



Seneca County, Ohio

# FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Tiffin, Ohio

**Seneca County Board of Commissioners**

**Gossman Group Design & Planning**

Cincinnati, Ohio

**Encompass Engineers and Architects, Inc.**

Findlay, Ohio

04.2020

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# Acknowledgments

## **Seneca County Commissioners**

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Former Commissioner - Holly Stacy  
County Administrator - Stacy Wilson

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## **Seneca County Department Heads**

## **Consultants**

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## **Appendix A**

Individual Building Inventory

## **Appendix B**

Original Building Drawings

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Seneca County Board of Commissioners (BOC), in conjunction with the Seneca County Strategic Planning Building & Grounds Committee (SCSPB&GC) has been debating the long-term use of their real estate holdings and are concerned that without a current “bill-of-health” analysis of the properties, subjective decisions might be made based on perception and opinion rather than actual analysis and strategic planning.*

Therefore, the BOC and SCSPB&GC engaged the design and planning firm of Gossman Group to prepare a County Facilities Master Plan document that will provide clear understanding of the current conditions of the facilities, discussion on development and programmatic goals, and identification of building deficiencies and recommendations for the future use of the facilities. The County’s real estate assets are located on the South Campus, Downtown and in other locations.

Many of the County's real estate assets could be considered historically significant if they are at least 50 years old. Careful consideration should be made when it comes to the County's older properties. Preservation of buildings helps communities retain a distinct sense of identity, and every effort should be made to maintain and preserve these significant buildings. While historic buildings are to be well-maintained and preserved; they should also remain functional for their defined purpose whether that is to serve as a historic reminder of the county's heritage in the form of museums or historic sites, or as an on-going facility housing modern offices and county services.



*Located in northeastern Ohio, Seneca County is home to roughly 56,000 people in its 553 square miles of land that is 80% agriculture. The county seat is located in Tiffin where the majority of the County's real estate holdings exist.*

# County Changes

Predicting future changes in the demographics and physical framework of Seneca County and using that information to determine the impact on the County Government's real estate portfolio is difficult. We typically rely on forecasting performed by national and state resources to provide indicators to help us identify factors worthy of consideration that might affect our recommendations. In our analysis for this initiative, we did not identify any information that would suggest a significant shift in our recommended strategy for the real estate portfolio. The information below provides a quick snapshot of the impact of future demographic changes will have on some select states of which Ohio is a part.

## How will the County change?



## What does this all mean?

- Smaller Classrooms
- More Retirements = More Job Openings
- Increase in Senior Services
- Less Taxes Coming In for Government
- The Need to Improve Accessibility
- More Sustainable Practices
- Cost Saving Approaches

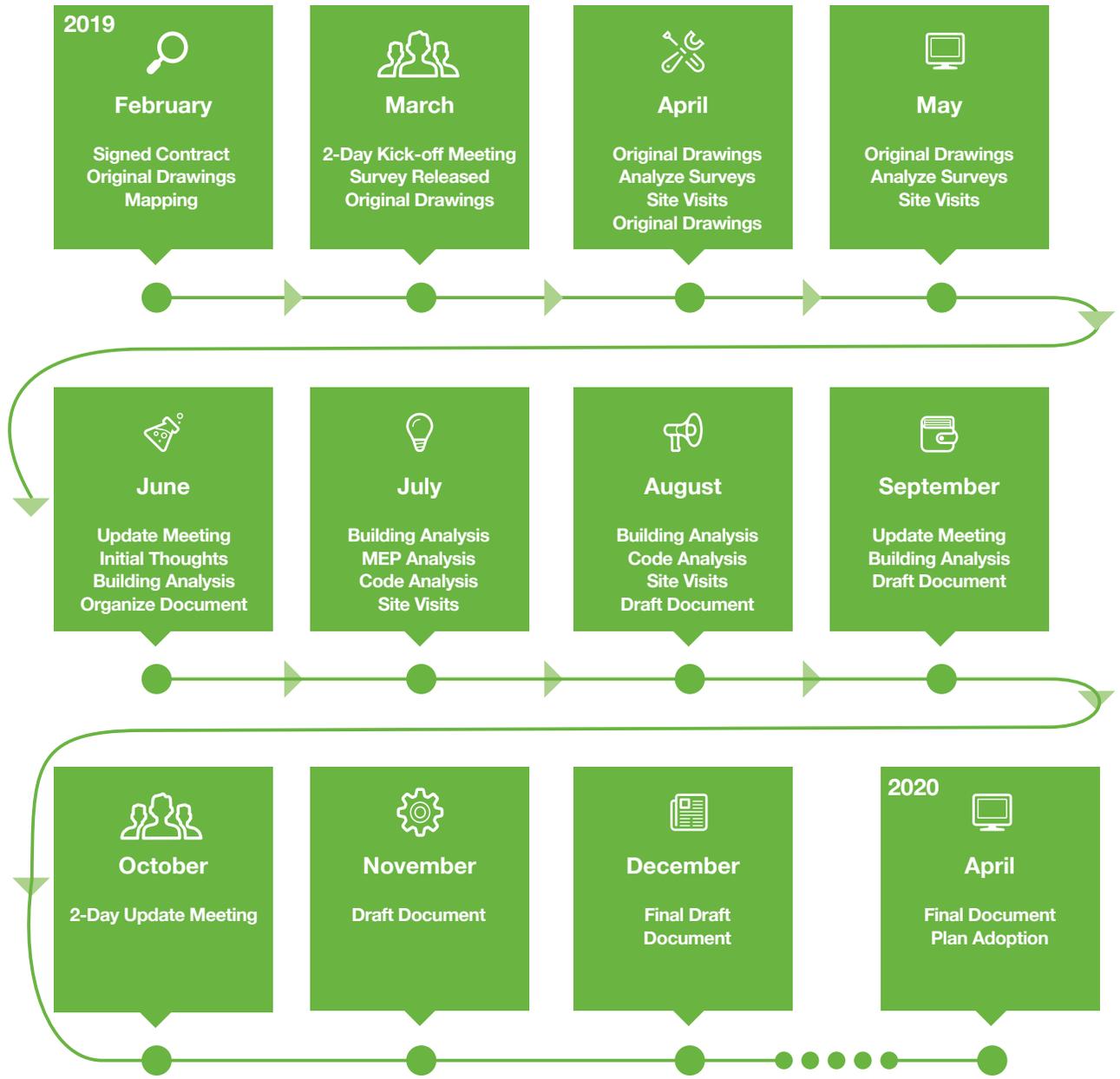
***"By 2026, a total of 17 states will move into the "super aged" category, meaning that at least 20 percent of their populations will be 65 or older"***

***Ohio is one of the 17 States***

Source: [governing.com/week-in-finance/gov-finance-roundup-aging-population-state-finances.html](http://governing.com/week-in-finance/gov-finance-roundup-aging-population-state-finances.html)



# THE PROCESS



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# Making an Assessment

Several factors came into play in order to determine with the best scenarios for the County to explore as they look to the future of their needs and facilities.

## 1. Building Visits

Visits took place over multiple days and with multiple team members. Many of the visits were accompanied by a County employee from Facilities Maintenance who gave insight into how a building was maintained.

## 2. Personal Input

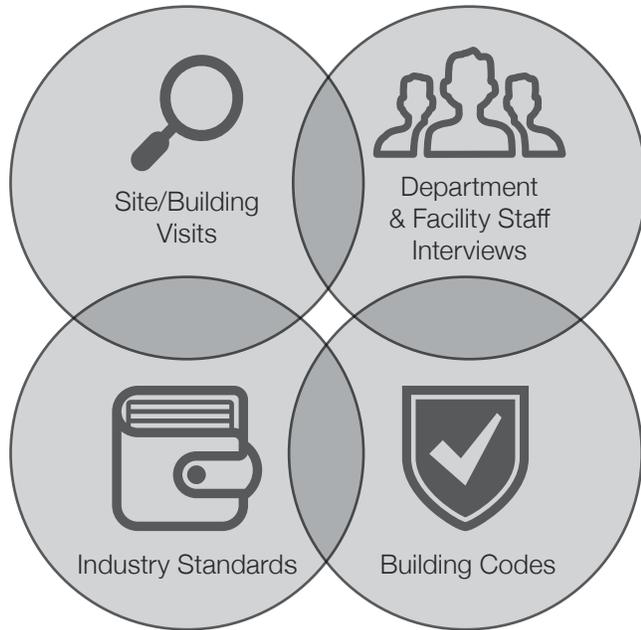
Input from County Staff consisted of paper/digital surveys circulated to department heads and a few group meetings that were held for department heads to give a first hand accounting of the inner workings of the County.

## 3. Industry Standards

The design team applied design practice knowledge and industry design principles and metrics for office buildings to determine the functional performance for the county buildings.

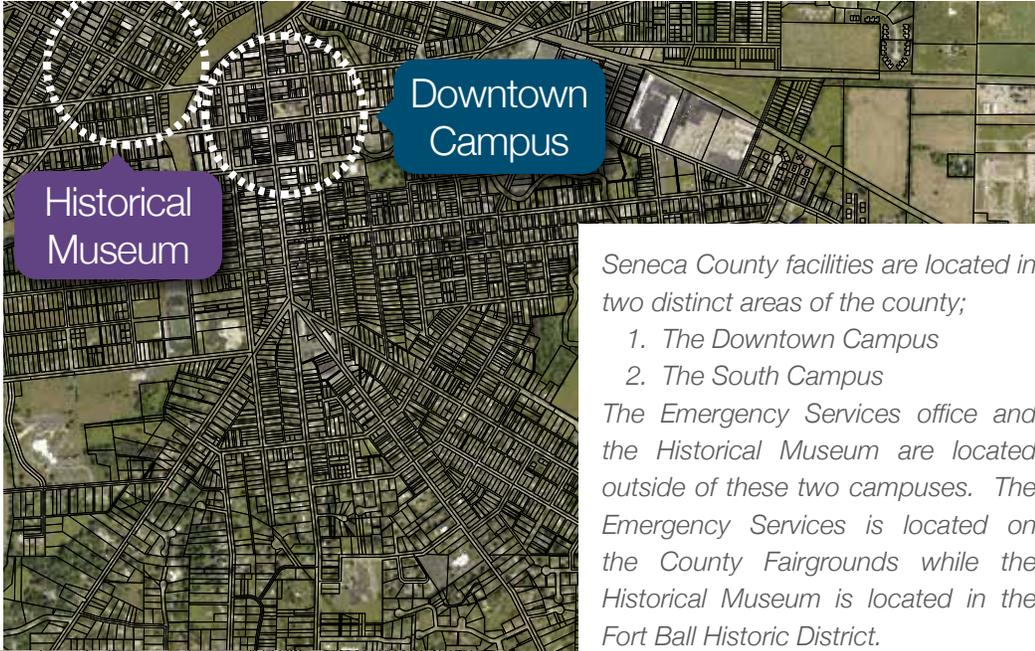
## 4. Building Codes

Although a detailed building code analysis for each building was outside the scope of this exercise, code challenges were considered in determining the functional aspects of the building reviewed through this initiative.





# COUNTY PROPERTY ORIENTATION MAP



Seneca County facilities are located in two distinct areas of the county;

1. The Downtown Campus
2. The South Campus

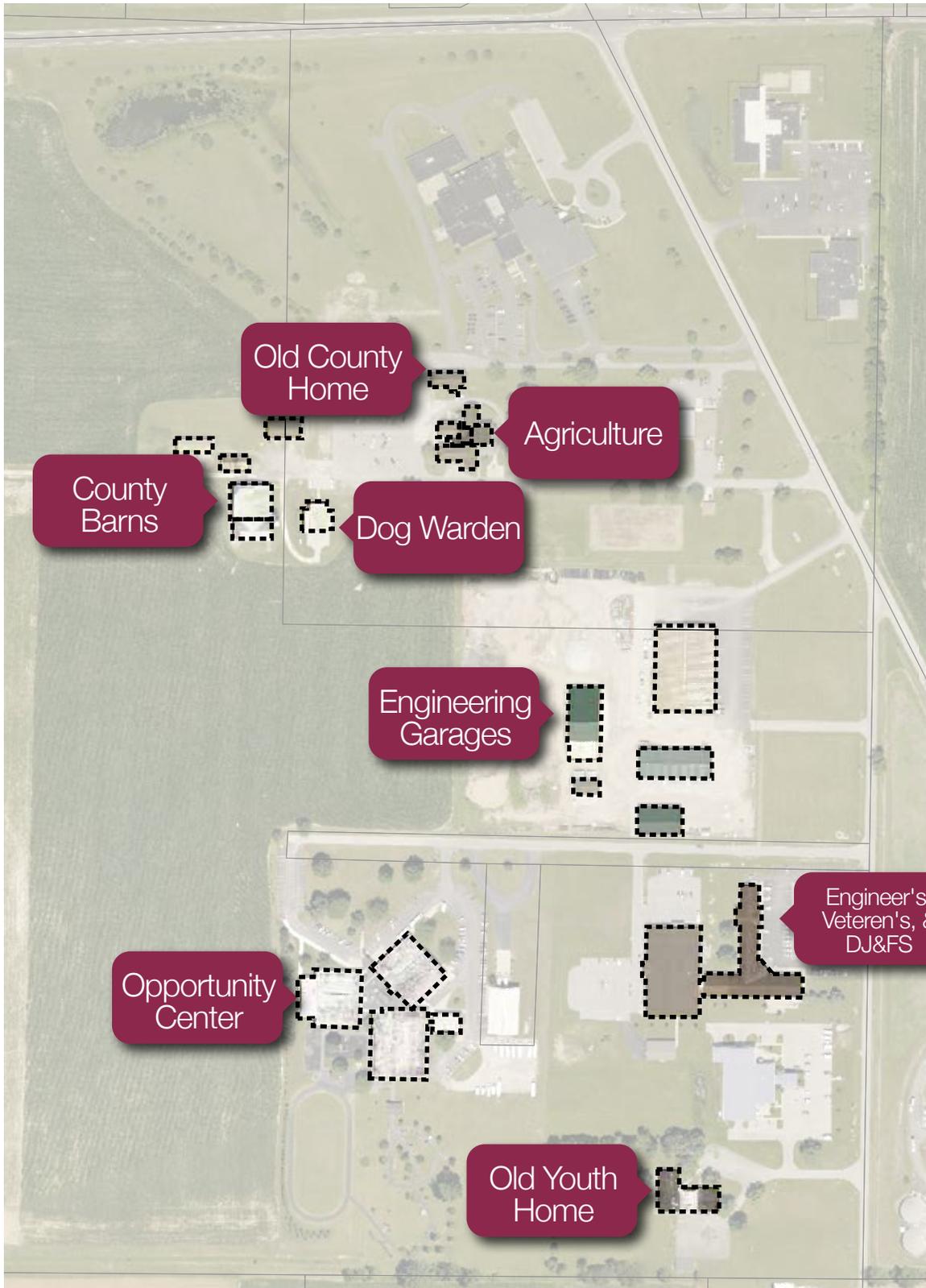
The Emergency Services office and the Historical Museum are located outside of these two campuses. The Emergency Services is located on the County Fairgrounds while the Historical Museum is located in the Fort Ball Historic District.



# Downtown Campus

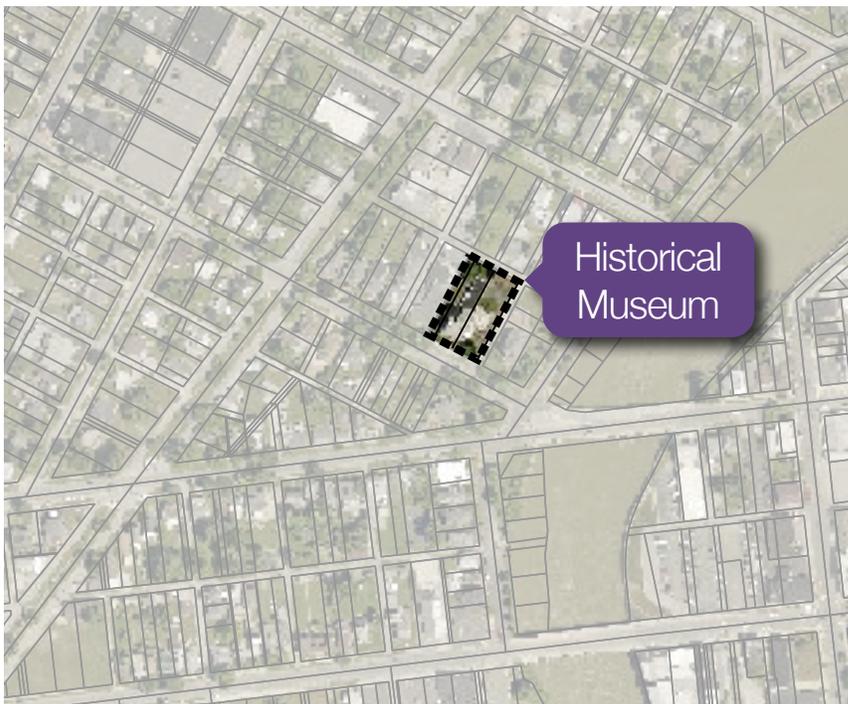


# South Campus





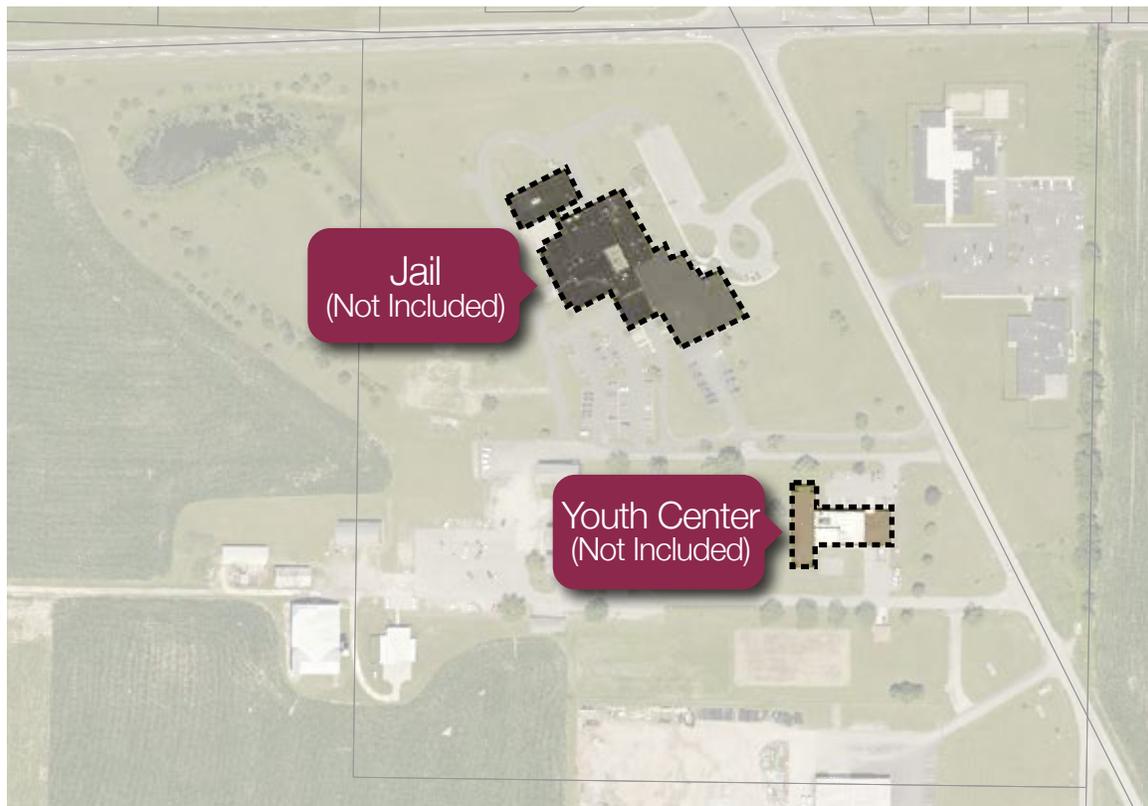
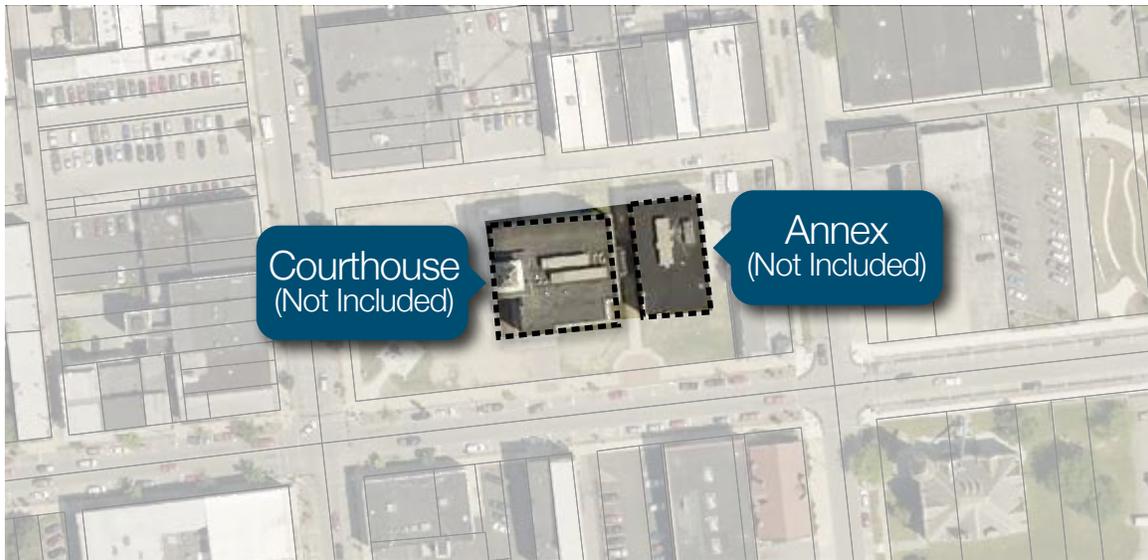
# Other



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# Buildings Not Included

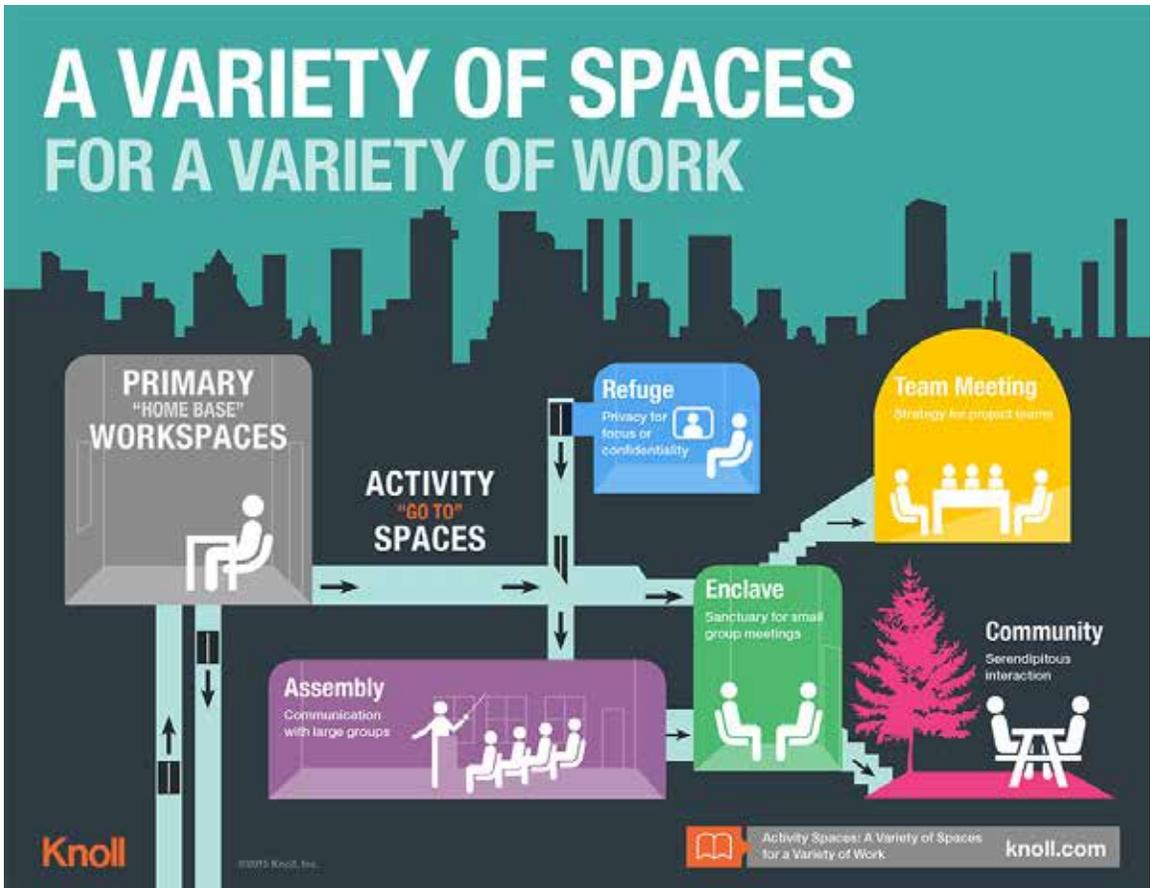
*Because several buildings were virtually “brand new” when the Design Team began the work, a decision was made to not include those buildings in the investigative analysis.*





# OFFICE TRENDS & STANDARDS

As the Design Team reviewed the buildings, their departments and offices, the type of work spaces were taken into account. Work spaces are ever evolving in today's world. More and more people are working remotely and utilizing the Internet since so much of society is digital these days. The County must take into consideration the evolving workplace. Employees are looking for a better work/life balance and if a employer can promote a flexible atmosphere then retention is higher. Although county government employment regulations might not allow the flexibility of work location for it's employees that private sector employers do, providing an "on-campus" work environment conducive for working from outside areas and common areas, should be explored.



***"The International Data Corporation reports more than 70% of the U.S. workforce will be mobile by the year 2020."***

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2017/06/29/top-6-digital-transformation-trends-in-government/#14903e977efc>

# Office Standards

The office standards below were taken from a few sources to further look into the County's efficiency of their existing office space. These are general standards in looking at space allocation.

Job Categories	Closed Office	Open Office
Managers/ Directors/ Commissioners	150-200 (Avg. 175)	
Assistant Directors/ Assistant Managers	100-150 (Avg. 125)	
Full-time Staffs/ Executive Assistants/ Receptionists		80-110 (Avg. 95)
Part-time Staffs		64-80 (Avg. 72)
Interns/ Visitors/ Others		25-40 (Avg. 32)

\* Open Office : Movable partitions surrounding a portion of a space

\* Closed Office: Fixed walls and a door

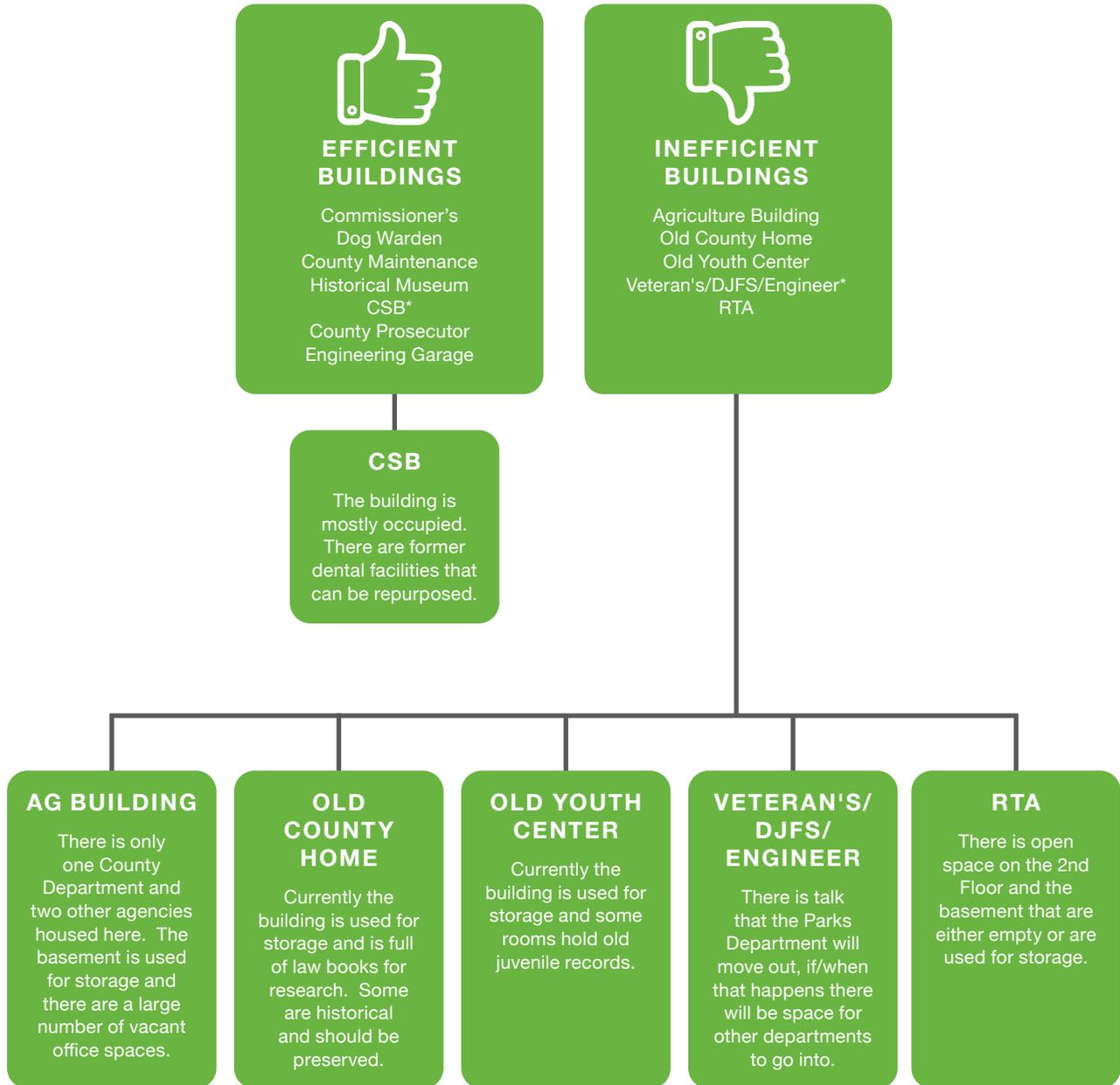
## Space Allocation Ratio Chart



International Facility Management Association. (1997). Benchmarks II, Workplace Standards Benchmarking, GSA, 2012  
 University of Cincinnati Design Guidance: Office Space, 2003  
 Cornell University, Office Space Guideline, 2017

# Space Efficiency Assessment

Along with physical walk-through's of all the buildings, The Design Team sent out surveys to all County Departments to gain information on current and future space needs. Some assumptions have been made due to not receiving a survey from every Department.



# Space Efficiency Case Study

## Agricultural Building

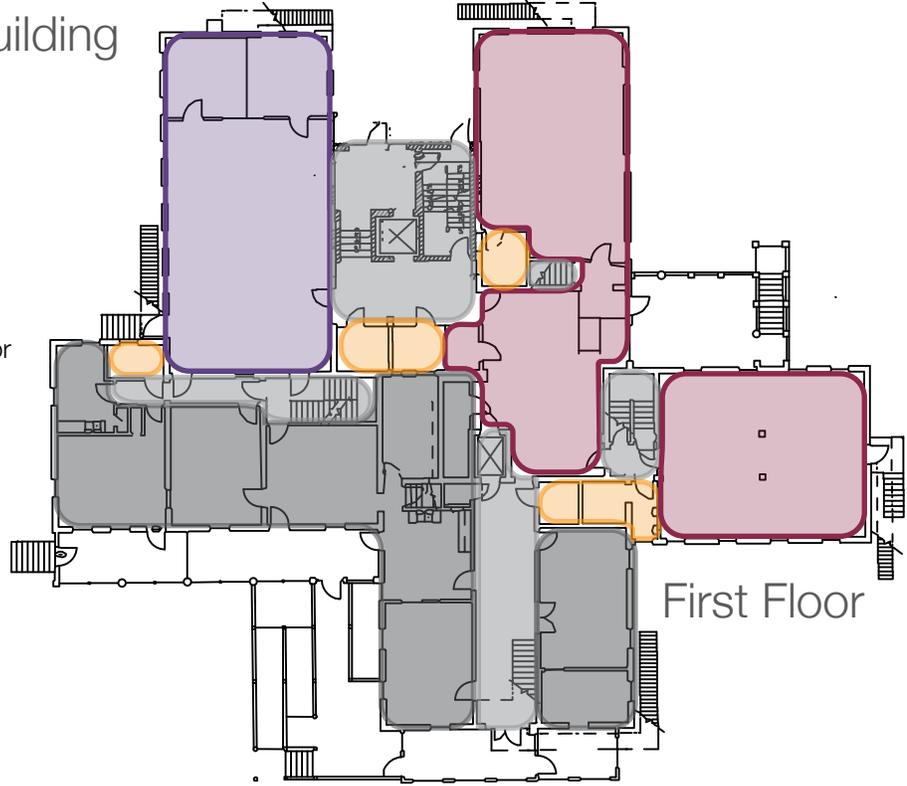
First Floor & Second Floor  
Square Footage  
19,373 Sq Ft

Occupiable Space\*  
15,153 Sq Ft

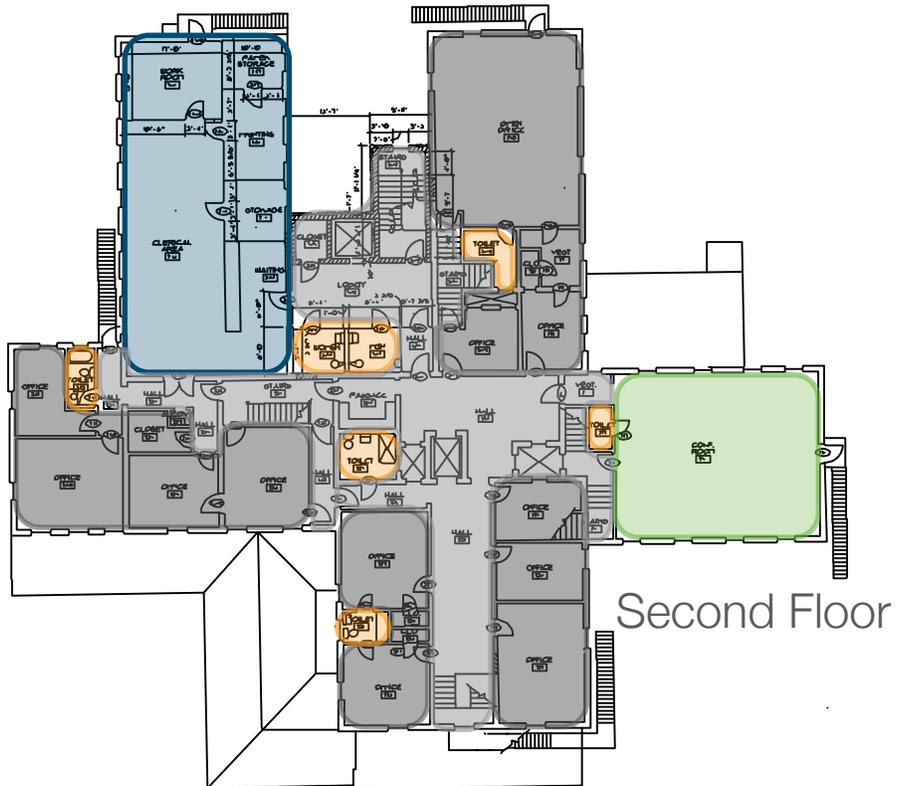
Space Occupied\*  
**58%**

Space Unoccupied\*  
**42%**

*\*Does not account  
for 75% of circulation  
(hallways, stairs, elevators)  
& 3rd Floor Attic.*



- US Dept of Ag  
1,550 sq ft
- Conservation District  
2,540 sq ft
- OSU Extension  
1,550 sq ft
- Conference Room  
950 sq ft
- Vacant
- Circulation
- Restrooms  
858 sq ft



# Space Efficiency Case Study

## Agricultural Building by Department/Agency

		Office Type	Existing Sq Ft	Existing %	Office Standards %	Difference	Suggestions
<b>US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE</b>	4 Employees	Office	370	24%	16%	8%	If this agency is projected to grow then space will need to be reallocated to create more space for workstations and collaboration space.
		Workstation	580	37%	59%	-22%	
		Collaboration	0	0%	12%	-12%	
		General Support	350	23%	10%	13%	
		Social Support	250	16%	3%	13%	

		Office Type	Existing Sq Ft	Existing %	Office Standards %	Difference	Suggestions
<b>CONSERVATION DISTRICT</b>	14 Employees	Office	0	0%	16%	-16%	This Department is projected to grow by 2-4 employees. Room for workstations could be taken out of the Collaboration space.
		Workstation	1,054	41%	59%	-18%	
		Collaboration	905	36%	12%	24%	
		General Support	299	12%	10%	2%	
		Social Support	282	11%	3%	8%	

		Office Type	Existing Sq Ft	Existing %	Office Standards %	Difference	Suggestions
<b>OSU EXTENSION</b>	4 Employees	Office	0	0%	16%	-16%	If this agency is projected to grow then space will need to be reallocated to create more space for workstations and an office.
		Workstation	718	46%	59%	-13%	
		Collaboration	234	15%	12%	3%	
		General Support	354	23%	10%	13%	
		Social Support	244	16%	3%	13%	



# BIG IDEAS

After the design team reviewed and analyzed all of the collected information, we began to consider future opportunities to improve the efficiency and physical work environment of the County owned facilities. The five categories of "Big Ideas" below have been used to help organize those ideas and to allocate our thoughts effectively.

The Big Ideas take into account all that the Design Team has observed over the last year in working with the County Commissioners, employees and department heads. As the County begins to formulate a strategic action plan from the Comprehensive Plan and this Facilities Master Plan, these Big Ideas should be used as the over-arching building/property management and operations framework for decision making.



**Sustainable Practices**



**Consolidation**



**Campus Enhancement**



**Wayfinding**



**Health & Wellness**

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# Big Ideas



## Sustainable Practices



- Sustainable Landscaping
- Water Savings
- Energy Efficiency



- Material Selection
- Building Materials
- Equipment
- Indoor Environmental Quality



## Consolidation



- Assess Inefficiencies
- Prioritized Storage



- Dept / Agency Adjacencies
- Paper to Digital

# Big Ideas



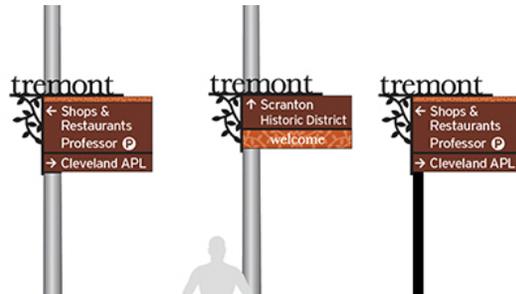
## Campus Enhancement



- Create a Place
- Pedestrian/Bike Friendly
- County Hub/One Stop
- Visitor Friendly
- Outdoor Gathering Space
- Better Connect Dept/Agencies



## Wayfinding



- Campus Wayfinding
- Location Mapping
- Integrate Improved Transit
- Build off of Logo & History
- Connection to The Urban Campus & The South Campus

# Big Ideas



## Health & Wellness



● **Accessibility for All**

● **Healthy Buildings for Healthy Employees**

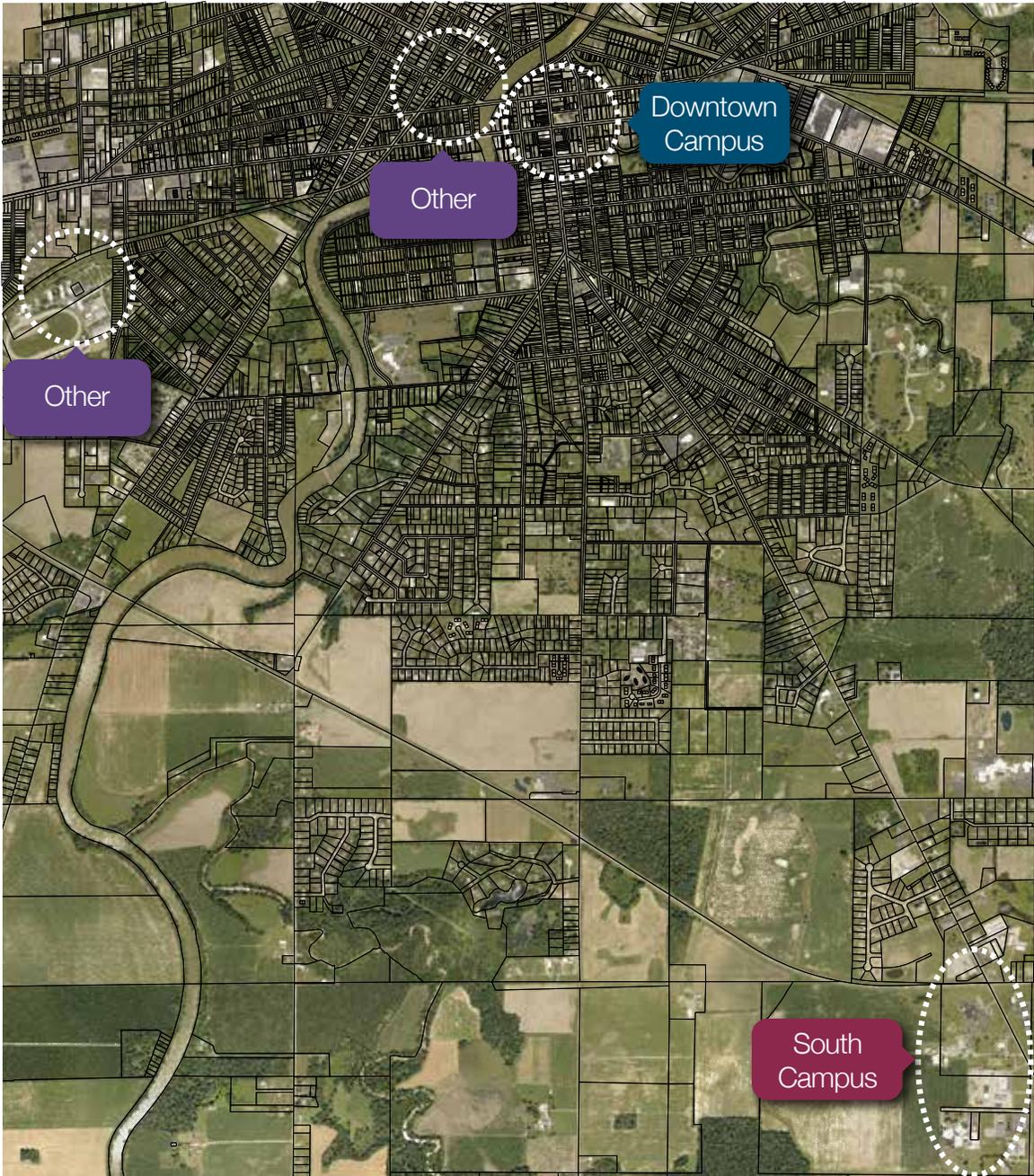
● **Promote Fitness**



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Consistent with the Big Ideas identified earlier, facilities utilized by the County for their operations were evaluated to determine those having the greatest need. These needs were then broken down by scenarios and geographic location.

- The Downtown Campus
- The South Campus
- Other Areas



# Recommendations

## Overall Strategies for all Facilities & Campuses

### ● Assess and consolidate storage

There is an excess amount of items that are stored ranging from unused furniture, to juvenile records to law books to plat maps. For paper records, the County should seek out guidance from the State for how long original records must be kept and when they can be digitized. Each department should set-up a timeline to go through all records and items stored. Old furniture and unused equipment should be sold to the public on a yearly basis to create space and generate additional revenue.

### ● Wayfinding

This applies to the Downtown Campus and the South Campus. A cohesive wayfinding package should build off of the existing branding that the City of Tiffin and the County has been using.

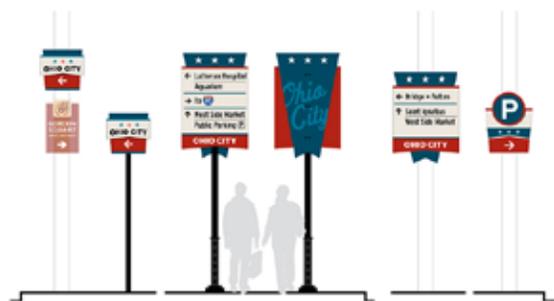
### ● Accessible for Everyone

All County buildings should comply with ADA accessibility requirements this includes main entrances and exits as well as bathrooms. For example, the Prosecutor's entrance and most of the bathrooms in RTA are not ADA compliant.

### ● Beautify with Landscaping

Create a seasonal landscaping schedule for the Downtown Campus. Many of the Downtown buildings are lacking the softness and impact that landscaping plays. Permanent planters should have perennials with the addition of seasonal annuals to compliment. For buildings that lack permanent planters, movable planters should be placed with seasonal annuals. This should be in conjunction with the City's planting schedule.

For the South Campus, utilize the same practices around the buildings but along the more open areas provide a more natural landscape setting. Use native species of plants where applicable to promote less mowing of manicured lawn. This provides less maintenance and therefore further saving money.



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# Recommendations

## Strategies for Other Facilities & Campuses

### Historical Museum

- **Interior Refresh**

Give the interior of the County History Museum a refresh. History museums do not need to be dated looking to showcase history. Consider renovating the interior to have a more neutral backdrop and catalog and place some items in storage allowing for rotation of artifacts and displays. Possible grant opportunities should be sought out to fund the renovation.



### Emergency Services

- **Move Location**

Construct a new building at a new location preferably not on the South Campus. For a real disaster it is advantageous to have EMS be separate from other County Administrative services. The current building is in a poor location on the fairgrounds. While the fairgrounds are not in use everyday, the few times of the year it is makes it very difficult to service citizens from the building.



- **Team up with Storage**

Construct a building that will hold the County's physical record storage and the Emergency Services. The storage on the South Campus is failing due to unconditioned buildings. Since these records are only visited by County employees it does not need to be on a highly assessable location. These include the Law Library and the Clerk of Courts. It is recommended that records be converted to digital as much as possible. Local genealogy groups may be apart of organizing certain types of records.



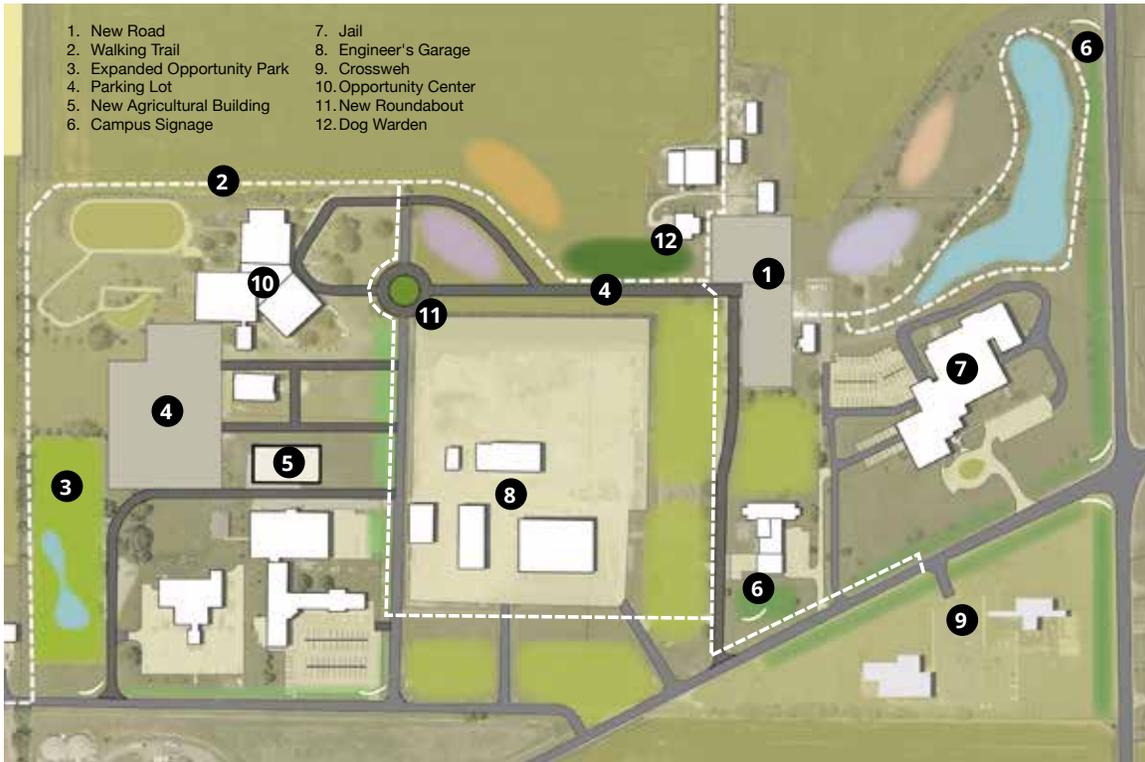
# Scenarios

*There is no perfect solution for what the County should do with its facilities due to the complex nature of serving the residents, providing a safe, comfortable and effective environment for employees, owning buildings that are efficient and sustainable and paying attention to real estate trends in the area. This process has concluded that there are multiple scenario's that the County should explore. Each scenario provides different options to help fit the different needs of the County and could potentially be intermixed.*

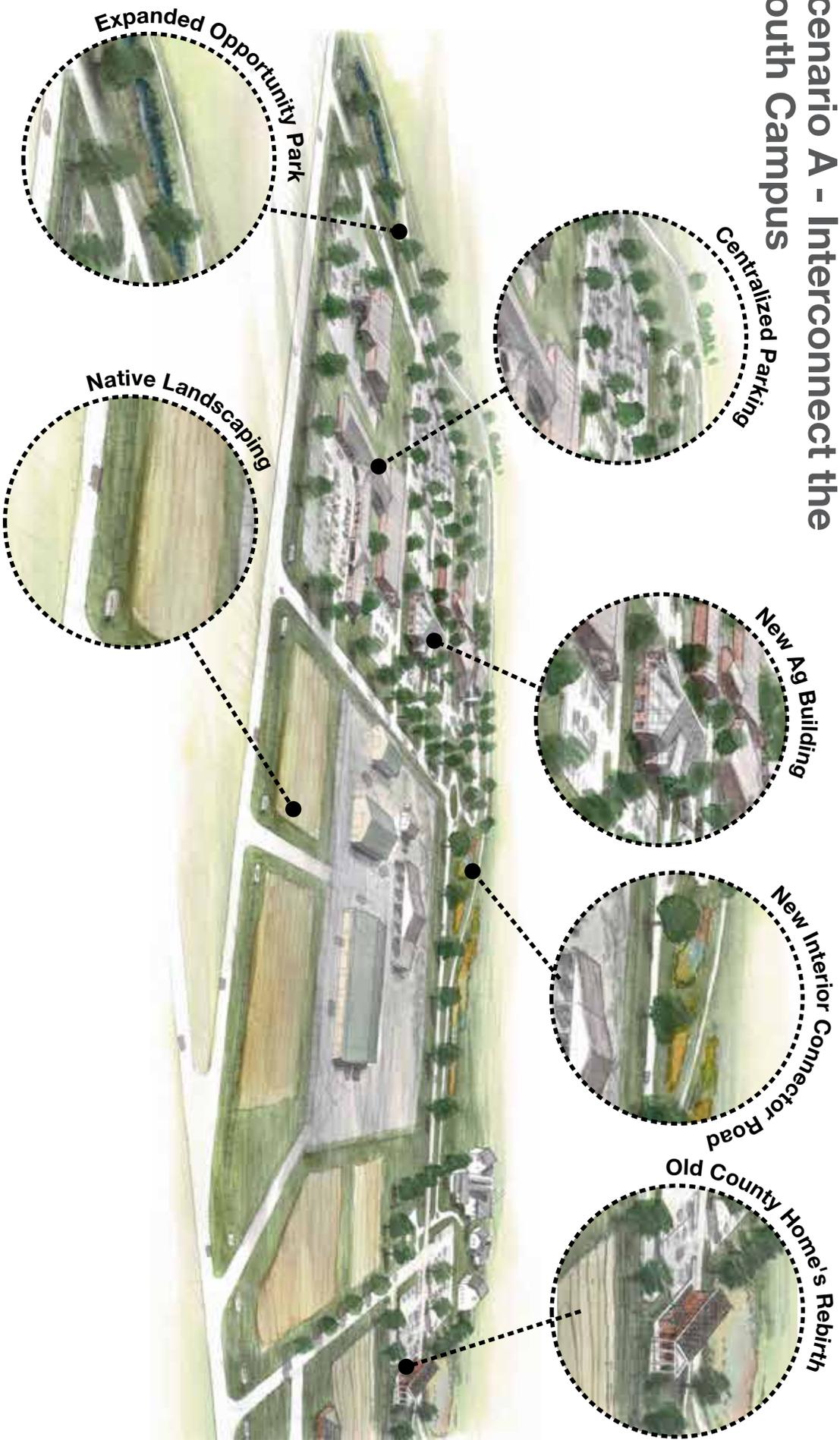
## Scenario A - Interconnect the South Campus

This scenario promotes connectivity. A new road behind the engineering garages connects the north and south side of campus. An interior walking path and a bike trail that connects to the large County/City bike system promotes using multiple modes of travel for County employees and visitors. This interior walking path also connects occupants from Crossswah who need the services on the Campus.

Connectivity also includes a centralized parking lot and building a new Agricultural building to the south by other key services on the Campus. The old County Home could be re-purposed as a Bike Hub.



# Scenario A - Interconnect the South Campus



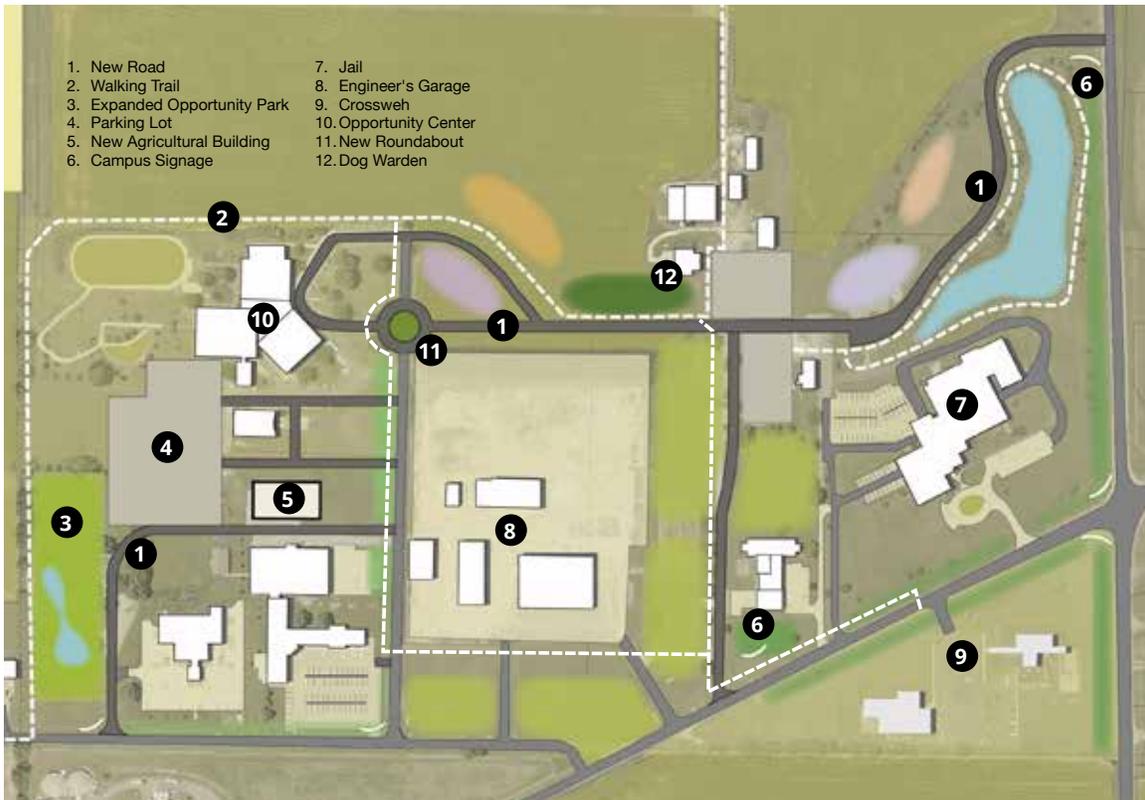
# Scenarios

## Scenario B - New South Campus Gateway

This scenario encompasses all the aspects of Scenario A with the major addition of a new Campus entrance off of 224. A new entrance to the campus at U.S. Route 224 will create several enhancement opportunities;

- A new prestigious and welcoming entry onto the campus bypasses the incarceration portion of the campus
- Safer on-campus vehicular circulation patterns
- Organizes the campus for future development
- Provides important access from U.S. Route 224 for possible future land development on farm acreage

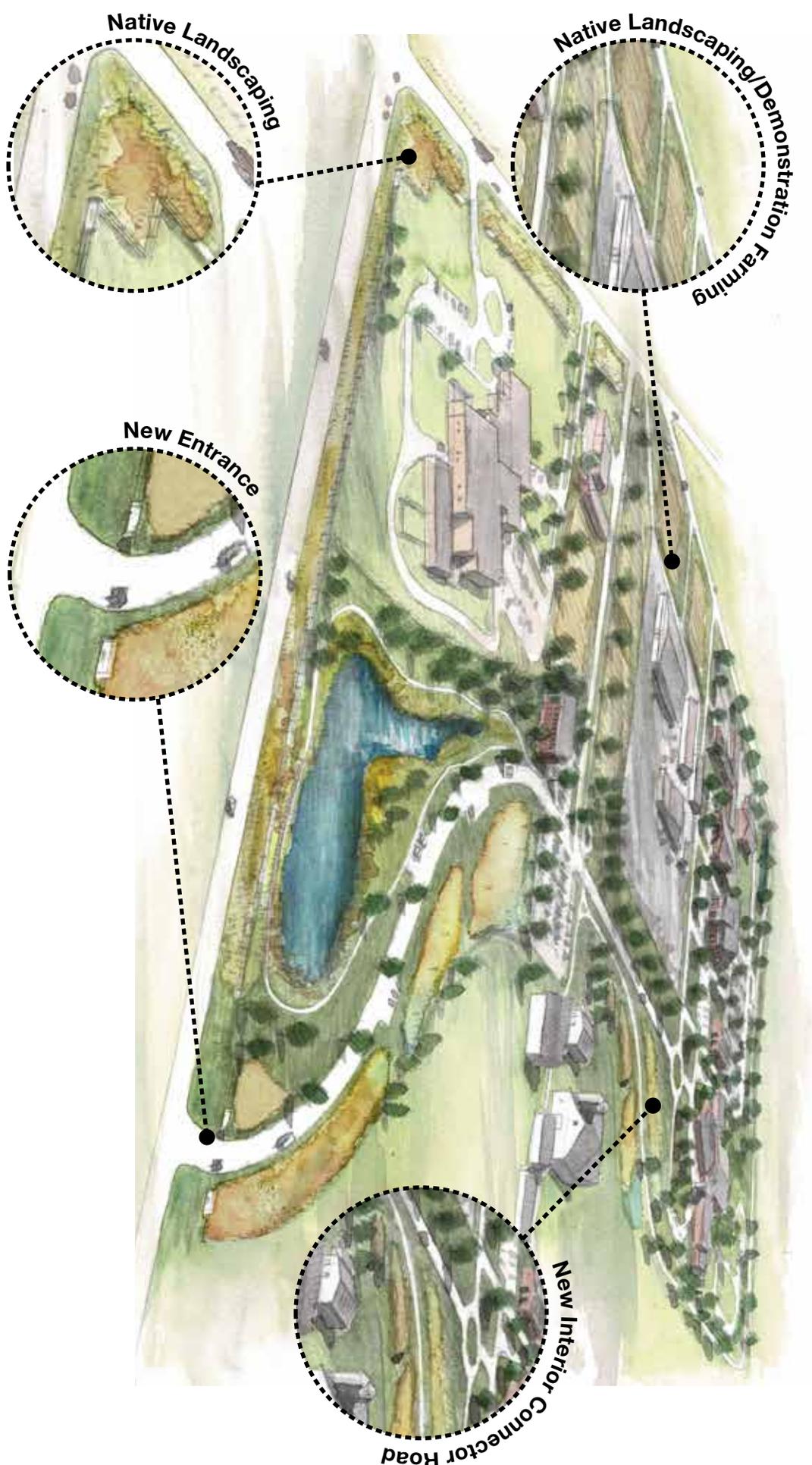
It should be understood that U.S. Route 224 is a Federal Highway and serves a relatively short transportation corridor running from Western Pennsylvania and terminating in Eastern Indiana. Negotiations and approval of this campus access plan would have to meet local, state, and federal transportation design and engineering standards and requirements. Understanding this will take time to negotiate with all of the agencies, we suggest the process begin as soon as possible to determine the potential implementation of the idea.



Enhanced public access to the campus can create opportunities for education about farming, native landscape, and aspects of rural life.



# Scenario A - New South Campus Gateway



# Scenarios

## Scenario A & B - Overall Campus Strategies

### ● Centralized Parking

Parking in front of the Engineer's and Park's District building should be strictly for visitors. Centralized parking in the middle of the campus should be for mainly employees but also for visitors too. This promotes more of a walkable campus instead of driving from building to building. Parking along the edge of the Opportunity Park can house the larger trucks and equipment.

### ● Expanded Opportunity Park

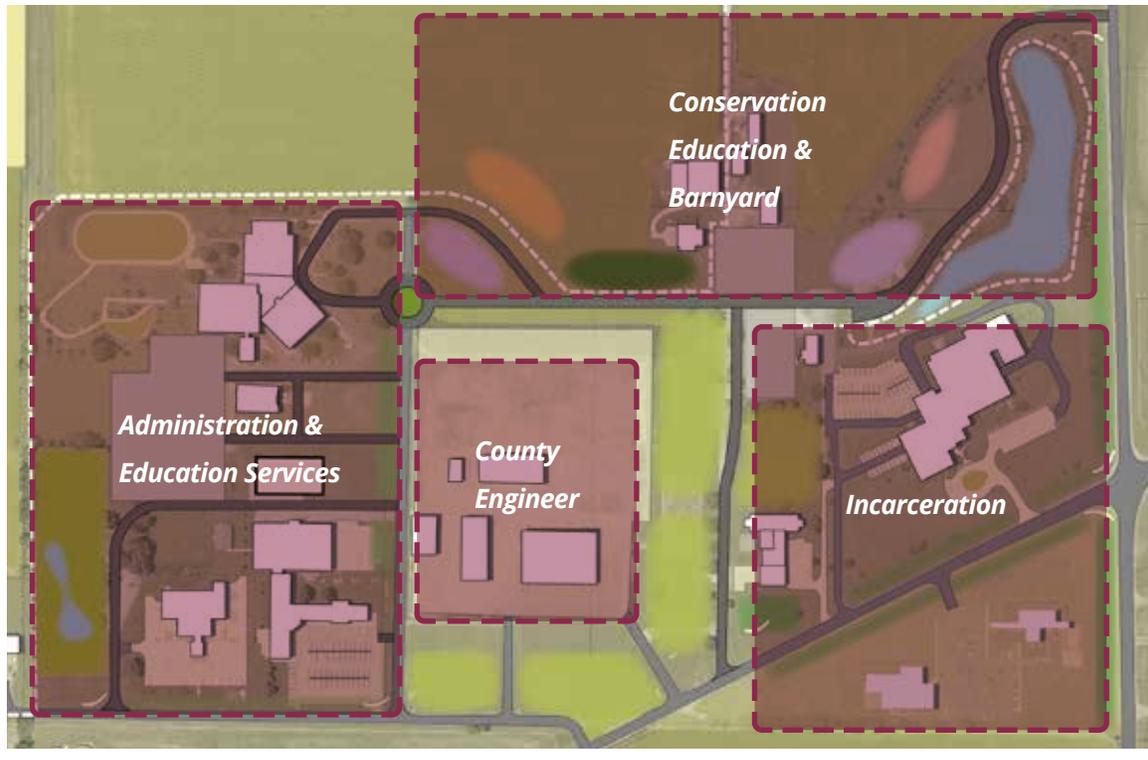
Opportunity Park should be expanded. The park could encompass the entire south end of the South Campus. This area allows for an additional detention pond for the campus. It could also expand but stop short to allow for developable land along Infirmiry Road.

### ● Opportunity for Expansion

Right behind the New Youth Center there is room for expansion for the Jail, Engineering Garages and the Youth Center.

### ● Old County Home's Rebirth

The Old County Home has important historical significance for the County. Every effort should be made to preserve this building for future generations. With the new network of trails and the road, the Old County Home can be re-purposed as a trail head. New consolidated parking allows for visitors to park and "ride". The exterior of the Old County Home should be restored. This could happen through grants because of its history. The interior could have restrooms, changing rooms and showers, community meeting space and an opportunity for a seasonal vendor. A structural assessment needs to happen before any renovations can take place.



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# Scenarios

## Scenario A & B - Overall Campus Strategies

### ● **New Agriculture & Wellness Building**

Building is underutilized and not suited for continued use as a County facility. Vacate and demolish the building. Departments/Agencies should be relocated within the South Campus in a new building. Temporary relocation could happen in the Park District's office when they move out. New building should be 12,000-15,000 SF to replace the existing Agricultural Building, County employee workout facility and community event/meeting space. The new building should be more centrally location to the south to better create a walkable campus so that departments and agencies can support one another.

#### Building Size Estimate

- Dept of Ag/OSU/Conservation 6,000sf
- Event Space/Conference Room 3,000sf
- County Employee Fitness Room 3,000sf
- Restrooms 1,000sf
- Circulation 5,500sf
- Campus Mailroom 1,500sf
- Estimated Building Size 15,000-20,000sf



*An example of modern farm architecture*

# Scenarios

## Scenario A & B - Overall Campus Strategies

### ● A Safer Intersection

The intersection at Infirmary Road and Route 100 should be improved to create a safer route for drivers and pedestrians. The traffic on Route 100 is at high speeds therefore making a sharp angled intersection even more dangerous. The County should work with ODOT, who owns the triangular shaped property across from the South Campus, to coordinate this new intersection.

Option 1 provides the least amount of space needed but there still could be some reduced visibility. Option 2 has a better connection but with there is not much room for stacking and creating a zigzag traffic flow for the heavily traveled destinations on CR20. The preferred option is number 3 as this allows for a more direct flow of where the majority of the South Campus traffic is located.



**Existing Intersection**



**Option 1**  
Direct Infirmary Rd Connection



**Option 2**  
Connection to Engineer's Entrance with  
Additional Road to CR20



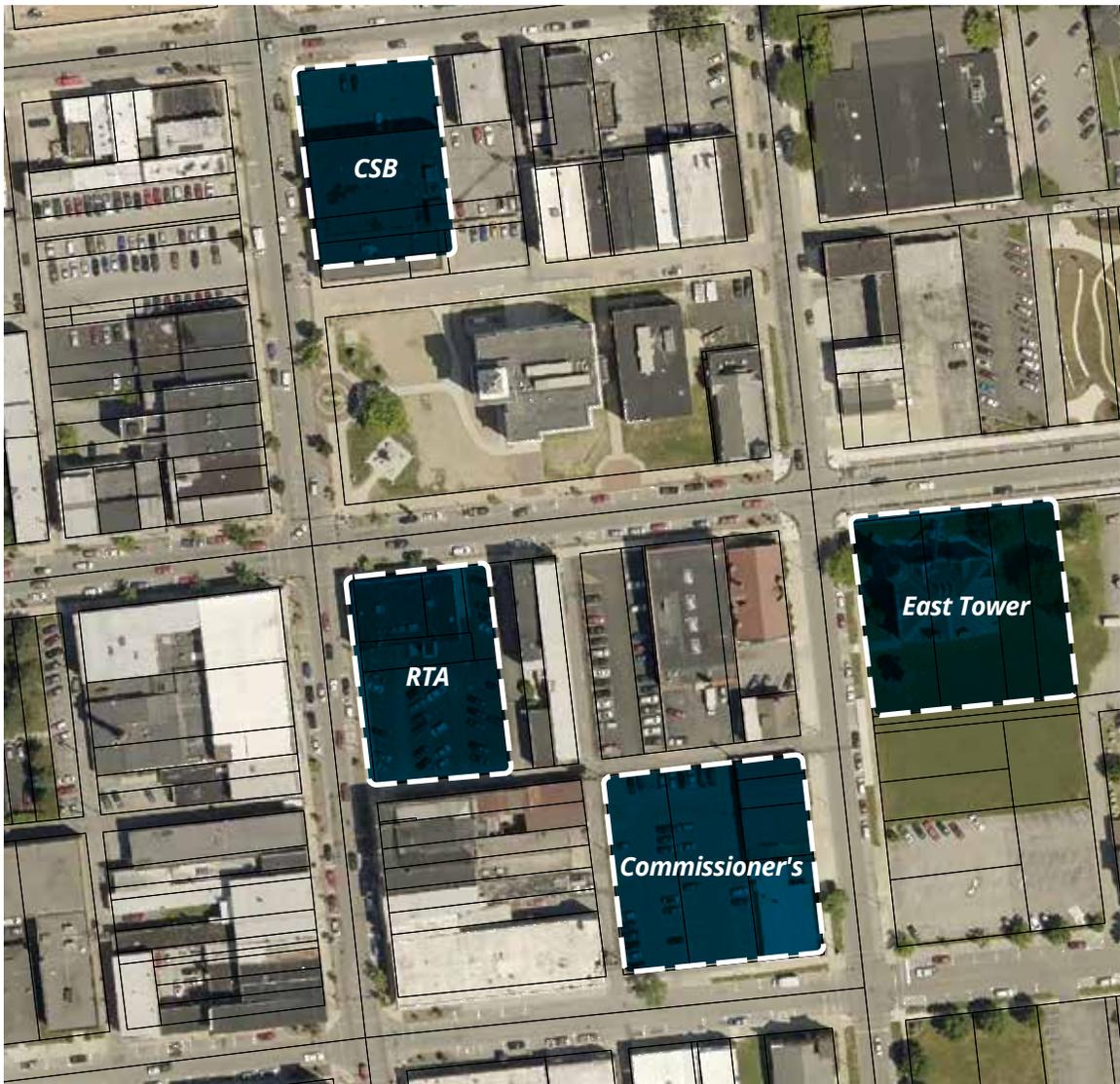
**Option 3 - Preferred Option**  
Roundabout and Connection off of CR20

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# Scenarios

## Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

This scenario centralizes services and employees Downtown. By bringing Jobs & Family Services Downtown, space is opened up on the South Campus to allow the Agriculture Building occupants to be relocated. The Agriculture Building would still be demolished and there would be no need for a new building to be built. Jobs & Family Services would move Downtown and could be housed in a new building on the Commissioner's Site or the RTA Site or into a renovated East Tower. Bringing Jobs & Family Services Downtown will add more employees to downtown Tiffin which could trigger the opportunity to construct a parking garage as suggested in the recently completed Parking Study. Except for the East Tower, all the sites that the County owns are prime real estate sites in the core of the Downtown. A parking garage would help alleviate Downtown parking issues and create options for revenue.



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# Scenarios

## Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

### Commissioner's Site

#### ● Option 1 - Redevelop the Commissioner's Site

Revisit the Downtown Parking Study completed in 2018 for details on a redevelopment approach. The new building could be developed by the County or by a private developer in a public/private partnership scenario where-by the county could become a tenant within the new building. Redevelopment Positives are:

- Strategically located near Washington Street for access to retail and restaurants.
- Reasonably close to the Seneca Justice Center and East Green.
- Dimensions of the site are ideal for efficient construction.
- Retail Storefronts and/or Mixed-Use are possible along Madison and Jefferson Streets.
- Optional configurations depending upon desired number of parking spaces, efficiency and mixed-use opportunity.
- Majority of the land is owned by Seneca County.

#### ● Option 2 - Continuation of Commissioner's Ownership

The mid-century building is certainly not to be considered antiquated. It could be enhanced through a modest renovation to function better while bringing certain minor items up to current building code.

- Consider updating the electrical panel as there are no empty breaker slots.
- Public meeting space seating is tight. Convert to all loose seating and remove the tables and old church pews.
- Update backroom handrail to meet code.



# Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

## Commissioner's Site



# Scenarios

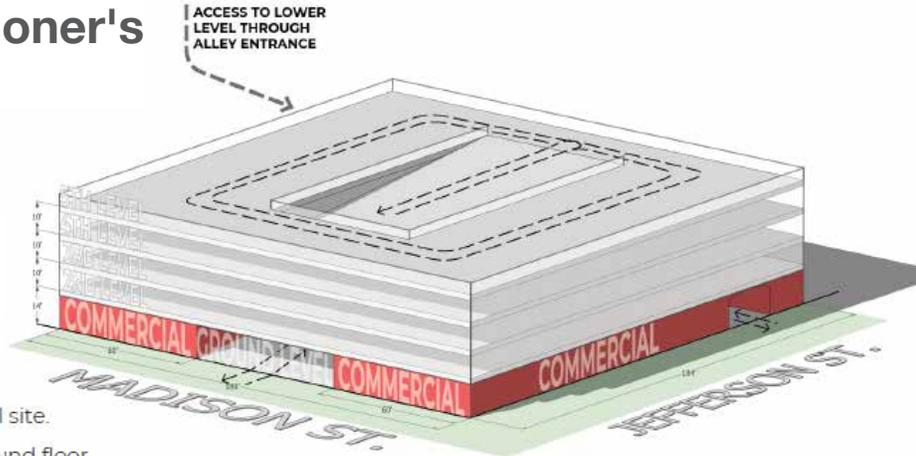
## Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

### Commissioner's Site

#### SITE #2A

380 Spaces

- Promote as an infill site.
- 22,500 sq ft +/- ground floor leasable space.

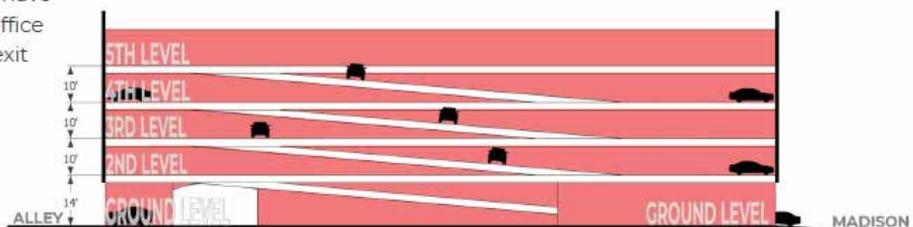
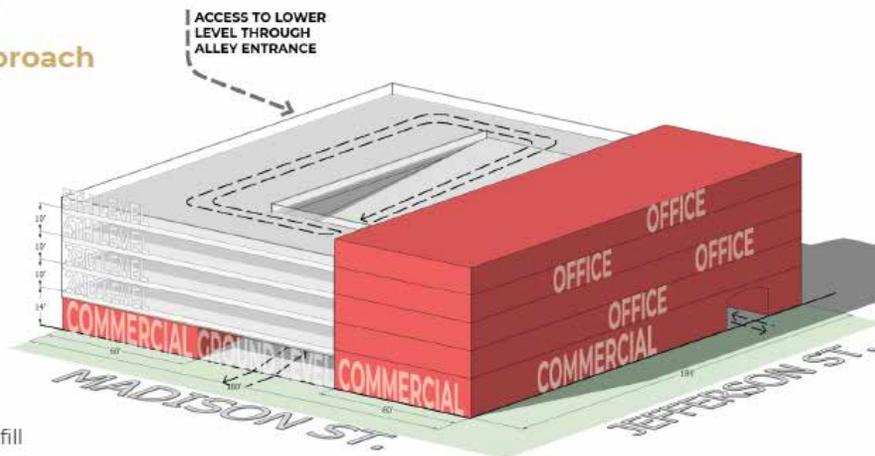


#### SITE #2B

Alternate Approach

260 Spaces

- Promote as an infill development site.
- Upper stories could have 12 apts per floor or office space plus lobby & exit stair.



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# Scenarios

## Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

### East Tower Renovation

One option for bringing more services Downtown, such as Jobs and Family Services, could be renovating and adding an addition to the East Tower. The East Tower building is currently unoccupied and is provides an opportunity to expand county services while providing a new use for this iconic structure. Consideration should be given to relocating offices currently housed in the RTA Building (ann other offices if appropriate) to the East Tower to strengthen the connectivity of the Downtown campus. It is centrally located Downtown within blocks of other County services. The example below shows an addition of 14,400 square feet with 18,000 square feet to be renovated in the historic school building. There could be 53 on-site parking spaces with employees and other customers utilizing on-street parking or the parking garages that could be developed on other County owned sites.

#### Conceptual Option - South East View



#### Conceptual Option - North East View



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# Scenarios

## Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

### RTA Strategies

#### ● Option 1 - Redevelop High Value Site

Revisit the Downtown Parking Study completed in 2018. The RTA building and surrounding parking lots are prime real estate in the heart of Downtown Tiffin. The new building could be developed by the County or a developer could be brought in with the County becoming a tenant within the new building. Existing RTA Departments need to evaluate necessary adjacencies.

Options for relocating temporarily are the CSB Building or permanently the East Tower Building.

Redevelopment Positives are:

- Strategically located near the Seneca Justice Center, County / City Offices.
- Could benefit the Washington Street & Seneca County Justice Center.
- Potential retail storefronts along Washington Street.
- Set up well for a public/private development project to build new “self-parked” infill building with lower level parking.
- Land owned by Board of County

#### ● Option 2 - Continuation of RTA Ownership

- For a prominent Downtown building the exterior facade is not putting its best face forward. The modern design of the building is dated and is clearly out of place among the collection of exemplary historic buildings in downtown Tiffin. Although recently cleaned, the rough-face facade will continue to attract dirt and should be cleaned on a regular basis.
- Consideration should be given to re-cladding the exterior with a new facade material. The building appears to function properly although there is a mustiness in the air quality on the lower level. Replacing the carpet with hard surface moisture resistant material should be considered.
- Condensing units on the roof are near the end of their lifecycle. Replacement of these units should be on the schedule.





# Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

## RTA Strategies



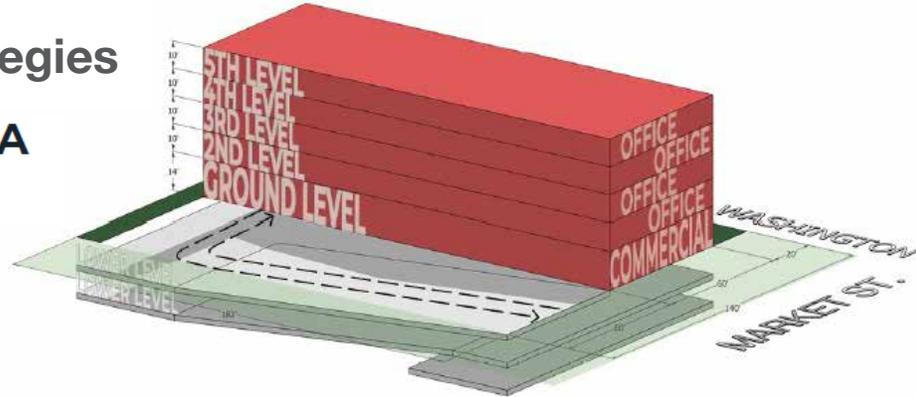
# Scenarios

## Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

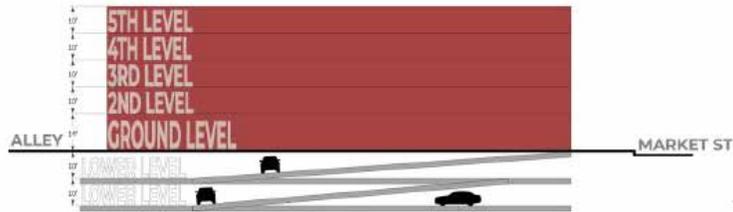
### RTA Strategies

#### SITE #4A

192 Spaces



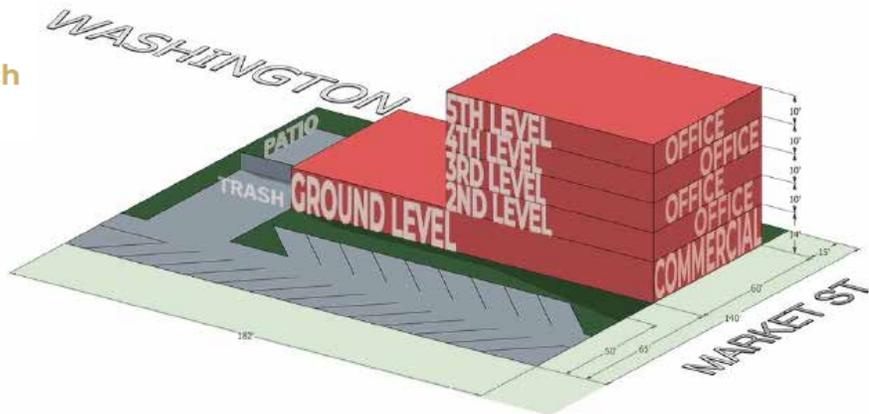
- Promote as an infill development site.
- 10,920 SF Ground Floor Commercial.
- 3-4 floors of office above.
- Deep public realm along Washington Street.



#### SITE #4B

Alternate Approach

21 Spaces



- Promote as an infill development site.
- 8,400 sq ft ground floor leasable space plus space for a outdoor patio and trash area.
- Upper stories (5,400 SF ea) could have 6 apts per floor or office space plus lobby & exit stair.



# Scenarios

## Scenario C - Bring More Services Downtown

### CSB

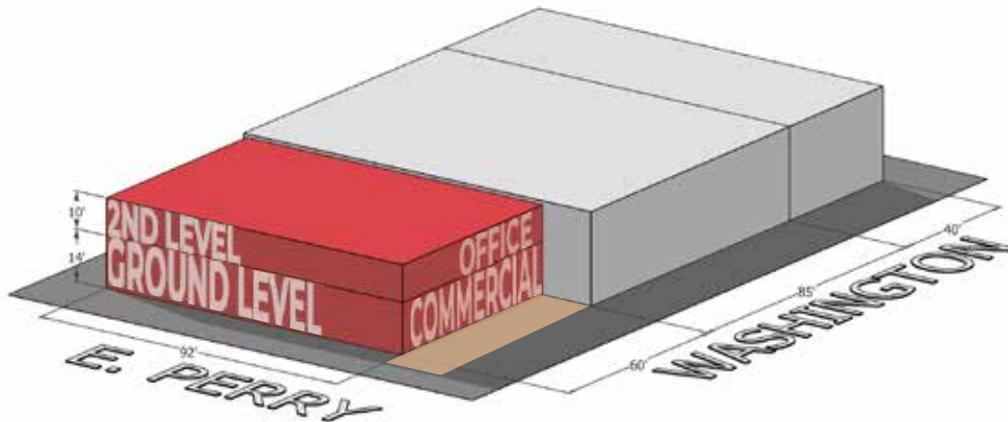
#### ● Where is the entrance?

Create a new enhanced and ADA compliant entrance on the side of the building as a more visible entrance to the Health Department and other departments in the back of the building and the second floor. The side parking lot may need to be reconfigured to accommodate the new entrance.

The CSB Building is perhaps the most up-to-date facility other than the Justice Center & Annex. There appears to be available space for expansion of existing departments within the building or relocation of offices in other facilities.

#### ● New Addition

Although a new entry on the north side of the building has been discussed, consideration should be given to constructing an addition on the current parking lot to accommodate relocated offices under that scenario. This would eliminate the current on-site parking which would be relocated as close to the CSB Building as possible.



- Infill existing parking
- Opportunity for plaza at Washington Street
- 5,520 sq ft ground floor leasable space
- 5,520 sq ft upper story is office

