

SECTION 1

COMMUNITY VISION

INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Plan Update presents Wadsworth Township's vision for the future. It serves as a policy guide for the Township, and informs the decisions of Township officials and administrators, governmental agencies, organizations, and private individuals. It is designed to provide a flexible roadmap for future development, and to ensure that new growth is consistent with the Township's goals.

The Comprehensive Plan Update (the Plan) is long range in that it examines past trends and makes projections for the next 20 years. This allows the Township to plan ahead and anticipate future needs. It should be noted, however, that projections are most accurate in the short term (5 years), and that many factors that will shape the future cannot be anticipated. For this reason, the Plan is considered an evolving document that should be revisited and revised at least every five years.

One of the most important functions of the Plan is to provide a solid foundation for future land use decisions made by the Zoning Commission and Board of Trustees. The recommendations presented in the text and shown graphically on *Map 5 Future Land Use* will provide a legal basis for zoning and other land use controls utilized by the Township.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

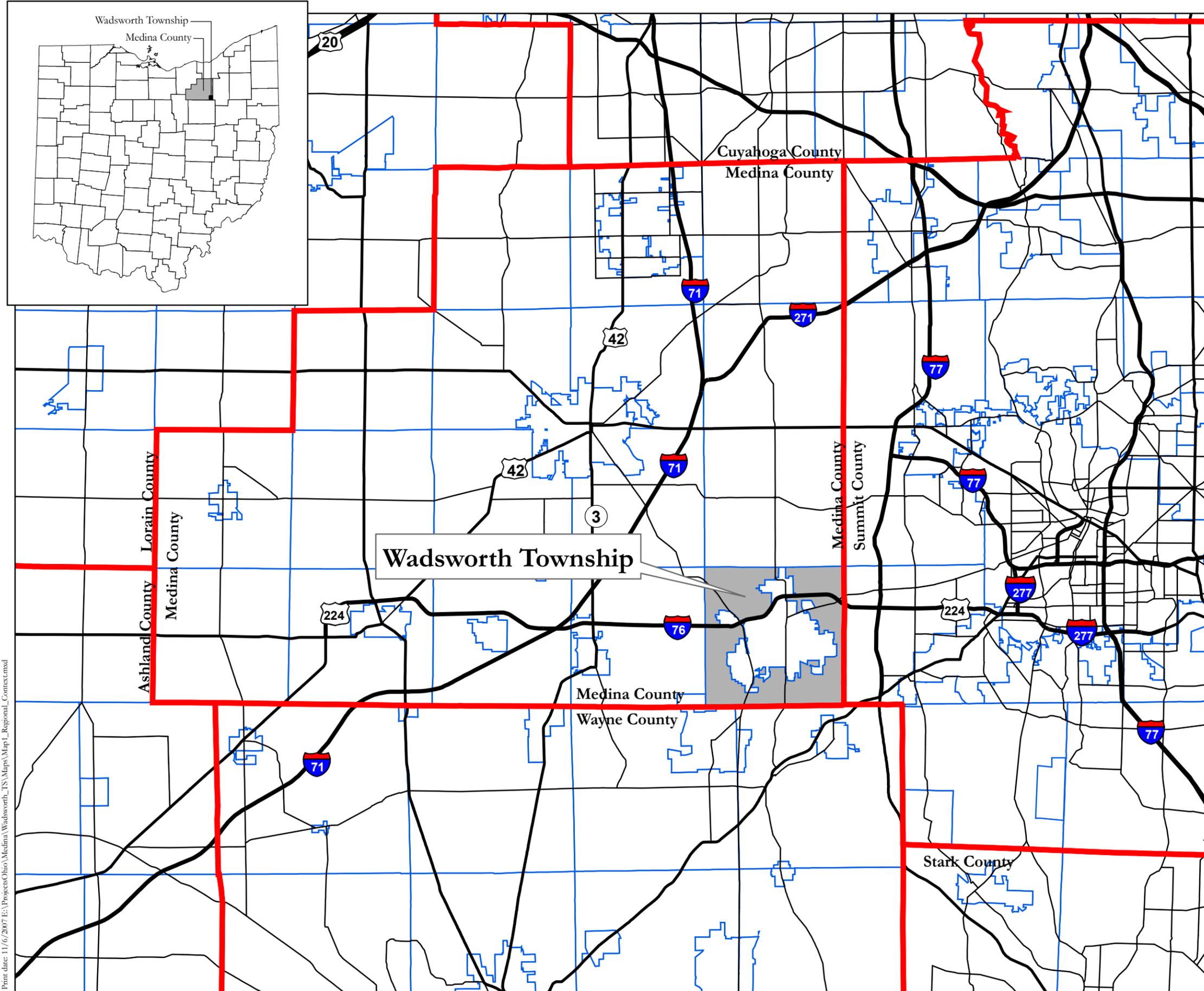
Wadsworth Township is located in Medina County in northeastern Ohio. It is considered part of the Cleveland-Akron Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA), which encompasses all of Medina, Summit, Cuyahoga, Lorain, Lake, Ashtabula, Geauga and Portage counties. CMSAs include core areas with substantial population (cities), and adjacent communities that have a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. The principal cities in the CMSA include the City of Cleveland in Cuyahoga County (north of the Township), the City of Akron in Summit County (east of the Township), the City of Kent in Portage County (northeast of the Township), and the Cities of Lorain and Elyria in Lorain County (west of the Township). Interstate 76 travels through the northern third of the Township and provides direct access to the regional highway network. *Map 1 Regional Context* shows the Township's location within the northeast Ohio region.

NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Residential uses have experienced rapid growth over the past 10 years, with more than twice as much land dedicated to residential uses in 2005 than in 1994. Furthermore, agriculture has remained the dominant land use in the Township, with approximately half of all land devoted to agriculture in both 1994 and 2005 (see *Section 6 Existing Land Use*). The Township faces natural development pressures and continued threats of annexation from the City of Wadsworth and other surrounding municipalities. As a result, the Township has undertaken this Comprehensive Plan Update to provide guidance as to where and how future development should take place and to ensure that future growth corresponds with the broader goals of the Township.

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

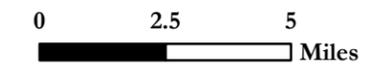
Wadsworth Township has not had an extensive history of land use planning, as this Comprehensive Plan Update represents the second plan in a process that began in 1994-1995 with the adoption of the Wadsworth Township Development Policy Plan. When possible, applicable goals and themes from past planning efforts have been incorporated in the analysis and recommendations of this Plan.



Map 1 Regional Context

Wadsworth Township,
Medina County, Ohio

Base Map Source: ESRI, Inc., 1999



THE PLANNING PROCESS

The process that led to the creation of the Wadsworth Township Comprehensive Plan Update commenced in late (October) 2006 and was completed in late (October) 2007. A Steering Committee was appointed to guide the process and to direct the consultants who assisted the Township in preparing the Plan (McKenna Associates, Incorporated). The Steering Committee was composed of 16 members who represented a broad range of stakeholders including residents, Township elected and appointed officials, a City of Wadsworth representative, and various Medina County representatives.

The Plan was completed in four different stages, outlined below:

1. *Existing Conditions.* The first step in the process was to collect information on existing conditions in the Township and to analyze demographic, land use, and other trends.
2. *Issue Identification.* The most important and pressing issues to be addressed in the Plan were then identified using two techniques:
 - Through an exercise called a S.W.O.T. analysis, completed with members of the Steering Committee at the October 10, 2006 and December 12, 2006 meetings. At the October meeting, members of the Steering Committee were asked to identify what they perceived to be the Township's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. At the December meeting, members were then asked to prioritize the list of issues identified in the S.W.O.T. analysis using a system of voting. The results and more details regarding the S.W.O.T. analysis are included in *Section 8 Plan Recommendations*.
 - During the process of compiling information on existing conditions and trends, additional issues were identified.
3. *Goals/Objectives.* Once issues were identified, general goals and objectives were drafted and reviewed by the Steering Committee in January of 2007. The goals were grouped into three categories: Quality of Life, Environment, and Community, which were selected based on the input received throughout the planning process, especially the S.W.O.T. analysis. The Plan contains a total of three goals and nine objectives (three for each of identified goals). The goals and objectives are included in *Section 8 Plan Recommendations*.
4. *Implementation Strategies.* Following Steering Committee review of the goals and objectives, draft implementation strategies and a draft future land use map were presented and reviewed by the Steering Committee in March and April of 2007. The Plan contains a total of 29 implementation strategies, distributed amongst the three goal categories. The implementation strategies are included in *Section 8 Plan Recommendations*. The future land use map and summary text, which apply the goals and objectives to specific areas of the Township, is included in *Section 7 Future Land Use*.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

On February 23, 2007, a press release was issued to several local newspapers and media outlets providing notice to local residents that the Steering Committee would be discussing the draft future land use map at its March meeting. At the meeting, members of the Steering Committee and approximately 10 members of the public discussed the draft future land use map and provided useful insight and constructive comments regarding the draft map. In addition, the draft Plan was presented at two public meetings before the Zoning Commission, and Board of Trustees, where members of the public were given additional opportunities to provide further input into all elements of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

Sections 2 through 6 of the Plan provide an in depth inventory and analysis of current conditions in the Township. These sections examine five key topics: demographics, housing and economy; natural resources; community infrastructure; transportation; and existing land use. In these sections, existing conditions in the Township are described and mapped, trends are analyzed, and emerging issues are discussed.

Section 7 discusses where and how new development and redevelopment should occur in the Township. A major component of this Section is *Map 5 Future Land Use*, which shows the preferred land use for all areas of the Township.

Section 8 contains the results from the S.W.O.T. analysis and provides a list of goals, objectives, and specific implementation strategies for each of the three goal categories (Quality of Life, Environment, and Community) identified in the Plan. Following each implementation strategy is a space provided for the Township to identify the responsible party, timetable, and date for completion of the above strategy.