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## I. Introduction

Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (OVRDC) and the Ross County Commissioner retained Carpenter Marty Transportation (CM) to complete an update of the Ross County Thoroughfare Plan. Previous Thoroughfare Plan updates were mostly completed in house with support provided by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), OVRDC, and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The existing Thoroughfare Plan, completed in 2008, was very comprehensive. Minor amendments to the plan were completed in 2010 and then in 2012. Due to growth in the region, and the completion of several priority projects in the County, the need for a plan update is critical to plan for future infrastructure in Ross County and the City of Chillicothe. This 2021 Thoroughfare Plan update, though minor in nature, will provide Ross County, the City of Chillicothe, and OVRDC with updated data which can be used to support infrastructure investments and prioritization in the future. The plan update includes a review of key demographic data in the County, stakeholder and public input, updated mapping, and an access management plan.

## II. Demographics Data Review

Current demographic data was obtained via the United States Census Bureau from the 2010 census with updated information through 2020, as available. It should be noted that 2020 census data was not available at the time of this Thoroughfare Plan update. Key demographic findings for the County are summarized below.

- Population estimates for July 2019 were 76,666 people. This is down 1.8% from the 2010 Census estimate in 2010 of 78,076. The data shows Ohio population grew 1.3% over the same period.
- The median household income based on 2019 estimates is \$51,092 and the poverty rate is 17.3%.
- The owner-occupied housing rate between 2015 and 2019 was 70.9%, compared to 66.1% in all of Ohio. The median value of owner-occupied units during that time was \$123,800.
- The mean travel time to work between 2015 and 2019 was 25.8 minutes, compared to 23.7 minutes for the state of Ohio.

The supporting data and additional information from the United States Census Bureau can be found in **Appendix A**.

## III. Tourism

### A. World Heritage Site Designation - Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recently designated the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks sites as World Heritage sites. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks sites include Newark Earthworks State Memorial in Newark, OH, Fort Ancient State Memorial in Warren County, OH, and Hopewell Cultural National Historic Park in Ross County, OH.

The Hopewell Cultural National Historic Park has seen increased, annual visitation over recent years, and the World Heritage designation is expected to further increase visitation numbers at the site. Increases in tourism numbers are also expected to increase traffic volumes and changes transportation patterns near the Hopewell site.

The Ohio University School of Leadership and Public Affairs along with the Ohio History Connection developed an economic impact report in 2018 for the World Heritage designation of the Hopewell site. The report describes expected economic impacts of the World Heritage designation, and provides guidance to ensure local municipalities can maximize the economic impacts of the World Heritage designation by providing additional amenities to tourists of the area.

The report estimates that visitors to the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks site will increase 75-100% over the first 2-3 years of designation. The report recommends providing amenities such as bed and breakfasts, local restaurants, and tourism experiences to further support entrepreneurial tourism. These amenities, along with the Hopewell site, must be supported by transportation infrastructure to support the additional traffic volumes. Adequate ingress/egress via vehicular transportation along with trail connections and mobility assistance support, such as handicap accessibility, are vital for success of the touring public. Wayfinding signage and guidance for all modes of transportation should also be provided, with mapping of nearby amenities available online and on site. The sites should be monitored as tourism and attendance increases. Roadway improvements, such as turn lanes, may need to be considered as traffic volumes increase.

## **IV. Stakeholder & Public Input**

A key part of the Thoroughfare Plan update was the formation of a stakeholder group. No one has a better grasp on existing and future conditions of Ross County than a group of residents and people who are in touch with the affected communities. The stakeholder group was vital in providing first-hand experience with daily living in Ross County and clearly identifying transportation issues and concerns.

CM worked with the stakeholder group to develop a survey/questionnaire which was provided to the public. The questionnaire included 13 questions requesting feedback regarding transportation issues, proposed improvements, and growth trends in the County. The questionnaire received a total of 66 responses. The key findings from the public questionnaire are identified below.

- The top issues with transportation in the County are traffic congestion, lack of parking, and high speeds.
- The top locations with transportation issues are Bridge Street in Chillicothe, US-50/Western Avenue, and the US-23/US-35 interchange.
- The top roadways traveled are US-23, Western Avenue, US-35, and Bridge Street.
- Future, major development is expected in the west and north parts of Ross County.

The questionnaire and summary of responses can be seen below.

**Question #1 - Which of the following are the top three issues with the transportation system in Ross County today?**

Traffic congestion was the top answer, with over 77% of the votes. Lack of parking was the second most selected issue, with almost 40% of the votes. Narrow streets came in third, with high speeds and traffic control coming in as close fourth and fifth most popular votes. Multimodal transportation options; underutilization of public transportation due to associated stigmas; access/curb cuts; and automobile dependency were all also concerns, indicated by their double-digit percentage of votes. Planning for autonomous vehicles did not seem to be a major concern among the participant group.

**Question #2 - What roadway improvements do you believe will improve travel in Ross County? Please list in order of importance.**

**Bridge Street**

Bridge Street was the most popular response, appearing in almost half of the responses for this question. Most people noted the congestion and poor traffic flow. Some ideas respondents provided ideas for improvement included reducing curb cuts and combining access points, adding an access road, an additional lane for turning, and adding “no left turn” signs at some locations along Bridge Street. There were a few comments requesting adjustments to the signal timing as well.

**Western Avenue**

Western Avenue was mentioned in many responses to this question. Most people recommended adding additional lanes and turning movement opportunities. Several people expressed the desire to make the City more walkable by extending the sidewalks along Western Avenue.

**Other Improvements**

Several people recommended using the old weigh station ramp from US-23 to start a new interchange in hopes to help promote additional development and help alleviate congestion in the Downtown and Bridge Street areas. Many respondents mentioned the desire to have additional parking in the Downtown area as well as the ability to turn right on red at intersections. Several comments mentioned pothole repair as well.

**Question #3 - Do you believe additional widening and/or other improvements should be implemented for US-50/Western Avenue?**

**Widening**

Almost 70% of responses indicated additional widening and/or other improvements should be implemented for US-50/Western Avenue. The majority of the respondents were interested in US-50/Western Avenue being widened from the Cabbage Hill area to Veterans Parkway.

**Turn Lanes**

Multiple comments mentioned turn lanes, including elimination of the left turn on Gerber Avenue, extension of the two-way left turn lane from Leeds Road to Stoneridge Drive, or addition of a turn lane from Cabbage Hill to Veterans Parkway.

**Sidewalks**

Several mentioned the addition, or continuation, of sidewalks for residents, workers, park-goers, seniors. Specific areas included Central Center to Adena Wellness Center-West and the continuation of sidewalk from Bob Evans past the fast-food restaurants and Kroger “and beyond.”

**Traffic Signals**

Brewer’s Height was mentioned a couple of times, with one person recommending the addition of a traffic light at the foot of Brewer Heights. He/she said it has become a dangerous intersection at rush hour. Two responses mentioned replacing the signaled intersection at Veterans Parkway with a roundabout. Others thought syncing the lights could help.

**Other**

In general, traffic congestion was another popular topic. The addition of signs and a request for a consistent speed limit in the Sunrush area was mentioned. One person mentioned Water Street to Pyleys Lane needs improvement, and another person mentioned the traffic patterns west of Centennial Boulevard needs improvement, and no further details were given.

**Question #4 - Please list the top three major roadways in Ross County that you utilize most frequently. Examples: US-50, US-35, US-23, SR-28, SR-772, SR-104, SR-159. Please list below, including other roadways not included in the example list.**

**Table 1** below shows the primary, secondary, and tertiary roads respondents use.

Table 1 – Question #4 Results Summary

Roadways	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total Votes
US-23	19	11	12	42
US-50/Western Avenue	15	11	6	32
US-35	12	18	11	41
SR-159/Bridge Street	8	7	10	25
SR-772	3	1	2	6
SR-207	2	1	5	8
SR-28	1	0	0	1
CR-550	1	0	0	1
SR-104/High Street	1	11	16	28
Cooks Hill Road	1	1	1	3
US-28	1	1	0	2
Veterans Parkway	0	0	11	11
Marietta Road	0	0	1	1
Pleasant Valley area	0	0	1	1
Eastern Avenue	0	0	1	1

**Question #5 - Have you experienced the following issues on the Bridge Street corridor near the US-35 interchange? If so, what priority would you give to addressing the issue?**

The issue that was most frequently experienced was congestion and backups in the northbound direction. Over 96% of respondents experienced it; 76% of those individuals rate it as a high priority and 24% rate it a medium priority to fix. Other issues that rated in the 90th percentile include congestion and imbalanced lane use in the southbound direction and poor traffic flow at the intersection of Bridge Street & North Plaza Boulevard. **Table 2** below shows the number of respondents that experienced the specified issues and their respective priority levels.

Table 2 – Question #5 Results Summary

Issues	Yes	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Congestion and backups in northbound direction	55	38	12	0
Congestion and imbalanced lane use (more vehicles in the right lane than other lanes) in the southbound direction	50	30	12	5
Traffic backing out onto US-35 eastbound from Bridge Street	50	27	12	8
Traffic backing out onto US-35 westbound from Bridge Street	49	22	17	11
Poor traffic flow at the intersection of Bridge Street & North Plaza Boulevard	44	18	12	13
Poor traffic flow at the intersection of Bridge Street & Marietta Road	35	16	21	12
General issues at Bridge Street & Stewart Road	30	14	14	14
General issues at Bridge Street & Pawnee Road	29	6	13	20
Lack of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities in the corridor	25	5	5	26

Other Bridge Street issues mentioned include signal timings at Bridge Street and Marietta, signal coordination, recommendations to restrict left turns on Bridge Street to only signalized intersections, adding new service roads to connect Bridge Street businesses, and implementing safety measures for pedestrians and cyclists. Other problem areas included left turns at Shawnee Square and River Trace, high speeds, turning into North Plaza, and Main Street congestion during morning/evening commutes. One person mentioned people not following the signs indicating which lanes are through lanes and which are turn lanes.

**Question #6 - What methods would you recommend to better manage traffic operations along Bridge Street in Chillicothe?**

More than 60% of respondents recommended signal timing changes to better manage traffic operations along Bridge Street. Approximately 55% recommended a reduction in the number of access drives. Reducing traffic and multimodal transportation options were both in the twentieth percentile of votes. A few people thought speed limit changes could help. Many people believe a bypass connection of US-35 E to US-23N or access roads, especially for businesses, would be beneficial. A reduction of traffic lights, traffic light synchronization, speed monitoring, the addition of more bike/pedestrian facilities were also mentioned. One person recommended limiting entrances and exits more exclusively to signalized intersections. Another thought it would be beneficial to increase capacity in the northbound direction and improve lane use distribution in the southbound direction.

**Question #7 - Please rank on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the best of the best, 1 being the worst of the worst) how Ross County fares with the following transportation-related items.**

Ross County public transit options and multimodal transportation options ranked the lowest, with most votes being a five out of ten, or lower. **Table 3** below summarizes how other issues ranked.

*Table 3 – Question #7 Results Summary*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Votes
Safety	2	0	4	3	9	8	15	9	3	1	54
Infrastructure Maintenance	2	2	8	2	19	8	6	9	2	1	59
Travel Efficiency	3	3	2	7	13	11	10	4	1	2	56
Overall Transportation System	2	1	4	8	19	11	6	7	0	1	59
East of Access to Development	4	2	6	8	9	6	7	5	4	1	52
Infrastructure Quality (pavement, sidewalks, signals, etc.)	3	4	5	6	18	9	7	4	3	0	59
Public Transit Options (bus, car-sharing, etc.)	3	9	6	9	10	7	6	4	3	1	58
Multimodal Transportation Options (biking, walking, etc.)	5	8	10	6	12	5	5	3	2	0	56

**Question #8 - Do you believe existing traffic congestion negatively affects economic development?**

Most responses (75%) answered that they believe existing traffic congestion negatively affects economic development. Comments stated easy access to the highway system, providing safe and non-congested transportation for young drivers and customers, as well as parking for businesses is important.

Several people stated congestion could be a deterrent for current customers, new businesses, and economic development, which could decrease area business and City’s revenue. People provided that they are more likely to seek other businesses if it’s easier to access.

The addition of lanes, and a connector tunnel for pedestrians to cross Bridge Street were both mentioned. There were a couple of people that commented on the importance of walking and biking paths and adequate parking for commerce. Poorly timed signals and too many access points were also mentioned.



**Question #9 - Where in the County do you think new major development will take place in the next 10-20 years? (Select all that apply)**

Almost 75% of respondents think new major development will take place in the Western part of the County. The second most popular response was the Northern part at 62%. There were less than ten responses, each, for the Central, Southern, and Eastern areas.

**Question #10 - Please describe specific areas in the County where you have seen increased development over the last 5-10 years.**

Most people responded that Western Avenue has seen increased development over the last 5-10 years. A few people specifically mentioned the Hospital and Sunrush areas. The second most popular response was Bridge Street, with mentions of the Riffle/Adena Regional Medical Center/Kenworth area. Other general responses included the Northern and Western part and Downtown Chillicothe.

**Question #11 - Please describe where you believe the top 5 most popular travel destinations are within Ross County. These can include shopping areas, entertainment districts, parks, etc.**

The most popular travel destinations comments included shopping; city, state and historical parks; dining; entertainment; and biking and walking trails. Bridge Street, Downtown Chillicothe, and Western Avenue were all mentioned multiple times. Tecumseh, Yoctangee Park, Hopewell Culture National Historic Park, and Adena Mansion & Gardens were all mentioned several times.

**Question #12 - How would you like to see the ATP incorporated into the Thoroughfare Plan update?**

Almost half of the comments mentioned biking or walking paths. In general, people expressed interest in safer and more connected walking and biking paths. One person mentioned the dangerous nature of bicyclists around the railroad underpass. Another person was concerned about the safety of handicapped individuals attempting to travel on sidewalks in front of businesses, noting that tables, chairs, planters, and uneven pavement sometimes prevent them from using it via a wheelchair. Another safety concern is the lighting on Bridge Street for people walking at night.

The most noted areas for walking and biking infrastructure improvements were US-35/Bridge Street, Western Avenue, Shawnee Square area, Pyleys Lane, and the Pleasant Valley area. One person expressed interest in a map of long-term plans for additional shared use paths and connections, particularly the north-south corridor.

Other requests included a dedicated bus lane for major streets, Park & Ride, and incorporating public input and transparency with decisions. Another person thought focusing on highway infrastructure is more important now than economic development.

**Question #13 - Please feel free to comment further about transportation concerns and solutions in Ross County. Additionally, if you have observed transportation solutions in other parts of Ohio that may be beneficial to the Ross County area, please share.**

**Accessibility**

Access was mentioned in several comments, some referencing Bridge Street and others referencing connectors from US-35 east to US-23 north and US-50 to US-23. Intersection improvements were mentioned many times. Several people expressed interest in more roundabouts rather than signalized intersections and others thought syncing the traffic signals would help with traffic flow. One person expressed concern that the time allowed for pedestrian crossings seemed short.

**Walking/Biking Projects**

Multiple people are interested in walking/biking projects, with one person interested in clearing space (i.e. prohibit people parking on sidewalks and double parking in the street when parking is available; clear planters and seating if they block the sidewalk; etc.) for wheelchairs to more easily travel.

**Other**

One idea not previously mentioned in the previous comments throughout the questionnaire was removing old buildings to make municipal parking lots. The desire for additional parking for businesses was mentioned in a few comments. The frequency and timeliness of buses was a concern, with the respondent providing that the system took him/her over an hour to go 2-3 miles. He/she said transportation via the bus system took the majority of the day for only an hour-long appointment.

Speed enforcement was mentioned a couple of times. One respondent is interested in more “Slow Children at Play” signs in neighborhoods. Other topics included pothole repair, widening US-50, and improvements to the safety at Veterans Parkway and US-50.

## **V. Mapping and Projects**

Several transportation maps and/or map updates were included as a part of the Thoroughfare Plan update. Each map is described below, followed by the map figures.

### **A. Roadway Functional Classification Map**

Highway and street systems form an interconnected roadway network across jurisdictional boundaries to serve the transportation needs of a region. Roadway systems need to provide traffic mobility or land access, with many systems providing a combination of both. The following definitions are presented for each classification of roadway in the County network. The standard industry definitions have been referenced using information from ODOT:

- **Interstate/Freeways** have full access control and limited points of entry at interchanges.

- **Other Freeways and Expressways (02)** have full access control and limited points of entry at interchanges. Roads in this classification have directional travel lanes, are usually separated by some type of physical barrier, and access and egress points are limited to on/off ramp locations or a very limited number of at-grade intersections. Like Interstates, these roadways are designed and constructed to maximize mobility and do not directly serve abutting land uses.
  - Right-of-way width 120-160 Ft.
  - Example: US-35
  
- **Principal Arterials (03)** typically serve major activity centers with higher traffic volumes and longer trips. Principal arterials minimize access to promote a higher level of mobility. These roads also provide a critical connection to minor arterials and collector routes.
  - Right of way 120-160 ft
  - Example: US-23 and Bridge Street
  
- **Minor Arterials (04)** typically have more access and provide an interconnection between principal arterials and collectors. Trip length will be shorter than principal arterials.
  - Recommended Right-of-way 100 ft
  - Example: US-50 and Western Avenue
  
- **Major and Minor Collector Roads (05 & 06)** serve both mobility and land access within the network. These roads are an important link between the arterial system and local streets and provide access to residential and commercial areas.
  - Recommended Right-of-way 80 ft
  - Example: Arch Street (Major) and Blain Hwy (Major) and Charleston Pike (Minor)
  
- **Local Roads (07)** are designed to provide direct land access to abutting parcels, connect to higher-level roadways, and should not carry through traffic.
  - Recommended Right-of-way 40 – 60 ft
  - Example: Sugar Street and Lick Run

The Roadway Functional Classification Map can be seen in **Figure 1** and **Appendix B**.

## **B. Annual Average Daily Traffic Map**

An annual average daily traffic (AADT) volume map was created using StreetLight Data. StreetLight produces AADT volumes by utilizing cell phone location services, which shows the relative amount of traffic that passes through a user-defined zone. The indexed relative data is then compared to permanent count station data to produce AADT volumes for each

roadway segment. Data obtained was an average for the entire year of 2019. The AADT Map can be seen in **Figure 2** and **Appendix B**.

### **C. Proposed Roadway Improvements Map and Future Studies**

Figure 3 is a map of proposed roadway improvements based on growth trends, traffic volume expectations, previous Thoroughfare Plan recommendations, and public input. It shows general location and conceptual alignment only. Projects identified below may require additional study to determine impacts to the network, available funding sources, development opportunities, and final design and alignment. Projects identified should be considered targets of opportunity based on ever-changing development opportunities, funding prospects, technology, and trends in transportation. Below is a list of proposed improvements by type:

#### **Interchange/Intersection Improvements**

- SR-104/Buckeye St/Vine St Intersection
  - Intersection ranks low on pavement conditions, with high average daily traffic and moderately high volume to capacity rates. Project will look at traffic flow modifications to improve safety and access into the City.
- US-23/US-35 Interchange
  - Interchange modifications that permit additional movements such as US-23 south to US-35 west and US-35 east to US-23 north.  
The lack of these movements requires drivers bypassing Chillicothe to exit and utilize SR-207, SR-104, and SR-159.
- Interchange and Intersection Projects identified for further consideration and study include the following:
  - Roundabout at US-50 and Veterans Parkway intersection; and
  - Full interchange at US-35 and Pleasant Valley Road

#### **Existing Roadway/Corridor Improvements**

- Bridge Street Improvements – ODOT recently held a public open house to gain input on the base plan (including pedestrian and shared path facilities) and alternatives for multiple intersection improvements. Until the final design is complete, the Respective Planning Commissions and those responsible for development review should coordinate all development review with ODOT and apply the concepts, particularly access management best practices, and pedestrian/bike facilities required to accomplish the vision for the corridor. This Thoroughfare plan Update includes by reference, ODOT’s corridor study.
  - Additional northbound lane, southbound turn lane, new access road, various intersection and lane realignments, signal timing/coordination improvements, and access management
  - Additional sidewalks and shared use paths

- US-50/Western Avenue Corridor – this Thoroughfare Plan Update includes by reference, the Feasibility Study and Addendum performed by Stantec in 2017. As the corridor continues to develop, the respective Planning Commissions and those responsible for development review should reference the study and apply the concepts, particularly access management best practices, provision of pedestrian/bike facilities, and grant of right of way, required to accomplish the vision for the corridor.
  - Widen road to multiple lanes and utilize access roads as primary means of access
  - This mostly includes providing left turn lanes where needed and encourages access management to restrict new, private access points to signals or public road connections to Western Avenue
  
- SR-159 Widening
  - Widen to multiple lanes and utilize access roads as primary means of access along SR-159 from US-23 to the northeast
  - This area has various development types and is sure to continue developing in the future. Private access to SR-159 should be restricted as much as possible.
  - In the short-term, it is recommended that the county, through a collaborative approach, develop an access management plan for the corridor. See future project studies.
  
- Marietta Road/Rocky Road Improvements
  - East/west connector road improvements to service amenities in eastern Ross County such as wilderness areas and parks. Repair major road slips.

### **Roadway Extension Improvements**

- Industrial Drive Extension

Extension southeast with a possible signal installation (if warranted) to promote additional connectivity and developability of industrial corridor
  
- Massieville Road Extension
  - Extension of Massieville Road to Three Locks Road and/or other improvements to promote access management and improve safety
  - The purpose of this connection would be to further reduce access points along US-23
  - Some existing US-23 at-grade intersections in this area are already planned to be closed or improved

### **Future Project Studies under Consideration**

Thoroughfare Plan partners should consider the following intersections, streets, and corridors for project feasibility studies.

- SR104/US-35 Interchange Safety Study
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Street Traffic Calming and Two Way Conversion Study
- US-50/East Main Street Corridor Study from Cutright east to US-23
- US-23/US-35 Interchange Feasibility Study
- SR-159 Corridor Access Management Study
- US-35/Pleasant Valley Interchange Study
- US-50/Veterans Parkway Intersection Study (Roundabout)

The Proposed Roadway Improvements Map can be seen in **Figure 3** and **Appendix B**.

Figure 1 – Ross County Roadway Functional Classification Map

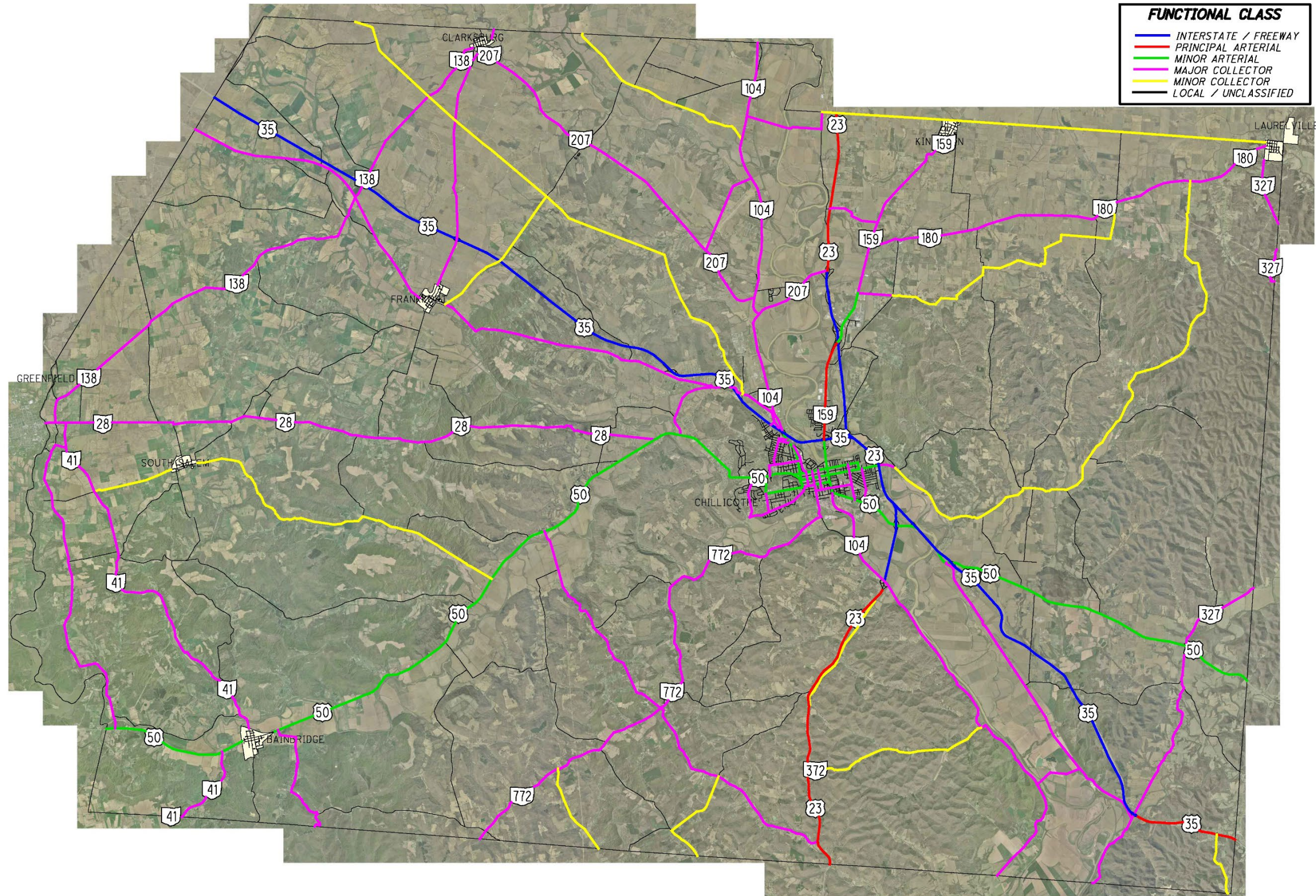


Figure 2 – Ross County AADT Volume Map

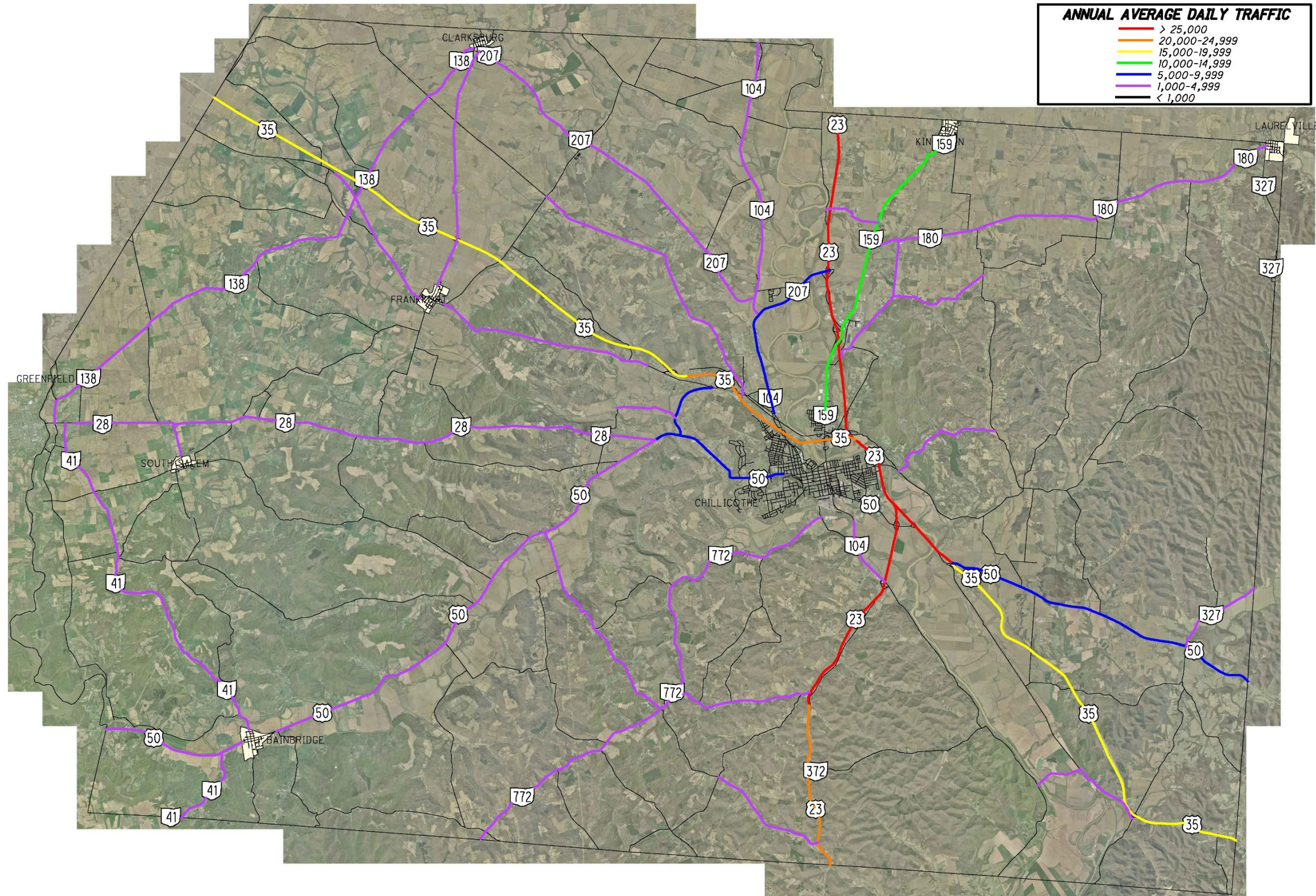
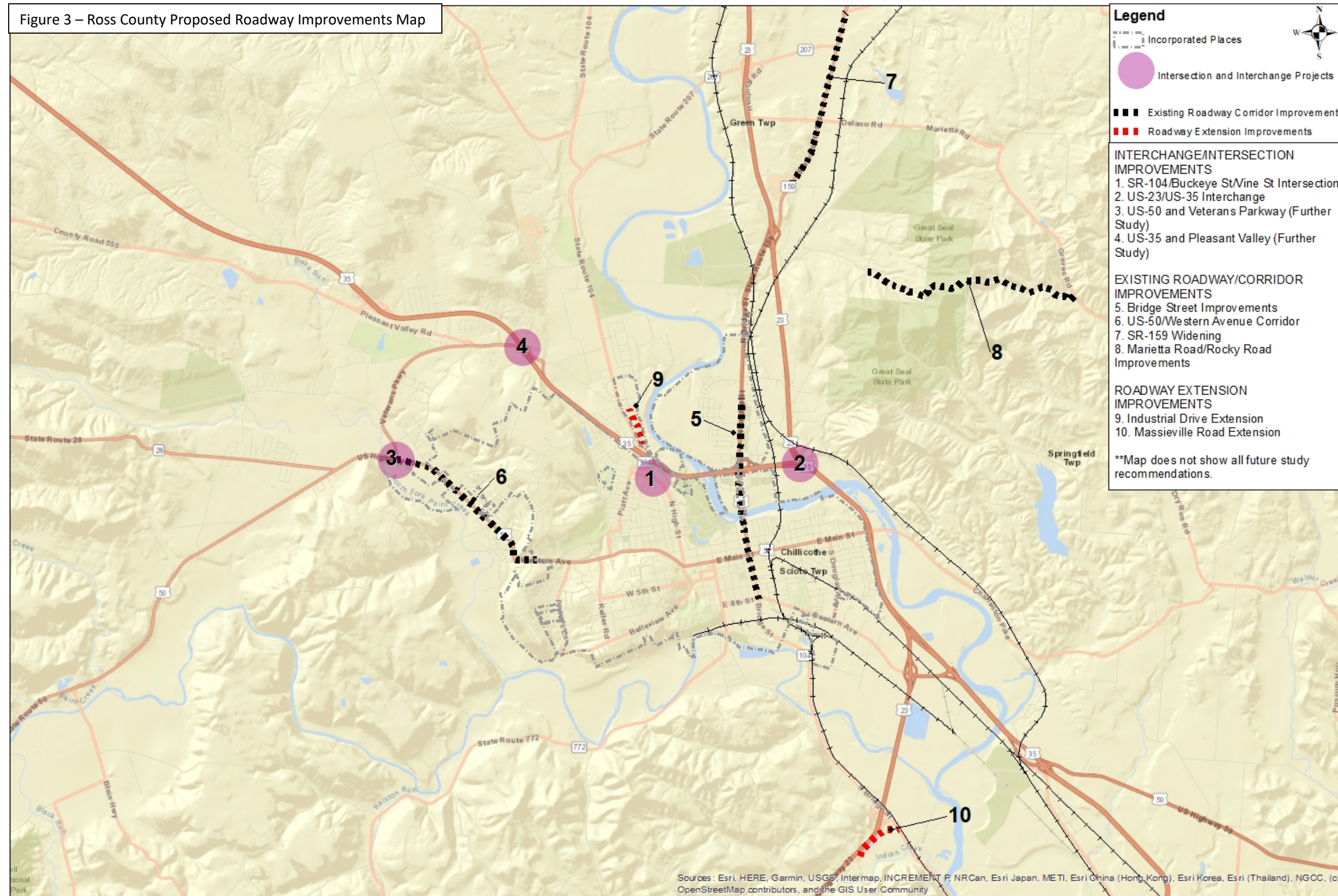




Figure 3 – Ross County Proposed Roadway Improvements Map



## VI. Access Management Plan

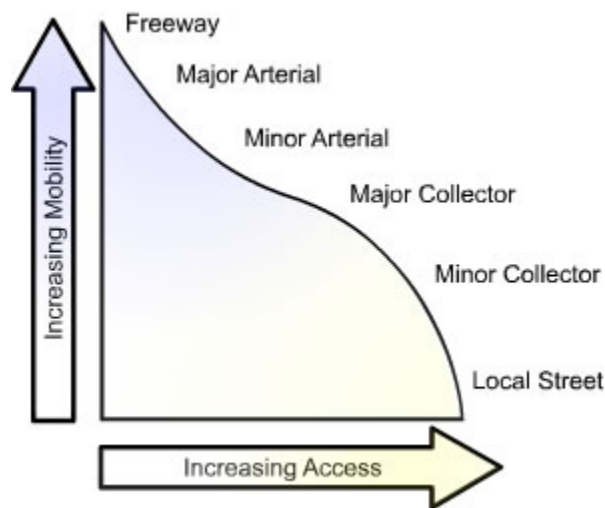
### A. Access Management Summary

Access management is an effective way to increase capacity, manage congestion, and reduce crashes. This is important for growing regions within Ross County, like the City of Chillicothe, which are continuing to see an increase in development, density, and traffic volumes. Overall, access management improves the ability of a roadway to function as intended. FHWA states that access management is a set of tools including the following:

- Increase spacing between signals and interchanges
- Increase driveway spacing but also awareness of driveway location and design
- Use of exclusive turn lanes
- Median treatments such as two-way left turn lanes or physical medians that prohibit turns from access points
- Use of service and frontage roads

All highways and roadways provide traffic mobility, land access, or a combination of both. The primary function of a freeway is to provide mobility with strict access control requirements. Local streets are primarily designed to provide access to properties. Arterial and collector roads fall in between these classifications and provide both traffic mobility and property access. **Figure 4** shows the change in mobility versus access as roadway classifications change.

*Figure 3 - Mobility versus Access*



*Source: FHWA Access Management Principles, 2020*

Many of the best practices from around the country are presented in the *Transportation Research Board Access Management Manual* (TRB Manual). The TRB Manual is used as a

master reference in this report because it focuses many of the ideas and practices into one document. ODOT has also published the *State Highway Access Management Manual* which is generally referenced more in Ohio. Many of the practices from these manuals will be highlighted and recommendations tailored to the needs of Ross County.

Providing the appropriate level of access by roadway type allows agencies to maintain the functionality of the roadway, maintain traffic operations, and improve safety. Access management benefits many stakeholders including drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, businesses, residents, and public agencies. While many businesses equate multiple access points with more customers, surveys have found that customers often avoid high congestion areas. Proliferated access leads to congestion when volumes are high. Some of the negative impacts to a city when access is not well managed include:

- Increases in crashes at driveways, intersections, and roadway segments
- Hazardous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists
- Decreases in roadway and intersection capacity
- Increases in cut-through traffic as drivers avoid congestion
- Difficulty entering/exiting businesses due to congestion created by a high concentration of access points mixed with arterial traffic

## **B. Access Management Considerations & Guidelines**

The FHWA provides several considerations for access management of a corridor. Roadway functional classification, functional areas of intersections, location and number of driveways, the use of medians, and driveway design are all important aspects of providing safe and efficient travel for roadway users. The below guidelines should be referenced and considered for new development and redevelopment in Ross County going forward.

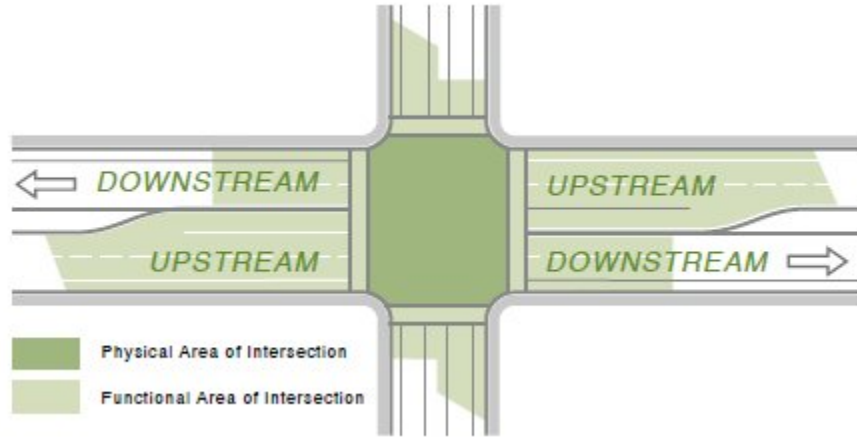
### **Locating Driveways on Appropriate Roadway Functional Classification**

Access should be provided on roadways with the lowest traffic volumes and speeds. This generally improves safety near intersections. These would typically be reserved for Local and Minor Collector roadways. Critical consideration must be given to providing access to Major Collector and Arterial roadways. In general, access to high volume roadways like Major Collectors or Arterials should be reserved for lower volume public roadways unless a traffic study supports an access point at these locations.

### **Limiting Driveways within Functional Area of Intersection**

Access points should not be permitted within the functional and physical areas of an intersection. This will eliminate conflict points in areas where there are queued vehicles and turning movements that reduce perception reaction time. **Figure 5** below shows the functional and physical areas of an intersection.

Figure 4 - Functional & Physical Areas of Intersection



Source: FHWA Access Management in the Vicinity of Intersections, 2010

### **Eliminating Left Turn Movements at Driveways Along High Volume Roadways**

Restricting left turn movements is an effective way to reduce conflicts at intersections and increase safety. FHWA research suggests that approximately 72% of crashes at a driveway involves a left turning vehicle. Full-movement access should be permitted only on low-volume roadways that connect to a high-volume roadway unless otherwise supported by a traffic study. Similarly, the installation of medians along high volume roadways will ensure left turn movements are not completed in high traffic areas.

### **Reducing Driveway Density**

Reducing the number of driveways on any given stretch of road consistently shows reductions in crashes and more efficient travel. Driveway spacing should be increased as traffic volumes are increased. Additionally, roadway functional class can also be used to determine the number of permitted driveways on any stretch of roadway.

## **C. Methods for Establishing Access Management Policies**

Access management is practiced by municipal governments, counties, and state agencies. While the implementation varies by agency, the focus is on planning, regulatory, and design strategies. The TRB Manual provides some of the following methods to establish access management:

- Adopt community-wide policies, directives, and/or guidelines
- Develop local access management regulations and ordinances
- Require acquisition of access rights
- Improve/enhance land development regulations
- Foster development review and impact assessment
- Establish geometric design criteria for drives and intersections

Agencies can develop area-wide or corridor access management plans and programs. These are typically based on roadway classification. Managing access in a community

requires a partnership between planning, zoning, and engineering. Engineering departments also need to maintain a relationship with local Metropolitan or Rural Planning Organizations to be aware of planning and project development on a regional level that affects County operations. Access management programs can develop standards and criteria to be applied based on the roadway classification and land uses. The following types of standards can be developed and utilized when development plans or traffic studies are reviewed or when transportation projects are planned or designed:

- Distance between intersections
- Distance between traffic signals
- Distance between driveways and driveway depth
- Review of drive and intersection placement to minimize conflicts between left turns
- Number of drives per property
- Requirement for turn lanes
- Requirements for median treatments
- Corner clearance of drives outside of intersection functional area
- Cross access with development/redevelopment of properties with closely spaced drives

#### **D. Current Access Management & Transportation Plans / Policies**

##### **Ross County**

Ross County currently has access management polices in place which include general recommendations for access via different classes of roadways:

- Class I roadways include all US routes and State routes within the county that are regulated by the ODOT
- Class II (A) and Class II (B) roadways are major collector and minor collector roads, respectively, that are capable of moderate traffic volumes at moderate speeds
- Class III roadways are low to medium volume roadways that enable more than one direct access per development parcel

The Ross County access management policy provides recommendations for access permitting, design requirements, sight distance, etc. These access management polices can be accessed via Ross County Planning & Building.

Ross County also has a recently implemented an Active Transportation Plan. “Active transportation” is an umbrella term for mobility without the use of a personal motor vehicle. This can include walking, biking, mobility assistance devices such as wheelchairs and scooters, skating, skateboarding, etc. The focus of this plan is to promote opportunities for physical activity and healthy food access by providing safe and reliable transportation choices for all populations in the County. The Active Transportation Plan provides framework for connectivity of parks and trails to other travel destinations in the County. The Ross County Active Transportation Plan can be accessed via the Ross County Health District.

Ross County has also developed the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. This plan was developed and adopted in 2020 and includes identifying community resources, identifying/prioritizing community transportation needs, and establishing a clear plan for achieving shared goals of the community. The plan includes descriptions and locations for major trip generators in the County including healthcare facilities, government facilities, educational facilities, major employers, entertainment facilities, retail hubs, and parks/protected areas. Available transportation access and access shortfalls for these major trip generators are also provided in the plan with recommendations for improvement. The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan can be accessed via the Ross County Health District.

### **City of Chillicothe**

The City of Chillicothe currently has access spacing requirements within the zoning code which describes number of access points permitted and the spacing requirements between public road intersections and adjacent parcels.

### **ODOT**

The ODOT State Highway Access Management Manual provides access requirements and criteria for all US and State routes in Ohio. The manual describes access permit requirements, access categories, driveway design details, intersection spacing requirements, and traffic study requirements. The ODOT State Highway Access Management Manual is the standard for access management in Ohio which should be used as a basis for any access management plans for various municipalities.

## **VII. Appendices**

Appendix A – Demographic Data

Appendix B – Ross County Updated Mapping