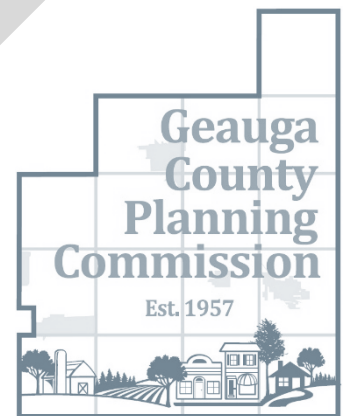


YEAR END REPORT 2024



GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
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Chardon, Ohio 44024

Geauga County Planning Commission

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Timothy Lennon, County Commissioner
Ralph Spidalieri, County Commissioner
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February 4, 2025

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Part 1: Introduction and Overview of Yearly Activities

The year 2024 continued to be busy as many special projects commenced or carried over from 2023, including assistance with land use plan updates for Claridon, Thompson, and Burton Townships, which was the primary focus of special projects. Additional work was performed on the *Guide to Updating a Township Land Use Plan* and unique to 2024 was the finalization of the housing inventory that lists all apartments, condominiums, duplexes, and triplexes in the county. This spreadsheet can now easily be updated as new developments occur. A report on mining operations in the County also began.

Internally, the staff began meeting every two weeks to stay up to date on the various department activities. Workload generally increased compared to previous years. There were no brand-new major subdivisions, but lot splits on existing streets to create new building sites totaled 59, slightly higher the five-year average of 51. Zoning assistance to townships remained steady while easements decreased.

Commercial construction activity for large projects were fewer in number than in the previous year but the projects were significant in scale including new apartments in Bainbridge Township at the former Geauga Lake site, the Hive at Honey Hill in Bainbridge renovation to multi-use, and Hartville Hardware in Middlefield Village.

While not specifically related to Planning Commission's duties, the Village of Aquilla dissolved as of November 19, 2024, after the voters decided to surrender their corporate power. The area is now part of Claridon Township and will be subject to township zoning hereafter.

Part 2: Comprehensive Planning and Zoning

a. General Plan:

October 2024 marked the third year the Geauga County General Plan ("Plan") has been in use. The annual review was conducted, the purpose of which is to ensure the staff and Commission actively use the Plan, make observations as to how it is used, and discuss potential items to add, delete, correct, or modify during the major five-year update (scheduled to commence at the end of 2026). The staff referred to the Plan twenty-five (25), down from forty (40) in 2023.

The Planning Commission Initiatives from the Plan were also assessed in October to determine their relevance and whether they should be pursued in 2025-2026. The Commission agreed that seven of the twenty initiatives should be pursued in the next two years.

b. Model Township Zoning Resolution:

While no proposed changes were presented to the Commission in 2024, the staff has noted several sections that should be updated in 2025.

c. County Land Use Map:

The County Land Use Map was updated in March 2024 based upon the most recent aerial imagery. The map is to be updated for all communities on a three-year basis.

d. Township Assistance:

The staff assisted the townships approximately ninety (90) times (87 in 2023) with various questions including informal and formal amendments, zoning amendment process, lot splits/plats, various uses, project mapping assistance, zoning/variances, easements, storm water, township land use plan, and demographics.

Part 3: Planning Administration

a. Subdivision Activity, Zoning Assistance:

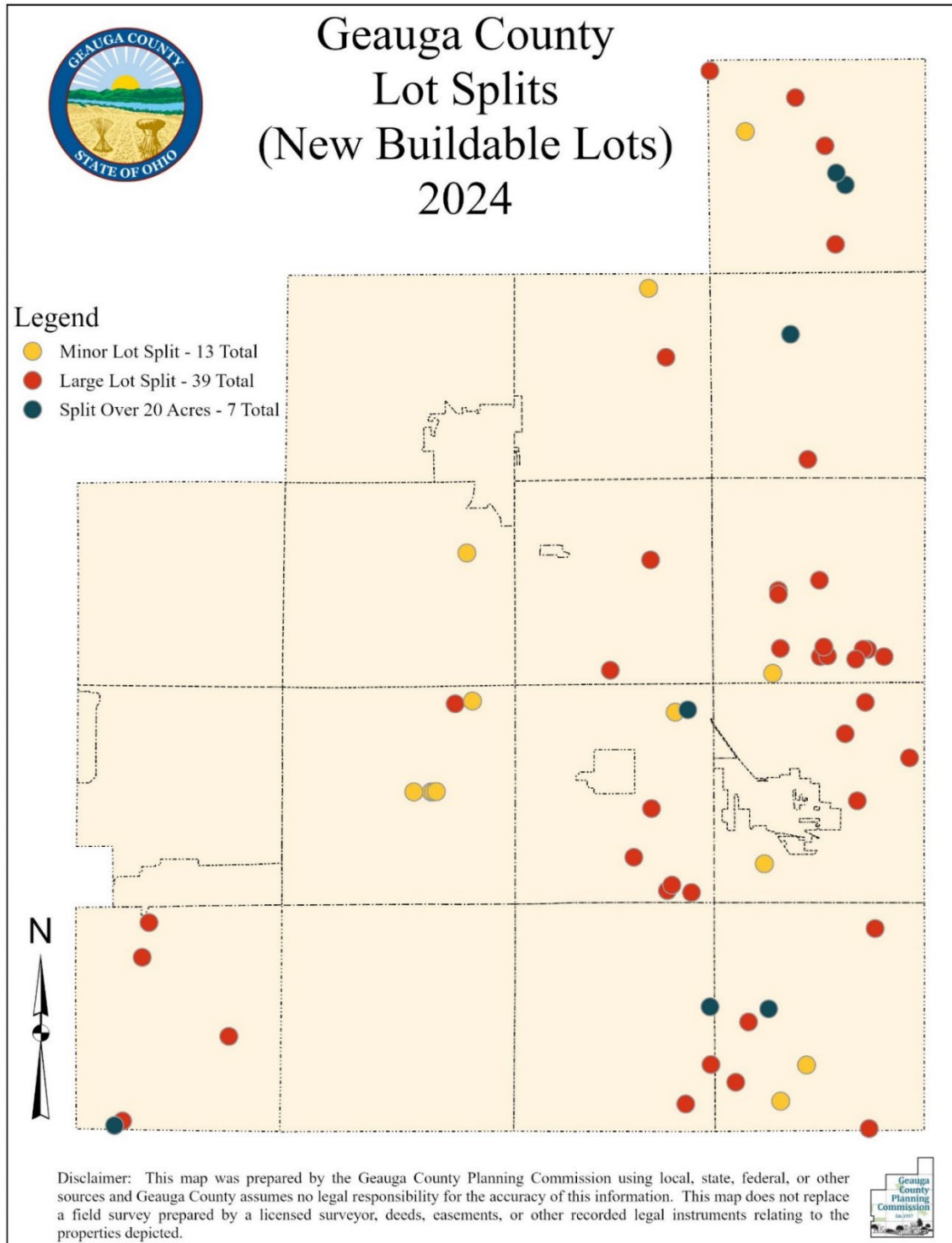
The following chart is a breakdown of the lot splits, easements, and other subdivision activity as well as the number of text/map amendment reviews.

Activity	2022 # Reviewed	2023 # Reviewed	2024 # Reviewed	3-Year Total
Lot Splits/Subdivisions				
Re-plat	3	5	5	13
Major Subdivision	2 (informally)	2	0	4
Minor Subdivisions (5 acres and less)	16	15	13	44
Large Lot Subdivisions (Between 5-20 acres)	21	36	39	96
Exempt Lots (Transfer to Adjacent Owner)	60	62	84	206
Exempt Lots (Over 20 acres)	8	12	7	27
Lot consolidations	90	75	88	253
Total	200	207	232	639
Zoning				
Informal text or map amendment reviews	8	7	12	27
Formal text or map amendment reviews	19	6	23	48
General zoning assistance	95	87	90	272
Total	122	100	122	344
Miscellaneous				
Easements (roadway, septic, utility...) Total	46	80	47	173
GRAND TOTAL	368	387	401	1,156

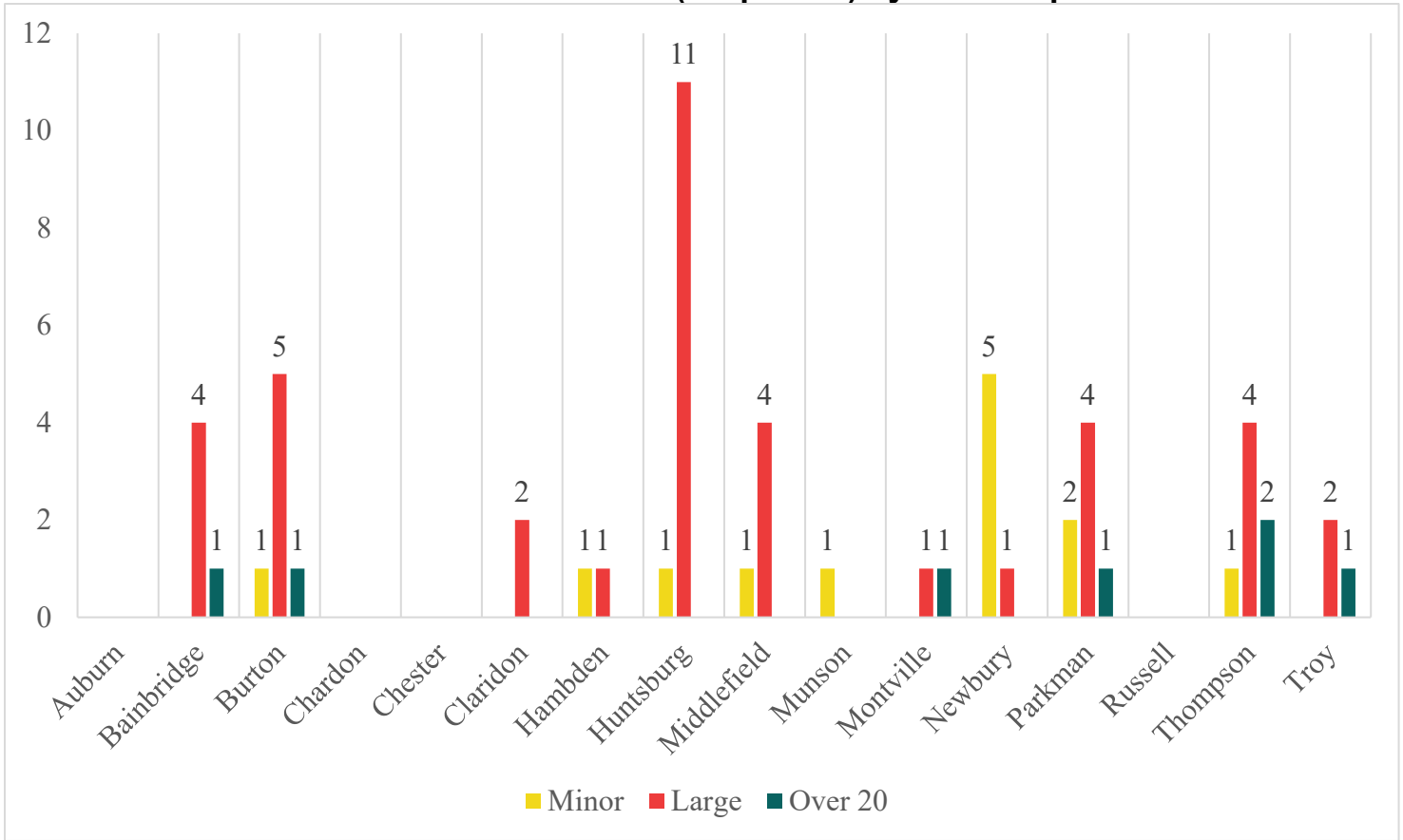
The map on Page 7 illustrates the general location of the lot splits contained in the table above. Fifty-nine (59) new building lots located on existing roads were approved in 2024, compared to 63 in 2023, 45 in 2022, 54 in 2021 and 38 in 2020. Large lots were the most common type of lot split. There were no major subdivisions platted and only one (1) replat that resulted in a new building lot (Arborwood Subdivision in Munson Township).

The chart on Page 8 depicts this same information, making it more apparent that most lot splits in 2024 were in Huntsburg Township.

New Buildable Lots (Un-platted) (59 total new lots).



New Buildable Lots (Un-platted) by Township



b. Township Zoning Text/Map Amendments:

Township zoning amendment submittals were much higher in 2024 totaling twenty-three (23) compared to 6 in 2023, 19 in 2022, 17 in 2021, and 15 in 2020. See map below. Twenty-one were text amendments and two were map amendments. All were initiated by the various township zoning commissions except one by the township trustees.

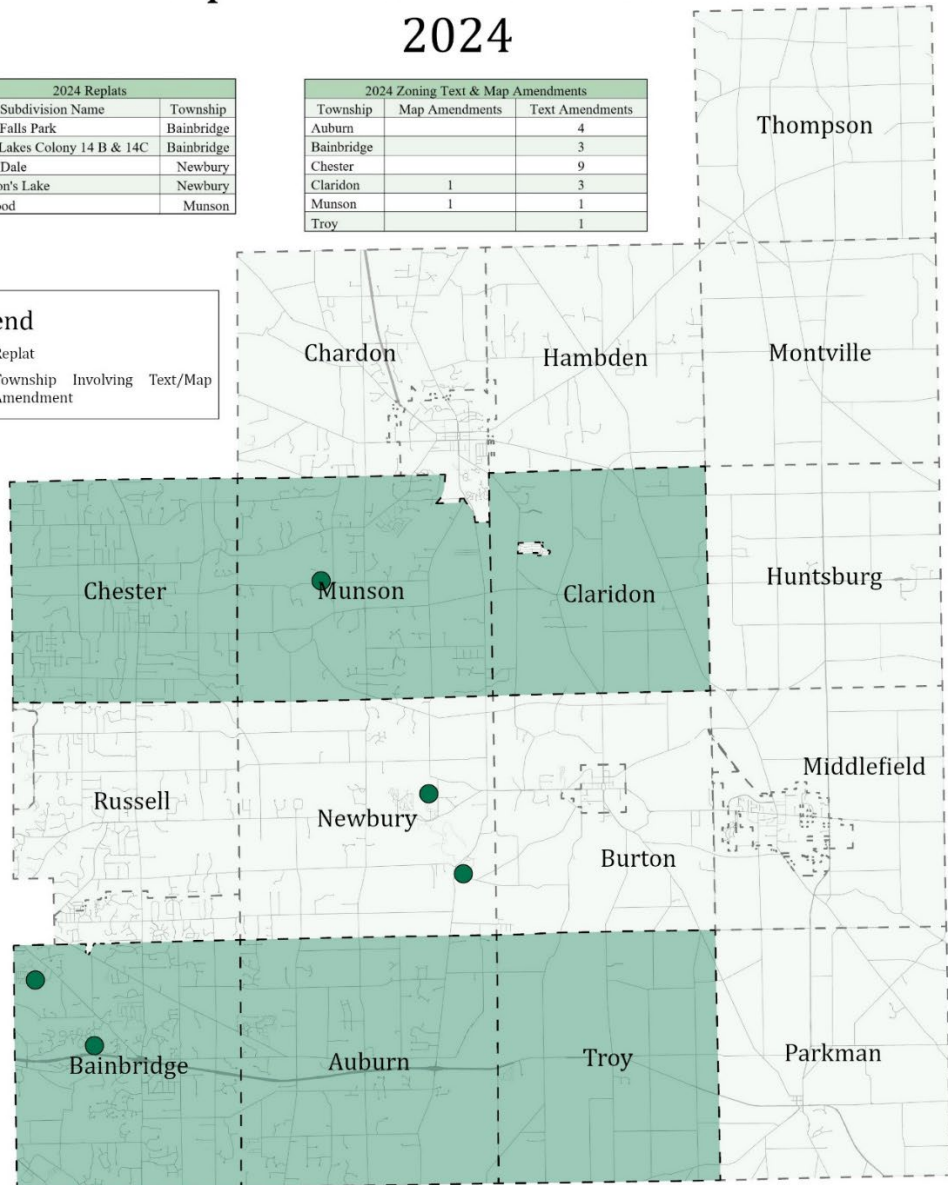
Geauga County Replats & Text Amendments 2024

2024 Replats	
Subdivision Name	Township
Chagrin Falls Park	Bainbridge
Canyon Lakes Colony 14 B & 14C	Bainbridge
Hickory Dale	Newbury
Punderson's Lake	Newbury
Arborwood	Munson

2024 Zoning Text & Map Amendments		
Township	Map Amendments	Text Amendments
Auburn		4
Bainbridge		3
Chester		9
Claridon	1	3
Munson	1	1
Troy		1

Legend

- Replat
- Township Involving Text/Map Amendment



Disclaimer: This map was prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission using local, state, federal, or other sources and Geauga County assumes no legal responsibility for the accuracy of this information. This map does not replace a field survey prepared by a licensed surveyor, deeds, easements, or other recorded legal instruments relating to the properties depicted.



c. Easements

Forty-seven (47) easements were reviewed in 2024 significantly lower than eighty (80) in 2023, but almost identical to the 46 in 2022 (93 in 2021, and 131 in 2020). Easements are generally for utilities, storm water, conservation, septic systems or highway purposes. It is important and interesting to note that no conservation easements were submitted in 2024.

Part 4: GIS

- a. **Mapping Projects:** Many maps serving various purposes were created including the following: County Land Use Map, Generalized Zoning January 2024, New Housing Starts and New Commercial Builds, Lot split Activity (monthly dashboard presented to the Planning Commission), road/address maps for the Russell Township Police Department, Munson Township (zoning), and Geauga Public Health and Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District (parcels with NPDES off-lot discharging septic systems).
- b. **Miscellaneous:**
 - i. Ms. Allyson Kobus won 1st place in the small format map contest held at the Ohio GIS conference. The map was for Claridon Township Crash Statistics 2018-2024.
 - ii. Community Analyst was used to download numerous census data sheets.
- c. **Networking:** Attended the Ohio GIS Conference, Women in GIS webinar (organized by Lakeland Community College), and the County Auditor’s GIS Day

Part 5: Special Projects

- a. **Land Use Plan Assistance**
 1. Claridon Township: The staff started wrapping up the land use plan assistance in the 3rd quarter, but some work remains for 2025. Hours of assistance: 337 total since May 2023. Total value of work (time, print jobs, mileage) year end 2024: \$13,961.00. See pictures below from their April 2024 public forum.

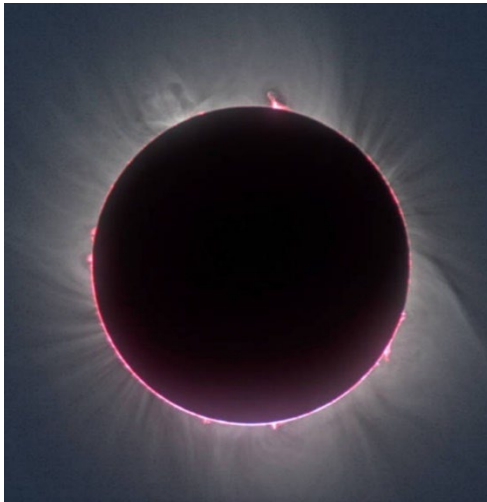


2. Thompson Township: The staff is approximately half-way through assisting Thompson with their land use plan update. Hours of assistance: 83 as of December 2023. Total value of work (time, print jobs, mileage) year end 2024: \$3,892.00

-
3. **Burton Township:** The staff has assisted only with the township's land use survey preparation (questions and use of Survey 123). Hours of assistance: 7.3 since September 2024. Total value of work (time, print jobs, mileage) year end 2024: \$245.00

b. **Total Solar Eclipse**

April 8, 2024 was a special day for Northeast Ohio as we were lucky to witness the total solar eclipse. The Commission was kept informed about various events leading up to the eclipse.



c. **Housing Inventory**

Completed in August 2024 by the GIS/Planning intern, the Housing Inventory focused on multi-family dwelling units county-wide, largely based upon County Auditor data. The totals are as follows, with a grand total of 3,592 dwelling units:

- Apartments: 1,415
- Condominiums: 1,357
- Duplexes: 664
- Triplexes: 156

d. **New Residential Developments Within the Past 5 Years**

Presented at the November 14, 2024 meeting, this project provides a summary of all of the new residential subdivision activity in the townships and municipalities that has occurred over the past five years. This is part of the staff's ongoing practice of keeping the board informed of developments.

e. **County Land Use Map Update**

This past year marked the official transition to the new methodology in updating the land use map. It was completed in March 2024 and the next update will be done in 2027 (3-year cycle).

f. County Subdivision Regulations Review

Various observations were made about the Subdivision Regulations. The staff will reach out to the townships in 2025 specifically related to the lot split process.

g. Standard Operating Procedures Manual Update

The Standard Operating Procedures Manual that details how to perform the various office processes and tasks was updated as needed to document processes not yet included or to provide more detail on existing processes. This document will continue to be a work in progress and serves as an asset to the staff.

h. Draft Guide to Updating a Township Land Use Plan

This guide has continually been worked on as time permits. Through working with Claridon, Thompson, and Burton Townships, some of their ideas were included based upon the township's desire on how to approach certain tasks. For example, Burton Township purchased small yard signs that state "Did you complete your land use survey?" and placed them at strategic locations. Thompson Township printed flyers to advertise for their public forum and put them online, social media, and around town. The guide is meant to serve primarily the Planning Commission staff but also the chairperson of the township land use committee.

i. Report on Mining Operations Geauga County

This new project highlights the various mining operations with the County. The GIS/Planning intern worked on it during down time, and it is a 2025 goal to complete it.

Part 6: Miscellaneous

a. Info Sheet Series

The staff worked on the info sheets for *Agriculture* and the *Roles of Various Government Offices*. These should be completed in 2025 after legal review and the Commission's approval. The info sheet series continues to be an important source of information for residents and businesses related to planning and zoning topics.

b. Bi-weekly Staff/Huddle Meetings

The staff began meeting every two weeks, so the staff stays informed of the various department activities as well as other important information (trainings, etc.). It has proven to be a valuable office function.

c. 2025-2029 Five-Year Goal Timeline

This five-year goal timeline was updated to provide the staff and the Commission a visual reference for the many projects we are required to do, should do, or could do. This document is helpful for many reasons including any possible future requests for additional staffing.

d. Interoffice Collaboration or Assistance

The staff continued to work with various county offices regarding lot splits and platted subdivisions. See also Item “j” below.

e. Website updates: Meeting agendas and minutes were routinely posted to the Commission’s website as well whenever updates were necessary to other documents including but not limited to the Directory of Public Officials, meeting dates and holidays.

f. Directory of Public Officials:

Updates were made as needed to the Directory of Public Officials to account for new officials, retirements, etc.

g. Planning Commission Bylaws Update

The Order of Business was modified so that the Director’s Report was moved later in the agenda so plats and township zoning amendments can be heard first.

h. Northeast Ohio Planning and Zoning Workshop

The staff participated in a meeting with various local zoning officials early in the year to suggest topics for the workshop. The staff attended the workshop, held in June in Lake County at the Willoughby Hills Community Center and a summary was provided to the Commission.

i. Geauga Growth Partnership Collaboration

In 2023 the idea was discussed of the Planning Commission and Geauga Growth Partnership collaborating to create a zoning video series geared toward helping businesses understand zoning. Due to various other commitments and duties, some unforeseen, this project is on hold until the time can be sufficiently dedicated to it.

j. County’s Loss Prevention Safety Team

Staff attended the four County Loss Prevention Safety Team meetings to ensure measures are in place for a safe and hazard-free workplace. Many county offices attend these meetings giving the staff an opportunity to network with departments we normally do not have interaction. CPR was offered to the Safety Team members, which was a valuable benefit.

k. Senate Select Committee on Housing

The Commission was kept up to date on the various House and Senate bills introduced in 2023 and 2024 relating to affordable housing, zoning, tax breaks, evictions, and more. The Senate Select Committee on Housing held public hearings throughout Ohio and many of their own meetings. Senator Sandra O’Brien attended the May 14, 2024 Planning Commission meeting to

hear the Commission’s questions and concerns. While there has been much concern and discussion over what may be proposed, ultimately none of the bills progressed through the entire legislative process by 12/31/24, the end of session for the 135th General Assembly. Staff will monitor efforts in 2025 as new legislation may be proposed during the 136th General Assembly.

I. 2022 Agricultural Census Data

Data from the above referenced census was downloaded for use in the Farmland Preservation Plan update in 2025.

m. Single-Family Housing Starts:

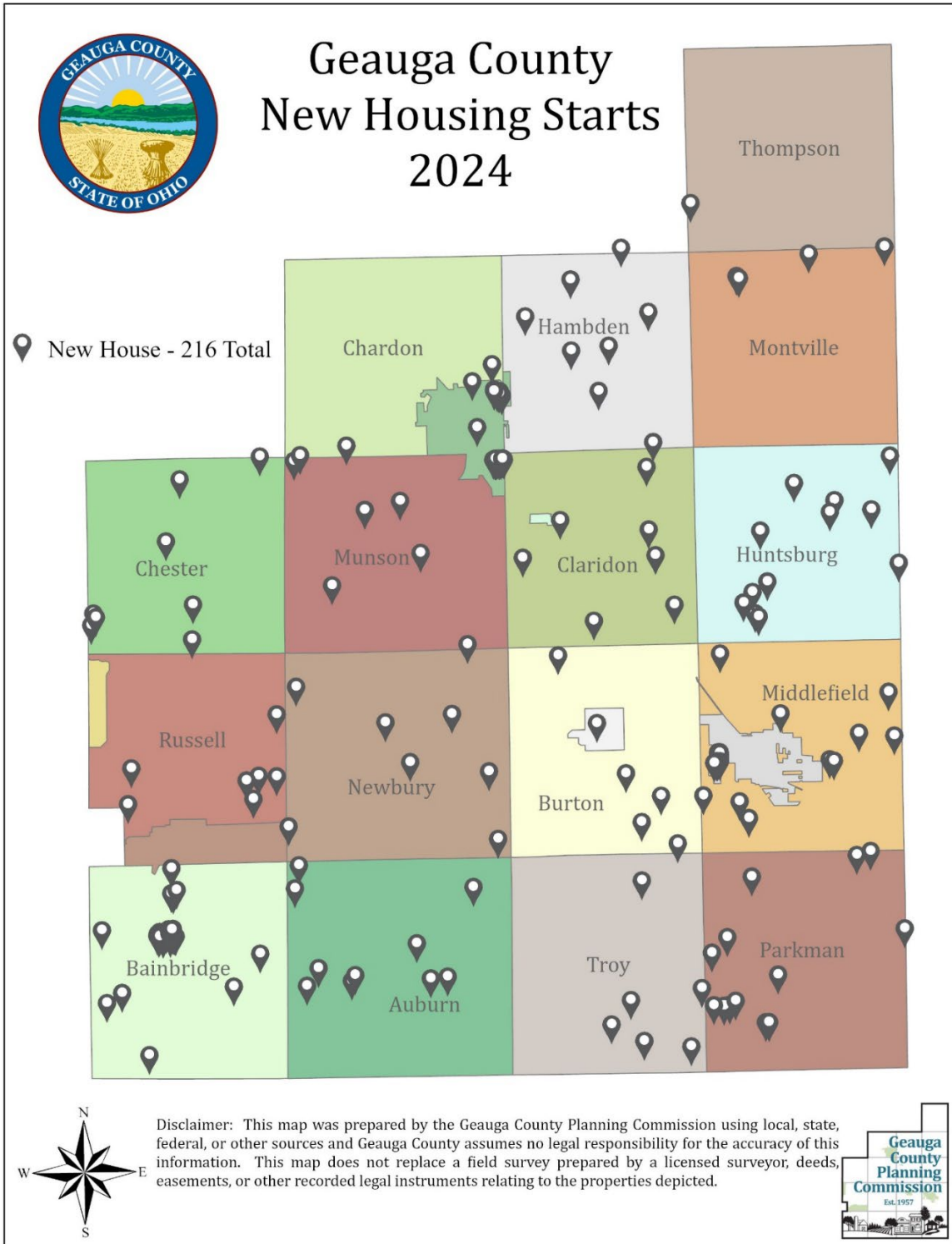
Housing starts in 2024 totaled 216, much higher than 145 in 2023, 160 in 2022 and 189 in 2021. See the table below. The 2020-2024 five-year average is 168, up from the previous five-year average of 156.

Housing Starts, Ten Years 2015-2024

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Aquilla Village	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Auburn Twp.	15	18	10	11	10	10	18	17	3	11
Bainbridge Twp.	30	26	35	33	23	26	31	22	20	32
Burton Twp.	3	5	1	6	6	3	5	6	2	4
Burton Village	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Chardon Twp.	9	6	7	1	8	6	11	5	5	0
City of Chardon	11	8	11	8	4	2	5	11	11	38
Chester Twp.	3	5	5	8	12	6	9	9	2	7
Claridon Twp	4	0	6	10	9	1	9	3	2	8
Hambden Twp.	7	11	13	6	9	7	13	11	6	7
Huntsburg Twp	6	10	9	4	6	3	7	6	9	12
Middlefield Twp.	4	5	5	3	4	9	8	10	10	9
Middlefield Village	1	3	8	7	5	7	11	6	17	40
Montville Twp.	0	2	3	5	3	3	2	2	6	4
Munson Twp.	10	13	13	11	11	17	15	20	8	7
Newbury Twp.	5	3	8	6	8	5	10	14	9	7
Parkman Twp.	10	13	15	7	12	8	13	9	14	13
Russell Twp.	5	6	6	10	14	9	9	3	8	8
Thompson Twp.	2	2	5	5	5	5	6	2	8	1
Troy Twp.	3	4	2	4	4	4	6	4	5	7
TOTAL	130	141	164	145	153	131	189	160	145	216

*Data not available for South Russell Village or Hunting Valley Village.

The map on Page 15 illustrates that new housing starts were, in general, spread out over the entire county, as compared to the New Building Lots map on Page 7 that illustrates new lot splits are primarily located on the east side of the county. The top 3 townships regarding new housing starts were Bainbridge (32), Parkman (13), and Huntsburg (12).



n. Commercial Construction Activity

The following is a list of the more significant new buildings, accessory buildings/uses, additions, and alterations that received permit approval from the County Building Department in 2024. A

map is provided on Page 17 depicting the general location. A select few images from various construction sites follow on Pages 18-20.

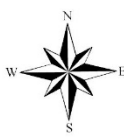
Construction Type	Owner or Business	Community	Square Feet
Principal Building/Use			
Community meeting room	Russell Township	Russell	2,760
Warehouse	W. and R. Schrock	Middlefield Vill.	25,000
Auto body shop	E. Babcock	Munson	Not listed
Retail/office building	P. and S. Miller	Middlefield	10,634
Taco Bell	SDC III Ohio LLC	Bainbridge	Not listed
Hartville Hardware	Sherpa Development	Middlefield Vill.	Multiple bldgs
Apartment buildings	Aurora Apartments I, LLC	Bainbridge	Multiple bldgs
Ohio Premier Archery	LSC 2020 LLC	Middlefield	13,000
Accessory Building/Use			
Storage building	W. and R. Shrock	Middlefield	12,000
Cold storage building	Daughters Three, LLC	Newbury	Not listed
Garage for Police Dept.	Thompson Twp. Trustees	Thompson	Not listed
Ruhlman Environmental Learning Center	Laurel School	Russell	10,810
Maple Leaf Community Residences storage garage	Maple Leaf Community Residences	City of Chardon	Not listed
Building Addition			
Storage	Bow and Reels	Parkman	Not listed
Warehouse	Mouldings 1	Middlefield	71,646
Warehouse	Mouldings 1	Middlefield	11,708
Transitional Living Center	Geauga Comm. Bd of Mental Health	Claridon	Non listed
Manufacturing	Troy Chemical	Troy	11,964
Alteration			
The Hive at Honey Hill (multi-use/event center)	Partners Production Ltd	Bainbridge	54,218



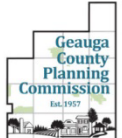
Geauga County Commercial Construction Permits 2024

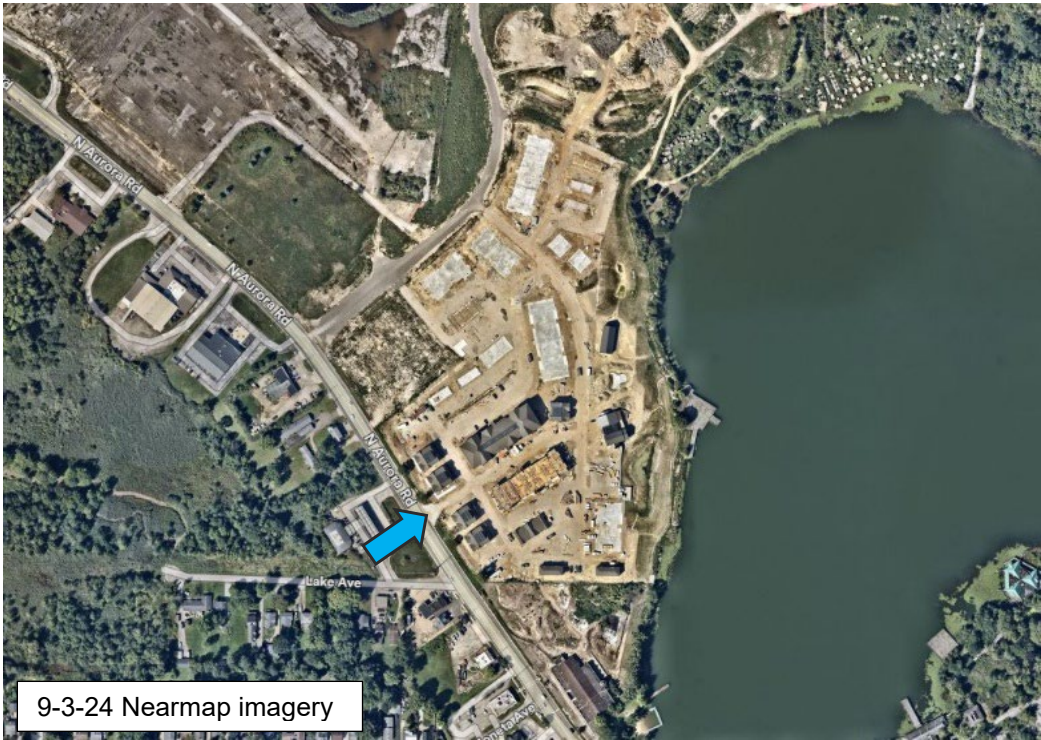
Legend

- Building Addition
- Building Alteration
- Demolition
- Accessory Building/Use
- Principal Building/Use



Disclaimer: This map was prepared by the Geauga County Planning Commission using local, state, federal, or other sources and Geauga County assumes no legal responsibility for the accuracy of this information. This map does not replace a field survey prepared by a licensed surveyor, deeds, easements, or other recorded legal instruments relating to the properties depicted. This map does not contain all non residential structure activity. Larger projects were selected for mapping purposes only.





Blue arrow represents vantage point in photograph below.



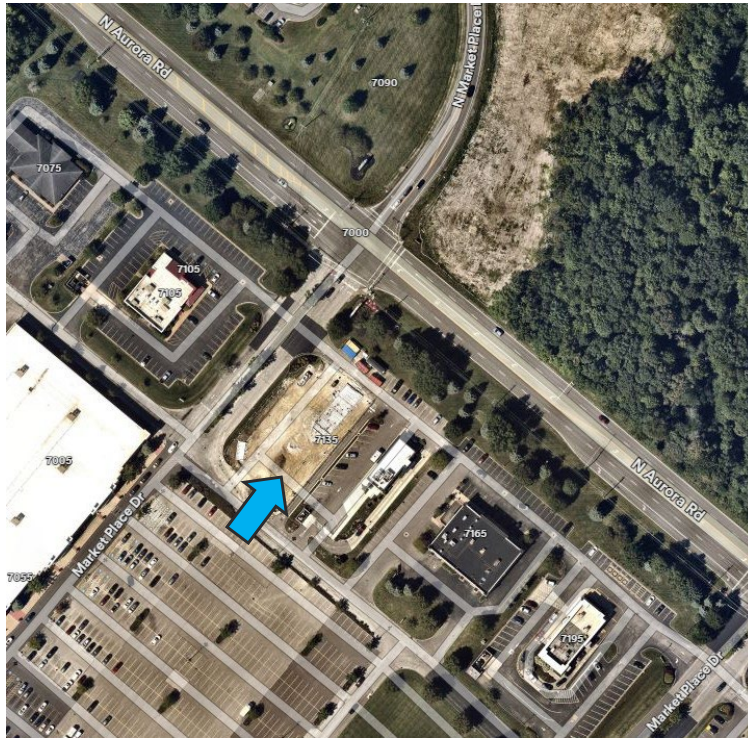
Aurora Apartments LLC, Bainbridge Township



Russell Township Community Room



Hartville Hardware, Middlefield Village



Taco Bell, Bainbridge Township

o. Legislative Updates: The two primary pieces of legislation signed by the Governor are listed below. Of course, numerous other pieces of legislation, mostly relating to the Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing, were proposed but did not make their way through the full legislative process.

1. HB 315 (Township Omnibus, introduced 11/2/2023, effective April 2, 2025)

Known as the township omnibus bill, several provisions related to townships, the primary ones related to planning and zoning are listed below:

- Alters Township Public Notice Requirements
- Permits Townships to Create a Preservation Commission
- Alters How Zoning Citations Are Issued & Enforced
- Provides Funding to Modernize Zoning Regulations/Processes

2. SB 94 (Recording documents, introduced 3/3/2023, Effective 10/24/2024)

Requires all documents recorded on or after 1/1/1980 shall be made available on the Recorder's website no later than 6/30/2026. This change will be very useful to planners, zoning inspectors, attorneys, title companies, Realtors, and more as it will eliminate the need to physically go to the Recorder's Office.

Part 7: Staff Related/Training

Staff participated in twenty-five (25) educational webinars or meetings as listed below, organized by topic.

Planning and Zoning

1) Northeast Ohio Planning and Zoning Workshop (June); 2) Four Geauga County Township Association meetings; 3) Regional water and sewer districts webinar; 4) riparian setbacks webinar;

GIS

1) Ohio GIS Conference; 2) meetings with Department of Emergency Services regarding the total solar eclipse; 3) Women in GIS; 4) Python for Everyone webinar; 5) ArcGIS Survey 123 Basics

Employee Training

1) CORSA's Defensive Driving, 2) CORSA annual training; 3) County Loss Preventions meetings; 4) Cybersecurity training (online); 5) Ethics training; 6) Public records training; 7) Active shooter training; 8) First Amendment audit training; 9) Ohio State Auditor fraud training

Miscellaneous

1) Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Meeting; 2) Audio/visual training; 3) Conference room training; 4) Effective Communication skills; 5) FMLA; 6) Leadership v. Management; Ethical Behavior for Local Government; 7) AI Unveiled (Industry Insights)

Part 8: Fiscal

The Planning Commission's 2024 budget was \$246,110.00 and \$221,605.29 was spent, a usage of 90.04%.

Revenues received through the collection of lot split and platting fees totaled \$10,193.00, down from \$22,770.00 in 2023. The chart below provides the last seven years of revenue. Fluctuations can largely be attributed to major subdivisions and replats, which have the highest review fees.

Year	Total Revenues
2018	\$25,932.50
2019	\$ 7,950.00
2020	\$23,200.00
2021	\$19,800.00
2022	\$ 7,380.00
2023	\$22,770.00
2024	\$10,193.00

Part 9: Conclusion

The year 2024 was heavily focused on township land use plan assistance, which the staff very much enjoys. The focus for 2025 should be Planning Commission special projects, most notably the update of the Geauga County Farmland Preservation Plan and the Planning Commission's Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual.