

“SHAPING OUR FUTURE”



North Gate Alliance
Cooperative Economic Development Agreement

STRATEGIC LAND USE PLAN

Final Plan and Report

March 10, 2013

ASHVILLE

PICKAWAY COUNTY

HARRISON TOWNSHIP

WORKING TOGETHER

SOUTH BLOOMFIELD



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Commissioner, President

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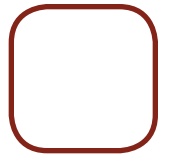
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Executive Summary



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Executive Summary

“Make not little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.”

Daniel Burnham
Architect (1846-1912)

The entire text of the North Gate Alliance Land Use Plan can be found at the Village of Ashville Website www.ashvilleohio.gov or at http://ashvilleohio.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=152



I. Why a Joint Planning Effort?

Communities are constantly changing. In village and rural environments, buildings are often constructed, torn down, renovated and abandoned while roads and public facilities are built or improved. Residents of this physical environment also change over time. They age, form families, and move through various stages of life looking for different things from the community in which they live. Attending to these changes, village and township leaders typically address various issues and concerns on an individual basis. Meeting agendas are filled with consideration of individual projects and proposals at various locations throughout the community. In addition, smaller communities such as villages and townships often struggle with the costs and complexities of providing and maintaining essential services and infrastructure.

With the passage of time, communities often recognize the need for a more comprehensive and long-term view of change. This is typically in response to a deep human need to grasp a bigger picture and to have some sense of “where we are going” and “how do we get there?” For all of these reasons there are many advantages to planning jointly. Individual communities can establish a road map for achieving their individual goals while also exploring opportunities to share resources and identify common goals for the benefit of all.

The benefits of joint planning have become even more evident with the establishment of the North Gate Alliance CEDA (Community Economic Development Agreement). This agreement, established between Pickaway County, the Village of South Bloomfield, the Village of Ashville, and Harrison Township, has outlined a process that will enable each of these communities to collaborate and succeed both individually and together. No longer do these individual communities, who’s futures are already intertwined by their proximity, have to compete with each other for the next annexation or economic development success. This plan will further that joint effort and explore ways to promote the most efficient use of land to meet the needs of the entire community and provide recommendations that will reflect the desires of residents and leaders from both villages and the township.



Fig ES-1. - Project Logo (Source: G2 Planning+Design)

Our Vision for the Future:

“Our Township and Village residents and leaders value their small town friendliness, community charm, and agricultural heritage and in the future, through smart growth policies and the coordination of local government resources and efforts, our entire community will promote balanced growth opportunities, coordinated transportation and pedestrian connectivity, and environmentally responsible industry that respects our environment, enhances our small village centers, and increases the success and quality of life of our families and employers.”



II. What Is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a forward-thinking, long range document that looks years ahead to anticipate the future challenges and needs of a community, and describe the long-term vision that a community wants to achieve. It provides the framework and policy direction for future development decisions and helps to promote and preserve the community character. A Comprehensive Plan is a broad look at the entire community in terms of where it is now and where it would like to be in the coming years. This vision of the future is depicted with maps showing future land uses and conditions, and with goals and policies that describe how the community wants to grow. Once adopted, the comprehensive plan becomes a flexible guide for the community to follow in order to achieve their desired vision for the community. The comprehensive plan also becomes the basis for many other planning activities, such as the creation of development regulations, transportation planning, park and open space planning, and economic development strategies. Given the ever changing nature of communities, demographics, housing and development needs, and other trends, the comprehensive plan is intended to be a living document which is continually revisited and revised to make sure that it meets the needs and desires of the community.

Along with the knowledge of what a comprehensive plan is and does, it is also important to describe what a comprehensive plan does not do. Because a comprehensive plan is big picture oriented and strategic in scope it does not typically focus on detailed elements. The comprehensive plan is also not a regulatory document, such as a zoning code, but is a policy plan. A common misconception among property owners is that a comprehensive plan represents a change in their existing land use or zoning. A comprehensive plan does not automatically re-zone land as a result of its adoption but instead makes recommendations as to what future land uses would be desirable if land is to be developed. In short this plan becomes a guide for how future requests for re-zoning and development would be evaluated.

Creating a Plan

Creating a plan begins with 3 simple steps that can best be summarized as questions:

Where are we now? - What makes up our community, what factors affect our future, and what are our needs?

Where do we want to be? - What is our vision for the future and the goals that will guide our future decisions.

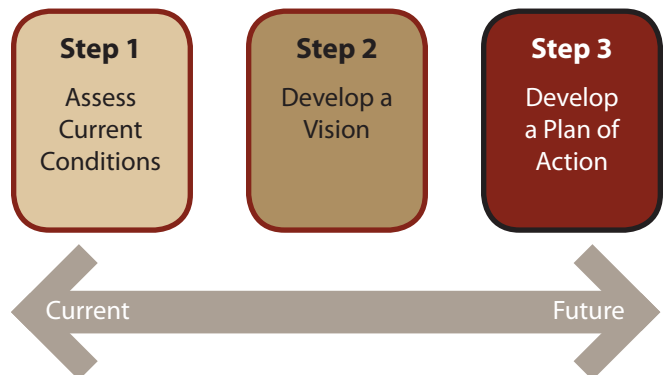
How do we get there? - What steps must we take to create the community we envision?

The Plan is:

- A guide for community leaders to look to when making future development and policy decisions.
- A reflection of the communities long term vision, goals and priorities.
- A supporting document to each communities zoning code when making critical decisions.
- A way for the residents, landowners, and developers to be aware of the communities vision and to meet those expectations.
- A flexible document that can be updated as changes in the community and changes in trends take place.

The Plan is not:

- A change in existing zoning
- Overly specific in it's recommendations
- A legally binding document
- A permanent document
- An exact outline of every future project



III. How To Use This Plan

This plan has been written so that it can be read either cover to cover or consulted as a reference when needed. The Executive Summary provides instant access to the major findings of this study, the results of the public visioning, and some of the more important maps. Chapters 1 through 4, outlines the existing conditions and trends that affect the planning area and the vision and goals developed by the community that determine the desired future. Chapters 5 through 8 detail 4 main categories that provide recommendations to help the township and villages to achieve those goals. These main categories are Future Land Use, Infrastructure and Community Facilities, Community Character, and Economic Development Opportunities. The recommendations in each of these categories, along with the interaction between them, must be considered for their relation to the overall growth and vision of the community. Creating a healthy and sustainable community depends on the successful interaction between these parts, resulting in a community that is environmentally friendly, fiscally sound, and maintains its desired “small-town” charm and appeal. Finally chapter 9 identifies the appropriate “action items” and suggested timelines for their completion. These action items provide the township and villages with the next steps that are necessary to move the community toward its desired vision.

The Township Trustees, Village Council members, and associated planning staff should turn to this plan when considering policy matters. They should consult this document to review the basic direction it sets forth for the community and the more specific recommendations outlined for the various areas. This plan, in conjunction with the zoning code, will provide a guide for the township and villages in evaluating, and approving or denying, land use and development proposals. To establish the appropriate expectations, this plan should also be reviewed by developers and landowners seeking rezoning in the Township and Villages for guidance on land use and development issues. In general, this plan should be used as a reference for providing guidance on a wide variety of issues, problems and challenges facing the township and villages and how to effectively overcome them.

This Plan is a policy document that should be used regularly to:

Guide zoning and subdivision approvals...

The plan should be used during all zoning and subdivision processes. While the plan is not a legally binding zoning document, it sets forth the land use vision for the community as well as policies to help achieve that vision. Proposed plans that are presented to the township or villages should be evaluated based on their compatibility with the future land use map and the supporting goals and vision.

Inform capital improvements planning...

Capital improvements should be planned in accordance with the recommendations in the plan. This mainly includes recommendations from the Future Land Use, Infrastructure and Community Facilities, and Community Character sections. If there are major additions to the list of capital improvements that will affect future land use planning (a newly proposed road as example), the land use plan should be updated accordingly.

Guide the creation of economic incentives...

The township, villages, county and the P3 Partnership should work together and use the plan when deciding the composition of economic incentive packages and who they will be targeted toward. The plan outlines several recommendations regarding locations and types of businesses desired.

Direct community initiatives...

Community organizations should use the recommendations in the plan to direct new programs and initiatives. Organizations should work with the township and villages to make sure they are following the goals and vision of the plan while helping create a better community through outreach and activities.



IV. Market Analysis

As part of this planning effort a comprehensive study of Demographics and Market Conditions was conducted. This study was done for the purposes of informing the plan of future land use needs, identifying future trends and changes in demographics, and identifying potential economic development opportunities in untapped commercial and industrial demand. From this study a summary of the top 8 market factors that affect the planning area are as follows:

Continuing Demand for Large-Lot Rural Single Family Homes:

The township and both villages (hereinafter referred to as the “planning area”) is expected to lose around 60 people (20 households) in the next five years. However, the planning area is expected to grow 57% from 2016-2035 according to the Ohio Department of Development. This study is not as optimistic as ODOD, but it is still believed that a growth of 40% from 2016-2035 is feasible. The bulk of this growth is expected to occur in the unincorporated parts of the township. We expect an increase in the population of 13% for Ashville (500 people) and 18% for South Bloomfield (300 people), by the year 2035. The ODOD predicts this growth under the assumption that land uses will not change. We know that the land uses probably will change to accommodate for the growth. Therefore, we believe that the demand for rural large lot single family homes may actually be greater than is currently forecast. If land uses remain unchanged, we predict an explosion in the amount of frontage development for single family homes. This could pose additional land use efficiency, safety and transportation challenges for the community. This plan recommends incorporating organized large lot subdivision development to accommodate the predicted growth in rural housing.

Households Earning Less Money = Low-Income Housing Demand Increasing:

Unfortunately, low-income households are the strongest growing demographic within the planning area. The growth is not occurring via migration into the planning area. The growth is occurring as a result of households falling from a higher earning income bracket. The median income within the planning area is currently \$44,691 which is approximately 10% less than the median income for the U.S. (\$49,445). Approximately 20% of households within the planning area (564) are at or below the poverty line (\$22,350). From 2000-2011, the median income increased 10.6% while inflation increased 30.6% during this same period.

As a result the residents are earning less money and it is affecting their housing choices. There is a 100% occupancy rate for low-income rental multi-family units. The excessive demand for these units is currently being absorbed by single-family homes; primarily in Ashville. Unless more low-income multi-family rentals are brought online, the demand will continue to be absorbed by single-family housing. There are positives and negatives with this approach. The positive is that this is a possible use for the increasing number of vacant homes, especially in Ashville. The negative is that it could permanently change the character of housing in the older parts of Ashville and eventually South Bloomfield. We recommend planning to allocate space for low-income multi-family rentals. The next 5-10 years could support an additional 60+ units of low-income multi-family rentals in the planning area.

Little Demand Exists for Additional Condos:

Demand for the existing condos in Ashville is light and the project will struggle to absorb what has already been built. It is unlikely that the project will attempt to engage in the second phase of the development. Rural condos were a tough sell during a strong housing market and are almost an impossible sell now.

Build Out of the Existing Platted Subdivisions in Villages is not Expected Soon; Long Term Outlook\Need is Modest:

It appears the housing market has not yet bottomed out in the planning area. Recent sales activity indicates that the market is slowing again (close to 2008 levels). Under optimistic scenarios, the villages could achieve subdivision build-out by 2027. However, locations and preferences change over time. In addition, the ODOD does expect modest growth (10-13%) in both villages by 2035. This will put pressure on additional subdivision development within the villages. In the short term (less than 10 years), we do not believe it is wise for either village to pursue additional subdivision development. However, the 11-23 year outlook suggests that further subdivision development is likely. Further, we recommend planning for this as a way to attract the households that are expected to migrate into the planning area per the ODOD. History suggests that large-lot rural frontage development has been meeting demand for housing at greater price points. Therefore, including housing of this type in future development may be a good idea. It is much more efficient to locate housing close to the cores of the villages than in the township’s unincorporated areas. We recommend the villages plan for a total 200-300 acres of space for single-family homes to be built 11-23 years from now, some of which should be targeting higher price points.

Demand for Senior Care Facilities is High and Will Remain High:

Both short and long term demand for Assisted Living facilities is high. As the residents in the planning area continue to grow older, demand should only increase. In addition, support for such facilities can come from a larger area than support for traditional housing. There is expected to be demand for at least 70 Assisted Living units for the next 10 years. We recommend planning on allowing 1 acre for every 6 units of assisted living. There is an overabundance of nursing care facilities and this is expected to continue. We don't recommend building any more nursing care only facilities.

There is also strong demand for independent living facilities. Current occupancy rates are at an unhealthy 97.8% and there is expected to be demand for up to 100 units of this type within the next 10 years. We recommend planning on allowing 1 acre for every 6 units of independent living.

Retail Demand is Ready for Expansion in Some Sectors:

There are five industry groups which currently have demand that exceeds supply within the Primary Trade Area and/or Competitive Trade Area. Those groups are: Food and Beverage Stores, Health & Personal Care Stores, Gasoline Stations, Clothing & Clothing Accessory Stores, and Sporting Goods, Books & Movie Stores. In addition, the data indicates that there is currently ample support for a mid-sized supermarket (around 60,000 square feet). Support for this would come primarily from both Villages. Within the planning area the median yearly sales for supermarkets is \$24.2 million and there is currently a gap of \$16 million. The location of a supermarket should be in a highly visible area with good traffic and access for residents of both Villages - preferably off of US 23. The support for the remaining four groups is strong enough to warrant consideration for development. However, there are currently vacant commercial spaces in both South Bloomfield and Ashville.

The traffic and visibility of US 23 make this the most desirable commercial corridor for retail expansion. In addition, clustered retail is desirable because it discourages "bounce". We recommend planning for minor expansion of commercial development around US 23; however, we urge the Village of South Bloomfield to consider issues of traffic and access when expanding commercial opportunities.

Office and Industrial Space will be driven by the Pickaway County Economy:

Although the surveys of residents indicated a desire for

a consolidated medical office facility, the data does not indicate that there is currently enough support for it. Most residents are traveling to either Circleville or Grove City to receive medical treatment that requires a visit to more than one facility. Consolidated medical office facilities in the suburbs of Columbus (Dublin, Hilliard, Grove City, Gahanna, Westerville, etc.) have proven to be successful primarily because there are large population bases in place to support it. In addition, most of those population bases are aging and thus more are more likely to seek medical treatment. In light of the fact that the population figures are expected to remain stagnant for the next 10 years, it is unlikely the area could support much additional medical office.

There is projected to be little increase in professional jobs (Finance, Insurance and Information) over the next 10 years; therefore, demand for additional office space will remain low.

We must note that predicting demand for Industrial and Office space in a rural environment similar to this planning area, is a tricky proposition. Demand for such space is generally related to regional demand. Although the planning area is included in Columbus MSA, it is not directly influenced by regional demographic trends. These trends have historically affected the northern portions of the MSA more than southern portions. In addition, there is ample space for light industrial and warehouse use in southern Franklin County. Businesses seeking 100,000 or less square feet of space have plenty of currently available space to choose from already in Franklin County.

Demand for significant (> 100,000 sq ft) Industrial and Office space is likely to come from a single source. In other words, a local factory is expanding or an assembly plant decides to locate in the planning area. These decisions are generally made independent of demographic outlooks. Instead, these decisions are based on the economic conditions that the business is experiencing and expecting to experience into the future. We recommend that the Plan allow for this type of expansion but cannot recommend a specific amount of acreage to set aside.

North of Duvall - The Rickenbacker Intermodal Facility.

Because of the uniqueness of the Intermodal facility, this area is being considered separately from the Market Analysis (see Economic Development Chapter). However, we can safely make the following suggestions. First, do not allow for additional housing within the established JEDD area. Second, besides light industrial and warehouse (hyper-logistics) uses, the plan should allow for opportunities for ancillary development, i.e. the trucking industry.

Overall Community Goals:

1. Continue to promote cooperation and collaboration between the township and villages to share resources, plan collectively, promote economic development, and make decisions that improve the quality of life for the entire community.
2. Protect the rural character, small town charm and agricultural heritage of the community.
3. Protect the character of 23 and establish a new gateway / sense of entry into the community and Pickaway County.
4. Preserve and/or support farmland as a viable industry where appropriate.
5. Promote economic development and the growth of jobs and industry north of Duvall Road and east of US 23 while protecting the character and environmental resources of the area.
6. Provide targeted areas for growth and development in and around the villages that do not require extensive infrastructure costs to the community and that protects the character of the villages and the environment.
7. Provide walking and biking connections between the villages, into targeted areas of the township and to important community facilities such as schools.
8. Develop consistent policies and regulations between the township and villages for the use of the 100 year floodplain.
9. Develop consistent zoning regulations and unified development standards between the village and the township for new growth and development.
10. Examine alternatives to address the concern over at-grade railroad crossings and the need for the fire department to reach all areas of the community.

(Established During the Public Participation Process)

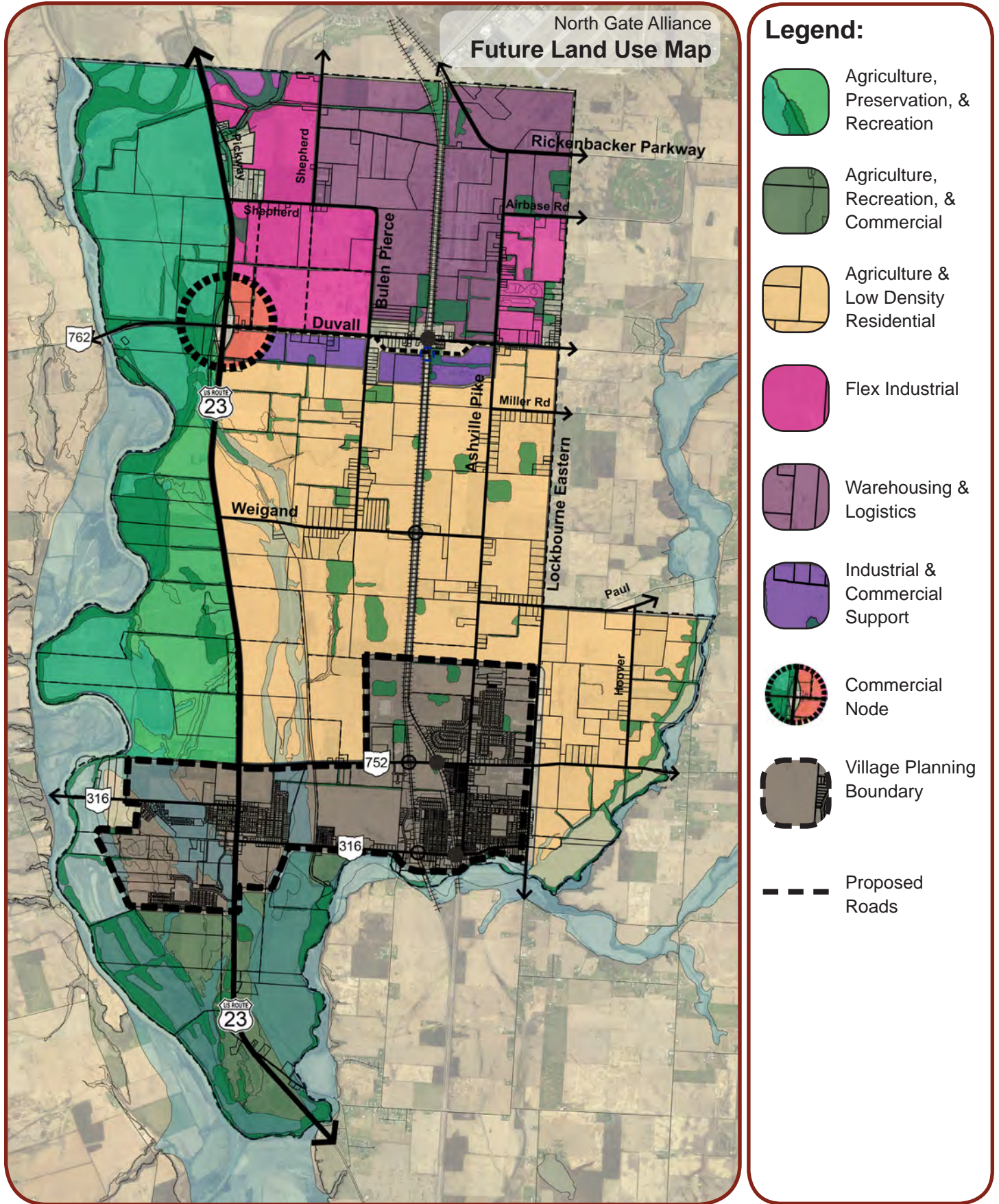


Fig. ES-2 - Future Land Use Plan (Source: G2 Planning & Design) - See Chapter 4 for explanation of land uses

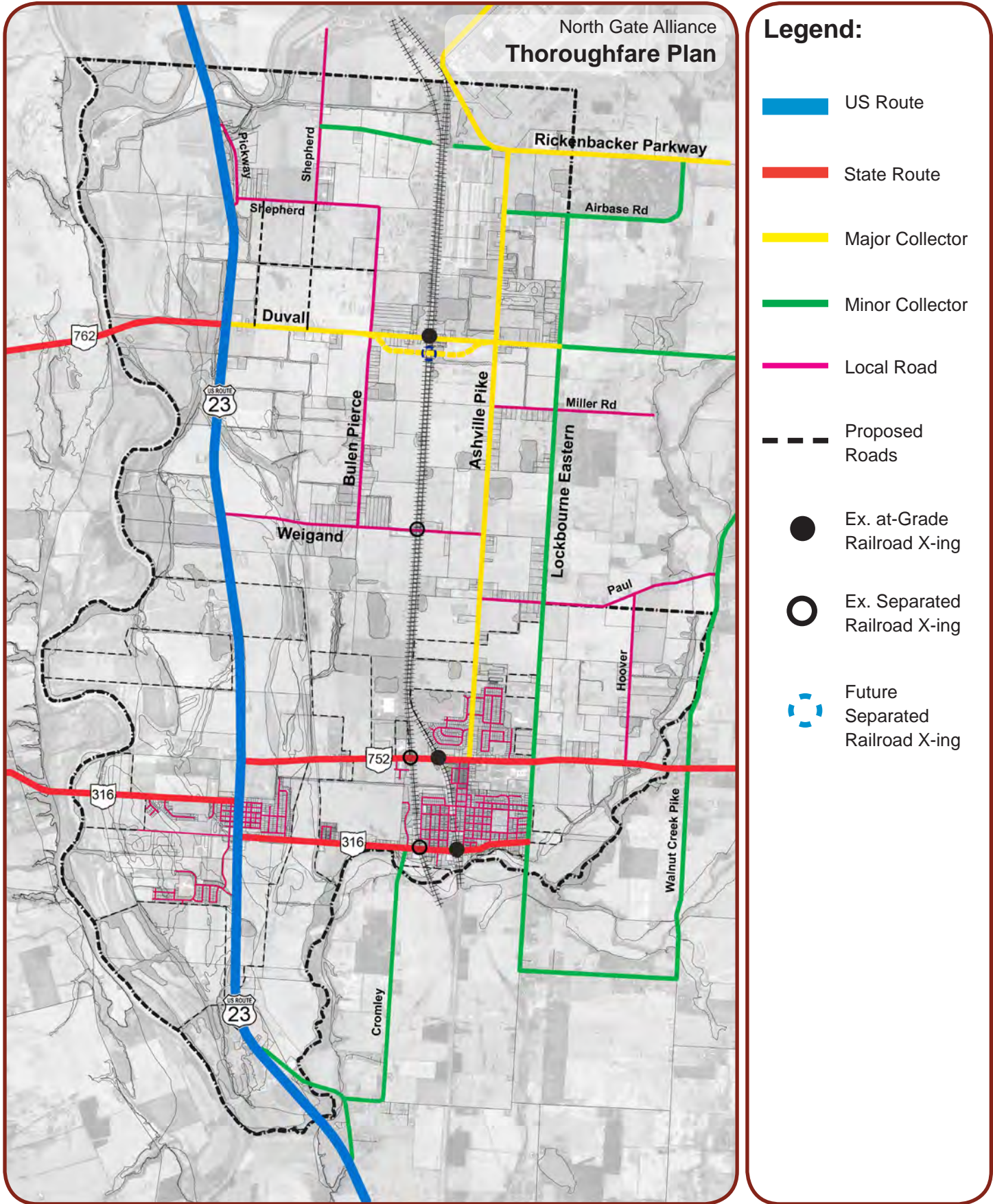
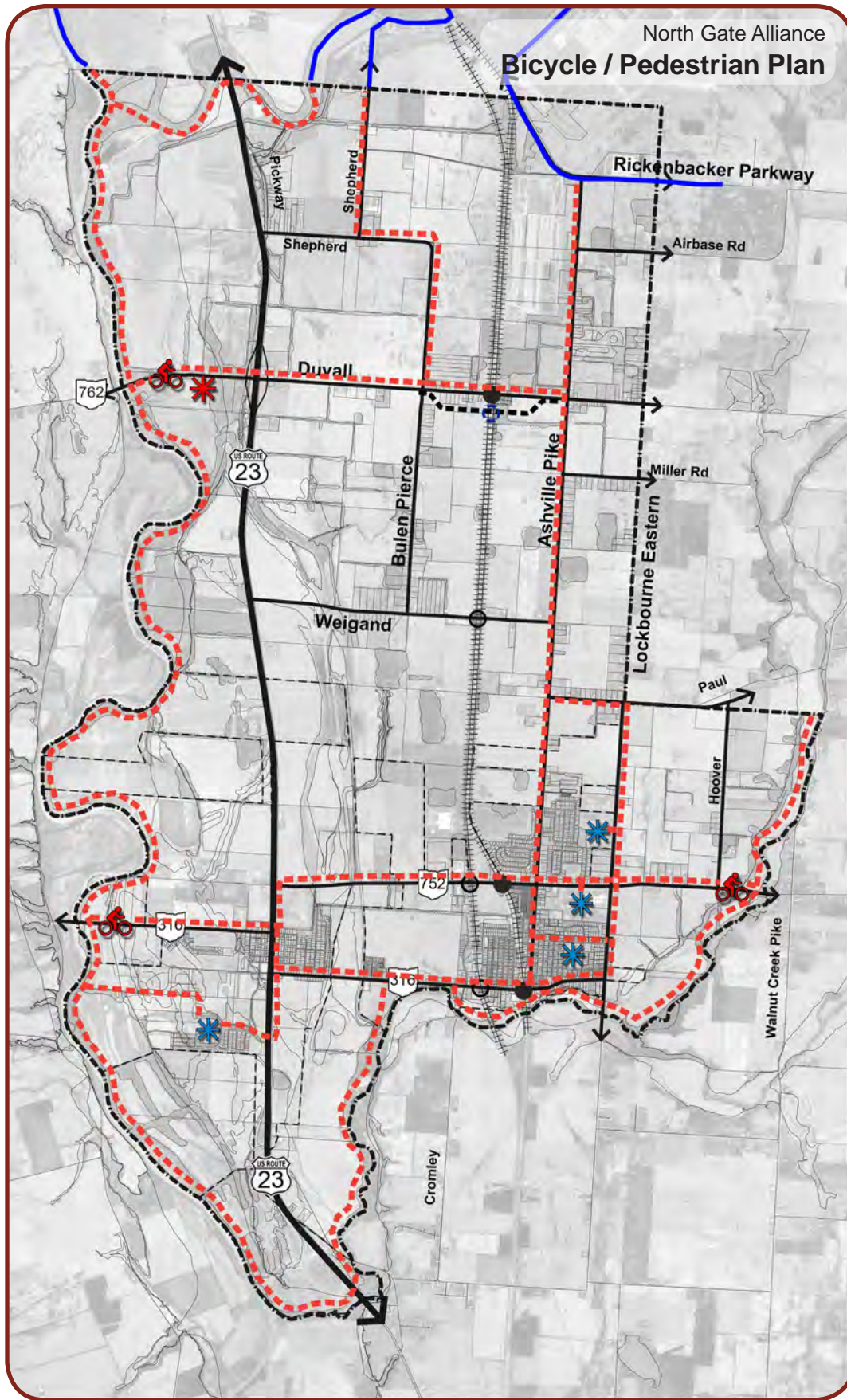


Fig. ES-3 - Thoroughfare Plan (Source: G2 Planning & Design) - See Chapter 5



Legend:









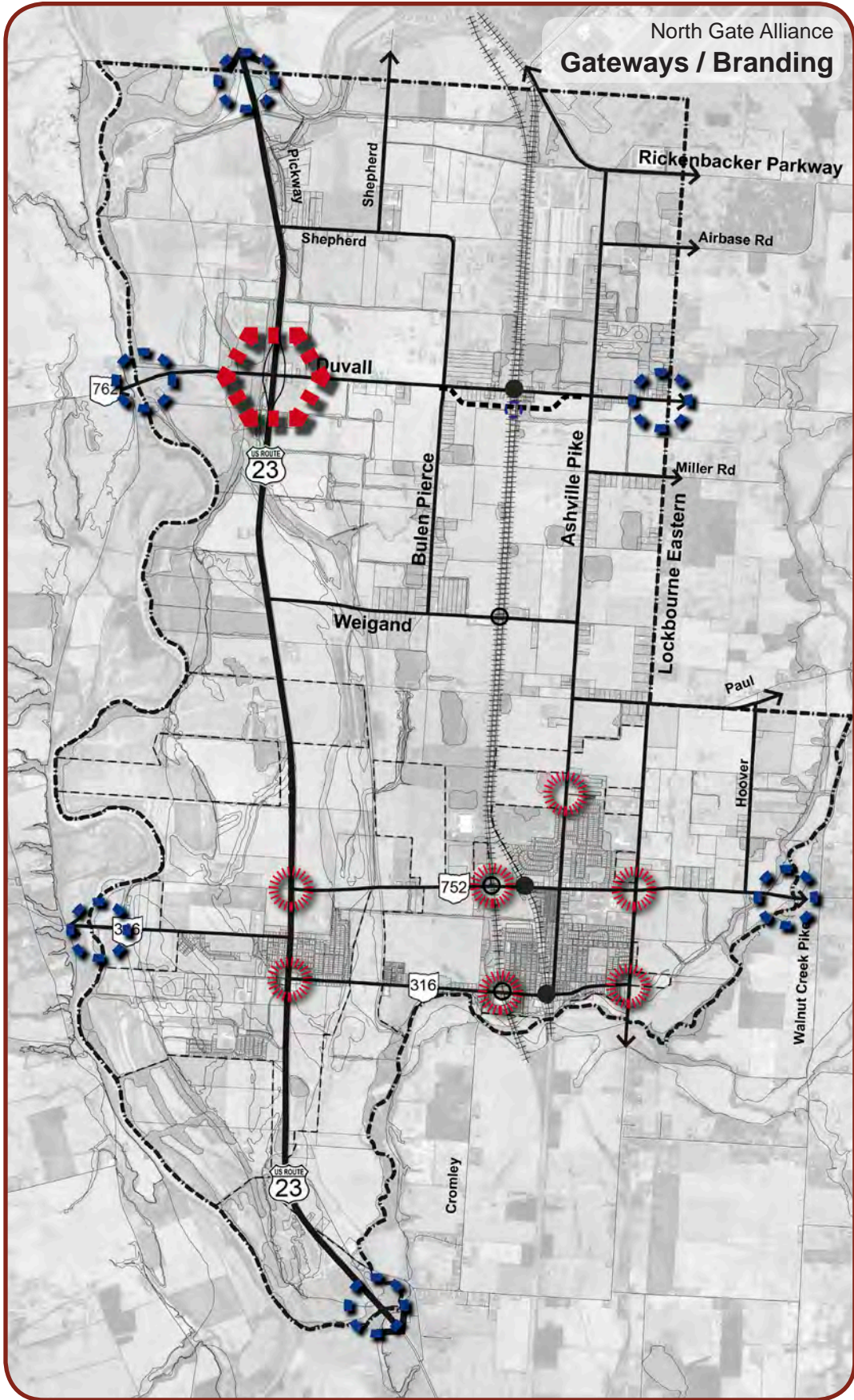
-  Proposed Regional Trails (Source: MORPC)
-  Recommended Local Trails
-  Recommended Connection Points
-  Mackey Ford Wildlife Preserve
-  Potential Trail Head Location
-  Ex. at-Grade Railroad X-ing
-  Ex. Separated Railroad X-ing
-  Future Separated Railroad X-ing

Fig. ES-4 - Future Pedestrian / Bikeway Connections (Source: G2 Planning & Design) - See Chapter 5



Legend:


-  Major Gateway Opportunity
-  Minor Gateway Opportunity
-  Village Branding Opportunity
-  Ex. At-Grade Railroad X-ing
-  Ex. Separated Railroad X-ing
-  Future Separated Railroad X-ing

Fig. ES-5 - Gateways / Community Branding (Source: G2 Planning & Design) - See Chapter 6