

PAST AND ONGOING PLANNING EFFORTS

As part of the needs assessment, the Design Team and SCPD analyzed past and ongoing planning efforts to determine how plans for Quail Hollow Park could complement existing and proposed regional amenities and help meet the needs of the community.

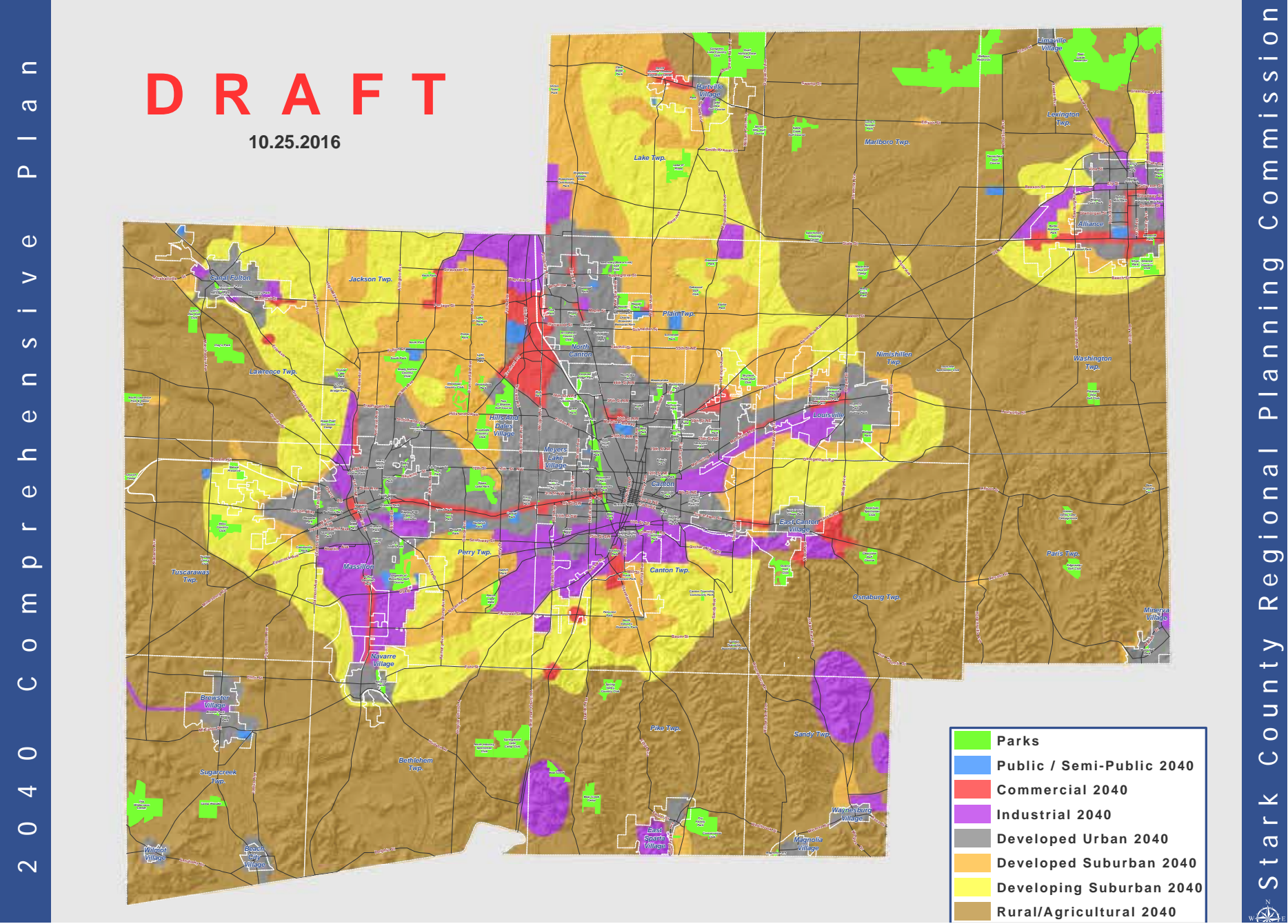
Regional Zoning and Land Use Plans for Future Development

The Stark County Comprehensive Draft Plan (2040) was created by the Stark County Regional Planning Commission (SCRPC) “to provide a flexible framework for representatives of local governments to work cooperatively in areas which will have a positive effect on Stark County; to plan for and guide growth and development; and to participate in programs which provide for the physical, social, and economic needs of the county’s present and future residents.” According to the comprehensive plan, areas surrounding Quail Hollow are to remain zoned as rural/agricultural through Lake Township, meaning predominantly agricultural lands with no public sewer or water, and no present plans for growth. Findings have shown that rural/agricultural areas have experienced the largest decrease over the last several decades. It is the goal of the Stark County Regional Planning Commission (SCRPC) to reverse this trend in an effort to reduce urban sprawl. The 2040 plan stresses the importance of recreation, the preservation of open space, natural resources, and land conservation.

SCRPC Zoning Plan Recommendations that are applicable to the Quail Hollow Master Plan are as follows:

- Focus on projects that reinvest in existing infrastructure.
- Protect local water sources.
- Expand the amount of quality open space preserved.
- Enhance existing open space and recreation areas.
- Focus on pedestrian-orientated transportation.

This plan not only references, but also closely aligns with the Stark County Trail and Greenway Master Plan and the Stark County Park District Five-Year Plan.







Stark County Park District Plans

The Stark County Park District employs a number of different plans, developed in partnership with the public and stakeholders, to guide the district and direct how to best utilize its resources. One of these guiding documents is the Five-Year Plan, the most recent version of which covers 2014–2018. This plan highlights the Park District’s mission statement and the importance it places on passive recreation. Passive recreation activities include hiking, walking, picnicking, bird watching, wildlife observation, fishing, and boating. Cultural and historic resources, such as the Ohio & Erie Canal and the Magnolia Flouring Mill are existing examples of how preserving historic structures and resources goes hand-in-hand with the preservation and development of natural areas, as well as promoting educational opportunities – both of which are goals of the Park District’s mission statement. Therefore, the Park District should continue to assist in the preservation of these elements, especially when they demonstrate how humans have shaped the natural environment to meet their needs.

The first major Park District sponsored plan for trails and greenways was the Stark County Canal Corridor Master Plan which was quickly followed by the Stark County Trail and Greenway Master Plan in 1999. In 2013, the Park District completed an update to the Trail and Greenway Master Plan. The success in developing the Stark County Canal Corridor Master Plan and subsequent construction facilitated the development of the Stark County Trail and Greenway Master Plan (TGMP), which is a long-range plan that spreads the benefits of multipurpose trails throughout the County, in addition to providing a framework for park development and preservation of natural areas. The TGMP comprises a number of major trails and connector trails that would tie parks and a number of community assets into a comprehensive network, including the Hartville/Quail Hollow Loop. While the popularity of these trails can be directly seen in the steady increase in users over the last decade, common requests for these trails is that they link to destination points. Having a short loop trail around a park or natural area is an excellent way to spend a leisurely afternoon, but having places of interest along the way or at the end of a trail transform the route into more of a multi-purpose and/or productive experience. With destination trail routes, the actual trail can become more of a mode of transportation rather than just the destination itself, which with peoples’ busy schedules helps combine the acts of daily living and healthy lifestyles into one.

The Park District’s Education Department provides the public with both experiential and curriculum based educational opportunities to explore the abundance of natural and cultural heritage resources within Stark County and the surrounding region. Education Programmers and Wildlife Rehabilitation staff work hand-in-hand to present these experiences to the public and foster an appreciation and understanding of Stark County’s resources. The Park District also hosts special events throughout the year, such as Christmas at the Hollow, which attract large audiences and help foster the Park District’s interaction with the general public.

Bird watching and nature hikes are two of the fastest growing and most popular forms of outdoor recreation in not only Ohio, but in the U.S. as a whole. As the Park District continues to offer programs on these activities, it is recommended that additional viewing areas and programs be considered as these activities continue to become increasingly popular. The sites would also provide convenient locations to begin bird-watching walks. In addition to observation/viewing areas, other similar projects that have been requested by the public include programs pertaining to observation activities involving migrating amphibians, astronomy, and tree/wildflower identification. According to various studies, one of the most increasingly popular outdoor recreation activities in this region is bicycling. This includes on-road biking, mountain biking and trail/leisure biking.



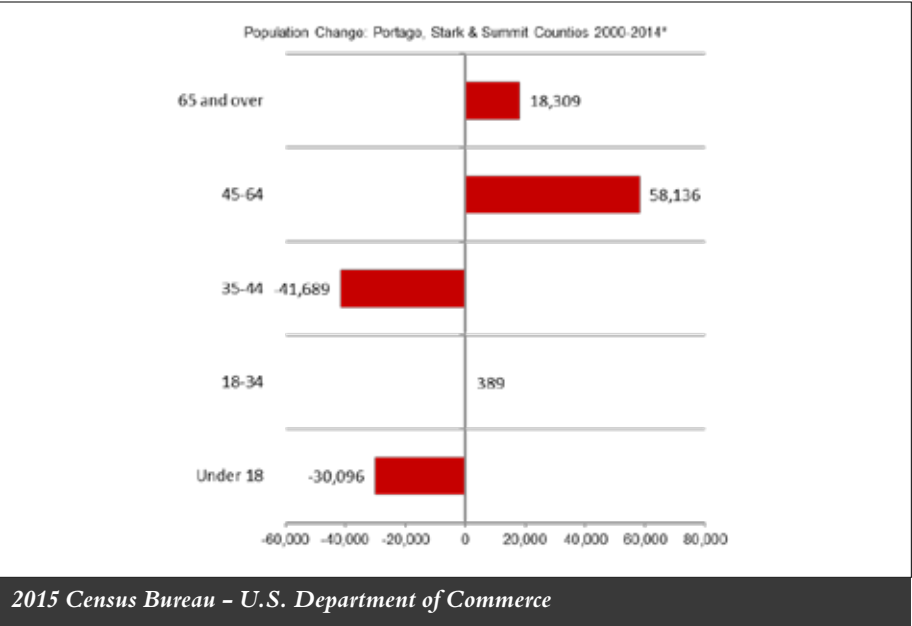
## REGIONAL BACKGROUND

### Demographic Trends

As part of the needs assessment the Design Team analyzed existing demographic trends in the region to help gain an understanding of who lives in the region and what the population, employment and income trends are for the future. Having a detailed understanding of these trends, assisted the Team in making appropriate recommendations for future park users.

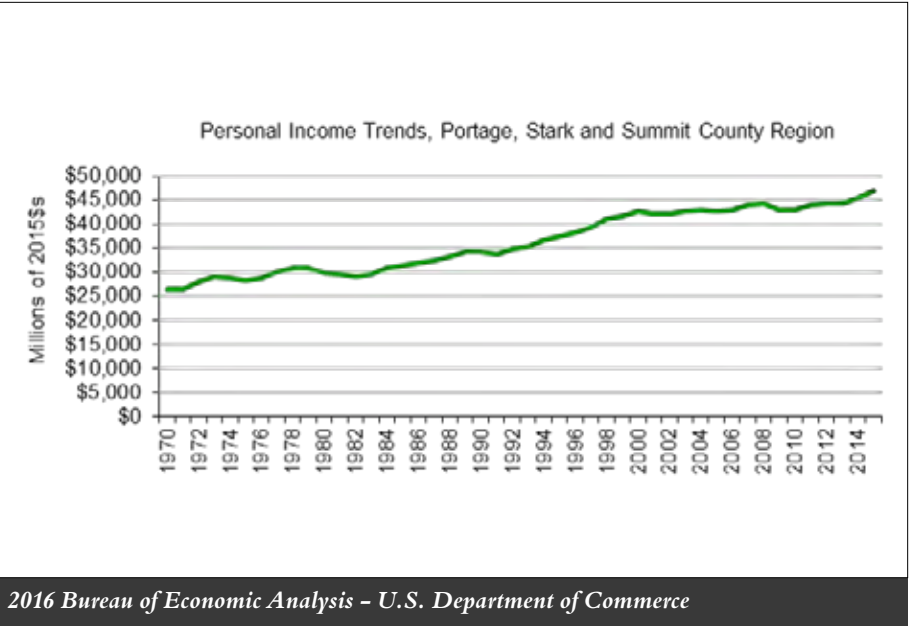
In line with the Park’s history as an Ohio State Park, the stakeholder interviews and the results of the public survey revealed that Quail Hollow is truly a regional park, and attracts visitors from a larger distance than a typical county park. Though the public survey results show that there are some park visitors who travel hours to reach the park, the majority of users are located within the local region around Quail Hollow Park. As such, a 10-mile radius was used to analyze the region’s demographics. The land use within the 10-mile radius mostly consists of rural farmland, but does incorporate urbanized areas as well including: portions of Canton, North Canton, portions of Akron and its southeastern suburbs, including Green, Mogadore, and Brimfield. Due to the Park’s proximity at the northern edge of Stark County, this radius also includes three counties in the analysis: Portage, Stark and Summit.

Existing demographics were analyzed by comparing the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data and the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) data. The ACS is a nation-wide survey conducted every year by the Census Bureau that provides current demographic, social, economic, and housing information about communities every year. The ACS is not the same as the decennial census, which is conducted every ten years but aids in supplementing census information between censuses. The 2014 ACS data is the most current demographic data available.



Like most of Northeast Ohio, population growth is relatively flat in the region surrounding Quail Hollow Park, with a slight 0.5% increase in population since 2000. The racial breakdown of the population is 85% Caucasian, 10% African American and 5% of other minority groups. The biggest takeaway from the population analysis is that the region’s population is aging. As shown in the chart above, there have been large increases in people over the age of 45, with the largest population increase occurring in the 45 to 64-year age group. This is a direct result of the “Baby Boomers” generation aging. Consequently, the younger groups under 45 years of age experienced a large decrease in population since 2000.

In terms of employment, the population is largely localized, with roughly 70% of workers residing in the County they work in. The region’s educational attainment is consistent with the State of Ohio, with roughly 17% of the population holding a Bachelor’s Degree and 9% holding a Graduate Degree as compared to 16% and 9% respectively at the State level. The major employment industries in the region are: Education/Health Care (24%), Manufacturing (17%) and Retail Trade (12%).



The median household income for the region is in line with the State of Ohio, as Portage, Stark and Summit Counties have a median household income of \$53k, \$46k and \$50k respectively, while the median household income for the State is approximately \$49k. As of 2014, approximately 15% of residents and 11% of families in the region live below the poverty threshold, which is consistent with the State averages. The U.S. Census Bureau considers a single person within the poverty threshold if their per-year earnings are less than approximately \$12K per year. For families, the poverty threshold has a slightly higher per year income of approximately \$16K per year.

Personal income within the region has been consistently rising over the past 40 years. As shown in the chart above, there has been a 78% increase (adjusted for inflation) in personal income since 1970.

## Regional Trends in Recreation

The regional trends in recreation collected by the Design Team are a summarization of relevant data identified in the 2013 Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the Physical Activity Council 2014 Participation Report, the National Survey on Recreation and Environment (NSRE), and the City of Canton: Parks Master Plan. Together, these studies identified the wants and needs of the public and park staff in Ohio as well as the priorities and challenges that often arise in the parks and recreation market. Through surveys, meetings and various other forms of open communication, research identified recent trends in amenities, facilities, technology, safety, and programming. For example, surveys have shown that touring historic farms and buildings is the fifth most popular outdoor recreation activity. In contrast, trends have also shown that recreation, as whole, has declined due to busy schedules. Understanding these regional commonalities reveals what is and isn't working in today's market and helps identify opportunities to overcome these challenges. The following observations were collected based on their applicability to Stark county, the Village of Hartville and most importantly, the current and future programs and facilities at Quail Hollow Park.

### Activities

Some of the most popular recreation programs are camping, nature programming, and special events. Outdoor events, such as festivals, concerts or trail runs, often draw not only park guests, but also overnight campers, and in doing so, have created a greater need for large or group camps. Multi-use trails are in high demand; hiking and biking has become extremely popular in Ohio and trail systems, including trail signage and their connectivity, were described as being one of the most pressing needs in the region. Research has indicated that the use of trails (walking, exercising pets, running, etc.) is the leading activity for regional park users. Most would like to see multi-use trails and trail connections added/developed/or updated in the near future.

Amenities with a “productive experience,” or an activity that creates a destination, will give park visitors a sense of accomplishment and pride. Playground and picnic areas are sought out by park visitors of all ages. In combination with proper facilities, orientation, and natural surroundings, both amenities can become essential destinations within a park. Additionally, wildlife observation, picnicking, scenic drives, multi-use trails, and the touring of historic farms and buildings have been selected as the most desired forms of recreation in Ohio.

### Facilities

Shelters with amenities, electric hookup and reservation availability are growing in popularity and are often filled to capacity. Flush restrooms draw users to recreation areas for longer periods of time. They are in high demand and are preferred when comparing to vault or portable facilities. Equipment rental facilities are vital to encourage guests who “don't have equipment” to take full advantage of park amenities. Parks that have collaborated with companies to provide rental equipment for camping, fishing, biking, etc... have shown to be successful in meeting this demand.

### Park Demographics

As of 2013, regional parks typically draw younger families, couples, and seniors. Seniors are seeking passive recreation activities such as kite-flying, bird watching, fishing, and nature programming. Teens, on the other hand, are more likely to utilize their local hike and bike trails and are especially fond of high-adventure and extreme sports. Younger families are attracted to stroller friendly trails, playgrounds, and family friendly picnic areas.

With the increase in both older and younger demographics, the meeting of accessibility requirements has become even more essential to park success. Oftentimes, parks and their facilities are not equipped to accommodate physically challenged visitors, and in turn, prevent their attendance.

### Constraints

Attendance at regional parks is declining due to busy schedules. The single greatest barrier to Ohio's participation in outdoor recreation has been, simply, a lack of free time. Oftentimes, parks are perceived as being too far away and the public doesn't always know how easy getting to their local park can be. The more information the public has, the better.

The perception of clean, safe, and secure spaces is key. Aging infrastructure has been found to be problematic and often results in a poor perception of the park. Parks do not always have the necessary funding to properly maintain their existing structures or create new ones and typically prefer to retain and renovate an existing structure rather than build new.

Considering these trends, the Design Team has identified specific findings that would most successfully align with Master Plan goals for Quail Hollow Park as well as the Stark Parks Five-Year Plan and the Stark County Regional Zoning and Land Use Plan. For a detailed description of these findings, refer to Appendix B.



Example Picnic Area



Example Fishing Pier



Example Trail



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Cuyahoga Valley National Park					
Mill Creek Park					
577 Foundation					
Allerton Park & Retreat Center					
Silvermont Park					
Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens					
Malabar Farms					
Punderson State Park					
Beechwood Farms Nature Preserve					
Historic Oak View County Park					
Shelburne Farms					
Weir Farm National Historic Site					
Thomas Wolfe Site					
Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park					
Quailcrest Farms					
Case-Barlow Farm					
Deep River County Park					
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site					
Strawbery Banke Museum					
Riker Hill Art Park					
Chicago Parks					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree





History Theming



Art Theming



Nature Theming



Farm Theming

## Park Themes

Across the selected benchmarks, park themes commonly included Art, Nature, Farm, and Garden. Successful benchmark projects seemed to contain multiple, if not all 4, of the primary theme elements. When used together, each one theme seems to strengthen the next. All four of these themes have potential to be incorporated into the Master Plan and programming at Quail Hollow Park.

- History: Acknowledge and celebrate the story of the land, structures, and surrounding region. Create experiences that bring guests into the lives and home of the Stewart family.
- Nature: Utilize the existing features of the site to enhance placemaking and tell the park's story. Incorporate sustainability, gardening, nature education, climate change, and environmental conservation.
- Art: Incorporate multifunctioning installations. Visually engaging pieces may also act as playful seating, lighting, or wayfinding elements. Art theming can be easily incorporated into any of the three additional selected themes. Create park experiences that offer a look at nature through an artist's lens.
- Farm: Works hand-in-hand with Nature and History theming in the context of Quail Hollow. Incorporate gardening, sustainability, historical context and education through hands on experiences.

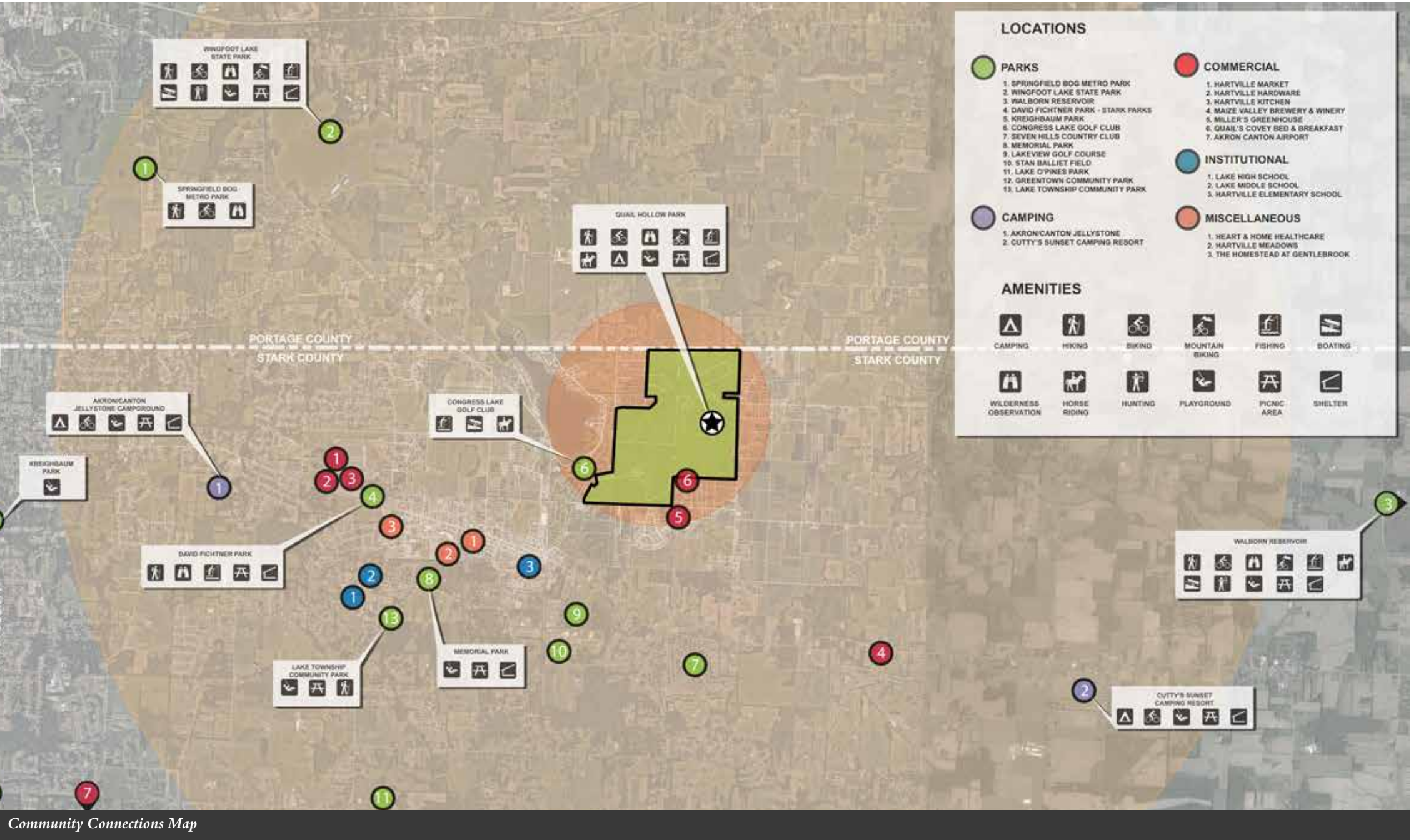


Community Amenities

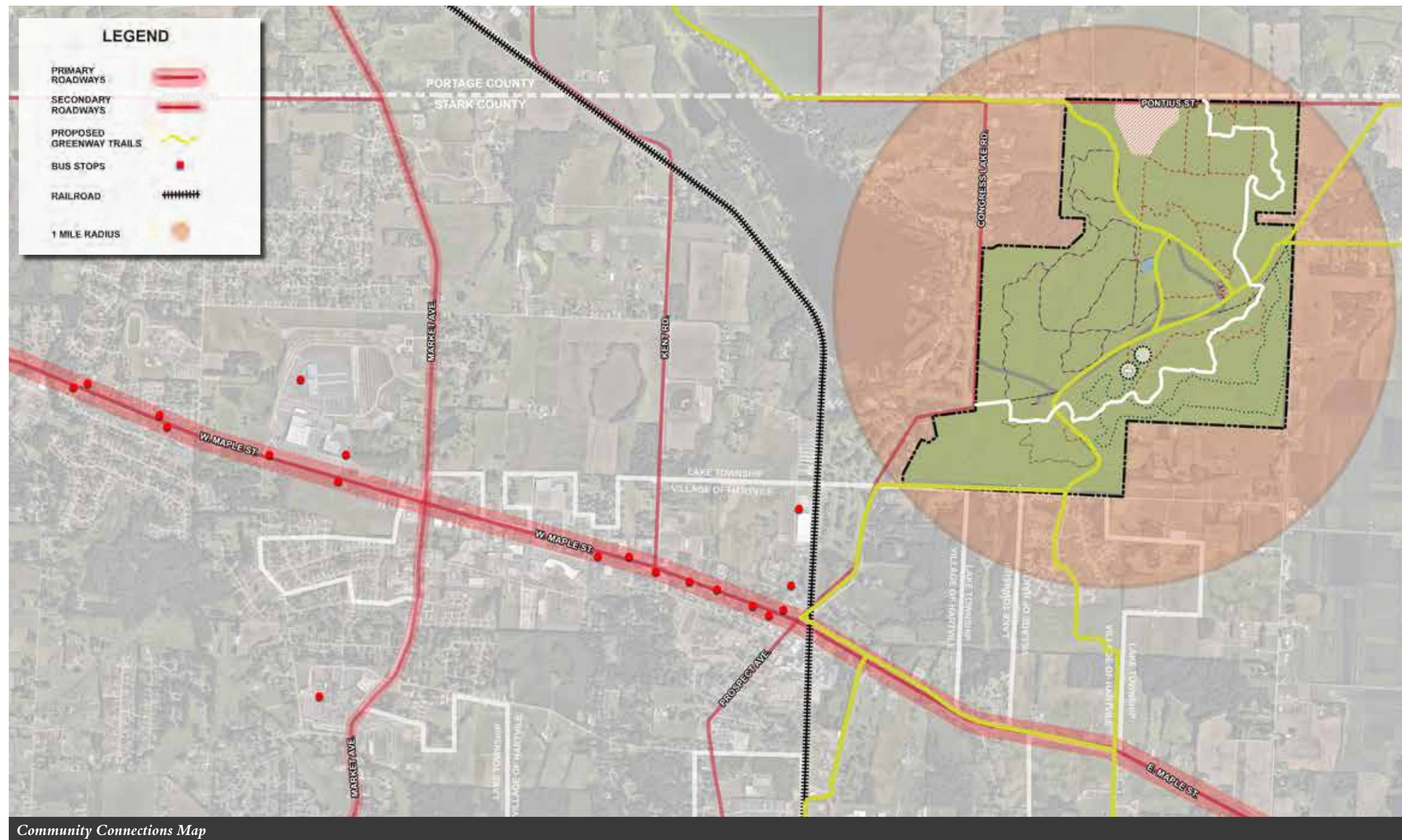
As part of the needs assessment the Design Team looked outside of the Quail Hollow Park boundaries to identify community assets. These assets were identified not only to avoid duplicating regional amenities within Quail Hollow Park, but also to find the community’s most desired assets and explore ways to connect Quail Hollow Park to those assets moving forward.

Regional amenities were quantified into five categories: Parks, Camping, Commercial, Institutional, and Miscellaneous amenities. Due to the regional draw of visitors to Quail Hollow, regional amenities were analyzed within a five-mile radius of the park.

From the Design Team’s extensive stakeholder and public outreach, a handful of existing regional amenities were identified as needing a future connection to the park. These amenities included: Lake Township High School, Hartville Kitchen, David Fichtner Park, Stan Balliet Field, Winged Foot State Park, Hartville Meadows, Gentlebrook Event Center, and Downtown Hartville.







## Community Connections

Transportation connections were also investigated in the region to determine how Quail Hollow is connected to the surrounding community. Currently, there is only one entrance or exit into Quail Hollow Park via the main park drive on Congress Lake Road. Though there are roads surrounding the perimeter of the park on all sides, there are no other vehicular connections. In addition, there are limited existing trail connections into the park from the community. The Buckeye Trail is the only designated connection, but oftentimes, it includes major roadways as a means of connecting the park and the Village of Hartville. Due to the rural character of the region, there are limited sidewalks on many of the roads in the area. Even within town, sidewalks are limited to a few main streets. Both Stark Parks and Portage County Park Districts have future Greenway Trail Plans that connect regional trails to Quail Hollow Park, but none of these trails exist today. SARTA, the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority, does run bus service into the Village of Hartville along State Route 619, via bus route 112, but this service does not extend to Quail Hollow Park. Though a regional asset, Quail Hollow Park is isolated from the surrounding community.

*The Buckeye Trail is an almost 1,444-mile hiking trail that meanders through Ohio both on and off road. Several sections of the trail cross Stark County, including the section from Akron that primarily uses the Towpath Trail, and a section that passes into the County near Hartville. This trail is managed entirely by a non-profit organization and volunteers.*