision for the development of the expanded trail system corridors in northern Miami County;
- the creation of a unique brand for the trail for marketing purposes;

- strategies to enhance connections and linkages between the trails to the communities along the proposed path and to the various amenities along the corridors;
- strategies to enhance eco-cultural and recreational tourism along the corridors;
- consensus regarding an organization to implement the plan; and a listing of potential resources to fund the trail expansions and proposed improvements.



STEERING COMMITTEE

To oversee the planning process, the following individuals were appointed to the planning steering committee:

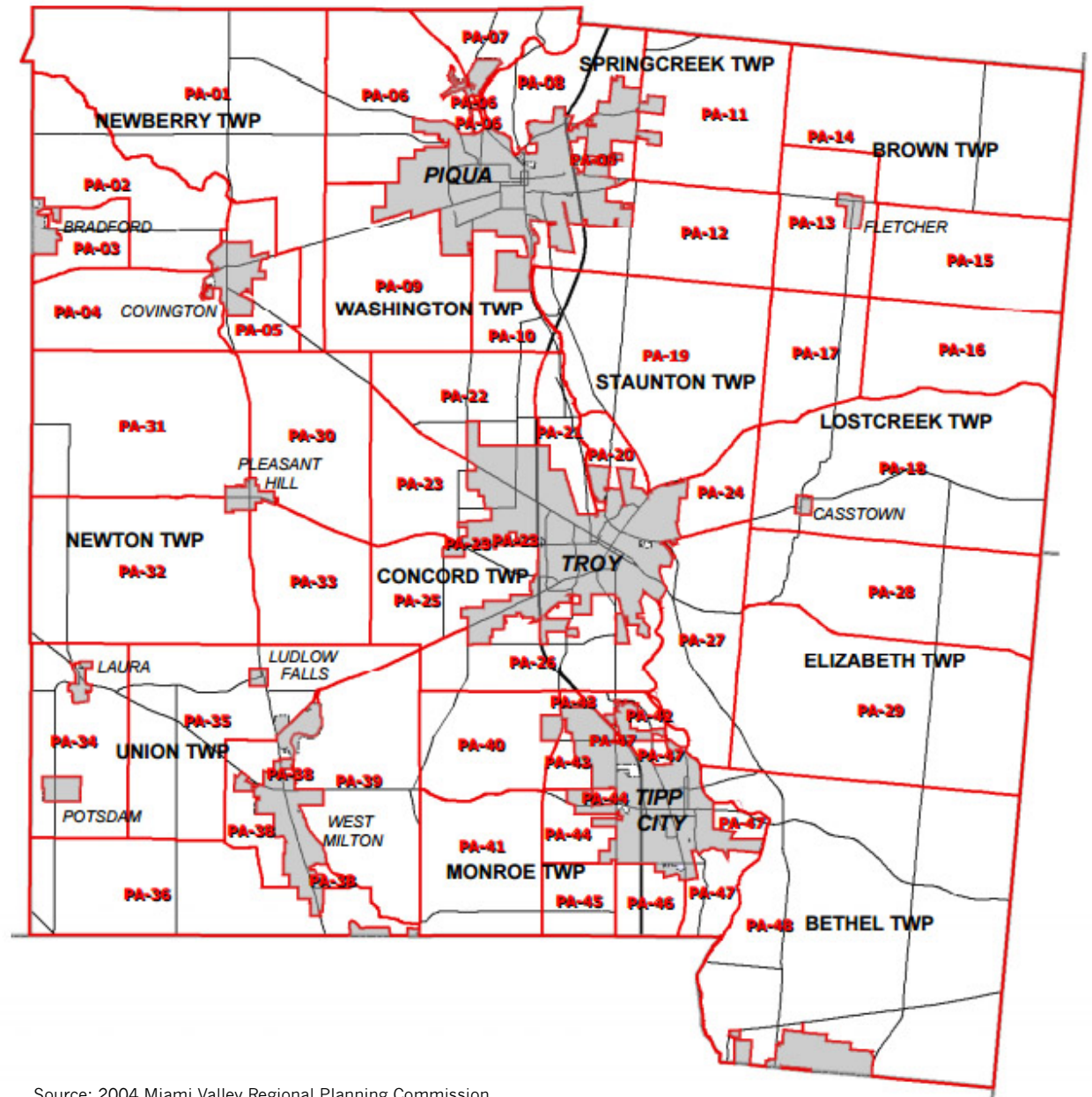
- Scott Myers, Miami County Park District
- Chris Schmiesing, City of Piqua
- Andy Hite, Johnston Farm and Indian Agency
- James Oda, Piqua Public Library
- Mike Busse, the Village of Covington
- Roger Looker, Village of Bradford
- Duane Gaier, City of Sidney Parks and Recreation



PLANS AND STUDIES

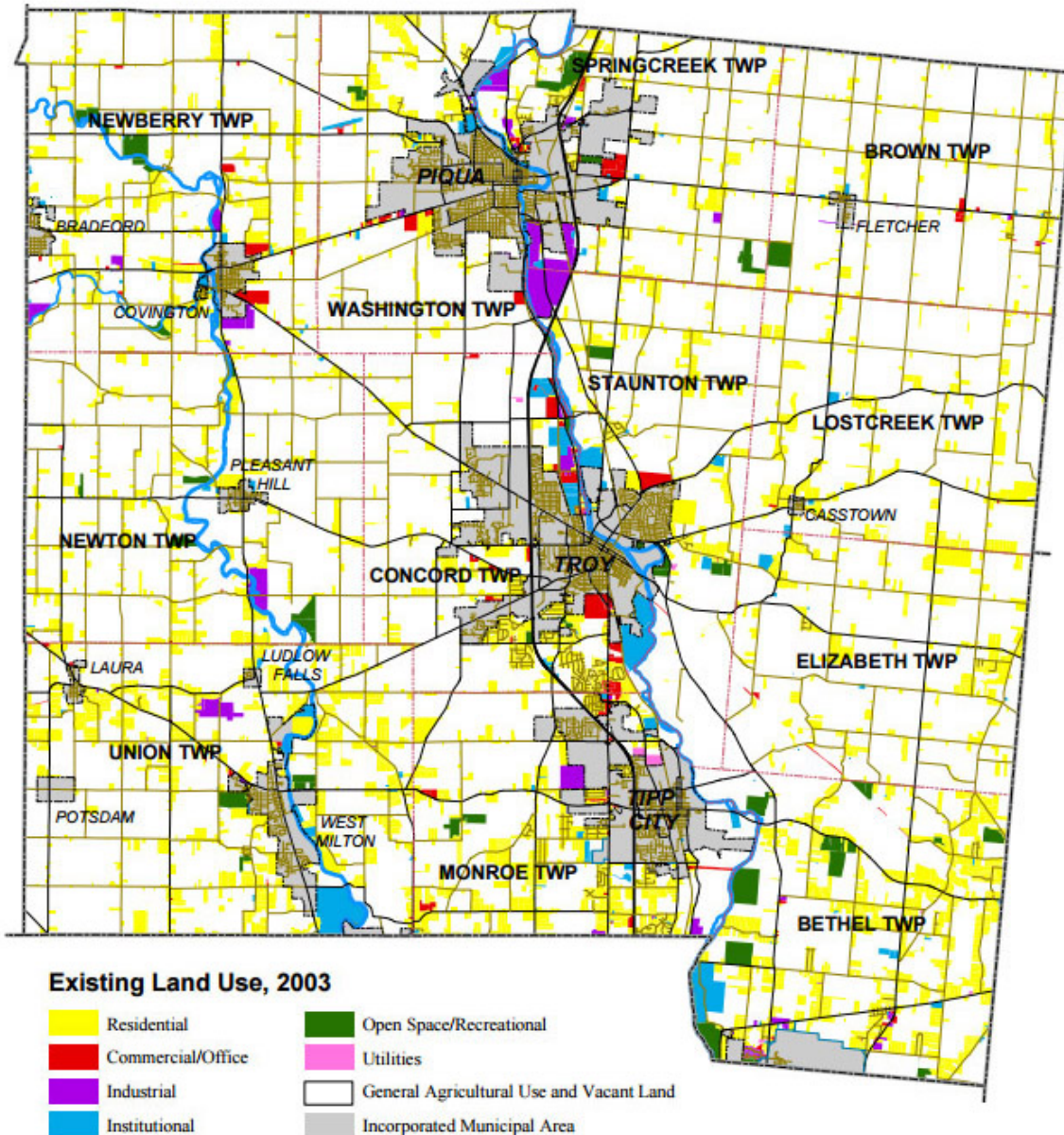
Current plans and studies support the enhancement of the county's trail system to make it more accessible to the public, to encourage healthier lifestyles and to meet the growing demand for outdoor recreational activities. The following studies and plans were reviewed for this plan: the Miami County Comprehensive Plan; the Miami Valley Bikeways Plan; the Miami County Park District 2013 strategic Plan; and the 2013 Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). All studies and plans collectively cited the need to upgrade existing trails and to expand them where feasible to enhance connectivity to population centers and amenities and to coordinate regionally for linkages to other trail networks.

PLANNING AREAS MIAMI COUNTY, OHIO 2004



Source: 2004 Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission

EXISTING LAND USE MIAMI COUNTY, OHIO



Source: Miami County Auditor's Office records 2003, cross referenced with 2002 Orthophotos and spot field checks.

Source: 2004 Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission



EXISTING LAND USES

The planning area where the proposed trail extensions would take place include the four northern most townships in Miami County: Newberry, Washington, Springcreek and Brown. Bradford and Covington are in Newberry Township, Piqua straddles Washington and Springcreek Townships and Fletcher, Conover, and Lena are within Brown Township. From the 2006 adopted Miami County Comprehensive Plan, the identified land uses for the subject townships are listed below. The plan further subdivided the townships into Planning Areas. Below are the existing land uses by Township and impacted Planning Areas from west to east.

• Newberry Township

(Planning Areas, #2, #3, #4 and #5)
– this area includes the central and southern parts of the township and encompasses 13,068 total acres of



The planning area where the proposed trail extensions would take place include the four northern most townships in Miami County.

and 3,007 acres as developed lands (23%). There was limited commercial, mostly found along SR 589 and US 36.

• Washington Township

(Planning Area #9) This area includes the land west of Piqua north and south of US 36. It includes 5,766 total acres, of which 5,243 acres were classified as agricultural/vacant land (90.9%), and 523 acres as developed land (9.1%). This area includes Piqua's PATH Trail ending at Spiker Road.

• Sugar Creek Township

(Planning Area #12) This area is east of Piqua between US 36 on the north, West Loy Road on the south and Brown Township to the east. This area has 5,112 acres of which 3,908 acres were classified as agricultural/vacant (76.4%), and 1,205 acres considered developed (23.6%). The PATH Trail stops at Troy-Sidney Road, the western

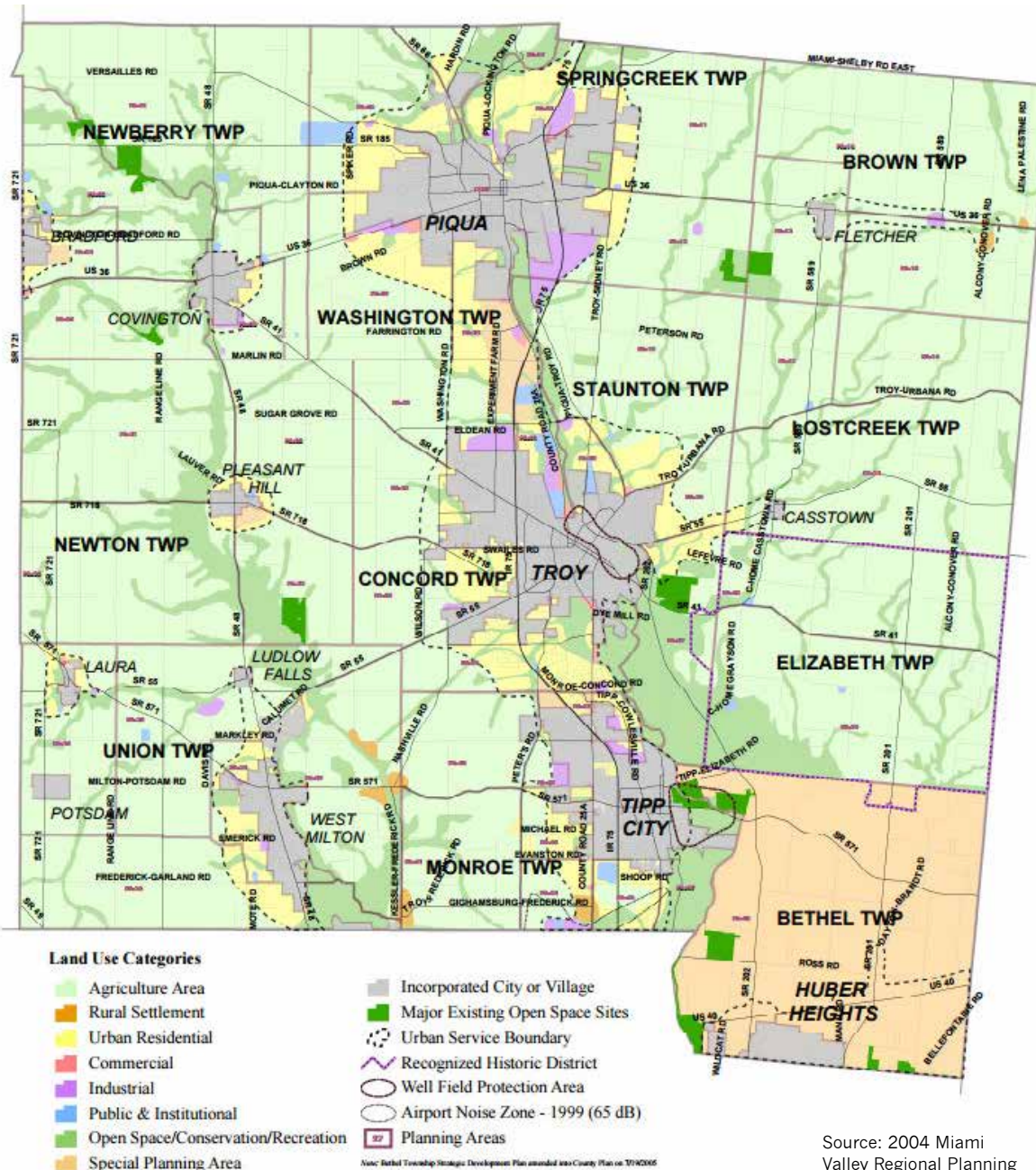
boundary of this planning area. Part of Garbry's Big Woods Reserve and Sanctuary is within Planning Area #12.

• Brown Township

(Planning Areas #13 and #15)- These two planning areas include the southern part of Brown Township and encompass 8,788 acres of which 7,919 acres were classified as agricultural/vacant (90%) and 869 acres as developed land (9.89%). Garbry's Big Woods has 160 acres of parkland within Planning Area #13.



RECOMMENDED FUTURE LAND USE MIAMI COUNTY, OHIO



Source: 2004 Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission

FUTURE LAND USES

Following are the proposed future land uses for the areas of the proposed trail extensions.

• Newberry Township

- Planning Area #2- Agricultural, Open Space/Conservation/Recreation, and Public & Institutional; Planning Area #3- Urban Residential, Special Planning Area (areas that may support more than one type of land use, may lack utilities and improved roadway systems. Future growth may depend upon availability of utilities and transportation improvements. Additional master planning would be recommended for these areas to ensure proper land use relationships to avoid sprawl and fragmented development), Agricultural Area, Open Space/Conservation/Recreation, Commercial and Industrial uses; Planning Area #4- Agricultural Area, Open Space/Conservation/Recreation, Public & Institutional; Planning Area #5- Agricultural Area, Open Space/Conservation/Recreation, Industrial, Commercial, Special Planning Area, Urban Residential.

• Washington Township

- Planning Area #9- Agricultural Area, Open Space/Conservation/Recreation, Urban Residential, Commercial, Light Industrial and Special Planning Area.

• **Sugar Creek Township**

- Planning Area #12- General Industrial, Institutional, Agricultural Area, and Open Space/Conservation/Recreational.

• **Brown Township**

- Planning Area #13- Agricultural Area and Open Space/Conservation/Recreation; Planning Area #15- Agricultural Area, Open Space/Conservation/Recreation, Industrial and Rural Centers.

The future land use section of the plan included the proposed expansion of Piqua’s PATH Trail eastward and westward along the abandoned railroad right-of-way. The trail extension would be compatible with the existing land uses and to the proposed future land uses proposed in the county’s comprehensive plan.

POPULATION

The population of the communities along the proposed trail extensions have decreased between 1990 and 2010. The exceptions have been the county and the state which experienced a 10% and 6.36% respective

increases over this same time period. From 2040 population projections prepared by the state, both Champaign and Darke Counties will lose population by 6% and 12% respectively, while Miami County and the state will have slight gains of 1.45% and 1.24%.

POLITICAL ENTITY	1990	2000	2010	% CHANGE 1990-2010
Bradford	1,111	1,034	1,077	-3.06%
Covington	2,603	2,559	2,584	-7.30%
Fletcher	545	510	473	-13.20%
Piqua	20,612	20,738	20,522	-0.44%
Miami County	93,182	98,868	102,506	+10%
Ohio	10,847,115	11,353,140	11,536,504	+6.36%

Source: U.S. Census Data

COUNTY	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% CHANGE 2010-2040
Champaign	40,097	39,880	39,690	39,250	38,690	38,000	37,400	-6.73%
Darke	52,959	52,190	51,270	49,670	48,280	46,890	46,280	-12.61%
Miami	102,506	102,700	102,590	103,160	103,500	103,930	103,990	+1.45%
Ohio	11,536,504	11,549,120	11,574,870	11,598,670	11,615,100	11,635,110	11,679,010	+1.24%

Source: Ohio Development Services Agency



PAST PLANS

MIAMI COUNTY PARK DISTRICT 2013 STRATEGIC PLAN



The Miami County Park District was established in 1967. To date, it oversees thirteen facilities representing approximately 1,900 acres of parkland and maintains approximately 91 miles of bikeways and trails. In 2013, it updated its strategic plan. The land area managed by the park district was found to be comparable to other districts with similar size populations; the number of parks was also similar, but the Miami District Parks were larger, its annual operating budget was also comparable to other similar size districts; operating expenses per visitor and acre were lower than other parks; and a higher percentage of its budget was allocated for education and programming. The highlighted services of the Miami County Park District included: water trails, safety

courses and after school programs (that weren't emphasized in other park districts), common services offered by other districts that were expanded in the Miami District included major and special events, river access, health and wellness programs, summer camps, and recreational trails. The Miami County Park district has experienced a decline in park usage from the 18 and under population group but a slight increase in the over 65 age group. Additionally, the aggregate population using the park facilities has grown more diverse, better reflecting the community at-large.

Future social and economic trends affecting parks in general include: the public's interest in accountability, sustainability and economic stewardship; more emphasis on public access to outdoor activities; and an increase in importance on active lifestyles, nutritional awareness and physical fitness as a result of rising healthcare costs. Additionally, with

lessening public funds, parks have had to enter into regional partnerships for better efficiency and reduced costs through economies of scale.

The adopted Plan included seven areas of action.

- 1 **Outdoor Experiences**
- 2 **Community Outreach**
- 3 **Education**
- 4 **Park Facilities and Management**
- 5 **Natural Resources**
- 6 **Organizational Structure**
- 7 **Funding and Partnerships**

Some of the key strategies pertaining to the maintenance and expansion of trails that were listed under these action steps included:

- Providing experiences that connect people with nature and inspire diverse park usage, while maintaining the integrity of natural resources
- Promotion of health and wellness activities, environmental stewardship and independent exploration through education, outdoor experiences and programs
- Continued collaboration with industry partners and area businesses to promote outdoor activities, local resources and to improve the overall quality of life
- Increased access to open space, recreational trails, waterways and natural play areas to diversify outdoor experiences consistent with the Mission of the Park District and user needs.

The eastward and westward expansion of the Piqua PATH, connecting it to other Miami County Park Facilities and trail networks in the region, conforms to the strategies outlined in the Miami County Park District Strategic Plan.



2013 OHIO STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)

The purpose of the SCORP is to guide the state with outdoor recreation planning, land acquisitions, facility development, programming, and management for a five year period- from 2014-2019. The 2013 plan is the 9th document in a series of plans satisfying the federal requirements of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) Act of 1965. This Act requires each state to have an approved SCORP on file with the United States Department of the Interior- National Park Service in order to participate in the L&WCF cost sharing program.

The primary goal of the SCORP is to provide a contemporary assessment of the state's outdoor recreation facilities, programs and activities and to recommend ways to meet needs. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources



(ODNR) is the responsible entity authorized under ORC 1541.03(f) to prepare the SCORP and to administer the L&WCF Program in Ohio.

The 2013 Plan reported that (from information obtained through various public outreach mechanisms) Ohioans were fairly satisfied with outdoor recreation in the state, though satisfaction levels declined somewhat for popular outdoor activities. It should be noted that Ohio does not charge any fees for admission to its parks and given the decline in federal and state resources for recreation coupled with the economic downturn in the US, has put a strain on many park district budgets. Consideration should therefore be given for revenue enhancement opportunities to boost park funds through facility rentals, equipment rental and program and special event fees.

The identified barriers to park usage and outdoor recreation activities included the lack of free time, distance of parks and various outdoor amenities, lack of park equipment at some facilities, and lack of information regarding available outdoor recreational offerings. On November 25, 2013, the guidelines issued by the United States Access Board for National Parks and other Outdoor areas developed by the federal government became effective. The guidelines are part of the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards, and address access to trails, picnic and camping areas, viewing areas, beach access routes and other components of outdoor developed areas on federal sites when newly built or altered. The United States Access Board intends to develop guidelines for non-federal outdoor sites covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through subsequent rulemaking.

Some other trends and priorities listed in the plan include the following.

- The need to include other outdoor recreational facilities such as Cricket and soccer fields to meet needs of a more diverse population.
- Addressing the resurgence of nature programs on ecology, “green” themed programs and nature play areas.
- The decline of tennis, basketball, baseball, and sand volleyball has meant that some of these courts have been and/or will be changed to skateboard parks, pickleball courts, and outdoor hockey rinks.
- There is an increased interest in healthy lifestyles by all generations with differing activities; the millennials wanting more high adventure and extreme sports; while the Generation Xers seek more family type activities, and the baby boomers preferring



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walking, dog walking, birdwatching and paddling, where water amenities are available.

- Touring heritage sites, special events and programs were listed as the fifth most popular outdoor activity behind multi-use trails, scenic driving, picnicking, and wildlife observation. Sites that have such amenities can provide more offerings and opportunities to double up on certain activities.
- Additional funds are needed to maintain existing park facilities, to upgrade and modernize older structures and for increased security.
- More funds are needed to purchase land and easements to expand existing trails and to develop new trails and new park facilities.
- Motorized recreational activities are currently limited to state and national forest lands (mostly in southeast Ohio).



Though this activity has declined between 2004-2012 at the Wayne National forest, there is still interest in this activity in other parts of Ohio.

- Niche recreation activities have surged over the years and include zip lines, canopy tours, ropes courses, obstacle courses, climbing walls, bouldering and rappelling. In some regions, there has been a decline in disc golf, paintball, dodgeball, ultimate Frisbee and kickball.
- Many park systems have accommodated dog owners with fenced dog parks, accompanying dog swim areas, and other pet centered events. Demand is high for these activities, especially in urbanized areas.
- Social media has escalated the sharing of information affecting customers and service providers. Rating services have helped parks address issues and improve services and have helped many park systems disseminate information

regarding facilities, special events, hours of operation and the like.

- Ohio's parks, wildlife areas and nature preserves are among the state's most important assets for tourism. The Ohio State Park System sustains 4,505 jobs. Visitors to the parks spent \$229 million in 2011, generating business sales of \$349 million, directly and indirectly. Overnight stays in state parks generated \$47 million in tax revenue in 2011.
- In regards to trails, a 2009 ODNR survey indicated that one or more members of more than half (51%) of Ohio households used an Ohio Trail in the past 12 months. From this survey and other public outreach sessions, multi-use trails were mentioned as the most popular outdoor recreation facilities with Ohioans. Further, trail amenities, more trails closer to home, signage along trails and better trail connectivity rank among Ohioans' highest priorities for outdoor recreation



improvements. Partnership projects such as the Ohio to Erie Trail linking Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland will be a boon to trail users and stimulate the mom and pop businesses along the “trail towns” along the way.

- Swimming is among the most popular outdoor recreation activities among Ohioans. This is due to Ohio’s excellent Lake Erie Beaches and numerous sand beaches on inland lakes that are a major attraction to summer tourists and local families. Modern swimming pool complexes with water features are heavily used with many providing picnic facilities, concessions and hosting of events to bring in revenue. While many pools are used and operated successfully by park systems and municipalities, others are not faring well and many have closed. For places with limited resources, splash pads and spray parks are an affordable alternative. In Ohio, paddle sports are increasingly popular with many Ohioans and improved access for kayaks and



canoes on Ohio waterways rank high among the most pressing needs identified in surveys and other public outreach initiatives. To accommodate this increased interest, the Ohio Water Trails Team under the Division of Watercraft at ODNR have designated water trails throughout Ohio. The most recent ones include: the Great Miami River, Mad River, Mahoning River, Mohican River, Stillwater River and Vermilion-Lorain water trails.

The SCORP plan identified four Federal Government Agencies that own and manage land in Ohio for outdoor recreation purposes.

1. The U.S. Department of the Interior specifically through the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS).

2. The U.S. Department of Agriculture through the U.S. Forest Service.

3. The U.S. Department of Defense through the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers; and

4. The U.S. Department of Transportation through the Federal Highway Administration.

The NPS manages natural, historical and recreational resources of national significance in Ohio. It manages 11 Park Service Units and is responsible for the North Country National Scenic Trail along with the North Country Trail Association. This trail is over 4,000 miles long connecting New York State to North Dakota via Pennsylvania and Ohio. In Miami County it follows the Great Miami River Trail along the communities of Tipp City, Troy and Piqua. NPS also administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF), the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program and the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) is responsible for the conservation and management of fish and wildlife resources. It maintains 3 National Wildlife Refuge Areas in Ohio and administers the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act. Programs



Ohio's parks, wildlife areas and nature preserves are among the state's most important assets for tourism.

under these 2 Acts provide funding for wildlife habitat, wildlife research, acquisition and development of access facilities for public use, hunter education, facilities for target ranges, funding for boating agencies, aquatic education, wetlands restoration and boat safety to name a few.

The U.S. Forest Service in Ohio

manages the 241,000 acre Wayne National Forest (WNF) in southeast Ohio. WNF offers two 100- acre lakes, over 100 fishing ponds, 11 developed campgrounds, five group picnic shelters, two boat launches, a swimming area, and over 360 miles of multiple use trails.

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

assists Ohio in planning and development of Ohio's water resources. In Ohio, the Corps has constructed multi-purpose reservoirs, locks and dam structures for purposes of flood control, navigation, hydropower, water supply, environmental/outdoor recreation and fish and wildlife restoration. ODNR

leases 95,000 acres of land from the Corp for various conservation and recreational purposes. The Corp has also provided boat launch ramps, fishing access and picnic facilities at all of its lock and dam sites.

The Federal Highway Administration

in Ohio provides funding for trail and transportation corridors under the Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program and the Recreational Trail (RTP) Program. The TE program provides funds for projects that enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure. Primary project categories are historic and archaeological, scenic and environmental, and bicycle and pedestrian. The RTP program funds can be used for a wide variety of recreational trail projects, including trail maintenance and construction, acquisition of land for trails, trail equipment, trailhead and trailside facilities.



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



The State of Ohio, through the Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), is the largest provider of outdoor recreation and open space in the state. These amenities include state parks, forests, wildlife areas, canal lands, nature preserves, scenic rivers and historic sites. In aggregate, these park and recreational areas provide thousands of acres of land and water, hundreds of facilities, and a variety of programs and events to help meet the outdoor recreation needs of Ohioans.

ODNR was created in 1949 under legislative authority as the lead agency to provide outdoor recreation services in the state. As of 2015, ODNR owned and managed 590,000 acres of land including 75 state parks, 21 state forests, 134 nature preserves and 138 wildlife areas. The department also has jurisdiction over more than

120,000 acres of inland waters, 7,000 miles of streams, 481 miles of the Ohio River and 2.25 million acres of Lake Erie. ODNR also licenses all hunting, fishing, and watercraft in the state and is responsible for overseeing and permitting all mineral extraction, monitoring dam safety, managing water resources, coordinating the activity of Ohio's 88 county soil and water conservation districts, mapping the state's major geologic structures and mineral resources, and promoting recycling and litter prevention. ODNR carries out its duties through eleven (11) divisions representing 2,089 employees (as of 11/30/14). Of these, 1,555 were full time and part-time (permanent and fixed-term staff) with an additional 534 part-time and full-time temporary, intermittent, seasonal, interim and project employees. ODNR's 2014-2015 budget was \$326.61 million, up from \$270.96 million in FY2011-2012.

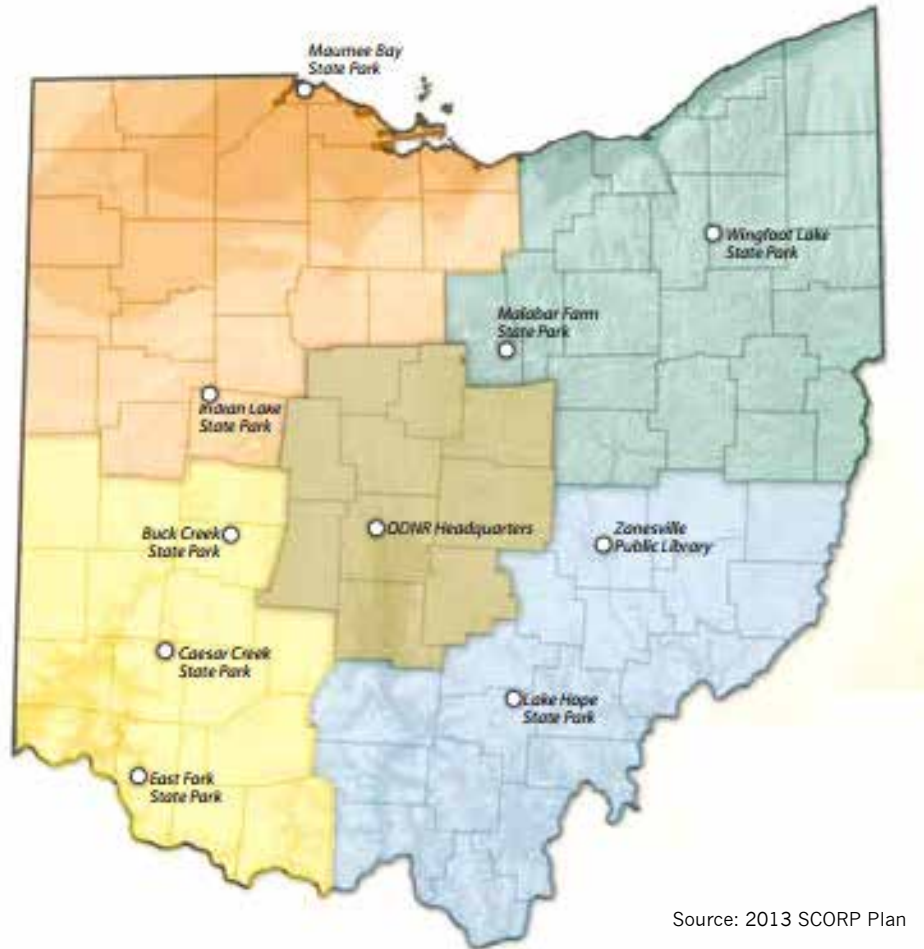
For the 2013 SCORP, the state was divided into the following five county regions for public input, focus group meetings and surveys.

1. Central Ohio included 10 counties: Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Knox, Licking, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Pickaway and Union.

2. Northeast Region included 21 counties: Ashland, Ashtabula, Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Harrison, Holmes, and Jefferson, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Richland, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, and Wayne.

3. Northwest Region included 23 counties: Allen, Auglaize, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hardin, Hancock, Henry, Huron, Logan, Lucas, Mercer, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Van Wert, Williams, Wood and Wyandot.

FIVE COUNTY REGIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS



4. Southeast Region included 18 counties: Athens, Belmont, Gallia, Guernsey, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton and Washington.

5. Southwest Region included 16 counties: Adams, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Darke, Fayette, Greene, Hamilton, Highland, Miami, Montgomery, Preble and Warren.

Each region was analyzed and surveyed to identify the recreational activities and programs that have increased and declined, the demographic trends occurring there, the barriers to outdoor recreation, and pressing recreational needs.

SOUTHWEST REGION- ACTIVITIES ON THE INCREASE

For the Southwest Region, which included Miami County, multi-use trails was identified as a primary recreational asset in the region and an area experiencing growth. Rural residents are seeking out public paths and trails as traffic increases on country roads. The Little Miami Trail corridor is heavily used and assisted greatly by many volunteers. Equestrians use bridle trails as well as multiple use trails for horseback riding. Park users are interested in cycling (preferably on paved paths), mountain biking trails and cyclo-cross courses. Motorized trails are also popular. Southwest Ohioans are also embracing nature experiences including gardening and beekeeping, primitive camping, unstructured nature play as well as nature programs. Adventure activities such as disc golf, geocaching, ropes courses, zip lines and canopy tours have been introduced and are popular. Southwest Ohio offers many waterways and a variety of boating opportunities from power boating on the Ohio River to kayaking, canoeing on streams and

rivers and paddle boarding on lakes. There is an increasing demand for dog friendly facilities and dog parks.

SOUTHWEST REGION- ACTIVITIES ON THE DECLINE

Declining activities included lake swimming, traditional lap pools, canoeing, paintball, sand volleyball courts and tennis courts. Some tennis courts have been repurposed to provide skate parks, and pickleball courts.

SOUTHWEST REGION- DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

More families are enjoying outdoor activities particular geocaching, kayaking, and mountain biking. Demand for fee based programs have declined. Attendance by lower income individuals and households have declined as well. Due to the economic environment, there has been an increase in staycations, where families stay home and use the various park amenities in the region.

SOUTHWEST REGION- BARRIERS

Barriers mentioned included lack of leisure time, distant location of park amenities, unavailable or overcrowded facilities, and unawareness of available facilities, programs and events.

SOUTHWEST REGION- PRESSING NEEDS

Facilities most needed by park systems include hiking trails and walking paths, soccer fields, indoor options for year-round access, spray parks, swimming pool complexes with water features, neighborhood parks and dog parks. Supporting infrastructure needs include flush toilets and signage on bike trails to alert bikers to area attractions. Programming needs include adult fitness and wellness programs. Park system professionals mentioned funding for operations and maintenance of existing facilities as a pressing need. Controlling invasive species was also mentioned as a pressing need in the region. With regard to land acquisition, the southwest region stated that land purchases for riparian corridors was a priority as well of purchases of small parcels near urban center and rural areas for future development. Acquisition for the development of new campgrounds was also stated. Special populations of concern included aging Ohioans, injured veterans and youth. Recommended actions included ADA modifications to applicable park facilities and better outreach of park services.

THE SCORP RECOMMENDATION FOR TRAIL CORRIDORS

Multiple use trails were most used by Ohioans compared to other outdoor recreational activities and was mentioned as the most important outdoor facility and the top preference for new or expanded recreation opportunities. Survey respondents also reported the highest level of satisfaction with their outdoor recreation experiences on multi-use trails.

Park professionals most frequently identified “trail connectivity” as a pressing need for outdoor recreation improvements in their area and trail connectivity was selected as a pressing need by the greatest percentage of survey respondents. When asked about their need for purchasing additional public land, the park professionals most frequently identified land for trails, trail access and trail connectors. When presented with a variety of trail improvements for increased spending the largest number of respondents chose restrooms and fountains along trails followed by funding for construction of alternative transportation routes (more trails).



Multiple use trails were most used by Ohioans compared to other outdoor recreational activities.

SCORP TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- Given the overwhelming popularity and importance of trails to the public, recreation providers should continue to form regional coalitions to review their trail offerings and to explore opportunities for creating trail connectors.
- New trail development should focus on connectivity to existing trail systems in the area.
- Grant evaluators should continue to give preference for funding to trail development projects that include connectivity to existing trail systems in the area.
- Trail development projects should also include conveniences for users, including restrooms, drinking water, adequate parking and security lighting.

- With regard to motorized trails, projects should focus on widening and providing obstacles or other challenges for riders on existing trails, and offering additional recreation facilities in the area to enhance the overall experience.



2008 MIAMI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL-REGIONAL BIKEWAY PLAN



2008 MIAMI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL-REGIONAL BIKEWAY PLAN (CLRBP)

The 2008 Plan "...envisions an interconnected network of well designed, well signed, and well maintained bicycle facilities serving all sections of the region, allowing people to bicycle for recreation and to reach major destinations".

The bike plan calls for an east/west route in Northern Miami County connecting Darke and Champaign Counties through Miami County (the Ohio-to-Indiana Trail). Connections would be made off Piqua's Linear Park Trail also called the Piqua Activity Trail for Health-PATH.

The eastern portion, called the Piqua-Urbana Connector, would link the PATH trail that currently stops at Troy-Sidney Road to Champaign County. Two main connectors were envisioned; one to the south, east of N. Union Shelby Road to the Garbry Big Woods Reserve and Sanctuary; and the other to the north, to the Village of Fletcher along SR 589.



2008 VISION MAP

Legend

Regional Network

- Existing Bikeways
- Proposed Bikeways

2008 Vision Bikeways

- in-corridor
- off-street
- rural corridor

This map displays Trails and Bikeways that make up our existing network, and shows the 30 year Vision of the plan; to use our roadways as a bike-friendly transportation system getting residents to the trails and parks from their own neighborhoods.



The estimated cost for this segment was \$1,442,000 (source: MVRPC 2008-2011 TIP). Improvements would include a ten foot (10') shared asphalt path on the former Conrail Rail Road R-O-W, major bicycle pedestrian crossing treatments- flashing warning lights, signage, crosswalks at Troy-Sidney Road, SR589, and at Alcony-Conover Road; and minor treatments such as crosswalks and signage at other crossings.

The western segment would start at the PATH trail where it currently stops at Spiker Road/County Road 106 and continue westward along the former railroad R-O-W through the northern part of the Village of Covington and on to the Village of Bradford and the Darke county line. Connections at Covington and Bradford were envisioned as well as links to other amenities such as the Stillwater Prairie Reserve and the Greenville Falls State Scenic River Area.

2015 MIAMI VALLEY BIKE PLAN UPDATE

This update to the 2008 Plan, embraced the six E's of bike planning: Education; Encouragement; Engineering; Enforcement; Equity; and Evaluation. Additionally, it adopted three overall themes: broadening the focus from trails to on-street infrastructure and complete streets; the importance of biker comfort and safety necessary to grow more fully this mode of transportation; and the need to taking a comprehensive approach to bikeway planning to enhance implementation of the 2015 Plan.

Since the adoption of the 2008 Plan, progress on the Ohio-to-Indiana Trail included the placement of temporary on-street markings in 2010 and 2011, and the construction of a major trail and road sections in Darke County in 2013.



The Ohio-to-Indiana Trail connecting Darke and Champaign Counties through Piqua was again listed as a top priority project for Miami County and the region.

Under the Long Range Plan, subject to further review in 2016, the East-West corridor of the Ohio-to-Indiana Trail included the Piqua to Champaign County section. This proposed off-road, 9 mile, ten foot wide section of trail was estimated to cost just under \$1.9 million.



NORTHERN MIAMI COUNTY TRAILS

Piqua and Miami County are within a 330 mile trail system encompassing the following counties: Butler; Champaign; Clark; Greene; Hamilton; Madison; Miami; Montgomery and Warren. The north-south trails in northern Miami County include:

- **The Great Miami River Trail** an 86.2 mile long asphalt trail from Waterworks Park in Fairfield, Ohio on the south, to Roadside Park in Piqua on the north;
- **The Canal Run trail** (part of Piqua's Linear Park), a 2.3 mile long asphalt trail connecting French Park on the south to Roadside Park on the north which is adjacent to SR 66. The Canal Run section connects to the Great Miami River Trail at Roadside Park.

- **The River's Edge Trail** (part of Piqua's Linear Park and the Great Miami river Trail), a 6.6 mile section that connects Swift Run Lake on the north to Lock Nine Park on the south.
- **The City of Sidney**, Shelby County and the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce are supporting the extension of the Sidney Canal Feeder Walkway southward crossing underneath I-75 alongside Miami River Road and continuing southwesterly along the Sidney Canal Feeder to East Lockington Road, then proceeding westward along Lockington Road to the Lockington Locks Historical Area. The plan is to connect this trail to the Great Miami River Trail and to the Buckeye Trail and North Country Trail.

This extension of the Sidney Canal Feeder trail has been made possible by the City of Sidney's acquisition of land and easements for a waterline project bringing water from the Lockington area northeast to the City.

PIQUA PARKS & RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Come see all the exciting things Piqua has to offer, including affordable homes, safe neighborhoods, great recreational facilities, vibrant shopping, proud schools, a beautiful downtown, Piqua Recreational Bike Path... and much more!

Whether your purpose is a day of shopping, an overnight visit, a day of recreational activities or conducting business...

Piqua is the place!

Piqua Parks & Recreational Trails



THE EAST WEST TRAILS INCLUDE:

- Piqua's Linear Park Trail, also known as the Piqua Activity Trail for Health (PATH), a 5.5 mile long asphalt trail from Spiker Road on the west to Troy Sidney Road on the east. The PATH re-used an abandoned railroad line and connects to both the Canal Run section and the River's Edge section along the Great Miami River.



TRAILS/BIKEWAYS

BIKEWAYS

The 2006 Miami County Plan identified two bikeways: the Cardinal Trail, an east-west bikeway running south of US 36 connecting Darke County to Champaign County running through Covington and south of Piqua. The other bikeway was in Troy along the Great Miami River.

U.S./STATE DESIGNATED BIKE ROUTES

US BIKE ROUTE 25

In September 2016, the Ohio Department of Transportation, after public input designated US Bike Route 25 which will connect Dayton to Toledo. In Miami County this route will go through Tipp City, Troy and Piqua following the Great Miami River Recreational Trail.

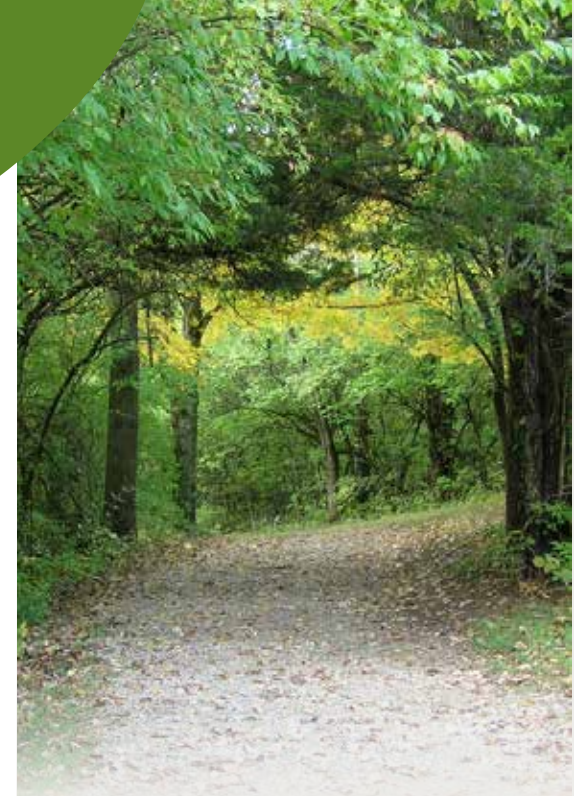
ODOT-STATE BIKE ROUTE 36

This east-west route connects Indiana to Ohio traversing through Miami County from Bradford on the west through Piqua on to Urbana. This route parallels US 36 on the

north on the west side of Piqua and runs along the south side of US 36 east of Piqua to Casstown Sidney Road. It then goes north on Casstown Sidney Road to Snyder Road, which is north and parallel to US 36. The route continues eastward on Snyder Road to Champaign County and on to Urbana where it connects to the Simon Kenton Trail.

PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

Both the Ohio Buckeye Trail and the North Country Trail follow the north-south Great Miami River Trail and Miami Erie Canal Route traversing the entire county from the county line south of Tipp City to the Shelby County line north of Piqua. The Ohio Buckeye Trail is a 1,400 mile loop trail that runs along the perimeter of Ohio. The North Country Trail is a 4,000 mile national trail connecting New York State to North Dakota via Pennsylvania and Ohio.



The 2006 Miami County Plan identified two bikeways.



The goal of The United States Bicycle Route System is to connect America through a network of numbered interstate bicycle routes.

NATIONAL CORRIDOR PLAN

December 2016



DESIGNATED U.S. BICYCLE ROUTE

Established U.S. Bicycle Route designated by AASHTO.

.....

UNDEVELOPED CORRIDOR

These corridors are not routes, but 50-mile wide areas where a route may be developed.

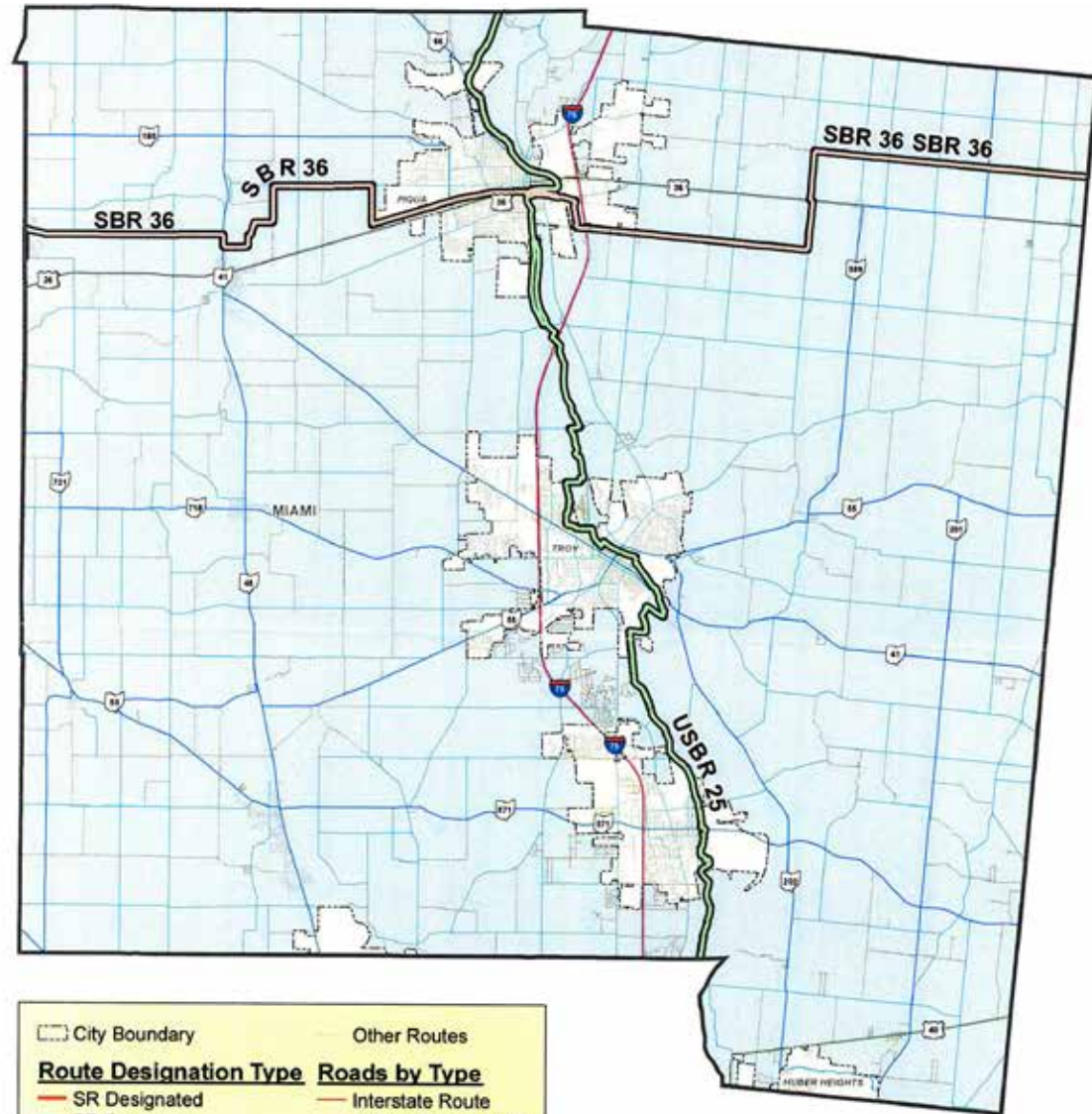
ADVENTURECYCLING.ORG/USBR

ODOT US & STATE BIKE ROUTES - MIAMI, COUNTY



PROPOSED EXPANSION OF PIQUA'S PATH TRAIL

The existing and proposed new north, east, and west connections provided the impetus to extend Piqua's PATH trail both eastward to Champaign County, westward to Darke County, and northward to Shelby County. The PATH trail in Piqua used an abandoned east-west railroad line that traverses the southern part of the City. On the east, the trail stops at Troy-Sidney Road. Following the abandoned railroad line eastward would have the trail parallel US Route 36 on the south all the way to Champaign County. This route would be near the communities of Fletcher, Conover and Lena. This route would be just north of Garbry's Big Woods Reserve and Sanctuary, a beautiful 172 acre recreation area of the Miami County Park District.



Route Designation Type		Roads by Type	
	SR Designated		Interstate Route
	SR Proposed		United States Route
	US Designated		State Route
	US Proposed		County Road
	City Boundary		Township Road
	Other Routes		

Date: 9/6/2016



On the west, extending the PATH trail from Spiker Road, where it currently ends, westward along the abandoned railroad line would take the trail north of US 36 to Bradford and on to the Miami/Darke County line. This proposed route would pass through the communities of Covington and Bradford and would be near two parks: the Stillwater Prairie Reserve, a 260 acre recreation area; and Greenville Falls Nature Preserve, a 92 acre park to the north the Great Miami River Trail would continue along the river corridor from Roadside Park to Johnston Farm and the Miami-Shelby line to connect with the trail extension coming south from the Sidney Feeder Canal and the Lockington Locks Historical Site.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As part of this project, thirteen individuals were interviewed to obtain their opinions and insight on the proposed trail extensions. The names of these individuals were provided by the Steering Committee and included

elected officials, park board members, and park district representatives. These phone interviews were held between January and February 2016. Fifteen questions were asked covering a wide range of topics that included years of residency in the area, park usage, knowledge of existing trails and connections, awareness of the proposed extensions from Piqua to Urbana and Piqua to Greenville, suggested links to the proposed trail extensions, opinions on needed improvements to the



existing trails (signage, trail markers, needed amenities, etc.), funding recommendations for trail improvements and development.

Generally, there was a strong consensus for the support of expanding the Piqua PATH both eastward and westward with many recommending the eastward section to proceed first tying it to Garbry Big Woods Reserve and Sanctuary.

On February 10, 2016, a public meeting was held at the Piqua Plaza Banquet Center to present the two proposed Trail extensions: Piqua to Urbana and Piqua to Greenville. Both would generally follow the former Conrail Rail Road ROW. After brief background remarks by Messrs. Scott Myers and Chris Schmiesing the group was asked to view the three stations set up in the room. These stations included maps and information on the Piqua to Urbana Extension, the Piqua to Greenville extension and the northern connections and extensions from Piqua to Lockington. Many



property owners along the Piqua to Greenville Extension expressed concern regarding the trail extension following the rail road ROW, stating that some of that land had been purchased and now had homes and farms on it. Concern was also voiced regarding the proposed eastern route near Lena where a fertilizer company had a scale located on or very near the proposed trail route.

The positive comments stated that these trail extensions would greatly improve the regional network of trails. The Piqua to Urbana extension would link up to the north-south Simon Kenton Trail and the western extension would connect to the Tecumseh Trail in Darke County. In general, the concept of extending the Piqua PATH eastward and westward was supported. Using some segments of the Conrail Rail Road ROW was seen as problematic given that private acquisitions of some of the ROW lands were now being used for residential and agricultural purposes.

MIAMI COUNTY PARK DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

“To conserve natural resources and enrich the quality of life for the people of Miami County through stewardship, environmental education, outdoor experiences and passive leisure activities.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Before finalizing the final recommendations for the trail extensions, the Planning Steering Committee reviewed the Miami County Park District’s Mission Statement and applicable goals and strategies from the Park District’s 2013 Strategic Plan. The Steering Committee also looked at the State’s 2013 SCORP’s Trail recommendations. After this review, the Planning Steering Committee unanimously agreed that the proposed trail extensions- Piqua to Urbana and Piqua to Greenville met the goals and strategies of the Park District Strategic Plan and addressed the needs for Trail connectivity as outlined in the state’s current SCORP Plan. Following are the 2013 Miami County Park District Strategic Plan Mission Statement and applicable goals and strategies.

OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES GOAL

“Provide quality outdoor experiences and open spaces that connect people with nature, promote stewardship and enhance the livability of Miami County.”



COMMUNITY OUTREACH GOAL

“Enhance the connection with the community and successfully communicate the importance of the Miami County Park District to quality of life with an emphasis on environmental, economic and social benefits.”

OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES STRATEGIES

- Provide experiences that connect people with nature and inspire diverse park usage, while maintaining the integrity of natural resources
- Promote health and wellness activities, environmental stewardship and independent exploration through education, outdoor experiences and programs
- Continue to collaborate with industry partners and area businesses to promote outdoor activities, local resources and improve the overall quality of life

COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRATEGIES

- Influence behaviors, opinions and actions by successfully communicating messages regarding land stewardship, sustainability and opportunities for outdoor experiences

- Assist in building local economy through tourism and business attraction

EDUCATION GOAL

“Provide engaging, impactful learning experiences to promote environmental stewardship, connect people with nature, improve quality of life and meet the educational needs of Miami County.”

EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES:

- Improve the overall health and wellness of the community by informing the public on the correlation between the outdoors and a healthy lifestyle

PARK FACILITIES MANAGEMENT GOAL

“Connect people with outdoors by providing quality facilities for community use and excellent customer service consistent with established standard.”

PARK FACILITIES AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

- Develop a Management Plan for each property, including an assessment of physical resources to determine upgrades and/or new facilities that meet the needs of the community
- Establish sustainability standards and updated procedures to guide design and management of land, facilities and equipment
- Increase access to open space, recreational trails, waterways and natural play areas to diversify outdoor experiences consistent with the Mission and user needs
- Review and assess all land acquisition opportunities through established criteria

The 2013 Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), a five year plan, identified Trail usage as the most used outdoor recreation activity in the state and the most pressing need was trail connectivity. Acquisition of land was therefore a priority along with trail amenities such as restrooms and water fountains.

**RECOMMENDED
ALTERNATE ROUTES**

PIQUA-GREENVILLE CONNECTOR

As a result of the community outreach activities and review of the related planning documents, the Steering Committee proposed an alternative route to the Piqua to Greenville Connector to address the issues and concerns raised at this public forum. The Piqua to Greenville Connector would follow the Conrail ROW westward from Spiker Road to North McMaken Road then proceed northward to Ingle Road; on Ingle Road proceed west and then southerly along Ingle Road to its most southeasterly point, then commencing at that point in a southwesterly direction along the Covington Tributary (that feeds into the Stillwater River) to the Conrail ROW (between Face and East Lindsey Streets in Covington), then proceeding west along the Conrail ROW to Range Line Road; then on Range Line Road

proceed northward to Covington Bradford Road; then on Covington Bradford Road proceed west to the Village of Bradford. This alternate route would bypass the industrial land uses with heavy truck traffic along the north side of Covington. This alternate route follows ODOT’s State Bike Route 36 from Range Line Road west to Bradford along Covington-Bradford Road.

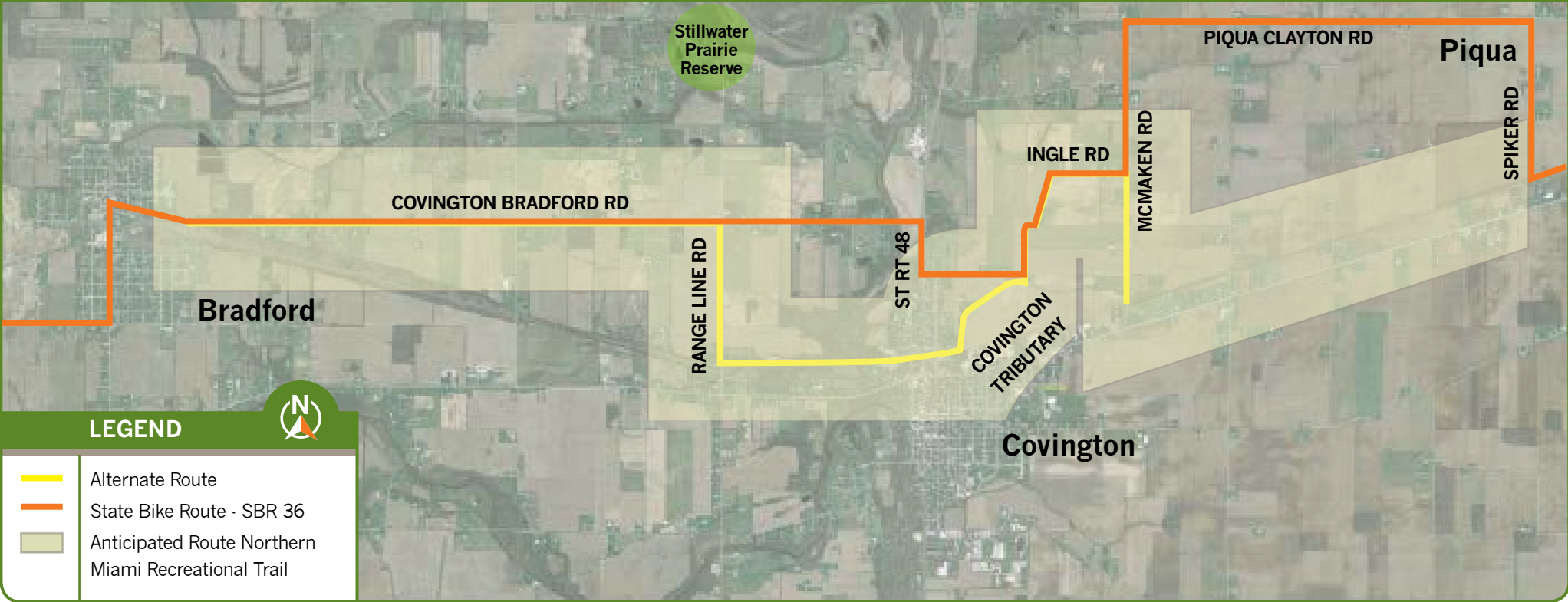
PIQUA-URBANA CONNECTOR

State Bike Route 36 (SBR 36) follows the PATH trail along the southern part of Piqua and then proceeds southward on Cromes Drive to West Statler Road; it continues east on West Statler Road (West Statler turns to East Statler Road at Troy-Sidney Road) to North Casstown Sidney Road; at Casstown Sidney Road it proceeds north to Snyder Road; on Snyder it then goes eastward to Champaign County. SBR 36 is parallel and south of the Conrail

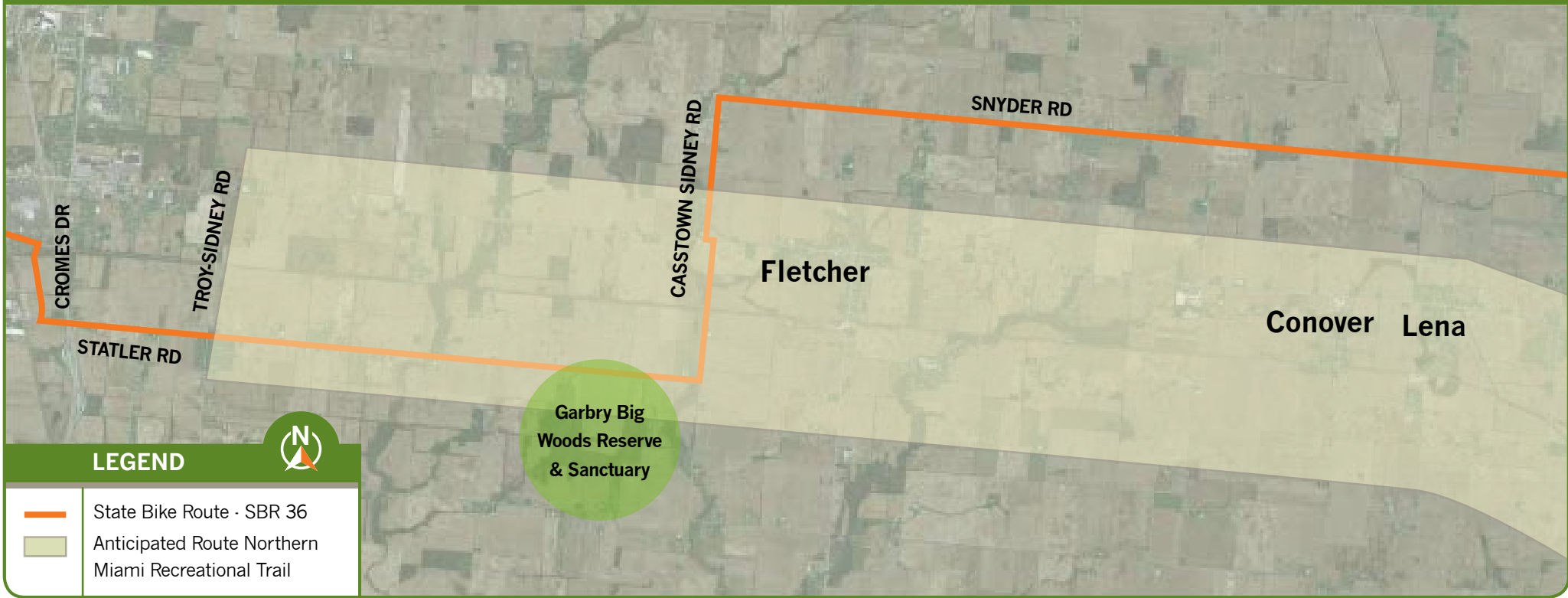
ROW between Piqua and Casstown Sidney Road. Entry to Garbry Big Woods Reserve is off East Statler Road. The Miami County Park District has purchased some land along the Conrail ROW near the Big Woods Reserve making a connection to Piqua’s PATH an ideal link to the City. This segment would be about 3.5 miles between Troy Sidney Road and Casstown Sidney Road and could be one of the first segments constructed given that some of the land has already been purchased by the Park District.



PROPOSED WEST - PIQUA GREENVILLE CORRIDOR

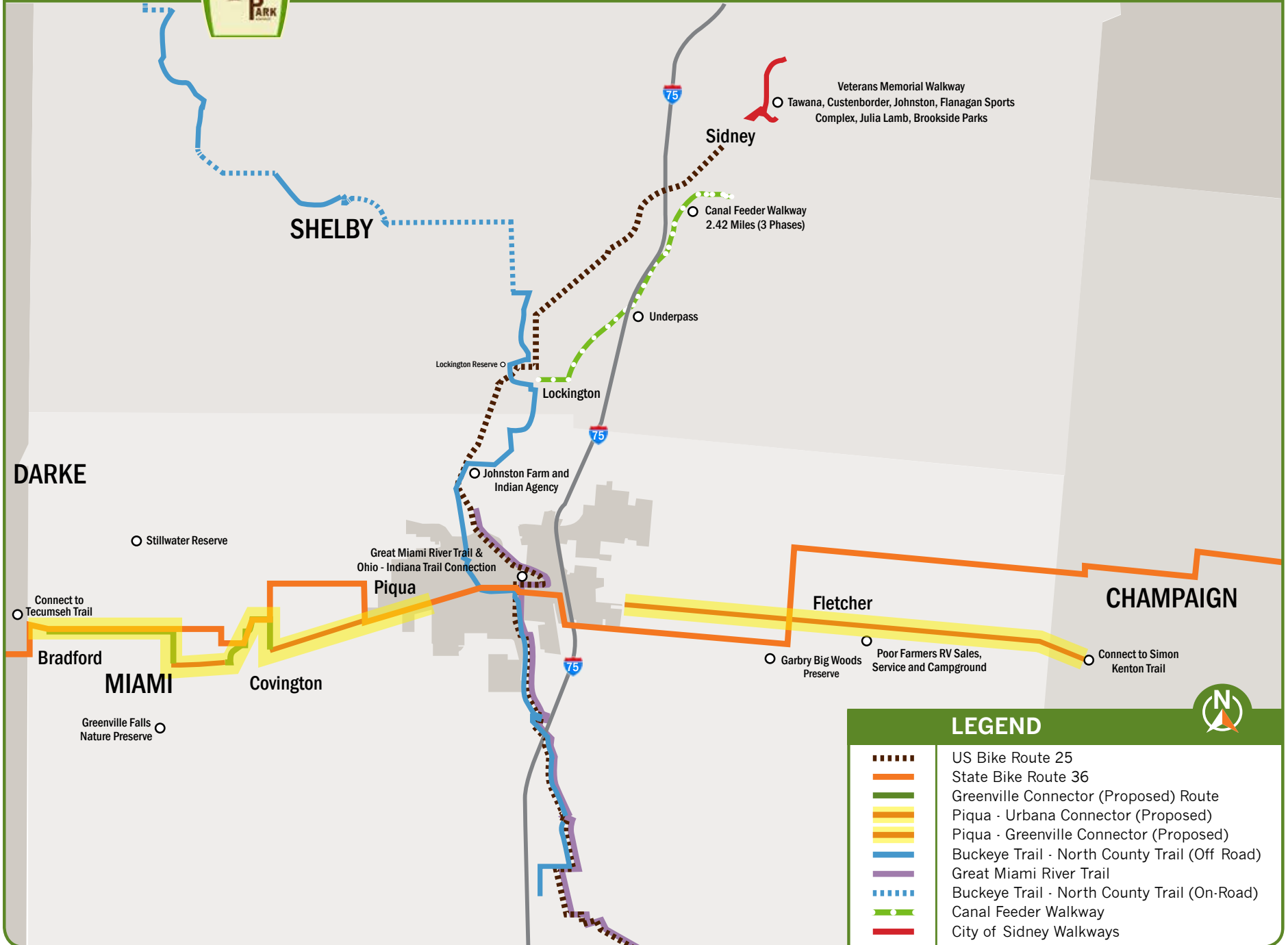


PROPOSED EAST - PIQUA URBANA CORRIDOR





NORTHERN MIAMI COUNTY TRAIL SYSTEM



Veterans Memorial Walkway
 ○ Tawana, Custenborder, Johnston, Flanagan Sports Complex, Julia Lamb, Brookside Parks

Sidney

○ Canal Feeder Walkway
 2.42 Miles (3 Phases)

○ Underpass

○ Lockington Reserve

Lockington

○ Johnston Farm and Indian Agency

DARKE

○ Stillwater Reserve

Great Miami River Trail & Ohio - Indiana Trail Connection

Piqua

Fletcher

CHAMPAIGN

○ Connect to Tecumseh Trail

Bradford

MIAMI

Covington

○ Garbry Big Woods Preserve

○ Poor Farmers RV Sales, Service and Campground

○ Connect to Simon Kenton Trail

○ Greenville Falls Nature Preserve

LEGEND

- US Bike Route 25
- State Bike Route 36
- Greenville Connector (Proposed) Route
- Piqua - Urbana Connector (Proposed)
- Piqua - Greenville Connector (Proposed)
- Buckeye Trail - North County Trail (Off Road)
- Great Miami River Trail
- Buckeye Trail - North County Trail (On-Road)
- Canal Feeder Walkway
- City of Sidney Walkways

