Chapter 7 Sustainability + Resiliency

01 GOALS + INITIATIVES

02 SUSTAINABILITY INTEGRATION

03 STORMWATER + GREENWAY ANALYSIS

04 ENVIRONMENTAL MAPPING + CONDITIONS

05 FARMLAND

Core Focus Area:

Sustainability + Resiliency

Copley Township will meet the needs of current and future generations without compromising the ecosystems upon which they depend.

GOALS AND INITIATIVES

Sustainability + Resiliency Goal 1: Copley Township will encourage low impact design principles in areas of residential and commercial development

SRG 1/1: Create incentives for sustainable projects in commercial and residential developments

SRG 1/2: Encourage the use of previous pavement/surfaces in development projects and other stormwater management solutions

SRG 1/3: Minimize regulations which require mass use of impervious surface

SRG 1/4: Utilize environmental resources such as the Copley Township Sustainable Development Checklist when conducting a Site Plan Review for residential and commercial projects

SRG 2: Copley Township will support efforts to conserve and protect natural resources and wildlife

SRG 2/1: Support natural resource protection, including wetland and canopy preservation, in all development projects

SRG 2/2: Create incentives which lead to natural resource and wildlife protection in development projects

SRG 2/3: Partner with Summit Soil & Water Conservation District to identify projects which will help protect, retain and restore at-risk land such as wetlands, floodplains and riparian corridors

SRG 2/4: Regulate development and residential density based on environmental capacities of a site

SRG 2/5: Encourage landscape maintenance methods which reduce or eliminate the use of toxic chemicals and encourage the use of compost and water preservation

SRG 2/6: Support the acquisition and preservation of environmentally sensitive acreage

SRG 2/7: Explore property valuation reductions for environmentally sensitive acreage

SRG 2/8: Encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites, such as former gas stations and dry cleaners, and previously-developed sites before using open space

SRG 3: Copley Township will support efforts of private landowners to preserve and expand farmland

SRG 3/1: Educate property owners regarding the economic advantages of land conservation efforts, sustainable farming practices, advanced agricultural techniques and start-up farming

SRG 3/2: Partner with appropriate land conservancy organizations to discuss acquisition and/or easements of historically identified farmland

SRG 3/3: Support and promote Farmland Preservation incentives

SRG 3/4: Encourage regulations which support large lot requirements in low density Districts

SRG 3/5: Map and monitor agricultural land in order to document the amount of land in farm production and the rate at which it is being developed

SRG 3/6: Partner with the organizations to promote and recognize Copley's historic family farms

SRG 3/7: Encourage regulations which support backyard farming initiatives

SRG 3/8: Encourage the conversion of inactive farmland to parkland over residential and commercial development

SRG 3/9: Advocate for funding and opportunities which support the expansion of farming networks and agricultural infrastructure

Supporting Documents

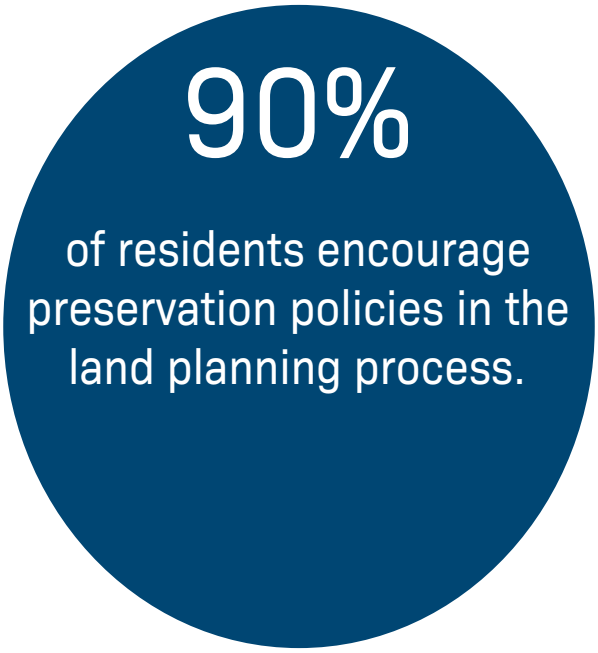
Summit County General Development Plan
OHIO Green Building Standards Checklist
Copley Township Sustainability Checklist
American Forest Foundation (AFF) Standards of Sustainability v2.2
EPA Low Impact Development Strategies
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Designs
LEED Rating System
Ohio Forest Law

PROPOSED BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Farmland Preservation Committee
Homestead Directory
Wildlife Habitat Study
Cost of Community Service Study (COS)
Farmland Preservation Plan
Parks + Recreation Plan

PARTNER AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

Summit County Engineers Office
Farm Bureau
4-H
Farmland Preservation Office (State of OH)
Western Reserve Conservancy
Summit Metro Parks
Balanced Growth Program (State of OH)
Department of Agriculture (State of OH)
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Arbor Day Foundation
Darksky
EPA Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities



Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Sustainability Integration

Kimley»Horn

MEMORANDUM – Sustainability Integration

To:	Copley Township
From:	Katherine Holmok, PLA
	Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
Date:	8/26/2024
Subject:	Copley Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update – Sustainability Integration *Draft

---

Summary

Kimley-Horn is tasked with supporting Copley Township staff with identifying and developing recommendations to integrate initiatives that encourage sustainable development, natural resource protection and enhance canopy in residential and commercial development as an integral component of the broader Comprehensive Land Use Plan update. This memorandum documents the information collected and recommended in this exercise.

Encourage Sustainable Development

Environmentally, sustainable practices can help protect natural resources, mitigate and adapt to climate change and promote biodiversity. The below are identified incentives for potential inclusion by Copley.

Sustainability Check List

: Checklist is not graded or scored – there is no pass or fail. Instead, the encourage developers to address issues early and submit proposals that hey would otherwise have been. They can also be used to promote the Copley's existing website. There are a number of example checklists vided to Copley in this document as an appendix.

For enhanced readability or to view this image in greater detail, scan the QR code to access the digital version of this study.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Sustainability Integration

Kimley»Horn

In Copley, the PDAs are areas around I-77's ramps, W. Market Street/SR-18 and the town Center. Additionally, areas already serviced by water and sewer can be added to the PDA areas in the future.

15-minute Neighborhoods

The '15-minute' neighborhood concept – developed primarily to reduce carbon emissions by decreasing the use of cars and motorized commuting time – is a decentralized urban planning model, in which each local neighborhood contains all the basic social functions for living and working. The 15-minute neighborhood include groceries, medical services, cultural services, education, transit and leisure. Of the existing neighborhoods in Copley, these three neighborhoods were the closest to achieving a 15-minute neighborhood:

Copley Circle has 4 of the 6 services in a 20-minute walk radii (The 15-min city – check your access to essential living needs (here.com)_

Montrose has 5 of the 6 services in a 20-minute walk radii The 15-min city – check your access to essential living needs (here.com)

Heritage Woods has 2 of the 6 services within a 20-minute walk radii The 15-min city – check your access to essential living needs (here.com)

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Sustainability Integration

Kimley»Horn

Provide Natural Resource Protection

Copley Township already has numerous Natural Resource Protection tools including open space protection codes, environmentally sensitive areas mapped, and inclusion into the regional Summit County Stormwater Management Program.

Additional Natural Resource protection tools may include:

Priority Conservation Areas

PCAs are locally designated areas for protection and restoration. They may be critically important ecological, recreational, heritage, agricultural, and public access areas that are significant for their contribution to water quality and general quality of life. PDAs are locally designated areas where development and/or redevelopment is to be especially encouraged in order to maximize development potential, maximize the efficient use of infrastructure, promote the revitalization of existing cities and towns, and contribute to the restoration of the Ohio River watersheds.

Copley's existing mapping of Environmental Constraints areas is similar to PCA mapping but would also include hydric soils. Hydric soils overlay the other layers already identified as part of the Environmental Constraints area map, therefore no changes would be needed.

Team with Conservation Organizations for priority conservation easements

Conservation organizations often can apply for alternative funding sources and can provide more resources for conservation and protection. Often these organizations can provide education, programming, operations and maintenance. There are several non-profit conservation organizations within Copley's geographic footprint that might be good partners, including:

- West Creek Conservancy (WCC)
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC)
- Trust for Public Land (TPL)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Regional Stormwater Control and Modeling

- Prioritize larger greenways that have greater connections to historic flooding areas. Maintain records of flooded areas to assist with future grant applications.
- Prioritize retrofits of historic basins
- Continue to work with Summit County Engineer for flood control projects
- Develop a stormwater control ordinance that allows for regional detention basins to be managed by the township or county to provide improved long-term control.

Enhance Canopy in Residential and Commercial Development

Copley Township has an existing Tree Preservation code (Article 16). Copley's code identifies a fee-in lieu of tree preservation but does not identify when these trees shall be planted, what type and where. This code can be improved by utilizing code examples from other municipalities such as:

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Sustainability Integration

Kimley»Horn

Copley Tree Preservation Code Revision Recommendations

Granville, OH: CHAPTER 1184 Tree Preservation Code (amlegal.com)

"Tree Bank Option means that if on-site Tree replacement is impossible or impractical, the remaining balance of required Replacement Trees shall be planted on a designated Tree Bank Site determined by the Village Planner."

"Section 1184.10 Tree Planting and Replacement.

a) Species selection shall be based upon the amount of space available for proper growth on the site in accordance with width of Tree lawn as specified in the Village Code, Section 1193.04; and informed by the most current Preferred Tree List maintained by the Village Planner."
   a. *suggest using a local list like City of Cleveland's Preferred Tree List Cleveland Tree Plan Appendix A Tree Selection Guide – Cleveland Tree Coalition (clevelandtrees.org)*
b) "The Applicant is expected to plant Trees in locations on the site where the environmental benefits of canopy cover are most likely to offset the impact of development. Trees shall not be placed within utility easements, or in other locations where their future protection cannot be assured.
c) Approval of a plan shall be contingent upon the Applicant depositing with the Village either bond or other insurance/surety in an amount equal to the estimated cost of materials and labor of Trees at the time of installation.
d) Every effort shall be made to replant a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the required Replacement Trees in another location on the site from which the original Trees were removed to maintain the remaining natural distribution of Tree cover in the Village.
e) Replacement Tree shall, to the extent possible, have a minimum caliper of two (2) inches and a clear trunk height of at least six (6) feet. The schedule for Replacement Trees will be based on the diameter, twenty-four(24) inches above grade of those Trees removed. Replacement Trees shall equal the diameter or aggregate diameter of the Tree(s) removed; i.e., removal of a twenty-four (24)-inch diameter Tree at twenty-four (24)inches above grade would equal twelve (12), two (2) inch diameter Trees."

"Section 1184.11 Replacement Schedule for Heavily Wooded Sites.

...This calculation shall be a measured estimate based on Tree size and canopy achieved over a thirty (30) year period....

...may approve one, or any combination of, the following alternatives as a means of meeting the Tree replacement requirements:

a) Replace as many Trees as is practical on the affected lot; and/or
b) Replace as many Trees as is practical within the affected subdivision phase; and/or
c) Replace as many Trees as is practical within the affected subdivision; and/or
d) For those Trees that cannot be replaced through steps one through three above, the developer or owner shall be required to replace the Trees elsewhere in the Village; and/or
e) Donate two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) per Tree removed payable to the Village Tree Bank Fund for purchase and planting of Replacement Trees at an alternate location, up to a maximum of twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000)."

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Sustainability Integration

Kimley»Horn

Cleveland, OH:

341.051 Tree Preservation Plan Required § 341.051 Tree Preservation Plan Required (amlegal.com)

" 341.051 Tree Preservation Plan Required

(a) For any development project that meets the criteria of Section 341.02 ("development project") and is situated on one (1) or more acres of land, and for apartment, townhome or condominium projects of four (4) or more units situated on any size parcel of land, a Tree Preservation Plan shall be submitted as part of the Building Permit application. The Tree Preservation Plan shall be approved by the Commissioner of Urban Forestry ("Commissioner") or a designee before a Building Permit is issued. A Tree Preservation Plan is not required for single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and three-family dwellings or for any person, firm, or corporation demolishing a building or structure pursuant to a valid demolition permit issued under Chapter 3115 of this Code.

(b) The Tree Preservation Plan shall include: (1) the location, botanical name, dimension at breast height (DBH), and vertical height of all existing trees on the property; (2) the intent to preserve, relocate, or replace each tree; (3) measures to be taken to protect new and mature trees during construction, and to protect roots and soil during construction, following *Best Management Standards and ANSI Standards for Arboriculture*, as may be amended from time to time; and (4) any other information the Commissioner or a designee requires to determine compliance with this chapter. The Tree Preservation Plan shall be adhered to during all phases of construction on any development project for which a Tree Preservation Plan is required."

"341.052 Tree Preservation General Requirements

The following are basic provisions for the preservation of private and public trees during construction of development projects on one (1) or more acres of land, for apartment, townhome or condominium projects of four (4) or more units situated on any size parcel of land, and for protecting public trees under Section 509.14.

(a) All trees with a DBH of over six (6) inches shall be preserved, maintained and protected during construction, a tree's roots shall be protected, and the size of the Tree Protection Zone shall be, in accordance with *Best Management Standards and ANSI Standards for Arboriculture*, as may be amended from time to time.

(b) Trees on the property shall not be removed without prior written approval from the Commissioner of Urban Forestry ("Commissioner") or a designee and only if one (1) or more of the following situations apply:

1) The tree poses a risk. To verify that a risk exists, the City may require a tree risk assessment be performed by the Commissioner or designee or an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist with the ISA qualification.
2) The tree is planted too close to an existing structure, such that it is either damaging or has the clear potential to damage the structure.
3) The tree inhibits an infrastructure repair due to its proximity to the needed infrastructure repair. Trees should not be removed simply because a sidewalk is

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Sustainability Integration

Kimley»Horn

raised or cracked, unless it is determined that removal of the tree is necessary for the sidewalk repair.

4) The tree has structural defects (e.g., split trunk, poor branch attachments), is damaged to the point that it cannot recover and grow properly, or that it will grow in a misshapen or unsightly manner that could result in failure.
5) The tree is infested with an epidemic insect or disease where the recommended control is not applicable and removal is necessary to prevent transmission of the insect or disease to other trees. The City may require this condition to be verified by the Commissioner or designee or an ISA-Certified Arborist.
6) The Commissioner or a designee determines that the removal of the tree is necessary to carry out construction in compliance with approved plans."

§ 341.053 Civil Penalties for Damaged Trees or Trees Removed Without Approval

(a) Any person, firm, or corporation required to submit a Tree Preservation Plan that damages a tree located in the development site, due to the failure to properly protect or maintain the tree during construction pursuant to Section 341.052, whether by negligence or otherwise, shall be charged one thousand dollars ($1,000.00) per area of damage to the above ground portion of the tree. If the damage can be repaired or reduced following *Best Management Standards and ANSI Standards for Arboriculture*, as may be amended from time to time, the party responsible for the damage shall hire an ISA-Certified Arborist to repair or reduce the damage at the cost of the responsible party. If the damage to the tree is adequately repaired by the ISA-Certified Arborist, in the discretion of the Commissioner of Urban Forestry ("Commissioner") or designee, the Commissioner may waive the civil fine.

(b) Any person, firm, or corporation required to submit a Tree Preservation Plan that harms a tree within the development site by failing to properly protect the roots in violation of Section 341.052 or division (e) of Section 352.05, such that an ISA-Certified Arborist believes the tree will fall or decline and die within two (2) calendar years of the date of completion of construction, shall be charged the full value of the tree as established using the Trunk Formula Method outlined in *The Guide for Plant Appraisal* by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers, as may be amended from time to time, or other tree replacement analysis provided by similar publication.

(c) Any person, firm or corporation required to submit a Tree Preservation Plan that removes any tree located in the development site in violation of Section 341.052, shall be charged a civil fine of one thousand dollars ($1,000.00) for each tree removed in addition to the full cost of any removed tree based on the replacement cost of the tree as established using the Trunk Formula Method outlined in *The Guide for Plant Appraisal* by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers, as may be amended from time to time, or other tree replacement analysis provided by similar publication."

Copley Tree Preservation Incentive Revision Recommendations

Copley Township also has an existing tree Planting Grant program. That program can be improved by:

1. Incorporate the existing Copley Tree Planting Grant Program with the existing Summit County Engineer & SWCD's Surface Water Management District Grant Program: SWMD Grant Program (14 x 11 in) (summitengineer.org)

Our Town Copley
Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Sustainability Integration

Kimley»Horn

- Identify Copley-contracted tree maintenance contractors to help maintain trees
- Link to existing heat island maps and prioritize areas for trees grants where most effective:
  - Tree Equity Score National Explorer
  - Urban Heat Island Severity (Data Source: The Trust for Public Land) (arcgis.com)
- Include items that other SWCDs do as part of their tree grant program. For example Franklin Soil & Water Conservation District: https://www.franklinswcd.org/columbus-tree-assistance-program
  - Tools (shovels, gloves, etc.
  - Standard Tree Planting Guidelines
  - Links to maintenance documents, including deer damage

2. **Build public awareness of the importance of tree maintenance through links and information on Copley's existing website:**
   - Have a Tree Maintenance Month. Time it with the Tree Grant program. Include social media posts with key facts about trees, such as:
     - Why are trees important to the environment? (Video) | Blog (citizensclimatelobby.org)
     - Why Trees Are Important | One Tree Planted
     - Why Trees Are Important | One Tree Planted
   - Provide links to tree maintenance
     - Tree Owner's Manual (usda.gov)
     - HOW to Prune Trees (usda.gov)
     - Private Property Tree Assistance | Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ohiodnr.gov)
3. **Incentivize Woodlands through the Ohio Tree Farm Program and Other Ohio Programs**
   - https://www.ohioforest.org/mpage/OhioTreeFarmHome
   - Landowner Assistance | Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ohiodnr.gov)
   - Ohio Forestry | Natural Resources Conservation Service (usda.gov)

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Sustainability Integration

The 2021 Study also identified priorities as outlined in the Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategic Plan (NPS-IS). Projects identified within critical areas are in conjunction with the NPS-IS plan requirements. Critical areas outlined within the plan include the Wolf Creek and Pigeon Creek.

For enhanced readability or to view this image in greater detail, scan the QR code to access the digital version of this study.

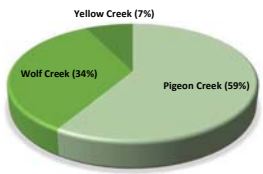
STORMWATER & GREENWAYS | SUMMARY

Copley Township is located in Summit County with 93% of the township draining into the Wolf Creek and Pigeon Creek watersheds, which are both headwaters of the Tuscarawas River, which then drains to the Ohio River and ultimately the Golf of Mexico. The remaining 7% of the township drains to the Yellow Creek watershed, which is tributary to the Cuyahoga River ultimately draining to Lake Erie. Of these watersheds, a large majority of the township's water bodies and existing stormwater control measures (SCMs) are located in the Tuscarawas River Watershed - mainly within Pigeon Creek watershed.

In 2017, all the Ohio EPA watershed plans were determined to be non-conforming with the USEPA's methodology for watershed planning. Therefore, the Ohio EPA mandated new watershed plans for the entire state. These new watershed plans are called Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategy Plans (also called: NPS-IS plans or 9-Element plans) and shall be created for each 12-Digit Hydrologic Code (HUC 12) subwatershed. Copley has three HUC12 subwatersheds - Yellow Creek, Wolf Creek and Pigeon Creek.

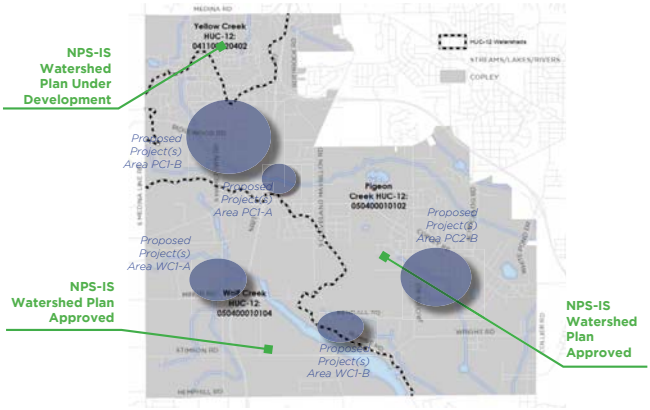
As part of the last chapter in every NPS-IS plan, projects are identified and roughly described with a series of 14 points/questions. These project descriptions conceptually define projects in terms of costs, timelines, partnerships, water quality benefits, and funding potentials. These plans also document water quality impairments and potential partners for implementation.

COPLEY WATERSHEDS BY AREA (ACRES)



An approved NPS-IS plan is required to apply for Ohio EPA/USEPA Section 319 stormwater and habitat improvement design & construction grants. Additionally, these regional watershed plans can score additional points for competitive grant applications such as:
- Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Grant applications,
- WRRSP grant application,
- OPWC,
- and other funding applications.

As mentioned previously, Copley is almost entirely within the Wolf Creek and Pigeon Creek HUC-12 watersheds. Both of these NPS-IS plans are currently approved by the USEPA and therefore only require slight modification to include Copley priorities projects for flood control, water quality improvements, and greenway restoration. The Yellow Creek NPS-IS plan is currently being drafted by the Summit County Soil and Water Conservation District (SCSWCD) and is estimated to be completed in 2022. Therefore the township would benefit most by having the Environmental Design Group team update the two completed NPS_IS plans and then have SCSWCD include Copley information into their Yellow Creek NPS-IS Plan. Copley can then utilize this information to apply for a multitude of grant applications for implementation.



Environmental Design Group

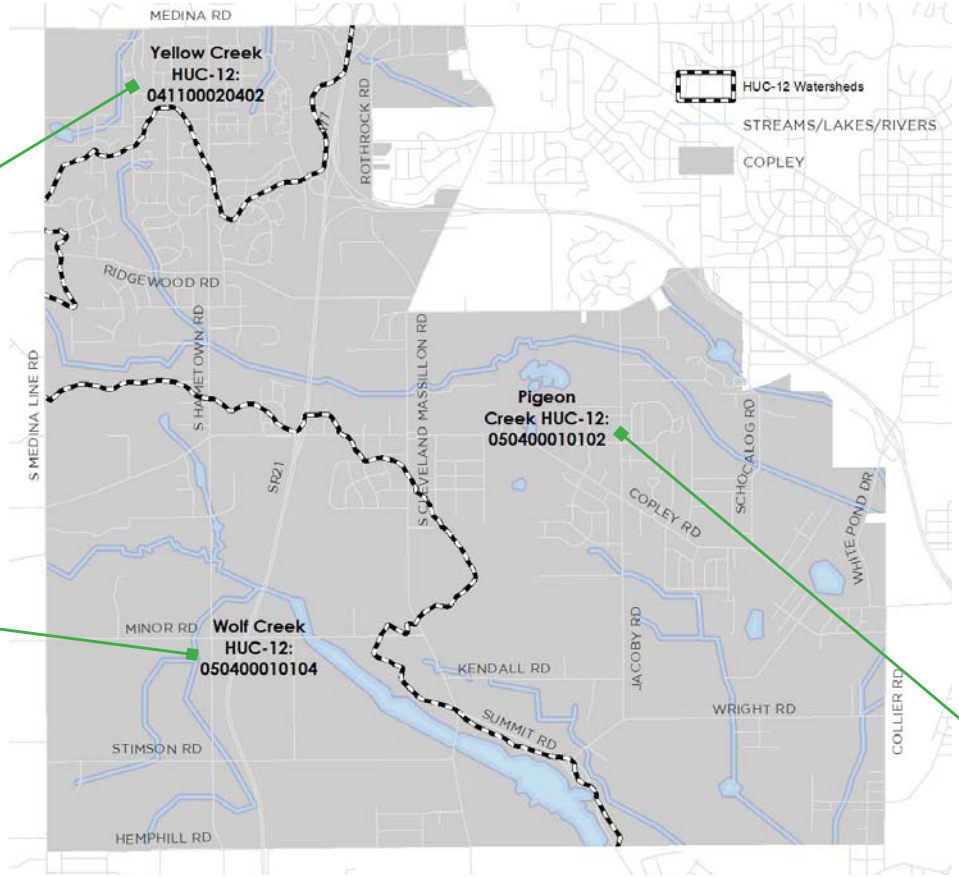
copley township **stormwater & greenways**

Copley Comprehensive Land Use Plan

STORMWATER & GREENWAYS | EXISTING NPS-IS PLANS

NPS-IS Watershed Plan Under Development

NPS-IS Watershed Plan Approved



NPS-IS Plan is a (Nine-Element) Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategic Plan approved by the USEPA. It is a watershed-based plan that identifies water quality issues for potential funding & grants.

NPS-IS Watershed Plan Approved

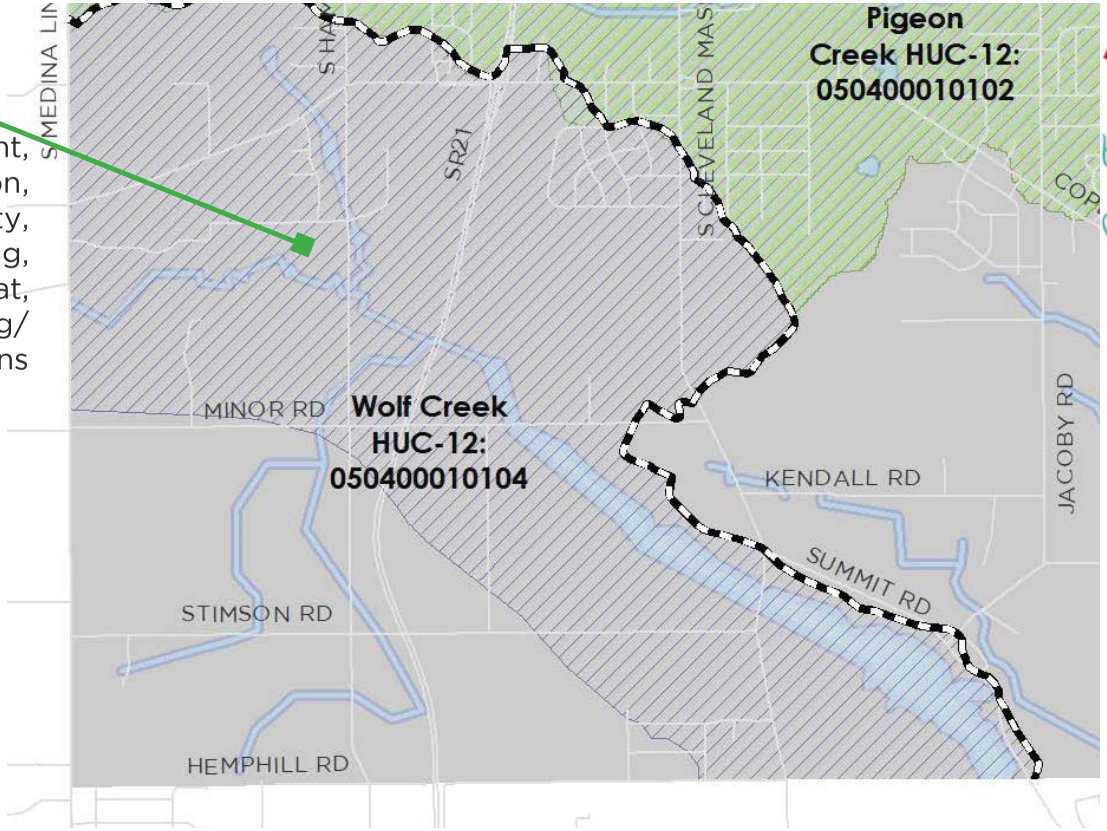
2,000
FEET

Environmental Design Group

copley township
stormwater & greenways

WOLF CREEK Critical Area #1

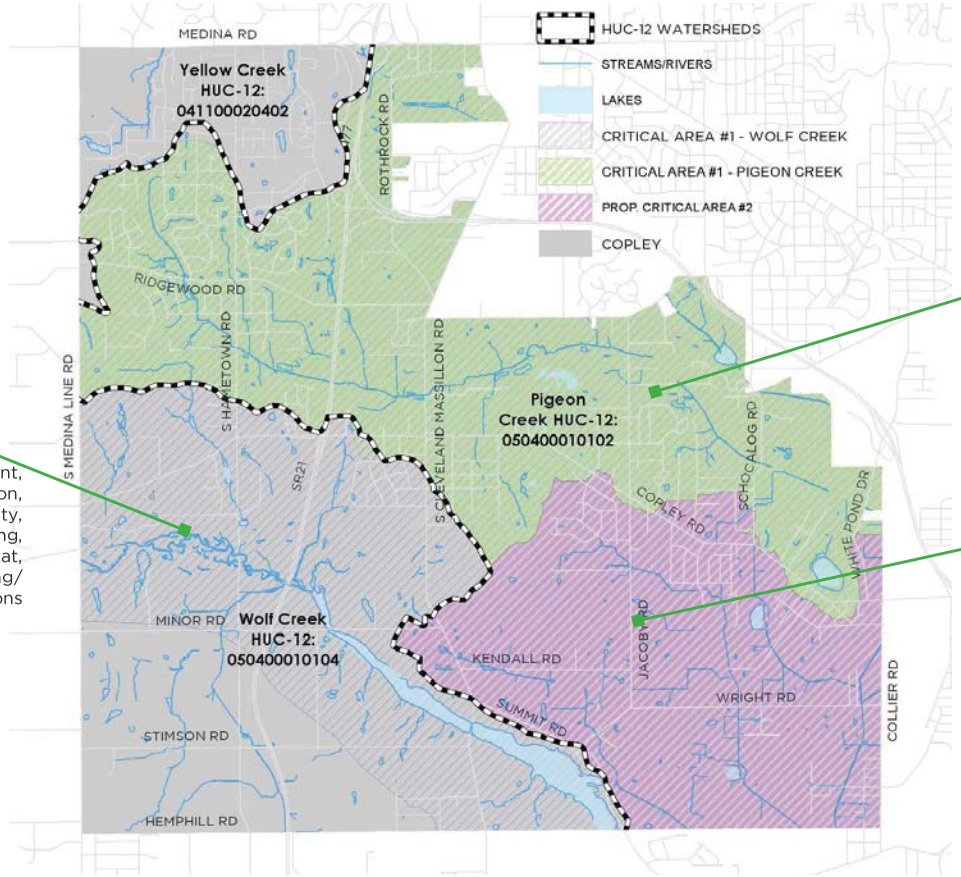
- urban/suburban development,
- channelization,
- poor water quality,
- flooding,
- lack of instream habitat,
- excess nutrient loading/ concentrations



2,000
FEET

Environmental Design Group
The community impact people.

STORMWATER & GREENWAYS | PROPOSED NPS-IS CRITICAL AREAS



Critical areas are problems identified within a watershed based upon known water quality impairments.

WOLF CREEK
Critical Area #1

- urban/suburban development,
- channelization,
- poor water quality,
- flooding,
- lack of instream habitat,
- excess nutrient loading/ concentrations

PIGEON CREEK
Critical Area #1

- urban/suburban development,
- channelization,
- poor water quality,
- flooding,
- lack of instream habitat,
- excess nutrient loading/ concentrations
- poor riparian zone

PIGEON CREEK
Proposed Critical Area #2

- poor water quality,
- flooding,
- channelization,
- lack of instream habitat,

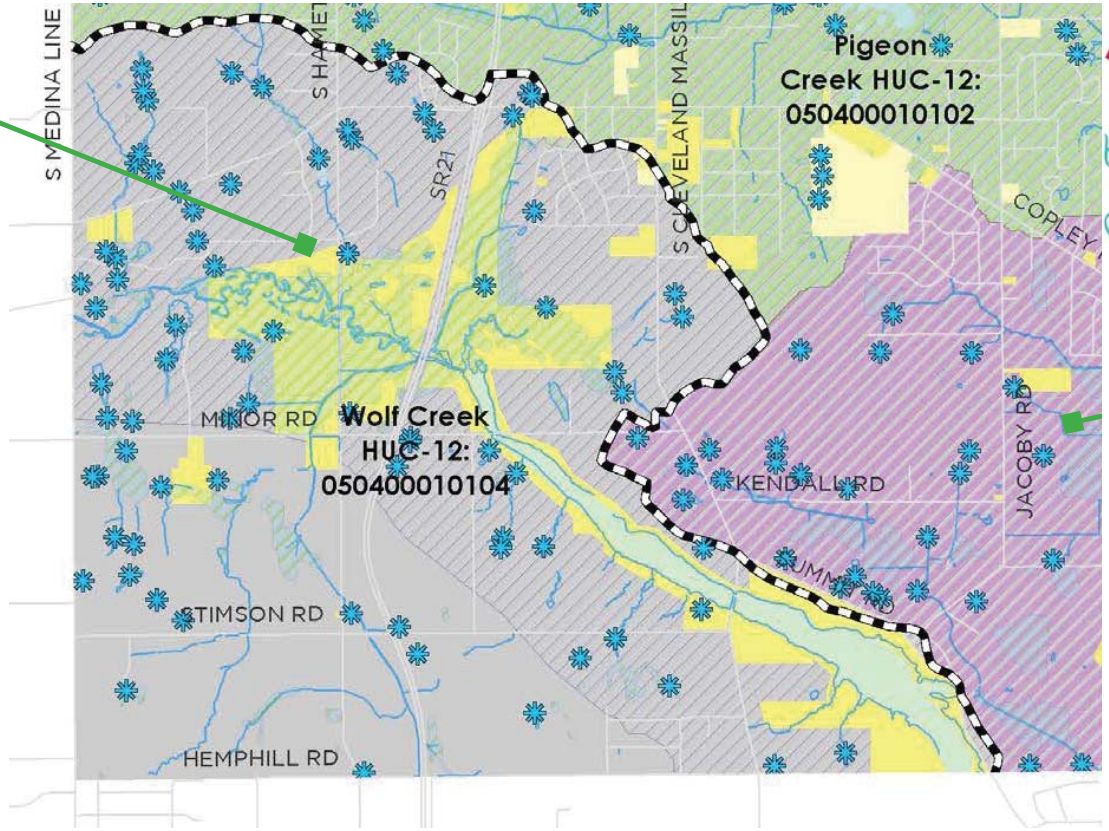
2,000
FEET

Environmental Design Group

copley township
stormwater & greenways

WOLF CREEK
Critical Area #1

- lots of land owned by Barberton
- water levels highly controled by Reservoir needs



2,000
FEET

Environmental Design Group
The community impact people.

STORMWATER & GREENWAYS | PROPOSED NPS-IS CRITICAL AREA PROJECTS

PIGEON CREEK Critical Area #1

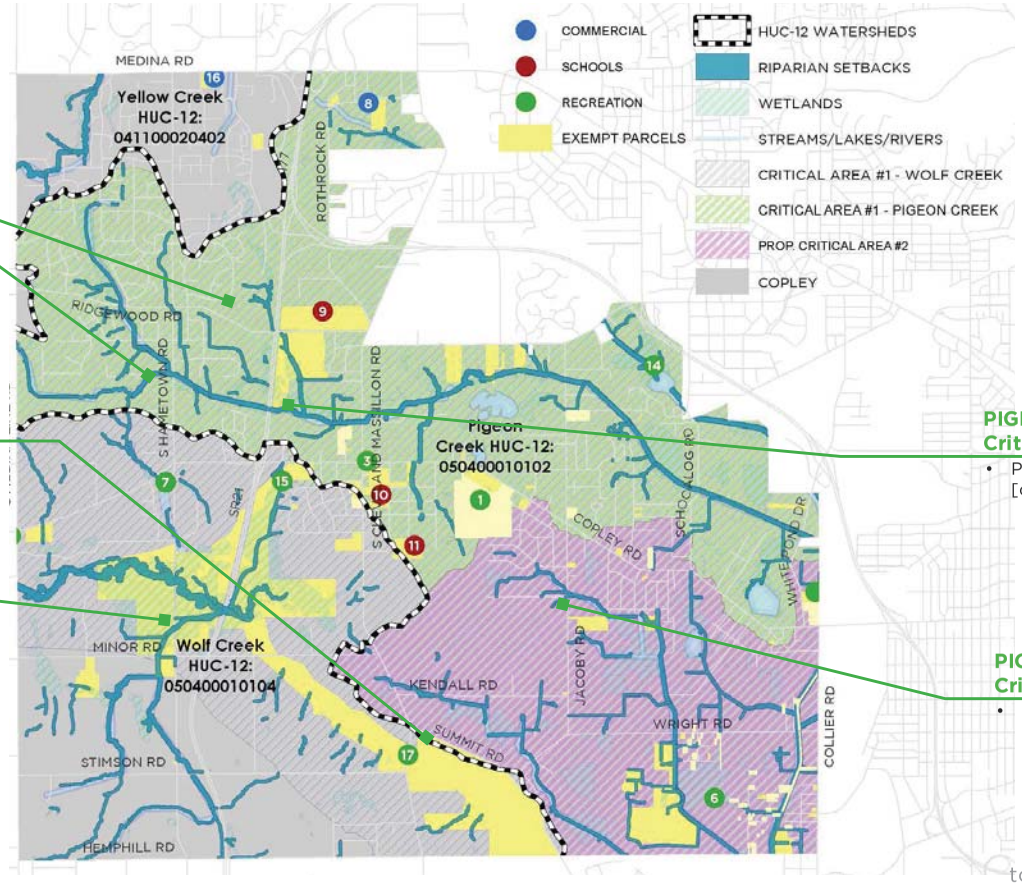
- Proposed project(s) #PC1-B [existing basin retrofits]

WOLF CREEK Critical Area #1

- Proposed project #WC1-A [increase floodplain]

WOLF CREEK Critical Area #1

- Proposed project #WC1-B [work with Barberton]



PIGEON CREEK Critical Area #1

- Proposed project #PC1-A [oxbow wetland]

PIGEON CREEK Critical Area #2

- Proposed project #PC2-B [work with UofA]

Critical areas are problems identified within a watershed based upon known water quality impairments.

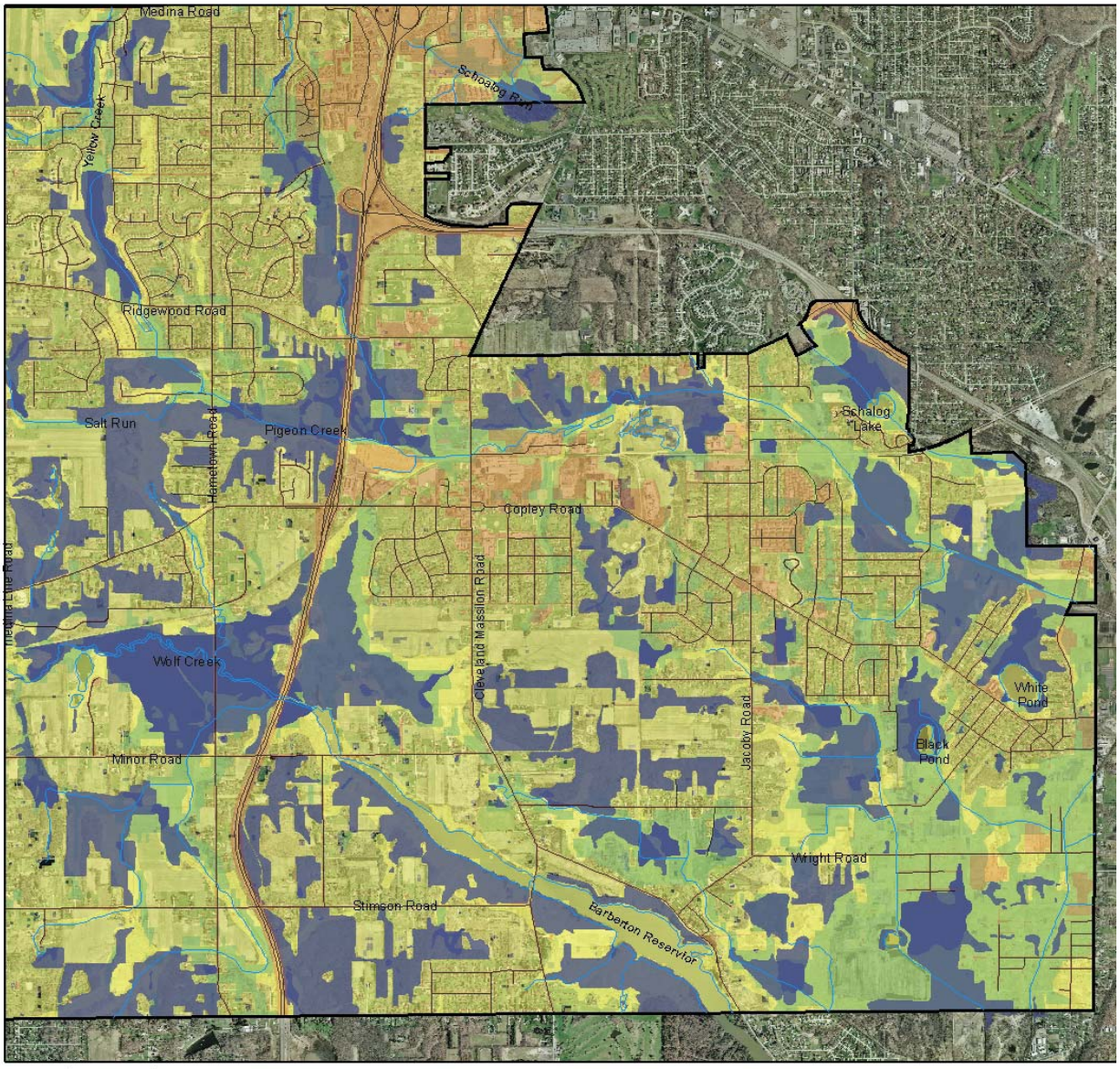
Our Town Copley
Comprehensive Land Use Plan

copley township
stormwater & greenways

Environmental Design Group

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Environmental Resources Map



Legend

- High quality natural areas
- Natural areas
- Disturbed/developed areas
- Low quality imperivous areas

Source: Copley Township Natural Resource Study
Projection: State Plane Ohio North NAD 83

Copley Township

Our Town Copley
Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Environmental Resources

In the Copley Township Natural Resource Study (2007), completed for the initiated Land Use Plan, vegetation coverage, soils, groundwater and surface water in the Township was mapped and values were assigned to natural resources quantifying the integrity and function of the resources.
Some of the metrics used included:

Successional State (rates the stability of a natural area or habitat by its successional state in relation to man-made disturbance.)

Rare Species (quantifies the density of rare species occurring within a habitat unit.)

Uniqueness of Habitat (measures the uniqueness of habitat and its scarcity relative to the geographic region.)

Patch Qualities (evaluates the effectiveness of natural areas to support and sustain healthy wildlife populations.)

Perimeter Adjacent Land Cover (addresses how land cover types are impacted by adjacent land uses.)

Hydrologic Function (measures the capability of a land cover to process runoff prior to entering aquatic habitats.)

Pollution Potential (measures point and National Pollution Standards pollution potential for land cover.)

Groundwater Interchange (measures groundwater pollution potential based on yield, soils with high permeability, and proximity to watercourses or water wells.)

Riparian Value (measures the type and quality of land cover located within the riparian corridor.)

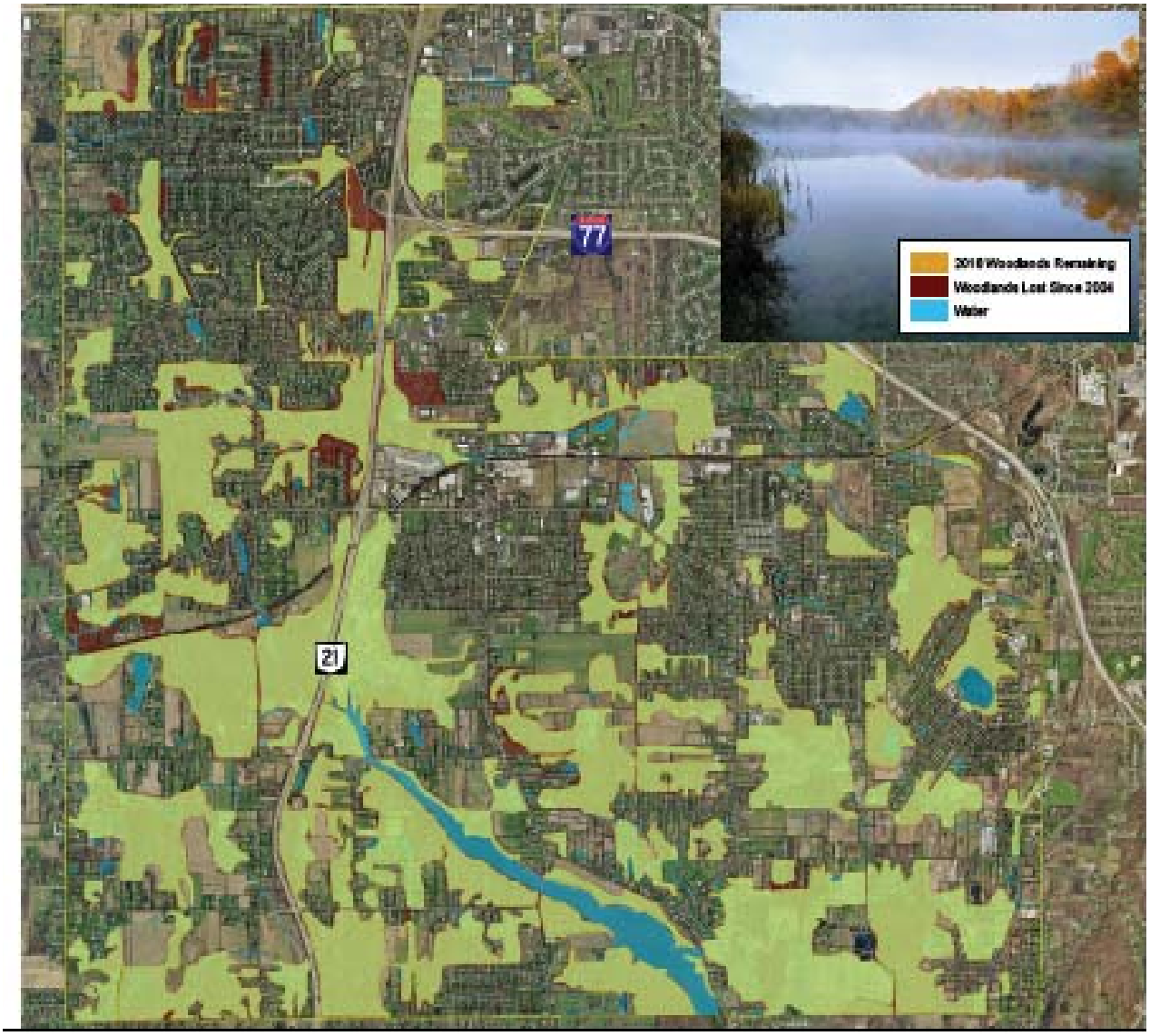
Erosion Value (measures potential for erosion based on degree slope and vegetation coverage.)

The following map shows environmental resources. The data can be used to prioritize preservation and restoration areas.

in 2018, data was obtained from Summit County Geographic Information System (GIS) environmental maps to highlight wetlands, riparians, floodplains, watersheds and steep slopes.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Woodlands Map



Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Woodland Resources (Canopy Cover)

Woodland resources are aesthetically pleasing and contribute significantly to the rural and scenic character of Copley. Significant woodland resources were mapped using aerial photography. As of 2004, analysis of the larger tracts of woodland reveals that Copley only has 22% canopy cover and has experienced and additional decrease in canopy with new development.[2] The Township implemented new Tree Preservation and Landscape Planning Standards in 2012 in an effort to combat the decline of canopy in the Township due to development. It is the large tracts of woodlands that provide the most public health and safety benefits, as well as aesthetic and ecological benefits.

The presence of trees and the high percentages of canopy cover positively impact the health and vitality of our ecosystems. Woodlands are important environmental assets that provide a number of public health and safety functions.

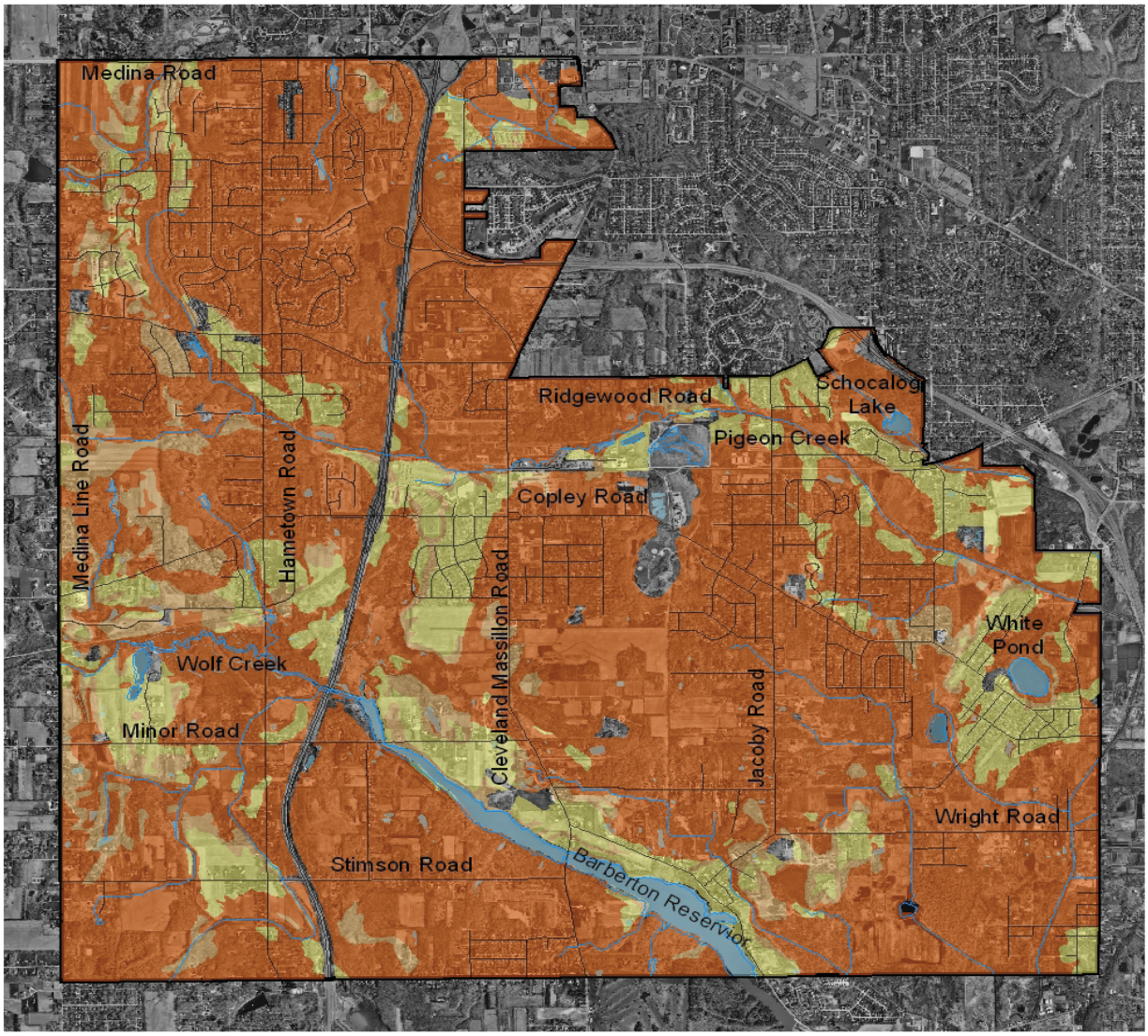
Trees are a form of vegetative cover. Tree roots help to keep soil in place and reduce erosion. Tree cover, especially in areas of steep slopes, helps to significantly reduce stormwater runoff rates. Slowing runoff rates can reduce the incidence and severity of floods. Moreover, woodland resources increase groundwater recharge and promote watershed protection. A well-canopied area's ability to function as a buffer to protect water quality is drastically improved, as the trees simultaneously reduce runoff, soil erosion, and flooding and increase groundwater recharge.

In addition, woodlands can collectively provide measurable improvements in air quality by filtering pollutants and lowering the incidence and severity of ozone production. Trees capture particulate matter and produce oxygen. Canopy cover helps to reduce local and global air pollution by ingesting carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxides.

2 Based on data provided by EnviroScience, Inc., ODNR lists Copley Township of having a 54% canopy cover in 1994. It is estimated that the township had approximately 22% canopy cover in 2004. The company used its methodology along with the County Department of Development data to get this figure and suggested a 32% decrease was largely contributed to the development of Creekstone, the Heritage Woods area and Montrose Park.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Suitability for Septic Systems Map



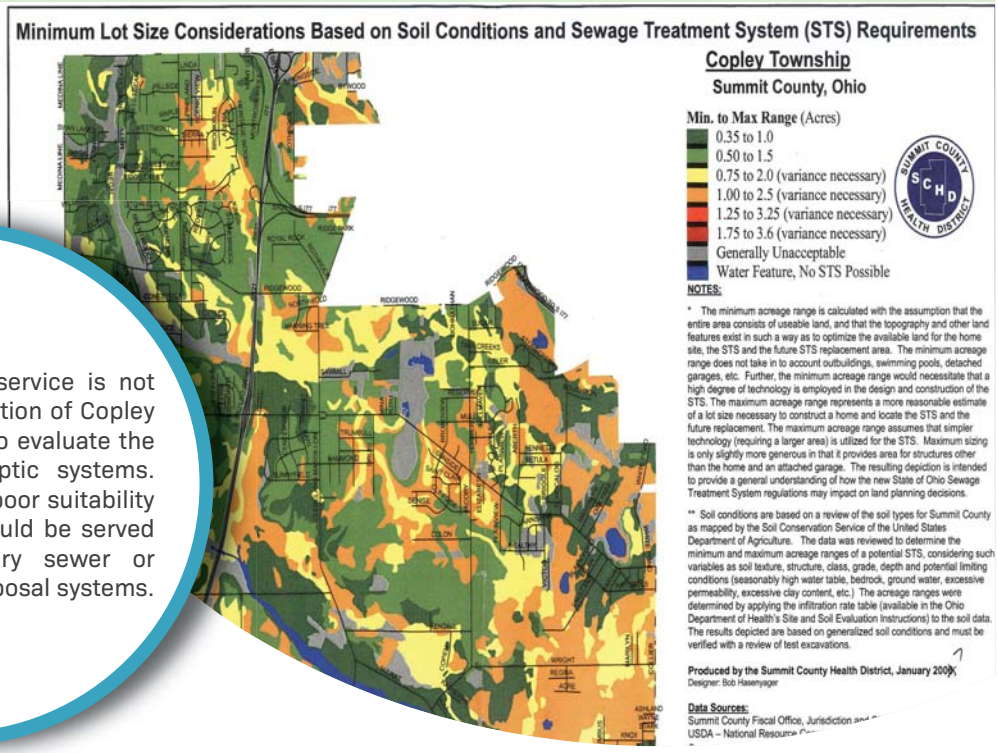
Suitability for Septic Systems

- Slight
- Moderate
- Severe

Source: Summit County Soil Survey
Projection: State Plane Ohio North NAD83

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Soils Suitable for Septic Systems



Since sanitary sewer service is not available to a large portion of Copley Township, it is useful to evaluate the soil capability for septic systems. Ideally, land with very poor suitability for septic systems should be served by centralized sanitary sewer or alternative sewage disposal systems.

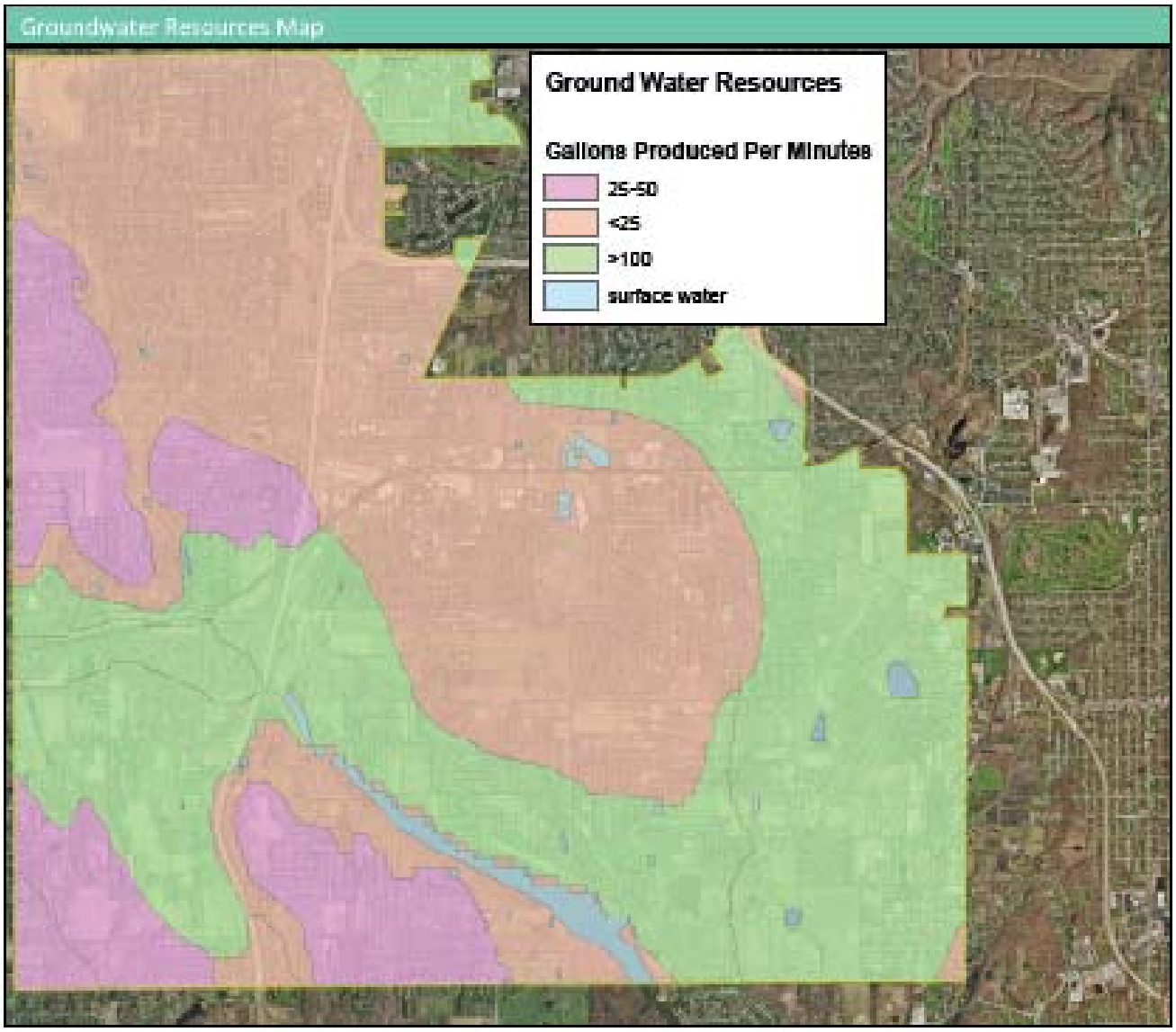
Unfortunately, many of the soils suitable for septic systems are located on alluvial soils (formed by sediment deposited by flowing water) near streams and drainage ways. These alluvial soils tend to be sandy and well-drained, which is good for septic systems, but these areas pose other problems for septic tank absorption fields such as flooding and groundwater contamination. In areas not served by sewer systems, it is recommended that only low-density development will be allowed, in order to avoid potential public health problems should failing septic systems discharge off-lot. Proper placement, maintenance, and operation of home sewage disposal systems are critical to ensure proper functioning. Leaks from these systems can travel through the subsurface soils and contaminate groundwater supplies. Regular inspection, maintenance, and pump-out is necessary to avoid failing septic systems, yet local governments often refrain from aggressive enforcement of these activities in privately owned systems. In 2007, The Summit County Health Department mapped appropriate development densities for acceptable septic system performance. With ever changing technology, however, the importance of the suitability of soils issue may be overcome at some point in the future. Therefore, it should be noted that there are other environmental carrying capacity issues other than septic limitations that should be used to determine development densities. Aditionally, Summit County Public Health initiated an Operation Permit program in May of 2015. Changes to the Ohio Administrative Code now require that no person shall operate a Home Sewage Treatment System without a valid Operation Permit. The goal of this program is to improve water quality in summit County and surrounding watersheds.

According to the Summit County Soil Survey, a majority (80%) of Copley is underlain by soils poorly suited for septic systems. Only 14% of the land within Copley has soils that have only slight limitations for septic tank absorption fields. Common limitations include a seasonal high water table, restricted permeability, poor natural drainage, the hazard of flooding, excess slope, and a shallow depth to bedrock. Soils with a very slow or moderately slow permeability along with restrictive layers such as bedrock are rated as having severe limitations for septic system use. Septic systems placed on slopes greater than 12% may result in erosion and seepage downslope. The high seasonal water table, common within poorly drained soil types, prevents the proper functioning of septic disposal fields for varying time periods.

Percentage of Township Soil Suitable for Septic Systems	
Severe	72%
Moderate	8%
Slight	14%

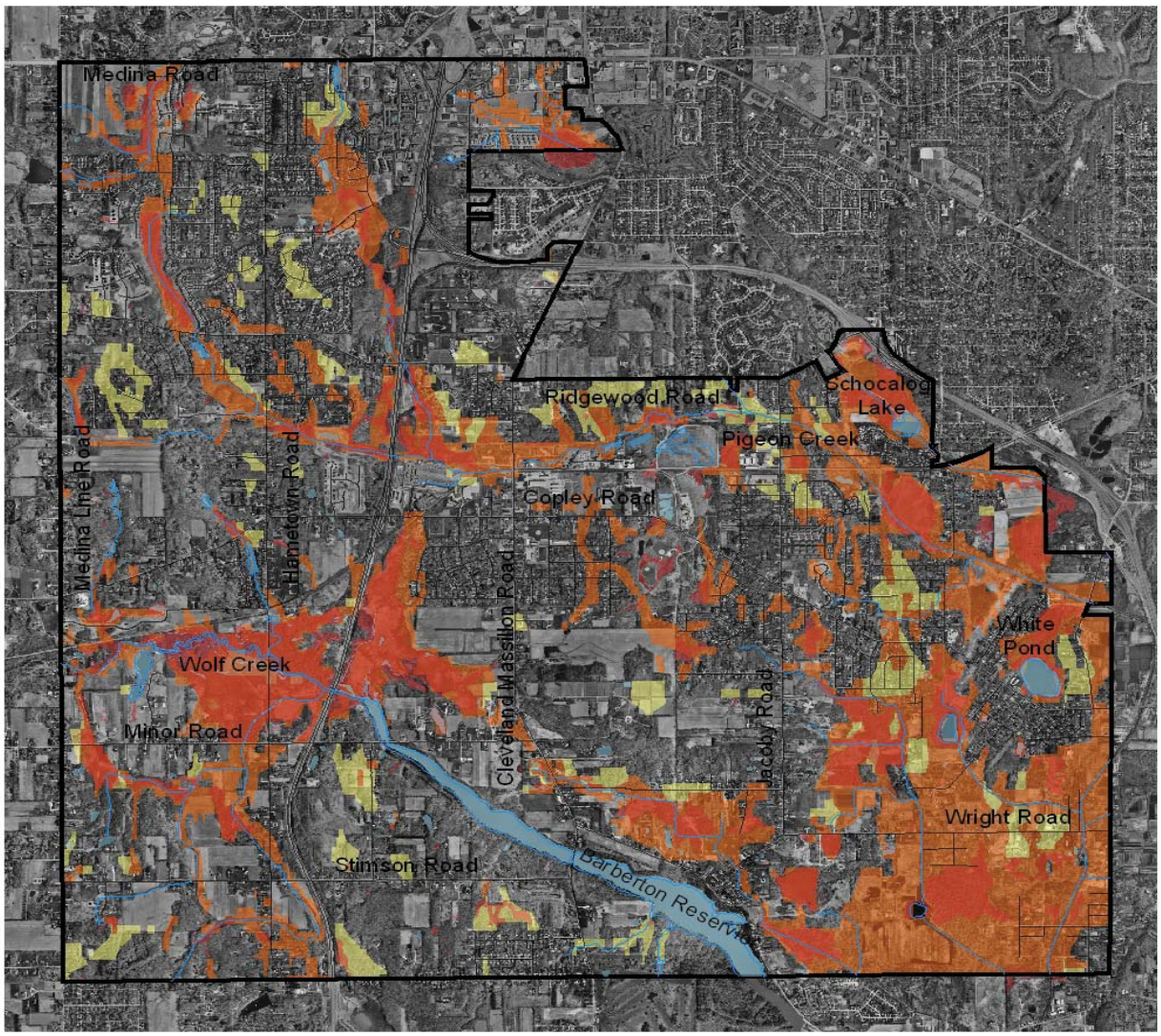
Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Groundwater Resources Map



Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Wetlands and Hydric Soils Map



Source: Summit County Natural Resource Study, Summit Soil Survey
Projection: State Plane Ohio North NAD83

Wetlands
Hydric Soils
Non Hydric Soils with Hydric Inclusions

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Groundwater Resources

The terrain and geology of Copley Township is primarily a Sharon conglomerate laid down some 231 million years ago by glaciers that repeatedly moved into and receded from the area. Some of the deposits appear to be as recent as 10,000 years ago.

Groundwater resources are important to understand because they supply public drinking water and also because of their hydrologic connection to surface waters. The deposits left by glaciers that once covered Copley Township affect groundwater yield. Glacial outwash can offer substantial groundwater yields because of the large, interconnected pore spaces between the grains. Till, a poorly sorted mixture of particles ranging from clay to boulders, offers very poor yields due to the small pore spaces between the particles and soil compaction by the ice. The major groundwater supplies occur in two general types of formations: Glacial outwash in existing and ancient, now-buried valleys, and sandstone bedrock underlying till.

Groundwater represents an important source of potable water, which can become contaminated from pollution sources at the ground surface and underground. Cleanup of groundwater contamination can be extremely costly and difficult. Other potential sources of soil and groundwater contamination may exist, ranging from hazardous material sites and hazardous waste mishandled by businesses to leaking underground storage tanks.

There is an interchange between surface water and groundwater. Groundwater is recharged from infiltration. Given Copley Township's dependence upon groundwater for much of its drinking water, it is critical to protect groundwater resources and watercourses from which recharge is received.

By recognizing and incorporating the interchange between surface water and groundwater, a healthy environment will be provided to all citizens of the Township. Specifically, the quality and composition of groundwater can be affected by both natural processes and human activity.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Wetlands and Hydric Soils

The Army Corps of Engineers (Federal Register 1982) and the U.S. EPA (Federal Register 1980) both define wetlands as: "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas."

Wetlands provide valuable environmental functions and social benefits that include filtration and purification of water, flood storage, ground water recharge, supporting diverse communities of flora and fauna, and recreational (hunting and fishing) and commercial use (fur and fish harvesting). To date, the State of Ohio has lost over 90% of its original wetlands due to draining, dredging, filling or excavating.

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) is a series of maps produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service based on analysis of aerial photographs. As such, these maps are usually conservative, and actual wetland boundaries are usually larger than what is shown on the NWI. In addition, some types of wetlands (wet meadows, lowland woods, and small vernal pools) are not discernible on these photographs and so are generally not shown on the NWI map. However, the NWI map is a standard secondary literature reference and starting point for wetland analysis.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

NWI Wetlands Shown in Copley

Wetlands Code	Wetlands Type	Total Approximate Acreage
(PEM) Palustrine Emergent Wetland (Cattails, reeds and sedges)	Marsh	64
(PFO) Palustrine Forested Wetlands (forested)	Forested Wetlands	60
(PSS) Palustrine Scrub/Shrub (like a button bush swap)	Scrub/Shrub Wetlands	12
(PUB) Palustrine Unconsolidated Bottom (sand, mud and organic)	Ponds	109
Total		245

Copley's wetlands comprise of about 245 acres as identified on the NWI maps, or less than 2 percent of the Township. Assuming the presence of other wetlands that are too small to be mapped by the inventory, probably no more than four percent of Copley's land area is wetlands.

The Copley Bog area with its rich muck soils appears to be former wetlands and floodplains. This area has been identified by the South Summit Flood Task Force as an area where excess storm water might be returned after diverting from county ditches.

Another secondary source useful in wetland analysis is the County Soil Survey. Published by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Soil Survey contains maps, descriptions and technical characteristics of soils throughout the county. Some soils are listed as hydric soils, and some soil types are listed as non-hydric soils with hydric inclusions. According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the definition of a hydric soil is "a soil that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part." Mapped hydric soils are an indication of the potential presence of wetland or their historical occurrence at a location.

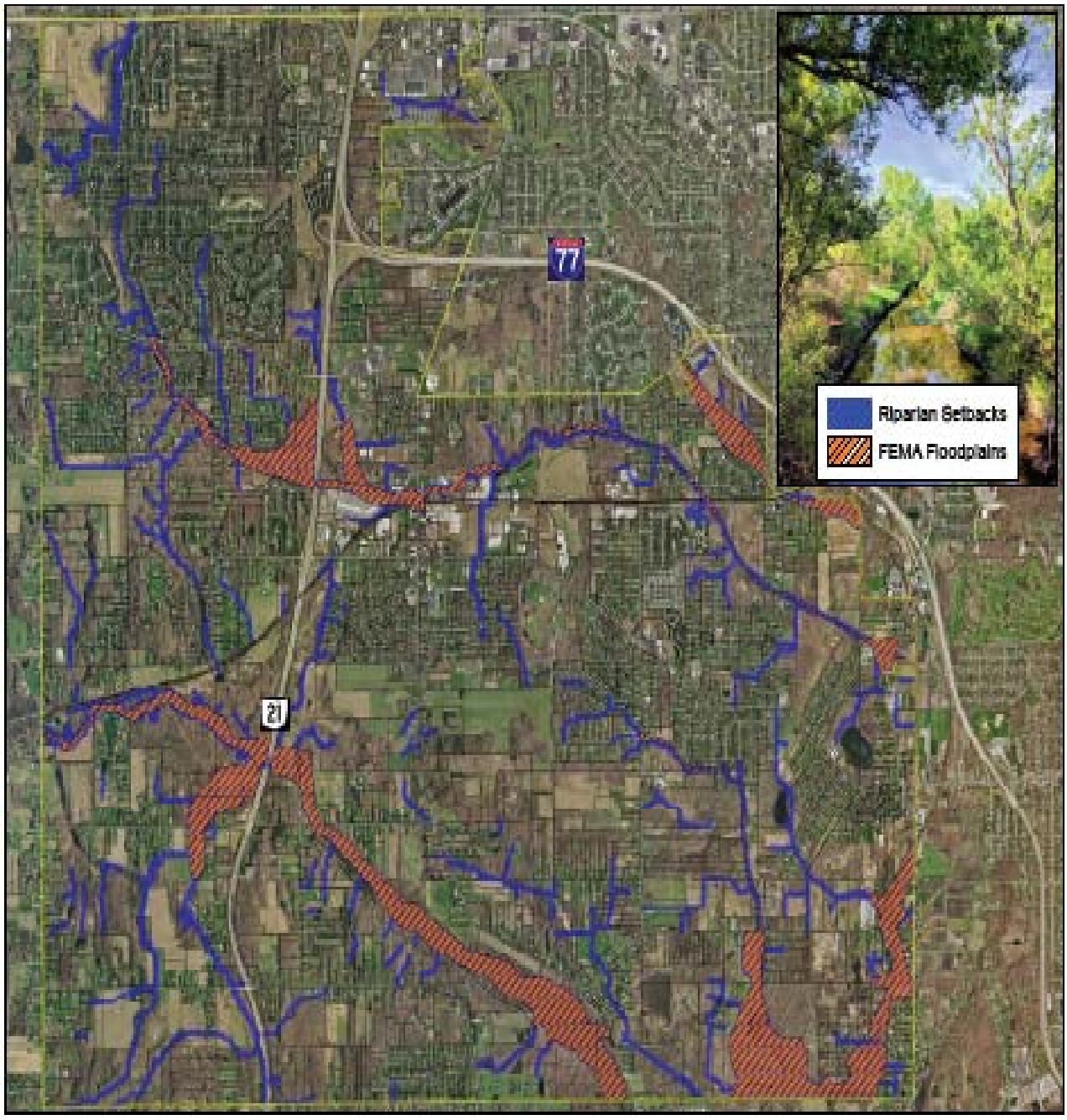
Although analysis of secondary sources such as the NWI maps and Soil Survey maps is a useful first step in wetland analysis, in almost all cases, legal wetland boundaries must be marked in the field by a trained wetland delineator. These mapped wetlands represent only a portion of the total amount of wetlands within Copley Township. This mapping should be considered an approximation of wetlands locations and sizes within the Township. It is intended for planning purposes to give Copley an idea of where wetlands might be; however, it should not be used as a substitute for a wetland delineation.

The presence of wetlands often coincides with the occurrence of hydric soils and non-hydric soils with hydric inclusions. Wetlands are delineated based on hydric soils, the presence of wetlands hydrology, and the dominance of hydrophytic vegetation. Hydric soils, as identified in the Soil Survey of Summit County, were also used as part of the study.

Over a fourth of Copley Township (27%) has hydric soils and 5.5% of the township has non-hydric soils with hydric inclusions. These soils are non-hydric, but can have small hydric soils in depressions, along drainage ways and in other areas.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

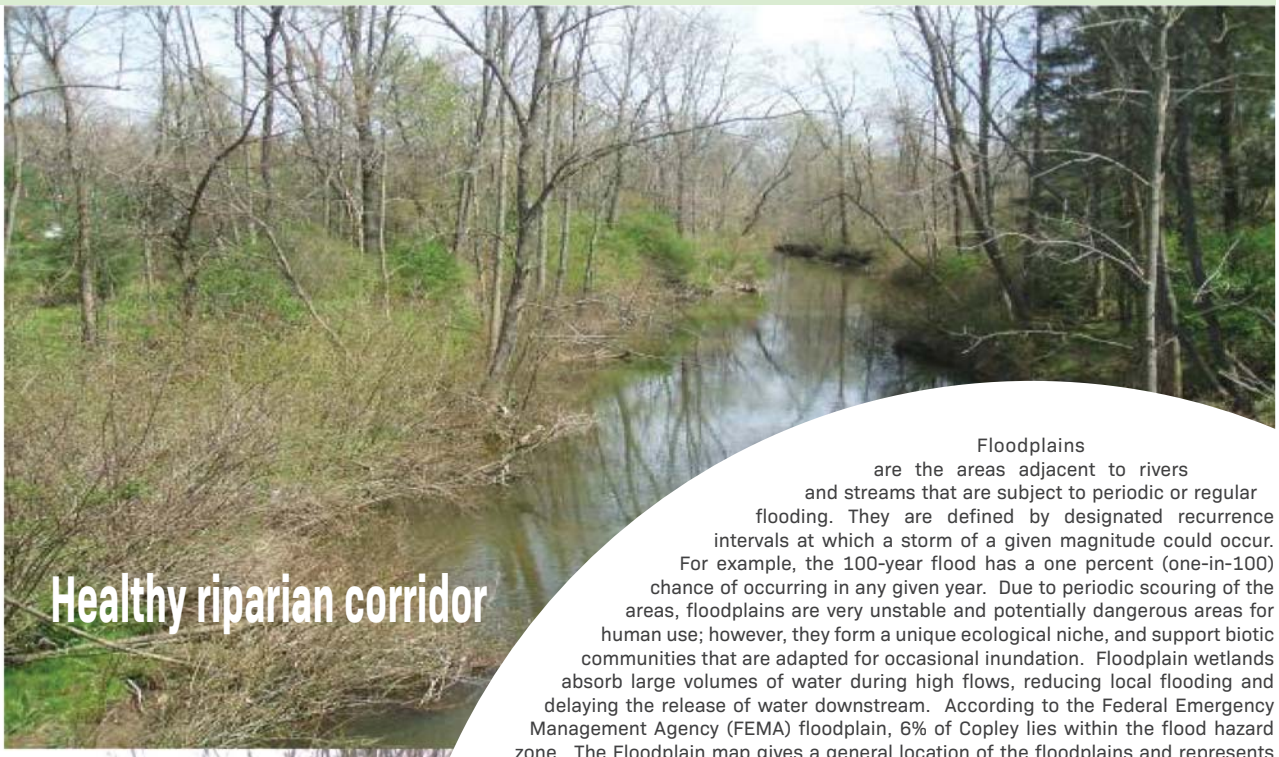
Riparian and Floodplains Map



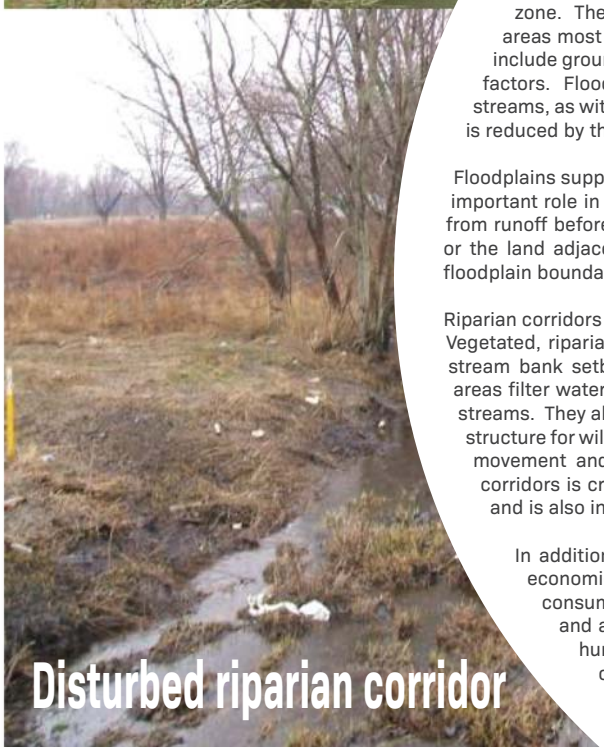
Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Riparian corridors within Copley were delineated based on Summit County GIS Mapping Resources. The riparian corridor includes all floodplains, steep slopes, and wetlands adjacent to streams or within the floodplains. The top of the valley slope was used as the riparian boundary in areas with well-drained topography. All small tributaries mapped as streams were included within the riparian corridor. In addition, other small, unmapped streams with obvious, well-defines valleys were included.

Floodplains and Riparian Corridors



Healthy riparian corridor



Disturbed riparian corridor

Floodplains are the areas adjacent to rivers and streams that are subject to periodic or regular flooding. They are defined by designated recurrence intervals at which a storm of a given magnitude could occur. For example, the 100-year flood has a one percent (one-in-100) chance of occurring in any given year. Due to periodic scouring of the areas, floodplains are very unstable and potentially dangerous areas for human use; however, they form a unique ecological niche, and support biotic communities that are adapted for occasional inundation. Floodplain wetlands absorb large volumes of water during high flows, reducing local flooding and delaying the release of water downstream. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain, 6% of Copley lies within the flood hazard zone. The Floodplain map gives a general location of the floodplains and represents areas most likely to flood during the most severe storms. Factors influencing flooding include ground permeability/imperviousness, slope, and the presence of flood-mitigating factors. Flooding is increased where storm water runs directly off the land and into the streams, as with impermeable soils, development, and unvegetated steep slopes. Flooding is reduced by the presence of woods, wetlands, and permeable soils.

Floodplains support a diverse assemblage of plant and animal life. In addition, they serve an important role in water quality protection, since stream bank vegetation can filter pollutants from runoff before they enter a waterway. In some instances, the established riparian zone, or the land adjacent to the stream, extends beyond or does not have a mapped 100-year floodplain boundary.

Riparian corridors include stream banks and associated areas adjacent to a flowing waterway. Vegetated, riparian areas also function as stream buffer zones. There are many benefits of stream bank setbacks, including protection from erosion. In addition, vegetated riparian areas filter water pollutants (toxic chemicals, nutrients, and sediment) from runoff entering streams. They also function to prevent stream warming, and provide food, cover, and habitat structure for wildlife. The linear corridors provided by stream bank setbacks enhance wildlife movement and migration for sensitive species. Protection of existing natural riparian corridors is critical to the long-term health of streams and downstream receiving waters and is also instrumental in adding aesthetic and economic well-being to the community.

In addition to environmental importance, riparian corridors also possess significant economic value. Riparian corridors provide for recreational and health benefits, non-consumptive secondary benefits, cultural enhancement, increased property values, and an improved quality of life. In so contributing to human welfare, both directly and indirectly, riparian corridors represent part of the total economic value of natural resources.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Water Quality Designations for Copley

Waterway	Ohio EPA River Code	Aquatic Life Habitat Use Designation	Water Supply Use Designations	Recreational Use Designations
Cuyahoga River Watershed				
Yellow Creek ▪ RM 1.5 to mouth ▪ All other segments	19-021	WWH, SRW WWH	AWS, IWS AWS, IWS	PCR PCR
Tuscarawas River Watershed				
Wolf Creek ▪ Akron-Wadsworth Rd (RM 6.4) to mouth ▪ At RM 5.12 ▪ All other segments	17-540	MWH WWH, PWS WWH	AWS, IWS AWS, IWS AWS, IWS	PCR PCR PCR
Pigeon Creek ▪ Jacoby Rd (RM 5.2) to mouth ▪ All other segments	17-543	MWH WWH	AWS, IWS AWS, IWS	PCR PCR
Schocalog Rd	17-544	WWH	AWS, IWS	PCR
Waterbodies				
Barberton Reservoir	OH10 28-367	EWH	PWS	PCR
Black Pond	-	EWH	PWS	PCR
Yellow Pond	-	EWH	PWS	PCR

Sources: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Division of Surface Water, Appendices to the Year 2000 Ohio Water Resource Inventory (305 (b) Report), Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Division of Surface Water State of Ohio Water Quality Standards Chapter 3745-1 of the Administrative Code.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

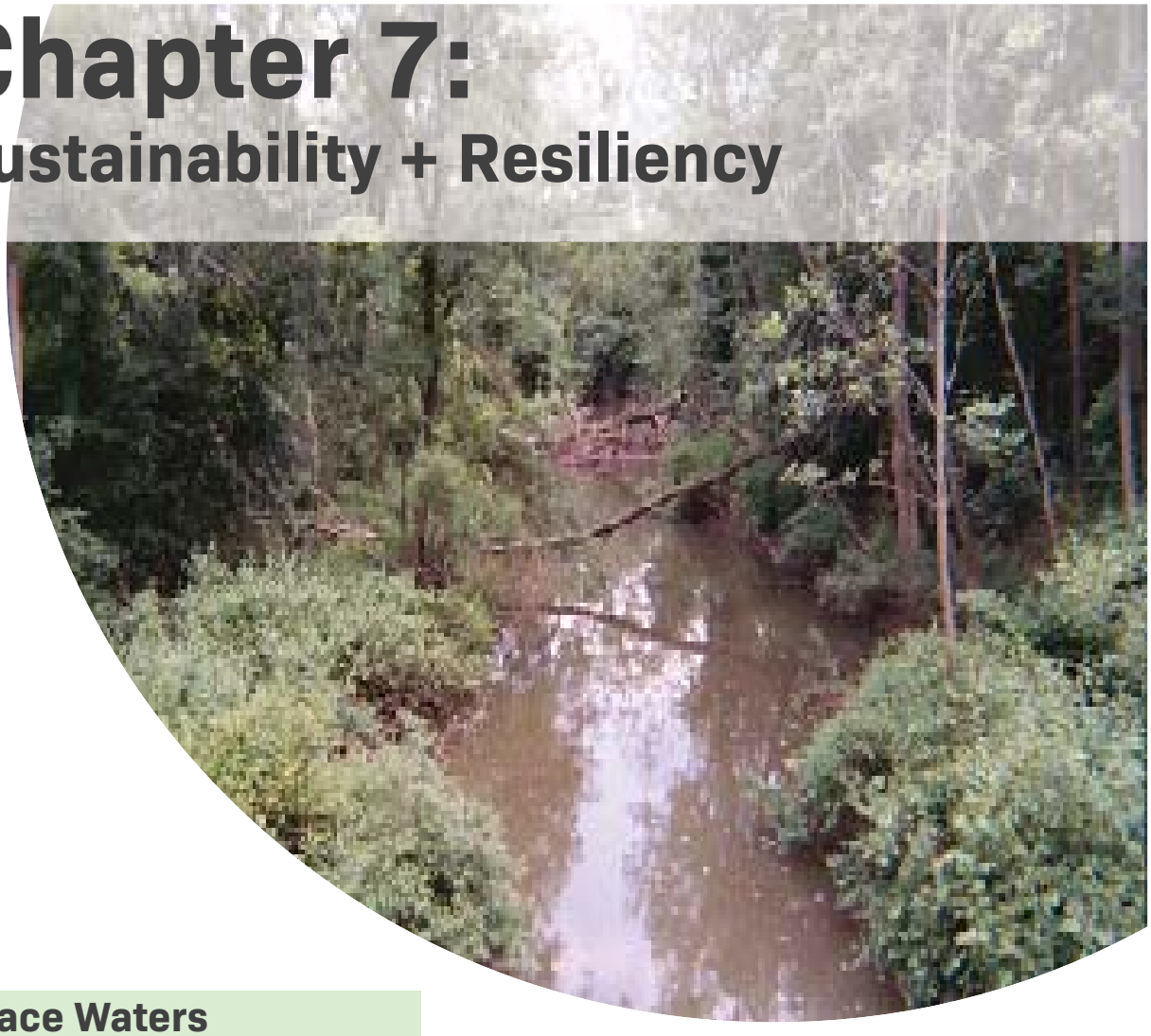
Surface Waters

The following table shows water quality designations for water bodies and watercourses in Copley. A given water quality designation does not necessarily reflect existing conditions or imply that it has been thoroughly sampled by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA). Ohio EPA defines the following use designations:

1. Warmwater Habitats (WWH) are waters capable of supporting and maintaining a balanced, integrated, adaptive community of warmwater aquatic organisms having a species composition, diversity, and functional organization comparable to the 25th percentile for identified reference sites within each of Ohio's ecoregions.
2. Exceptional Warmwater Habitats (EWH) are capable of supporting and maintaining a balanced, integrated, adaptive community of warmwater aquatic organisms having species composition, diversity, and functional organization comparable to the 75th percentile for identified reference sites within each of the state's ecoregions. All lakes, ponds, and reservoirs except upground storage reservoirs[1] are automatically designated EWH.
3. Public Water Supplies (PWS) are waters that, with conventional treatment, are suitable for human intake meet federal regulations for drinking water. All publicly owned lakes and reservoirs, with the exception of Piedmont Reservoir, and all privately owned lakes and reservoirs used as a source of public drinking water or emergency water supply, are automatically designated PWS.
4. Agriculture Water Supplies (AWS) are suitable for irrigation and livestock watering without treatment.
5. Industrial Water Supplies (IWS) are suitable for commercial and industrial uses, with or without treatment. Criteria for the support of IWS designation varies with each type of industry.
6. Primary Contact Recreation (PCR) during the recreation season is suitable for full-body contact recreation such as, but not limited to, swimming, canoeing and scuba diving with minimal threat to public health as a result of water quality. All lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, except upground storage reservoirs and lakes and rivers meeting the definition of Bathing Waters, are designated Primary Contact Recreation waters.

1 *Upground Storage Reservoirs* are formed by artificial barriers on two or more sides and which impound water or liquefied material pumped or otherwise imported from an exterior source. Lagoons are considered upground reservoirs. They are automatically designated Warmwater Habitats.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency



Surface Waters

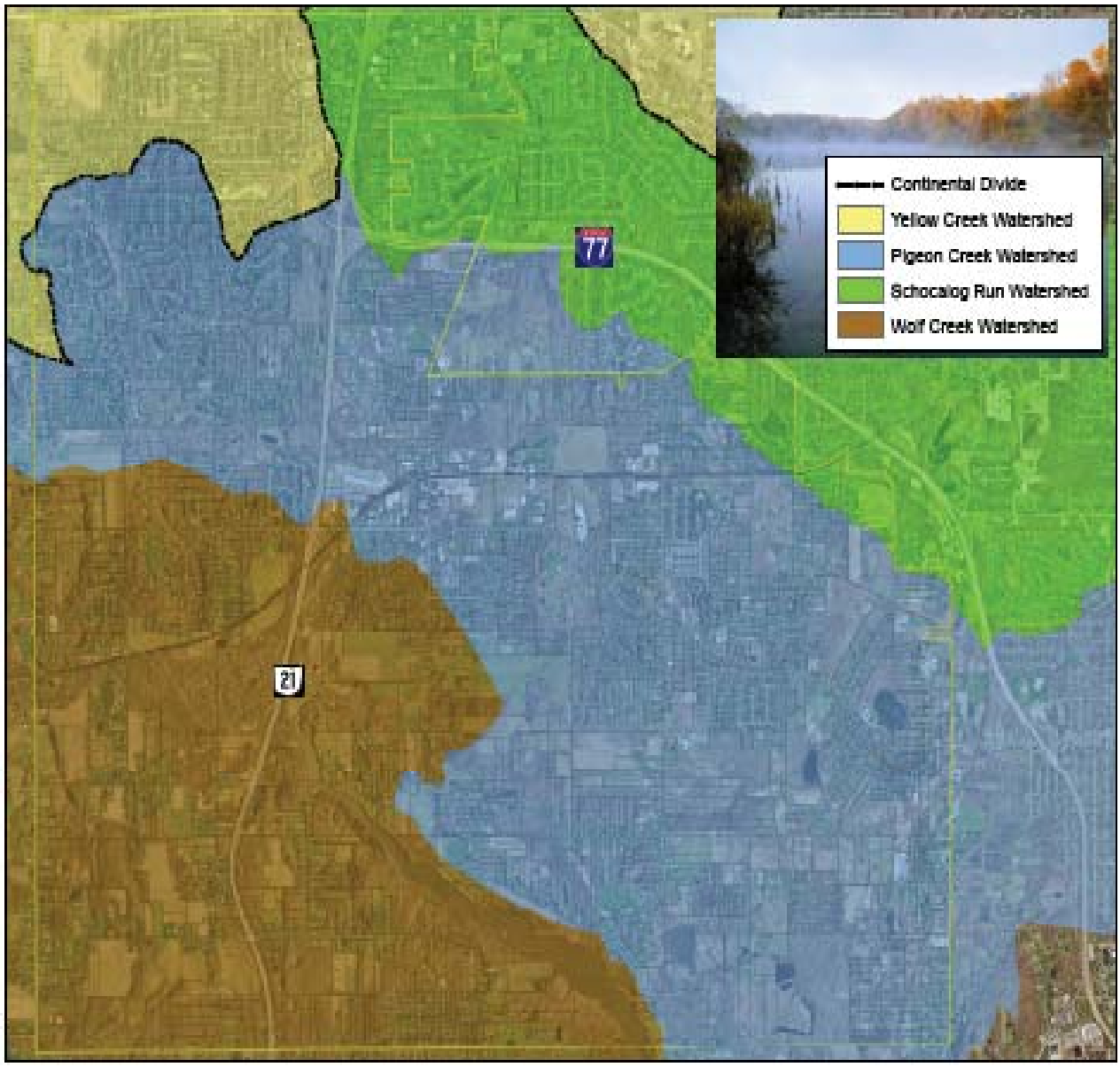
Watercourses are defined as any perennial, ephemeral, or intermittent stream, river, or creek with a defined bed and bank that flows through or borders a landscape. An ephemeral stream is dry except during and shortly after rain/melt events. An intermittent stream is frequently flowing but with seasonal dry periods. A perennial stream is permanently flowing. Streams support a vast array of organisms and are important components of a number of inter-related ecological processes. It is important to protect watercourses for the following reasons:

- Stormwater runoff and flood prevention are more easily accommodated by the presence of healthy streams, thereby protecting private property from flood damage.
- Aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat can be supported through forested buffers, and by shading water which moderates temperatures.
- Water quality is enhanced by filtering storm runoff and chemicals through forested buffers and riparian areas.
- Passive recreational opportunities are supported by natural corridors such as streams.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Watershed Map

As smaller streams come together and form larger rivers, their associated watersheds also join. In this manner, Pigeon Creek, Schocalog Run and Wolf Creek are part of the larger Tuscarawas River watershed, which is part of the Ohio River drainage basin. Yellow Creek is part of the Cuyahoga River watershed, which is part of the Lake Erie drainage basin. The continental divide runs through Copley between the Ohio River and the Lake Erie basins. Most of Copley drains into the Ohio River.



Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Watersheds

A "watershed" is defined as an area of land within a drainage divide from which precipitation (rain & snowmelt) drains via gravity to a body of water. All water on land eventually drains into a stream, river, pond or lake. This land area that drains into a particular stream or river is called a watershed.

A watershed is a dynamic system that includes land, soils, plants, wetlands, water bodies, land cover and people. These factors all affect the water flowing down through the watershed to the streams and rivers, influencing flooding, erosion, water quality, water temperature and habitat. A 2004 watershed study of the Wolf Creek and natural areas evaluation of Barberton Reservoir and Nature Preserve suggested that Copley and other communities in the watershed should be encouraged to further define general concerns and issues regarding growth and change, developing a series of alternative benchmarks, indicators, and options that could guide future development. A realistic combination of resource protection measures should be considered for implementation. The Table and Map below show watersheds delineated by Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and subwatersheds delineated in the Summit County Natural Resource Study.

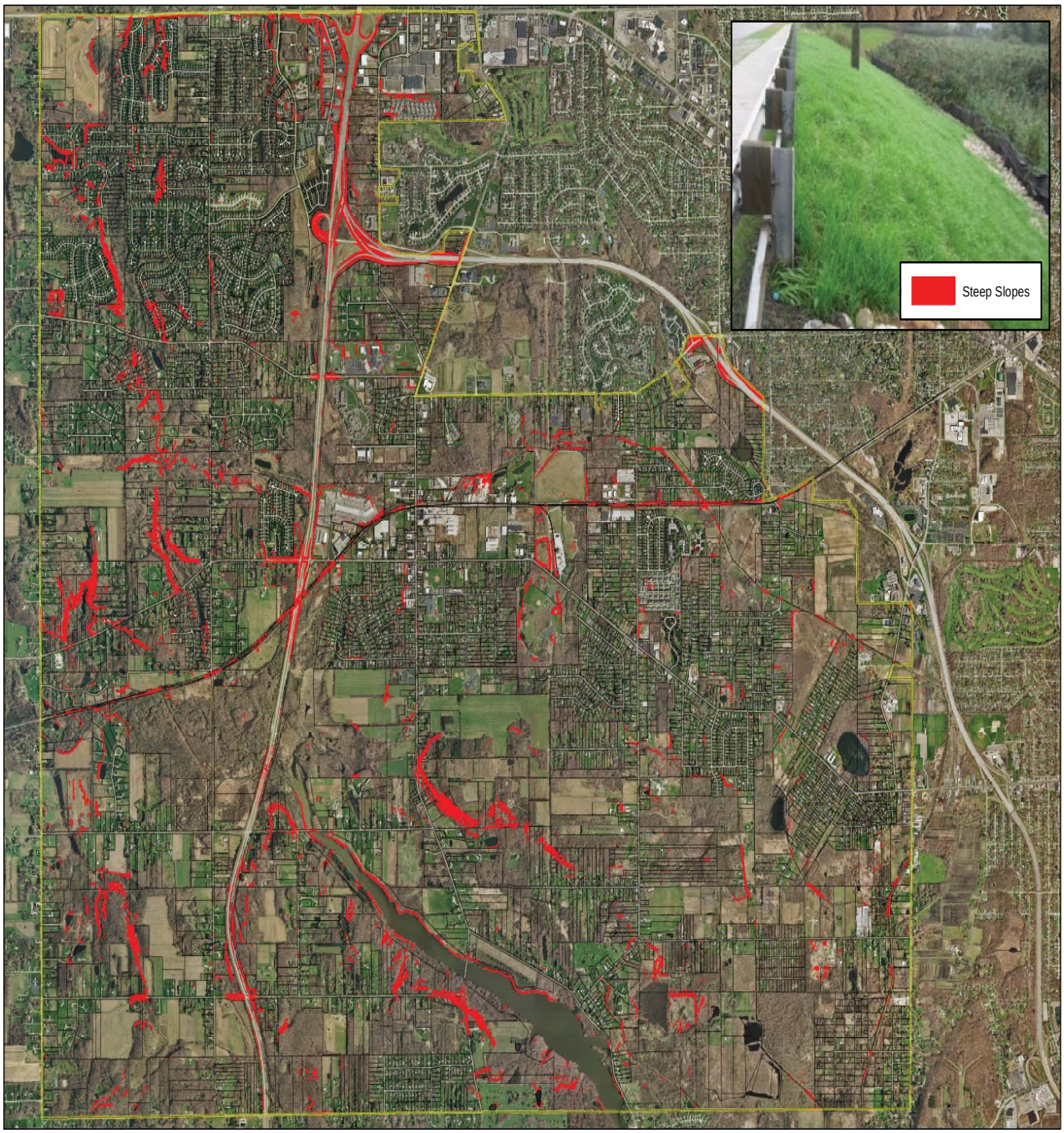
Barberton Reservoir

Watersheds in Copley

Basin	Watershed	Size of the Watershed (Acres)	Copley's Percentage of Watershed	Percentage of Township
Tuscarawas River	Pigeon Creek	10,705	67%	54%
	Schocalog Run	5,224	14%	5%
	Wolf Creek (Barberton Reservoir only)	24,976 (18,626)	18% (24%)	34%
Cuyahoga River	Yellow Creek	19,863	5%	7%

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

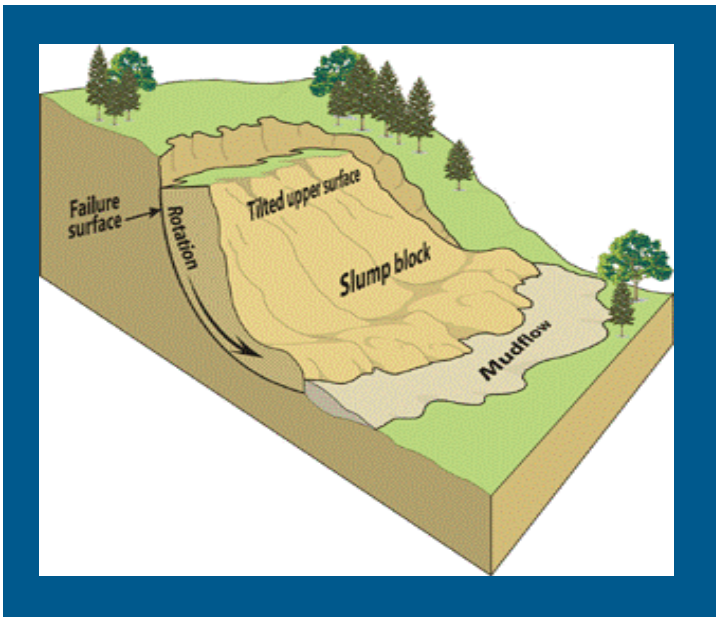
Steep Slopes Map



Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Land Cover

The most recent available satellite imagery dates back to 1994. Although dated, it can be used for planning purposes to identify general patterns of developed/undeveloped areas. The dataset illustrates conditions across Copley. Within certain limitations, land cover datasets are useful in determining general areas such as canopy cover. The category of agriculture/open space, however, is misleading as it includes land lot development. Map and Table show land cover data developed from ODNR 1994 satellite imagery.



Land and Vegetation Cover

TYPE OF LAND COVER	% of Township
Wooded	54%
Non-Forested Wetlands	4%
Scrub/Shrub	<1%
Agriculture/Open Space	33%
Urban	8%
Open Water	1%

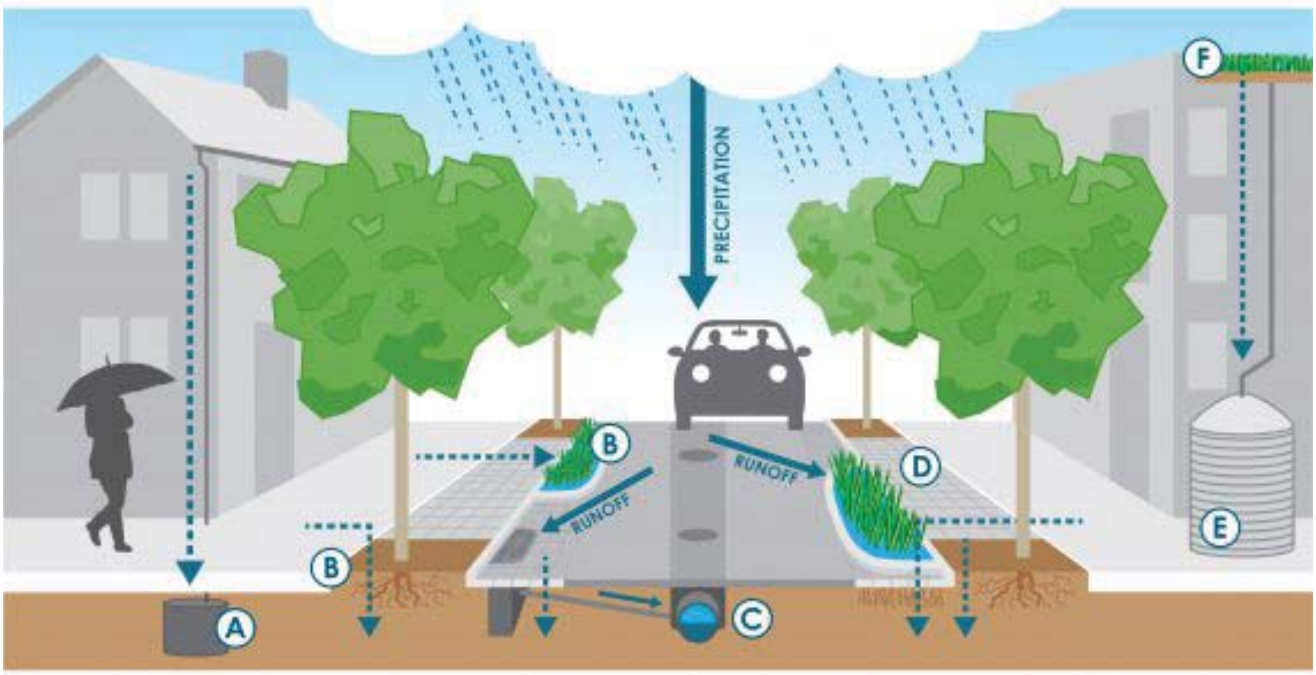
Source: ODNR 1994

Topography - Steep Slopes

While only two percent of Copley Township has slopes over twelve percent (12%), vegetated steep slopes are an important natural resource to be preserved because any significant disturbance to the hillside's environment may result in: landslides or land instability, unacceptable alteration in the drainage patterns, and loss of scenic value. When development takes place on or near steep slopes, vegetation cover is greatly reduced. Loss of this vegetative cover on steep terrain significantly increases soil instability, and thus the risk of erosion. Soil erosion and sedimentation into waterways pose several threats to public health and safety, which are difficult and expensive to correct. Property damage is commonly associated with development on steep slopes. Soil erosion and sedimentation into nearby waters increase the potential for flooding. Copley Township works to manage development in steep slope areas.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

According to the World Resource Institute (2003), services provided by green infrastructure include soil formation; nutrient cycling; primary production - the production of organic compounds from atmospheric or aquatic carbon dioxide, principally through the process of photosynthesis - and carbon sequestering. Green infrastructure provisioning services include: food, fresh water, fuel, fiber, biochemical production and genetic stability. Green infrastructure regulating services include: climate regulation, disease regulation and water purification. Increasing green infrastructure increases recreation and ecotourism opportunities, aesthetic value and many social benefits related to health, education and individual well being. Green infrastructure can include large, interconnected patches of woodland and interior forest, stream corridors with indigenous habitat, natural channels, flood plains, riparian slopes, wetlands, and even successional areas.

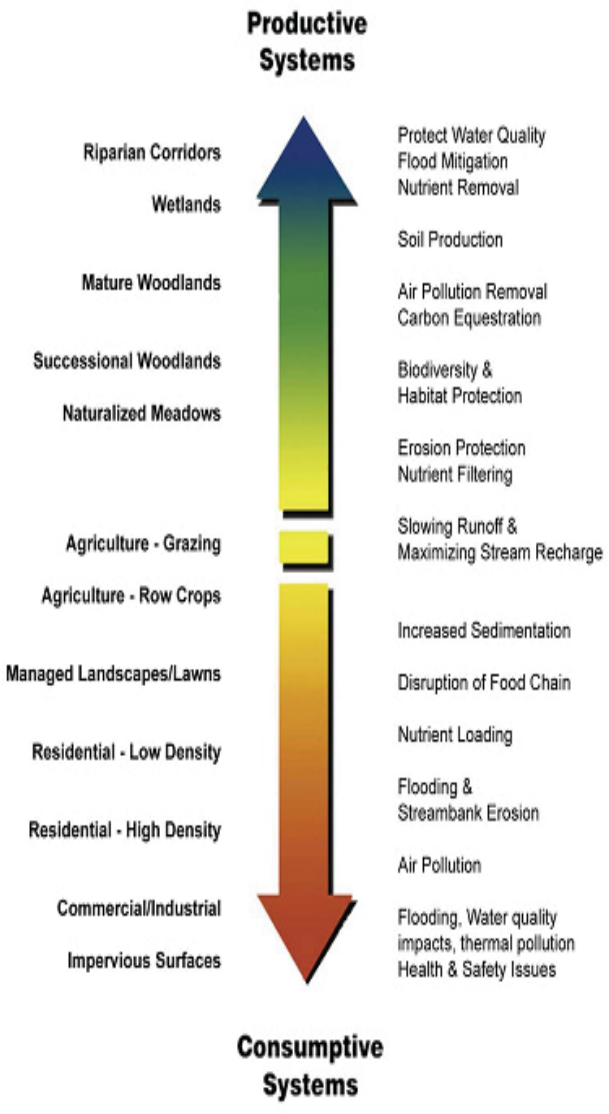


A: Dry Well B: Stormwater Planter C: Storm Drain D: Permeable Paving E: Rainwater Harvesting Cistern F: Green Roof

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

In 2007 Copley Township conducted an environmental analysis to provide a basis for wise land use regulation decisions. Baseline data and analysis regarding exsisting environmental conditions are intended to inform the planning process and serve as a base line for environemental planning.

Preservation and restoration of green infrastructure within communities is essential to maintaining natural ecological processes that impact air and water resources, habitat and species diversity.



Green infrastructure includes:

- ◊Trees and Woodlands
- ◊Streams and Lakes
- ◊Wetlands
- ◊Meadows
- ◊Inorganic Habitat
- ◊Living Organisms
- ◊Soil, Water and Air

Green infrastructure is as important as the built or gray infrastructure and includes:

- ◊Transportation Networks
- ◊Storm Sewers
- ◊Sanitary and Water Treatment Facilities
- ◊Bridges and Culverts
- ◊Buildings and Structures
- ◊Impervious Paving

Land is either a net **producer** *of eco-benefits or a net* **consumer** *of eco-benefits.*

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Farmland

Most of Copley Township is prime farmland according to the Summit County Soil Survey. Prime farmland is based on potential farmland productivity which is primarily dependent on soil inherent quality and soil management, and is often expressed in terms of land capability, suitability and expected yield. These interpretations involve predictions about soil behavior or attributes that are based largely on a known or obtainable set of soil properties that are maintained or predicted for each kind of soil.

The impact that elevated land values have on deducing the profitability of farming has become a critical issue associated with farmland protection concerns throughout the state. The price of agricultural land for development use is in stark contrast to land for agricultural use. In this case, land value for future development is not determined by the land's agricultural worth. Land value is, instead, often determined by its location. Its value comes from where it is, rather than its physical productivity.

Given the farmland already lost, the need for genetic diversity and the need to become less dependent on fossil fuels transporting our food to market, local farming will be critical to future generations. For many, farmland is first and foremost a business, and the bottom line is profitability. Also, for many, it is more than "farmland". It is a direct connection to the earth, a way to teach children the meaning and breadth of that connection, a way to enhance a thriving family that includes past and future generations. It is a commitment to nurture and sustain community resilience. Sustainable niche farming can also create job opportunities -

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Farmland

and keep dollars circulating in the community. The entrepreneurial success of these farms is direct marketing of food to consumers and developing cottage industries with unique products and services, which gives a better quality of life and more desirable community to reside.

Because Ohio's agricultural sector is changing, many farmers have searched for alternative farm based enterprises such as agri-tourism and the associated different methods of producing and marketing their products. Some farmers have been able to make this shift, creating farmers markets. According to the Center for Agriculture and the Environment, effective farmland policies tend to incorporate the basic premise that farms are more than just land. Successful programs leave the initiative with the farmer.

The Township supports working farms to the extent that if a development was proposed to be built on a contiguous lot or close to it, the farm use would not be required to change to accommodate a proposed development including, but not limited to dust, manure smell or spreading, fertilizer, animal noises, and corn cannons.

According to the 2024 Community Perspective Survey, Copley residents value open space and rural character and support policies which manage growth in the Township. Copley has 2,646 acres (20%) of land classified as agriculture according to Summit County Fiscal 2024 records. Parcels were sorted for Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV). However, not all agriculture parcels in the township are enrolled in the CAUV program and therefore, agricultural acres and the percentage is higher.

The Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program is a financial tool for property tax purposes. Farmland devoted exclusively to agriculture is not valued according to its current use but rather at its "highest and best" potential agricultural use. By permitting values to be set well below true market values, the CAUV program normally results in a substantially lower tax bill for working farms.

Farmland Survey

Copley Township launched a farm survey in 2024 to compile a more realistic idea of how much agriculture is going on in our township. The survey asked participants to indicate which description best fits how their land is currently being used for agriculture:

A. BACKYARD GARDEN to help feed and care for myself/family and may or may not include chickens, rabbits, goats or other small animals.

B. WORKING FARM/HOMESTEAD of less than 10 acres that includes crops and/or livestock.

C. WORKING FARM of more than 10 acres.

Over 100 people participated in the survey -

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Farmland Survey

Copley Township launched a farm survey in 2024 to compile a more realistic idea of how much agriculture is going on in our township. The survey asked participants to indicate which description best fits how their land is currently being used for agriculture:

A. BACKYARD GARDEN to help feed and care for myself/family and may or may not include chickens, rabbits, goats or other small animals.

B. WORKING FARM/HOMESTEAD of less than 10 acres that includes crops and/or livestock.

C. WORKING FARM of more than 10 acres.

Working Farms

Copley Township is home to over 70 working farms and/or homesteads which are actively utilizing their land for a wide variety of agricultural purposes; livestock, crops, apiaries, horticulture and small-family heritage farms. Family farms in Copley Township promote the preservation and economic sustainability of their land through innovative partnerships with but not limited to conservancies, wineries, nurseries and event centers.

Working Farms of More Than 10 Acres

Farming continues to be challenged by elements such as: weather, operating costs, infrastructure, aging operators, declining commodity prices. Despite these challenges, there are currently 42 working farms of more than 10 acres in Copley Township. Most of these farms, but not all, are currently enrolled in the CAUV program. These farms, many of which are generational, provide high quality food for livestock and humans, horticulture, a wide variety of livestock management, crop cultivation, sustainability and family values, as well as an income. Agri-tourism has given farmers the ability to protect their livelihood, educate the township youth, and encourage agriculture of all sizes, especially when supporting the smaller homestead farmers and backyard gardeners. Farmers cite their Copley Township neighbors as the greatest support of local agriculture in the community.

The working group helped to compile the following list of some of the farms of more than 10 acres in Copley Township. The majority of working farms are located Jacoby, Wright, Minor, S. Cleveland Massillon, Stimson, and Medina Line roads.

Working Farms/Homesteads of Less Than 10 Acres

Copley Township is the home of 30 working farms and homesteads of less than 10 acres. Most of these farms/homesteads, but not all, are currently enrolled in the CAUV program. These small-scale agricultural operations integrate both crop cultivation and livestock management and are designed to be self-sufficient by focusing on producing a variety of food products. Most of today's working farms and homesteads reflect a blend of traditional practices

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Working Farms/Homesteads of Less Than 10 Acres

and modern innovations when raising chickens, tending to vegetable gardens and harvesting fruit. Many of these small farms emphasize organic and sustainable practices contributing to the local economy and enhancing community resilience. Copley Township's local farm markets are thriving, offering residents food security, fresh, locally-grown produce and fostering the connection between consumers and producers.

The steering committee helped to compile the following list of some of the farms/homesteads of less than 10 acres in Copley Township. The majority of working/homestead farms are located on Coon, Minor, Stimson, and S. Cleveland Massillon roads.

Backyard Gardens

Some of our residents came to reside in Copley to realize the benefits of the land as a means to support their families with less impact on their budgets, resulting in many using their land for gardens and the raising of small animals. A backyard gardener has one (1) acre or less of space used for the purpose of gardening fruits, vegetables or flowers and the raising of chickens, rabbits, goats, bees or other small animals. The cultivation of these gardens provide sustenance; fresh vegetables, berries and fruits for the grower and family, as well as the benefit of meat, eggs, milk and honey.

Farming in Copley Township

Not surprisingly, 73.11% of the survey responders categorized the agriculture on their property as Backyard Garden, 10.92% as Working Farm/Homestead of less than 10 acres and 11.76% as Working Farm of more than 10 acres. However, the percentage that was surprising is that 4.20% listed themselves as falling into "all of the above" categories with many respondents citing the importance of the ability to have agriculture in our community. Throughout both surveys information gathered and the steering committee meeting, it was perfectly clear that the importance of agriculture in Copley Township is community supported. It doesn't matter if it is the larger working farms, the smaller working farms/homesteads or the backyard gardens, the community reaps the benefits of having local produce, eggs, honey, flowers, etc. To put it simply, Copley Township is participating in the world movement to self-sustainment by growing, buying, and eating local for the health of not only our planet but optimally ourselves. It has been said that the ability to sustain oneself is one of the most important freedoms a people can have and let us not forget that farming, no matter how big or how small, raises the awareness of agriculture to the origins of our food.

Chapter 7:
Sustainability + Resiliency

Supporting the Future of Farming in Copley Township

One way to support future farming in our township would be to create initiatives that would help support farming for the next 10 years in Copley Township, as well as:
· continue to advocate for CAUV
· improve traffic education for the safety of all during equipment movement between farming locations
· identify township land for use as a Community Garden with access to water source and adequate parking
· develop farmstand guidelines
· create a homestead directory
· support and assist organizations and groups that:

Provide Educational Programs and Workshops:
- Initiative: Establish a series of workshops and educational programs focused on sustainable farming practices, soil health, water conservation, and advanced agricultural techniques.
- Implementation: Partner with local universities, agricultural extension services, and experienced farmers to deliver hands-on training and resources for new and existing farmers.

Give Support for Young and Beginning Farmers:
- initiative: Create a grant and mentorship program specifically for young and beginning farmers to provide financial support and guidance in starting and maintaining their farms.
- Implementation: Collaborate with local agricultural organizations, banks, and community leaders to develop and administer the program.

Improve Infrastructure Development:
- Initiative: Improve infrastructure for small farms, including access to high-quality irrigation systems, renewable energy sources, and modern storage facilities.
- Implementation: Seek funding through state and federal grants, and work with local government and private businesses to invest in infrastructure improvements.

Foster Community Engagement and Support:
- Initiative: Increase community involvement in local farming through farm tours, volunteer opportunities, and educational events that connect residents with the agricultural process.
- Implementation: Organize regular farm events, open houses, and school programs that highlight the importance of local agriculture and foster a deeper connection between farmers and the community.

Expand Local Food Systems:
- Initiative: Expand local food systems by developing more farmers markets, CSA programs, and farm-to-school partnerships to increase access to fresh, local produce.
- Implementation: Support the creation of new markets and distribution networks, and collaborate with local schools and businesses to integrate locally-grown food into their programs and services.

Developing initiatives and implementing them will give Copley Township a clear path to support the growth and sustainability of all size farms, homesteads and gardens thus ensuring that farming and food production will remain a vital and productive part of the community for years to come.