Goal 1. Density prioritize mixed-use, mixed-income, multifamily housing in walkable downtowns
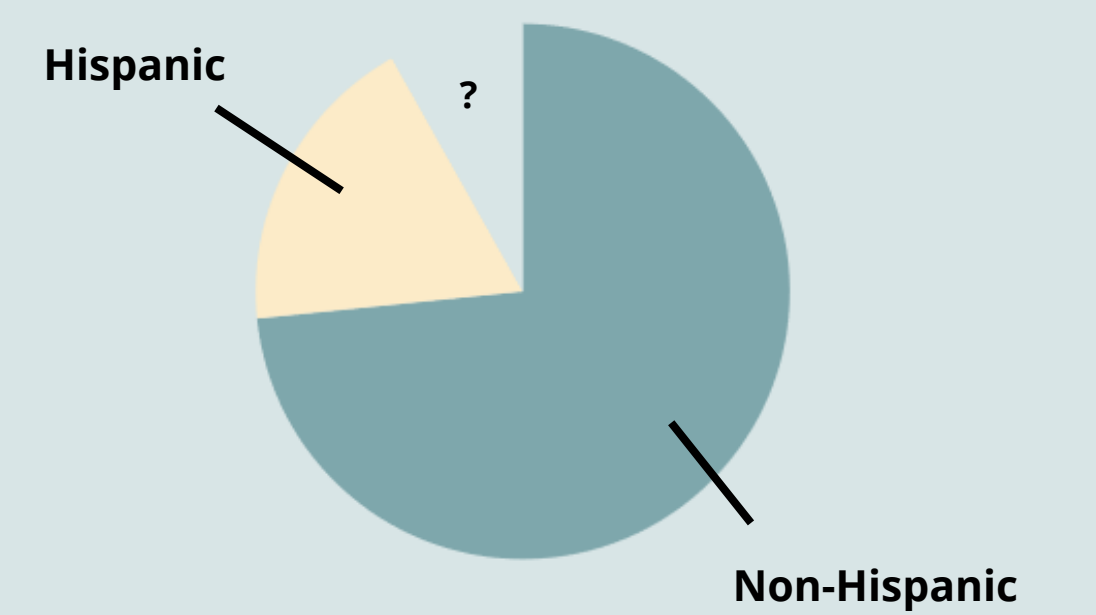
Goal 2. Connectivity link nodes and clusters in suburbs, rural areas, and hinterlands to downtowns

Goal 3. Flexibility identify parcels in service areas for climate- or hazard-driven displacement/migration

Goal 4. Responsibility coordinate with cities to steer/contain growth for the benefit of residents

Some Facts

population growth: 20~30%/yr and increasing!
median household income: $28K
median housing value: $128K
GDP: $350M
social equity: 51/100 (not bad)
urban walkability: 6/20 (could use some improvement!)
hazard vulnerability: moderate

Overall Development

Legend:
- Maybe developable
- Undevelopable
- Great for commercial
- Great for industrial

exhibit-A suggested spots, areas, and corridors for targeted priority investment.

high need

exhibit-B areas to provide more for

exhibit-C

- people (> 90K total)
- 10 mi. to restaurants (~2/3 of people)
- 5 mi. to restaurants (<1/3 of people)

exhibit-D

- good internet
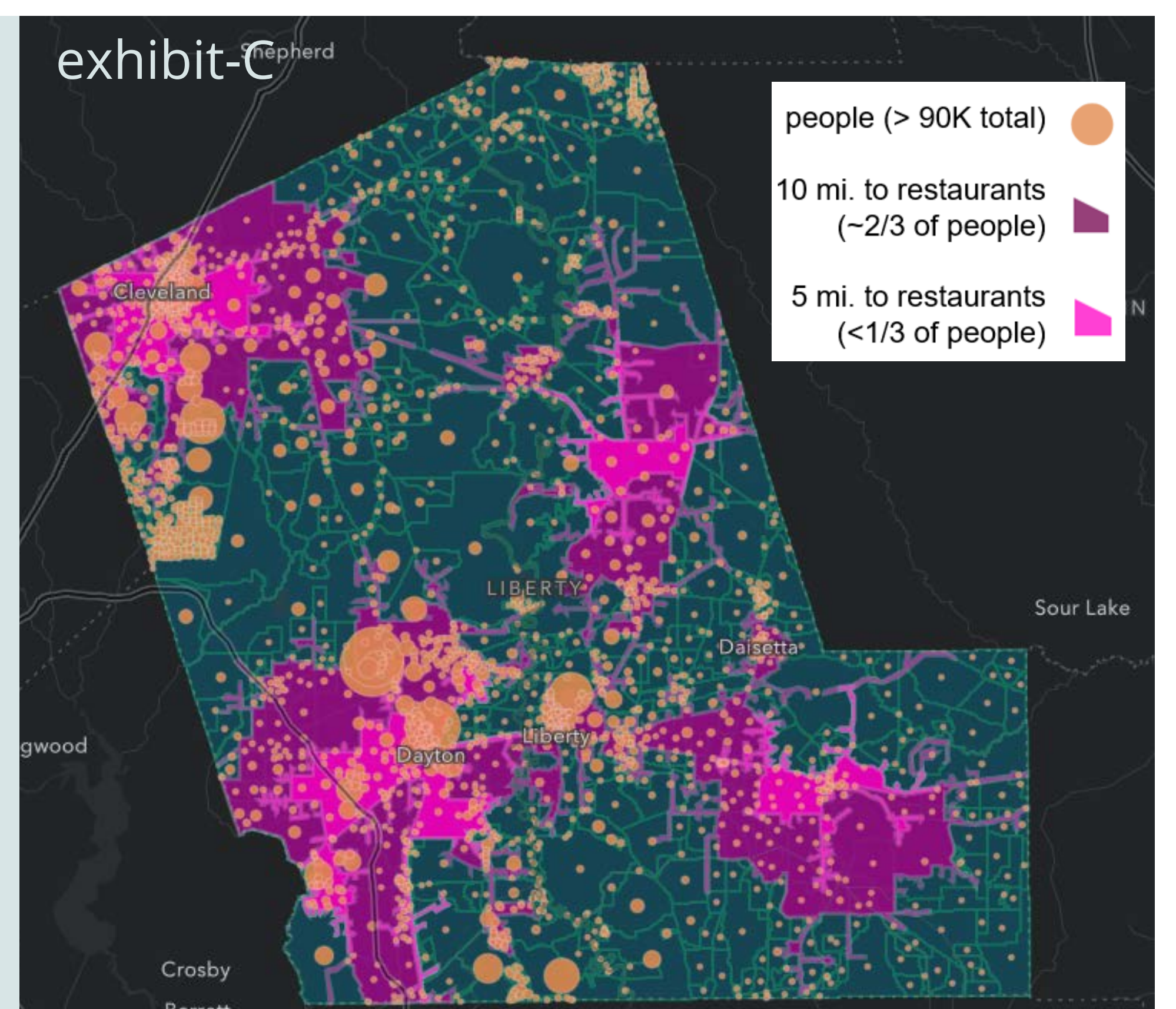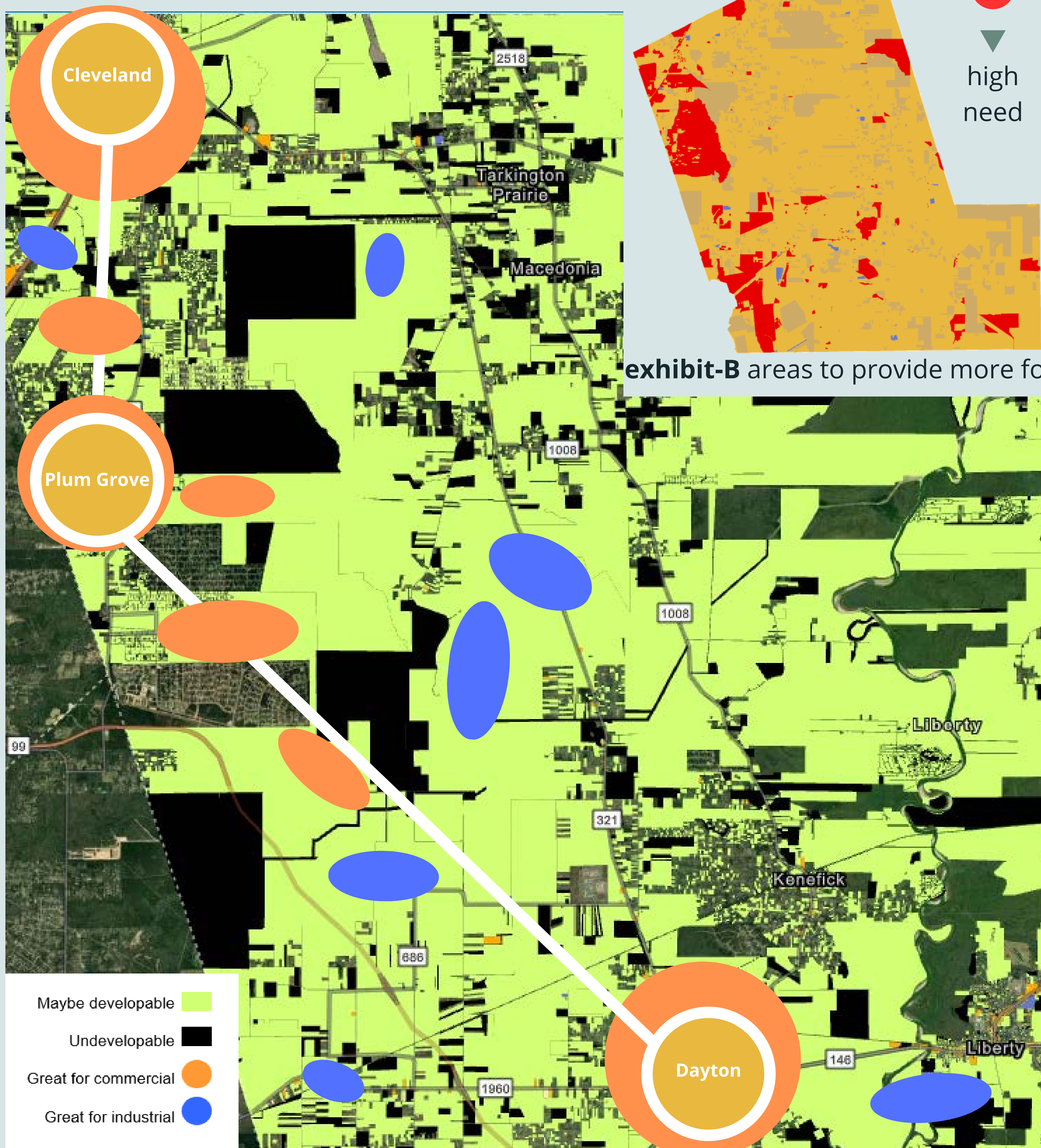- bad internet
- no internet

exhibit-C over 70% of Liberty County residents must drive 5 miles to just get to the nearest fast-food restaurant. (and no bars, pubs, or clubs either.)

exhibit-D good internet spots are few and far in between. > 1/4 of people live in the black zones or broadband blind spots.

Planning for a Rural County
- precision targeting for cost reduction
- diversifying for resilience and adaptation
- modularizing for flexible response and rapid rebuilding
- investing in children and families that are here to stay
- alliance- and partnership-building for collective impact
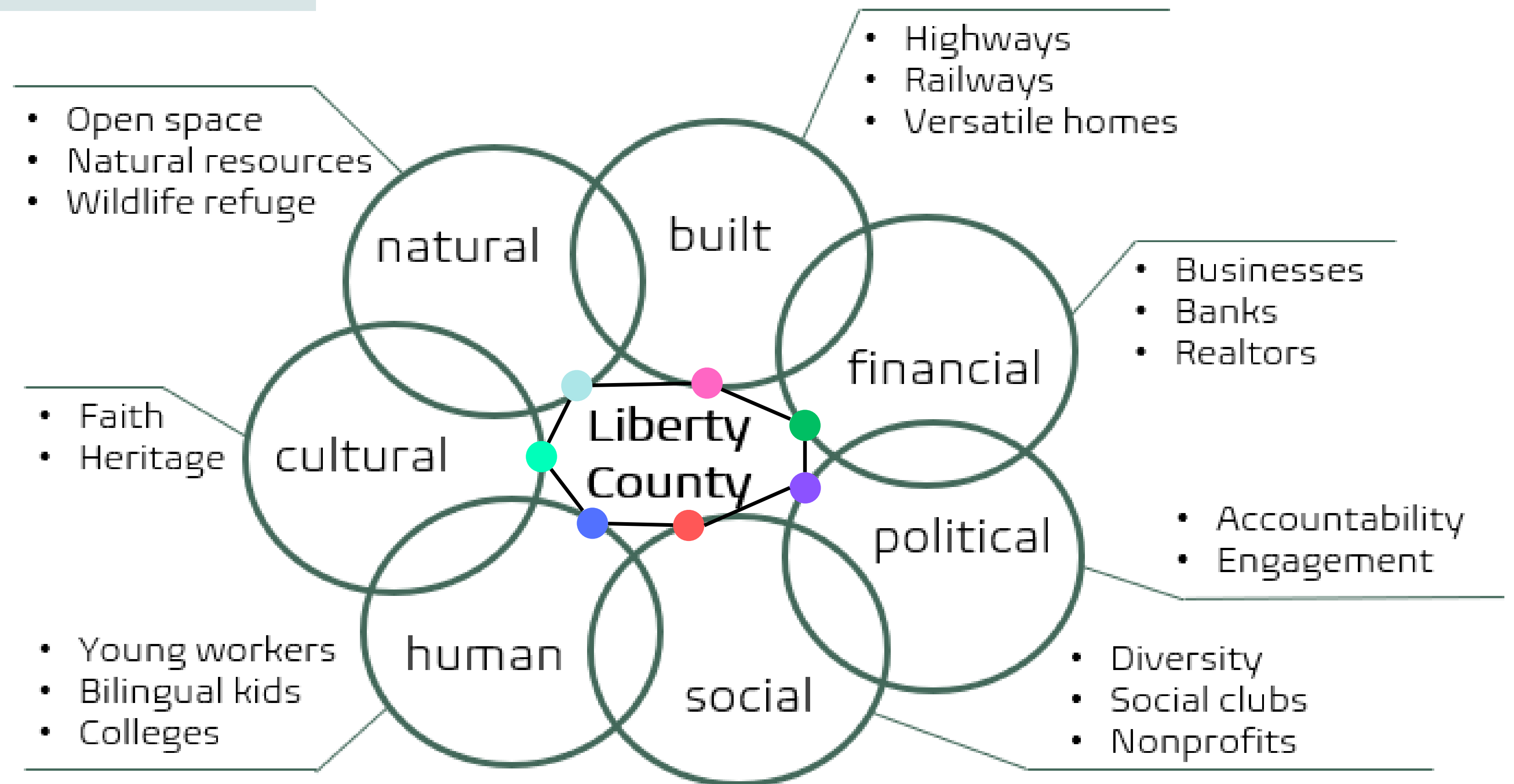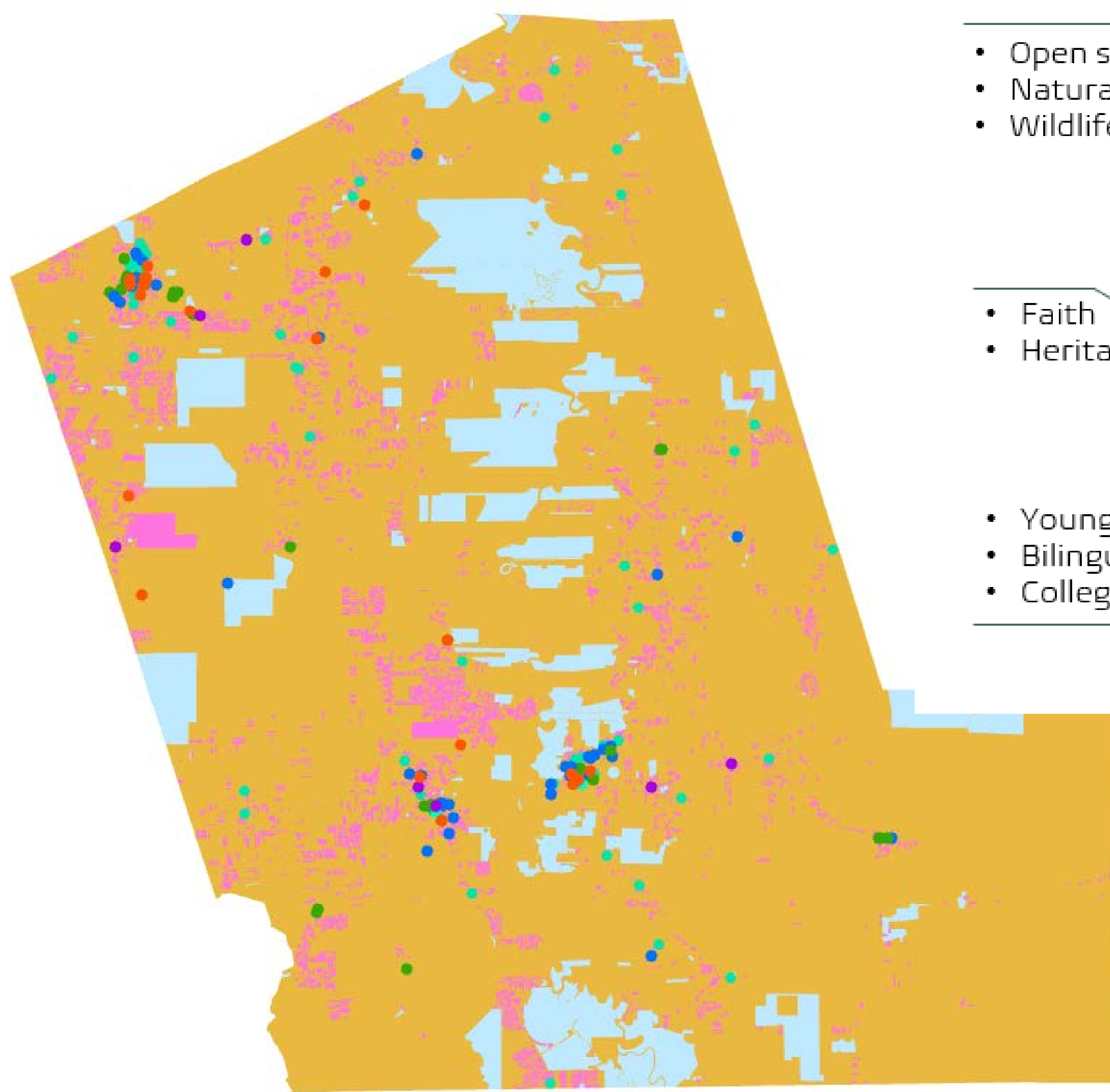- balancing inclusion and autonomy for full participation

Maintaining Standards

Liberty County is growing at a rate that would be challenging given the best of circumstances. It's important to remember that the County already has so much to offer. So, job standards don't have to be sacrificed for big companies to move in. New developments don't have to drive up the housing prices. Industries and naturescapes can prosper side by side. Future generations can pick up where the present leaves off without needing to fix too much. With strategic planning, Liberty County is the place to be.

$ INVESTMENTS THAT PAY $
DEDICATED GRANT WRITER
PERMANENT OUTREACH SPECIALIST
YOUTH LEADERSHIP
BILINGUALISM
COMMUNITY CULTURAL EVENTS

exhibit-E Liberty County assets (organizations, facilities, services)

- Open space
- Natural resources
- Wildlife refuge

- Highways
- Railways
- Versatile homes

- Businesses
- Banks
- Realtors

- Faith
- Heritage

natural **built** **financial** **Liberty County** **cultural** **political** **human** **social**

- Accountability
- Engagement

- Young workers
- Bilingual kids
- Colleges

- Diversity
- Social clubs
- Nonprofits

Case Study:
Upstate New York

INVESTING IN
Rural Prosperity

- natural assets
- equitable resilience
- broadband
- health partnerships
- learning (culture-based innovation from France!)

What else?

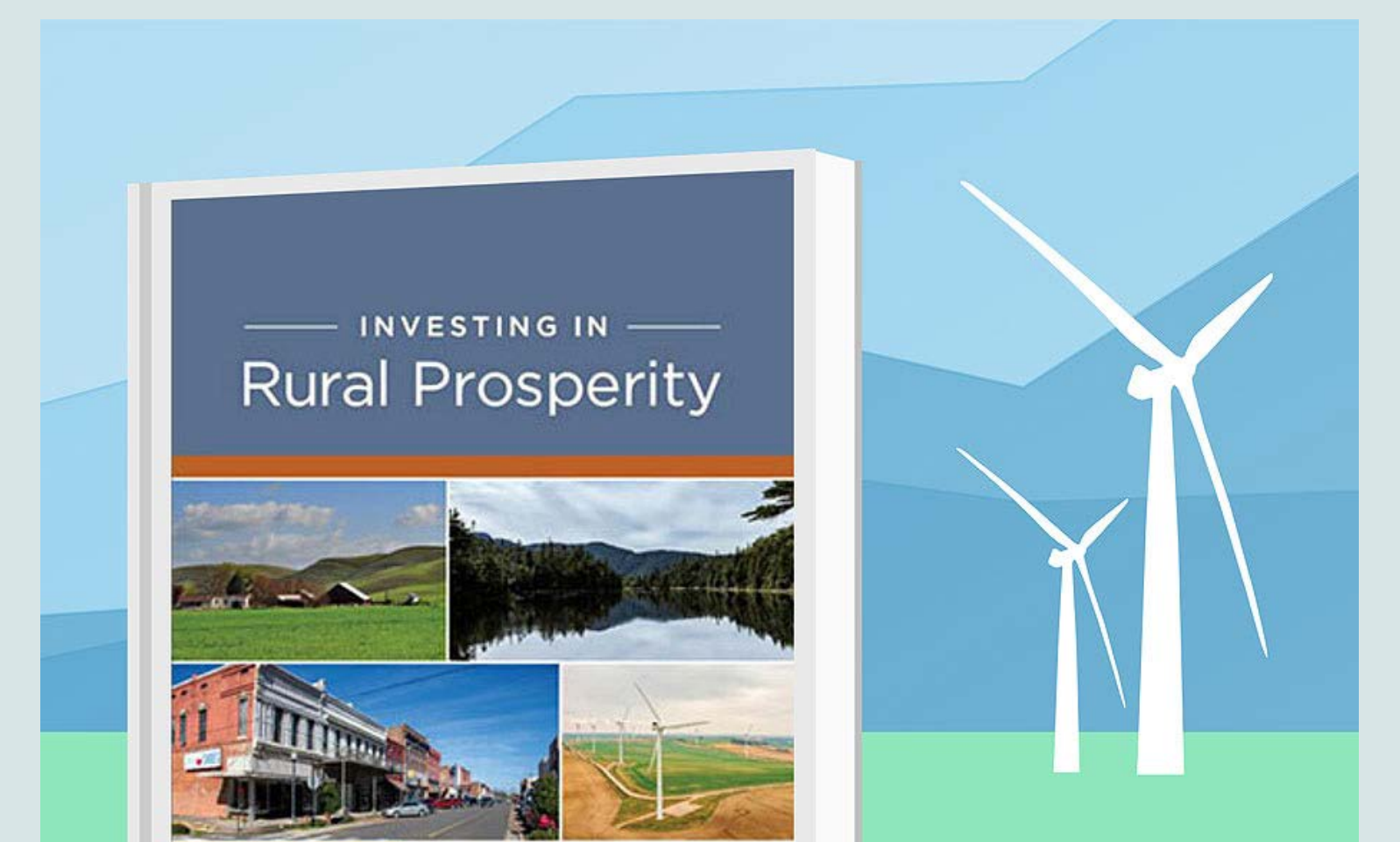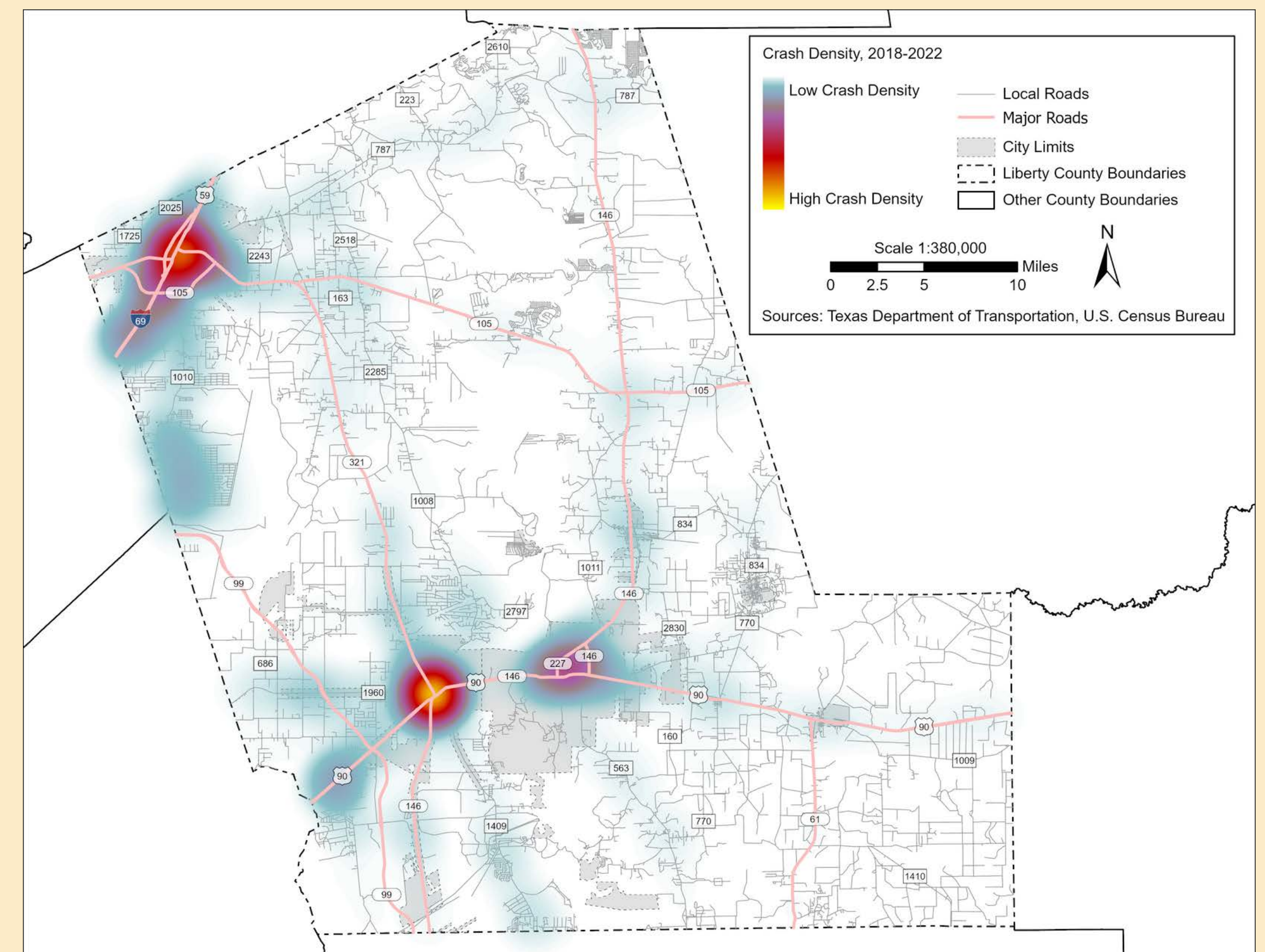## Existing Conditions

- Complex transportation system with varying strengths and weaknesses
- Mostly of local roads within city limits and ETJs
- One interstate (IH 69)
- Several principal arterial roads connect the major cities with each other
- Completion of SH 99 on the western edge of the county, has greatly increased traffic to the area, creating economic opportunity as well as congestion and safety issues.
- Rail lines throughout the county cause congestion issues, particularly within Dayton.

Liberty County Crash Density, 2018-2022

Liberty County Functional Classification of Roads, 2021
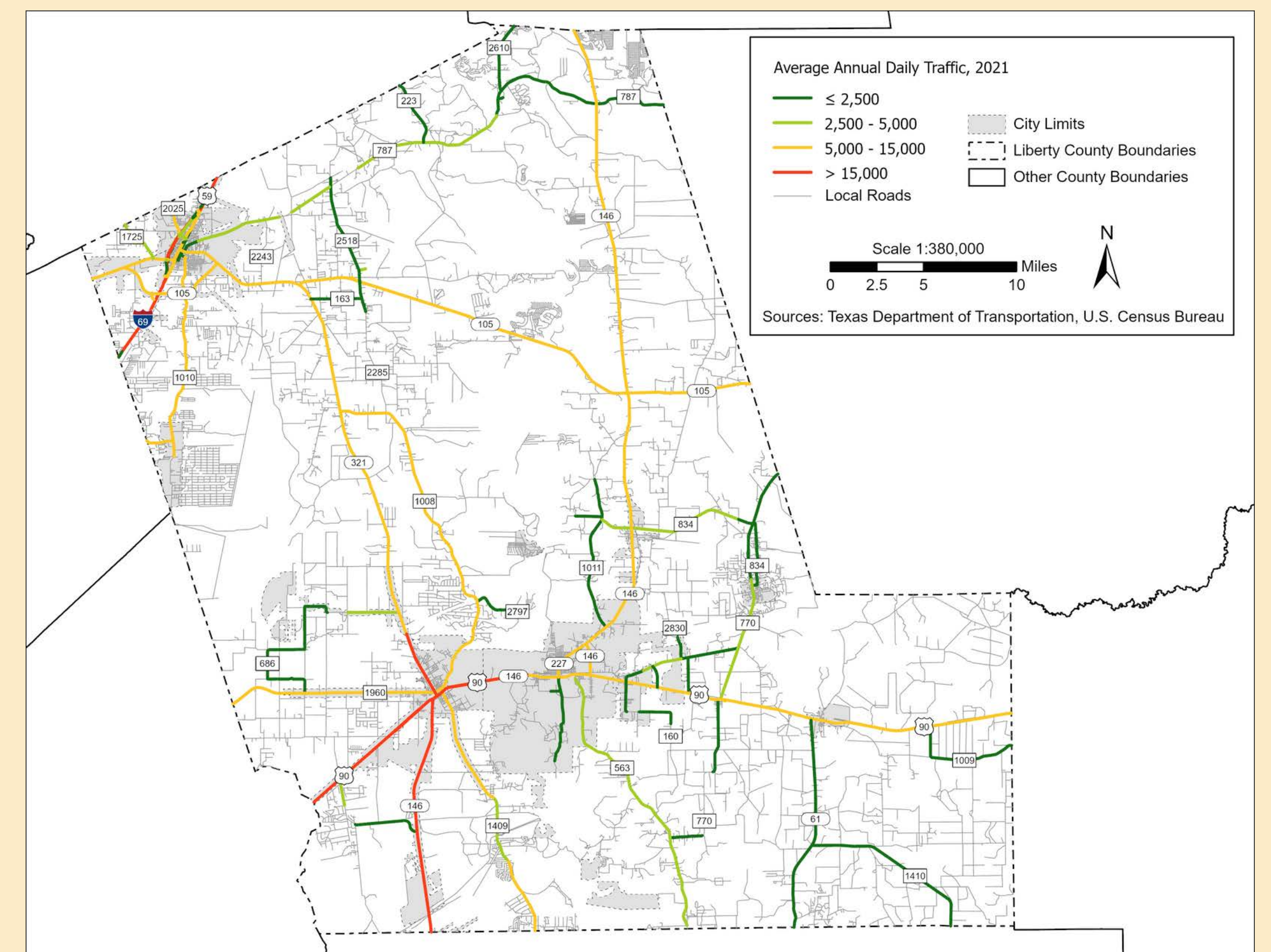
Liberty County Average Annual Daily Traffic, 2021

Recommendations

Goal 1: Improve the safety of the transportation system

Objective 1.1 Reduce vehicle crashes

Objective 1.2 Decrease hazards where sidewalks are present

Objective 1.3 Reduce pedestrian injuries and deaths

Goal 2: Provide sustainable transportation option

Objective 2.1 Improve public transportation

Objective 2.2 Improve bike travel

Objective 2.3 Improve access to sidewalks and trails

Goal 3: Provide a high-quality road system

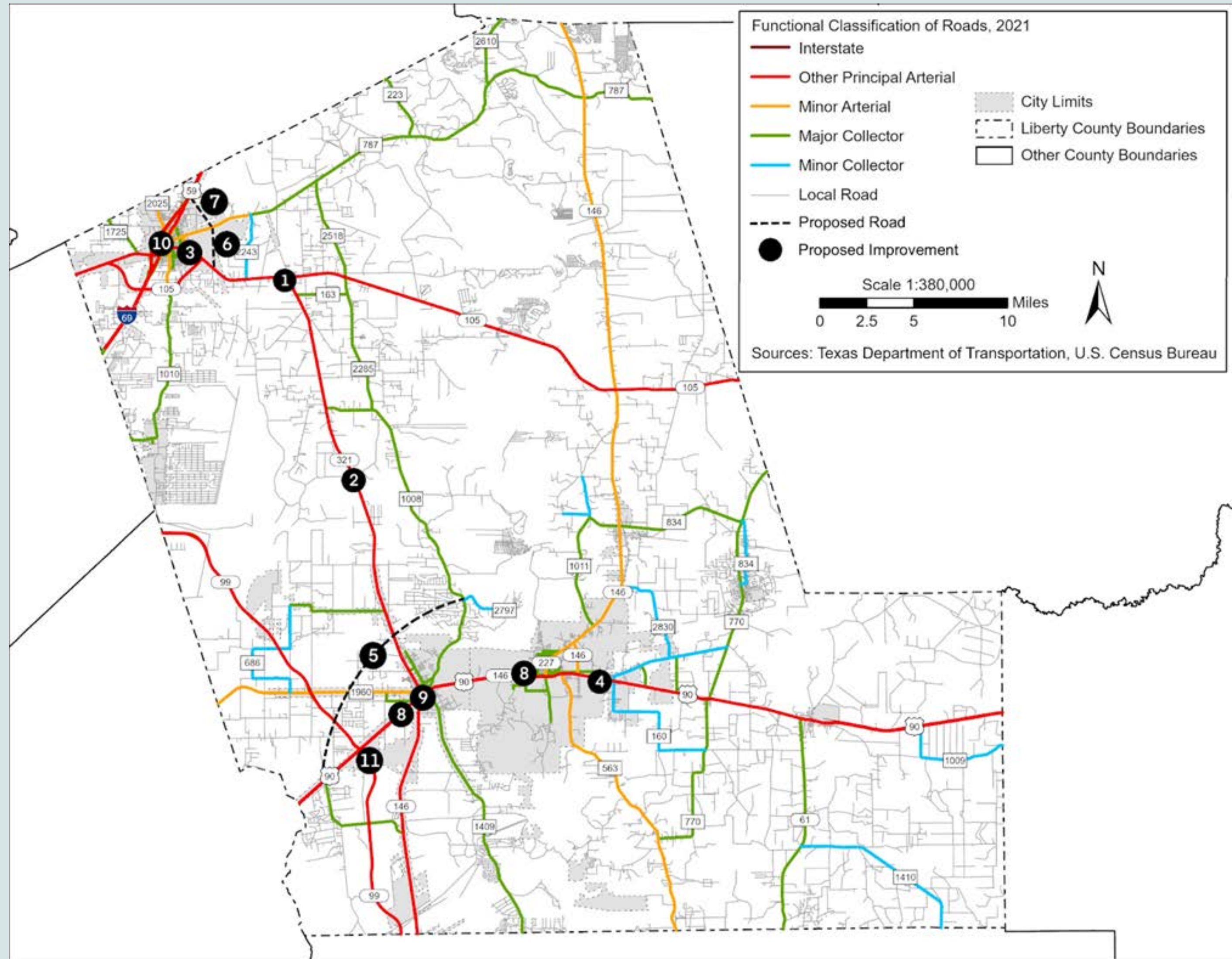**Objective 3.1** Reduce vehicle congestion hot spots

Objective 3.2 Ensure roads are built to high standards from the onset

Objective 3.3 Perform regular maintenance on all county maintained roads

Recommended Thoroughfare Plan

| No.	Highway	From	To	Overview	Functional Classification	No. of lanes	Speed Limit (mph)	Remark
1	SH 321 intersection with SH 105	-	-	Proposing grade separation at the intersection	-	-	-	PR[20]
2	SH 321	US 90	SH 105	Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	Principal Arterial	4	55	SP[21]
3	SH 105	SH 321	FM 573	Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	Principal Arterial	4	50	SP
4	US 90	SH 146	FM 61	Widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	Principal Arterial	4	65	UTP[22]
5	FM 1413	US 90	FM 1008	Extension of bypass FM 1413 loop	Major Collector	2	50	SP
6	SH 105	SH 105	FM 787	Extension of SH 105 loop	Principal Arterial	2	65	SP
7	FM 787	FM 787	US 59	Extension of proposed roadway	Principal Arterial	2	65	SP
8	US 90 at UPRR	-	-	Proposing grade separation at the intersection	-	-	-	UTP
9	SH 146 intersection with US 90	-	-	Proposing additional left turn and right turn lanes at the intersection	-	-	-	PR
10	SH 573 at UPRR	-	-	Proposing grade separation at the intersection	-	-	-	PR
11	SH 99 ramp	SH 99	US 90	Widening of ramps from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	Ramp	4	50	PR

Recommended Improvements
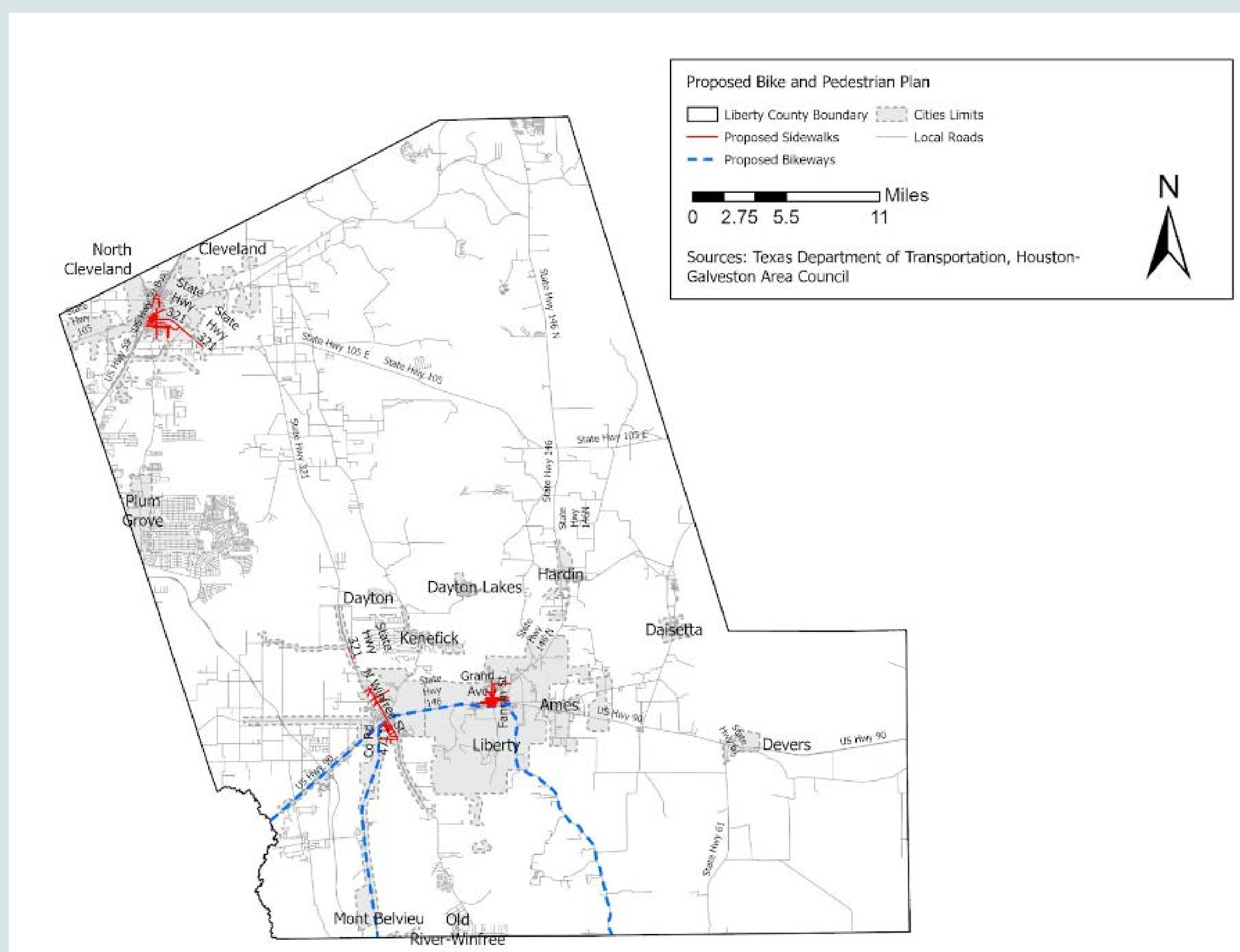
Liberty County Bike and Pedestrian Plan
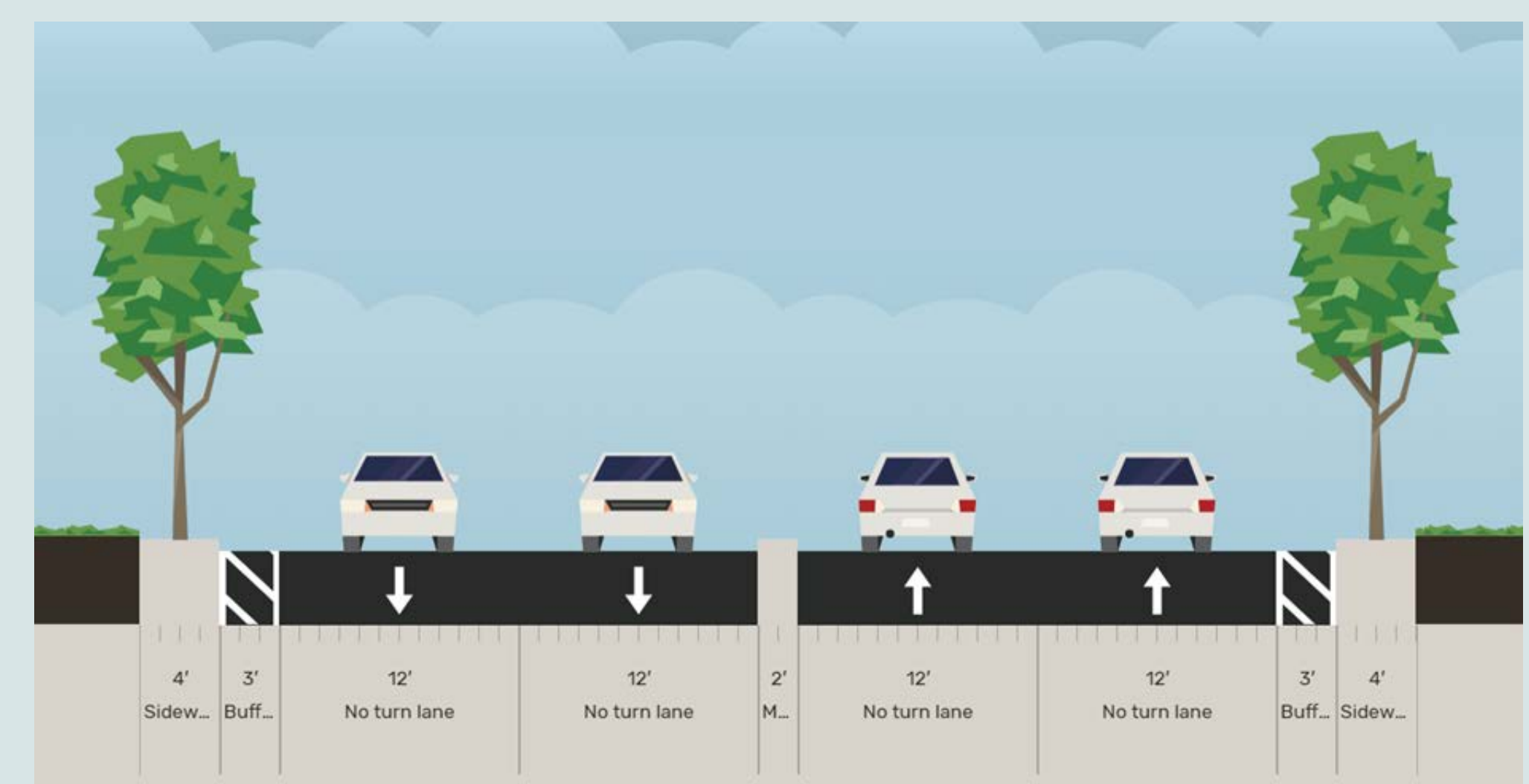
Proposed Widening of SH 321
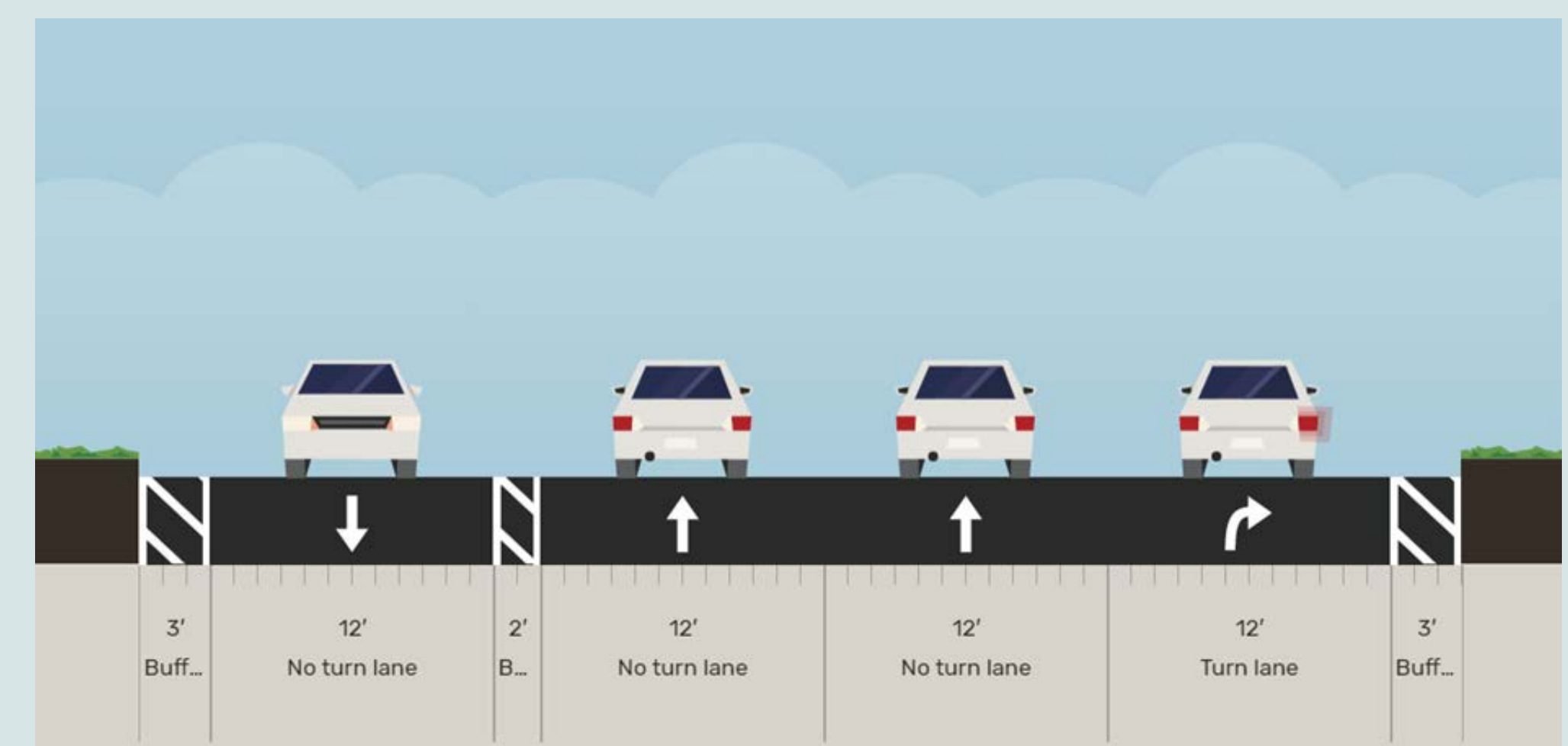
Proposed Widening of SH 99 along US 90

What else?

GOALS

Goal 1. Increase the range of housing options, particularly senior and multi-family homes

Goal 2. Encourage high quality housing through enforcement of building standards and flood protection

Goal 3. Reduce housing cost burden for low income residents of Liberty County

Goal 4. Effectively manage housing growth to ensure resilient and productive communities

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Improve senior living experience and quality of life
1.2 Increase supply of multi-family homes
1.3 Increase supply of single-family homes
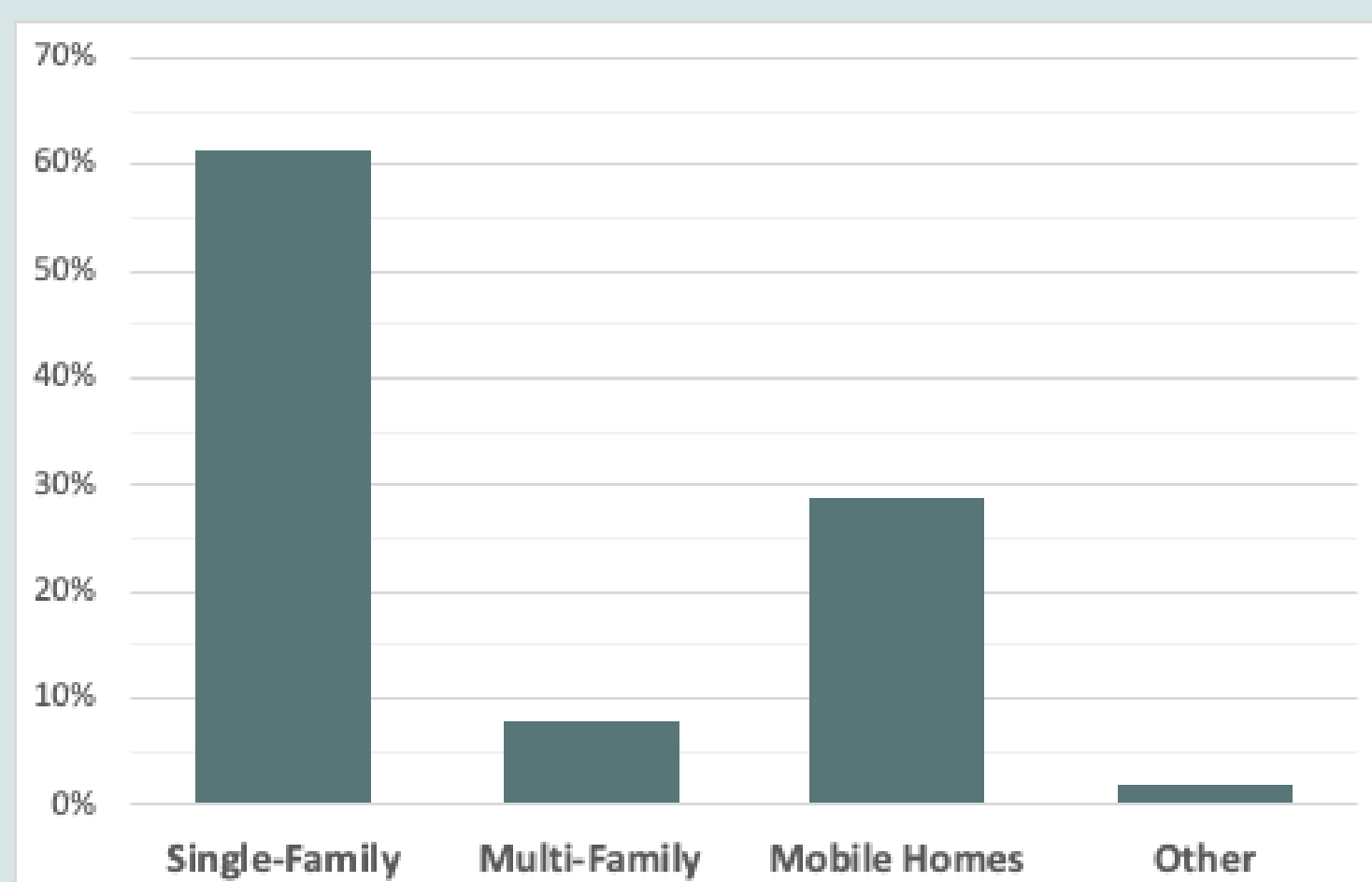**1.4** Integrate alternative housing types

2.1 Improve enforcement of building standards
2.2 Reduce damage from disasters

3.1 Increase supply of affordable housing
3.2 Invest in homebuyer education and empower residents to become homeowners
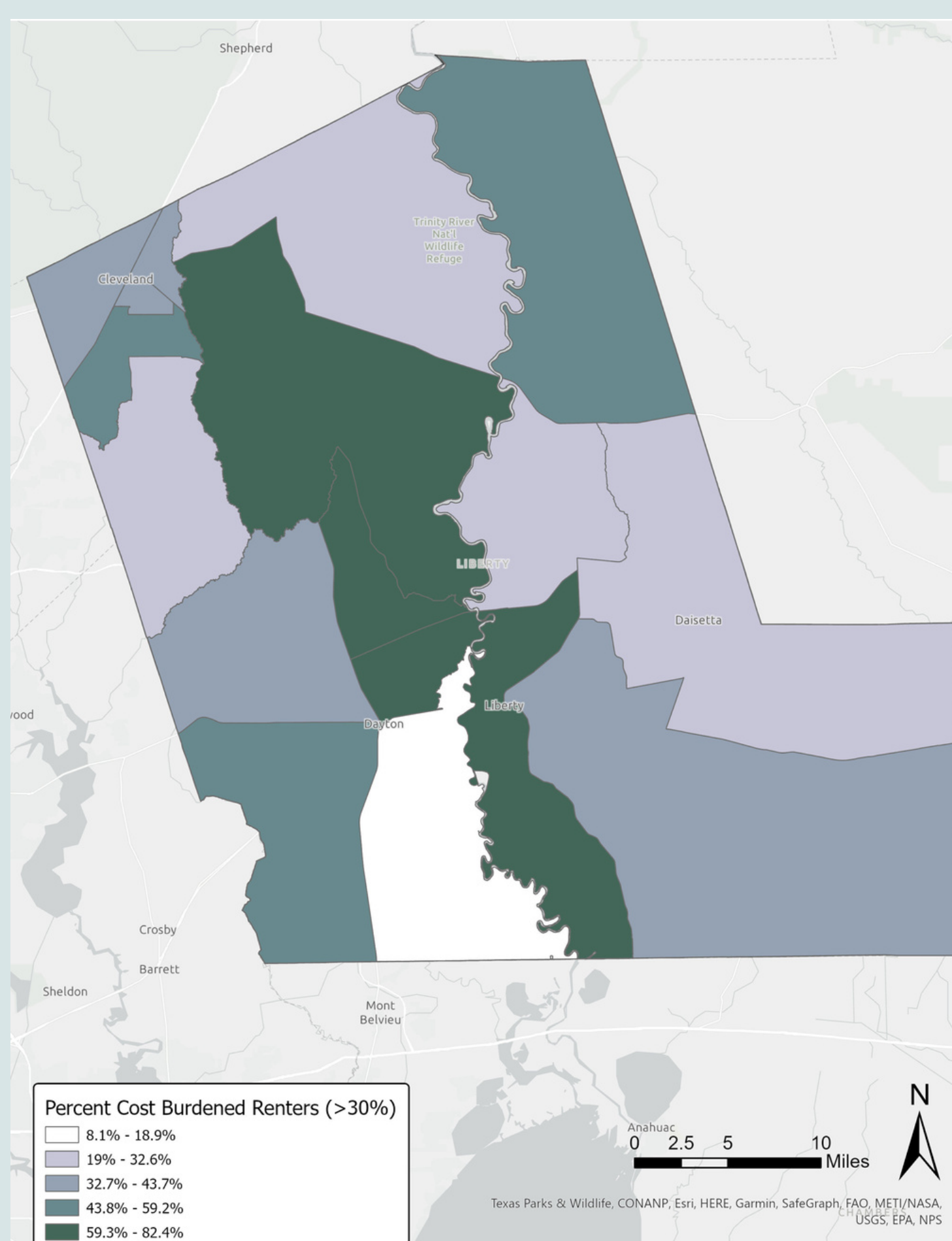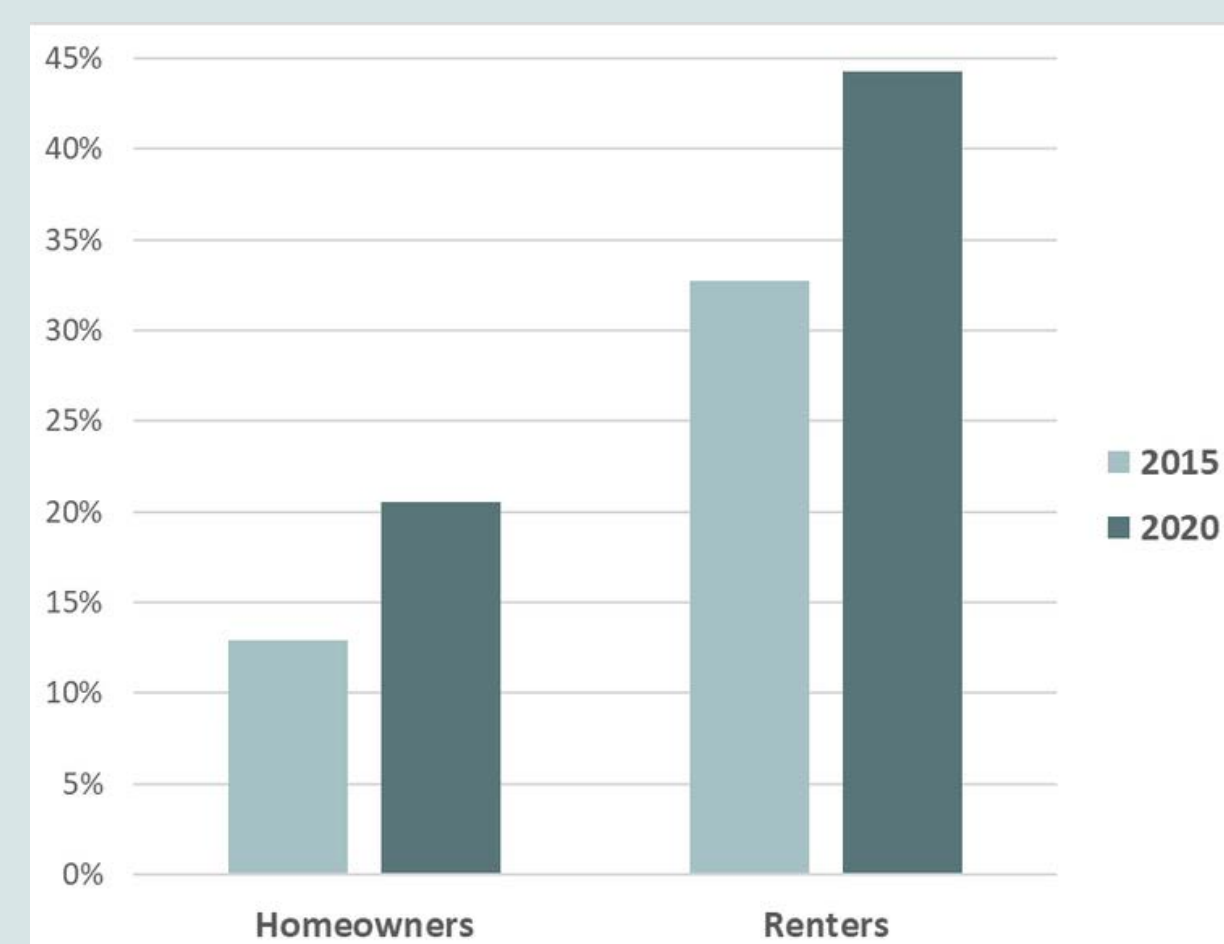**3.3** Inform residents of rental assistance programs

4.1 Concentrate housing density in and around urban areas
4.2 Direct/steer new construction to areas with low hazard exposure

STATE OF COMMUNITY

Housing Type

Percent Cost Burdened*

Percent Cost Burdened Renters (>30%)
- 8.1% - 18.9%
- 19% - 32.6%
- 32.7% - 43.7%
- 43.8% - 59.2%
- 59.3% - 82.4%

- An increase in multi-family housing could help offset the cost burden for renters
- Single-family is the predominant housing choice
- Central Liberty County has the highest concentration of cost-burdened households.

*Households are considered cost burdened if over 30% of income is spent on housing.

FUNDING SOURCES

- Community Development Block Grants
- Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit
- USDA Housing Assistance Programs
- Texas GLO Administered Grant Programs

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Lots of open land for potential housing development
- Concerns about rapid development in unincorporated areas
- Lack of high-quality affordable housing options
- Homes in the floodplain are vulnerable to hazards
- COVID-19 and drug use have worsened inequity
- Need more options for seniors
- Lack of resources for homeless residents, especially close to existing facilities

STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Housing Options

- Incentivize senior home construction via universal design principles in existing neighborhoods
- Incentivize new construction, conversion, and upcycle to apartments
- Encourage cities to zone for multifamily housing
- Allow sub-lease of ADUs for owner-occupied single-family homes
- Create more complete neighborhoods of manufactured homes by planning for recreation, retail, educational facilities, public safety and fire, etc
- Allow for tiny home construction in designated residential areas

Case Study: Senior Housing in Jefferson, NC

Where: Jefferson, North Carolina

How: Revitalized an old community asset, the Historic Ashe Hospital, into senior apartments

Funding: Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati's Affordable Housing Program

Benefits: Increased life quality via improved social, mental, and physical health for elders.

Goal 2: Housing Quality

- Broaden the range of responders that can carry out inspections
- Publish guide on the harms of living in substandard units and methods to improve and repair a home
- Create higher development standards specifically regarding updated building codes and subdivision regulations.
- Require disaster-proofing (structural reinforcement, rapid rebuild, etc.) for buildings within the 100 year floodplain
- Subsidize upgrades to occupied housing units

Case Study: Rapid Disaster Recovery Housing Program

Where: Rio Grande Valley, Texas

How: Two-step housing development process that turns prefabricated homes into permanent homes.

Funding: FEMA and CDBG disaster recovery funding.

Benefits: Protects families and reduces social and physical vulnerabilities; provides safe housing for residents; empowers homeowners after disasters.

Goal 3: Affordability

- Advertise federal and state affordable housing programs to developers
- Eliminate regulatory barriers to affordable housing construction such as minimum lot size and setback requirements.
- Provide additional county incentives to creation of affordable units
- Publish guide on resources and pathways to homeownership
- Establish community land trusts to assist in purchasing homes
- Create a countywide security deposit assistance program
- Publish guide on rental assistance programs

Case Study: Accessory Dwelling Units

**Where:** Applicable everywhere that zoning allows for them.

How: Building / remodeling detached accessory housing units to house more people in existing neighborhoods

Funding: Fannie Mae ADU Program, Freddie Mac Program

Benefits: Increases housing stock; increases housing range; provides affordable housing options.

Goal 4: Growth Management

- Partner with cities and developers on in-fill opportunities
- Amend subdivision regulations to encourage higher density (ht., parking) and construction in areas with existing infrastructure capacity, such as an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance
- Provide financial and regulatory incentives for building in safe areas
- Develop a buyout program for repetitively flooding areas
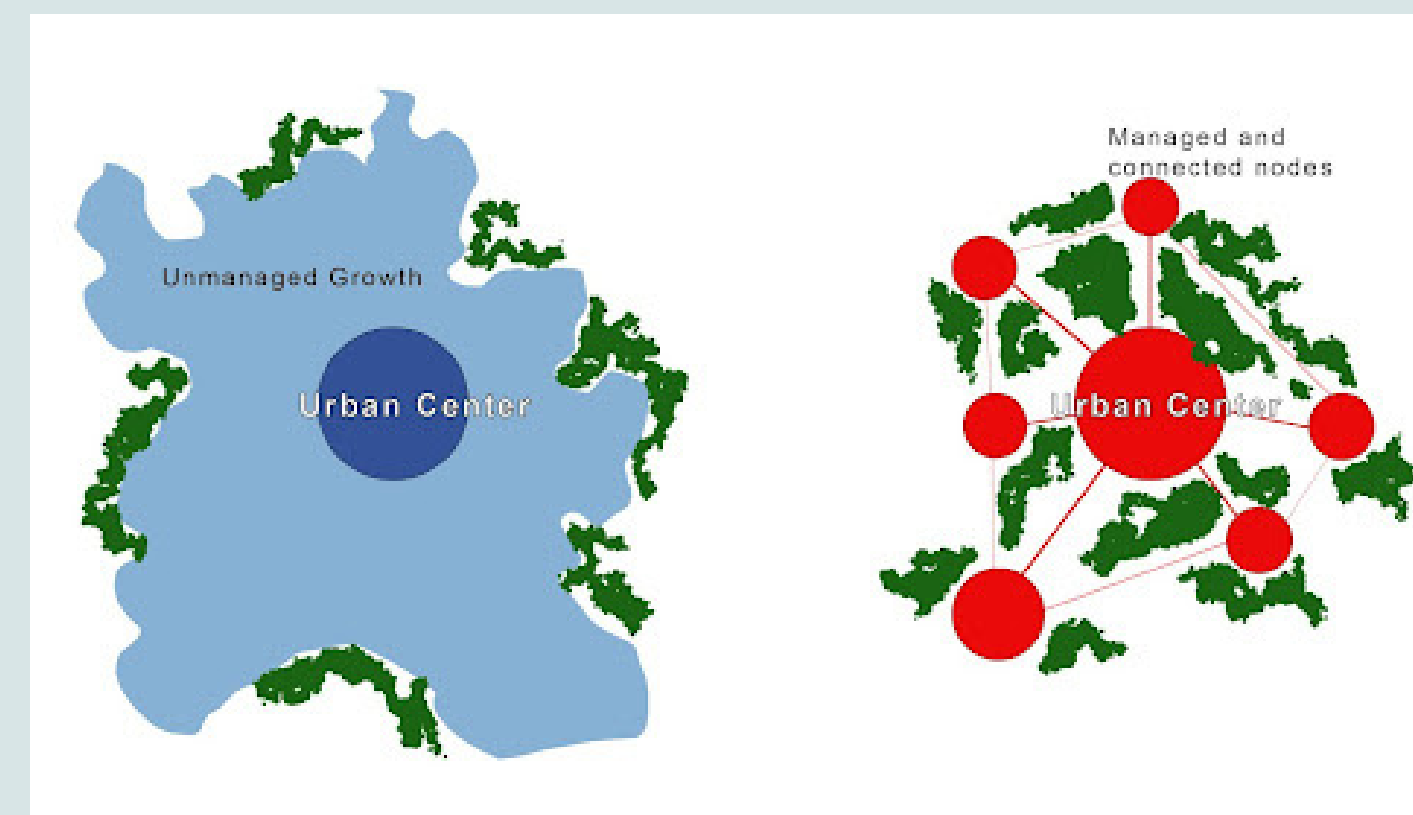
WHAT ELSE?

What are the biggest barriers in Liberty County to finding quality affordable housing?

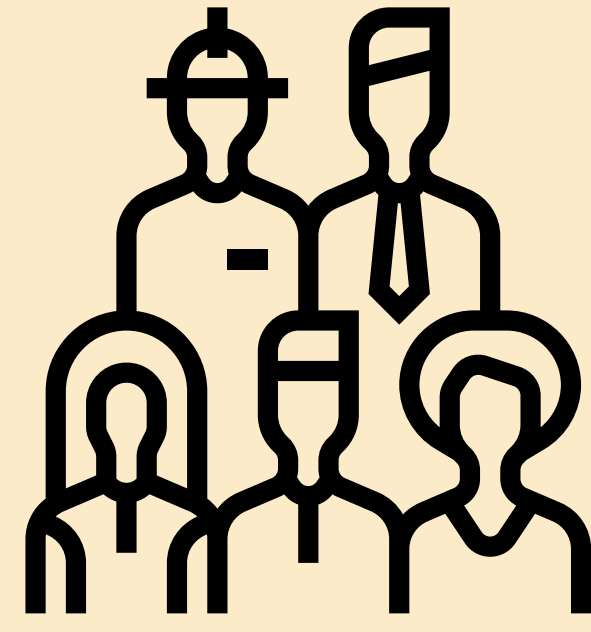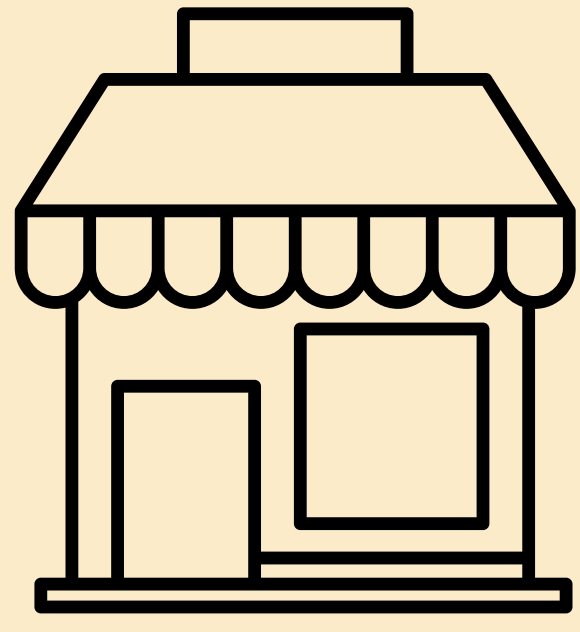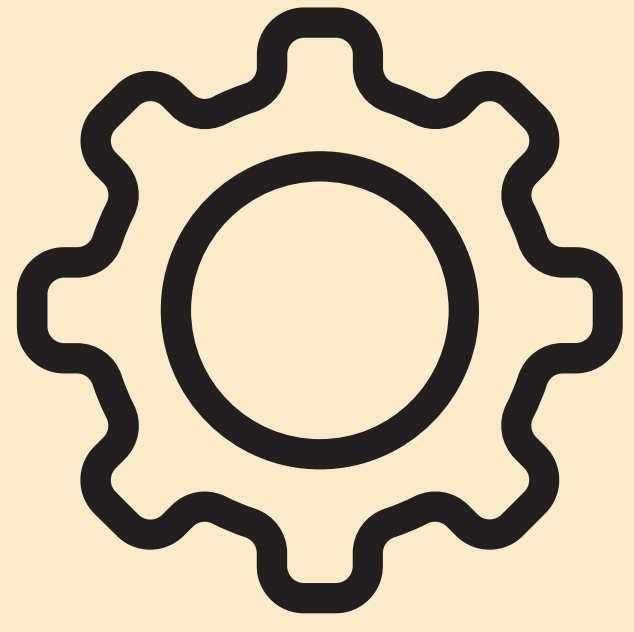**How do you feel housing and population growth should be managed in Liberty County?**

In your opinion, what should be the County's top priority related to housing?

GOALS

Goal 1. Industrial development
Invest in warehousing high manufacturing, freight, and agrotourism

Goal 2. Commercial development
Create vibrant downtowns

Goal 3. Workforce development
provide flexible, specialized job training and opportunities for entrepreneurship

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal 1.
1.1 Attract warehousing (Amazon, Walmart, etc.)
1.2 Attract and incubate manufacturing industry
1.3 Make County a regional freight hub
1.4 Develop tourism centered around recreational hunting and fishing, rodeo, casino, and agriculture
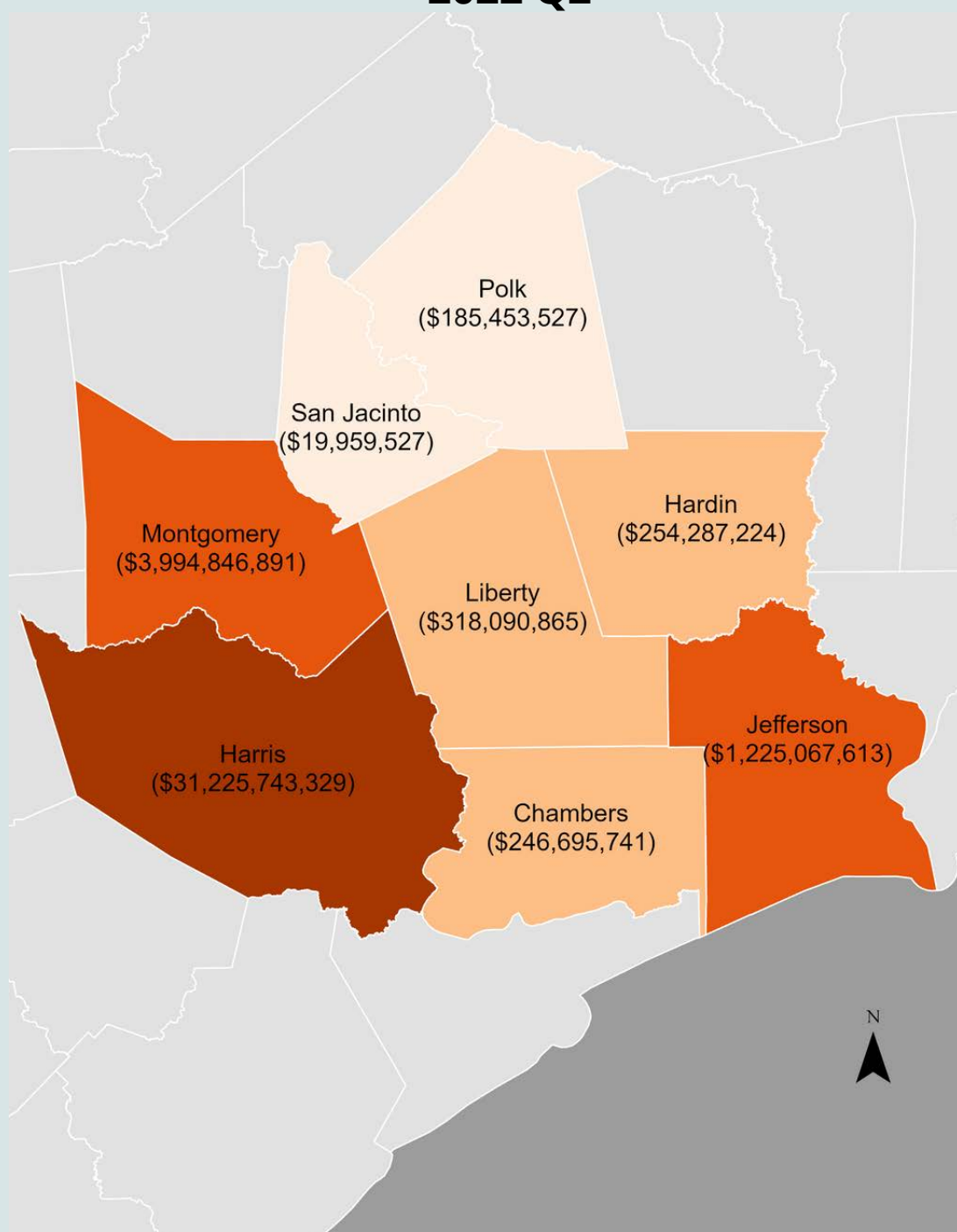
Goal 2.
2.1 Identify opportunities for opening more Latino grocers
2.2 Identify opportunities for more restaurants, bars, clubs
2.3 Expand sports-based (affordable) entertainment

Goal 3.
3.1 Improve job training
3.2 Improve adult education
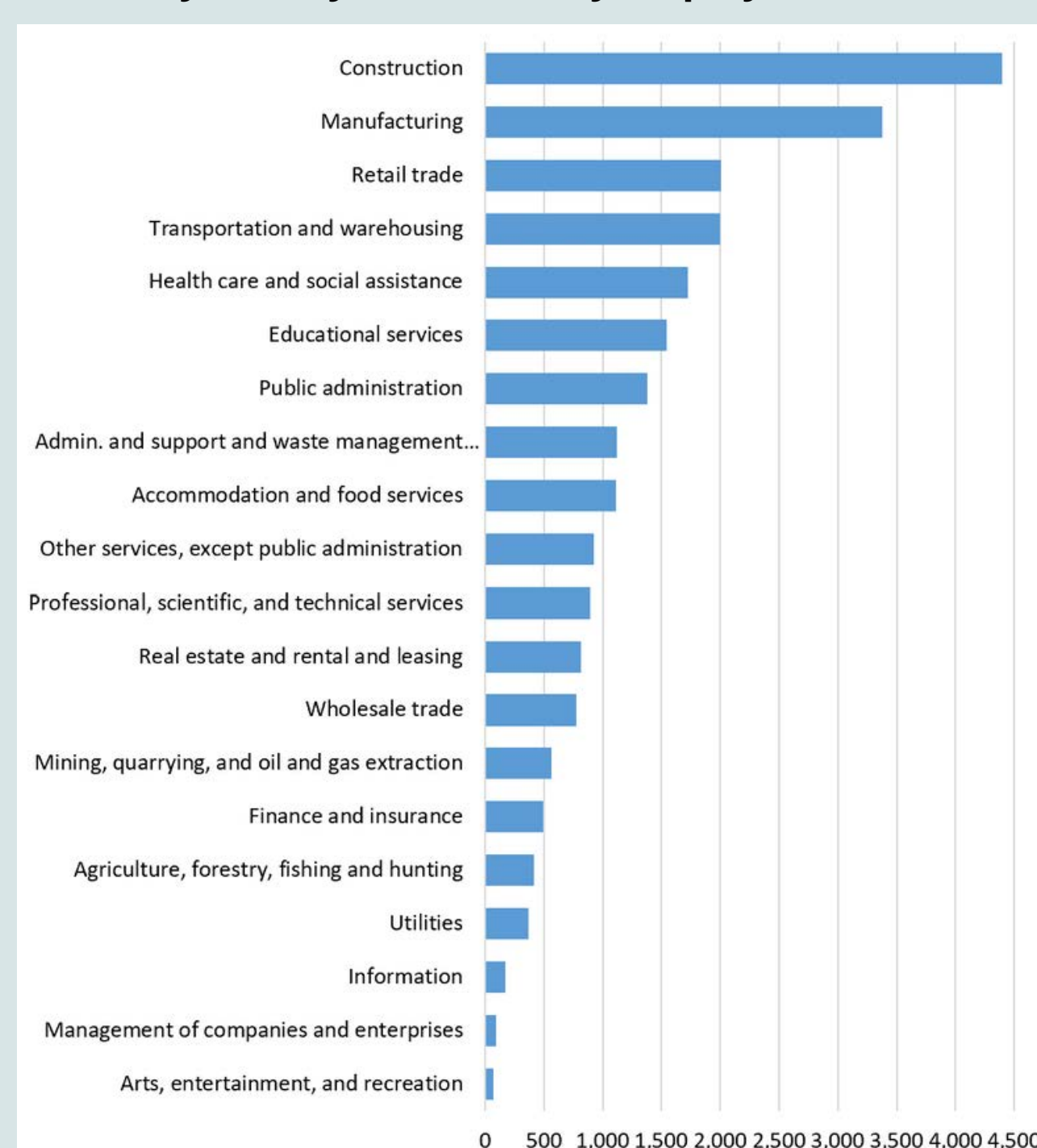**3.3** Cultivate entrepreneurs

STATE OF COMMUNITY

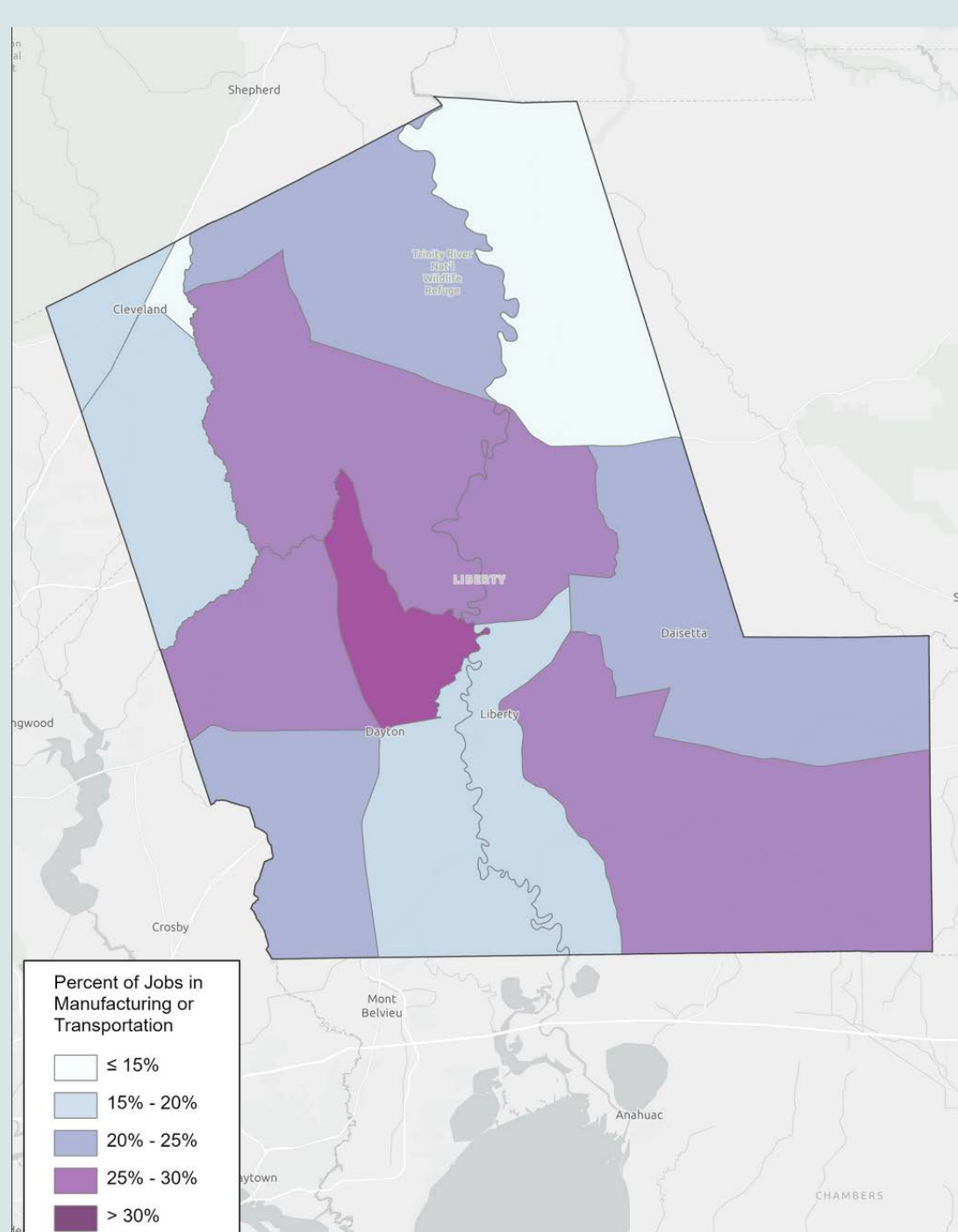**Retail Volumes of Liberty and Surrounding Counties, 2022 Q2**

- Polk ($185,453,527)
- San Jacinto ($19,959,527)
- Montgomery ($3,994,846,891)
- Hardin ($254,287,224)
- Liberty ($318,090,865)
- Harris ($31,225,743,329)
- Chambers ($246,695,741)
- Jefferson ($1,225,067,613)

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

Liberty County Industries by Employment (2021)

Construction
Manufacturing
Retail trade
Transportation and warehousing
Health care and social assistance
Educational services
Public administration
Admin. and support and waste management...
Accommodation and food services
Other services, except public administration
Professional, scientific, and technical services
Real estate and rental and leasing
Wholesale trade
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
Finance and insurance
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
Utilities
Information
Management of companies and enterprises
Arts, entertainment, and recreation

0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 2,500 3,000 3,500 4,000 4,500

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

Distribution of Manufacturing and Transportation Jobs

Percent of Jobs in Manufacturing or Transportation
≤ 15%
15% - 20%
20% - 25%
25% - 30%
> 30%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

Liberty County Educational Attainment

Percent of Population 25 Years and Over with no High School Diploma or Equivalent
≤ 15%
15% - 20%
20% - 25%
25% - 30%
> 30%
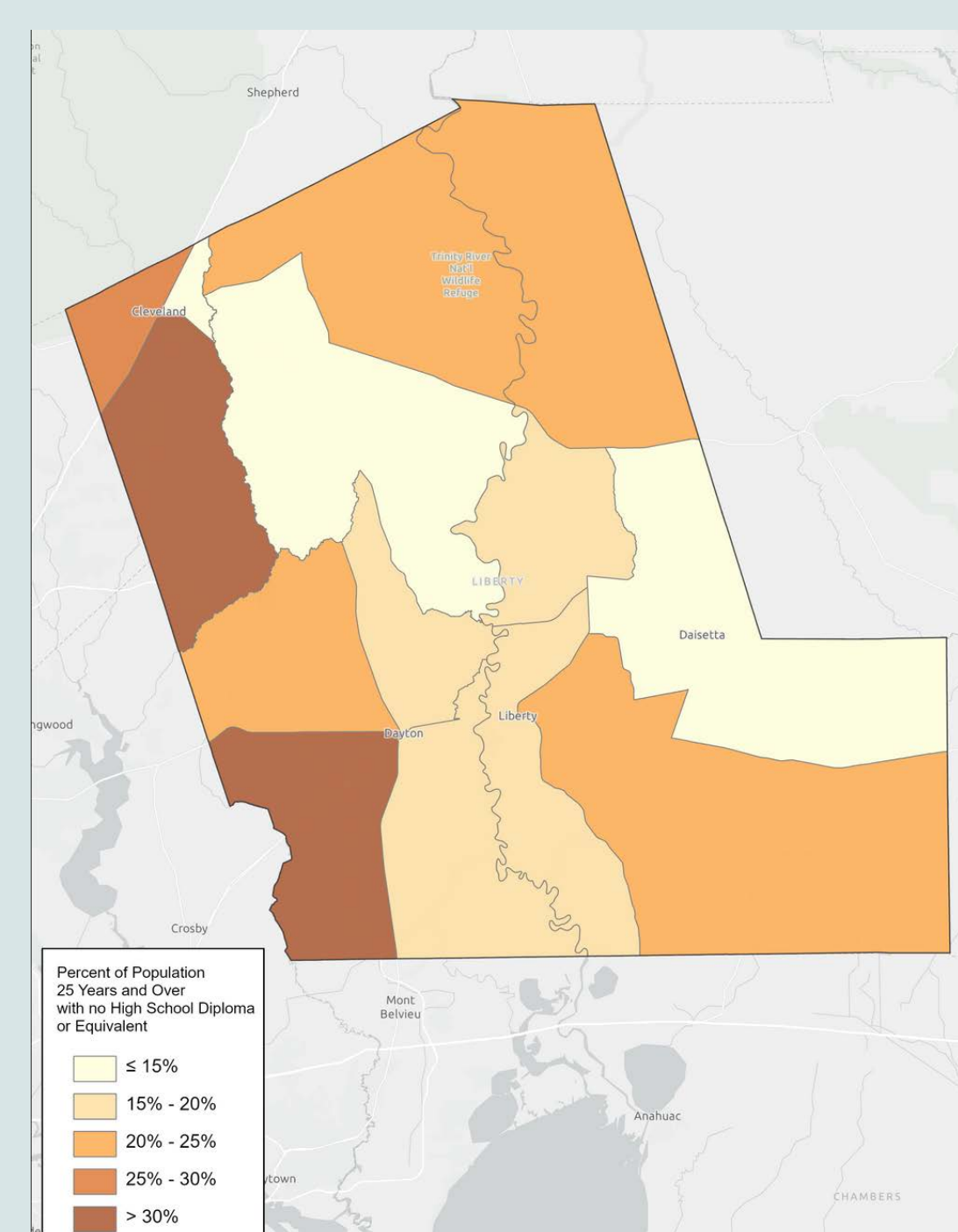
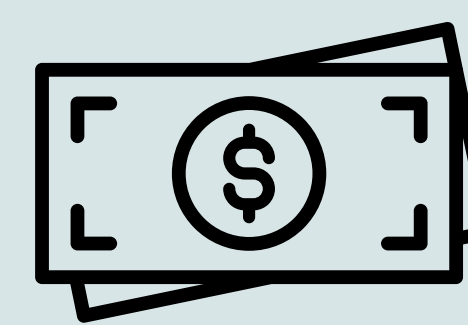Sources: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

FUNDING SOURCES

Grant Programs
- Capital Fund Education and Training Community Facility Grant
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program
- Texas Workforce Commission's Skill Development Program
- Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program

Bonds and Partnerships
- Aviation Capital Improvement Program
- Build America Bonds
- Chapter 380/381 Economic Development Agreements
- Economic Development Sales Tax
- Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Immense community pride within Liberty County
- Ample space for growth but restricted by a lack of resources and limited funding for local infrastructure.
- Strong desire for more stores and locally-owned businesses
- Emphasize the need for local entertainment opportunities which attract younger generations
- Recognized need for adult education classes geared toward trade work

ACTIONS

Goal 1: Industrial

1.1.1. Prioritize infrastructural spending on power and electricity

1.1.2. Advertise power and rail infrastructure, land, and untapped labor market

1.2.1. Deputize ED director to develop a plan for manufacturing development

1.2.2. Support small businesses specializing in advanced manufacturing

1.3.1. Build on existing infrastructure and partnership to create a regional hub

1.3.2. Connect all existing warehouses with railways

1.4.1. Deputize ED to develop a plan for tourism

1.4.2. Contract universities to conduct study on land an aquatic ecosystems

1.4.3. Connect with TPWD for advice and support

**1.4.4.** Identify agricultural products that appeal to hunters and fishermen

Goal 2: Commercial

2.1.1. Create an open-air market near Cleveland center

2.1.2. Connect immigrant entrepreneurs and suppliers with family farms

2.1.3. Survey family farms to identify challenges, and provide assistance

2.2.1. Reach out to chains and let them know the accurate headcount based on school enrollment

2.2.2. Teach restaurateuring through local colleges and food bank

2.3.1. Survey residents for what they enjoy in their spare time

2.3.2. Connect with business chains offering low-price entertainment

Goal 3: Workforce

3.1.1. Stay up-to-date on near-future industry needs, adjust program offerings accordingly

3.1.2. Create flexible, affordable micro-certificate programs

3.1.3. Partner with businesses to pay for apprenticeships

3.2.1. Partner with ISDs with colleges to create night school and peer tutoring for adults

3.2.2. Create micro-courses to be completed online

3.2.3. Work with local employers to incorporate training into everyday work

3.3.1. Offer free basic business courses through community centers, schools, or websites

3.3.2. Follow up with business course enrolees on plans to start businesses

3.3.3. Select exceptional business class students for adanced training and assistance

CASE STUDIES
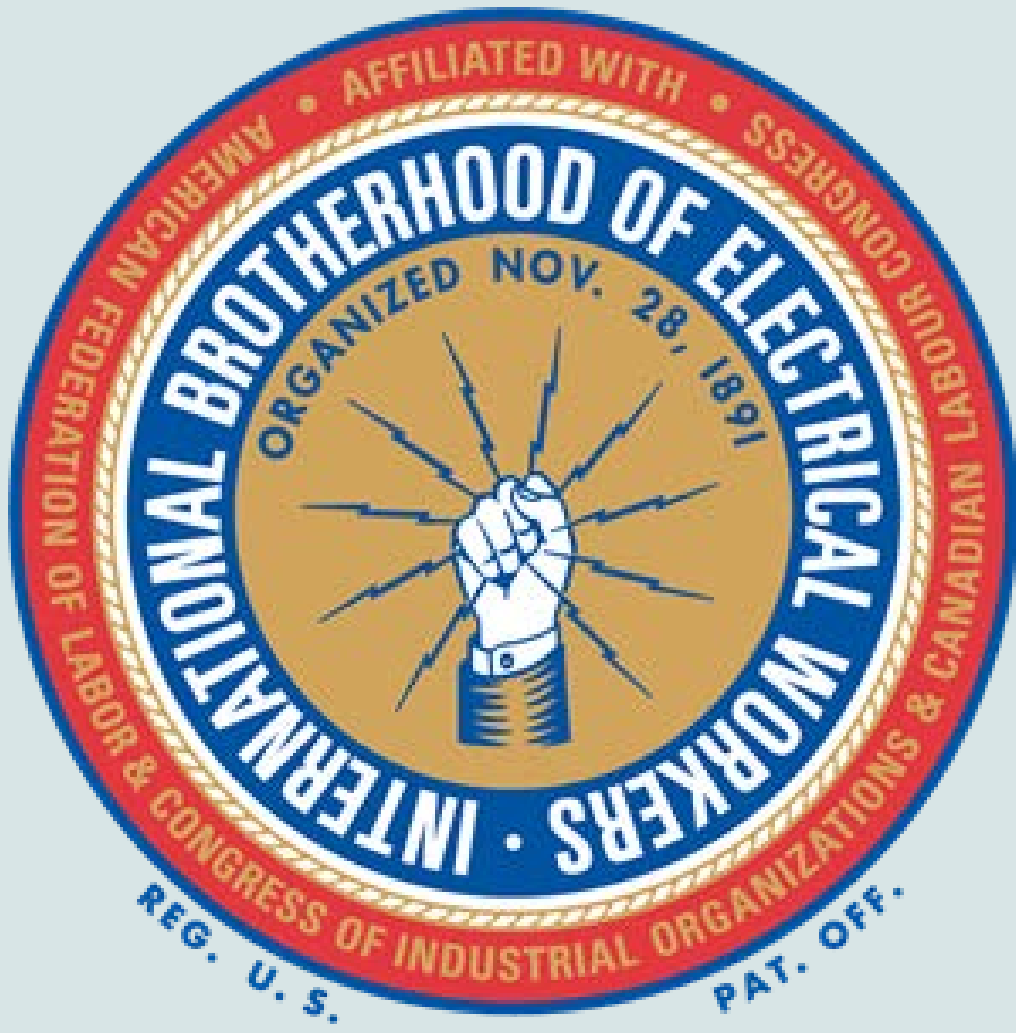
Rural Apprenticeships
Fairfield, Maine

- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers utilizes multiple funding sources to overcome barriers of a rural environment

Vocational Training
Lee County, North Carolina

- Partnership with local community college and Caterpillar provides training and certifications for high school students

Adult Education for Women
Baltimore, Maryland

- Career-focused job training and well-being considerations for women on welfare

WHAT ELSE?

GOALS

Siting   **Funding**   **Trust**

RECOMMENDATIONS

SITE NEW FACILITIES

- Locate areas in which current community facilities (such as education, emergency services, and healthcare) can add onto their development

- Identify existing infrastructure and current service area for ethernet and wireless for inventory of gaps to create a new broadband facility
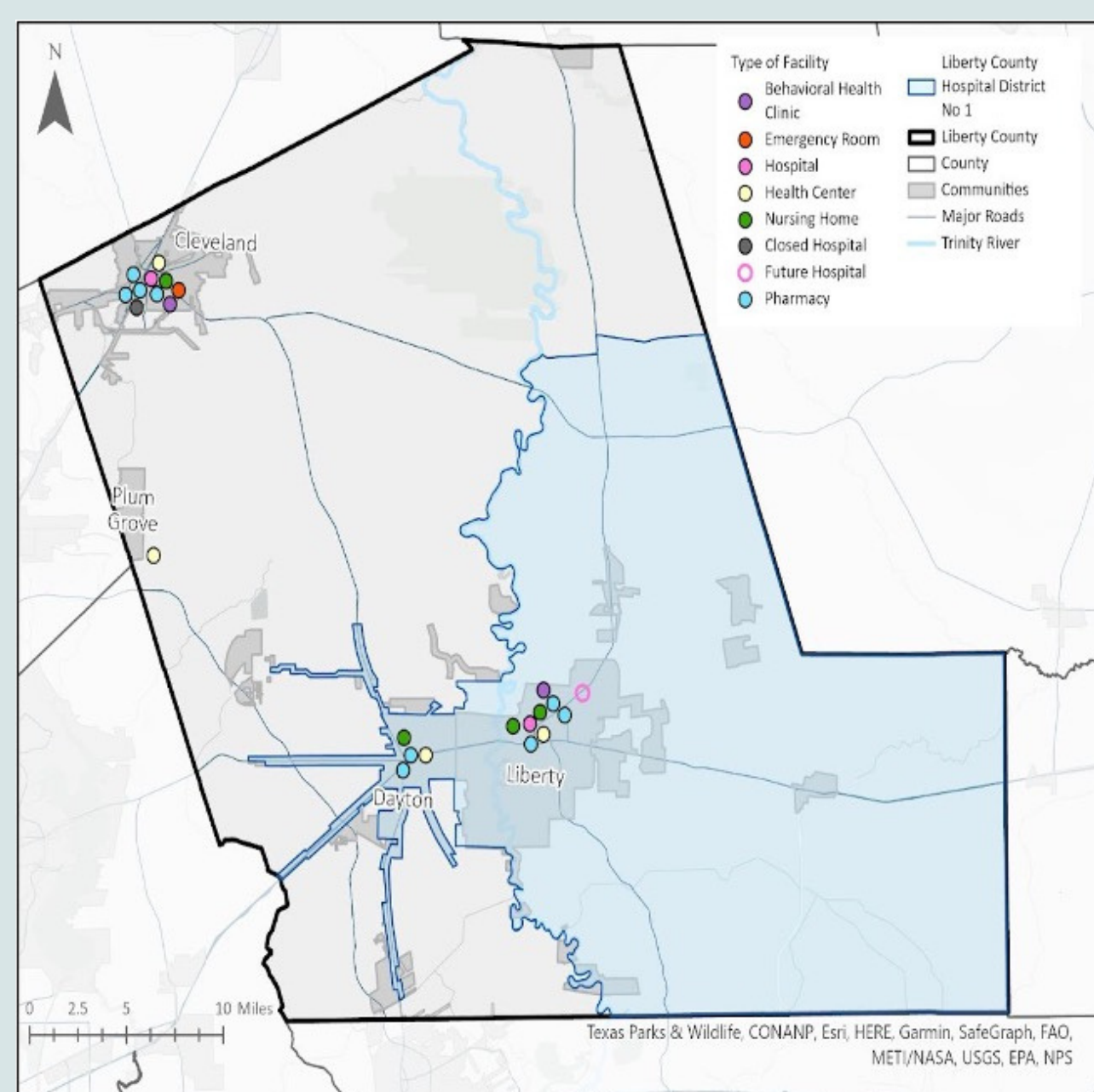
FUND NEW FACILITIES

- Facilitate new funding techniques to increase funding for current community facilities and new facilities like broadband

BUILD TRUST

- Improve cultural competency of public servants
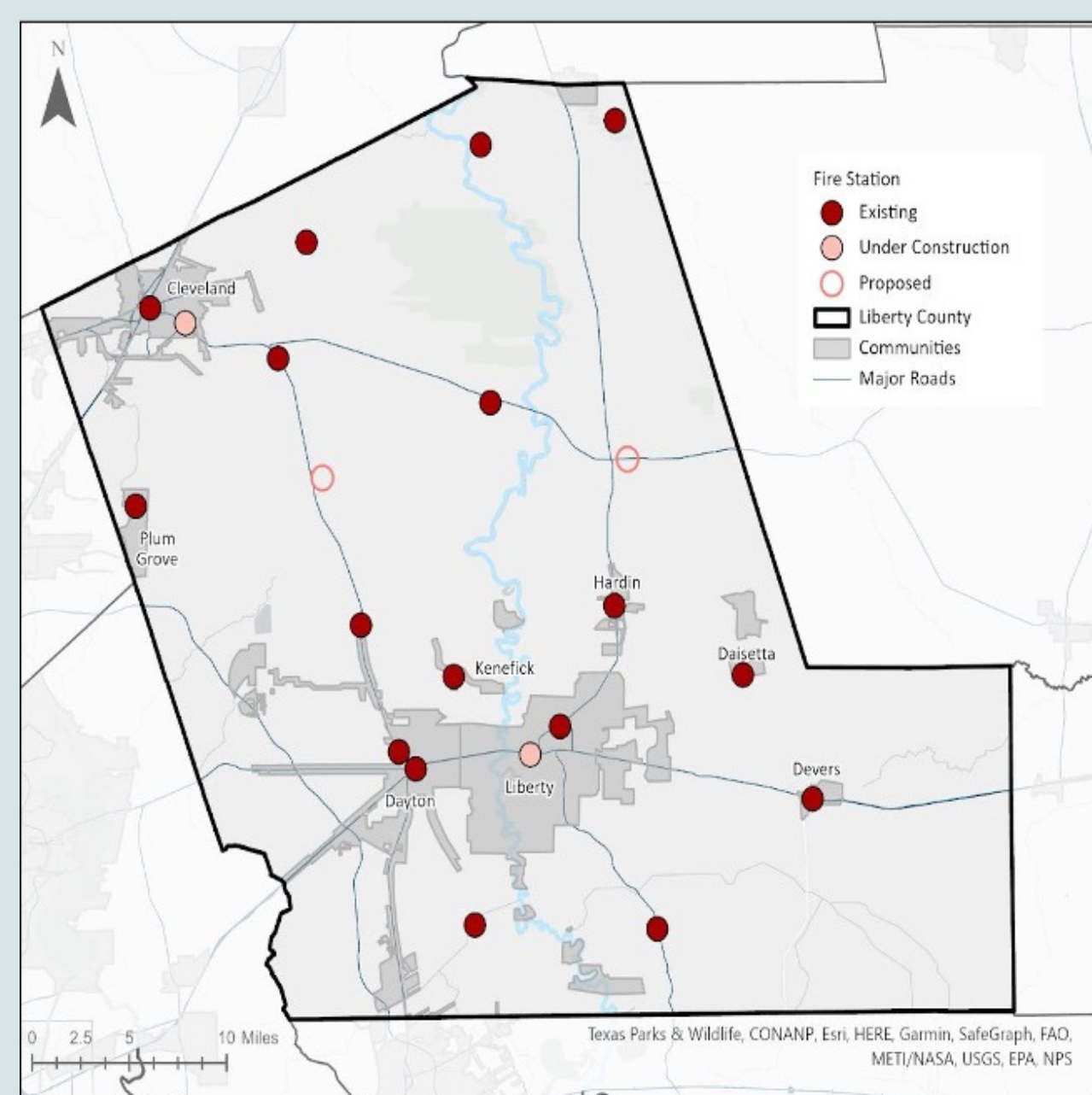- Establish long-term presence of social workers and coordinators
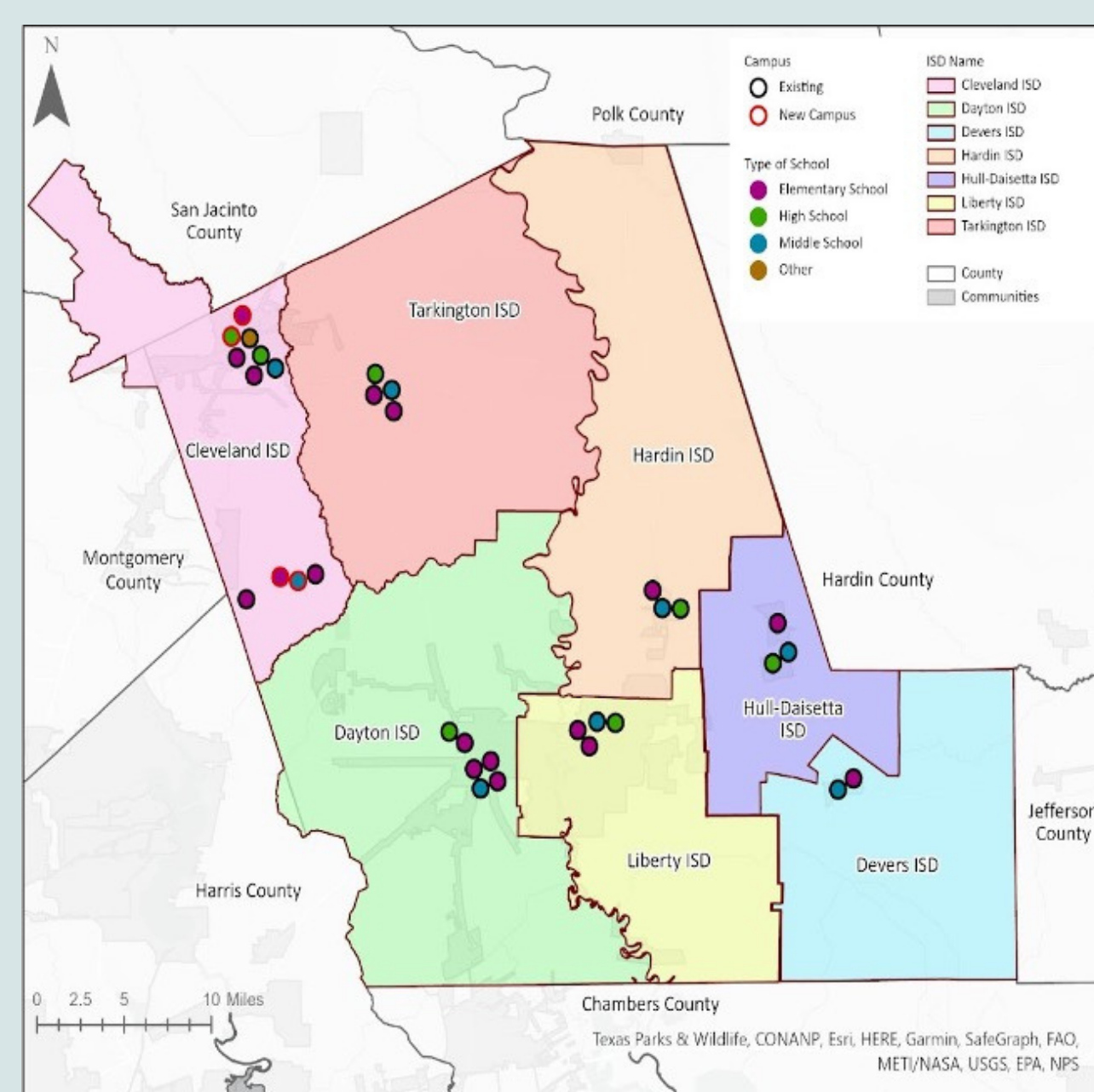
STATE OF COMMUNITY

Health

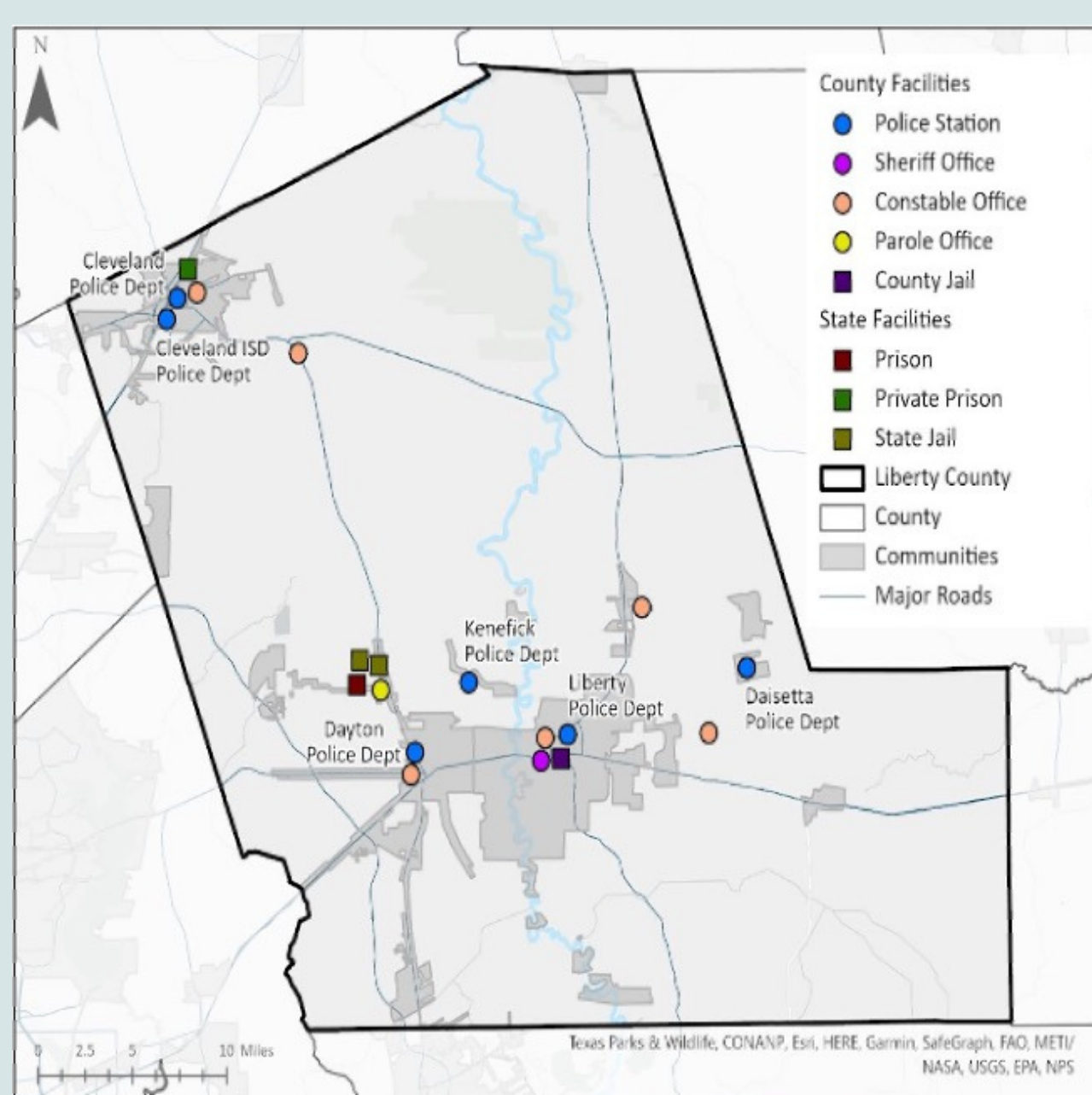- Facilities are concentrated in Cleveland and Liberty with a few in Dayton.

Fire

- Nearly every city has a facility. Several are in unincorporated areas.

Education

- Cleveland ISD and Dayton ISD have the largest student bodies and most facilities.

Police

- There are 9 facilities in the south half and 4 facilities in the north half of county.

FUNDING

EDUCATION

- Formula Grants
- Discretionary Grants
- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Grant Programs

BROADBAND FACILITIES

- Bringing Online Opportunities to Texas (BOOT) Program
- Affordable Connectivity Program
- Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program

STRATEGIES

Siting

Education
- Work with cities to get bonds approved for new schools near Cleveland and Dayton
- Encourage ISDs to negotiate with developers for land as part of community benefit agreements

Health Facilities
- Identify suitable plots or parcels in or near Dayton for clinics
- Coordinate with transportation planners on the ambulance and mobile care routes

Emergency Services
- Expand service to eastern parts in phases

Broadband Internet
- Identify existing infrastructure and current service area for ethernet and wireless for inventory of gaps

Funding

Education
- Recruit popular support for new bond proposals
- Coordinate between educational organizations on funding new/revised training curriculum

Health Facilities
- Adjust funding allocation based on a survey of healthcare needs and patterns
- Create a crisis prevention team

Emergency Services
- Explore cost-saving ways to construct new fire stations and upgrade equipment
- Explore low-cost upgrades to existing field communication technology

Broadband Internet
- Conduct cost inventory of satellite-based connections

Building Trust

Improve Cultural Competency
- Prioritize bilingual skills and live experiences in hiring process
- Subscribe to language learning apps
- Equip officers with personal translator devices

Establish Long-Term Presence of Coordinators
- Prioritize training and hiring of individuals who are committed to the long haul
- Prioritize rehabilitation over past offenses when hiring community coordinators
- Identify people in faith-based organizations to be community outreach ambassadors

Law Enforcement Outreach
- Bilingual Education Program - partner with local community colleges
- Communicators on Patrol - bilingual volunteers provide language assistance to officers on patrol
- Voice response translators
- *Ex: Houston Police Dept*

Education Support
- Involve student leaders in the bond planning process
- Students are able to actively promote it
- *Ex: Montgomery ISD School Bonds 2022*
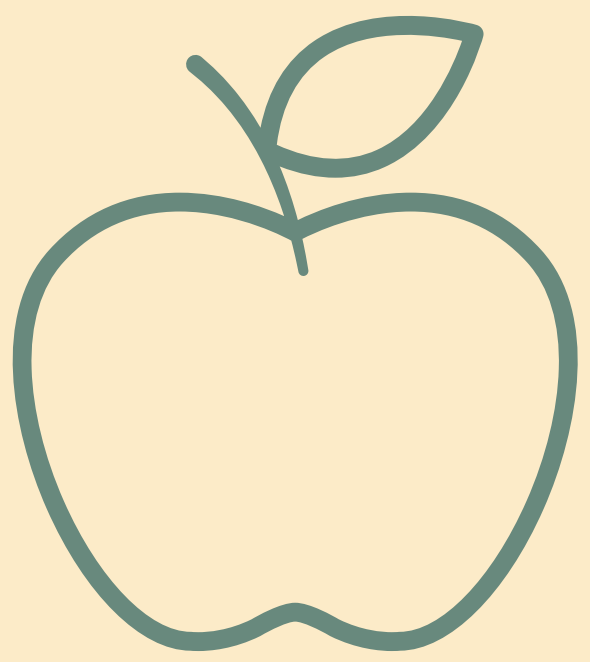

Internet Expansion
Texas (BOOT) Program
- Aimed at funding infrastructure projects
- Focus on last-mile connectivity
- Connecting end users to high-speed internet

WHAT ELSE?

Goals

Recommendations

Increase Access:
- Establish a locally sourced food system
- Encourage cheaper and healthier eating habits
- Build new stores and extend delivery services

Boost Health Related Services:
- Improve coordination amonge healthcare providers
- Expand specialty services
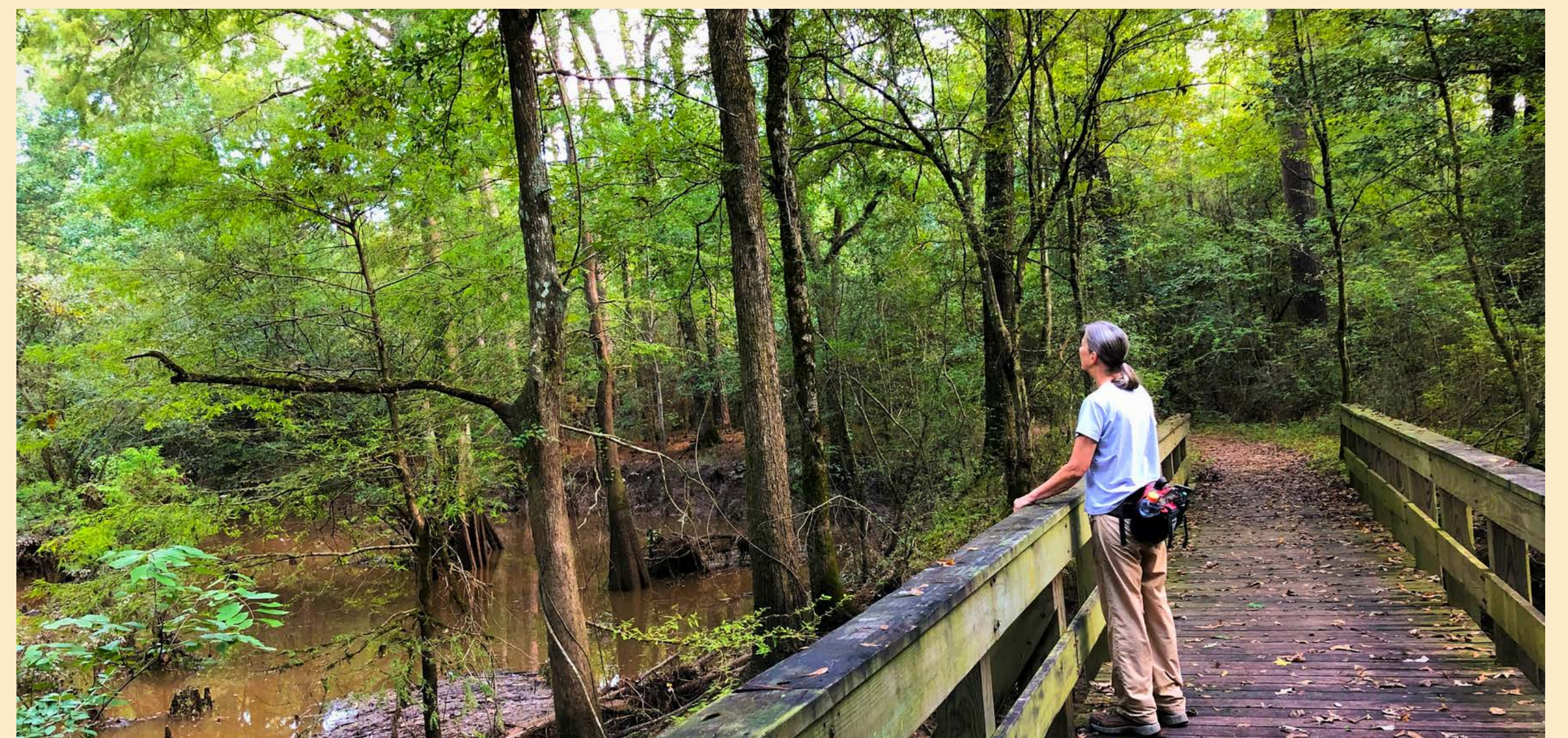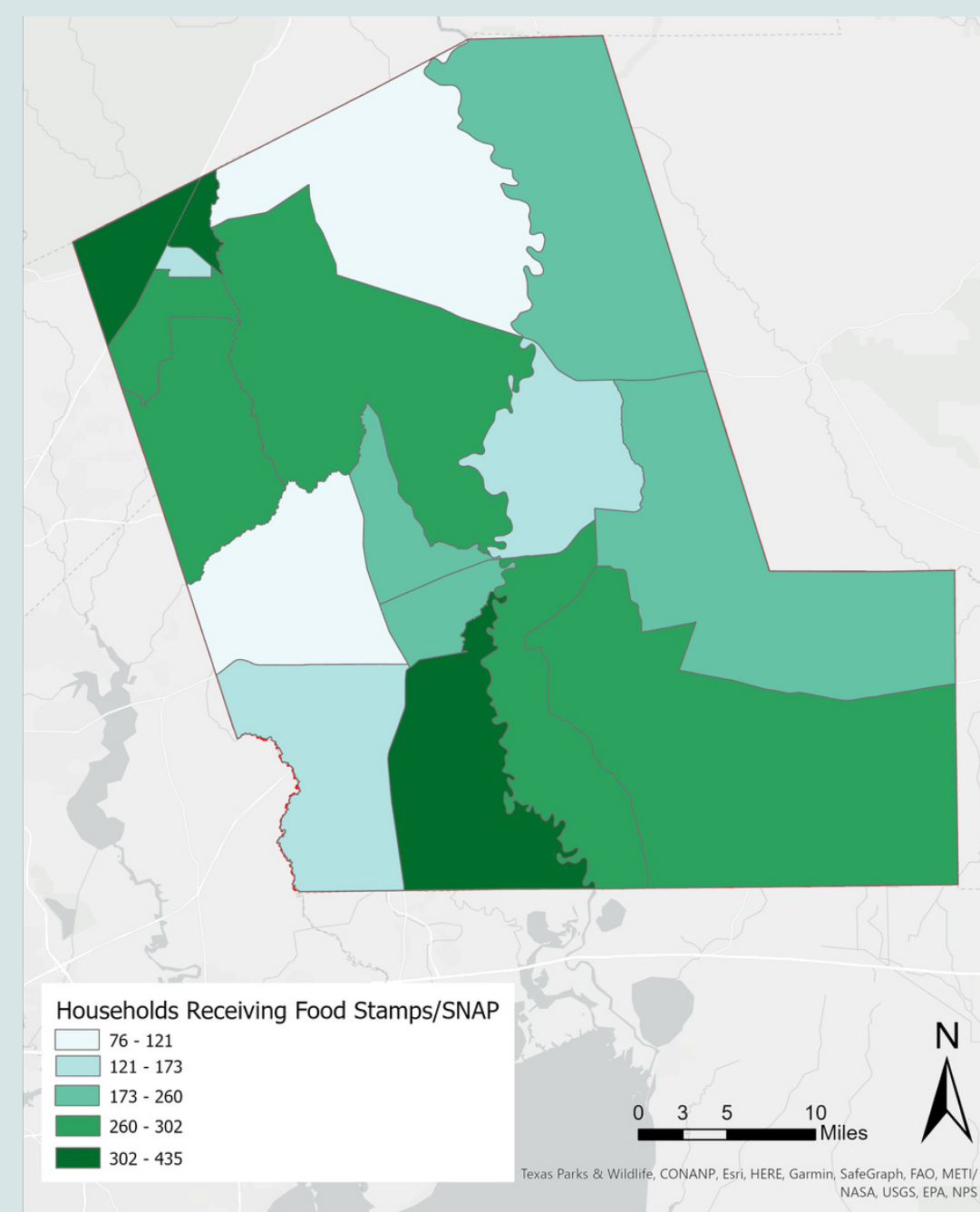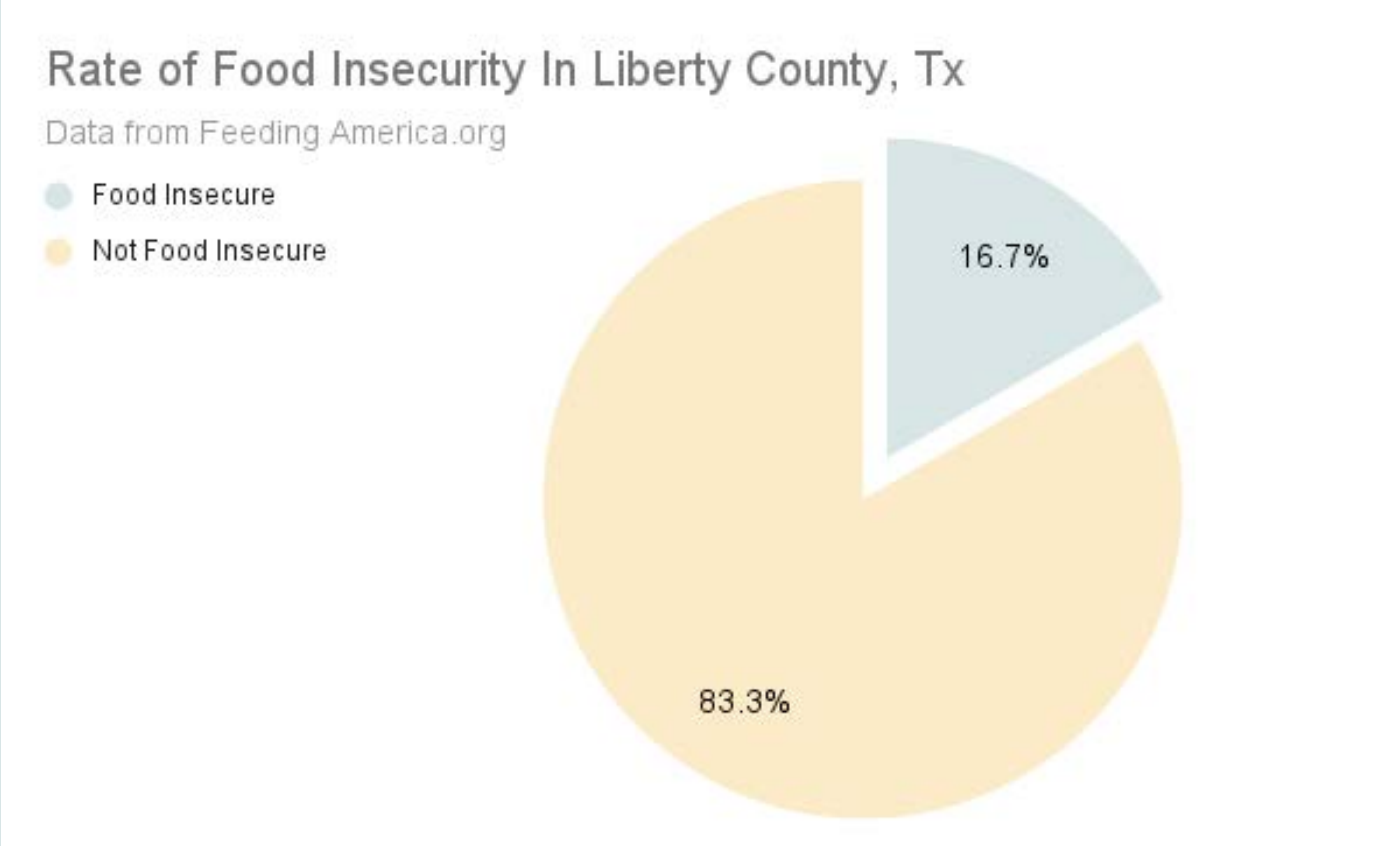- Expand Rural Healthcare Access

Manage Hazards and Promote Active Living:
- Reduce Hazard Exposure
- Build Resilience to Disasters
- Encourage Active Lifestyles
- Promote Green Building Techniques
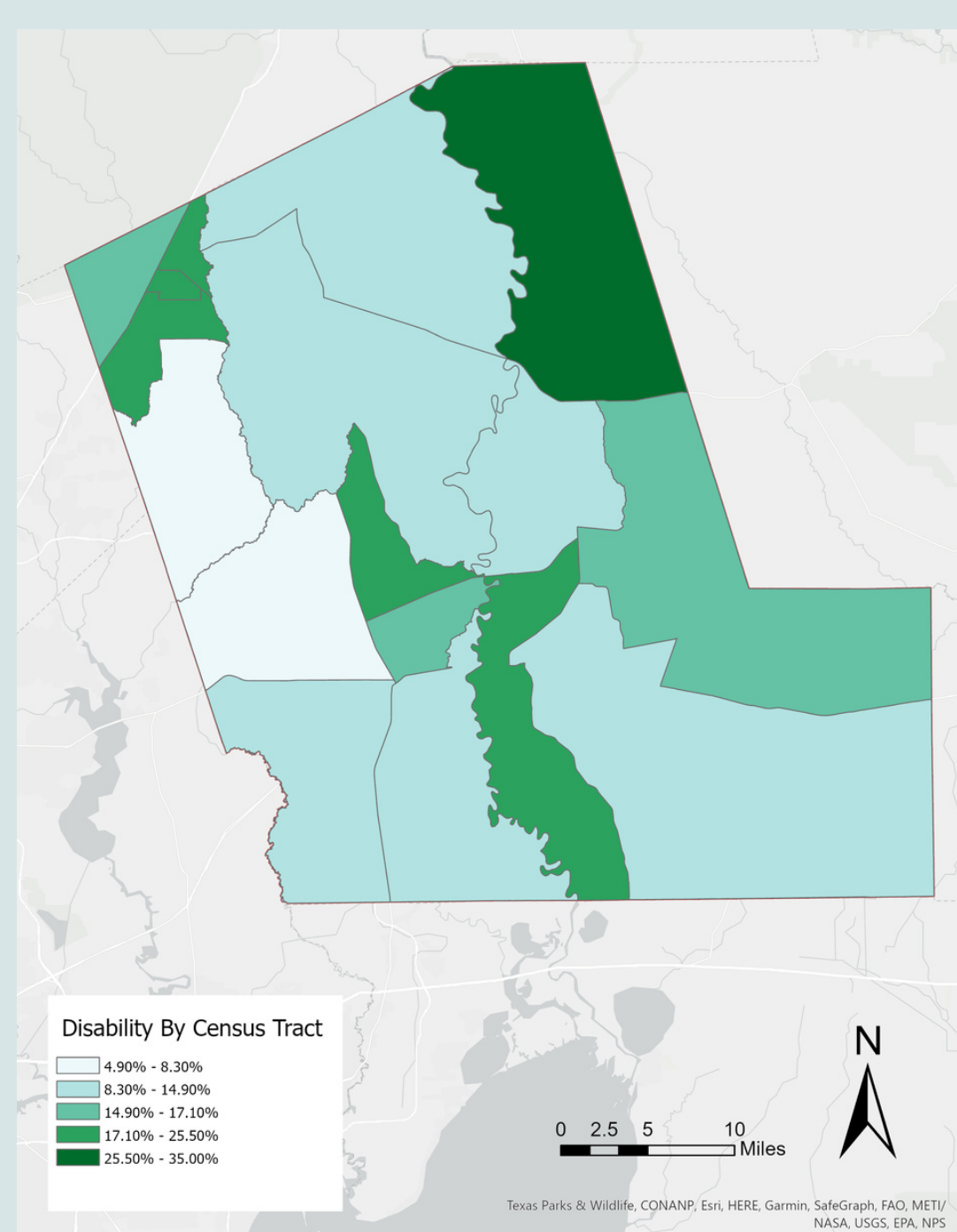
State of the Community

Food Insecurity:
- Liberty County experiences above-average levels of food insecurity. SNAP benefits and food banks are important and vital, but more can be done to increase food access.

Rate of Food Insecurity In Liberty County, Tx
Data from Feeding America.org
- Food Insecure
- Not Food Insecure

16.7%

83.3%

Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP
- 76 - 121
- 121 - 173
- 173 - 260
- 260 - 302
- 302 - 435

Healthcare Access:
- Healthcare is restrained by bureaucracy, a lack of specialty services, and limited access due to a lack of transportation options. In regards to mental health, there are 4,359 people per provider in Liberty County. For comparison, The US average is 355 people per provider.

Disability By Census Tract
- 4.90% - 8.30%
- 8.30% - 14.90%
- 14.90% - 17.10%
- 17.10% - 25.50%
- 25.50% - 35.00%

Exposure to Hazards:
- There is no county-wide hazard mitigation plan, crucial for potential disasters. Trash burning and pollution harms local health quality.

Funding

Telehealth Access:
- Bringing Online Opportunities to Texas (BOOT)
- iTRUST (TAMU Integration of Telehealth in Regions Underserved for Student Training)
- TXAN Mobile CARE (TAMU School of Nursing Mobile Care Access through Rural Engagement and Education)
- TEACH (TAMU Telehealth for the Expansion of Adolescent and Child Healthcare)
- ePattern (TAMU Expanding Patient Access to Telehealth through Engaging Rural Networks)

Hazard Recovery and Mitigation:
- CDBG Mitigation Funds
- EPA Environmental Justice Small Grants Program

Active Transportation:
- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program
- Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act

ACTIONS

Goal 1: Increase Access

- identify all barriers and gaps from farm to table
- identify opportunities and locations for community vegetable gardens
- request that Food Bank collect food habit data using anonymized surveys
- offer free classes through College, Food Bank, community centers, churches on health and financial benefits of healthy eating
- partner with Food Bank to develop a county nutrition plan
- create produce rescue programs through existing stores; use proceeds to fund grocery delivery to underserved areas
- partner with churches and Food Bank (for its freezer) on unprocessed frozen food drives, Goodwill-style

Goal 2: Boost Health Services

- short of creating a health department, employ two on-call nurses to direct residents to the appropriate providers
- extend healthcare services to the broader community through public schools
- bring in specialty providers (cardio, ob-gyn, etc.) to County hospitals 1 to 2 times a week
- coordinate specialist appointments with outside hospitals and provide monthly transportation for residents to these hospitals
- charge the nurse with exploring telehealth options (phone and, in concert with broadband expansion efforts, internet)
- require medical students and EMS-in-training to conduct organized rounds and house calls as part of their degree/certification

Goal 3: Manage Hazards

- explore PPPs for collection/disposal of trash, refuse, and hazardous wastes
- use punchcards + rewards to encourage the proper disposal of wastes by residents and businesses
- identify all federal and state programs that incentivize remediation, restoration, and cleanup of water and soil
- sponsor school field trips to County's natural reserves
- identify areas accessible to the electric grid to create or expand parks and open spaces
- in concert with efforts to expand tourism and local entrepreneurship, cultivate outfitters and guides
- maximize the use of green infrastructure for drainage and energy efficiency

CASE STUDIES

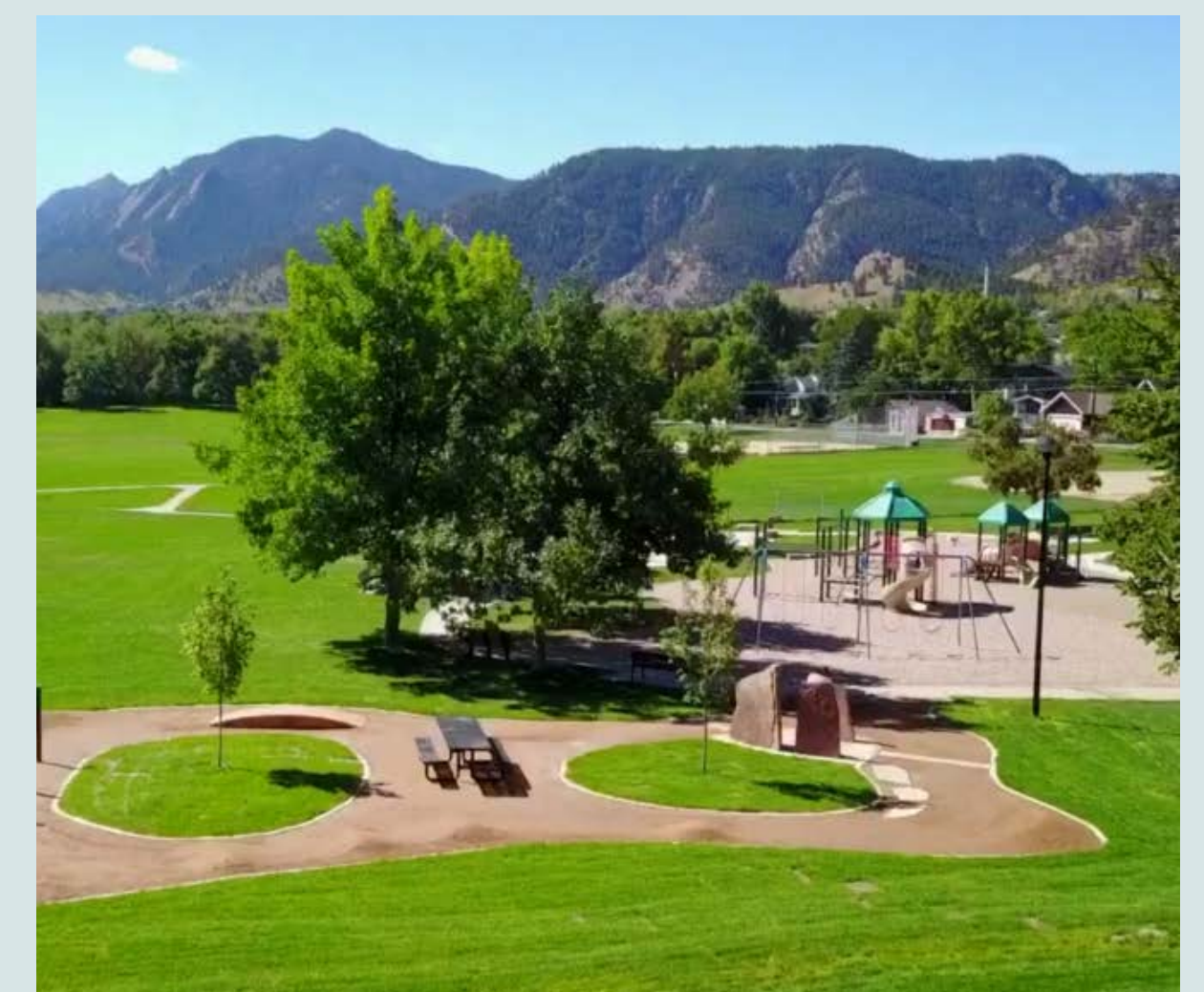**The Blue Zones Incentive**
Fort Worth, TX

- Using Urban Farming to Improve Healthy Food Access & Economic Development.

Reliable Telehealth
Shannon Medical Center, San Angelo, TX

- Provides stable, robust, and round-the-clock telemedicine to the rural communities they serve.

Development Impact Fee
Boulder, CO

- Fees assessed on new development go to bike lanes, pedestrian enhancements, and park land.

WHAT ELSE?