



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

City of Columbus - Bartholomew County Planning Department





City of Columbus - Bartholomew County Planning Department  
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# Introduction

The City of Columbus – Bartholomew County Planning Department provides development review and long-range land use planning services for the City of Columbus and unincorporated Bartholomew County. The Department also provides development review services for the Edinburgh / Bartholomew / Columbus Joint District by inter-local agreement and the Town of Hartsville by contract. The Planning Department is organized around its four primary functions:

- **Community Planning:** The maintenance and development of the long-term policies that guide land use change and development. This includes City-wide and County-wide plans, as well as those for neighborhoods, corridors, and other small areas.
- **Development Review:** The evaluation of development proposals and construction projects against the community's adopted policies and regulations.
- **Transportation Planning:** The administration of federal transportation improvement funds, as well as the policies and programs used to identify and prioritize construction projects.
- **Floodplain Management:** The administration of the community's flood hazard area regulations for new development and the Columbus Flood Risk Management Plan.

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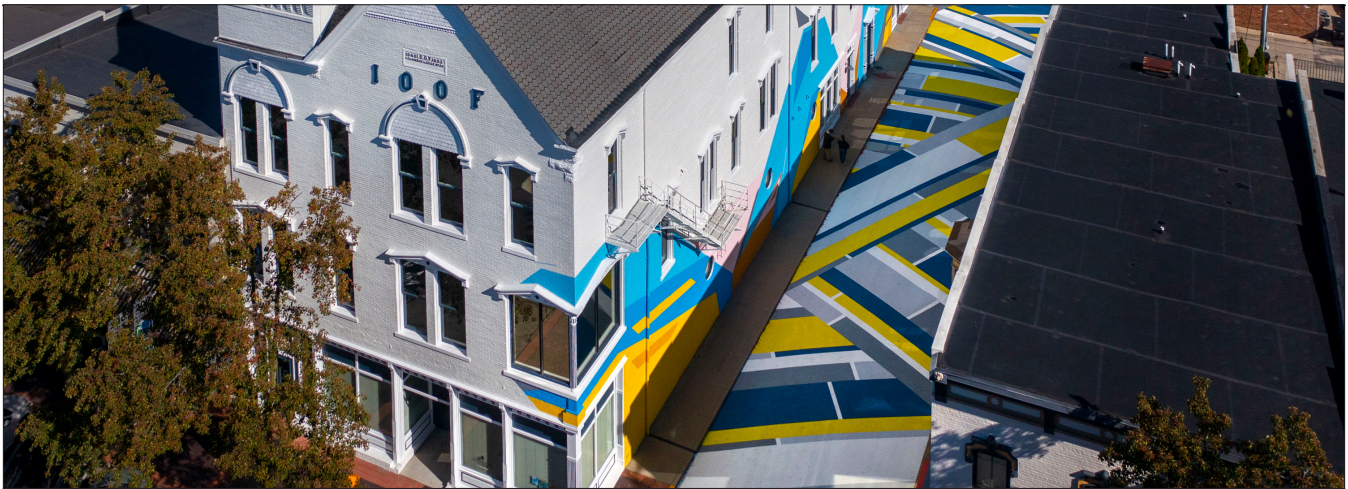
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# OUR TEAM

## Staff & Budget Information

The Planning Department staff serves to support the activities of the City, County, and Joint District Plan Commissions and Boards of Zoning Appeals. The staff is also called upon to provide information and assistance to the Columbus Mayor, City Council, and Board of Public Works; the Bartholomew County Commissioners; and other city, county, civic, and regional organizations. The staff's primary tasks are to (1) guide the public through the property development permitting process and (2) serve as a resource for long-range community planning and the discussion of community land use and transportation issues.

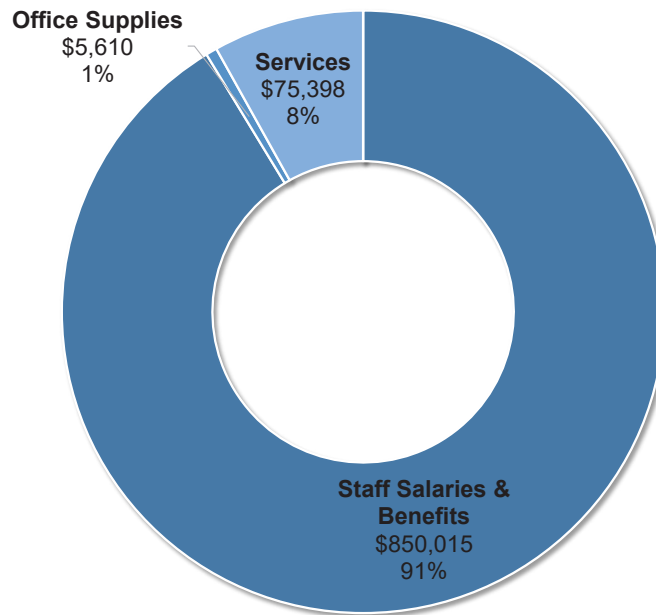
## Planning Department Staff & Tenure

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
<b>Jeff Bergman, AICP</b> Planning Director														Since 2004	
<b>Melissa Begley, AICP</b> Assistant Planning Director															
<b>Ashley Beckort</b> CAMPO Manager															
<b>Jessie Boshell</b> Long-Range Planner & Bike/Ped. Coordinator															
<b>Chelsea Cottingham</b> Floodplain Manager															
<b>Noah Pappas</b> Development Review Specialist															
<b>Andres Nieto</b> Development Review Specialist															
<b>Kyra Behrman</b> Development Review Specialist															
<b>Janie Meek</b> Office Manager															
<b>Audrey Lewis</b> Development Review Assistant															



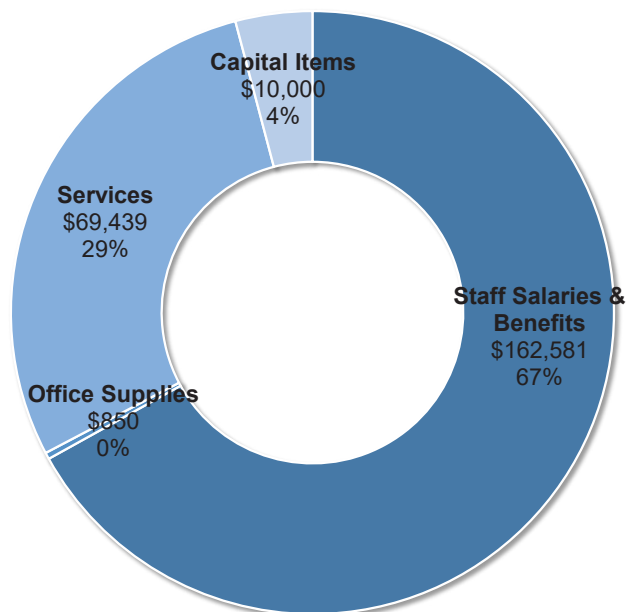
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### 2024 Planning Department Budget (Total: \$931,023)



The Columbus Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is the local entity charged with receiving, programming, and distributing federal funds for transportation projects. It is housed within the Planning Department. The federal government also provides funding for CAMPO's operations, for which Columbus and Bartholomew County must together provide a 20% match. Therefore, CAMPO's operations budget is separate from and in addition to the Planning Department budget.

### 2024 CAMPO Operations Budget (Total: \$242,870)





# JURISDICTIONS

## For Land Use Planning and Development Regulation

The Planning Department facilitates the work of the City of Columbus, Bartholomew County, and Joint District Plan Commissions and Boards of Zoning Appeals.

- **Plan Commission:** The Plan Commission is the primary authority for land use and development policy and regulation in each jurisdiction. The Plan Commissions make recommendations to the legislative body (Columbus City Council, Bartholomew County Commissioners, or Joint District Council) for each jurisdiction on land use policies (in the form of the Comprehensive Plan), land use regulations (the Zoning Ordinance), and subdivision development standards (the Subdivision Control Ordinance), as well as specific requests for zoning map changes. The Plan Commissions make final determinations on specific subdivision and site development plan requests from property owners and developers.

2024 City of Columbus Members: Melanie Henderson, Zack Ellison, Evan Kleinhenz, Andrew Beckort, Laura Garrett, Keerthi Alapati, Michael Kinder, Barry Kastner, Dennis Baute, Dave Bush, and Chris Bartells.

2024 Bartholomew County Members: John Prohaska, Kathy Thompson, Mike Speaker, Arnold Haskell, Debbie Flohr, Tony London, Tom Finke, Cindy Finkel, and Jorge Morales.

2024 Joint District Members: Ron Hoffman, Jamie Turner, Tim Barrett, Andrew Beckort, Keerthi Alapati, Larry Kleinhenz, Carl Lienhoop, Keith Sells, and Alvn Balmer. There was also an open position on this commission.

- **Board of Zoning Appeals:** The Board of Zoning Appeals is a quasi-judicial body that makes final determinations on specific requests by property owners and developers for exceptions from the established land use regulations found in the zoning ordinance, as well as requests for approval for any land uses listed by the zoning ordinance as “conditional”.

2024 City of Columbus Members: Michael Kinder, Grant Hale, Charlie Hammon, Chuck Doup, and Zack Ellison.

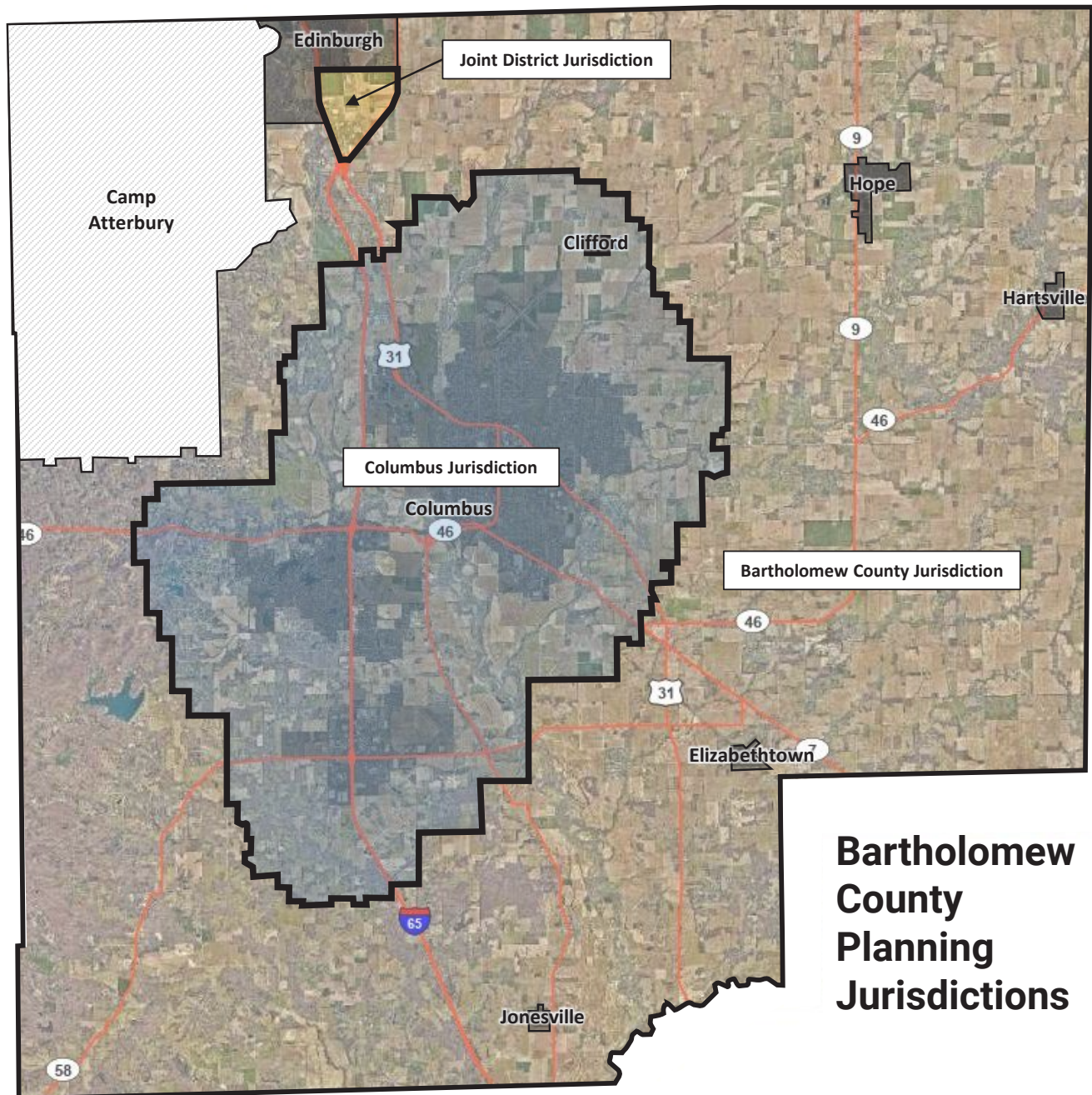
2024 Bartholomew County Members: Eric Scheidt, Arnold Haskell, David Flohr, Roger Glick, and Mike Speaker.

2024 Joint District Members: Eric Frey, Daniel Teter, Tim Douglas, and Jared Dickey. There was also an open position on this board.



The geographic jurisdiction of each unit of government is described and shown below:

- **Columbus:** The City of Columbus has jurisdiction for all land within the corporate limits of the City, as well as a specific extraterritorial jurisdiction that extends approximately 2 miles from the City limits.
- **Bartholomew County:** Bartholomew County has jurisdiction for all unincorporated land within the County, excluding the extraterritorial jurisdictions exercised by Columbus and Edinburgh and the approximately 2.5 square miles within the jurisdiction of the Edinburgh / Bartholomew / Columbus Joint District Plan Commission.
- **Joint District:** The Edinburgh / Bartholomew / Columbus Joint District Plan Commission has jurisdiction over an area of approximately 2.5 square miles bounded by a triangle formed by county road 900 North, I-65, and US 31. The Joint District is the only one of its kind in Indiana and was created through special legislation. The Joint District, per its inter-local agreement, shall be in existence until 90% of the area has been developed.





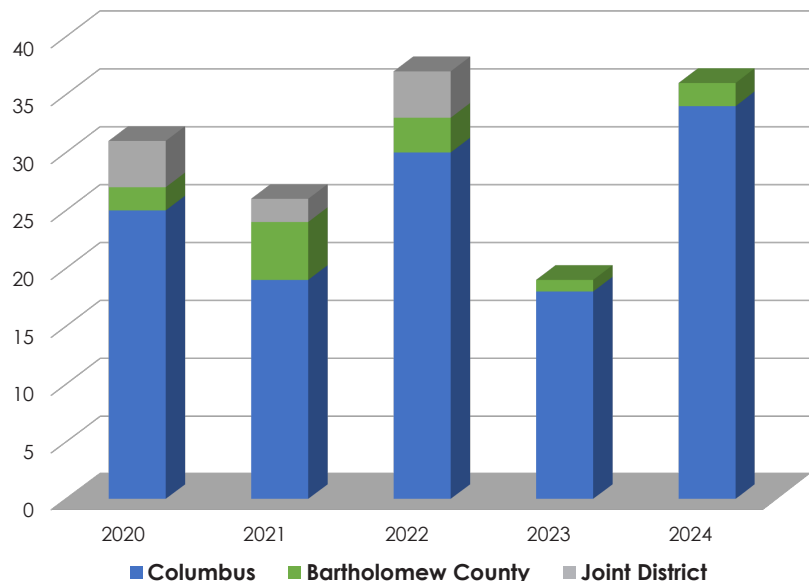
# GUIDING GROWTH

## Plan Commission Activity Summary

The following pages describe the work of the Plan Commissions, including rezoning, subdivision, and site development plan activity. The City of Columbus Plan Commission is also tasked with reviewing annexation requests.

- **Annexation:** Annexation is the act of adding territory to the City of Columbus. The Plan Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council on all annexation requests.
- **Rezoning:** Rezoning is the act of changing the designation of a property on the official zoning map. These designations, or “districts”, form the basis for land use regulation. Rezoning is a legislative act, with the role of the Plan Commission being to make a recommendation on each request to the local legislative body, the City Council for example, in the case of Columbus.
- **Subdivision:** Subdivision is the act of dividing property into additional lots for the purpose of sale or lease. Often this also includes the construction of new infrastructure, such as streets and storm sewers, to serve the new lots. The role of the Plan Commissions is to review “major” subdivisions and any others involving a request for relief from their jurisdiction’s adopted regulations for land division and the design of public infrastructure (the Subdivision Control Ordinance).
- **Site Development Plan:** Site development plans describe the design of new development within specifically designated site development plan zoning districts. These districts represent circumstances in which a higher degree of discretion is needed in the application of land use regulations.

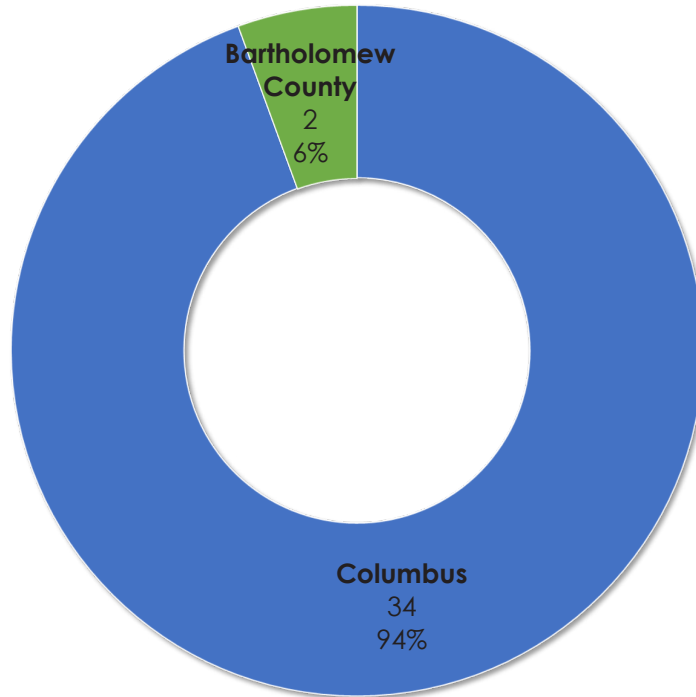
Plan Commission Business Item Trends



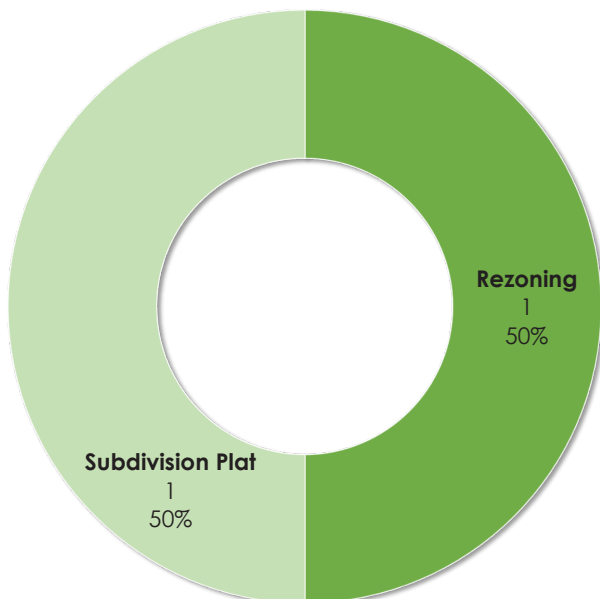


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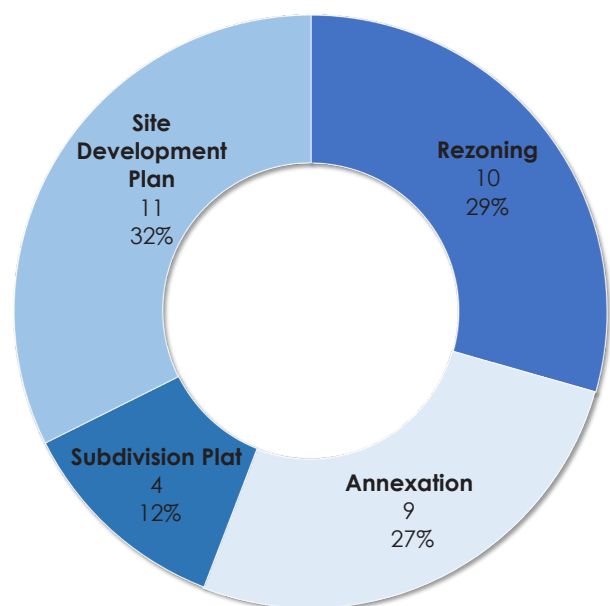
**2024 Plan Commission Activity by Jurisdiction**  
Number of Business Items & Percent of the Total



**2024 Bartholomew County  
Plan Commission Activity**



**2024 City of Columbus  
Plan Commission Activity**

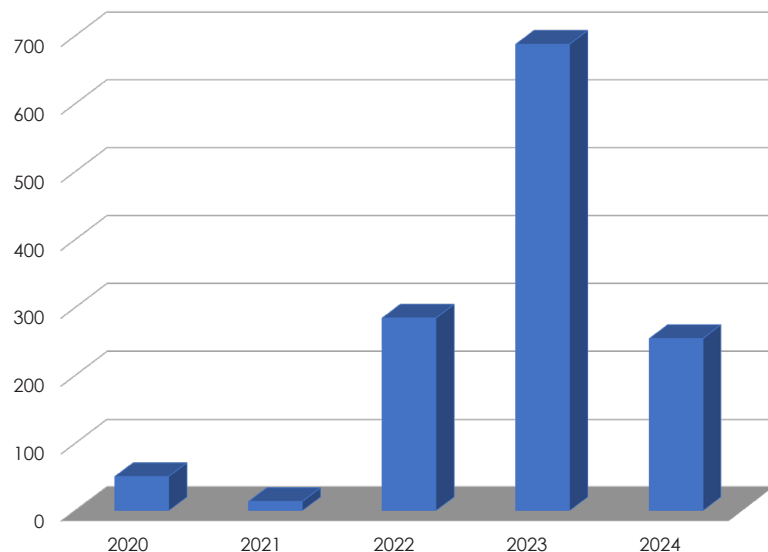


# Annexation Summary

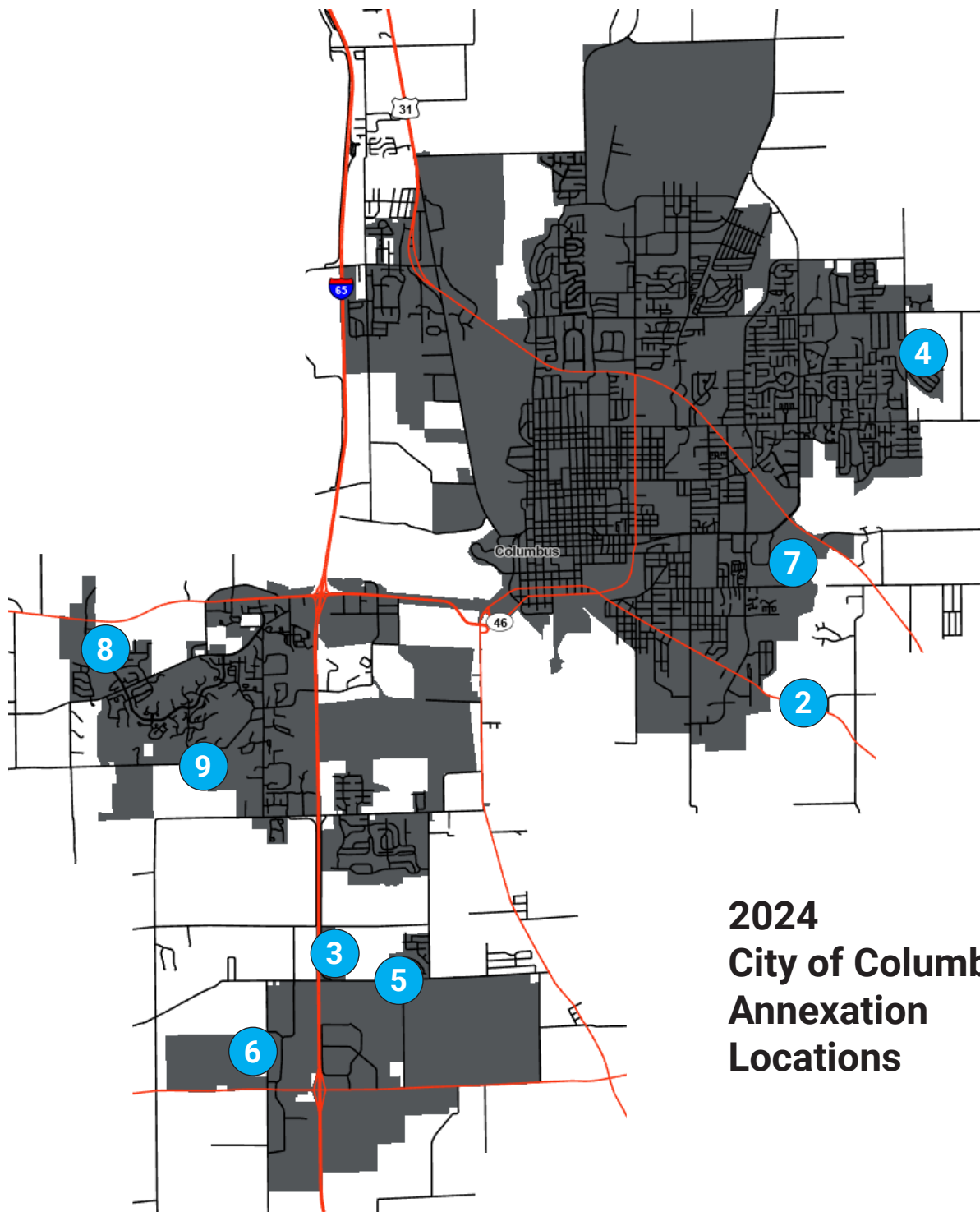
## 2024 City of Columbus Annexation Requests

		Property Size	Intended Future Use (if applicable)	Plan Commission Recommendation	Result
Columbus Right-of-Way Annexation ANX-2024-001	1	40.97 Acres	Not Applicable	Favorable	Approved
JOLI Development ANX-2024-002	2	289.44 Acres	Residential	None	Denied
Toyota Material Handling ANX-2024-003	3	70.53 Acres	Industrial	Favorable	Approved
Snitko Holdings ANX-2024-004	4	15 Acres	Residential	Favorable	Approved
Richardson Annexation ANX-2024-005	5	1.8 Acres	Residential	Favorable	Approved
Jeremy & Cynthia Thompson ANX-2024-006	6	18.79 Acres	Industrial	Favorable	Approved
Force Holdings ANX-2024-007	7	95.85 Acres	Agriculture	Favorable	Approved
Aaron Strickland ANX-2024-008	8	11.05 Acres	Residential	Favorable	Approved
Mickel Properties ANX-2024-009	9	0.39 Acres	Residential	Favorable	Approved

Columbus Acres Annexed







## 2024 City of Columbus Annexation Locations

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# Rezoning Summary

## 2024 City of Columbus Rezoning Requests

	Property Size	Requested Change	Plan Commission Recommendation	Result
Toyota Material Handling RZ-2024-001	65.03 Acres	AP (Agriculture) to I2 (Industrial)	Favorable	Approved
HMGO Real Estate RZ-2024-002	15,795 sq ft	RS2 (Residential) to RT (Residential)	Favorable	Approved
Snitko Holdings RZ-2024-003	15 Acres	AP (Agriculture) to RS1 (Residential)	Favorable	Approved
Housing Partnerships RZ-2024-004	15 Acres	P (Public/Semi-Public Facilities) to RM (Residential)	Favorable	Approved
Vision Housing - Omega Drive RZ-2024-005	15.53 Acres	I2 (Industrial) to RM (Residential)	Favorable	Approved
Vision Housing West RZ-2024-006	19.2 Acres	I1 (Industrial) to RM (Residential)	Favorable	Approved
Jeremy & Cynthia Thompson RZ-2024-007	18.79 Acres	AP (Agriculture) to I3 (Industrial)	Favorable	Approved
Cummins RZ-2024-008	10.5 Acres	I3 (Industrial) to I1 (Industrial)	Favorable	Approved
Columbus Redevelopment Commission RZ-2024-009	20.91 Acres	I3 (Industrial) to I2 (Industrial)	Favorable	Approved
Aaron Strickland RZ-2024-010	11.05 Acres	AP (Agriculture) to RS2 (Residential)	Favorable	Approved

## 2024 Bartholomew County Rezoning Requests

	Property Size	Requested Change	Plan Commission Recommendation	Result
Force Holdings RZ-2024-001	68.25 Acres	AG (Agriculture) to I2 (Industrial)	Favorable	Approved



# Site Development Plan Summary

## 2024 City of Columbus Site Development Plan Requests

	Zoning District	Request Summary	Result
<b>Lillian Schmitt Elementary School</b> DP-2024-001	P	Building addition, visitor parking, & bus circulation changes.	Approved
<b>Columbus Municipal Airport</b> DP-2024-002	P	New access drive on Arnold Street.	Approved
<b>11th &amp; Washington Streets Project (by Rubicon)</b> DP-2023-026	CD	New mixed-use development (parking garage, 120 multi-family units, & commercial space).	Approved
<b>Columbus Food Mart</b> DP-2024-003	CN	Additional business signs.	Approved with Modifications
<b>Bartholomew County Public Library</b> DP-2024-004	P	Change of use from a worship facility to a branch campus of the Bartholomew County Public Library.	Approved
<b>Hush Aesthetics &amp; Wellness</b> DP-2024-005	CD	Additional business signs.	Denied
<b>Roviar Building (Goodwill)</b> DP-2024-006	CN	A modification of the Zoning Ordinance parking standards for a new school use.	Approved
<b>Dunn Stadium</b> DP-2024-007	P	Addition of a pickleball facility.	Approved
<b>Burger King</b> DP-2024-008	CR	A modification of the Zoning Ordinance sign standards for a new/larger sign.	Approved
<b>Roviar Building</b> DP-2024-009	CN	New dumpster area and enclosure.	Approved
<b>Columbus Food Mart (Gas Station Signs)</b> DP-2024-011	CN	Additional business signs.	Approved

*A rendering of the Rubicon Development project approved by the Plan Commission as a site development plan for the southwest corner of the 11th and Washington Street intersection in downtown Columbus.*



# Subdivision Summary

The Columbus, Bartholomew County, and Joint District Subdivision Control Ordinances provide for several types of land subdivision, depending on the complexity of what is proposed. Administrative subdivisions are used to adjust existing property lines. Agricultural subdivisions create new agriculture parcels that cannot be developed for other uses. Minor subdivisions create new lots which can be served by existing streets and other infrastructure. And, major subdivisions involve new streets or other public improvements. In 2024, the Planning Department staff processed 59 administrative and agricultural subdivisions, 32 in the jurisdiction of Columbus and the remaining 27 in the jurisdiction of Bartholomew County.

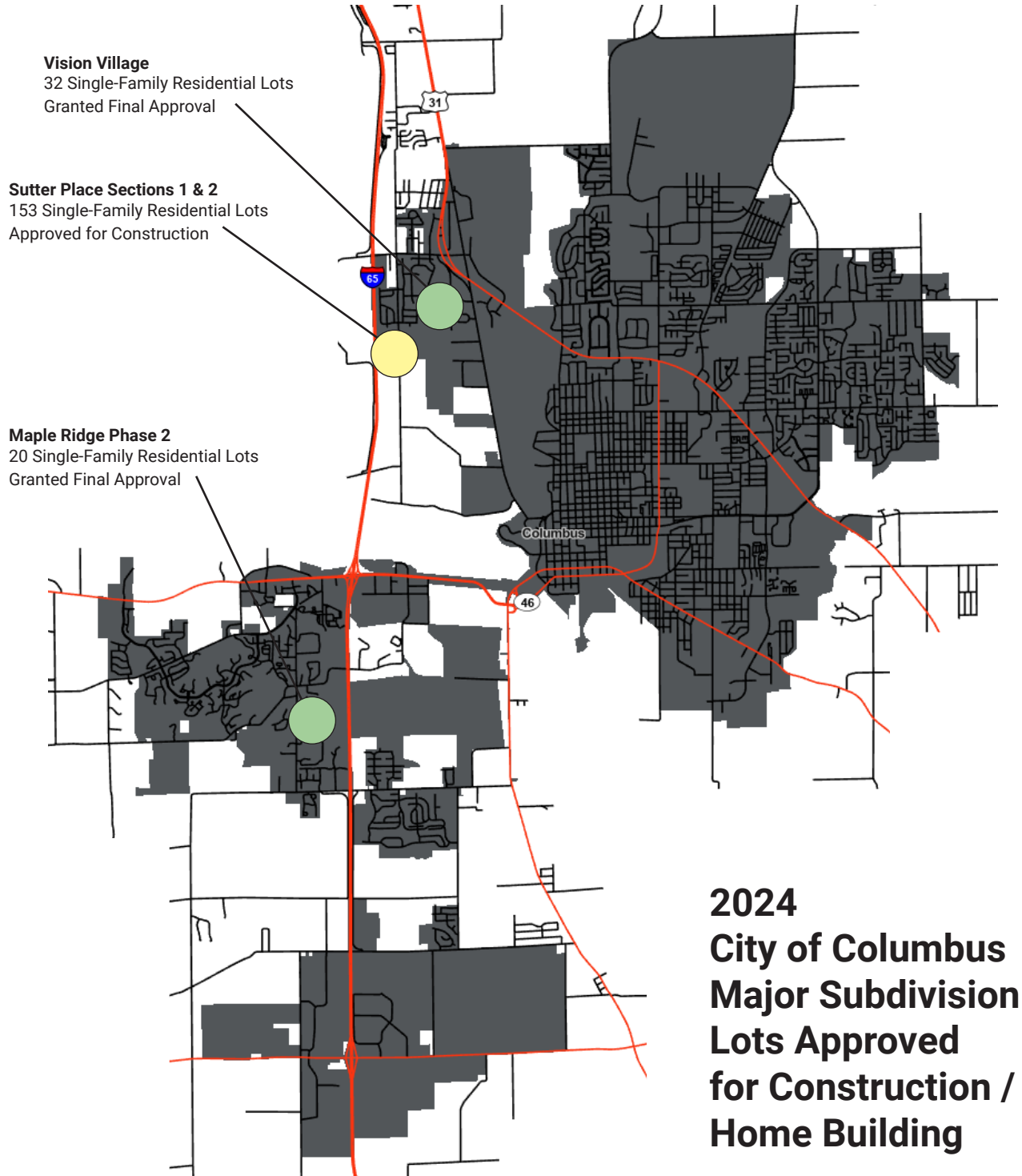
Minor and major subdivisions are processed in two steps, a preliminary plat considered by each jurisdiction's Plan Commission or Plat Committee and a subsequent final plat reviewed by the Planning Department staff. For major subdivisions, the approval of construction plans for infrastructure and the building of those improvements may occur before or simultaneous with the final plat approval. The 2024 Columbus minor and major subdivision approvals are summarized below. For Bartholomew County, 15 minor subdivisions were considered and approved, resulting in 15 new residential lots and 1 new industrial lot.

## 2024 City of Columbus Preliminary Plats Considered

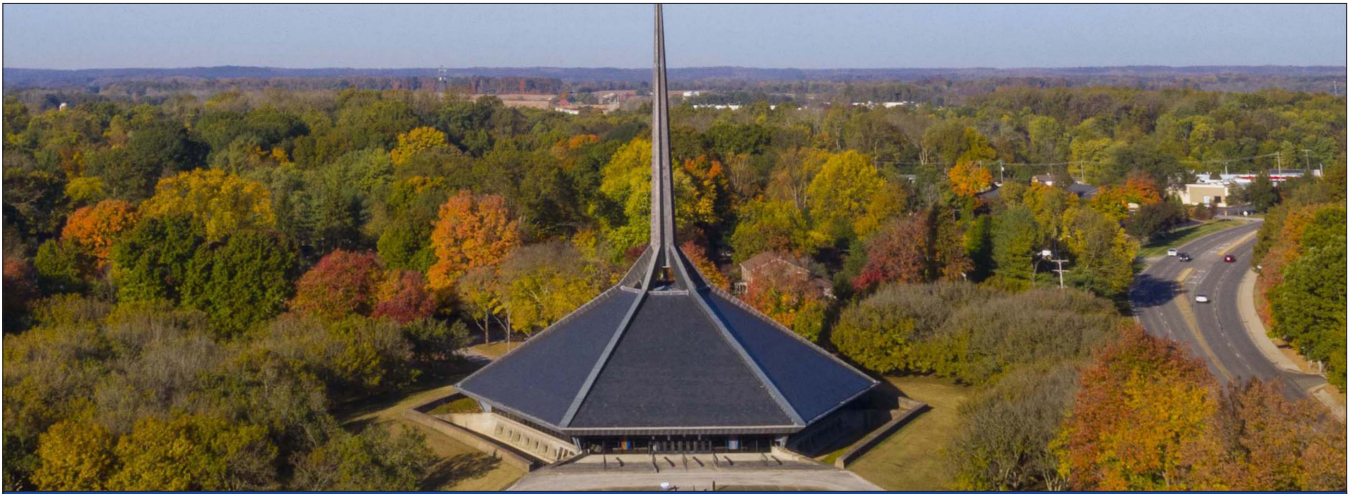
	New Lots	Anticipated Future Land Use	Approval Authority	Results
Drive-In Commercial Park Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat Revision PP-2024-001	0	Residential / Commercial	Plan Commission	Approved - May 8, 2024
Minor Subdivisions Summary (7 Total Subdivisions)	6	Residential (6 Lots)	Plat Committee (4 Subdivisions) Plan Commission (3 Subdivisions)	Approved (6 Subdivisions) Withdrawn (1 Subdivision)
Lots Granted Preliminary Approval:		6		

## 2024 City of Columbus Infrastructure Construction and/or Final Plats Considered

	New Lots	Anticipated Future Land Use	Construction / Final Plat Status & Date
Maple Ridge Phase 2 FP-2023-002	20	Single-Family Residential	Final Plat Approved - March 19, 2024
Sutter Place Section 1 FP-2024-001	50	Single-Family Residential	Construction Approved (without Final Plat) - April 23, 2024
Vision Village FP-2024-002	32	Single-Family Residential	Construction Approved (without Final Plat) - April 16, 2024 Final Plat Approved - July 15, 2024
Sutter Place Section 2 FP-2024-003	103	Single-Family Residential	Construction Approved (without Final Plat) - Sept. 10, 2024
Creekview Section 4 FP-2024-005	1	Commercial	Application Submitted / Approval Pending
Taylor Grove Phase 2 FP-2024-006	7	Single-Family Residential	Application Submitted / Approval Pending
Minor Subdivisions Summary (6 Total Subdivisions)	6	Single-Family Residential (6 Lots)	Final Plats Approved
Lots Pending Construction / Final Approval:		8	
Lots Approved For Construction:		153	
Lots Granted Final Approval:		58	







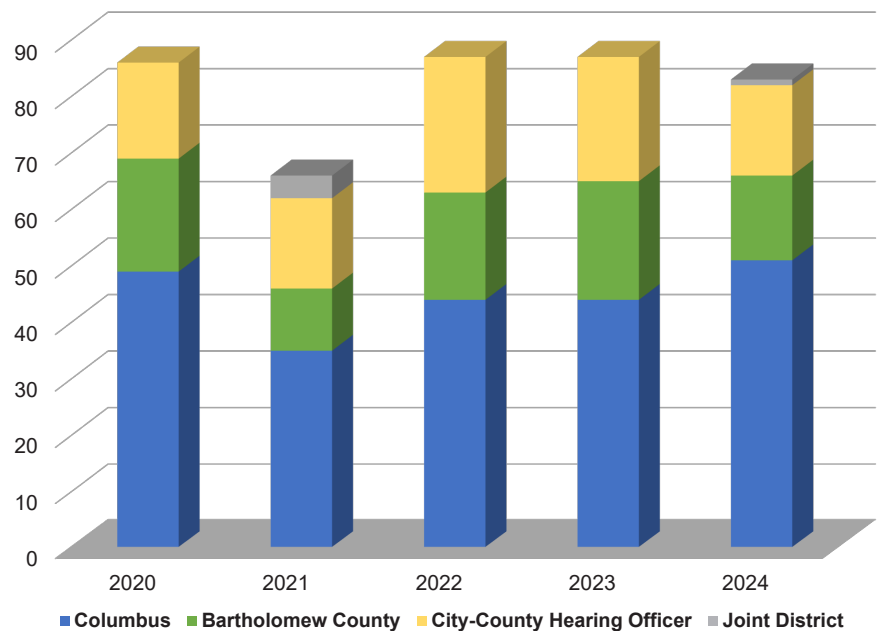
# SERVING UNIQUE PROPERTIES

## Board of Zoning Appeals Activity Summary

The Boards of Zoning Appeals consider case-by-case variances from the use regulations and development standards (height, setback, etc.) provided by the zoning ordinance. The Boards also consider proposals for those uses that the zoning ordinance identifies as conditional – meaning that they are likely appropriate, but require case-by-case review of each's details and its proposed location. As an alternative to a hearing by the full Board, both the City of Columbus and Bartholomew County use a Board of Zoning Appeals Hearing Officer.

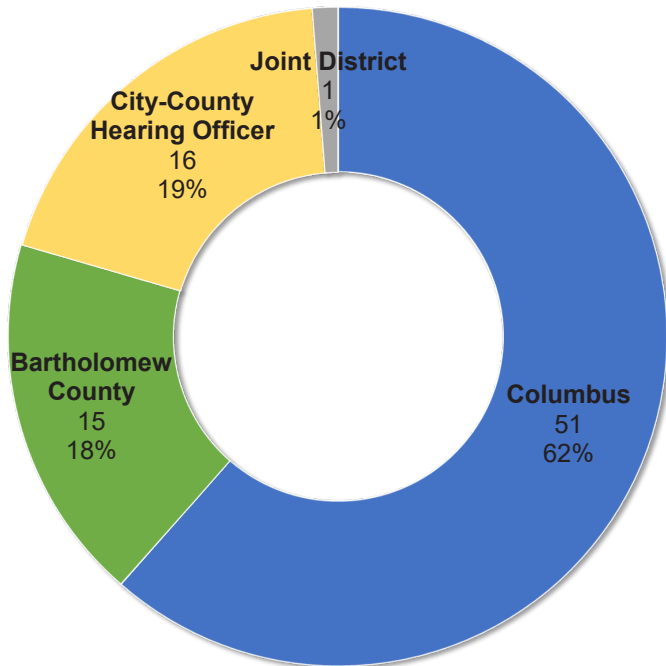
The analysis of variance and conditional use requests is one aspect of identifying changing land use and development trends as well as aspects of the zoning ordinance that may not be appropriately calibrated for the community. For example, variance requests on the same topic that are frequently granted may signal a need to revise that regulation.

### Board of Zoning Appeals Business Item Trends

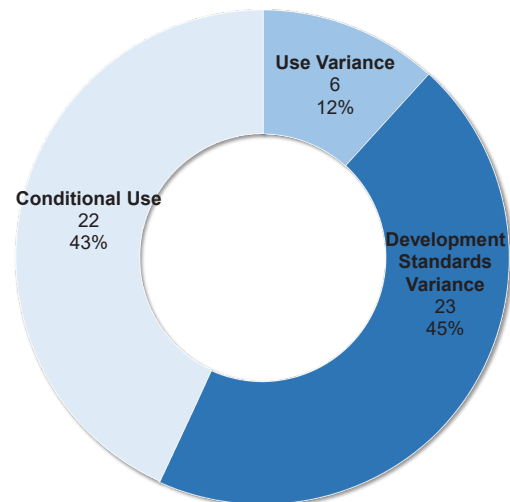


## 2024 Board of Zoning Appeals Activity

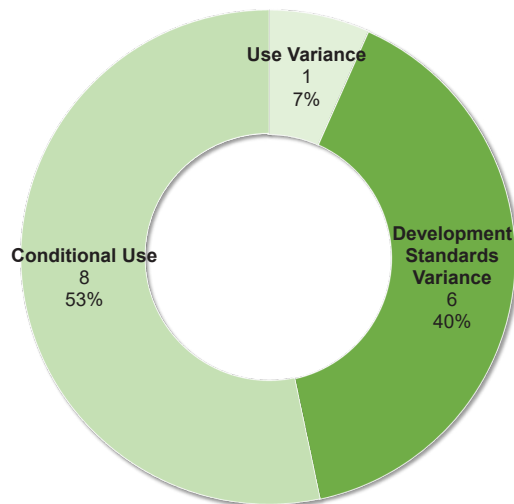
(Number of Applications & Percent of the Total)



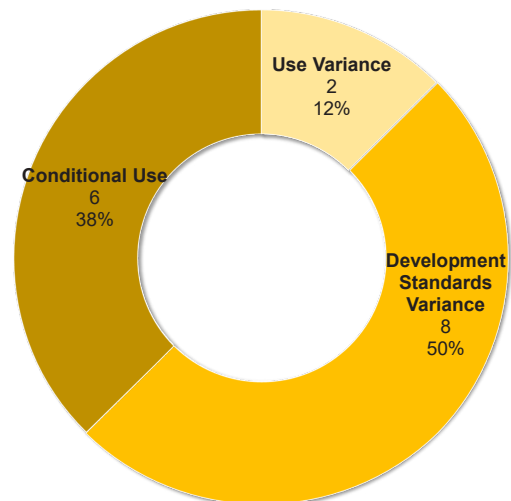
## 2024 City of Columbus Board of Zoning Appeals Activity



## 2024 Bartholomew County Board of Zoning Appeals Activity



## 2024 City - County Hearing Officer Activity



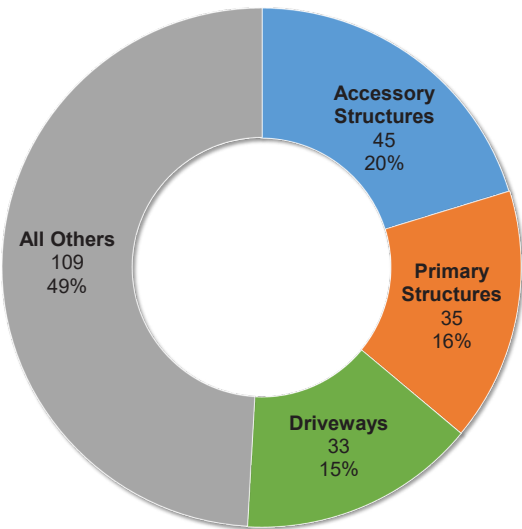
# Variance & Conditional Use Approval Rate

Below are the approval rates for all variance and conditional use requests by all hearing authorities – the City, County, and Joint District Boards of Zoning Appeals, as well as the Hearing Officer.

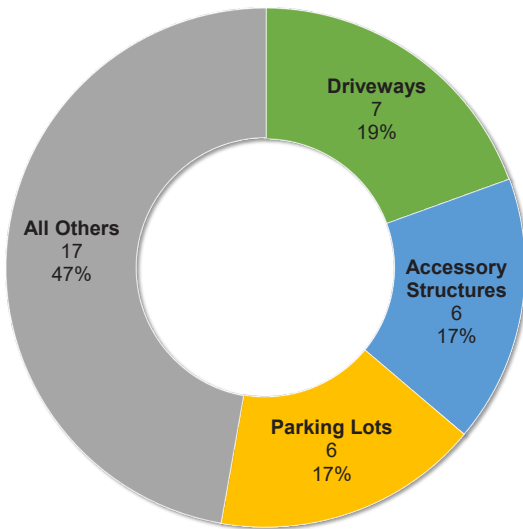
5-Year Approval Rate: **90%**      2024 Approval Rate: **90%**

## Development Standards Variance Most Numerous Approvals (by Regulation Topic Area)

5-Year Trend

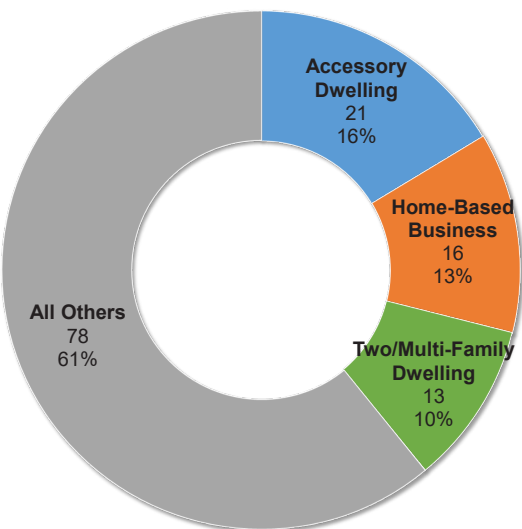


2024 Approvals

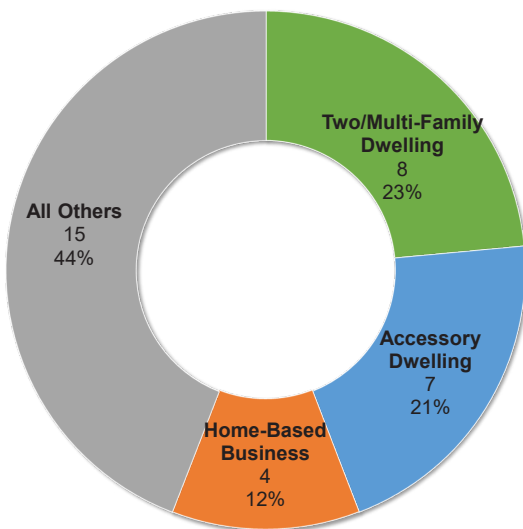


## Conditional Use Most Numerous Approvals (by Use Category)

5-Year Trend



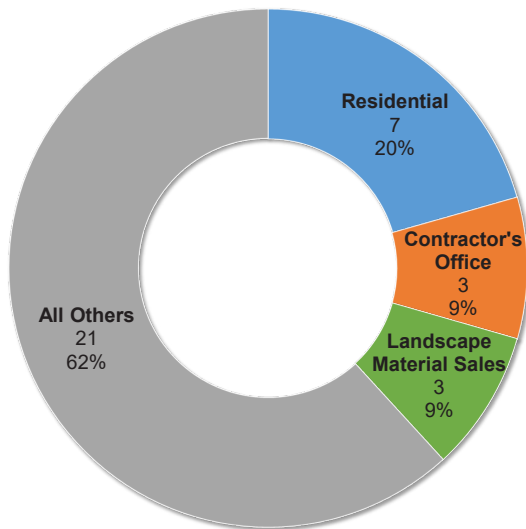
2024 Approvals



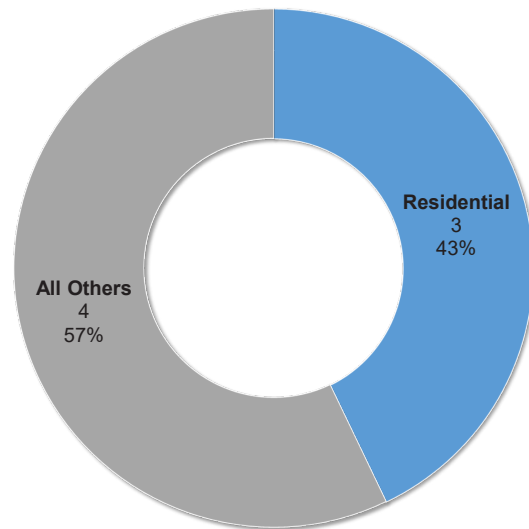


## Use Variance Most Numerous Approvals (by Use Category)

5-Year Trend



2024 Approvals



### Housing and the Board of Zoning Appeals

This Board of Zoning Appeals data can often reflect clear trends in development priorities in the community. In recent years, for example, the demand for rural “wedding barns” and event venues, as well as additional child care options, has been clear through an examination of Board of Zoning Appeals request trends. In many instances, those new facilities required case-by-case conditional use approval through the Board. For 2024, demands of the housing market, specifically efforts by local builders and developers to satisfy a need for affordable housing is evident. The most numerous conditional use approvals were for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as well as duplex and small multi-family projects as infill development in existing neighborhoods. The increased demand for these less-common, more-affordable housing options was also reflected in the use variance approvals. In the City of Columbus in 2024, these requests yielded 4 new ADUs, 6 new units as duplexes, and 16 new units as apartment homes or other types of multi-family development. In a less obvious but equally impactful way, the development standards variances also reflect this housing need as builders seek relief from parking, setback, and other requirements to enable infill or more dense housing projects.



*A new duplex approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals on a vacate lot in a near-downtown Columbus neighborhood.*



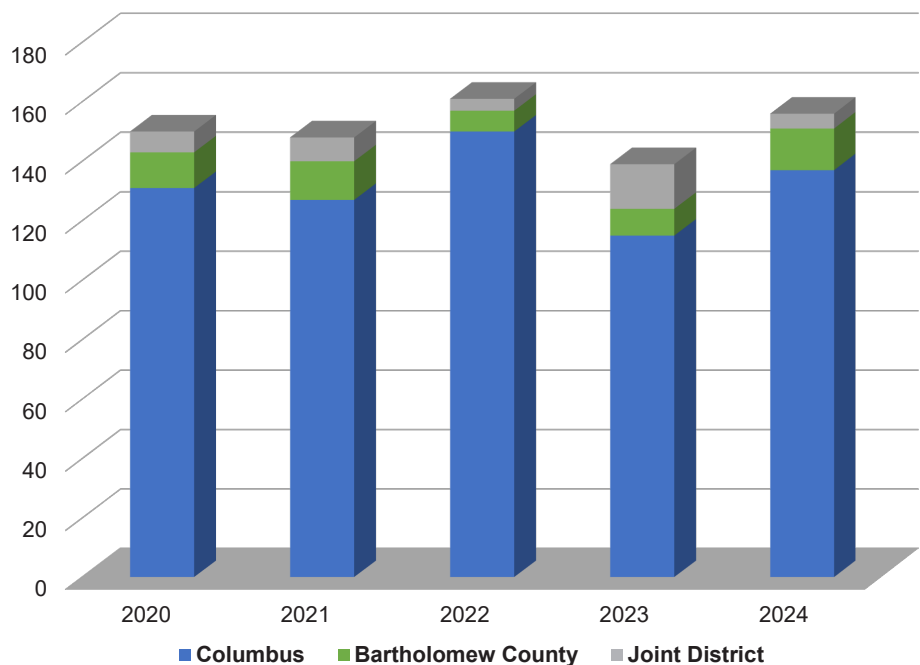
# SUPPORTING INVESTMENT

## Zoning Compliance Administration

Zoning Compliance Certificates (ZCCs) are used to verify the compliance of a development proposal with the adopted zoning regulations of the City, County, or Joint District, as appropriate. Zoning Compliance Certificates are approved administratively by the Planning Department staff, with no discretionary review by a Board or Commission required. The processing of Zoning Compliance Certificate requests includes verification that the appropriate materials have been submitted, visiting the property, researching any previous approvals on the property, applying the applicable zoning ordinance requirements, working with the applicant to address any areas of noncompliance, documenting the approval, and conducting an inspection of the completed project. This and the following page document the Zoning Compliance Certificate applications reviewed.

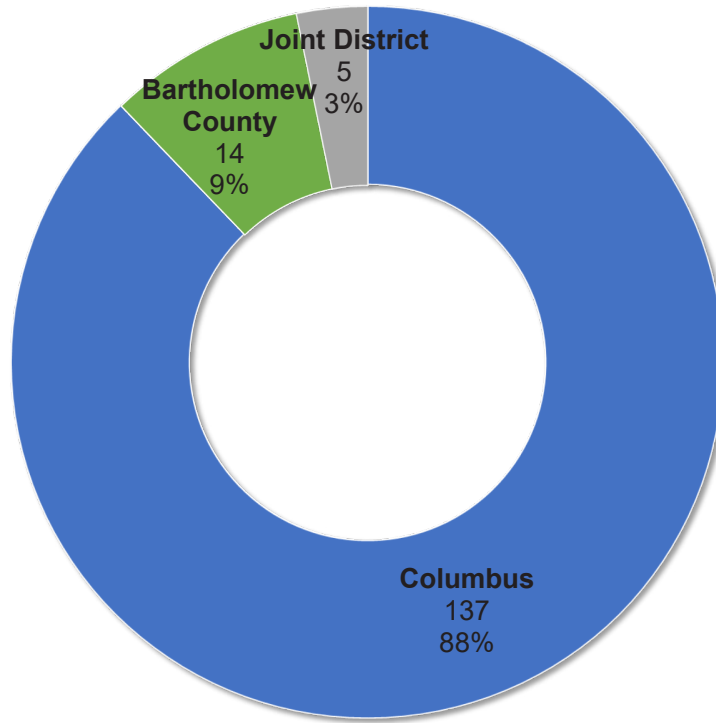
- **Site Plan:** Refers to proposed new construction on a property, such as a new building; a building addition; or changes to landscaping, lighting, or parking areas.
- **Site Development Plan Minor Modification:** Similar to a site plan, refers to a minor building addition or change to landscaping, lighting, or parking areas on a property in a site development plan zoning district where significant development is subject to approval by the Plan Commission.
- **Floodplain Alteration:** Refers to the placement of soil or other material that raises the ground level in a floodplain.
- **Temporary Use or Structure:** A building or use of property that is only present for a short duration, usually 60 days in a calendar year or less.
- **Sign:** A new sign placed on private property intended to be viewed from adjacent streets or other properties.

**Zoning Compliance Certificate Trend**

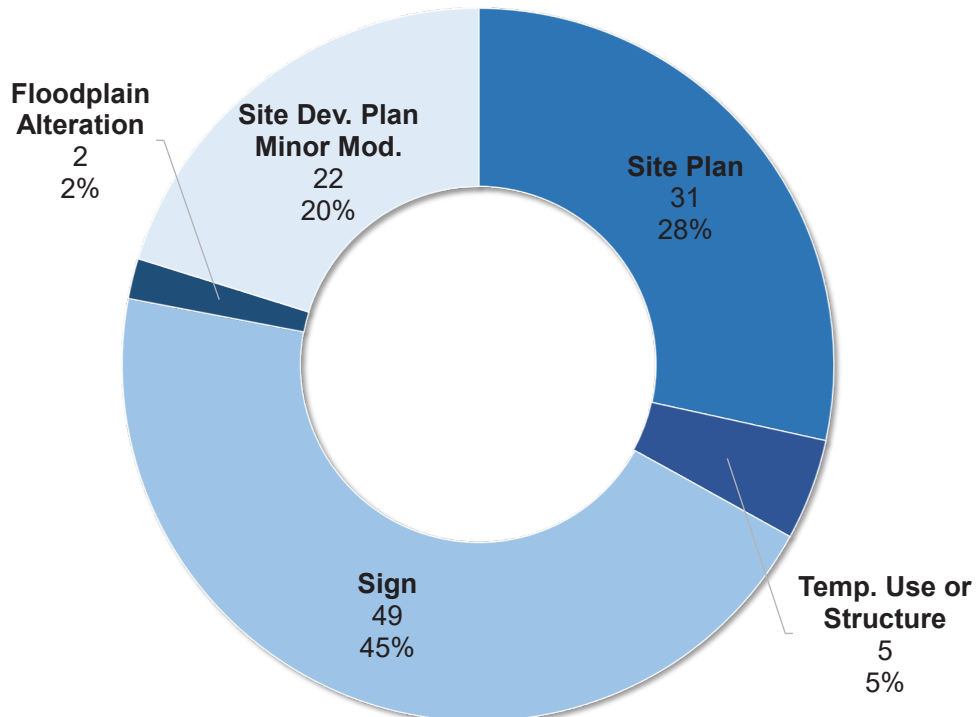


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**2024 Zoning Compliance Certificate Activity**  
(Number of Applications and Percent of the Total)



**2024 City of Columbus Zoning Compliance Certificate Activity**  
(Number of Applications and Percent of the Total)







# ANTICIPATING NEEDS

## Long-Range Planning & Special Projects

A primary role of the Planning Department is to serve as the keeper of the City of Columbus and Bartholomew County Comprehensive Plans, the adopted policies that provide long-term guidance for community growth and development. In that role, the Planning Department initiates updates and additions to those plans, conducts studies of relevant topics, and supports implementation of recommended programs and actions. The following pages describe the way in which the Planning Department fulfilled this portion of its mission.

### Columbus Strategic Growth Study

In 2024, the Planning Department began to update the Columbus Strategic Growth Study, which was last updated in 2017. The Study analyses critical services such as water service, sewer service, fire protection, and road conditions, as well as floodplains and other natural features to assess development potential and identify the most promising future development locations. The effort began with the updating of existing base maps and research on options and alternatives for making the document more readable and user friendly. The Planning Department staff also participated in a workshop facilitated by the Greater Columbus Economic Development Corporation and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation making a similar assessment of Columbus area industrial sites.

### Columbus Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Implementation

The Planning Department continued to support and facilitate implementation the Columbus Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 2024. Among these activities, the Planning Department collaborated with the Engineering Department to lead the installation of wayfinding signage along the People Trail consistent with the Plan's branding and wayfinding goals and guide. In the fall of 2024, the Planning Department facilitated a working session on wayfinding for the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Team (a working group of City departments and other local organizations with a mission and/or resources related to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure). The Team identified numerous locations that are considered decision points for Trail users and deemed appropriate for a People Trail wayfinding sign and/or pavement marking installation. The Planning Department is finalizing this initial wayfinding installation map with the identified locations, with sign and marking installation expected in 2025.



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## Columbus Subdivision Control Ordinance Open Space Updates

The Plan Commission's consideration, in recent years, of several large residential subdivisions prompted a broad Commission discussion of parks and open space, how those amenities grow with the City, and the role the Plan Commission can and should serve in that effort. The Commission also noted that the City's Subdivision Control Ordinance does not provide clear standards on that topic. A study committee facilitated by the Planning Department and comprised of Planning Department and Plan Commission members, as well as Parks Department and Parks Board members, was tasked with exploring this topic and making recommendations to the Plan Commission. By late 2024, that committee's work resulted in recommendations for revisions to the open space provisions of the Subdivision Control Ordinance, specifically to include an open space requirement for new subdivisions based on the size and number of lots proposed. The recommendations were presented to the Plan Commission for discussion in December 2024, with formal consideration by the Commission and City Council expected in early 2025.

## Columbus Front Door Overlay Zoning District

In the mid-1990's the City of Columbus established a Front Door Committee and effort to create, through architecture and infrastructure design, a unique entry into the City of Columbus from I-65 and along the Jonathan Moore Pike corridor. Today, these efforts can best be seen through the red color scheme bridges and other infrastructure that was installed. However, the ultimate goal was to apply a vision to the entire built environment, including the shops, restaurants, and other businesses that line Jonathon Moore Pike, and to ensure that thoughtful architecture and design were instilled in those developments.

In the fall of 2023, the Planning Department staff began consideration of the zoning regulations and architectural influences in the area. This included researching past Front Door plans and documents, as well as completing field research on the buildings that have been constructed along the corridor thus far, particularly those in the Columbus Crossing Planned Unit Development (PUD). This commercial area, which had been proposed by Menard's in the 1990's while the Front Door infrastructure improvements were under construction, was structured to provide the Plan Commission with oversight and a mandate to require "quality design" that reflects the overall Front Door goals for architectural quality. At the same time, Columbus Crossing created an inequity of regulation along the corridor, with new structures within the PUD held to higher standards than those beyond it.

After collecting data, the Planning Department staff then drafted architectural design guidelines that were based off the existing Columbus Crossing buildings as the potential baseline for the larger Front Door area. Features such as facade materials, orientation of the building entrance, screening of storage areas and mechanical equipment, and signs were considered. The Planning Department also made contact with Columbus Crossing's developers and existing businesses to discuss the idea of replacing the PUD and its broad Plan Commission discretion with similarly-intended but more clear and widely applicable Front Door guidelines.

The proposal for a Front Door Overlay Zoning District that would consistently and predictably implement the goals of the Front Door project along the Jonathan Moore Pike corridor was introduced at the February 2024 Plan Commission meeting. The intent was to create basic architectural standards for the entire Front Door area, beyond just the confines of Columbus Crossing. It would also replace the unguided discretion of the Plan Commission within the PUD with that same discretion over the larger Front Door area, but with the new guidelines providing a consistent, predictable approach to architecture. The Front Door Overlay Zoning District was favorably recommended by the Plan Commission on May 8 and adopted by the City Council on June 12, 2024.



*Imagery from the 1990's Front Door Project.*

## Columbus Housing Study and Zoning Ordinance Updates

In 2024, Planning Department Staff provided assistance to the Community Development Department, which led the Columbus Housing Study in collaboration with RDG Consulting. This effort included stakeholder meetings hosted by RDG, two public open houses, the collection of local, state, and national housing data, and the application of housing trends and best practices. The Planning Department role included supporting Community Development through consultant selection and contract review, providing local housing building permit data and analysis, and advising the project team on local development conditions and trends. As part of this effort, the Planning Department also analyzed the prominence of private covenants, commitments, and restrictions in local neighborhoods and the limitations they place on housing and development options. The Planning Department also was asked to review and comment on draft products created by RDG.

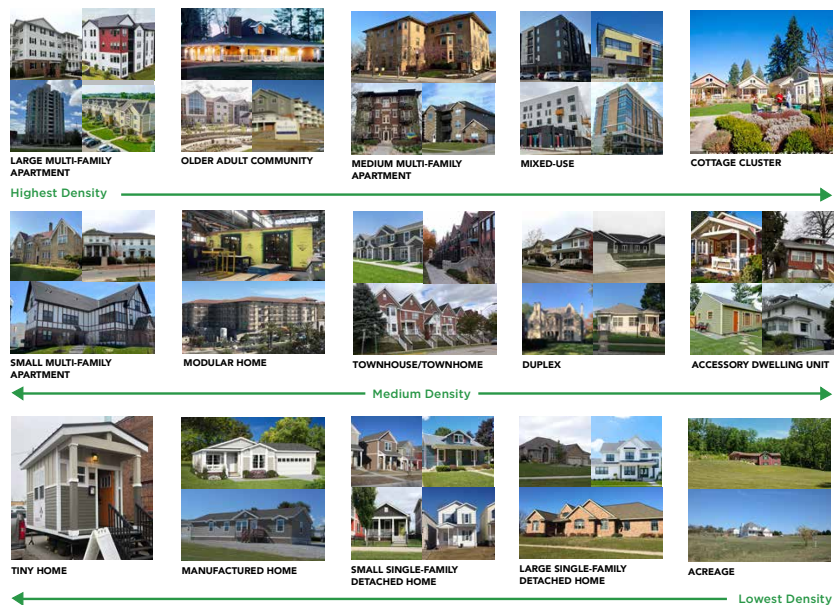
In September of 2024, the housing study was finalized and RDG presented the findings at a public forum, with the public encouraged to ask questions and discuss the results. The housing study identifies broad housing need in the community, establishes housing goals, and recommends local government measures to help meet that need.

In parallel with the Housing Study, the Planning Department began a review of zoning ordinance housing-related uses and development standards. The goal was to identify potential regulatory barriers and opportunities for supporting more diverse housing options in the community. Particular emphasis was placed on examining “missing middle” housing typologies as well as opportunities to add housing density. Missing middle housing typologies and added density, as indicated by the Housing Study, will produce a more attainable housing product for the citizens and workforce in Columbus. This zoning ordinance research, together with the Housing Study results, are intended to inform proposed zoning ordinance revisions in 2025.

FIGURE 1.5: PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM (UNITS, PERCENT OF PRICE POINT)

New Housing Price Points (rows equal 100%)	Detached Single-Family	Smaller Lot Single-Family Detached and Attached	Single-Family Attached and Townhomes	High Density Townhomes and Multi-family
Target Average Gross Density*	<4 units per acre	4-8 units per acre	8-16 units per acre	>16 units per acre
<b>Owner-Occupied</b>				
Under \$125,000	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ
\$125,000-\$225,000 <sup>Λ</sup>	0 (0%)	74 (30%)	99 (40%)	74 (30%)
\$225,000-\$300,000 <sup>Λ</sup>	159 (40%)	100 (25%)	100 (25%)	40 (10%)
\$300,000-\$450,000 <sup>Λ</sup>	392 (60%)	131 (20%)	98 (15%)	33 (5%)
\$450,000+	487 (70%)	70 (10%)	104 (15%)	35 (5%)
<b>Renter-Occupied</b>				
Under \$500	N/A	44 (10%)	133 (30%)	265 (60%)
\$500-\$700	N/A	17 (10%)	51 (30%)	103 (60%)
\$700-\$1,000	N/A	29 (20%)	44 (30%)	73 (50%)
\$1,000-\$1,500	N/A	89 (30%)	89 (30%)	119 (40%)
\$1,500-\$2,000	N/A	81 (30%)	81 (30%)	108 (40%)
\$2,000+	N/A	122 (40%)	91 (30%)	91 (30%)
<b>Total by Housing Type</b>	1,039 (29%)	757 (21%)	891 (25%)	941 (26%)
<b>Total Acres</b>	320-360	120-140	80-100	60-90

Housing Type Images and Density Scale



Excerpts from the Columbus Housing Study providing a program for meeting identified housing demand (above) and examples of housing products of a variety of densities (below).



## Columbus Road Segments Annexation

In early 2024, the Planning Department concluded a project initiated in years past that examined the public roads on the perimeter of the City, identified the jurisdiction responsible - the City of Columbus or Bartholomew County - and recommended annexation where necessary to improve the clarity and/or efficiency of road maintenance. The Planning Department, together with the City's Engineering Department and Bartholomew County Highway Department had noted instances resulting from past annexations and changes over time in Indiana annexation law that left a patchwork of jurisdictional boundaries along roads at the edge of the City limits. In some cases, the City limits followed a road's centerline, in others portions of an entire road had been annexed with adjacent properties but the result was a pattern in which the road transitioned from within to outside of the City multiple times over a short distance. With Indiana law currently allowing entire roads adjacent to the City to be annexed and adopted City policy favoring the efficient provision of City and County services, the project sought to comprehensively clarify road jurisdiction through annexation. Working jointly with the City's Engineering and Public Works Departments as well as the County Highway Department, the Planning Department proposed the annexation of 29 segments of 22 different roads. The result would modify existing City-County agreements around maintenance and snow removal on these roads, adding to the City's responsibility 6.5 miles for street maintenance and 3.5 miles for snow removal. The proposed annexation received a favorable recommendation from the Plan Commission on February 14, 2024 and was completed by the City Council on April 2, 2024.



*Sawin Drive at the Villas of Stonecrest; an example of an included annexation correcting where the Columbus city limits had previously followed the road centerline.*

## Columbus Flood Risk Management Plan Update

The Planning Department, in its role as floodplain manager, is the keeper of the City of Columbus Flood Risk Management Plan. Developed following the flood of 2008, this Plan provides a detailed examination of local flood risk, as well as information and mitigation resources, and provides recommendations for long-term floodplain management. It also provides the background information for the companion Flood Response & Evacuation Plan, a document that guides preparation for and response to predicated flood events by local emergency management agencies. In addition to being a valued local resource, the Flood Risk Management Plan also demonstrates the City's commitment to proactive floodplain management and is a consideration in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System program (FEMA's CRS) that rewards proactive communities with discounts for local flood insurance policy holders. For continued consideration by FEMA, the Plan must be updated every 5 years. In 2025, the Planning Department initiated that update process by issuing a request for proposals from interested consulting engineers. By the end of 2024, Christopher B. Burke Engineering was chosen as project consultant. Work on Phase 1 of the update effort, a comprehensive review of the existing Plan, newly available data and resources, and emerging best practices, will begin in early 2025. The result will be an assessment of the current Plan and a scope of work for the subsequent Phase 2, which will provide the needed updates.



# IMPROVING TRAVEL

## The Work of CAMPO

Within the United States, developed areas with a population of over 50,000 are designated as “metropolitan planning areas” for the purpose of the distribution of federal transportation funds. Each of these areas receives a formula-based allocation of funding each year for transportation improvement projects. Eligibility requires each area to prepare, adopt, and maintain (1) a Metropolitan Transportation Plan that establishes an understanding of long-term transportation needs, (2) a Transportation Improvement Program that provides a short-term list of projects and their funding sources, and (3) a 2-year Unified Planning Work Program describing how local transportation needs are continuously evaluated.

For each designated metropolitan planning area a “metropolitan planning organization” (MPO) is formed to (1) coordinate between the cities, counties, and towns that each area includes, (2) prepare and maintain the necessary transportation plans, (3) manage the distribution of funds for transportation improvement projects, and (4) provide the documentation necessary for federal oversight of the provided funding.

The Columbus Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is the MPO for the metropolitan planning area that includes the City of Columbus and Bartholomew County. The Planning Department serves as the staff for CAMPO and is responsible for its administration. The staff works under the direction of the CAMPO Policy Board

## 2022 CAMPO-Funded Transportation Project

Lowell Road Improvements – Total Construction Cost: \$3,081,645 / Local Funds: \$616,329

The 2024, CAMPO provided federal funds covering 80% of the cost of the Lowell Road reconstruction project. This effort rebuilt the road between US 31 and county road 200 West and included the installation of a middle turn lane, sidewalk and shared use path, storm sewer infrastructure, curb and gutter, and a roundabout at the 200 West intersection.







# MINIMIZING FLOOD RISK

## Floodplain Management

The Planning and Code Enforcement Departments together are the floodplain administrators for Columbus and Bartholomew County. The Planning Department is responsible for the floodplain regulations as they relate to commercial, industrial, multi-family, and public/semi-public facility site plans, as well as all subdivision proposals. Code Enforcement is responsible for all floodplain regulations related to single and two-family residences and the structural elements of all buildings.

The floodplain management task involves administering mandated regulations. These regulations combine both Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) minimum requirements with additional local regulations. Each local requirement is crafted to reflect the local community's choices regarding flood risk and to support the City and County's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). The voluntary CRS program reduces flood insurance costs for local property owners in response to community initiatives that preserve floodplains as open space, provide public floodplain education, increase flood protection regulations, etc. Failure of a local community to enforce minimum mandated floodplain regulations could result in federally-backed flood insurance being unavailable to community property owners. Failure to enforce additional CRS-related programs and regulations could result in increased flood insurance costs for all community property owners.

Typical Planning Department floodplain management responsibilities include (1) providing information to realtors, developers, and the public; (2) ensuring that new development complies with floodplain regulations; (3) monitoring federal and state law and FEMA and IDNR policies for changes to the minimum regulation requirements; (4) tracking permits and other approvals related to development and construction activity in the floodplain; and (5) making available a current set of FEMA-provided Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for the community.