2025

# NORTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## CITY OF NORTON

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Prepared for:



Prepared by:

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# PROJECT PURPOSE

# 1

# PROJECT PURPOSE

## ABOUT THE PLAN

In 2024, the City of Norton partnered with OHM Advisors to create a new comprehensive plan that will guide the city in land use, zoning, housing, transportation and economic development over the next 10 years. Norton's existing comprehensive plan was adopted in 2006, and the city recognized the need to revisit goals and update recommendations based on changing conditions. Unique to Norton, the plan takes a closer look at many factors that were shaping the city, including utilities and infrastructure, economic development, transportation, quality of life, and image. It also includes chapters about existing development patterns and subsequent development priorities within the city which show the greatest potential for development or redevelopment, and could serve as a catalyst for other community initiatives.

The planning process included extensive research to understand current conditions and develop a vision rooted in community feedback. The process also included public input ensuring the plan recommendations are based on the values and aspirations of the community. It was created with guidance from city staff, the Steering Committee, and city residents and business owners. The Steering Committee included broad representation from the community, including city officials, local stakeholders from the public and private realms, and general community representatives.

The Comprehensive Plan is a vital community blueprint. It sets the direction for where and how the city should grow over the next ten years. Within this broader goal there are a number of community wide objectives the plan achieves. These include land use, housing and economy, mobility and infrastructure, community identity, and focus areas.
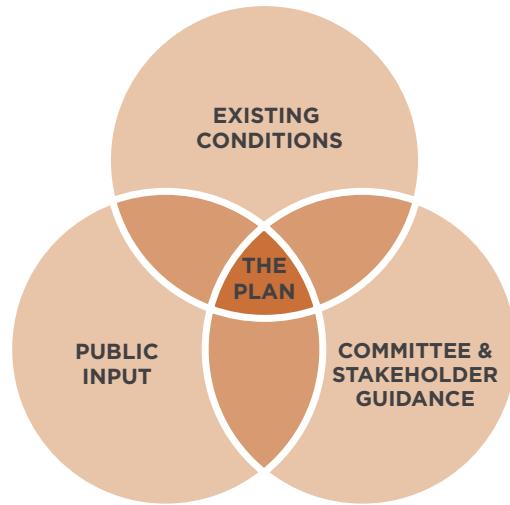


*The Plan was created by integrating three key inputs. This included existing conditions, public input, and committee and stakeholder guidance.*

## PLAN INPUTS

The Comprehensive Plan is a holistic and informed blueprint for future growth and development. Many layers of input from quantitative and qualitative analyses were considered, and extensive community involvement was conducted to create a technical and community informed vision. The following describes these inputs and how they informed the plan.

### Existing Conditions

Community existing conditions such as current land use, demographics, parks and open space, mobility, development character, community vision, and infrastructure were analyzed along with current market trends. With an understanding of the these, the planning team and the Norton Steering Committee worked to create the plan.

### Public Engagement

Throughout the planning process, the planning team facilitated public input sessions to gain insight into community values and aspirations for how and where the city should grow. These sessions revealed important insights on the issues and opportunities within the community, and preference for a desired growth strategy.

### Committee + Stakeholder Guidance

The planning team also facilitated discussions through steering committee and stakeholder meetings. Issues and opportunities made apparent during these discussions were used to validate findings from analyses and community engagement, and build focus and direction for the plan recommendations. These dedicated community members helped create the project framework and championed the plan on behalf of their community.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

### GUIDE...
...THE COMMUNITY IN EVALUATING PROPOSED PUBLIC, PRIVATE, OR JOINT PROJECTS.

### INFORM...
...CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE PROPERTY OWNERS AND DEVELOPERS ON DESIRABLE GROWTH PATTERNS.

### MEASURE...
...PROGRESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECTS IN NORTON  TO ENSURE THEY STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan process spanned approximately thirteen months and included both technical research and public involvement. The result is an intuitive, informed, and proactive document.

The planning process was developed at the beginning of the project. This process helped guide project activities, many of which were carried out concurrently in order to maintain the overall project schedule.

### Launch

During this initial step in the planning process, the scope of services was defined for the planning team, consisting of contracted planning consultants and key members of city staff. Members of the Steering Committee were also identified and invited to participate during the process. The whole team met to establish the project's goal and identify the preliminary priority projects.

### Inform

Throughout the summer and fall of 2024, the consultant team collected and analyzed data about all aspects of the city and analyzed them alongside current market trends. This information provided an understanding of the current conditions in Norton and informed the plan recommendations. Existing conditions and market analysis were reported to the Steering Committee for general feedback and verification.

### Engage

Concurrently with the existing conditions assessment, public input was collected using a combination of Steering Committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, an online public engagement survey, and public open houses to gain insight into the concerns and needs of residents within the study area.

### Develop

This step in the planning process involved developing recommendations for public and private improvements in the city. Future Land Use districts were identified, and concepts were created within various Priority Development Areas throughout Norton.

There was also an iterative process allowing the Steering Committee and the general public an opportunity to review and provide feedback on a draft version of the plan. This was a key step in ensuring the plan is supported by the public and that its recommendations are successfully implemented in the future.

### Finalize

Once the plan components were completed, compilation of the plan document began. The final plan is a concise, coherent, and easily understandable document. It is meant to be read and used by any Norton community member and its straightforward design should aid in the swift implementation of its recommendations.



*Phase 1:*
*Launch*
*July 2024*

*Phase 3:*
*Engage*
*November 2024 -*
*February 2025*

*Phase 5:*
*Finalize*
*July - October*
*2025*

*Phase 2:*
*Inform*
*August - October*
*2024*

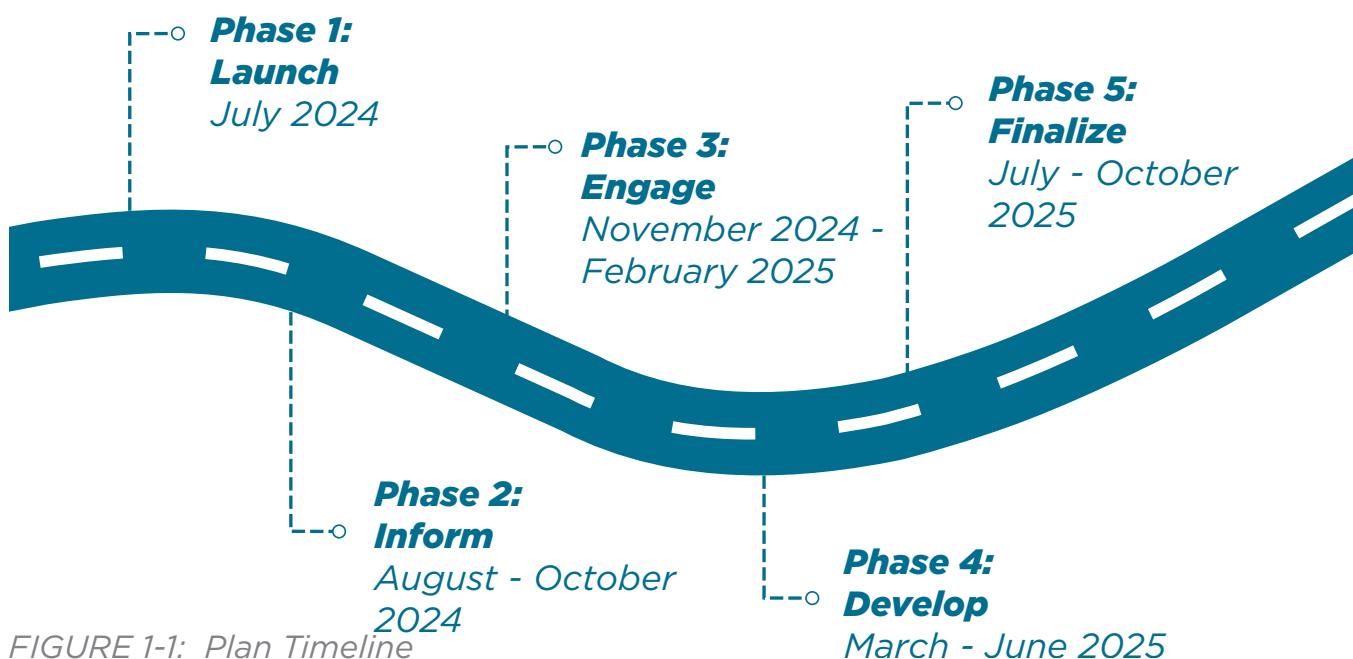*Phase 4:*
*Develop*
*March - June 2025*

FIGURE 1-1:  Plan Timeline

## PLAN FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The Plan integrates the inputs of an existing conditions analysis, public engagement, and committee and stakeholder guidance with guiding land use principles that represent the values and goals of the Norton community. This integration informed the development of the entire Plan Framework (*see Chapter 4*) and reinforced Focus Area concepts (*see Chapter 5*), along with related Implementation recommendations for all (*see Chapter 6*). The complete Plan will serve to reinforce future development character and shape the city for years to come.

The Plan Framework chapter outlines the Future Land Use Map and the Plan Elements goals and objectives. The important Future Land Use element section illustrates how land should be developed or zoned in the future, and gives direction on how to update the city's zoning code to align with the community's land use vision.

A fifth Plan Element includes three Focus Areas, each of which was identified for its ability to advance the future land use plan and the development opportunities outlined in the Plan. Each site has development or redevelopment potential, as well as the opportunity to accommodate growth that will generate new income opportunities for the city. The Focus Area concepts provide site analysis and development principles for the identified areas various development-ready sites in the city. These concepts are intended to be used as a guide for the city and developers to usher Norton into the future through proven design principles and forward-thinking development.

The final component of the plan comprises specific recommendations that should be implemented to advance the plan, because a plan without an implementation strategy is limited in its effectiveness. The full Implementation matrix can be viewed in Chapter 6.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

Future Land Use

Housing & Economy

Mobility & Infrastructure

Community Identity

Focus Areas

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan is a living document which should be reviewed annually and updated periodically. The city will oversee the plan implementation and coordinate the efforts of the parties identified as being responsible for its implementation. As conditions change and various sections of the plan are implemented, the city might find additional projects and/or strategies with which to achieve its desired goals and objectives.

A comprehensive plan is a community's "blueprint" for the future. It is the vision of what a community wants to become and a proposal for the steps needed to realize that vision. Specifically the plan achieves the following:

- Documents and illustrates what the community looks like today and what direction it wants to go in the future; it includes assessments of existing resources and issues, projections of future conditions and needs, and consideration of collective goals and desires.

- Translates the community's values into specific actions. It is a policy guide which not only addresses land use and infrastructure, but also includes important social, natural resource, and economic values of the community.

- Covers an approximate time frame of 10 years; it is assumed that shorter-term reviews will keep it current with the changing needs of the community.

- Integrates with other municipal documents and initiatives.

## WHO WILL USE THIS PLAN?

The Plan is intended to be used by a variety of audiences. The following are select groups that may most frequently utilize the plan:

- Citizens - Residents, business owners, and developers use the plan to submit development proposals to the city.

- City Council - Elected officials use it to guide policy decisions regarding land use, zoning, and development proposals.

- Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and other City Organizations and Boards - Citizens appointed by the Mayor can use the plan to provide policy recommendations to City Council.

- City and County - Use the plan to communicate with the public and development community on the priority initiatives for Norton.

Used effectively, the plan will make the process of new development and growth Norton easier and more efficient.

## ADDITIONAL PLAN INTEGRATION METHODS

The following are some additional methods where potential projects from this plan can be implemented:

### Annual Work Programs & Budgets

Individual city departments and administrators should be cognizant of the contents of the plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. Plan recommendations should be considered when reviewing budgets to layer city improvements with the recommendations outlined herein. In this way, the city can use public funds to help attract and elevate private investment, in turn creating opportunities for more revenue generating developments.

### Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning, major site plans, and conditional use permits, should be a central means of implementing the Plan. Decisions by elected and appointed officials should reference relevant plan recommendations and guidelines. City plans and codes should also reflect and support the plan vision and recommendations.

### Capital Improvements & The General Fund

The city's plan for capital improvements and use of the General Fund should be prepared consistent with the plan's policies and infrastructure recommendations. New improvements that are relevant to recipients of the General Fund as well as other tax funds such as street improvements should be considered as a means to implement the recommendations of this Plan.

### Economic Development Incentives

Economic development incentives should be reviewed periodically to ensure consistency with the plan and current legislation. New state ordinances may develop that change the economic landscape for funding projects in Ohio. This plan should be leveraged to apply for funding which requires a set of guidelines or area plan.

### Private Development Decisions

Property owners and developers should consider the plan's goals and strategies in their land planning and investment decisions. Public decision makers will be using the plan as a guide in their development deliberations such as zoning matters and infrastructure requests. The city should use this plan as a tool to clearly communicate to property owners and developers the overall vision for growth in Norton .

# 2

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

# 2

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## OVERVIEW

This section outlines the key data, metrics, and perspectives that are the foundation of the plan. This includes the data and analysis on existing zoning, land use, infrastructure, and a community snapshot. Collectively, these elements served as the inputs from which the plan's vision and recommendations were developed. This analysis aims to create a technical understanding of the community's conditions and trends to inform the development of the plan. Through this approach, the plan is both technically and intuitively informed.

# COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

## Study Area

The study area is determined by the City of Norton boundary, in the above map. Norton is bordered by the City of Wadsworth to the west and the City of Barberton to the southeast. The main vehicular routes in the area are U.S. Routes 76, which run from east to west, and Ohio State Routes 21, which intersect the study area from north to south, and 261, which runs east to west. The northern parts of the study area include agricultural, residential and industrial land, including the Loyal Oak Golf Course. The main streets in the city include S Cleveland Massillon Road, Wadsworth Road, Greenwich Avenue, Norton Avenue, and Barber Road. The southern part of the City includes the Summit County Silvercreek Metropark, and an industrial park.
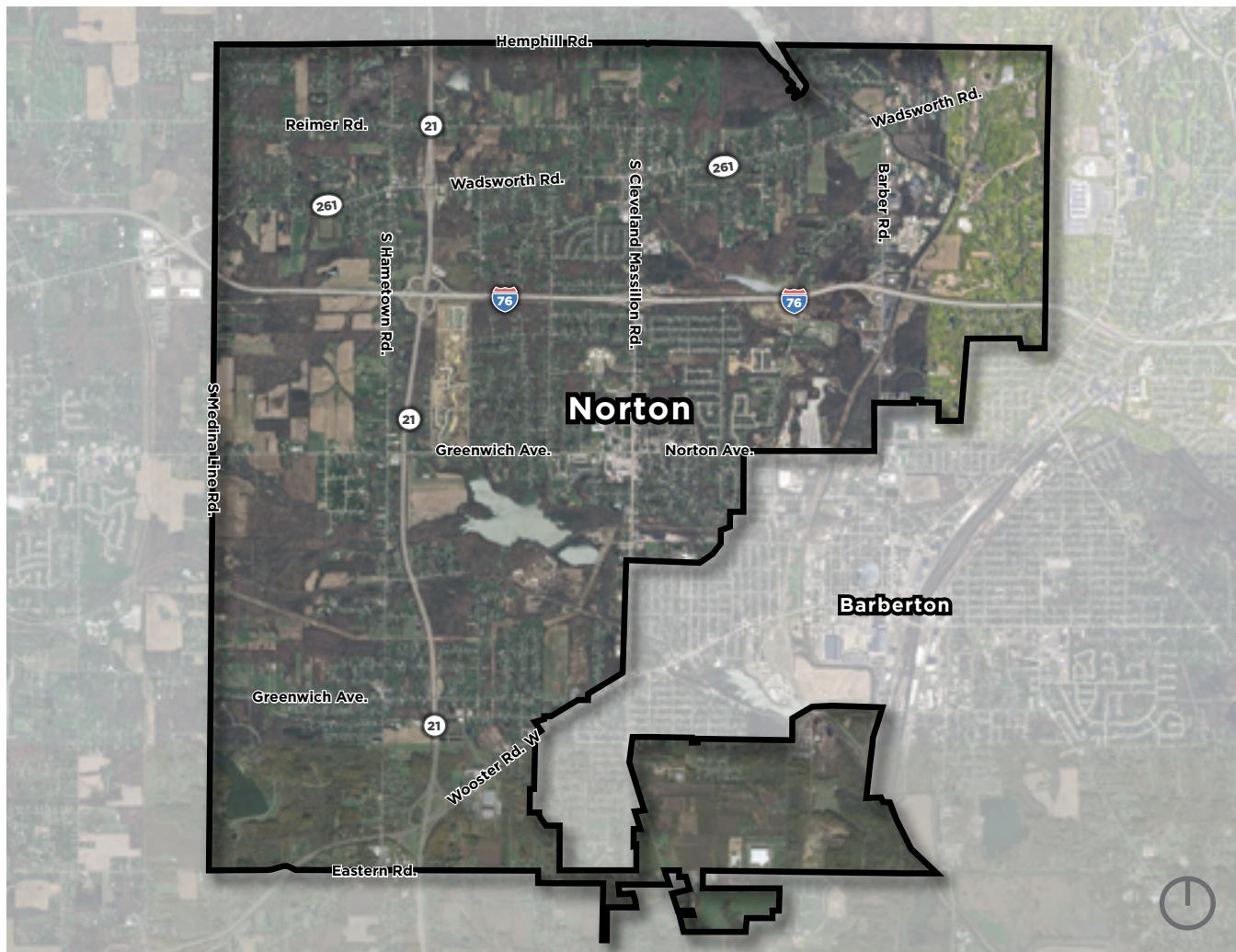


FIGURE 2-1:  Study Area Map

## Population

Norton's 2020 U.S. Census population was 11,673 (and 2024 Esri Business Analyst population was **11,802**). There is a greater percentage of older adult residents age 60 and over, which affects ongoing housing needs analyses and development. The median community age is 46, which is older than Summit County (42) and Ohio (40.2).

As shown in Figure 2-2, Norton reached a population peak in 2010, with 12,068 people, followed by a drop in 2020 (Based off of data taken from 2020-2024). Beginning in 2021, a gradual yet slow increase in population occurred, with a 2029 population projection of 12,052.

A .26% population growth rate suggests continuing slow and steady growth. When compared to neighboring geographies like Barberton (-.56%) and New Franklin (.01%), Norton is on track to capture new residents.

Since 25% of the Norton population consists of Baby Boomers, it will be important that new residents are young families or professionals.

Population
**11,802**

Daytime Population
**6,105**

Baby Boomer
**25%**

(22% in Summit County, 21% in Ohio)

**POPULATION**



12,068

12,052

11,499

11,673

11,621

11,641

11,701

11,802

*Norton Pop Growth Rate: .26%*

2000  2010  2020  2021  2022  2023  2024  2029
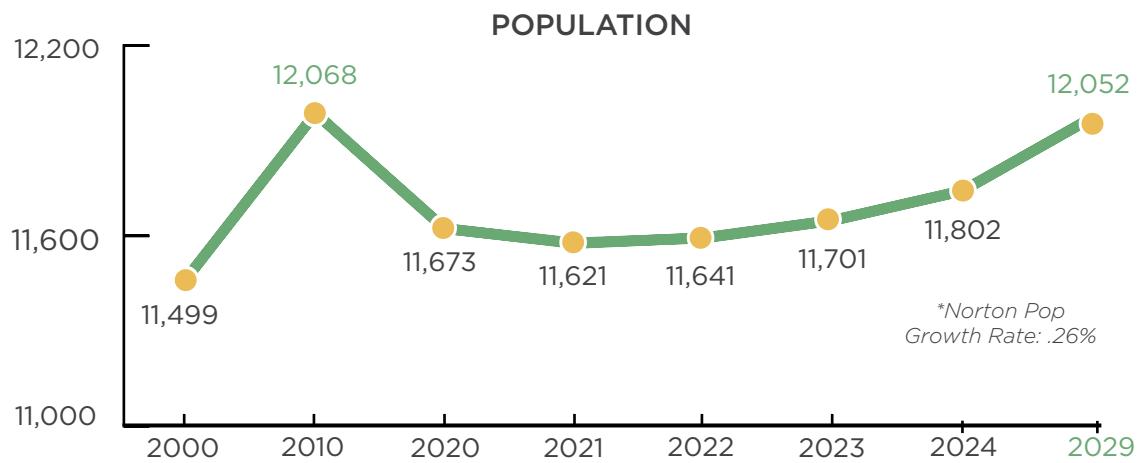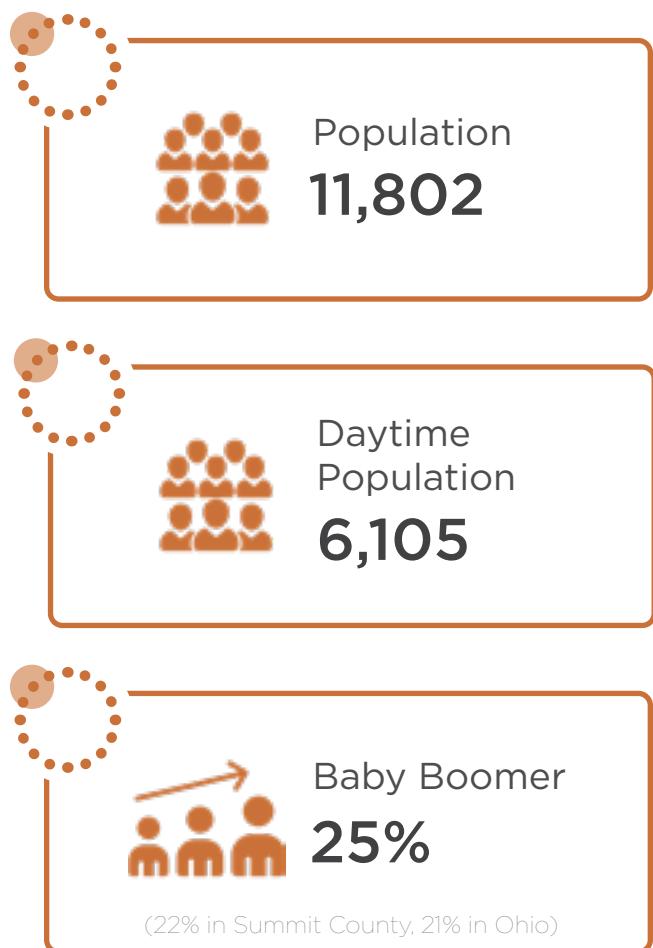
*Barberton*
*Population: 24,592*
*Pop. Growth Rate: -0.56%*

*New Franklin*
*Population: 13,882*
*Pop. Growth Rate: .01%*

*Wadsworth*
*Population: 24,514*
*Pop. Growth Rate: .43%*

*FIGURE 2-2: Population Growth Rate Graph*

## Households

According to Esri Business Analyst, in 2024 there were about 4,809 households in Norton with an average size of 2.45 people. The top three household types in Norton are professional couples aged 55 and older, married-couple families and couples retired or planning for retirement.

Other household types include young, well-educated professional families that traded up to newer housing in the suburbs, and newly retired individuals who can be characterized by their small household size, being fiscally conservative, mostly renters, and often living in multi-unit structures.

The 2022 median household income was $80,777 and median home value, $204,227. 86% of residents own their homes while 14% of the residential population rent.
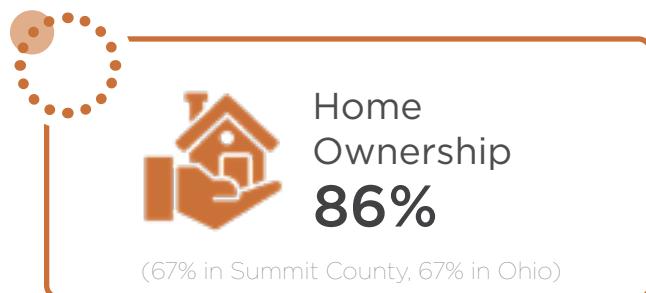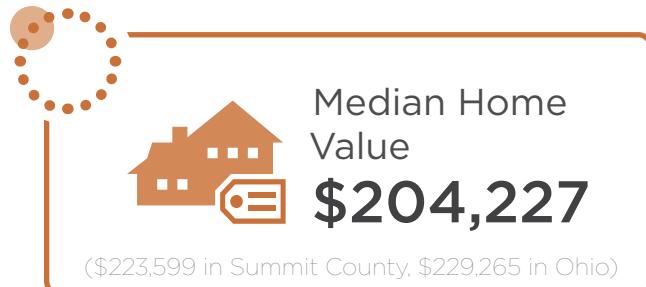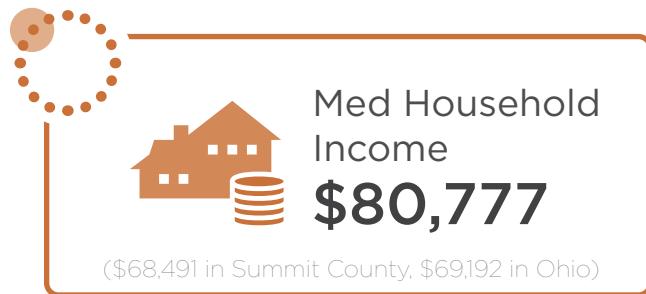
## Housing Stock

Norton's housing stock is characterized by single-family, low density housing. Multi-family housing has a very small footprint throughout Norton, mostly being concentrated near downtown and along S Cleveland Massillon Road.

The largest percentage of housing (20.6%) was built post WWII between 1950-1959.

### Med Household Income
**$80,777**
($68,491 in Summit County, $69,192 in Ohio)

### Median Home Value
**$204,227**
($223,599 in Summit County, $229,265 in Ohio)

### Home Ownership
**86%**
(67% in Summit County, 67% in Ohio)

## Workforce

Norton's daytime population drops to 6,105 due to the 5,070 residents working outside the City limits. About 22% of residents have a commute of 20-24 minutes to work, indicating they are traveling to surrounding communities for employment. White and blue collar jobs make up the highest percentage of the labor force, with the health care, manufacturing, and retail sectors being the most prevalent.

## Employment

57% of jobs in Norton are considered white collar, while 28% are blue collar and 15% are service related. The unemployment rate is 2.4%, when compared to other geographies like Summit County (3.3%) and Ohio (3.2%), is lower and could imply steady employment throughout the City.

The industries most prevalent within the local economy and Norton workforce are healthcare, manufacturing, and retail trade. It is important to note that these industries are likely regional hubs that attract a workforce from the greater Akron metropolitan area. Some of these workers are likely one of the 5,116 people that live in Norton but work outside of the City.

**4,203** people are employed in but *live outside* of Norton

**5,116** people live in, but *work outside* of Norton

**433** people are *employed and live* in Norton

**LABOR FORCE BY INDUSTRY**
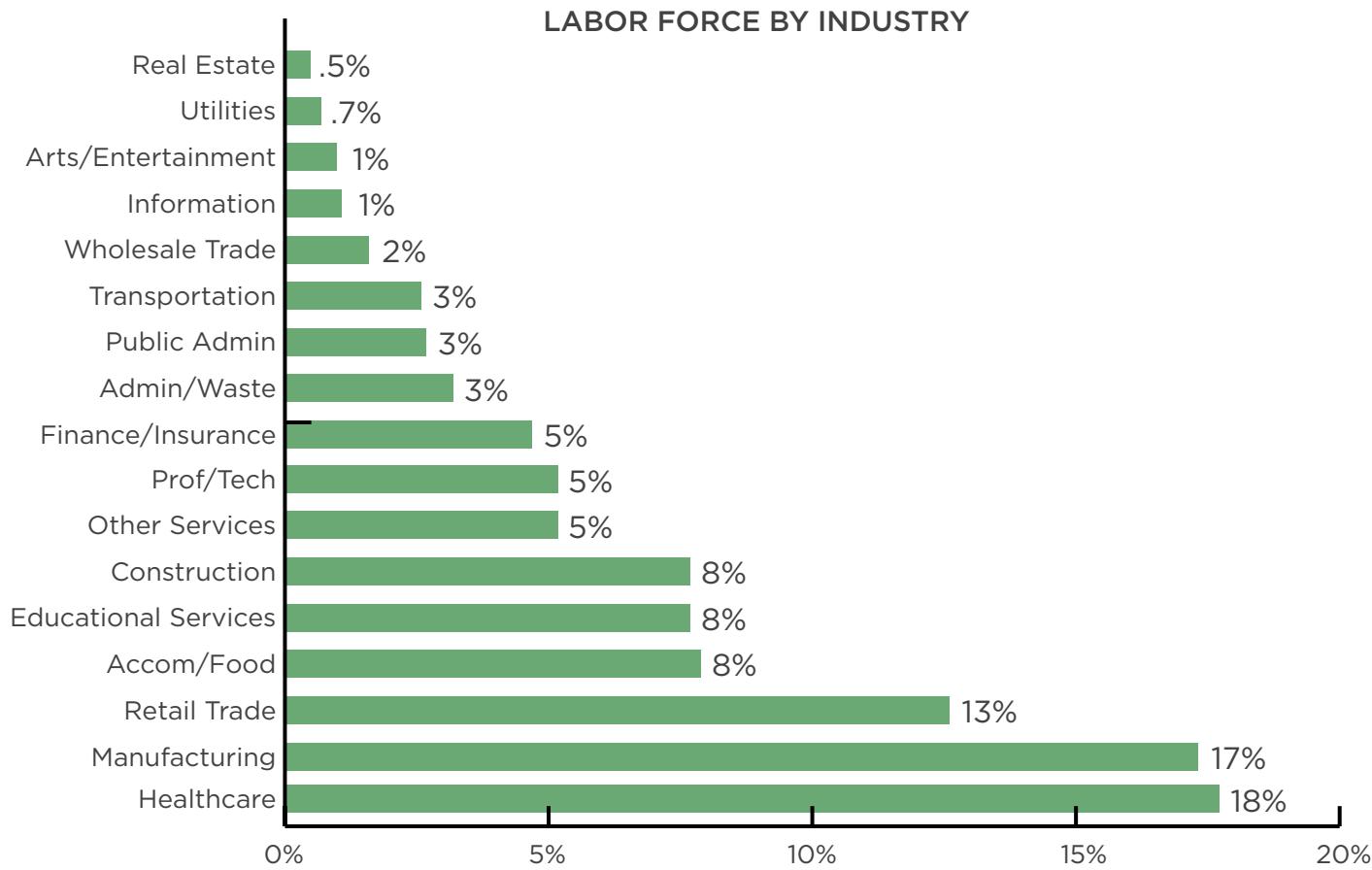


*FIGURE 2-3: Labor Force Graph*

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# EXISTING ZONING
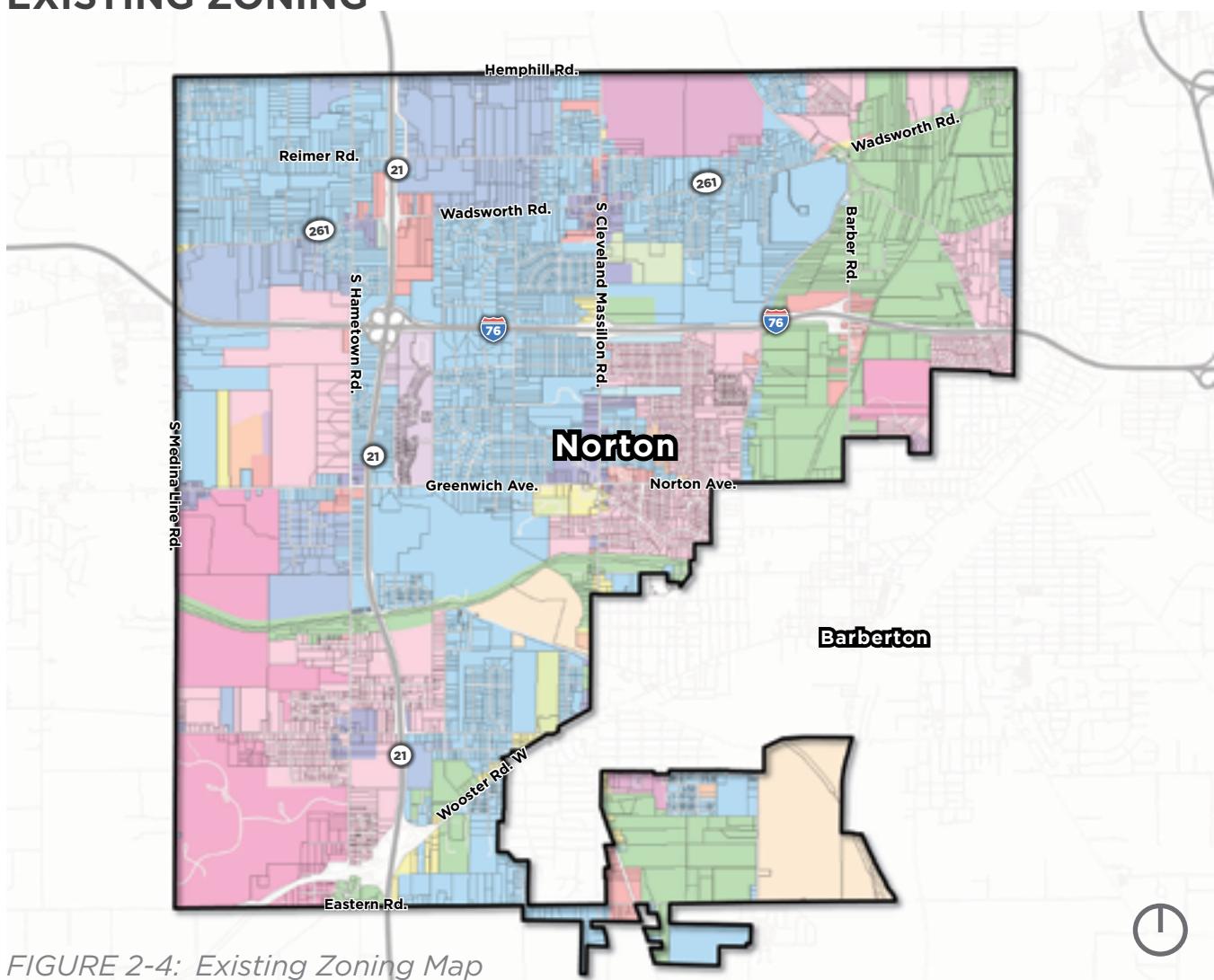


*FIGURE 2-4: Existing Zoning Map*

| ZONING KEY | | |
|---|---|---|
| SPEC- DEV - Special Development | R-PC - Planned Cluster Residential | |
| RU-1 - Rural Residential | R-1 - One-Family Residence | |
| R-2 - One-Family Residence | R-3 - One-Family Residence | |
| R-3 RPC - Planned Cluster Residential | R-4 - Multifamily Residence | |
| R-5 - Multifamily Residence | C-1 - Commercial | |
| C-REC - Commercial Recreation | I-1 - Light Industrial | |
| I-2 - Heavy Industrial | MUD - Mixed-Use | |
| PRD - Public Recreational | B-1 - Central Business | |
| B-2 - Neighborhood Business | B-3 - Highway Business | |

There are 18 zoning classifications in the City of Norton. Residential districts account for the most of the zoned laned in the city, followed by business/commercial, and industrial. The residential zoning districts are organized by density and are located throughout , with the majority of the districts located on the western half of the city. The businesses/commercial districts are located primarily along the corridors of South Cleveland Massillon Road, State Route 21, Interstate 76 (and interchanges), and Wadsworth Road. The industrial districts are primarily located on the eastern and southern portions of the community.

Understanding these zoning designations is important to set a baseline for land development today and in the future. The current zoning districts do not align with the existing land use, which causes friction when new development projects are proposed, especially with former agriculture land. The zoning, as outlined here, may not align with the future land use map presented later in the plan. By including the zoning, the intention is to provide a reference point for how land may be rezoned in the future to align with the future land use map.

## EXISTING LAND USE

Understanding current land uses in the study area provides a context that guides plan recommendations. Updating land use designations and identifying areas that have higher and better uses results from analyzing existing conditions and building on the variety of land uses that exist. Primarily, residential and agricultural uses dominate the study area. Majority of industrial activity is located along the Barber Road corridor. Most commercial activity can also be found in the same portion of the study area and along the S Cleveland Massillon Road corridor. Most of the undeveloped land exists in proximity to existing agricultural uses around the western portion of the City boundary.
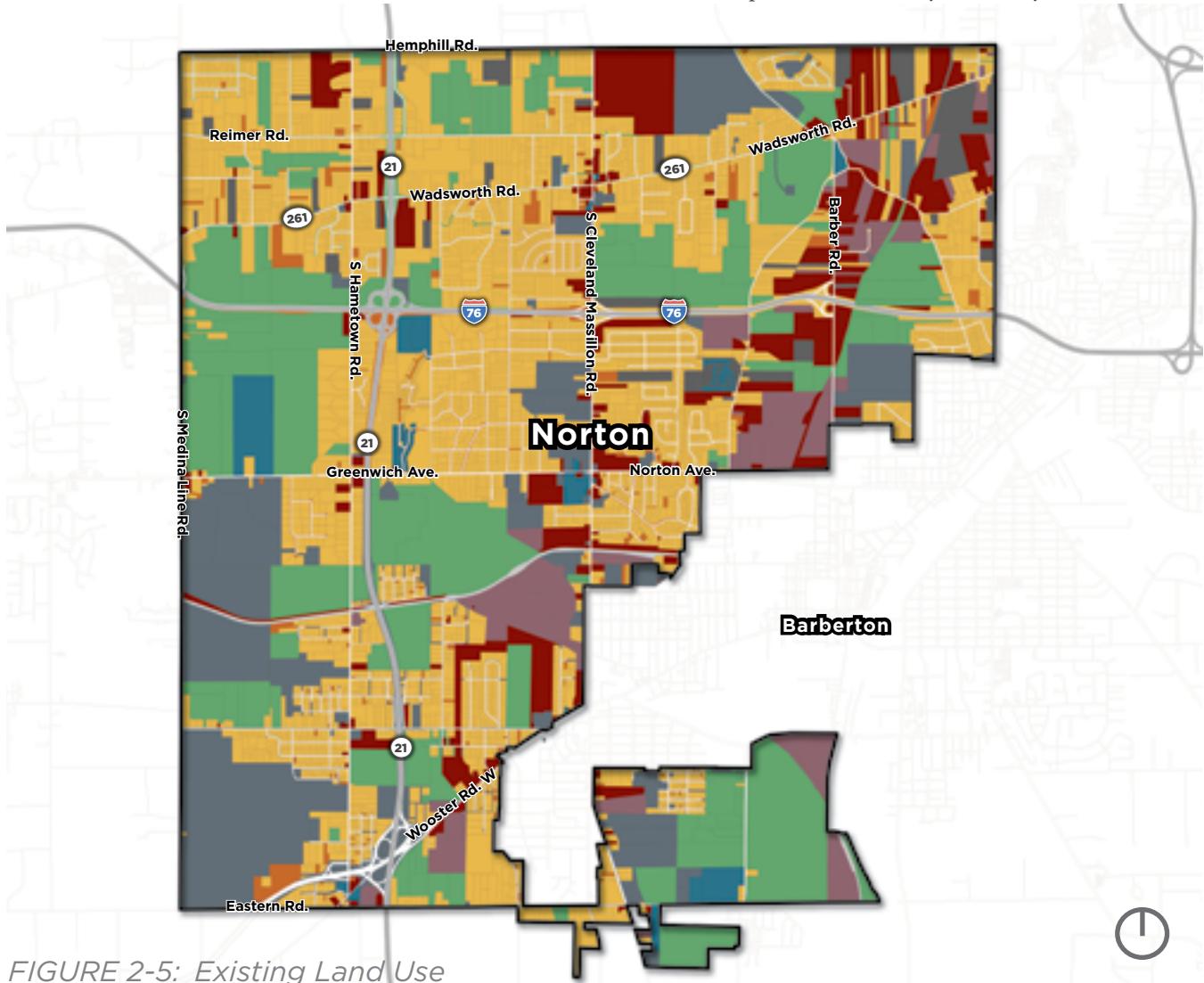


FIGURE 2-5: Existing Land Use

| LAND USE KEY | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Industrial | | Public/Civic |
| | Oil & Gas Rights | | Railroad |
| | Residential | | Agriculture |
| | Multi-Family | | Commercial |

# UTILITIES / INFRASTRUCTURE

The following map outlines the existing utility lines within the City of Norton and the bordering community of Barberton. Currently, only specific areas of the community are serviced by water and sanitary sewer. City staff is currently in the process to extend those services to the community. This planning process will aid in expanding the system and understanding the impact on the city both for residential and business growth.



FIGURE 2-6: Utility Map

| UTILITY KEY | |
|---|---|
| Water Main | Sanitary Sewer |
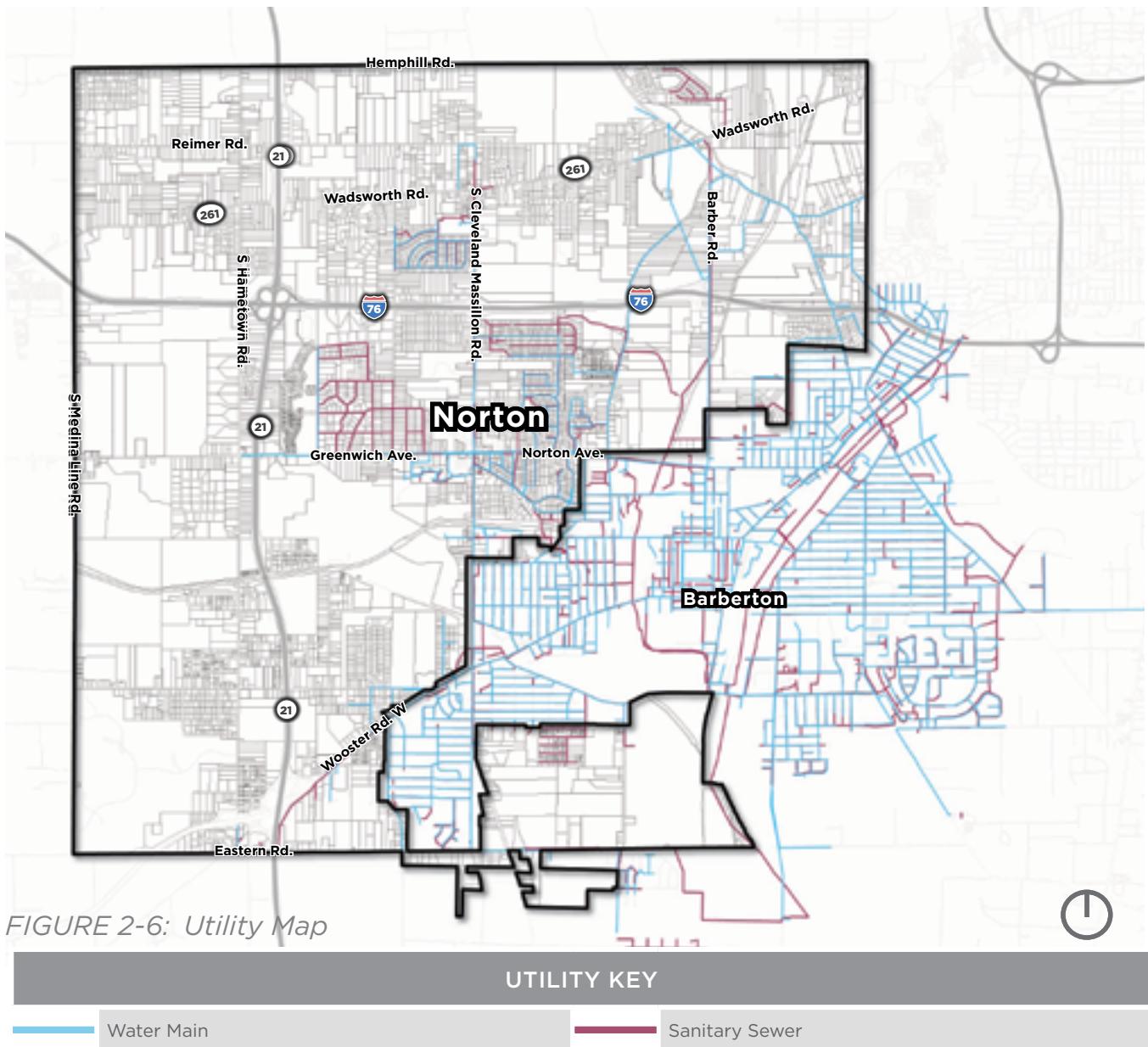
## PARKS MASTER PLAN

Norton completed a parks master plan process which was adopted by City Council in 2022. The process examined the system-wide park system to redefine a vision for the city parks and develop an implementation strategy to achieve the vision. The process involved dialogue with stakeholders, city leaders, staff, and community residents. The final plan outlined the process, summary from the engagement activities, and a detailed list of each parks recommendations and general maintenance needs going forward. As part of

the comprehensive plan process, the project team sought to further promote the vision and recommendations as outlined in the parks master plan report. The following page restates the park prioritization as determined by the plan and highlights the future recommendations overview for the five parks.



*FIGURE 2-7: Parks Master Plan*

## Park Priorities

1. Loyal Oak Park
2. Columbia Woods Park
3. Frashure Park
4. Williams Peace / Memorial Park
5. Helmick Park

### LOYAL OAK PARK FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Field drainage improvements
- Parking area improvements
- Walking paths
- Play area (or hillside play area)
- Restrooms with drinking fountains
- Add shade trees
- Add standardize site furnishings (benches, receptacles, and park signage)

### COLUMBIA WOODS PARK FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Amphitheater with band stand
- Restroom facility
- Ball field modification / improvements to allow for softball
- Acquire land to connect park to Lake Dorothy
- Add parking / re-configure vehicular circulation
- Add accessible paths connecting vehicular areas to park amenities
- Add standardize site furnishings (benches, receptacles, and park signage)

### FRASHURE PARK FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ball field drainage repairs
- Restroom facility
- Shade pavilion
- Nature play area
- Walking trail / path
- Pave parking lot / entry drive
- Basketball courts
- Add standardize site furnishings (benches, receptacles, and park signage)

### WILLIAMS MEMORIAL/PEACE PARKS FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Norton Branding / Monument Sign at Williams Memorial Park with community message board
- Veterans Memorial Flagpole Plaza at Williams Memorial Park
- Renovating / enhanced landscaping
- Urban seating plaza, with programmable space at Williams Peace Park
- Public Art

### HELMICK PARK FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Larger play area
- Pave parking area
- Add pavilion / shade structure
- Fenced dog area
- Renovate existing lawn areas
- Add standardize site furnishings (benches, receptacles, and park signage)

## Key Takeaways

Through a robust analysis of existing conditions and growth trends, the planning team identified these key findings to help inform the identification of future land use districts and focus area concepts:

- Norton's population (11,802) has been slowly climbing over the last decade, following a decline between 2010 and 2020. Their growth rate (0.26%) since 2020 is comparable to neighboring and similar cities in Ohio.

- The age breakdown in Norton is similar to Summit County, with over 65% being born between 1946 and 1998.

- Approximately 4,050 individuals are employed in Norton, but live outside of the City, providing an opportunity to capture new residents to live and work in the City.

- The median household income ($80,777) is higher than the average income in Summit County ($68,491). Still, it is comparable to neighboring cities whose average income is around $80,000.

- Norton's primary labor force industries are retail trade (13%), manufacturing (17%), and healthcare (18%).

- The median home value in Norton is approximately $204,227, which is lower than the median home value in Summit County ($223,599) and the State of Ohio ($229,265). The value difference suggests that housing in Norton is more affordable than in other cities in Summit County.

- Approximately 86% of Norton residents own their own homes, with the majority (approximately 50%) being built before 1980 (45+ years old). There has been a recent spike in new housing developments over the last 10 years.

# 3

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# 1

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## OVERVIEW

The first round of public engagement for the Norton Comprehensive Plan began with the first steering committee meeting on October 10th, 2024, and ended with the close of the online community survey on February 10th, 2025.

City of Norton staff and the consultant team used a variety of outreach methods to effectively communicate opportunities for the public to engage in the process. The City posted notice of the opening of the online community survey on its website and social media pages and published the survey flyer and link to its online city newsletter, which was distributed in January 2025.

Over 325 people participated in the first round of engagement efforts, generating dozens of ideas for how to shape Norton's future. This document outlines the public engagement process and key takeaways garnered from the community's ideas and aspirations.

The second round of public engagement for the Norton Comprehensive Plan began with the City's Community Day hosted July 26th, 2025 and ended with the presentation to City Council in October 2025.

**19** **Steering Committee Members**

Engaged throughout 5 total meetings in this process.

**254** **Survey Responses**

via an online survey, which was conducted over a five week span.

**50+** **Open House Participants**

Between two in-person sessions held in the evenings.

DESIGN YOUR OWN MURAL  TITLE: _____

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE...

THING TO DO: _____

PLACE TO GO: _____

THINKING ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD...

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT NORTON?

_____

IF YOU HAD MONEY TO SPEND ON THE NEIGHBORHOOD, WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE FIRST?

_____

WORD SEARCH

```
C A S R E N N S E S M O A S
R C Y R R N O P F I R E N B
Y Y E U H A T A M L C C E G
R T M U O D R N H V P H I R
H I H E A O O T O E L E G E
H N N Y R H N H D R A E H E
E U C R A O E E A C Y S B N
E M O N I E N R R R G E O W
O M T E O S O S E E R B R H
B O R C T O M A E E O A H I
E C S R E E B U S K U R O C
F B E O I E E E A N N N O M
E E T L W H O E O N D N D S
T R E T E E O A K L E A F O
```

PANTHERS
SILVERCREEK
PLAYGROUND
STREET
NEIGHBORHOOD
CHEESEBARN
OAKLEAF
GREENBROOK
COMMUNITY
NORTON

BUILD YOUR OWN BLOCK IN NORTON. HOW DO YOU IMAGINE THE SHOPS, RESTAURANTS, AND SERVICES? DRAW IT HERE!

*Kid's activity during the public open house at the Norton Hish School Athletic Center*

*Participation during the public open house at the Norton High School Athletic Center*

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Through multiple engagement events the community was asked what they believe are the biggest issues and opportunities facing the City. These questions were posted to the steering committee, survey, and community meetings. The following are the key takeaways/themes from the many responses received to these two important questions.

What is the most critical **issue** for the City of Norton?

"Does Norton **want** to grow?"

"What is **reachable** growth that doesn't **conflict** with our values?"

"**Rural** lifestyle in a city setting"

"Lack of city **water & sewer**"

"Open land, major companies **not enticed** to develop"

"Development in the past lacked **vision/negotiating** skills"

"**Staffing**, no planning director/ building inspector"

"The biggest issue is the **commercial isolation**"

"Lack of **growth & development**"

"Not many **hangout spots**"

**What is the greatest opportunity for the future of Norton?**

"Planned development of **downtown**"

"Clean up **storefront appearances** and **businesses**"

"Making Norton that community you can **live, work, and play**"

"Areas of **economic growth**"

"Grow our **industrial** park"

"We need a **Rec Center** for youth sports teams"

"Need for more **sidewalks**"

"**Land acquisitions**, purchase adjacent property"

"On/off **expressway** ramp **development**"

"**Vacant land** available at major intersections for **business development**"

## SURVEY OVERVIEW

The online survey, which was open from December 10, 2024, to February 9, 2025, received 254 responses. The majority of the respondents were residents. The Norton Comprehensive Plan Survey was open for nine weeks for public participation.

The survey consisted of 33 questions organized into five categories: community values, housing, economy, growth and development, and demographics.

City staff and the project steering committee reviewed the Norton community survey, which was then advertised to the public via the City's website, social media accounts, and a flyer with a QR code link to the survey.

The following pages show a snapshot of critical questions and results from the community survey.



# Through this survey we found the City of Norton is:

**>** VALUED FOR ITS RURAL LIVING AND SMALL TOWN COMMUNITY FEEL.

**>** APPRECIATED FOR IT'S LOCATION IN THE REGION AND RESIDENT'S PROXIMITY TO FAMILY & FRIENDS.

**>** LOOKING FOR INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND ADJUST TO MODERN DEMANDS.

# What We Heard

**1** MAJORITY OF RESIDENTS AGREE THAT NORTON SHOULD GROW; PARTICULARLY IN THE INDUSTRIAL AND MANUFACTURING SECTORS AND BY INCREASING QUALITY JOB GROWTH.

**2** THERE IS A STRONG DESIRE FOR A CENTRALIZED, AND VIBRANT DOWNTOWN THAT SUPPORTS SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINMENT OPTIONS AND PUBLIC SPACE FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING.

**3** RESPONDENTS ARE SUPPORTIVE OF INCREASED COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY THROUGH SIDEWALKS, PARKS, AND OPEN AND RECREATIONAL SPACES.

**4** A STRATEGIC AND BALANCED GROWTH PLAN IS VITAL FOR ATTRACTING AND INTEGRATING NEW DEVELOPMENT AND TO GROW THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

# 254
## respondents

## HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE CITY OF NORTON?

| | |
|---|---|
| 22% | 0 - 5 years |
| 15% | 6 - 10 years |
| 12% | 11 - 20 years |
| 17% | 21 - 30 years |
| 32% | Over 30 years |

### Resident Responses
# 96%
245 Responses

### Employed in Norton Responses
# 8%
20 Responses

### Business Owner Responses
# 3%
8 Responses

### Non-Resident Responses
# 2%
4 Responses

*Total equals >100% due to multiple choice selections*

## AVERAGE QUALITY OF LIFE RATING FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS:

# 7.5

## WHICH WOULD YOU FOCUS ON TO IMPROVE NORTON'S QUALITY OF LIFE?

1. Improving the Downtown Area
2. Enhancing City Services
3. Attracting Economic Development
4. More Parks & Open Space
5. Job Creation
6. Other
7. Housing

## TOP REASONS RESPONDENTS CHOOSE TO SPEND TIME IN NORTON:

1. Location in the Region
2. Proximity to Family
3. Cost of Living
4. Quality of Schools
5. Proximity to Work
6. Quality of Housing
7. Community Character

## WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES FACING NORTON?

| Challenge | Value |
|---|---|
| Economic Development | 135 |
| Sufficient City Services | 119 |
| Creating a Strategic & Balanced Growth Plan | 119 |
| Attracting & Retaining Workforce | 43 |
| Community Connectivity | 43 |
| Maintaining Parks & Recreation Facilities | 34 |

# WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN NORTON?

LAND  HOMETOWN  SIZE

COUNTRY  LOCATION

COST  SCHOOLS

AFFORDABLE

ACCESS

SAFETY  NEIGHBORS

COMMUNITY  QUIET

QUALITY

CLOSE

## DO YOU BELIEVE NORTON SHOULD GROW?

No 21%
Yes 60%
Not sure 19%
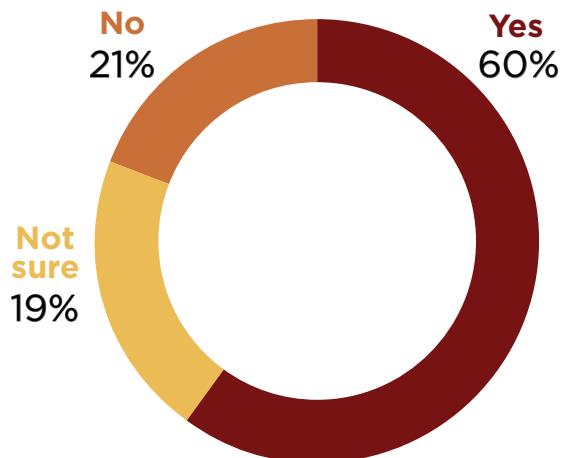
## RESPONDENT'S TOP CHOICE AS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY:

DOWNTOWN
62%
150 Respondents

## DO YOU BELIEVE NORTON HAS THE RIGHT MIX OF JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

**44%**

No

113 Responses

**26%**

I Don't Know

66 Responses

**24%**

Yes

60 Responses

## TOP 5 PLACEMAKING IMPROVEMENTS RESPONDENTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE DOWNTOWN:

60% Sidewalks/Walkability

28% Lighting

27% Exterior Landscaping

25% Benches & Trash Receptacles

21% Public Art

*Total equals >100% due to multiple choice selections*

## RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED TO RATE THEIR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

The City should increase the number, variety, and quality of employment opportunities.

*Strongly Disagree* — *Disagree* — *Neutral* — **Agree** — *Strongly Agree*

The City should continue to grow and invest in downtown.

*Strongly Disagree* — *Disagree* — *Neutral* — **Agree** — *Strongly Agree*

The City should use incentives to attract revenue-generating industries and tax-producing developments.

*Strongly Disagree* — *Disagree* — *Neutral* — **Agree** — *Strongly Agree*

The City should make it a high priority to develop work-force housing to support the local economy.

*Strongly Disagree* — *Disagree* — **Neutral** — *Agree* — *Strongly Agree*
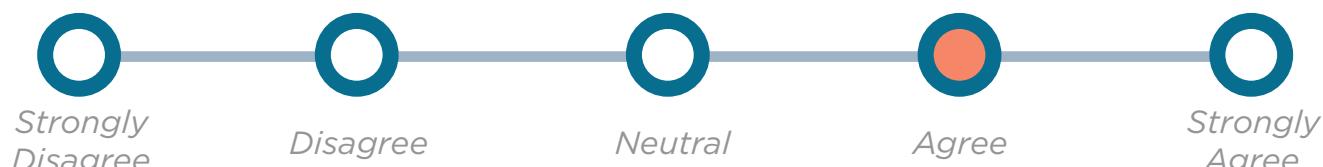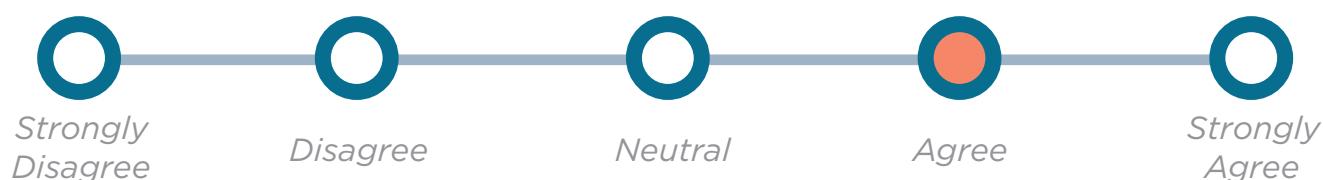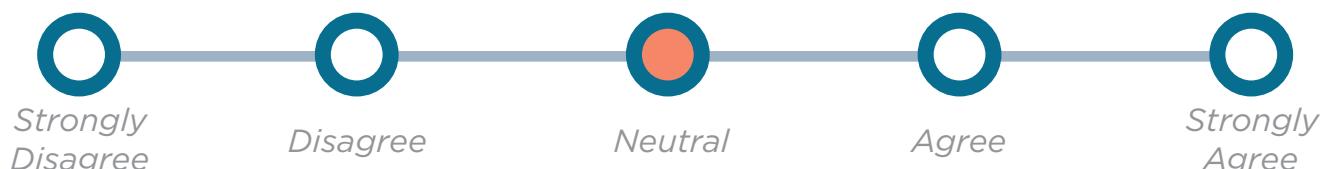
## TOP FIVE JOBS RESPONDENTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE NORTON ATTRACT MORE OF IN THE FUTURE:

**1** Technology

**2** Professional Services

**3** Healthcare

**4** Light Manufacturing

**5** Research & Development

## TOP THREE PARKS RESPONDENTS HAVE VISITED IN NORTON IN THE PAST YEAR:

**86%** Columbia Woods
219 Responses

**80%** Silver Creek Metro Park
205 Responses

**25%** Loyal Oak Community Park
64 Responses

## HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE CITY TO INVEST IN OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORTATION, SUCH AS WALKING, BIKING, AND OFF-ROAD TRAILS?

| Not Important | Slightly Important | Moderately Important | Important | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 48 | 56 | 58 | 42 | 46 |
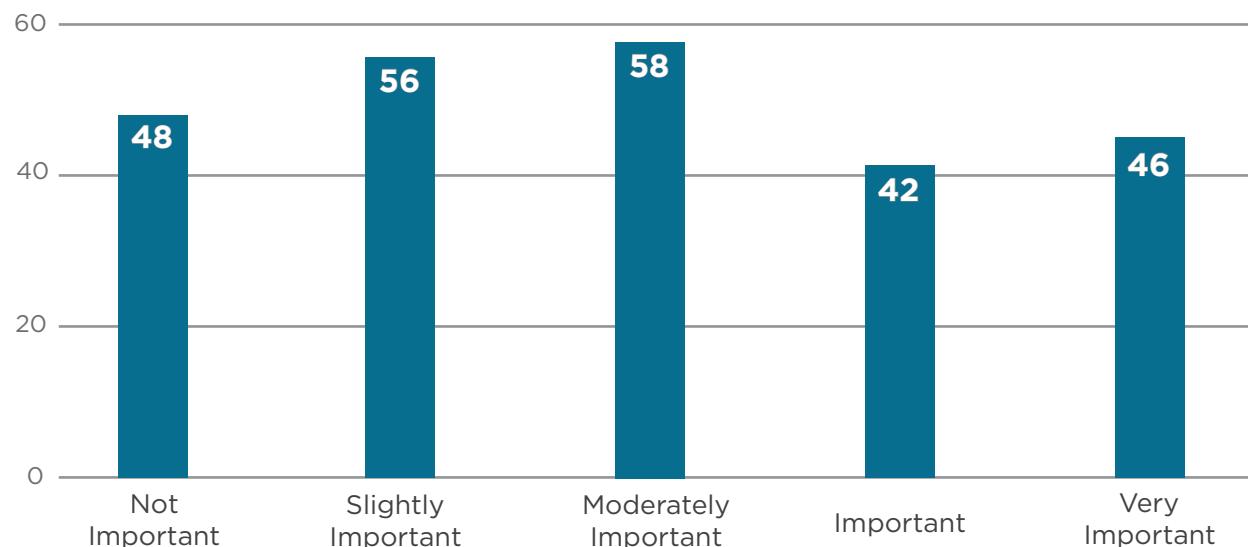
# COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

The consultant team held a three-hour public open house on January 15th, 2025, at the Norton High School Athletic Center. The same evening, the Norton Panthers boys' varsity and junior varsity teams hosted their home basketball games, which drew a sizable and assorted crowd of local residents, including the community's youth. The open house included eight interactive boards, a "Love Letter" to the City, and a kid's drawing activity.
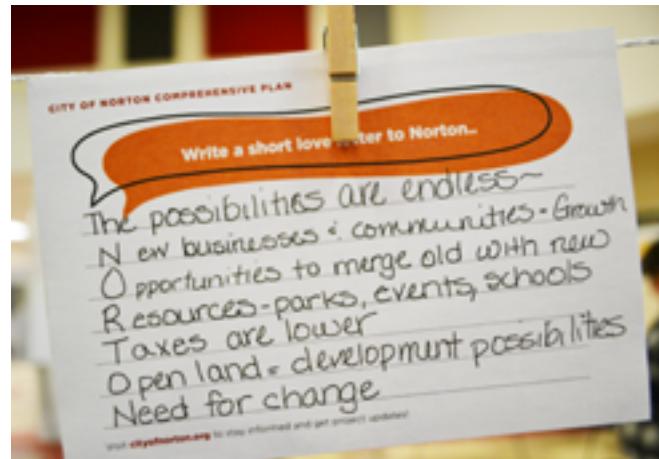
The consultant team recorded comments, spoke to community members about the planning process and purpose, and engaged participants in a series of activities designed to solicit specific feedback that would help inform the development of the Plan. The following are the results of those activities.



*Note, issues and opportunities, and general comments and ideas were included and summarized as part of the issues and opportunities outlined on the previous pages.*

## Opportunities Board

Some of the greatest opportunities shared were:

- A recreation center for youth sports.
- Opening up Silver Creek Beach.
- More sidewalks.
- The former Dayton Nursery property.
- Attracting new businesses.

## Land Use Board

- The top choices for desired land uses in Norton are Restaurants/Entertainment, Industrial, and Conservation/Open Spaces.

- Generally, there is not a strong preference for residential land uses, including mixed-use.

- The top choices also show support for economic development and job growth.
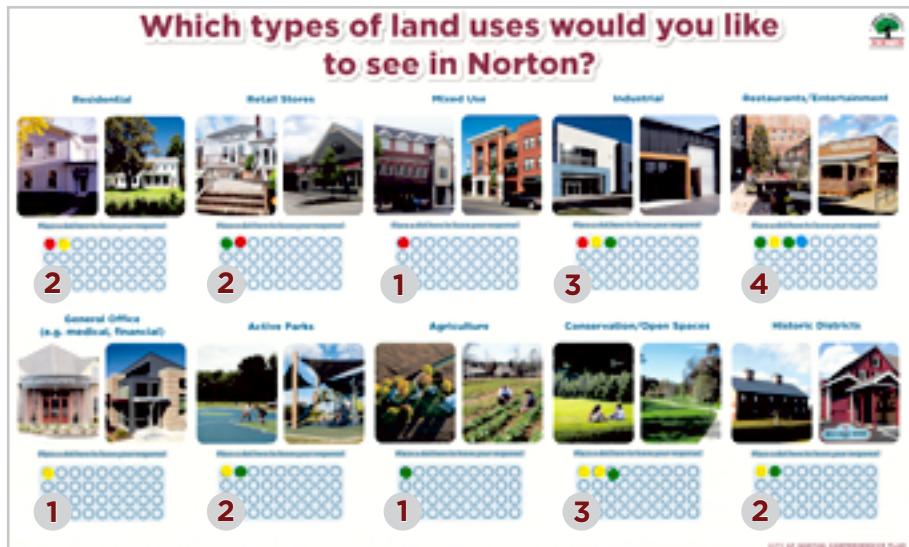


## Downtown Board

- The S Cleveland Massillon & Greenwich Rd intersection is a critical node that residents feel needs attention.

- Traffic and road safety are a desired priority.

- Participants would like to see downtown Norton attract more businesses.

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The consultant team held 5 steering committee meetings with a cohort that included 19 members from throughout the community. These meetings provided time for summary, in-depth reflection, and collaboration between committee members and the project team. Discussion allowed for refinement of the approach to ensure that community members' concerns were fully incorporated into the plan.

The early meetings established the foundation for the initial round of community engagement. Two activities were performed to engage the group. The first activity asked the following three questions:

- What is the most critical issue for the future of Norton?
- What is the greatest opportunity for the future of Norton?
- What are the big ideas for Norton?

Committee members wrote their ideas on post-it notes and placed them under the appropriate questions board.

The Steering Committee engaged in a mapping activity, where they indicated on a map of the city where they would like to see preservation, growth and enhancement. Figure 3-1 display the full results of the mapping activity.

- Preservation (red dots): Groupings are located near the high school and the S Cleveland Massillon Road Corridor

- Enhancements (yellow dots): Groupings are located along Greenwich Road and in several undeveloped areas within Norton.

- Growth (green dots): Groupings are concentrated around downtown Norton, along the Wadsworth Road and I-77 on/off ramp and in an undeveloped agricultural area.



*FIGURE 1-1: Steering Committee Mapping Activity Results*
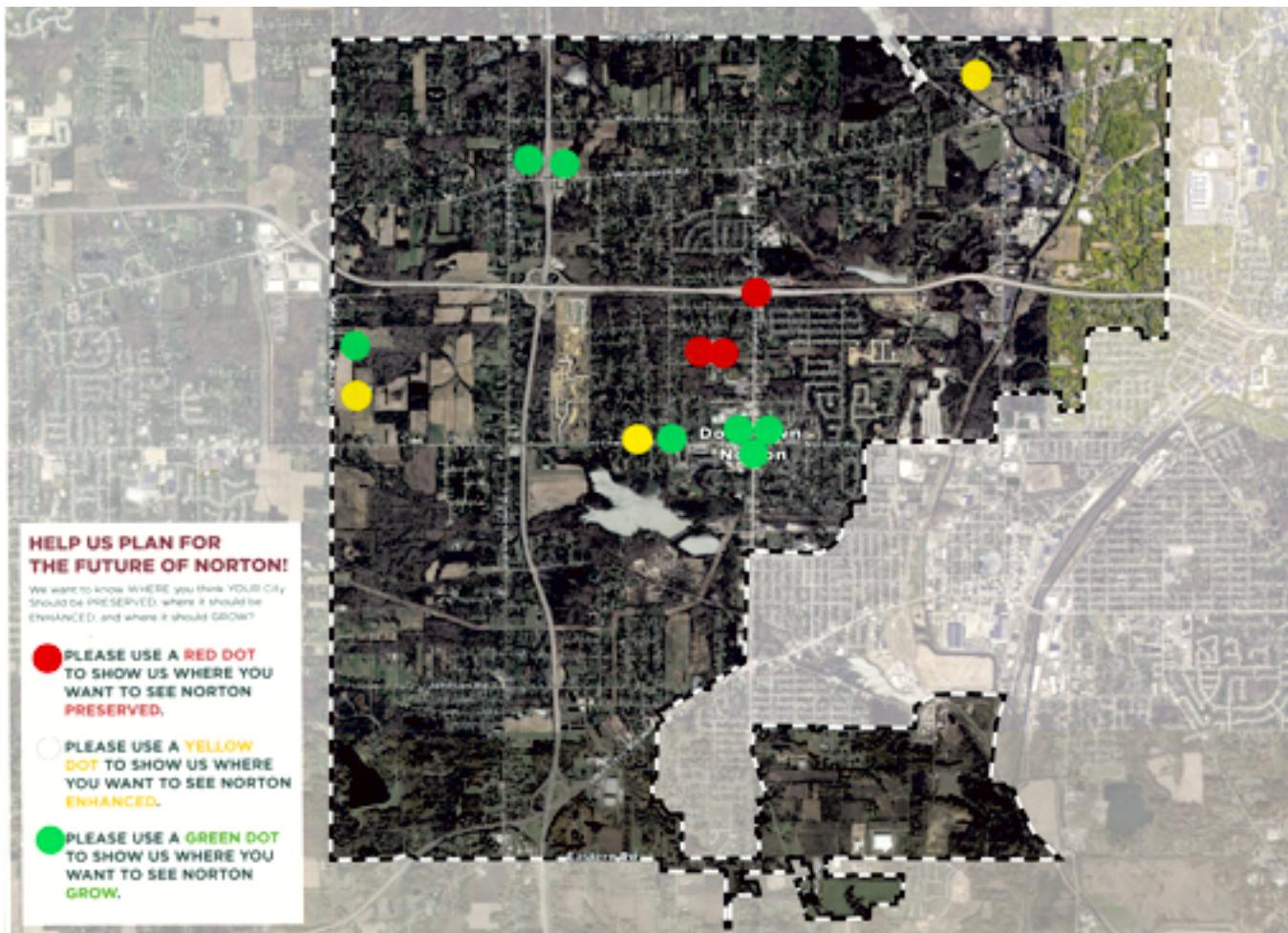
# COMMUNITY INPUT SESSIONS

The consultant team coordinated a community input session during the City's Community Day, hosted on July 26th, 2025. This annual event includes a farmers market, family fun activities, food trucks, and live music.

Flyers were posted throughout the event with a QR code to a short six question survey so residents could provide feedback on the draft future land use map, proposed focus areas, and plan framework. These materials were also posted on the City's website under the 2024 Comprehensive Plan landing page.

NORTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## We need your input!

**THE CITY OF NORTON** has initiated a process to create a **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN** and we want to hear from **YOU**!

Please take the
**PLAN INPUT SURVEY**

## Take the survey!

**SCAN ME!**

**OR**

Visit the survey website:
*https://ohmplanning.typeform.com/NortonCompPlan*

For project updates and event information visit the City of Norton website for more details
**CITYOFNORTON.ORG**

## ONLINE PLAN FRAMEWORK SURVEY

1 → After reviewing the future land use map, tell us what you think?

Visit the project website to view the future land use map...
https://shorturl.at/9cQzF

Type your answer here...

**OK** press Enter ↵

# PROJECT WEBSITE

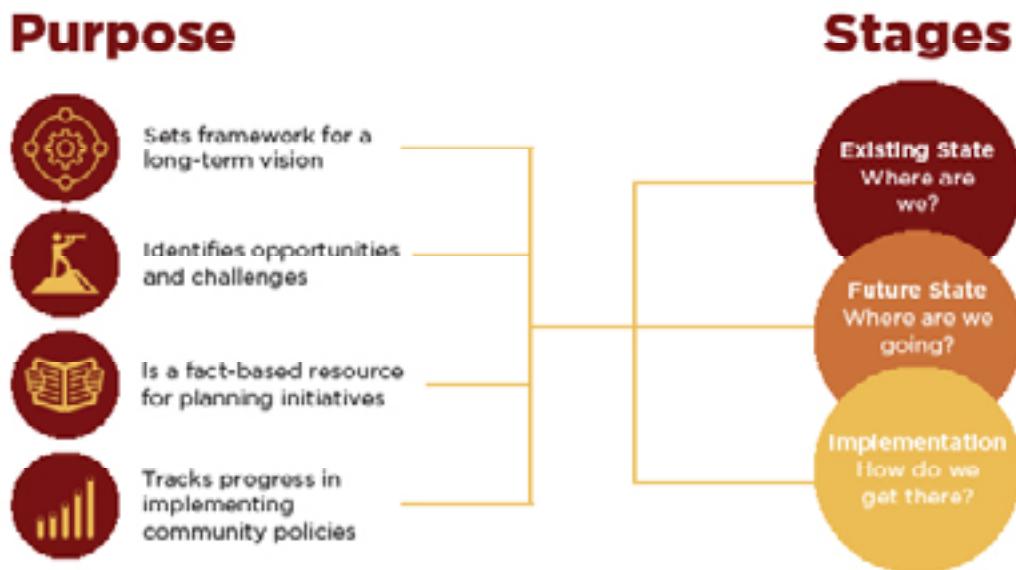A project webpage, under the City of Norton's primary webpage, was created to serve as the informational center for the planning process. The website included background information about the process, the planning process, and updated steps as the project proceeded forward. Project updates were posted to keep the community informed as the planned progressed.

At certain points of the planning process, materials were posted with digital forms for community members to review and provide comments. These virtual activities supported the in-person engagement with members of the steering committee and open houses.

## Purpose

- Sets framework for a long-term vision
- Identifies opportunities and challenges
- Is a fact-based resource for planning initiatives
- Tracks progress in implementing community policies

## Stages

- **Existing State** Where are we?
- **Future State** Where are we going?
- **Implementation** How do we get there?

## PROJECT WEBSITE

Home · Community · About Norton · 2024 Comprehensive Plan

# 2024 Comprehensive Plan

The City of Norton has initiated a process to create a Comprehensive Plan, and we want to hear from you! Before taking the survey, please review the draft Future Land Use, Focus Areas, and Plan Framework materials included below and share your input on the plan's progress. Your feedback is crucial in shaping the future of your community.

The City of Norton Comprehensive Plan is a long-term document that outlines the community's vision, goals, and policies for its future development. It will include land use, economic development, housing, transportation, parks, and recreation, and implementation strategies.

Future Land Use

Focus Areas

Plan Framework

Plan Input Survey Link

# ENGAGEMENT KEY TAKEAWAYS

This page summarizes the key takeaways and themes from dozens of ideas generated from community input through phase one. These themes and takeaways, together with the research on existing conditions and trends, inform the development of the plan framework.

A desire for **strategic growth** over the long-term, balancing smart growth and new development while **preserving the small-town feel.**

Balanced growth while **retaining the rural roots** and **historic identity** of the community.
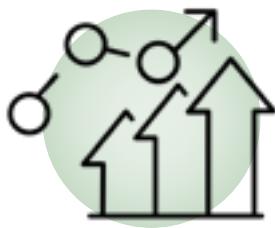
The development of **downtown Norton** focusing on **strategic development**, **enhancing connectivity**, and adding **new public features.**
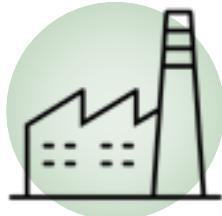
**Economic growth** driven by the **industrial** and **manufacturing** sectors.

Utility expansion such as city water and sewer services is popular among residents and prospective businesses.

Creating better options for retail, restaurants, arts, and entertainment for residents.

Continuing to develop community connectivity and walkability.
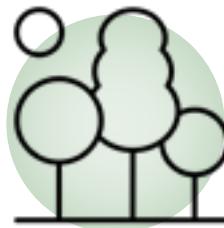
Residents would like to see improvements to existing public gathering spaces and the creation of more in downtown Norton.

Collaborating with neighboring cities to create more opportunities for economic development.
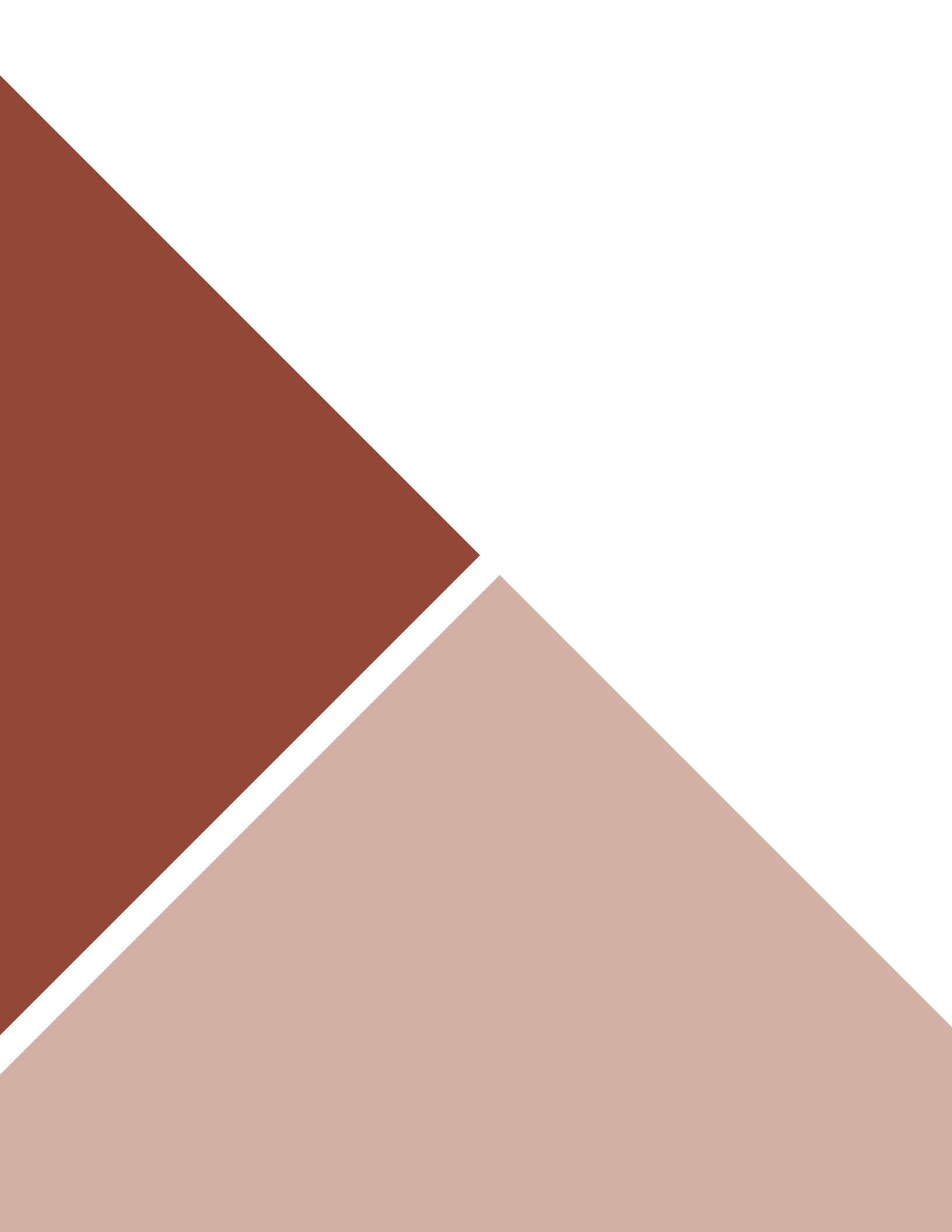
# 4

## PLAN FRAMEWORK

# 4

# PLAN FRAMEWORK

## OVERVIEW

This chapter contains the plan vision and recommendations for the primary community elements (sections). These elements include **Land Use, Housing & Economy, Mobility & Infrastructure**, **Community Identity,** and **Focus Areas** outlined in the next chapter. Plan elements were derived from the existing conditions analysis, and community feedback gathered through the public engagement process, and with guidance from the Steering Committee.

The goals and objectives, along with the action steps, form the plan framework. This framework incorporates the action steps developed through the technical analysis and refined in the engagement process. In the framework, each goal is broken into objectives, which are translated into clear action steps. The action steps then define a time period and potential responsible parties to assist in the implementation of the comprehensive plan.

A comprehensive list of recommendations can be found in Chapter 6 (Implementation) which should be used on a regular basis to drive and monitor the implementation of the plan.

**Goal**

OBJECTIVES     OBJECTIVES

Action       Action
Action       Action
Action       Action

**Goal: Desired outcome** *expressed in simple terms.*

**Objective: Statements** *that serve as the framework for future decision making.*

**Action: Project, policy, or program** *intended to achieve the strategy.*
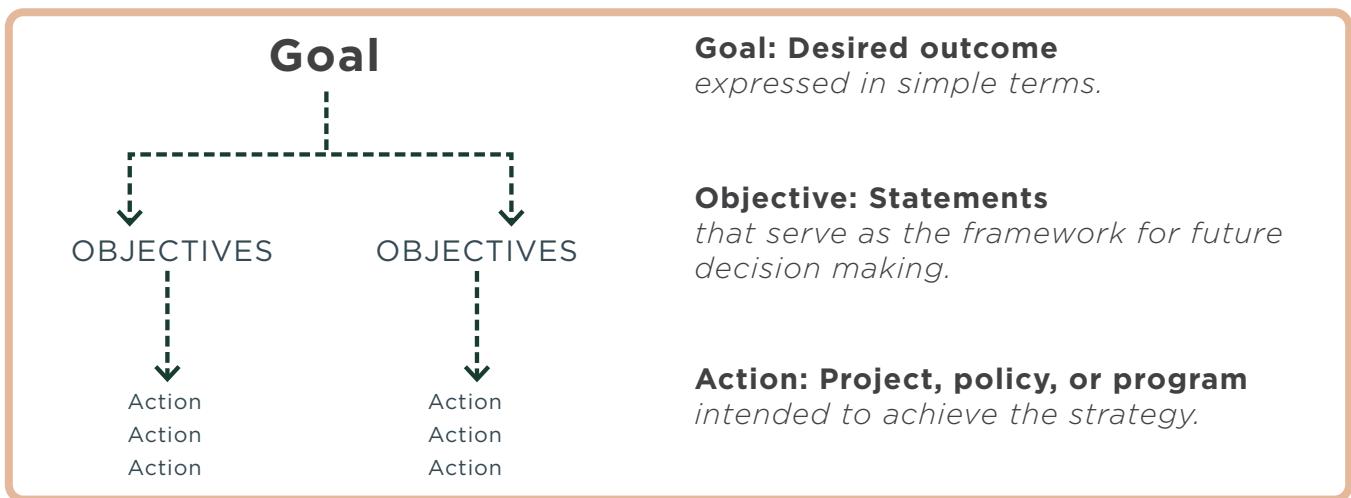
*Each section herein has a goal statement, with corresponding objectives and actions developed by the Steering Committee.*

# PLAN ELEMENTS

## LAND USE

A prosperous and balanced community that ensures small-town character, green areas, and careful planning for the growth and development of a mix of housing options, existing and emerging economic centers, and neighborhoods.

## HOUSING & ECONOMY

A community with diverse housing options for all income levels and age ranges which builds community, improves quality of life, and attracts residents and businesses.

## MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

A safe, efficient, and balanced transportation network that includes a variety of mobility choices, connects land uses, enhances the environment, and improves quality of life for those who live and work in the community.

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

A city that embraces and connects people to small town values while fostering development that promotes a live, work, and play model for the future.

## FOCUS AREAS

These areas within the community that have the greatest opportunity for growth and development, and those areas that it transformed would have a positive impact on the overall health of Norton.

# Future Land Use Map

## OVERVIEW

The Future Land Use map is a synthesis of understanding the local and regional context of the City of Norton. There is a significant amount of land that could potentially be developed to accommodate growth in the coming decades, as well as neighborhood centers that could be redeveloped and re-imagined. This section is meant to guide the pattern and character of future growth in Norton, so that growth is financially and environmentally sustainable and aligns with the aspirations of the community. Developed in concert with the community engagement insights in Chapter 3, the technical analysis performed by the project team, this section establishes a set of guiding principles that inform how and where various land uses are appropriate and intuitive. This plan is meant to guide the city in development for years to come.

It is important to note that the land use map presented in the plan are intended to be guides for future policy decisions, including zoning. While zoning is codified into law, the land use map is aspirational, representing the community's consensus on the intended land use of the future. The land use map is intentionally general, allowing for additional analysis and public discussion during adoption of the zoning that will regulate development.
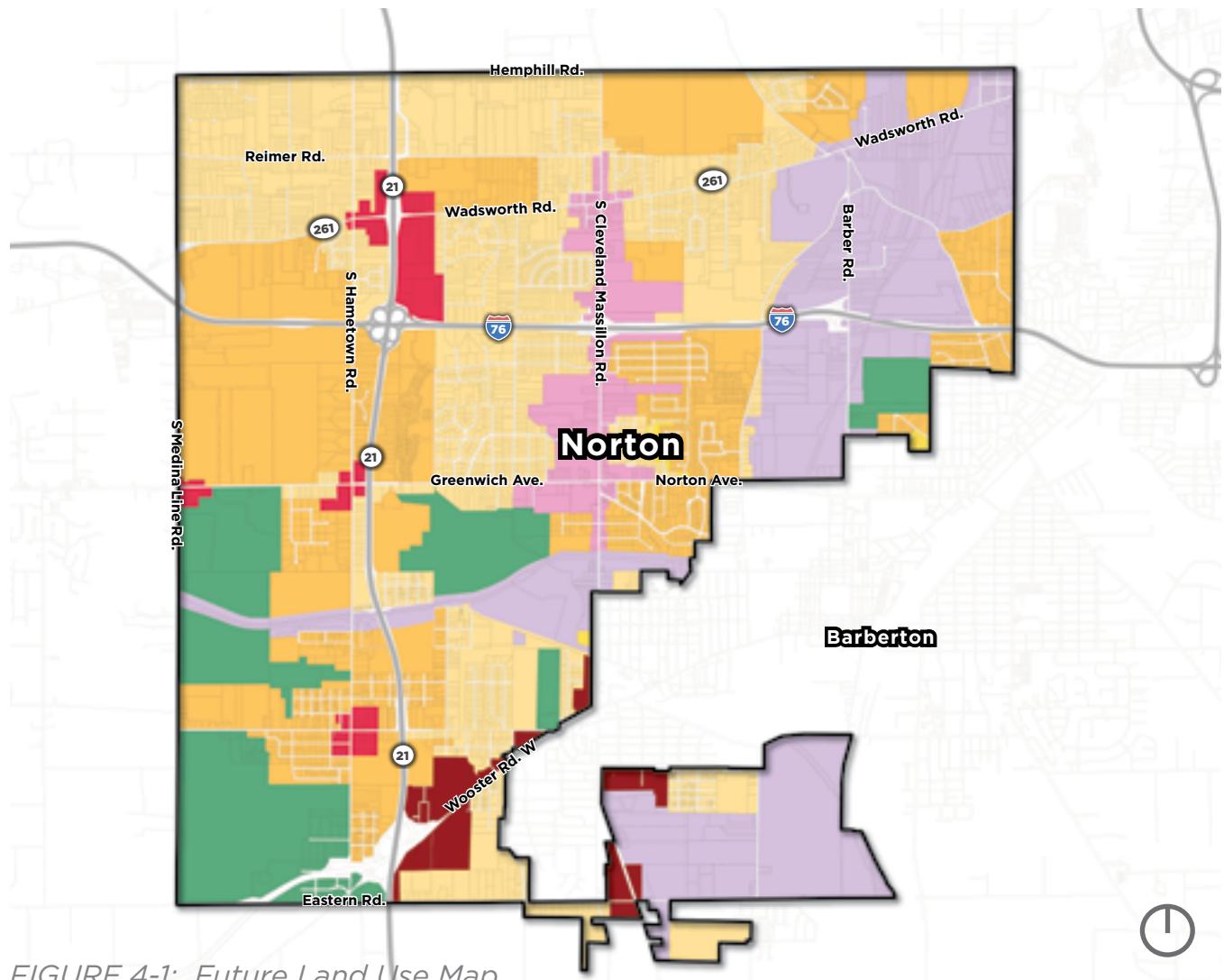
FIGURE 4-1: Future Land Use Map

| FUTURE LAND USE KEY | | |
|---|---|---|
| Open Space | | Neighborhood Commercial |
| Flex Industry | | Rural Residential |
| Downtown Core | | Suburban Residential |
| General Commercial | | Medium Density Residential |

# FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS

The Future Land Use map illustrates how land should be used in the future. As development occurs, future zoning and policy decisions should align with the map and the districts therein. Each district is a unique land use typology and has a prescribed set of characteristics. The table next to the map describes each land use type and the associated development standards.

**It is important to note that as part of this Plan, these standards are only intended to be general in nature. These standards can be used and referenced to guide future zoning changes.**

## Land Use types

The Land Use Types table summarizes the desired future character and form for each type of land use. **These descriptions are intended to be a general guide for how development may occur in the future, not a rigid set of standards.**

## Definitions

- **Land Use** - Describes the variety of ways (i.e. residential, commercial, etc.) people make use of the land.

- **Height** - Describes the general height of a building in number of stories.

- **Front Setback** - The minimum distance between the front edge of a site and the building on the site.

- **Parking** - General requirements related to parking standards including location and screening.

- **Development Intensity** - The approximate concentration or compactness of buildings on a site.

- **Recommended Uses** - The proposed development type for a site.
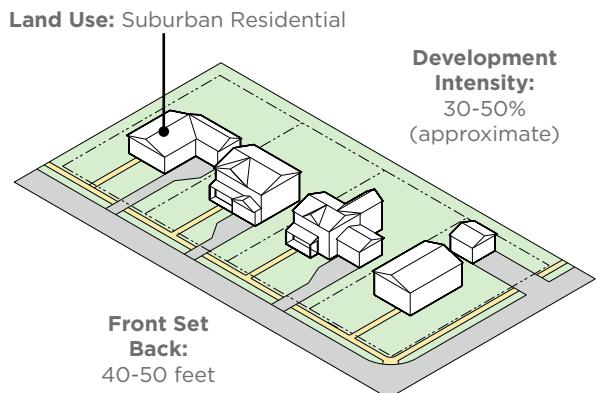


*FIGURE 4-2: Land Use Terms Defined*
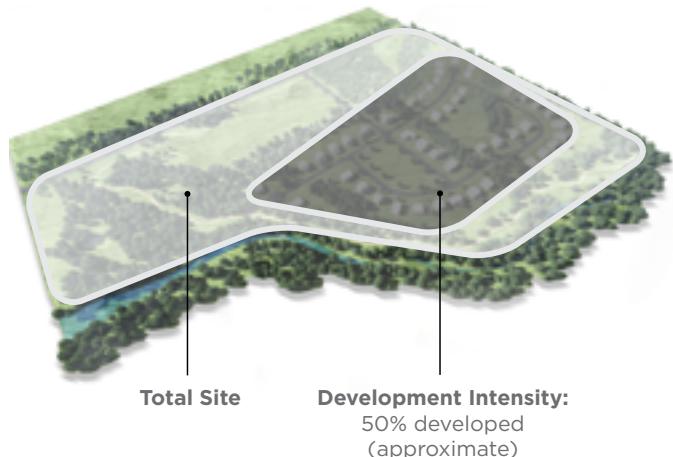


*FIGURE 4-3: Land Use Terms Defined*

| LAND USE | HEIGHT | FRONT SETBACK | PARKING | RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY | RECOMMENDED USES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Open Space | -- | -- | -- | -- | • Public Services<br>• Parks & Recreation<br>• Natural Areas<br>• Multi-Use Paths/Trails<br>• Environmental Education |
| Rural Residential | 1-3 stories | 50-60 ft | Front, rear, or side facing garages | 25,000-45,00 SF, conservation of 25-50% of site, approximately 1 du/ac | • Detached Single Family |
| Suburban Residential | 1-3 stories | 40-50 ft | Front, rear, or side facing garages | 10,000 - 15,000 SF, building coverage 30-50%, approximately 3-4 du/ac | • Detached Single Family<br>• Attached Single Family |
| Medium Density Residential | 2-5 stories | 10-30 ft | Rear or side facing garages, screen from street/ neighboring uses | Building coverage 40-60%, 15,000 - 20,000 SF, approximately 15-30 du/ac | • Attached Single Family<br>• Townhomes<br>• Multifamily<br>• Duplexes/Triplexes |
| Downtown Core | 1-5 stories | 0-10 ft | Rear or side of building, screen from street/ neighboring uses. Consolidate where possible | Building coverage 30-70%; 10,000-30,000 sf/acre or 10-30 u/a | • Mixed Use w/ Retail<br>• Mixed Use w/ Office<br>• Multifamily<br>• Townhomes |
| Neighborhood Commercial | 1-3 stories | 0-15 ft | Rear or side of building, screen from street/ neighboring uses | Building coverage 30-50%; 10,000-15,000 sf/acre | • Retail<br>• Healthcare<br>• Office |
| General Commercial | 1-3 stories | 0-30 ft | Rear or side of building, screen from street/ neighboring uses | Building coverage 30-50%; 10,000-30,000 sf/acre | •"Big Box" Retail<br>• Healthcare<br>• Office |
| Flex Industry | 1-3 stories | 25-100 ft | Screen from street/ neighboring uses | Building coverage 30-70%; 15,000-30,000 sf/acre | • Industrial<br>• Logistics<br>• R+D<br>• Office |

## OPEN SPACE



### DESCRIPTION

These areas are intended to accommodate parks and open spaces. Such facilities should be well-designed and integrated into the surrounding context. Pedestrian access is key on these sites and must be ADA-accessible. Structures should be connected to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the area, and enhanced crossings should be provided to ensure pedestrian safety. When considering the development of large expanses of greenfield land, it is important to recognize the value of open space and recreational areas and land remaining in its natural state. Residential neighborhoods and mixed-use developments often gain an even greater value when located in proximity to parks and open space. Park facilities should include a range of active and passive uses or activities and be designed to reduce maintenance expenses. The existing park network should be expanded into new areas of development.

## FLEX INDUSTRY



### DESCRIPTION

Flex Industry is characterized by large-scale industrial, research, and office users that demand proximity to local, regional, and national transportation networks and create synergy between adjoining uses and businesses.

- **Development Character** should be a variety of industrial, research and development, laboratory, design, and technology uses. Retail may be considered as a secondary use to accommodate workers. Public amenities including pedestrian and bicycle trail access should be considered. Zoning and building guidelines for this area should be flexible to accommodate the needs of a range of businesses sizes and types.

- **Development Intensity** may range from 30-70% of the site and between one to three stories in height.

- **Open Space** should be incorporated into site design as appropriate. Parking should be screened.

- **Connectivity** should allow safe travel for cars, trucks, and freight with consideration for roundabouts where appropriate. Multi-use paths and trails should be considered were appropriate. Branding signage may also be considered in this area.

# DOWNTOWN CORE

# GENERAL COMMERCIAL

## DESCRIPTION

Downtown Core development is characterized by developing a Downtown Norton with a focus on walkability, a mixture of uses, quality pubic spaces, and inclusion of the City's historic qualities.

- **Development Character** should be mixed-use development that blends complementary uses including retail, office, and residential in urban or semi-urban development styles. These uses can be integrated vertically in the same building, or horizontally in the same development, and create a live-work-play environment. Public amenities such as outdoor cafes, plazas, and green spaces provide both residents and visitors areas to relax and socialize.

- **Development Intensity** may range from 10-30 units per acre for residential, two to three stories and 10,000 - 30,000 square feet per acre for non-residential uses.

- **Open Space** should be highly connected and create both small and large places for people to gather including plazas, green lawns, and natural areas. Parking should be accommodated behind buildings, ideally consolidated with other needed parking in a district strategy.

- **Connectivity** should be narrow and incorporate "complete streets" that promote all modes of travel. Specific attention should be given to pedestrian travel to promote walkability through short blocks and lush streetscapes, including street trees, benches, and lighting.

## DESCRIPTION

General Commercial development is characterized by medium to large scale commercial uses that serve the regional community.

- **Development Character** should be a mixture of uses that blends complementary uses including retail, office, and residential in urban or semi-urban development styles. These uses can be integrated vertically in the same building, or horizontally in the same development. Public amenities such as outdoor cafes, plazas, and green space provide both residents and visitors areas to relax and socialize.

- **Development Intensity** may range from 30-50% 10,000-15,000 square feet) of the site and between one to two stories in height.

- **Open Space** should be highly connected and create both small and large places for people to gather including plazas, green lawns, and natural areas. Parking should be accommodated behind buildings or consolidated with other like developments.

- **Connectivity** should accommodate the daily traffic anticipated for the site, but incorporate "complete streets" that promote all modes of travel and access. Cross-access drives are encouraged between development to reduce curb-cuts on major roadways.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMM.**



**RURAL RESIDENTIAL**

## DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Commercial development is characterized by small-scale retail and office uses that complement and support nearby residential uses and local industries.

- **Development Character** should be a commercial mix development that blends complementary uses including retail, office, and small medical uses in an integrated development style. These uses can be integrated vertically in the same building, or horizontally in the same development.

- **Development Intensity** may range from 10,000 to 15,000 square feet per acre for non-residential uses.

- **Open Space** should be highly connected and create both small, and large places for people to gather including plazas, green lawns, and natural areas.

- **Connectivity** should be narrow and incorporate "complete streets" that promote all modes of travel.

## DESCRIPTION

Rural Residential is characterized by single-family, low-density development that preserves and protects environmentally sensitive areas and rural characteristics.

- **Development Character** should be a single family residential that consume smaller percentages of the total site and the remaining land is communal or left undistributed or developed as a public use.

- **Development Intensity** may range from 25,000 to 45,000 square feet, with one-dwelling unit per acre for residential use. 25%-50% of the site should be conserved.

- **Open Space** should consist of 50-70% of the site and primarily include preservation areas where land has been restored to its natural state and sensitive features are protected. Landscaping consisting of native plants that require little care and support a variety of habitats are encouraged.

- **Connectivity** should be of a rural character with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees and green stormwater infrastructure.

# SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

## DESCRIPTION

Suburban Residential development is characterized by maintaining the fabric and character of existing suburban Norton residential neighborhoods and subdivisions.

- **Development Character** should be single family residential that reflect the current characteristics of Norton.

- **Development Intensity** should be three to four dwelling units per acre. Single family detached and cluster homes are example typologies. Accessory dwelling units would be considered, ideally as a conditional use. Development projects that are campus like in nature, such as co-housing or conservation development, could be accommodated through a planned development approach.

- **Open Space** should be integrated into the site and primarily include preservation areas where land has been restored to its nature state. Open space should be landscaped with native plans that require little care and support a variety of habitats.

- **Connectivity** should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include sidewalks, trees, lighting, and green stormwater infrastructure, etc.

# MEDIUM DENSITY RES.



## DESCRIPTION

Medium density residential is characterized by multi-family residential with a range of small-lot attached, attached,or multi family housing types with on-site, shared amenities.

- **Development Character** should be multi family residential and community facilities that consume smaller percentages of the total site, that offer various amenities to residents such as a community center and natural areas.

- **Development Intensity** should be between fifteen and thirty units per acre. three to four dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed thirty units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.

- **Open Space** should be integrated into site and primarily include areas for gathering for residents within the development. Recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths where possible.

- **Connectivity** should be of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths that include trees, lighting, and green stormwater infrastructure, etc.

# Goals & Objectives

## OVERVIEW

This section provides a framework of goals and objectives on which the specifics of the plan rest. The four identified goals and objectives were developed based on the existing conditions analysis, past plans and studies, and community insights. The goals include land use, housing and economy, mobility and infrastructure, and community identity. These went through a series of considerations and revisions with city staff, steering committee members, and community members through the project engagement.

The goals and objectives, along with the strategies, form the implementation framework. In the framework for implementation, each objective is translated into clear strategies/action steps. These steps come with proposed time frames and responsible parties to maintain momentum and accountability. Chapter 6 places the framework into a matrix which specific outlines the time frames and responsible parties.

## LAND USE

A prosperous and balanced community that ensures small-town character, green areas, and careful planning for the growth and development of a mix of housing options, existing and emerging economic centers, and neighborhoods.

## HOUSING & ECONOMY

A community with diverse housing options for all income levels and age ranges which builds community, improves quality of life, and attracts residents and businesses.

## MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

A safe, efficient, and balanced transportation network that includes a variety of mobility choices, connects land uses, enhances the environment, and improves quality of life for those who live and work in the community.

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

A city that embraces and connects people to small town values while fostering development that promotes a live, work, and play model for the future.

# Land Use

***Goal Statement:*** A prosperous and balanced community that ensures small-town character, green areas, and careful planning for the growth and development of a mix of housing options, existing and emerging economic centers, and neighborhoods.

Objective 1 — Update plans and policies to align with the Future Land Use map.

Objective 2 — Allow for a range of housing choices through land use planning tools and

Objective 3 — Continue to grow smart and consider the rural landscape and preservation of open spaces.

Objective 4 — Maintain and enhance existing neighborhoods while growing a new mix of residential options that attract and serve a diverse population.

Objective 5 — Support development in the identified Focus Areas.

# Housing & Economy

***Goal Statement:*** A community with diverse housing options for all income levels and age ranges which builds community, improves quality of life, and attracts residents and businesses.

Objective 1 — Continue to study housing in Norton.

Objective 2 — Strengthen existing residential neighborhoods in Norton.

Objective 3 — Target higher density residential development in focus areas and areas identified in the future land use map.

Objective 4 — Support workforce development initiatives to grow the local economy.

Objective 5 — Continue to build and implement a wide variety of economic tools and strategies

# Mobility & Infrastructure

**_Goal Statement:_** A safe, efficient, and balanced transportation network that includes a variety of mobility choices, connects land uses, enhances the environment, and improves quality of life for those who live and work in the community.
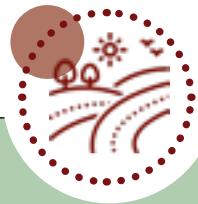
**Objective 1 —** Continue to expand and implement infrastructure that supports existing and new economic activities.

**Objective 2 —** Implement strategies to improve and expand roadways.

**Objective 3 —** Enhance the walkability within the downtown district to safely connect people to places.

**Objective 4 —** Promote best practices in transportation planning.
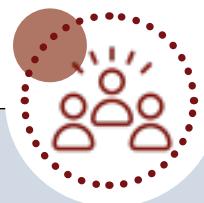
# Community Identity

**_Goal Statement:_** A City that embraces and connects people to small-town values while fostering development that promotes a live, work, and play model for the future.

Objective 1 — Retain and promote a rural and agricultural history and character, and small-town character

Objective 2 — Promote activities that build social capital and character

# 5

## FOCUS AREAS

# 5

# FOCUS AREAS

## OVERVIEW

This chapter outlines recommendations for the three (3) focus areas identified in the future land use map. These areas of focus have the greatest potential to accommodate future growth and development, facilitate infill and revitalization of existing districts, or serve as a catalyst for change through future development. They were identified by the steering committee based on their physical characteristics, location, and support for the broader plan's goals and objectives.

The defined focus areas include Downtown Norton, the South Cleveland Massillon Corridor, and the Flex Industry Zones (Industrial Core), specifically in the northeast quadrant of the City. Within this chapter, the proposed future development and community impact for each focus area are described.

It is important to remember that these are only suggested concepts of how the focus areas could be redeveloped. The following statements further define the purpose and intent of the focus areas.

- The examples in this chapter are only concepts
- The examples are NOT proposed developments
- They highlight planning principles in Norton, which are, at their core, about smart, sustainable growth
- Like the future land use map, they are intended to guide and inform future land use decisions
- The concepts set a proactive path forward as it relates to the development of these high priority sites
- These examples are NOT about zoning, but about creating social and financial value when these areas are ready to transform

## FOCUS AREA PRINCIPLES

*PRIVATE REALM*

**BUILDING FORM:** QUALITY DESIGN THAT MEETS A STANDARD SET

**LAND USE AND CHARACTER:** PROVIDES THE RIGHT BALANCE OF WANTS AND NEEDS

**GATEWAYS AND THRESHOLDS:** CREATING A SENSE OF ARRIVAL

**MARKET TRENDS:** BEING MINDFUL OF WHAT THE MARKET IS SAYING

**STREETSCAPE:** COMFORTABLE SPACE WHICH INVITES PEOPLE

**PUBLIC SPACE:** COMPLIMENTS THE SURROUNDING USES

*PUBLIC REALM*

# FOCUS AREA MAP
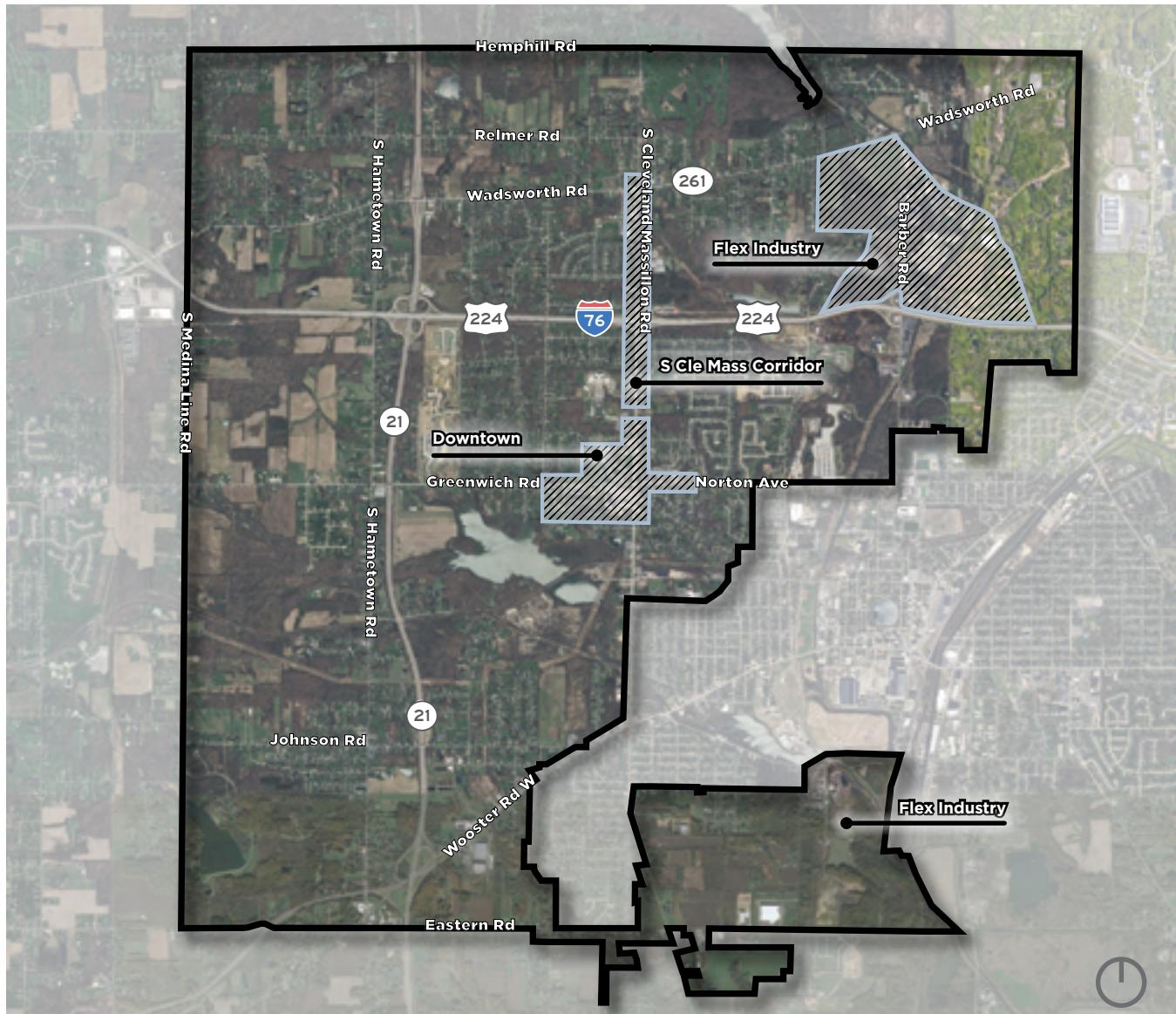


*FIGURE 5-1: Focus Areas Map*

# Downtown

## OVERVIEW

The residents of Norton broadly expressed the desire for a true, identifiable downtown core throughout the planning process. The area surrounding the intersection of Greenwich and South Cleveland-Massillon Road is where the focus of this core lies. The area contains several key businesses and community hot spots such as Finny's Sports Bar and Grill, Bean Grind N' Coffee, Acme Fresh Market, and several other commercial and local businesses. Norton Middle School and Administration Offices are also within the core area. At the same time, Norton City Hall, Community Center, and Columbia Woods Park are located just to the southwest of the focused area. While the area contains a healthy amount of businesses and activity, there are opportunities for further community-centered development and connectivity improvements to create a downtown feel. The boundary area contains vacant land and businesses that can be both re-imagined and re-postioned in a manner to serve the community better and position the space to become the heart of Norton.

## Issues & Opportunities

The proposed 'Downtown Norton' area, like many other downtown centers in the region, faces challenges that include aging buildings, vacant storefronts, a limited variety of commercial spaces, and missing connectivity points. In this case, an additional challenge is developing a sense of place, as the development pattern primarily caters to motorists.

Connectivity and development of a sense of place are primary needs. Pedestrian mobility is not easy, with improvements needed to the width of sidewalk spaces, adding landscape buffering, incorporating wayfinding, and making improvements to crosswalks and signal timing. The development patterns are also catered to the cars, with parking lots located on the primary frontage. Infill and redevelopment projects that prioritize front entrances, parking in the rear, and accommodating pedestrians would add vibrancy to the downtown.

The vacant parcels and existing middle school location in the northwest quadrant present an exciting opportunity to establish the intention and vision for the future 'downtown Norton'. The availability of land and the willingness of partners to collaborate create an opportunity to set forth the standard for how future development (infill and redevelopment) should look and feel.

## Vision

The vision for the area focuses on thoughtfully positioning the middle school and school district administration buildings towards the rear of the site, primarily facing Greenwich Road, while enhancing athletic facilities in the northern section. This layout allows for the design and implementation of a new middle school campus without disrupting the existing building site. Positioning it to the western edge of the priority area creates a buffer between existing residential neighborhoods and future developments positioned on South Cleveland Massillon Road, ensuring a harmonious transition between uses. A new mixed-use development along South Cleveland Massillon Road provides the opportunity to inject new development into the core, while integrating with the existing commercial developments. The mixed-use development can bring new residential housing types and retail developments specifically. Along Greenwich Road and the eastern side of South Cleveland Massillon Road, infill development that engages the street will bring a balance to the downtown core.

Adjacent green spaces on the northeast and northwest corners will enrich the community's natural landscape and establish a central gathering space within the central core. These spaces should tie into their adjacent development, creating a seamless integration where both are supporting one another. Streetscape improvements on Greenwich, Norton, and South Cleveland Massillon Road are designed to enhance walkability and foster connections between diverse uses. Improvements to the crosswalks and landscape buffering are significant to foster an increase in foot traffic.

By centralizing commercial and retail development within the city core and along the main community corridor, the proposed land use strategy facilitates the phased implementation of projects without conflicts, paving the way for a vibrant and interconnected area.

## Development Principles

- **Encourage Economic Growth:** Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting existing land use.
- **Create Community Spaces:** Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.)
- **Be a Connected Community:** Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.

## Design Principles

- Downtown Core
- Small-Town Character
- Human-Scale Design (2-3 stories)
- Materials (brick & stone)
- Ground Floor Activation
- Activated Right- Of-Way
- Streetscape Amenities
- Wayfinding
- Corner Emphasis
- Landscaping

# DOWNTOWN FUTURE LAND USE MAP

*Not To Scale*



*FIGURE 5-2:  Downtown Future Land Use Map*

**Legend:**

- PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA
- INSTITUTIONAL
- PARK / GREEN SPACE
- 1-3 STORY MIXED USE
- 1-2 STORY COMMERCIAL
- STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

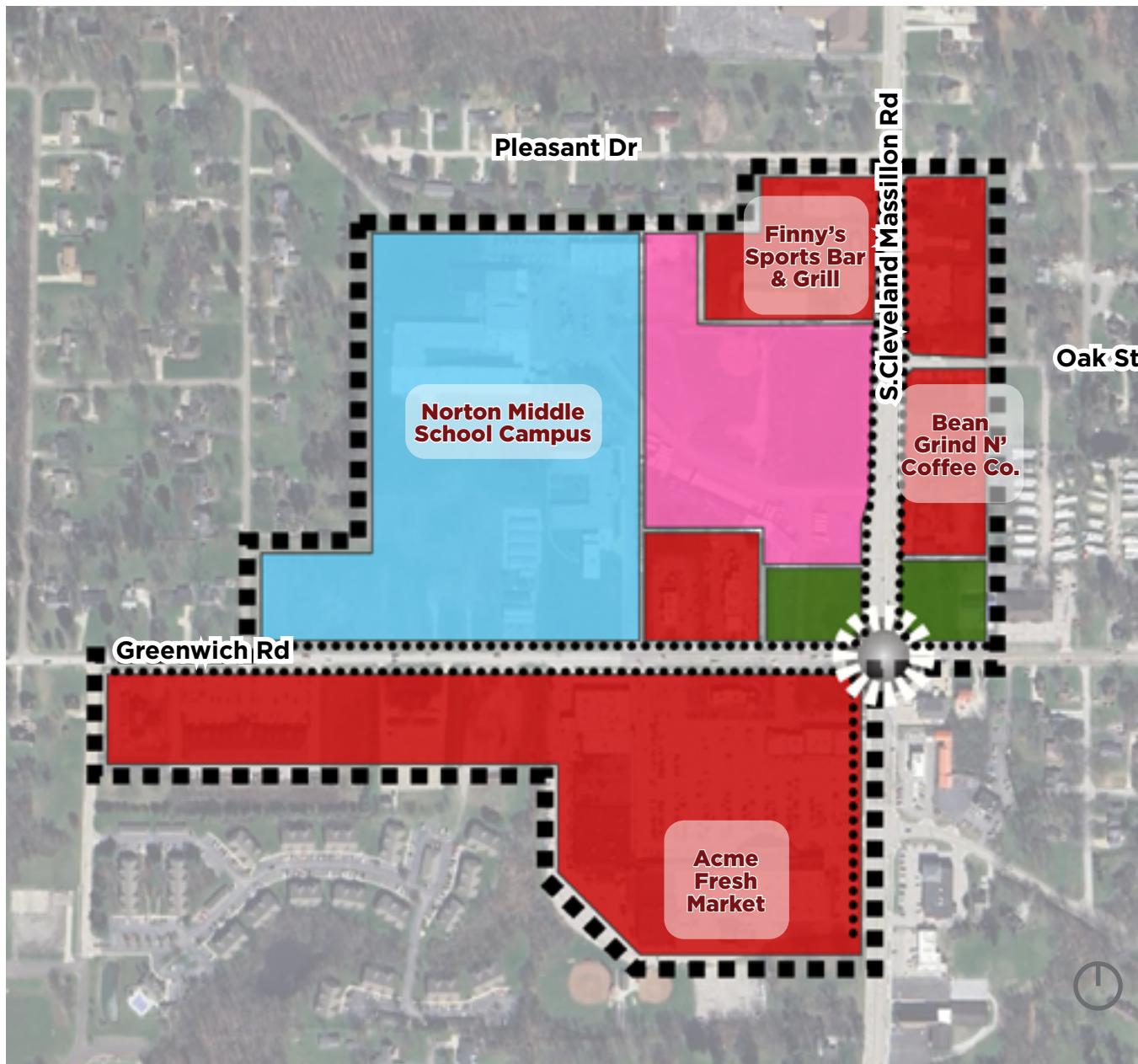**Map labels:** Pleasant Dr, S.Cleveland Massillon Rd, Oak St, Greenwich Rd, Finny's Sports Bar & Grill, Norton Middle School Campus, Bean Grind N' Coffee Co., Acme Fresh Market

## Character Images

To further elaborate on the vision for the downtown area, the following character images are included to provide a greater sense of how the development and key characteristics of downtown can look. These elements will incorporate a 'Norton' feel to ensure a unique sense of place.

## Focus Area - Downtown Norton

**Goal Statement:** Create a vibrant and identifiable 'Downtown Norton' that serves as the heart of the community - blending diverse land uses, celebrating local identity, and seamlessly connecting to adjacent neighborhoods.

### CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES WITH A FOCUS ON ENTERTAINMENT

Provide opportunities for public art, community gatherings and social relations by developing a variety of public spaces such as parks, dining and entertainment areas, and pedestrian-friendly connections.

### BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Develop a network of walkable paths and gathering places that support healthy lifestyles, improve mobility, and strengthen social connections.

### ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Encourage innovative strategies that stimulate economic development, support local businesses, and enhance the downtown's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting existing land uses.

### STRATEGIZE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Conduct a comprehensive Downtown Master Plan to guide the long-term revitalization and growth of Downtown Norton.

| Action Items |
| --- |
| Use the Master Plan to guide future investment, support funding applications, and coordinate zoning, design, and economic development strategies. |
| Collaborate with Norton School Board officials to develop a strategy for the existing school facilities in the area. |
| Promote Downtown to developers and investors through targeted marketing and promotional materials. |
| Explore funding through federal grants, TIF, and other means to support infrastructure improvements and future development. |
| Review and update zoning requirements to align with the vision of the focus area. |
| Strategically acquire key parcels to support coordinated development and improvements. |
| Encourage infill development that strengthens economic vitality and livability. |
| Create a signature public space for arts, entertainment and gathering. |
| Enhance Downtown's streetscape to provide safety and visual identity. |
| Support local businesses and provide additional community activities year-round. |
| Develop a Downtown Norton branding strategy to unify marketing, signage, and online presence. |

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# S Cleveland Massillon Corridor

## OVERVIEW

The boundaries of the focus area start at Wadsworth Road to the north, extending south through the proposed 'downtown Norton' to Gardner Boulevard. The area focuses on the South Cleveland Massillon corridor, streetscape, and adjacent land uses. This portion of the corridor provides a critical north-south connection to the community and acts as a gateway to the City from Interstate 76. The corridor contains an eclectic array of businesses and building types, ranging from shopping centers, chain restaurants, and medical offices. In addition, there is a collection of institutional issues in the form of churches, libraries, and schools. In portions of the corridor, residential housing fronts along the corridor, at times intermixing with the various commercial and institutional uses.

The key to the success of the focus area and Norton as a whole is the mixed-use development with an update to the overall streetscape of the roadway to accommodate pedestrians, safe crossings, and the ability for outdoor spaces. The corridor will help to foster the development of the 'downtown Norton' focus area and develop a strong corridor spine in the heart of Norton.

## Issues & Opportunities

The entire South Cleveland Massillon Road corridor contains a mix of businesses and residential land use types. The streetscape lacks continuity and does not provide an inviting atmosphere to encourage residents to walk along the corridor or safely cross the street. Motorists are typically entering the corridor at the Interstate 76 interchange at higher speeds.

The northern portion, around the South Cleveland Massillon and Wadsworth road interchange, is the historic town center, highlighting Wolf Creek Tavern and including restaurants, retail, warehouses, and churches. Other uses include a collection of restaurants, small retail, warehousing, and churches. Norton Elementary School is located in this portion of the corridor, along with the former Dayton Nurseries site. The former nursery site offers potential for an impact mixed-use development, which would help to transform the corridor into the mixed-use corridor the plan outlines.

The southern portion features diverse land uses, starting with residential areas south of the interchange. Notable sites include Norton High School, the Performing Arts Center, athletic fields, and the Norton Library. Starting at Pleasant Drive, the downtown Norton focus area is centered along the corridor as it moves south towards the Greenwich Road/Norton Avenue interchange. Once again, this area presents the greatest opportunity to transform into a mixed-use, walkable district.

The corridor is about 60 feet wide with a typical road width of 40 feet, comprising one lane in each direction and a center turn lane. Sidewalks and landscaping are minimal, with limited pedestrian amenities, primarily designed for vehicular traffic. The corridor could effectively connect the historic northern area with the vibrant southern focus area.

# SOUTH CLEVELAND MASSILLON CORRIDOR AERIAL MAP



PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS

Wadsworth Rd

Norton Elementary School

Former Dayton Nursery

76

Norton High School

Norton Middle School

Greenwich Rd

Norton Ave

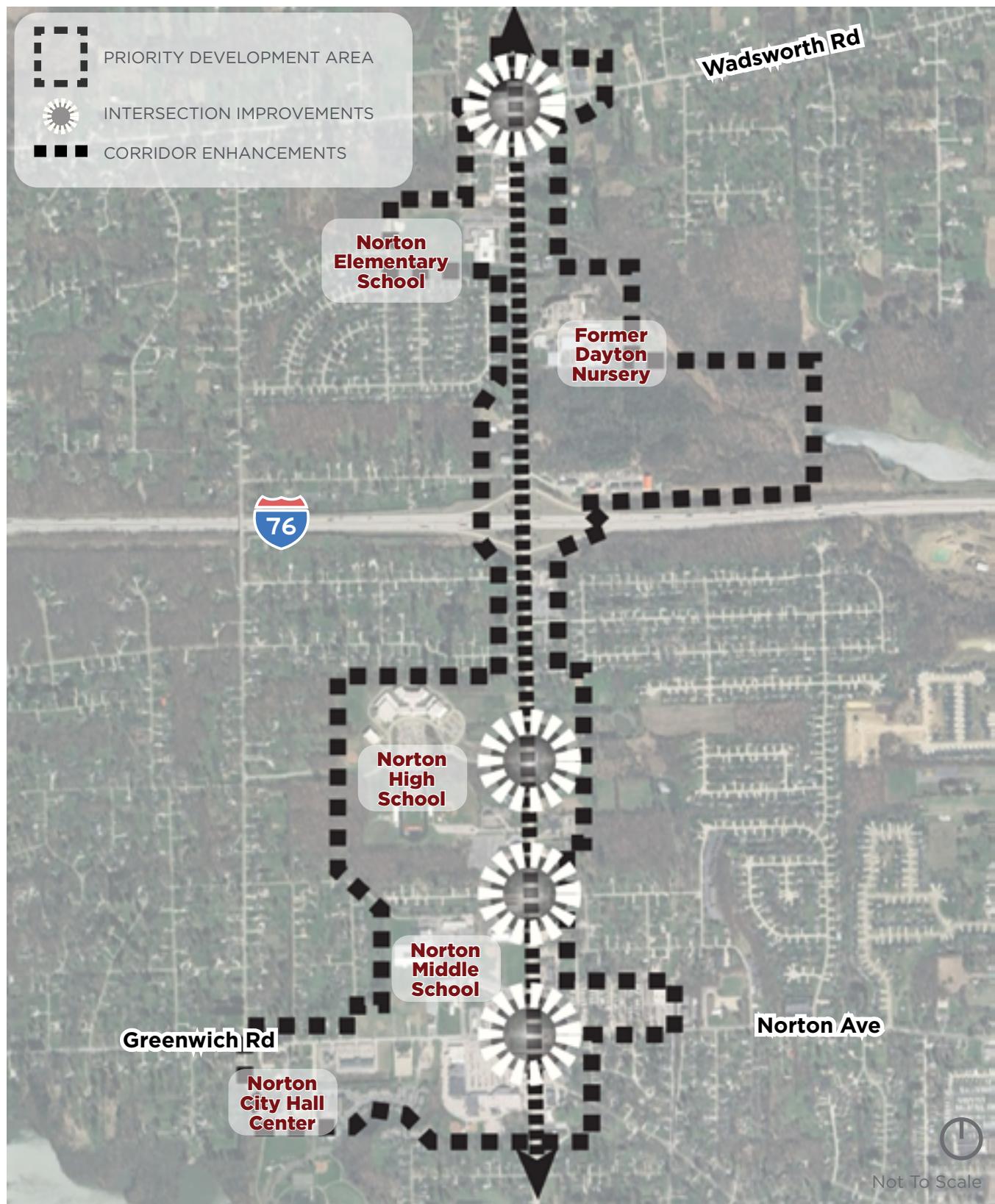Norton City Hall Center

Not To Scale

*FIGURE 5-3:  South Cleveland Massillon Corridor Opportunities Map*

## Vision

South Cleveland Massillon Road is envisioned to be a mixed-use corridor, with a strong central gathering space at the southern end (as part of the Downtown Norton focus area) and extending northbound to Wadsworth Road. The downtown core land use designation would allow for residential, commercial, retail, and office uses. By promoting a mix of uses, the existing commercial blocks along the corridor can be transformed, particularly at the former nursery site just north of the Interstate 76 interchange. A successful redevelopment strategy includes a mixture of residential housing typologies to meet the various needs of the community, such as townhomes, duplexes, and flats, which would fit the type of development desired. This strategy can happen organizationally, over time, as market realities change. Design guidelines are recommended to ensure that the development and changes over time are in keeping with the vision of Norton.

A critical part of the vision is streetscape enhancements and improved connectivity. The addition of pedestrian-scale lighting, increasing the amount of plantings (low to medium height), enlarging the landscape buffers and width of the sidewalk, where feasible, and including amenities (benches, trash receptacles, etc.) to encourage users to walk and feel secure. These improvements would enhance the look and feel of the corridor and create a 'Norton aesthetic' for users as they go along the corridor. This aesthetic would tie into the creation of the downtown Norton focus area. Additionally, upgrading existing pedestrian crosswalks to a high-visibility style and installing additional crosswalks, where feasible, not only encourages the walkability of the corridor but also discourages speeding by vehicles. Finally, opportunities for gateways and wayfinding signage, which not only brand the corridor but also establish a City of Norton brand, elevate the look and impression of the corridor. Specific attention should be given at key intersections along the corridor, such as Wadsworth, the Interstate 76 interchange, and Greenwich Road/Norton Avenue.

## Development Principles

- **Encourage Economic Growth:** Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting existing land use.
- **Create Community Spaces:** Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.)
- **Be a Connected Community:** Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.

## Design Principles

- Defined Entry
- Walkability & Accessible
- Clear Identity & Signage
- Hospitable Landscaping
- Street Furnishings
- Lighting & Accents
- Improved Crossings & Intersections
- Community-Scale Buildings

**Existing**

5'
Sidewalk

5'
Lawn

40'
Roadway

5'
Lawn

5'
Sidewalk

60'
Right Of Way
(typical)

**Proposed**

Sidewalk

5'
Lawn

40'
Roadway

5'
Lawn

Sidewalk
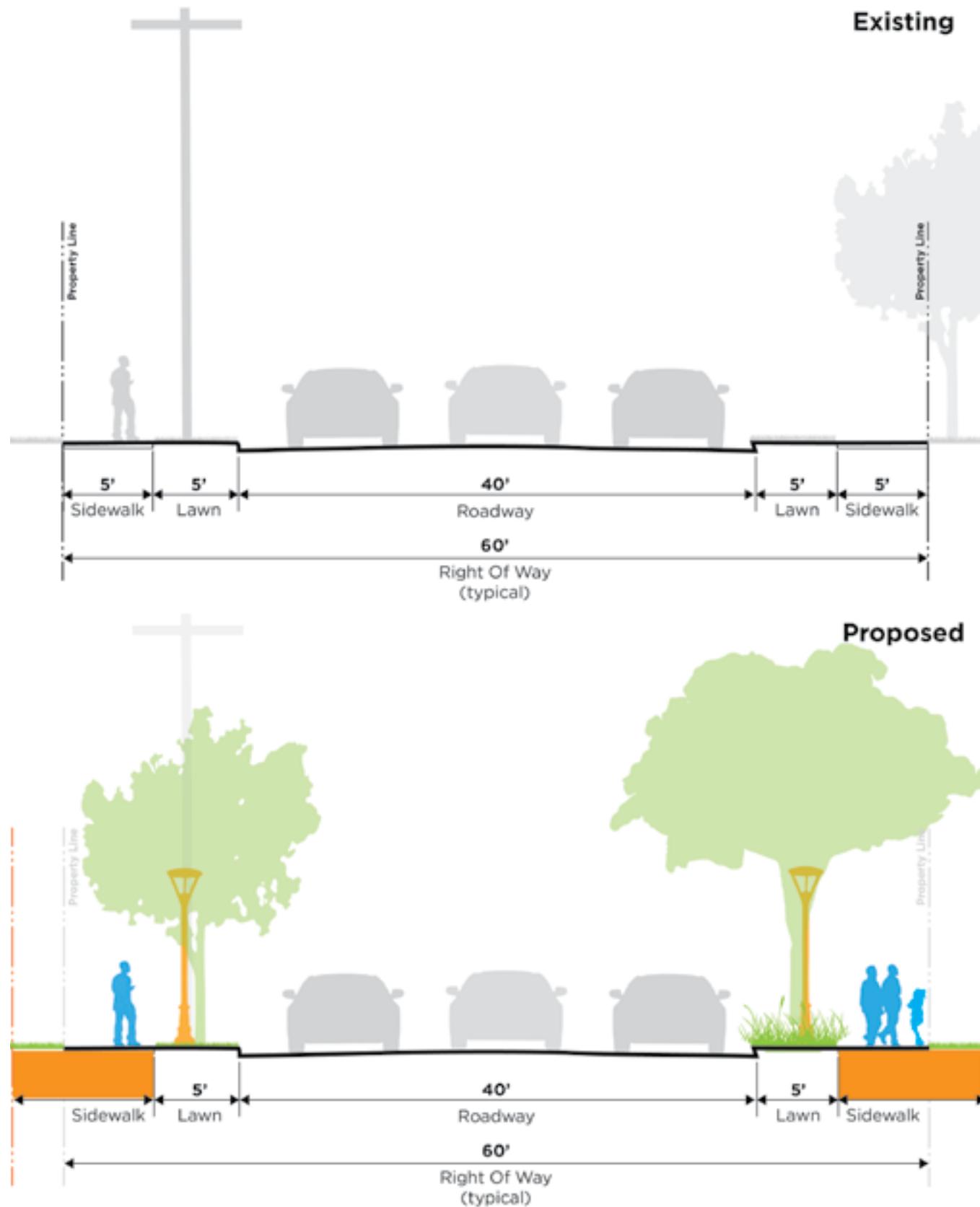
60'
Right Of Way
(typical)

*FIGURE 5-4: South Cleveland Massillon Proposed Right-of-Way*

## Character Images

To further elaborate on the vision for the downtown area, the following character images are included to provide a greater sense of how the development and key characteristics of downtown can look. These elements will incorporate a 'Norton' feel to ensure a unique sense of place.

## Focus Area - South Cleveland Massillon Corridor

***Goal Statement:*** Reimagine the corridor as a vibrant, mixed-use gateway that supports thoughtful infill development, enhances walkability and comfort, and elevates the corridor's visual identity - creating a cohesive and welcoming environment that reflects the City's character and connects its neighborhoods.

### ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Support local development by attracting and encouraging a diverse mix of downtown uses.

### BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Create a well-designed multi-modal streetscape that promotes safety and links businesses together to make them more accessible.

### CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities through a well-balanced mix of dining, gathering, and event spaces through well-designed streetscapes and plazas.

### STRATEGIZE CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

Conduct a detailed corridor study to evaluate current conditions, identify redevelopment opportunities, assess infrastructure needs, and establish a unified vision for the South Cleveland Massillon corridor.

| Action Items |
|---|
| As part of the study, assess the need to acquire additional right-of-way to expand sidewalks and landscaping buffers. |
| Conduct a traffic assessment for a comprehensive analysis on the roadway configuration. |
| Create a cohesive streetscape design with a landscape buffer, continuous sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled lighting, branding elements, and other furnishings. |
| Market the corridor to small businesses and entrepreneurs, highlighting improved infrastructure and visibility. |
| Use the corridor study to guide future investment, support funding applications, and coordinate zoning, design, and economic development |
| Explore funding through federal grants, TIF, and other means to support future investment and public improvements. |
| Update zoning to support mixed-use and pedestrian friendly development. |
| Strategically acquire parcels to help facilitate the overall development of the corridor. |
| Create a corridor overlay district with design guidelines that preserve character, improve quality, and support infill development. |
| Enhance connections by expanding walkability and safe paths to the downtown core. |

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# Flex Industry - Industrial Core

## OVERVIEW

The industrial core focus area, part of the flex industry future land use designation, is located between Interstate 76 and Wadsworth Road. Barber Road is the primary corridor that runs north-south. At the same time, Wolf Creek and Pigeon Creek streams exist within the eastern half of the identified area. This area is home to several existing businesses, including Ganley Ford, S.A. Comunale Company, Summit Landscape, American Roadway Logistics, and several other industrial and commercial-type businesses. There also exist several large plots of land which are currently undeveloped or underdeveloped. The largest of the undeveloped lands sits at the corner of Wadsworth and Barber Road, offering a significant opportunity.

## Issues & Opportunities

The area already contains several industrial and commercial-based businesses, which serve the greater region. The proximity to the region is through Interstate 76 and the interchange at Barber Road. As there is a desire to increase industrial and commercial-based businesses in Norton, this industrial core focus area is an ideal area within the City to see the expansion of uses. While businesses exist, there is a need to expand the water and sewer infrastructure in these parts to meet the demands for the desired business types. In addition, considerations will need to be given regarding the roadway infrastructure as an increase in the size and regularity with which larger vehicles travel in this portion of the City.

Larger industrial and supporting commercial development footprints would be most appropriate within this focus area, given its proximity to the interstate, state routes, available land, and adjacent development types both in Norton and the neighboring Barberton community. These types of development are less suited for other areas in town, specifically the South Cleveland Massillon Corridor and the western portion of the City. The importance of this area lies in its ability to support the development principles in Norton, while not sacrificing the character of the community. Moving forward, a key consideration will be the balance between development, conservation of available land, and the impact on the local transportation network.

## Vision

Envision a thriving flex industry hub emerging within the dynamic area bounded by Interstate 76 and Wadsworth Road, anchored around Barber Road. This development will not only build upon the existing industrial landscape but will also capitalize on its strategic location, fostering a vibrant ecosystem of businesses that harmoniously blend research and development with office, showroom, and warehousing spaces. As we unlock the vast potential of this region, the extension of essential infrastructure, such as water and sewer systems, will be paramount, while improvements to roadway infrastructure and intersections will ease the flow of industrial traffic. Future roadways and connections will be meticulously studied to enhance overall mobility, ensuring seamless access to major transportation routes for efficient distribution of goods and services. Thoughtful site design and architecture standards will preserve the community's character, with landscaped parking lots and inviting open spaces for employees, promoting a sense of belonging. We will prioritize integrating environmentally sensitive areas into the fabric of new developments, enhancing our commitment to sustainability. By incorporating sidewalks, trails, and multi-use paths, we will strengthen connections within the flex industry area and beyond, creating vibrant opportunities that enrich both the local economy and the community.

## Development Principles

- **Encourage Economic Growth:** Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting existing land use.

- **Promote Regional Proximity:** Boost Norton's regional proximity as a unique location that is accessible to greater Ohio.

- **Foster Creative Solutions:** Support and incentive research, development, and implementation of innovative technologies and practices that enhance quality of life, promote sustainability, and drive economic growth.

## Design Principles

- Flex Industry Land Use
- Simple and Modular
- Durable Materials (brick, stone, etc.)
- Accessibility
- Outdoor space/plaza for employees
- Emphasis On Main Entrance
- Landscaping (Buffering and Screening)
- Exterior Lighting and Accents
- Simple Circulation

# INDUSTRIAL CORE FUTURE LAND USE MAP
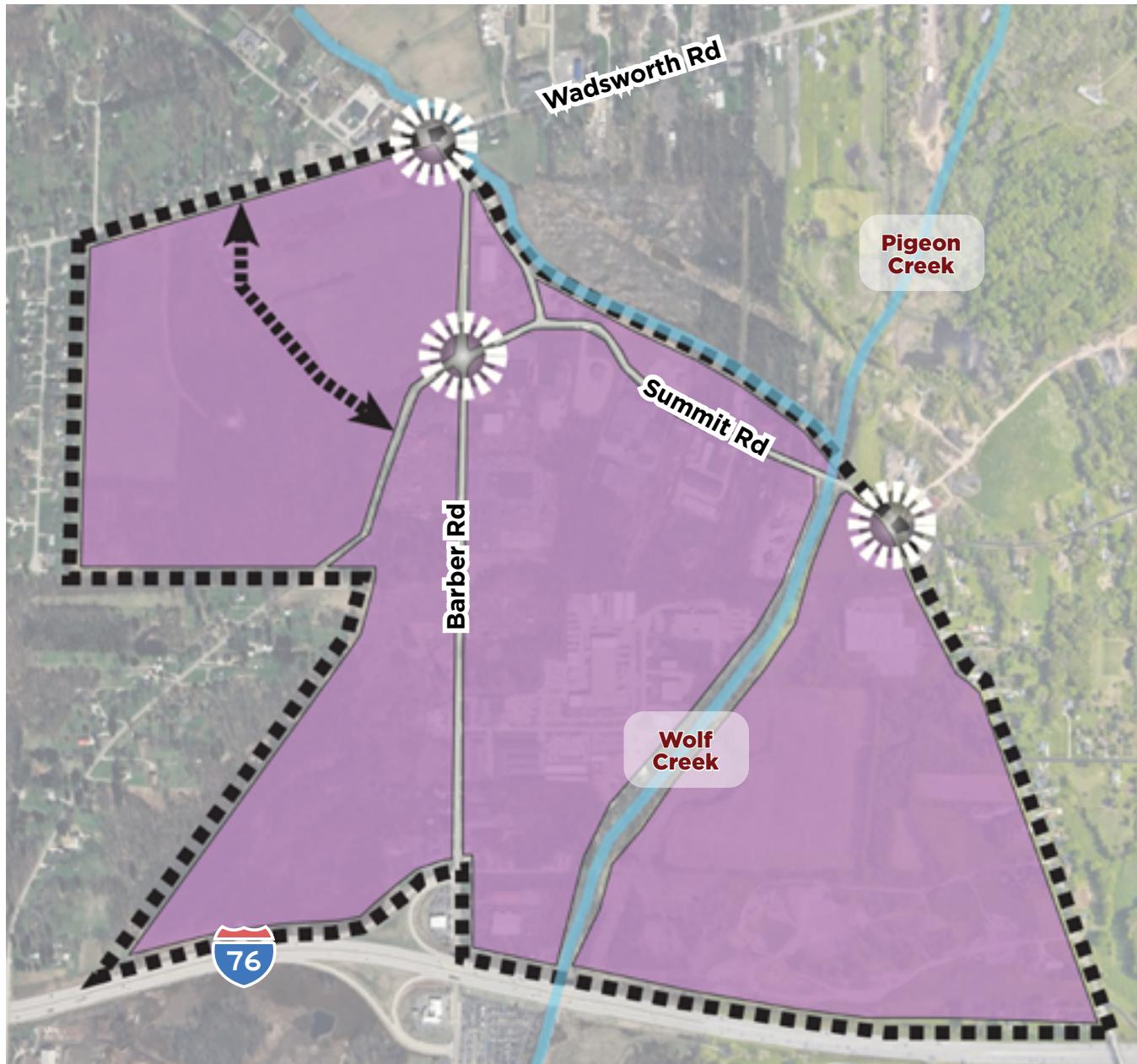


*FIGURE 5-5: Industrial Core Future Land Use Map*

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA

FLEX INDUSTRY

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

PROPOSED ROADWAY (INTERNAL)

*Not To Scale*

## Character Images

To further elaborate on the vision for the industrial core within the flex industry future land use, the following character images are included to provide a greater sense of how the development and key characteristics of future development can look.

# Focus Area - Flex Industry Core

**_Goal Statement:_** Strategically invest and expand the flex industry land use as a hub for innovative industry, manufacturing, and commercial uses, leveraging its location and proximity to the region.

### ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting existing land uses.

### PROMOTE REGIONAL PROXIMITY

Capitalize on the corridor's location along Interstate 76 and Wadsworth Road to attract industrial, flex, and logistics-based businesses seeking regional connectivity.

### FOSTER CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Encourage sustainable building and site design through incentives for green infrastructure and LEED certification.

| Action Items |
| --- |
| Develop promotional materials that showcase the corridor's location advantages, available sites, and local incentives. |
| Conduct site-readiness evaluations to prioritize catalytic redevelopment opportunities. |
| Explore funding through federal grants, TIF, and other means to support future investment and public improvements. |
| Review and update the zoning regulations to support light manufacturing, logistics, and flex space uses. |
| Improve roadway infrastructure and intersections to support increased truck traffic and improve safety. |
| Extend water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate future industrial expansion. |
| Collaborate with regional partners (e.g., Team NEO, JobsOhio) to attract advanced manufacturing, tech, and logistics businesses |
| Continue to expand and enhance city infrastructure to support existing and future business growth. |
| |

# 6

# IMPLEMENTATION

# 6

# IMPLEMENTATION

## OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Implementation Plan is to lay out the steps and time frame associated with the specific objectives for each plan chapter in order to advance the vision. This plan is intended to be used as a road map to help make informed decisions as they relate to plan chapters. The plan chapters and individual goals and objectives are broken down by action item, potential time frame and project partners.

Bringing the Plan to fruition will require a concerted effort from City and County staff, local organizations, stakeholders, engaged citizens, and others over the course of the next ten years. To assist and guide the process, an implementation matrix was created (exact time frames and project partners may change over time). The matrix should be reviewed regularly, and as funding, roles, and passions change within the local landscape, they should be updated within the matrix to support the implementation of the objectives and actions.

## TIME FRAMES

The projects were assigned a time frame based on a number of factors including level of priority, complexity of the project, funding, and local passion for specific projects that was noted during the planning process.

**Short Term** - 1 to 3 years       **Long Term** - 7+ years
**Mid Term** - 4 to 7 years         **Ongoing Projects**

## POTENTIAL PROJECT PARTNERS

This list, which updates and changes as projects are completed, contains potential partners that may be involved in various objectives and actions from this plan.

The partners include, but are not limited to:

- Norton Leadership
- Norton City Council
- City Planning & Zoning
- Economic & Community Development
- City Public Service
- City Engineer
- Parks and Cemetery Board
- Fire Department
- Code Enforcement
- South Summit Chamber of Commerce
- Norton City Schools
- Summit County
- Team NEO
- Private Landowners
- Local Business Owners
- City of Barberton
- Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)

# Land Use

**_Goal Statement:_** A prosperous and balanced community that ensures small-town character, green areas, and careful planning for the growth and development of a mix of housing options, existing and emerging economic centers, and neighborhoods.

### Objective 1 — Update plans and policies to align with the Future Land Use map.

| | Action Items | Time frame | Project Partners |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 1.1** | Update the City's zoning code to align with the Future Land Use map, district descriptions, and regulations. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |
| **Action 1.2** | Work with the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and City staff to regularly review the framework of the Comprehensive Plan. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |
| **Action 1.3** | Align updates to the Capital Improvements Plan with the Comprehensive Plan. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer; City Public Service |
| **Action 1.4** | Continue to implement the strategies and action steps as outlined in the Norton Parks Master Plan. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |

### Objective 2 — Allow for a range of housing choices through land use planning tools and policies.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 2.1** | Promote new residential housing on vacant and underutilized sites within developed areas. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Economic & Community Devp. |
| **Action 2.2** | Create incentives that encourage moderately priced housing options. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Economic & Community Devp. |

### Objective 3 — Continue to grow smart and consider the rural landscape and preservation of open spaces.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 3.1** | Ensure new annexations can be served by city utilities, infrastructure, and essential city services. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Summit County; Private Landowners |
| **Action 3.3** | Develop conservation development provisions on environmentally sensitive properties. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |
| **Action 3.4** | Implement "green" and sustainable building development code opportunities that address smart growth policies. | Long Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |

| Objective  4 — Maintain and enhance existing neighborhoods while growing a new mix of residential options that attract and serve a diverse population. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Action Items* | *Time frame* | *Project Partners* |
| **Action 4.1** | Reinforce existing neighborhood identity with direct linkages to parks, civic spaces, and commercial centers. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |
| **Action 4.2** | Locate smaller neighborhood commercial uses along major corridors and within walking distances of residential uses. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |
| **Action 4.3** | Concentrate residential development in the appropriate land uses as indicated in the Future Land Use map. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |
| Objective  5 — Support development in the identified Focus Areas. | | | |
| **Action 5.1** | Promote the development of the Downtown Core Focus Area. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Private Landowners; Norton City Schools |
| **Action 5.2** | Continue to grow the Flex Industry Focus Area. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Private Landowners; City Engineer |
| **Action 5.3** | Strategically grow the South Cleveland Massillon Road corridor Focus Area. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Private Landowners; Norton City Schools; City Engineer |

# Housing & Economy

**_Goal Statement:_** A community with diverse housing options for all income levels and age ranges which builds community, improves quality of life, and attracts residents and businesses.

## Objective 1 — Continue to study housing in Norton.

| | Action Items | Time frame | Project Partners |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 1.1** | Work with local organizations to create educational materials to articulate the housing needs in the City. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development; |
| **Action 1.2** | Promote a mix of housing options (e.g. single-family, townhomes, flats, multi-family, etc.) that cater to and align with the changing demographic and market demands, specifically young professionals, new families, and seniors. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development |
| **Action 1.3** | Maintain up-to-date statistics on the housing demand and typologies offered. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development |
| **Action 1.4** | Update or amend zoning regulations that outline design and landscape standards for new housing or mixed-use developments which align with the community fabric. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |

## Objective 2 — Strengthen existing residential neighborhoods in Norton.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 2.1** | Investigate and consider establishing historic districts focused on significant architecture and community history. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development |
| **Action 2.2** | Consider additional staff to assist in code enforcement and overall preservation of the existing housing stock. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development |
| **Action 2.3** | Invest in code enforcement personnel and training to maintain and improve housing. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development |
| **Action 2.4** | Promote the long-term maintenance of housing through programs to assist property owners with property maintenance and renovations. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development; Summit County |
| **Action 2.5** | Support rental property owners and tenants in maintaining safe, code-compliant properties through continued enforcement of codes, the use of grants, and other incentives. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development; Summit County |

| Objective  3 — Target higher density residential development in focus areas and areas identified in the future land use map. | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Action Items* | *Time frame* | *Project Partners* |
| **Action 3.1** Promote residential and mixed-use development in the downtown core and south Cleveland Massillon Road corridor focus areas. | Long Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development |
| **Action 3.1** Continue to find opportunities to add higher density residential in areas identified within the Future Land Use map. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development |
| Objective  4 — Support workforce development initiatives to grow the local economy. | | |
| **Action 4.1** Engage and invest in the community's network of economic development organizations and offices to support programming to match workforce development resources with employers. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; South Summit Chamber of Commerce; Summit County; Team NEO |
| **Action 4.2** Partner with other governments, institutions, and economic development-oriented nonprofits to study opportunities to support and grow the ecosystem for entrepreneurs. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; South Summit Chamber of Commerce; Summit County; Team NEO |
| **Action 4.3** Brand and market the community consistently across city departments to retain and attract a changing workforce and also visitors (i.e. traditional onsite workers, remote, freelance, start-up.). | Long Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; South Summit Chamber of Commerce; Summit County; Team NEO |
| **Action 4.4** Conduct surveys of the business community to help determine the state of the evolving workplace and economy and consider implementing needs identified in, or responsive to the survey. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; South Summit Chamber of Commerce |
| **Action 4.5** Expand relationships with owners of office, commercial, and industrial centers to monitor vacancy levels and assist in identifying suitable tenants of future owners/users. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Community & Economic Development; Team NEO |

| Objective 5 — Continue to build and implement a wide variety of economic tools and strategies. | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Action Items* | *Time frame* | *Project Partners* |
| **Action 5.1** Continue to engage with the business community on a regular basis to address specific needs. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Community & Economic Development |
| **Action 5.2** Continue to partner with neighboring municipalities to create joint economic development strategies benefiting multiple jurisdictions. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Community & Economic Development; City of Barberton; Team NEO |
| **Action 5.3** Expand opportunities to connect entrepreneurs and business owners with leaders and investors in the City to facilitate investment in the local economy. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Community & Economic Development; Team NEO; Summit County |
| **Action 5.4** Continue to promote the expansion of the flex industry properties (as identified in the future land use map) by encouraging a variety of business types and emerging sectors. | Long Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Community & Economic Development; Team NEO; Summit County |
| **Action 5.5** Direct programs for small businesses to fill vacant spaces in commercial centers. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Community & Economic Development; Summit Chamber of Commerce |
| **Action 5.6** Create a portfolio of incentives for potential development or redevelopment of key properties. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Community & Economic Development; Summit Chamber of Commerce Team NEO |
| **Action 5.7** Continue to consider offering tax incentives (e.g., tax abatements, tax increment financing, TIFF, JEDD, etc.) to attract, retain, or expand businesses. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; Norton City Council; City Community & Economic Development |
| **Action 5.8** Research programs and policies that support temporary outdoor dining and place-based enhancement efforts. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Local Business Owners |
| **Action 5.9** Collaborate with local businesses to develop shared goals for place branding, signage, and pedestrian-scale improvements. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Council; City Community & Economic Development; Local Business Owners |
| **Action 5.10** Promote public private partnerships as a tool to support future tax-generating growth opportunities. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Summit County; Team NEO |

# Mobility & Infrastructure

**_Goal Statement:_** A safe, efficient, and balanced transportation network that includes a variety of mobility choices, connects land uses, enhances the environment, and improves quality of life for those who live and work in the community.

**Objective 1 — Continue to expand and implement infrastructure that supports existing and new economic activities.**

| | Action Items | Time frame | Project Partners |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 1.1** | Plan for and extend/upgrade utilities to facilitate new development and infill. | Long Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer; City Public Services |
| **Action 1.2** | Determine feasible solutions to maintain and expand City services (i.e. water & sewer). | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer; City Public Services |

**Objective 2 — Implement strategies to improve and expand roadways.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 2.1** | Manage or reduce access points or major corridors to ensure efficient flow of traffic and access to commercial properties while promoting pedestrian safety. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; ODOT; City Engineer |
| **Action 2.2** | Require traffic impact studies for new development proposals as appropriate. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer; ODOT |
| **Action 2.3** | Clearly identify trucking routes in the City for all modal users. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Engineer; ODOT |

**Objective 3 — Enhance the walkability within the downtown district to safely connect people to places.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 3.1** | Continue to repair and expand the sidewalk network to residential development, open/park spaces, destinations, and neighborhoods in the city. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Engineer; City Public Service; ODOT |
| **Action 3.2** | Enhance gateways along entry corridors, key locations, and districts to welcome visitors and residents. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Engineer; City Public Service |
| **Action 3.3** | Update landscaping standards and requirements along primary corridors to reduce traffic noise and improve safety and comfort for pedestrians (See Downtown focus area). | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Public Service |

| Objective 4 — Promote best practices in transportation planning. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Action Items | Time frame | Project Partners |
| **Action 4.1** | Implement safe and efficient roadway design standards. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer; ODOT |
| **Action 4.2** | Explore the feasibility of roundabouts at key intersections to improve safety and traffic flow. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer; ODOT |
| **Action 4.3** | Coordinate the implementation of bike infrastructure along identified local and regional routes. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer; ODOT |
| **Action 4.4** | Support mixed-use development with shared parking requirements. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer |
| **Action 4.5** | Consider updates to the zoning code to incorporate anticipated changes in parking requirements, curbside management, and drop-off zones. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |
| **Action 4.6** | Asses existing right-of-way within the downtown to identify opportunities to expand sidewalk width and improve pedestrian accessibility. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Public Services, Private Landowners |
| **Action 4.7** | Explore participating in Ohio Department of Transportation's Safe Routes To School program to improve pedestrian safety and encourage walking and biking to school. | Short Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer; ODOT |
| **Action 4.8** | Prioritize intersection and crossing improvements in high-traffic areas, explore curb extensions, crosswalk visibility, and ADA compliance. | Long Term | Norton Leadership; City Engineer; City Public Service |
| **Action 4.9** | Establish and phase long-term pedestrian infrastructure improvements to support continuous and accessible walking routes throughout and connecting to downtown. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Engineer |

# Community Identity

***Goal Statement:*** A City that embraces and connects people to small-town values while fostering development that promotes a live, work, and play model for the future.

## Objective 1 — Retain and promote a rural and agricultural history and character, and small-town character

| | Action Items | Time frame | Project Partners |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 1.1** | Continue to evaluate and adopt policies that align with the future land use plan and help promote a small-town, rural character. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning |
| **Action 1.2** | Partner with developers to create projects that reflect Norton's rural and small-town character. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; City Economic & Community Devp. |

## Objective 2 — Promote activities that build social capital and character

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 2.1** | Support local community efforts and organizations by providing services to create safe and successful events. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; Chamber of Commerce; City Economic & Community Devp. |
| **Action 2.2** | Develop and implement strategies to market and promote activities and events throughout the City to audiences both within and outside the community. | Mid Term | Norton Leadership; Norton City Council |
| **Action 2.3** | Support and initiate activities that help brand the City, seasons, holidays, and the local community (i.e. holiday banners, lights, etc.) | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; City Economic & Community Devp.; Local Business Owners; Chamber of Commerce |
| **Action 2.4** | Promote, support, and implement special events that brand the local community through celebration of seasons, holidays, and other important milestones and more. | Ongoing | Norton Leadership; Norton City Council; City Economic & Community Devp.; Local Business Owners; Chamber of Commerce |

# Focus Area - Downtown Norton

**_Goal Statement:_** Create a vibrant and identifiable 'Downtown Norton' that serves as the heart of the community - blending diverse land uses, celebrating local identity, and seamlessly connecting to adjacent neighborhoods.

### CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES WITH A FOCUS ON ENTERTAINMENT

Provide opportunities for public art, community gatherings and social relations by developing a variety of public spaces such as parks, dining and entertainment areas, and pedestrian-friendly connections.

### BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Develop a network of walkable paths and gathering places that support healthy lifestyles, improve mobility, and strengthen social connections.

### ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Encourage innovative strategies that stimulate economic development, support local businesses, and enhance the downtown's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting existing land uses.

### STRATEGIZE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Conduct a comprehensive Downtown Master Plan to guide the long-term revitalization and growth of Downtown Norton.

| Action Items |
|---|
| Use the Master Plan to guide future investment, support funding applications, and coordinate zoning, design, and economic development strategies. |
| Collaborate with Norton School Board officials to develop a strategy for the existing school facilities in the area. |
| Promote Downtown to developers and investors through targeted marketing and promotional materials. |
| Explore funding through federal grants, TIF, and other means to support infrastructure improvements and future development. |
| Review and update zoning requirements to align with the vision of the focus area. |
| Strategically acquire key parcels to support coordinated development and improvements. |
| Encourage infill development that strengthens economic vitality and livability. |
| Create a signature public space for arts, entertainment and gathering. |
| Enhance Downtown's streetscape to provide safety and visual identity. |
| Support local businesses and provide additional community activities year-round. |
| Develop a Downtown Norton branding strategy to unify marketing, signage, and online presence. |

# Focus Area - Flex Industry Core

**_Goal Statement:_** Strategically invest and expand the flex industry land use as a hub for innovative industry, manufacturing, and commercial uses, leveraging its location and proximity to the region.

### ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting existing land uses.

### PROMOTE REGIONAL PROXIMITY

Capitalize on the corridor's location along Interstate 76 and Wadsworth Road to attract industrial, flex, and logistics-based businesses seeking regional connectivity.

### FOSTER CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Encourage sustainable building and site design through incentives for green infrastructure and LEED certification.

| Action Items |
|---|
| Develop promotional materials that showcase the corridor's location advantages, available sites, and local incentives. |
| Conduct site-readiness evaluations to prioritize catalytic redevelopment opportunities. |
| Explore funding through federal grants, TIF, and other means to support future investment and public improvements. |
| Review and update the zoning regulations to support light manufacturing, logistics, and flex space uses. |
| Improve roadway infrastructure and intersections to support increased truck traffic and improve safety. |
| Extend water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate future industrial expansion. |
| Collaborate with regional partners (e.g., Team NEO, JobsOhio) to attract advanced manufacturing, tech, and logistics businesses |
| Continue to expand and enhance city infrastructure to support existing and future business growth. |

# Focus Area - South Cleveland Massillon Corridor

**_Goal Statement:_** Re-imagine the corridor as a vibrant, mixed-use gateway that supports thoughtful infill development, enhances walkability and comfort, and elevates the corridor's visual identity - creating a cohesive and welcoming environment that reflects the City's character and connects its neighborhoods.

### ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Support local development by attracting and encouraging a diverse mix of downtown uses.

### BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Create a well-designed multi-modal streetscape that promotes safety and links businesses together to make them more accessible.

### CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities through a well-balanced mix of dining, gathering, and event spaces through well-designed streetscapes and plazas.

### STRATEGIZE CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

Conduct a detailed corridor study to evaluate current conditions, identify redevelopment opportunities, assess infrastructure needs, and establish a unified vision for the South Cleveland Massillon corridor.
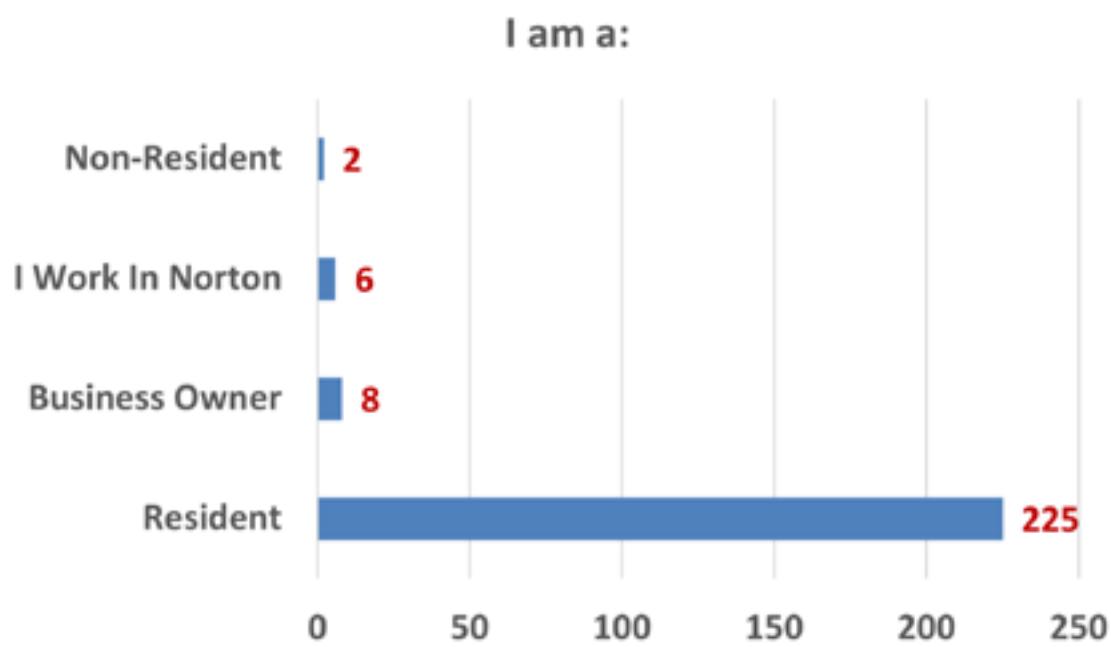
| Action Items |
|---|
| As part of the study, assess the need to acquire additional right-of-way to expand sidewalks and landscaping buffers. |
| Conduct a traffic assessment for a comprehensive analysis on the roadway configuration. |
| Create a cohesive streetscape design with a landscape buffer, continuous sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled lighting, branding elements, and other furnishings. |
| Market the corridor to small businesses and entrepreneurs, highlighting improved infrastructure and visibility. |
| Use the corridor study to guide future investment, support funding applications, and coordinate zoning, design, and economic development |
| Explore funding through federal grants, TIF, and other means to support future investment and public improvements. |
| Update zoning to support mixed-use and pedestrian friendly development. |
| Strategically acquire parcels to help facilitate the overall development of the corridor. |
| Create a corridor overlay district with design guidelines that preserve character, improve quality, and support infill development. |
| Enhance connections by expanding walkability and safe paths to the downtown core. |

# APPENDIX

# Survey

The following are the raw results from the Community Survey.

## I am a:

| | Count |
|---|---|
| Non-Resident | 2 |
| I Work In Norton | 6 |
| Business Owner | 8 |
| Resident | 225 |

## How many years have you lived in the City of Norton?

| | Count |
|---|---|
| 0-5 Years | 55 |
| 6-10 Years | 37 |
| 11-20 Years | 31 |
| 21-30 Years | 42 |
| Over 30 Years | 79 |
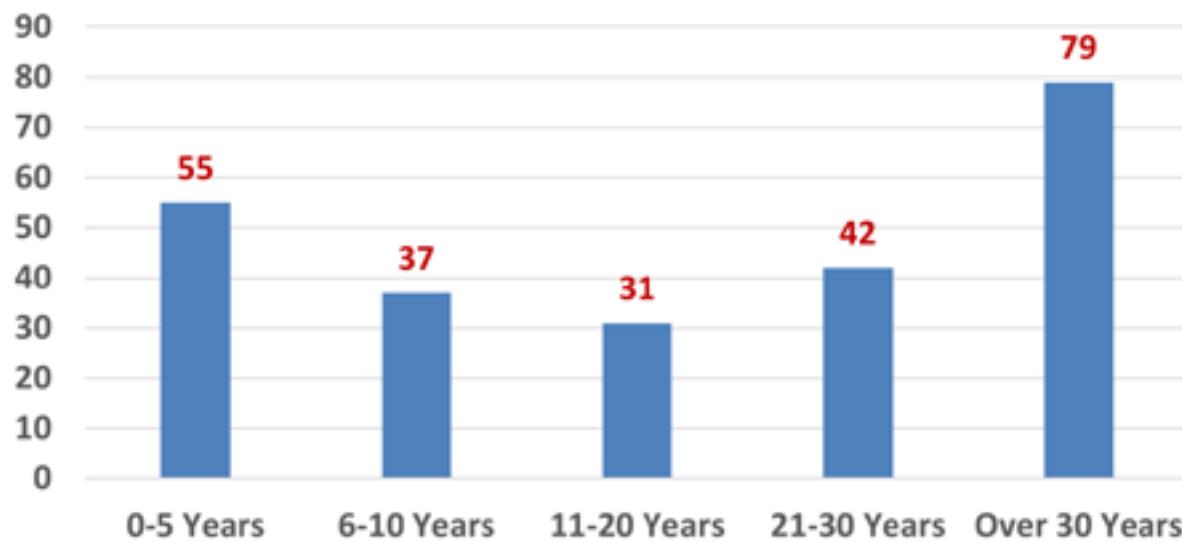
If you are a business owner, why do you choose to locate your business in Norton?

- Close to home, lovely community
- Close to where I live
- Company started in Norton
- Convenience
- Established for over 50 years
- Home Based Business
- It's where I have land



Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'extremely low' and 10 is 'extremely high', how would you rate your quality of life in Norton?
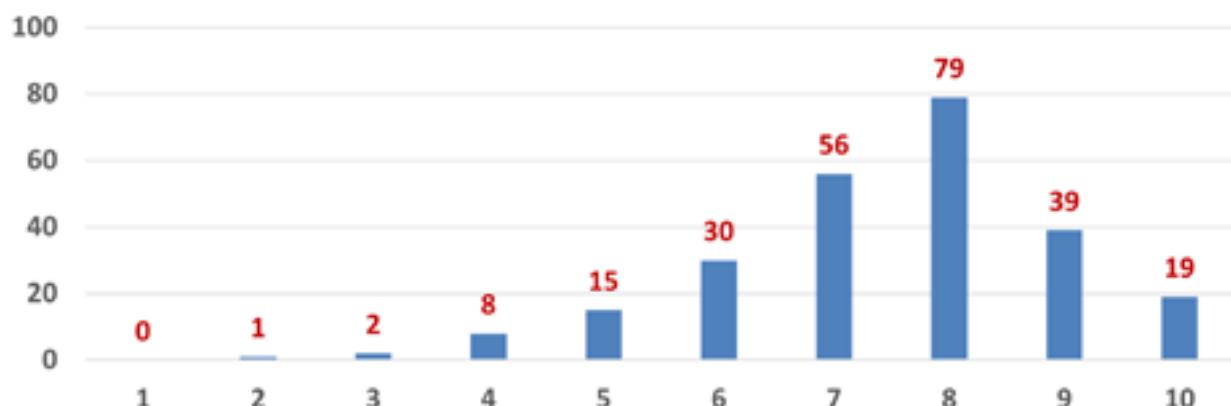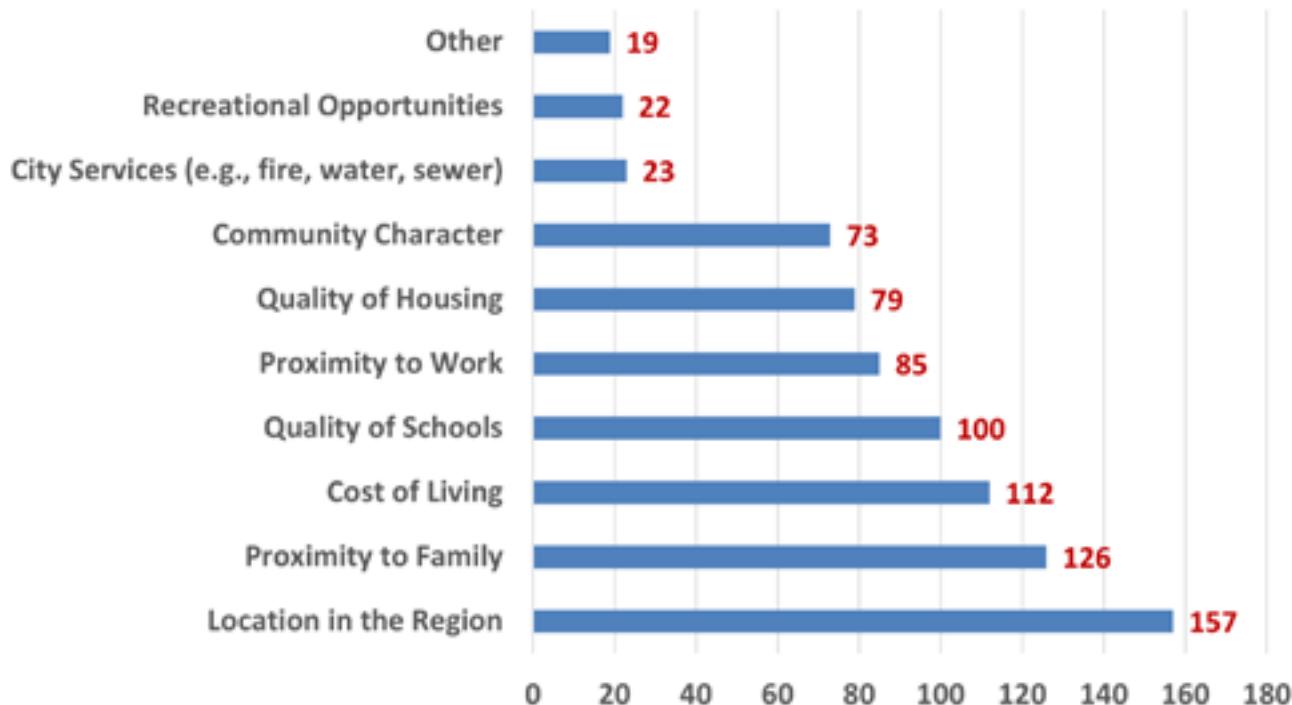
Average quality of life in Norton rating: 7.5



Which would you focus on to improve Norton's quality of life?
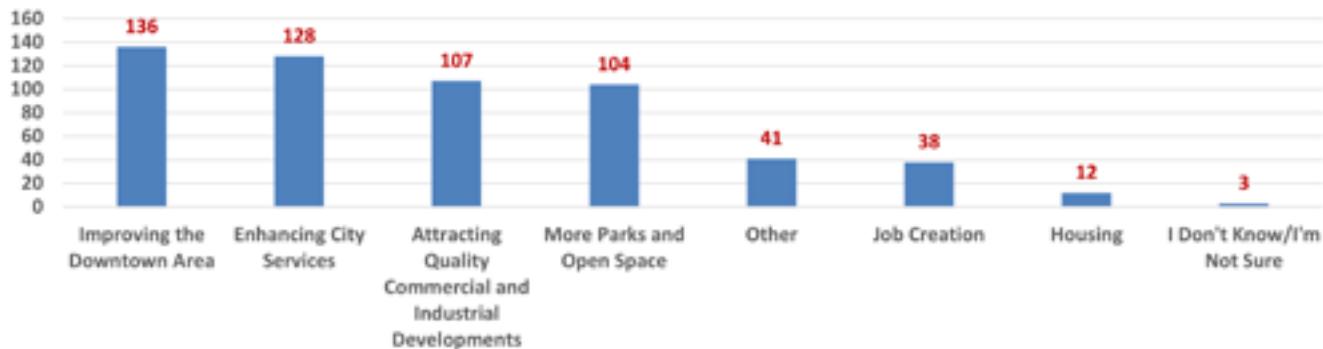
Top three choices respondents selected to improve Norton's quality of life:

- Improving the Downtown Area
- Enhancing City Services
- Attracting Quality Commercial and Industrial Developments

## Why do you choose to spend time in Norton?

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Other | 19 |
| Recreational Opportunities | 22 |
| City Services (e.g., fire, water, sewer) | 23 |
| Community Character | 73 |
| Quality of Housing | 79 |
| Proximity to Work | 85 |
| Quality of Schools | 100 |
| Cost of Living | 112 |
| Proximity to Family | 126 |
| Location in the Region | 157 |

Top three choices for why respondents choose to spend time in Norton are:
• Location in the Region
• Proximity to Family
• Cost of Living

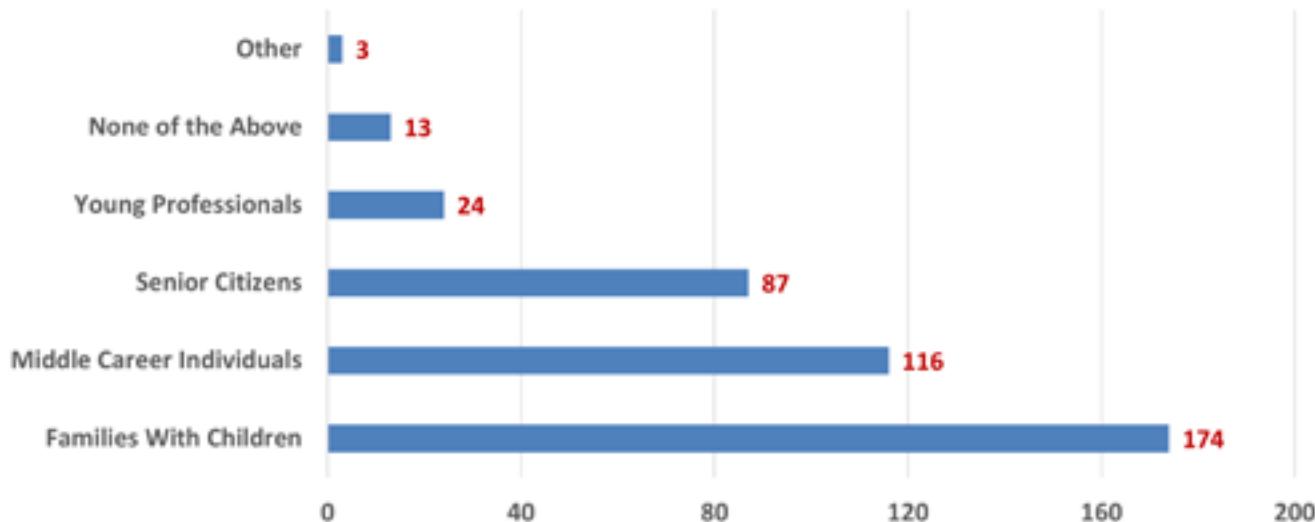## What are the most significant challenges facing Norton?

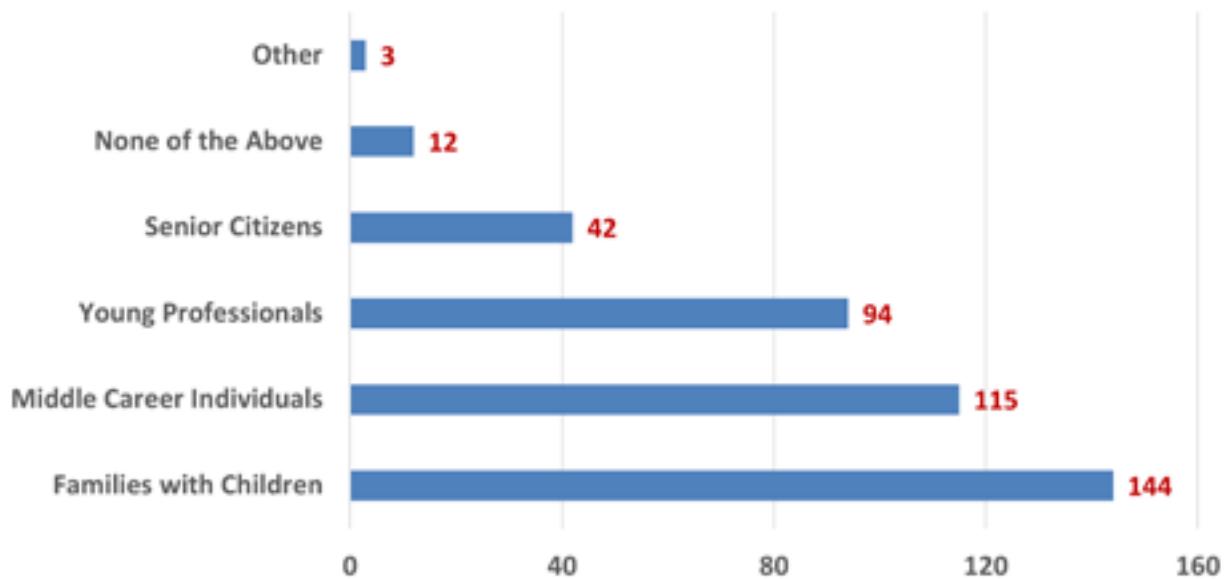| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Economic Development | 135 |
| Sufficient City Services | 119 |
| Creating a Strategic and Balanced Growth Plan | 119 |
| Attracting and Retainging Workforce | 43 |
| Community Connectivity | 43 |
| Maintaining Parks and Recreation Facilities | 35 |
| Other | 25 |

The three most significant challenges respondents feel Norton is facing are
• Economic Development
• Sufficient City Services
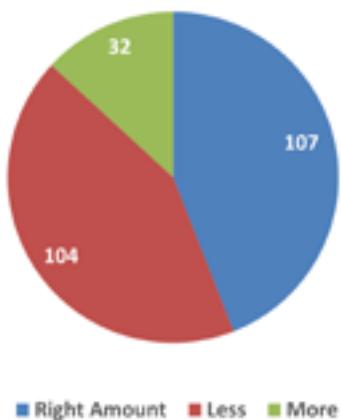• Creating a Strategic and Balanced Growth Plan

## Considering the homes and amenities available in the community, which groups do you believe is well served by the existing housing stock today?

| Group | Value |
|---|---|
| Other | 3 |
| None of the Above | 13 |
| Young Professionals | 24 |
| Senior Citizens | 87 |
| Middle Career Individuals | 116 |
| Families With Children | 174 |

## Which of these same groups would you most like Norton to attract more of in the future?

| Group | Value |
|---|---|
| Other | 3 |
| None of the Above | 12 |
| Senior Citizens | 42 |
| Young Professionals | 94 |
| Middle Career Individuals | 115 |
| Families with Children | 144 |

**Does Norton need more, less, or have the right amount of high-end apartments?**

107
104
32

■ Right Amount  ■ Less  ■ More

**Does Norton need more, less, or have the right amount of moderately priced apartments?**

115
72
60

■ Right Amount  ■ Less  ■ More
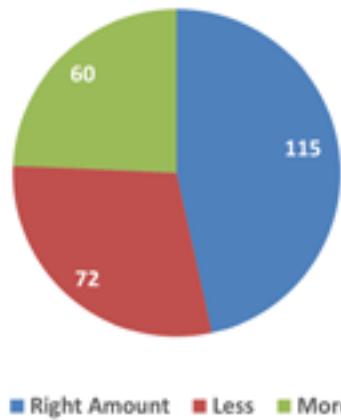
**Does Norton need more, less, or have the right amount of mixed-use developments that include retail, office, and resdiential?**

103
77
65

■ More  ■ Right Amount  ■ Less
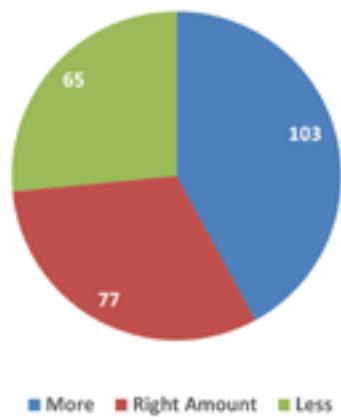
**Does Norton need more, less or have the right amount of single-family homes?**

129
87
32

■ Right Amount  ■ More  ■ Less
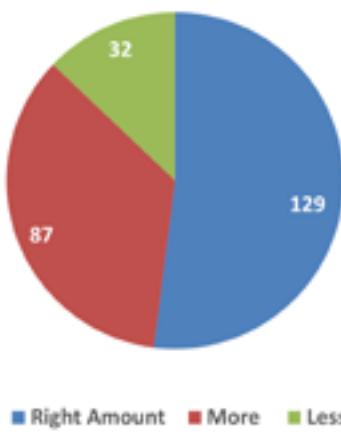
**Does Norton need more, less, or have the right amount of townhomes and condominiums?**

97
89
54

■ Less  ■ Right Amount  ■ More
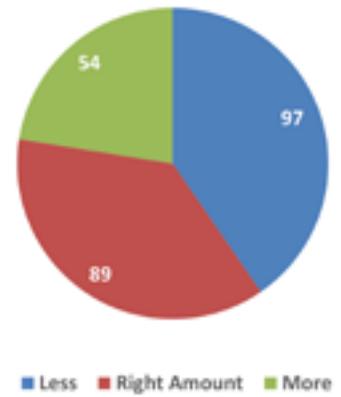
**Does Norton need more, less, or have the right amount of ADA-accessible housing?**

121
55
51

■ Right Amount  ■ More  ■ Less
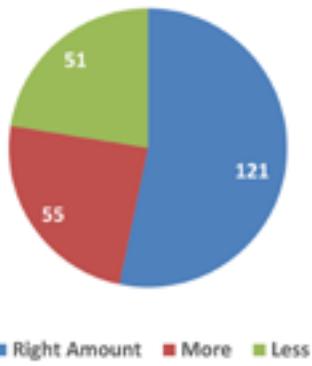
## What other facilities, goods, or services should be provided in Norton?

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Bars & Restaurants | 139 |
| Arts & Entertainment | 127 |
| Parks & Recreation | 123 |
| Grocery & Home Goods | 93 |
| Personal Shopping | 88 |
| Healthcare | 67 |
| Professional Services (e.g., Medical Offices, Law Firms) | 60 |
| Other | 25 |
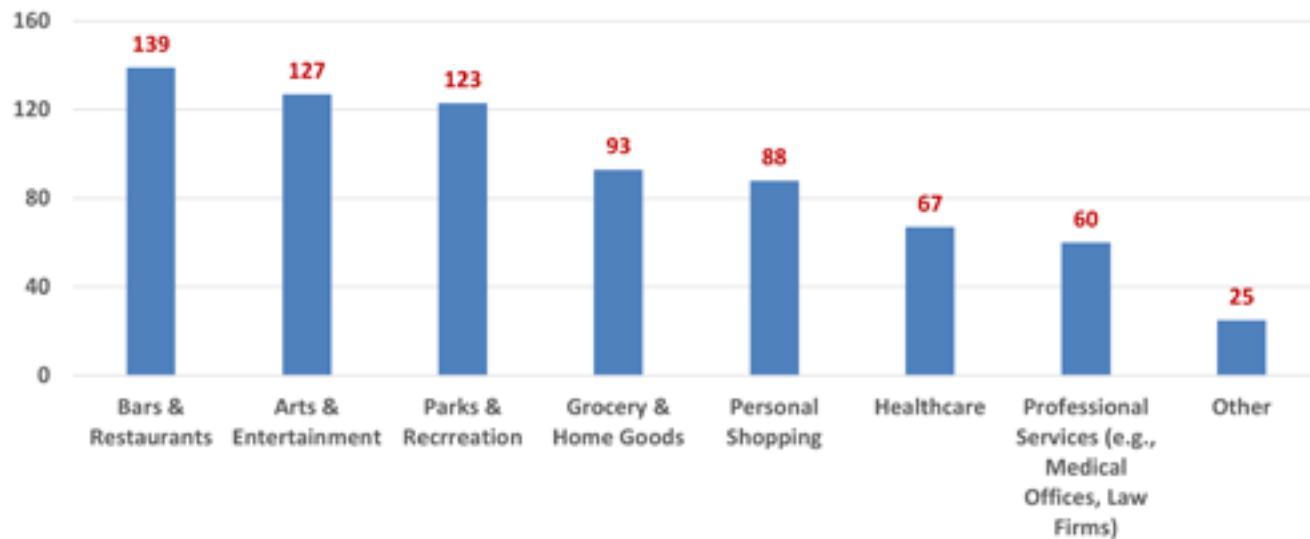
The top three choices for facilities, goods, or services respondents feel Norton should be providing are:
• Bars & Restaurants
• Arts & Entertainment
• Parks & Recreation

## Which factors are important when you decide to patronize downtown businesses and restaurants?

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Selection at Stores & Restaurants | 160 |
| Price Point | 139 |
| Diversity of Stores & Restaurants | 131 |
| Travel Time | 90 |
| Hours | 82 |
| Availability of Parking | 79 |
| Other | 12 |

The top three factors respondents prioritize while patronizing downtown business and restaurants are:
• Selection at Stores & Restaurants
• Price Point
• Diversity of Stores & Restaurants

### Are the goods and services you regularly need available locally, or do you need to travel outside Norton to find them?



- Must Travel
- It Depends
- Readily Available
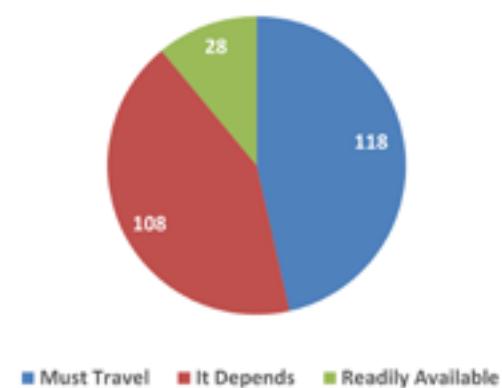
### If these are not available, what services are you traveling to find?



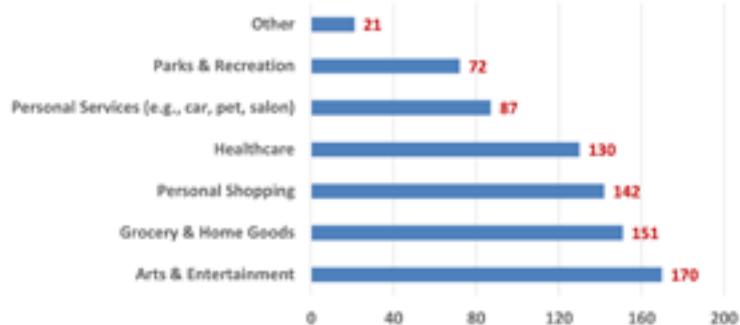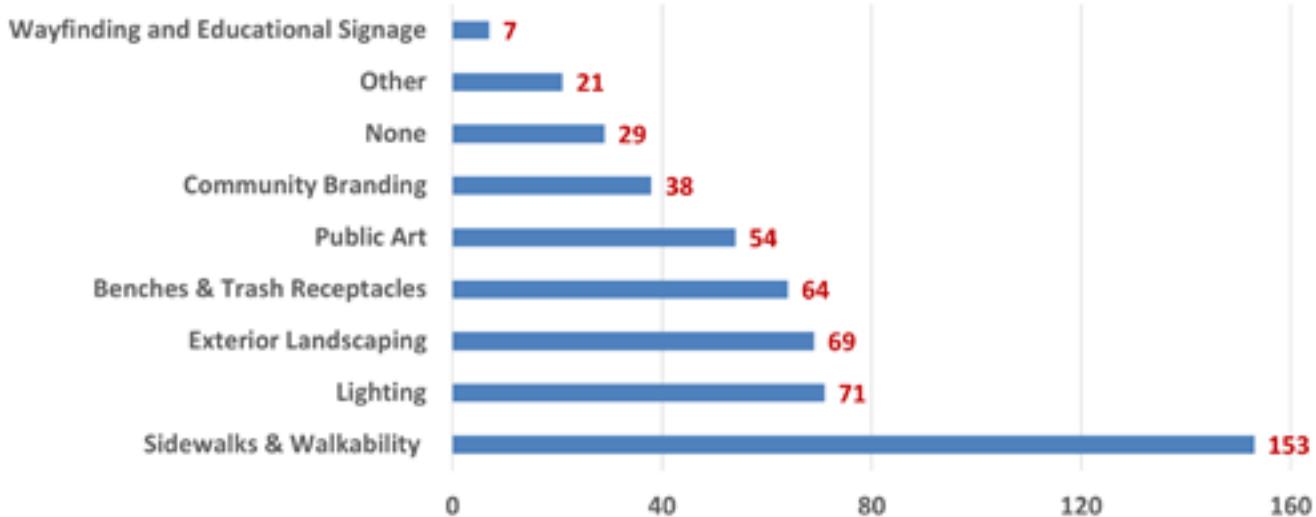| Service | Value |
|---|---|
| Other | 21 |
| Parks & Recreation | 72 |
| Personal Services (e.g., car, pet, salon) | 87 |
| Healthcare | 130 |
| Personal Shopping | 142 |
| Grocery & Home Goods | 151 |
| Arts & Entertainment | 170 |

### What placemaking improvements would you like to see downtown?



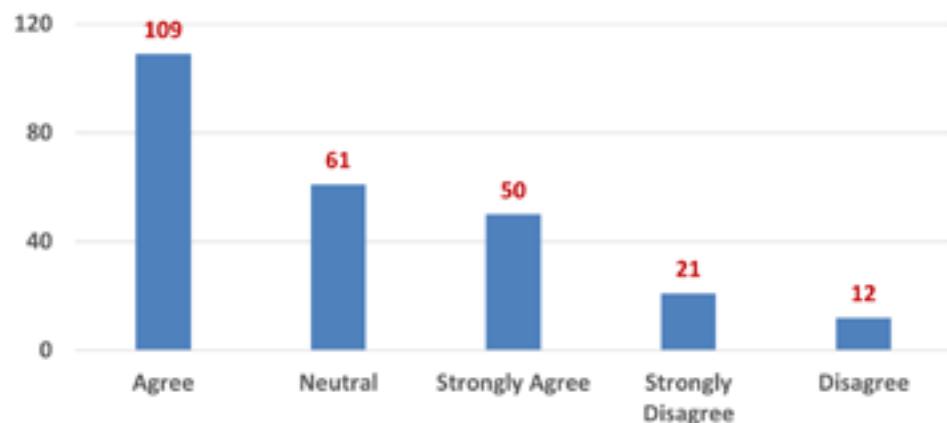| Improvement | Value |
|---|---|
| Wayfinding and Educational Signage | 7 |
| Other | 21 |
| None | 29 |
| Community Branding | 38 |
| Public Art | 54 |
| Benches & Trash Receptacles | 64 |
| Exterior Landscaping | 69 |
| Lighting | 71 |
| Sidewalks & Walkability | 153 |

The top three placemaking improvements from respondents are:
- Sidewalks & Walkability
- Lighting
- Exterior Landscaping

## Do you believe Norton should grow?
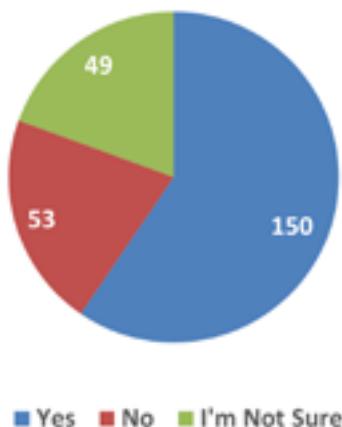


49
53
150

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ I'm Not Sure

## The City should increase the number, variety, and quality of employment opportunities



| | 120 | 109 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 80 | | 61 | 50 | | |
| | 40 | | | | 21 | 12 |
| | 0 | | | | | |
| | | Agree | Neutral | Strongly Agree | Strongly Disagree | Disagree |

## The City should continue to grow and invest in downtown



| | 120 | 108 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 80 | | 73 | 41 | | |
| | 40 | | | | 16 | 12 |
| | 0 | | | | | |
| | | Agree | Strongly Agree | Neutral | Strongly Disagree | Disagree |

## The City should use incentives to attract revenue-generating industries and tax-producing development



| | Agree | Strongly Agree | Neutral | Strongly Disagree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 97 | 70 | 43 | 27 | 15 |

## The City should make it a high priority to develop work-force housing to support the local economy



| | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 83 | 68 | 41 | 34 | 25 |
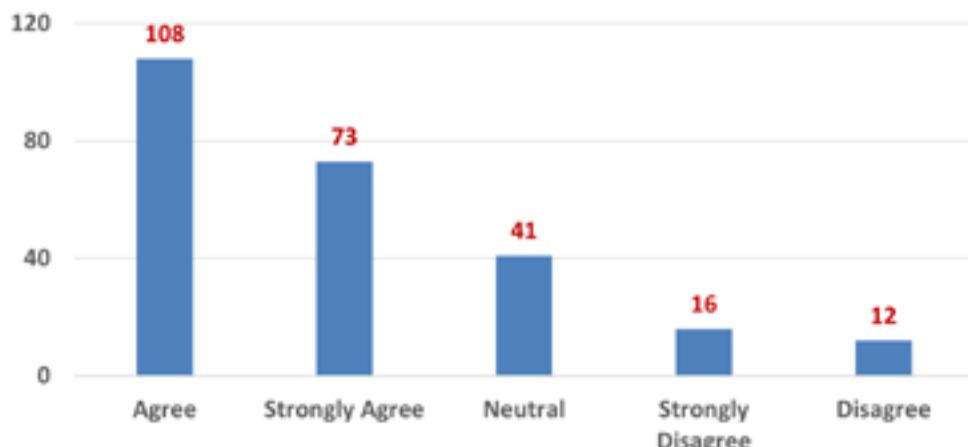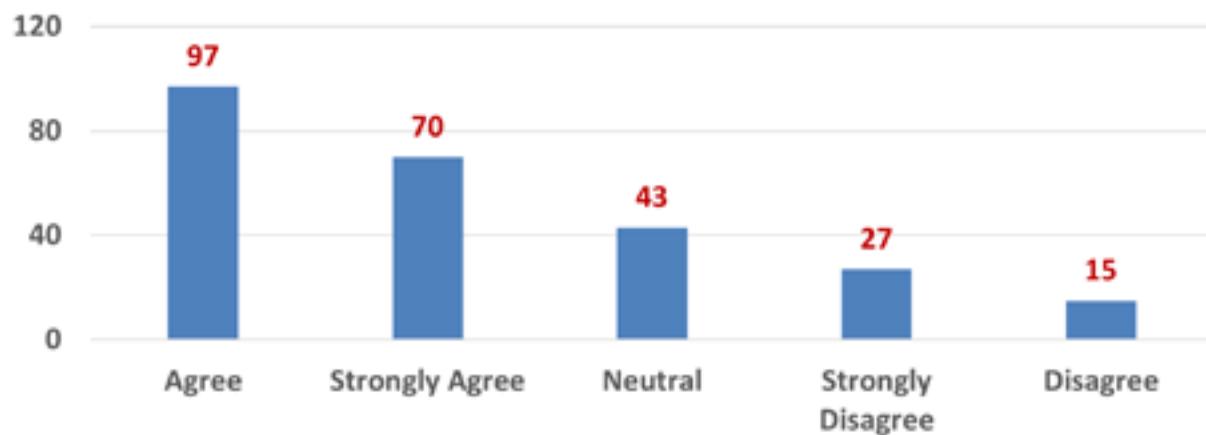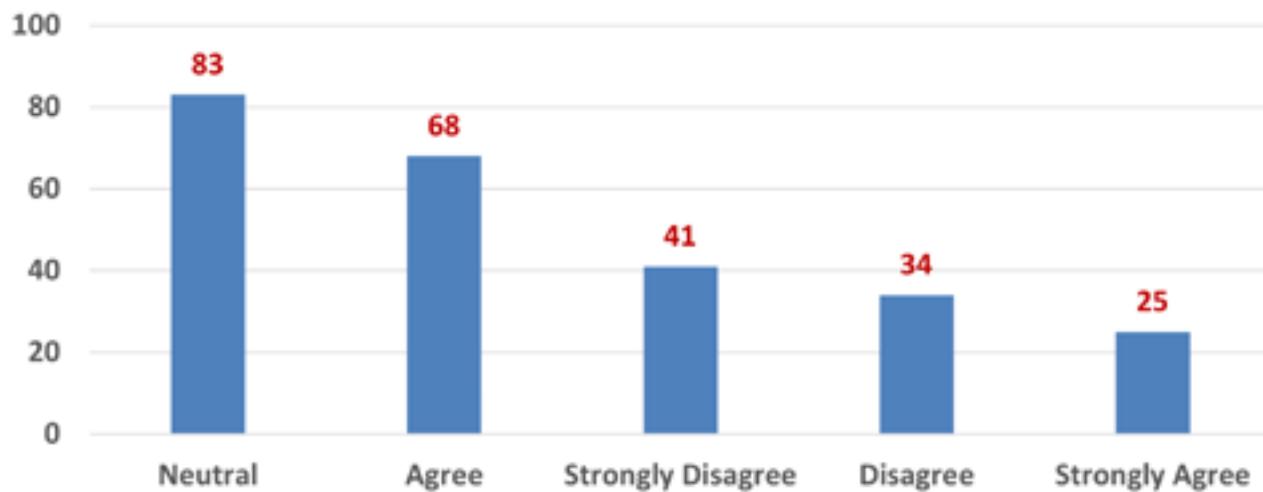
What parts of the City do you believe should be the highest priority for new development?
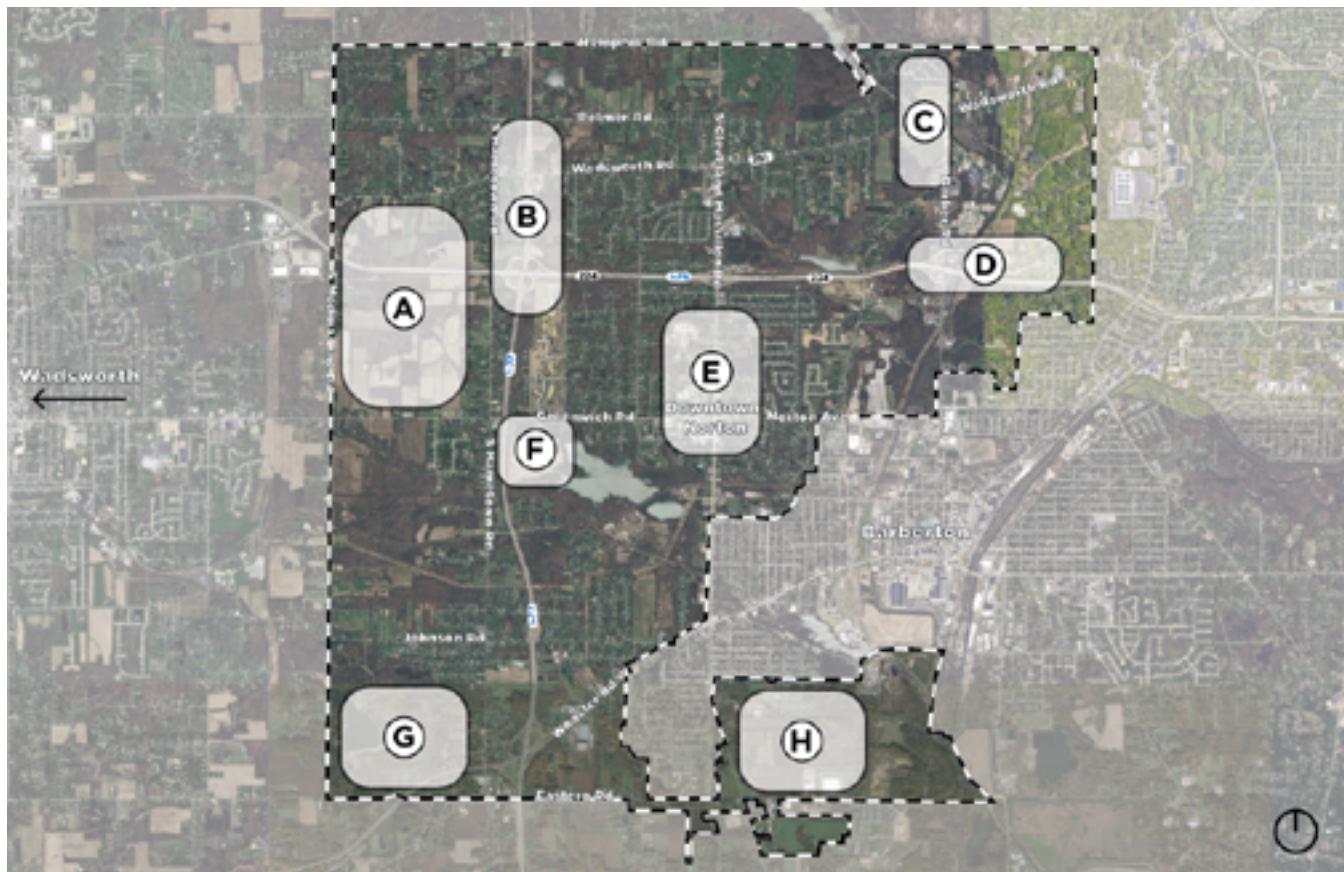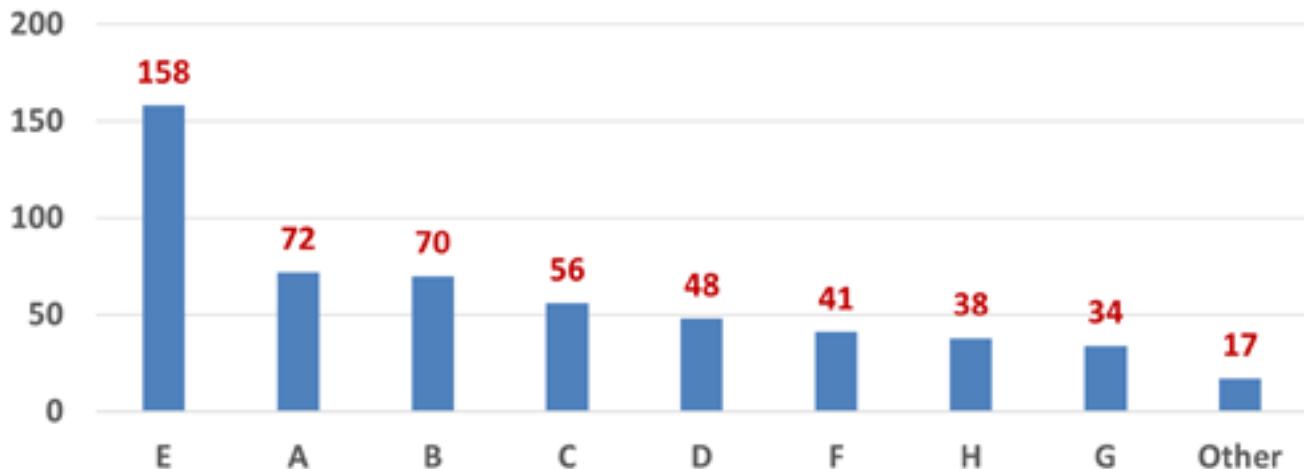
## What kinds of jobs would you like to see Norton attract more of in the future?

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Other | 15 |
| Transportation & Logistics | 29 |
| I Don't Know | 31 |
| Agri-Industry | 50 |
| Research & Development | 50 |
| Light Manufacturing | 75 |
| Healthcare | 91 |
| Professional Services | 98 |
| Technology | 117 |
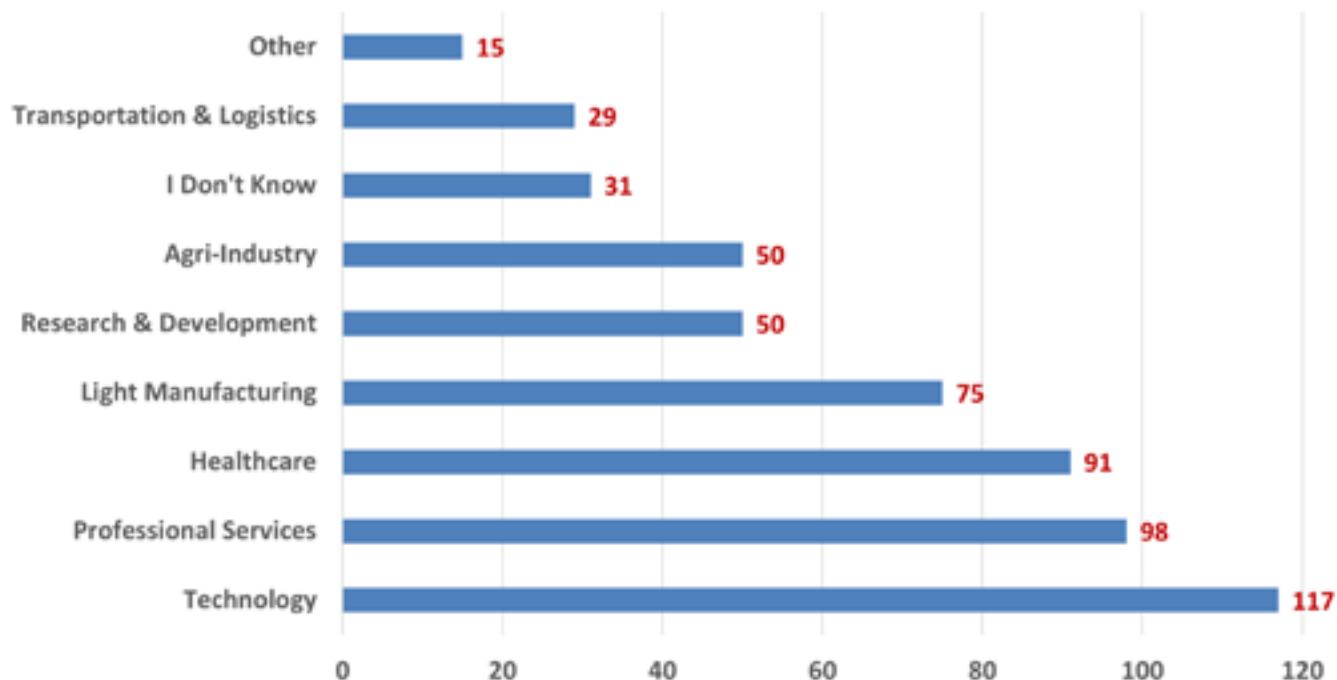
The top three jobs respondents would like to see more of are:
- Technology
- Professional Services
- Healthcare

## How improtant is it for the City to invest in other modes of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, and off-road trails?

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Moderately Important | 58 |
| Slightly Important | 56 |
| Not Important | 48 |
| Very Important | 46 |
| Important | 42 |
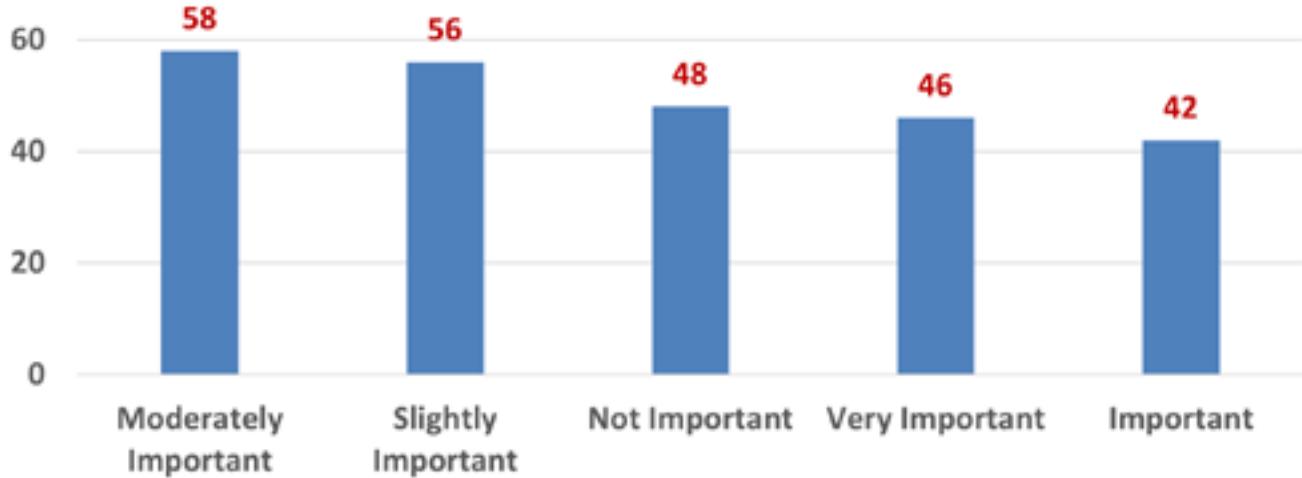
## Which parks have you visited within the last year?

| Park | Visitors |
|------|----------|
| Holiday Heights Park | 8 |
| Helmick Park | 10 |
| Williams Peace Park | 13 |
| Williams Memorial Park | 16 |
| McCafferty Park | 18 |
| Frashure Park | 25 |
| Loyal Oak Community Park | 64 |
| Silver Creek Metro Park | 205 |
| Columbia Woods Park | 219 |

## How old are you?

| Age | Count |
|-----|-------|
| 35-44 | 66 |
| 55-64 | 56 |
| 45-54 | 44 |
| 65-75 | 43 |
| 25-34 | 30 |
| 75 and Above | 7 |
| 18-24 | 3 |
| Prefer Not to Answer | 3 |

## How would you describe yourself?



| Female | Male | Other | Non-Binary |
|--------|------|-------|------------|
| 136 | 113 | 2 | 1 |

## Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity?



| Race/Ethnicity | Count |
|----------------|-------|
| Black/African American | 1 |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 1 |
| Asian | 1 |
| Other | 2 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 2 |
| Multi-Racial | 3 |
| Prefer Not to Say | 10 |
| White | 229 |

## Do you own or rent your home?

| Own | Rent | Living With a Relative or Friend | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| 241 | 6 | 2 | 2 |

## Write-In Raw Results
*Note: comments included are as written*

## What Do You Value in Norton?

- Small town feel, close to more urban areas. Adept police and city services
- A strong police force
- Access to our business and where we work.
- Affordable housing
- Affordable housing close to anything you want to see, do, or get.
- Affordable housing in a safe community close to family and work.
- Affordable housing. Close to freeway access. School size.
- Being close to family
- Being near my family and community events
- Church community, Family, the police force
- Close knit community
- Close to everything
- Close to family and friends
- Close to highways, close to Akron & Cleveland, Low traffic volume, I have never had problems with theft or crime.
- Close to work
- Closeness of the Community and the opportunity for volunteering with other
- Cohesive small town community
- Community
- Community
- Community
- Community
- Community & people
- Community and feeling safe
- Community events at Columbia woods park, farmers market (sense of community)
- Community- investing in our people and youth.
- Community involvement amongst the small businesses and organizations
- Convenience in shopping and travel.
- Convenient location
- Cost of living and green, native scenery all around the city
- Cost of living is low and Norton has a positive commufeel.

- Country charm in a city
- Culture, cleanliness and beauty, new Ryan retirement home, easy access to highways/shopping/medical services
- Economic development potential
- Family
- Feeling of living in a safe environment.
- Freedom from many urban restrictions. Trees and space
- Friendy neighborhood
- Good city services. Quality schools with high standards.
- Good neighbors, country like living while close to amenities, community strength
- Good people, low crime and good schools
- Good people. Good base to continue to develop
- Good school
- Good schools, small town feel with great people
- Great mix of rural/suburban atmosphere, safety and community.
- Great value in homes, safe neighborhoods, close to attractions and shopping.
- Having our own police and fire departments
- Hometown feel
- Housing values, stability,
- I appreciate the investment in fiber infrastructure, I appreciate the small but growing town feel.
- I feel safe here
- I like the small town feel with the small businesses we offer
- I use to value land
- I USED to value the fact that it was a small quiet town. It's since become something it's not with the illegal aliens here and crime rate growing up from the invitation of filth from big cities.
- I value my piece of land and the ability to enjoy backyard chickens and more space between houses than I had in my last community.
- I value the balance of living and natural spaces through out Norton.
- I value the safety forces we have in the city and feel we are blessed with strong leaders in both forces.
- I value the small town feel, good schools, and closeness to everything
- I value the small town feeling and woodlands views that Norton provides
- I value the small town feeling of Norton. The people here are what makes this city great.
- It's potential. Also, the effort to remain green and open whilst trying to foster development.
- It's quiet
- its not barberton
- Lack of jobs and career opportunities
- large lots for housing
- Let norton retain rural like areas. Not everything needs developed
- Local businesses
- Location
- location and family. Usually i would say our schools but currently very concerned about an issue with a middle school teacher. Now im wishing there was a Charter school option in Norton.
- Location to other cities
- Location to other resources outside the city
- Location, space/land
- Lots of green space, proximity to highways
- Love my specific location (Flesher allotment)
- Low crime rate, schools, city departments
- Low crime, quiet neighborhoods, safe parks, good schools
- Low tax base and schools.
- Low taxes
- Metro park, quiet neighborhoods
- My employer (S.A.Comunale) is located in

- Norton
- My family is here
- My home
- Neighborhood
- Nice people
- Nice, smaller community with larger properties but close to everything.
- Normal traditional way of life
- Norton has the feel of a small farm town...but near bigger cities. Id love to see a bit of a vision for the community that preserves farmland as part of the plan. Norton is unique because most of it has room to breathe...unlike the new developments
- Norton is safe, has a small town feel. I don't feel the city is out to critique my way of living.
- Nortons public school system
- Not being overdeveloped and busy.
- Not much
- Not much to be honest. We bought a house here thinking things would be different.
- Not much. I don't shop here, but I grew up here.
- Nothing
- Nothing to many housing development
- Old stone tavern
- Open space
- Open spaces and farm land
- OPEN UNDEVELOPED AREAS
- Opportunity for growth, but also mindfulness that we are a small community and not seeking to be Wadsworth or Barberton.
- Opportunity to develop and growth
- Parks
- Partnership with city
- Police and fire departments
- Potential. People. Schools. Location. Decent roads
- Privacy, small town feel

- Proximity to a lot of things to do in the area
- Proximity to grocery, work and church
- Proximity to highways and wolf creek/old stone taverns
- proximity to other cities, affordable cost of living
- Quality of life. Proximity to shopping and restaurants with out driving miles.
- Quality schools and safe community.
- Quiet bit getting busier
- Quiet neighborhood and love the walking trail at Columbia woods
- Quiet side street. Low taxes compared to Akron. Silvercreek Park.
- Quite community
- Relative quiet community, great schools
- Rural atmosphere and access to major hoghways
- Rural character
- Rural feel with less housing developments
- Rural open land yet close to major business
- Rural setting, close proximity to many larger towns, etc.
- Safe community
- safety
- Safety
- Safety
- Safety
- Safety and proximity to shopping and highways
- Safety and rural living
- Safety forces
- Safety Forces
- Safety services & schools
- Safety, cleanliness, affordability, economic growth to enhance house values.
- Safety, Community, Everything I need
- Safety.
- Safety/ fire and police/ school

- Schools
- Schools
- Schools
- Schools and community
- Schools and the People
- Schools, Community, Public Works
- Schools, fire/police dept, the people
- Schools, parks, regional location, community,
- Schools, safety, good neighbors, good people
- Schools, teachers, service men and women
- Semi rural.
- Sense of community, safety
- Small businesses
- Small businesses
- Small community
- Small town affordable living
- Small town community close to everything.
- Small town feel
- Small town feel
- Small town feel
- Small town feel and friendly people
- Small town feel with great access to surrounding areas. Low cost of living is a great draw for young families.
- Small town feel with lots of potential.
- Small town feel, country setting
- small town feel, housing prices
- Small town life. Until Brookside developed that is!!!
- Small town pride
- Small town vibes
- Small town vibes close to Akron
- Spacious and quiet
- Still had a bit of small town feel
- The community and being close to so much in the area.
- the community and support
- The community overall. Small town feel. We dont have a base "downtown" like Wadsworth or Doylestown. We need to realize and accept that.
- The community.   It's a family
- The country feel
- The country feel
- The Land
- The land
- The local business that are unique to any town
- The location is great. The small town community feel.
- The people
- The people
- The people
- the people who have been here for many of years and the history of norton
- The quaint farming environment.
- The rural feel without being too far from amenities. A suburban feel without the amount of traffic.
- the semi country feel.But this semi country feel is being slowly eroded by all of these high concentrated housing(aka Ryan/Redwood ) type housing taking away free space/farmland .
- The sense of community
- The sense of community that exists here.
- The small town rural feel.
- The small town vibes
- The way of life. Still has that hometown feel for me.
- Very low crime rate, overall safety and peacefulness.
- Very peaceful town
- Very quiet and economic.
- Wadsworth rd and loyal oak
- Was the country feel. I feel the mayor is taking that from us.

- We appreciated the ability to get a lot of home for our dollar so many years ago. Love the proximity to so many other communities.
- We moved here because of the quality of land we purchased, and the small-town feel. Would love to see more shopping opportunities like bookstores, small businesses, boutiques.
- We value feeling safe living in the smaller community with wonderful neighbors
- You feel like you are off the beaten path when you are not. You are 10 minutes from great shopping and entertainment.

## Describe Norton in Three Words:

- Hopefully not Wadsworth
- noisy, congested
- A safe community
- A wholesome community
- Accessible, safe, potential
- Affordable great location.
- Affordable. Community. Crossroads
- Afraid to grow
- Aging, becoming Kenmore
- Backward development mindset
- bad money management
- Beautiful, safe, close knit
- Beautiful, under-developed, quiet
- Becoming another trac home community
- Better than nothing
- Bias, wack, judgmental
- Bigger schools
- blue-collar, backwards, safe
- Bucolic, Quiet, Safe
- Clean. Safe. friendly
- Close knit community
- Close to Barberton
- Community Friendly convenient

- Community, safe, cozy
- Community, Suburbs, Potential
- Convenient location, nice
- Convenient. Not too large. Safe.
- Country like city
- Country, Communal, Cliquish
- Country, community, giving
- Cozy small town
- Dated, Community, Good-Schools
- Developing Community
- Developing, togetherness, great
- Easily looked over
- Families in Community
- Finally growing community
- Friendly, Community, Parks
- Friendly, convenient, safe
- Friendly, social, close
- Getting too big
- Good neighbors, friendly businesses
- Good polite citizens
- Great Awesome Amazing
- Great little town
- Great location
- Great people
- Great school system
- Greedy
- Growing quaint city
- Growing too fast.
- Growing, affordable, location
- growing, green, transitioning
- Growing, Historical and Community
- Growing, safe and friendly
- Growing,nice,work
- Heart, Home, and History
- Highways, corruption, decline

- home but underdeveloped
- Home farm family
- Home Safe Community
- Home town feeling
- Home town vibe
- home, consistent, community focused
- Homely, casual, potential
- Hometown.   Friendly.
- Homey, quaint, up and coming.
- Independent, traditional, community
- It fucking sucks.
- It's just okay
- Jim "corruption" Little
- Lack of Jobs
- Lacking modern infrastructure
- Let's go panthers.
- Local. Quaint. Ideal.
- Location, solid community
- Love the community
- Loving, caring and growing
- Low crime neighborhoods
- mismanaged, hopeless, mess
- Misuse of funds
- Need.city water
- Neighborly, quaint, community-centered
- Neighbors become family
- Nice family community
- nice people, good Mayor that reflects our family values.
- Nice place
- Nice small city
- Not a client
- Not business friendly
- Not the best
- Old fashion cozy

- Opportunity, Closeness, and Strength
- Over priced
- Panthers Community Location
- Peaceful, growing, needs more diversity
- Peaceful, same
- Plain old Norton
- Pleasant, growing, potential
- Podunk, Regressive, Nontransparent
- Potential, small town , proud
- Potholes vape shops
- Pretty, slow paced, open land
- Quaint suburb rural
- Quaint, opportunity, potential
- Quaint, Quiet, Potential
- Quaint. Transitional. Unassuming.
- Quality Of Life
- Quiet
- Quiet Friendly Welcoming
- Quiet peaceful clean
- Quiet, beautiful, friendly
- Quiet, friendly, family
- Quiet, rural , community
- Quiet, safe and economical
- Quiet, safe, beautiful
- Quiet, safe, growing
- Quiet, safe, rural
- Quiet, Simple, Cheap
- Quiet, small, safe
- Quiet, spacious safe
- Quiet, stable, semi-rural
- Quiet,stable, economic.
- Quite, simple and under-shadowed
- Redwood=overpriced trash
- Resistant to change
- Retirement. Boring. Dated.

- Rural adjacent community
- Rural American Community .
- Rural, close to highway,  close-knit
- Rural, fairly close knit, good schools
- Rural, friendly, plain
- safe clean dedicated
- Safe family oriented
- Safe friendly community
- Safe growing friendly
- Safe small town
- Safe, Affordable, Accessible
- Safe, boring, spacious
- Safe, calm, location
- Safe, clean, friendly
- Safe, clean, parks
- Safe, friendly, clean
- Safe, quiet, community
- Safe, secure and growing.
- Safe, undervalued, potential
- Safe. Average. Peaceful
- Safe. Charming, community
- Schools are old
- Semi-rural, quiet, safe
- Simple, laid back, charming
- Simple. Quiet. Underdog.
- Slow to change
- Small but Growing
- Small community setting
- Small cozy town
- Small home town
- Small safe nearby
- Small safe peaceful
- Small suburb underdeveloped
- Small town character
- Small town charm
- Small town feel
- Small Town Feel
- Small town feel
- Small town feel
- Small town feel
- Small town feel
- Small town life
- Small town living
- Small town thinking
- Small underdeveloped community
- Small, growing, close
- Small, old-fashioned, boring
- Small, rural, safe
- Small, supportive, simple
- Small, unique, potential
- Smaller, town, stuck
- Small-town Peyton Place
- Stable loving established
- Stable. Safe. Potential.
- Tax money hungry
- Too many developments!
- Traditional city values
- Underutilized highway access
- Unemployment, slow development
- Unprogressive, dense, boring
- Unrealistic growth plans.
- Very nice
- Wasteful taxpayer spending

- **Is There Anything Else You Want to Share With us Regarding the Norton Comprehensive Plan?**

- You can't please everyone. Focus on the long term best options.

- Don't rush this. Maintaining the character of the community is preferred over unchecked growth

- Needs to be more diverse in housing options. Unaffordable for single living and lower income. Acme being only grocery option makes it hard for people on budgets. I just feel norton is losing out to Wadsworth, Montrose and other surrounding cities.

- We need more tax base. We need to attract businesses while still keeping our charm

- As an employee of S.A. Comunale ( one of the largest if not the largest employers) I would like to ask the City of Norton to consider using our goods and services

- I think we need to add more popular places or small businesses to eats well as some of the popular shopping places like Bath and Body Works or a store like Kames for hunting and fishing. This is a great area for that type of shopping!

- Need less sidewalks to no where!

- I believe Norton should focus on bringing jobs to support single family homes. We should not focus on building rental communities. We should focus on building revenue.

- I would like to see development at all interchanges. Also along rt. 21 The development, which is taken place on eastern Road is a great start.

- Please no more Ryan home like developments.

- Start planning and financing sewer and water for the city.

- This is a Good Survey for citizen input. Without the EXCELLENT Newsletter, I would not have been aware of the proposed Plan

- Not relying on Barberton water would be a huge improvement

- residential city water needed

- Leaf pickup

- Expand Public transportation. Building codes, increase require land for home building.

- Water and sewer needs to be extended into residential areas.

- Safety is my priority. Thank you

- Our community has grown over the last few years with housing but our schools need attention! (more room, air conditioning, technology, and space for athletics)

- I spend literally hundreds of dollars each year to have usable water in my home and the new water line is less than a mile from my house but won't be run down my road. It's very frustrating

- I think the neighborhoods need to be plans that make them more uniform

- Growth is good, but with increased traffic, more traffic lights are necessary.

- Close to Barberton

- Community Friendly convenient