

Planning & Zoning Report

Our Finding

The St. Albans Township Zoning Commission should recommend to the St. Albans Township Trustees to vote against the proposed rezoning.

Recitals

1. St. Albans Township has received an application to rezone +/- 13 acres (parcel #066-317328-00.010) located on Moots Run Road east of the intersection of SR 37.
2. The applicant wishes to rezone the property from Agricultural (AG) to Manufacturing and Distribution (M&D).
3. The purpose of the Manufacturing & Distribution district (M&D) is to provide for business uses, storage, and those manufacturing uses not normally creating a nuisance discernible beyond its property lines.
4. The St. Albans Township Comprehensive Plan, adopted in December 2022, designates the property for Planned Commercial development.
5. Subject property map is below:



Conformance with St. Albans Township Comprehensive Plan

The St. Albans Township comprehensive plan is a long-term planning document created by the township that outlines a vision for the future growth and development of the community. It includes various elements such as land use, transportation, housing, environmental preservation, economic development, and more. The comprehensive plan is designed to guide decision-making and ensure that development aligns with the community's overall goals and values.

When a rezoning request is submitted, it must be compared to the comprehensive plan to assess whether the proposed change aligns with the broader vision for the township's development.

The comprehensive plan designates areas by land use category. Included in the land use categories are 'Manufacturing' and 'Planned Commercial.' The property in question is in the Planned Commercial district. The Township has provided areas designated for Manufacturing in and around the SR 310 / Morse Road including areas of manufacturing located along Shackelford Drive.

Keeping in mind the welfare of the total community in the decision-making process, a user of the comprehensive plan is encouraged to consider the following procedural steps:

- Step 1: Refer to the future land use plan text and map to ensure over-all consistency of pending decisions with the plan;
- Step 2: Refer to the other elements of the plan (i.e., residential, commercial, transportation, etc.) for appropriate goals, objectives, and policies;
- Step 3: Refer to related plans, technical information and/or individualized characteristics of the issue under study;
- Step 4: Assess the public interests, the technical nature and/or time constraint of the issue under study; and,
- Step 5: Evaluate information and take appropriate planning and decision-making action. Used in this manner, the community's comprehensive plan will aid in implementing a sound growth-management program.

The purpose of the Planned Commercial district of the comprehensive plan to encourage the design and development of non-residential uses in a manner which enhances the Township's image through the application of design and architectural principles, high-quality construction techniques, preservation of existing natural resources, and the provision of aesthetic amenities. New development should be designed to utilize agricultural and/or rural themed style

commercial development. Typical lower floor uses include, but are not limited to, offices, professional services, institutional uses, restaurants, and retail including grocery stores. The mix of uses may be vertically or horizontally distributed, and there is no requirement that a single building contain more than one use. Live/work housing options are permissible in Planned Commercial areas to ensure access to housing options and services within close proximity for the local workforce.

Where feasible, development is ideally built at the block scale, with minimum building setbacks. Parking requirements may be satisfied through shared or cooperative parking agreements, which can include off-site garages or lots. If parking requirements are satisfied on-site, structured parking is encouraged. Pedestrian spaces are encouraged to be generous in width and lighting, with streetscaping and signage scaled to pedestrians. Planned Commercial projects encourage incorporation of future transit facilities into development.

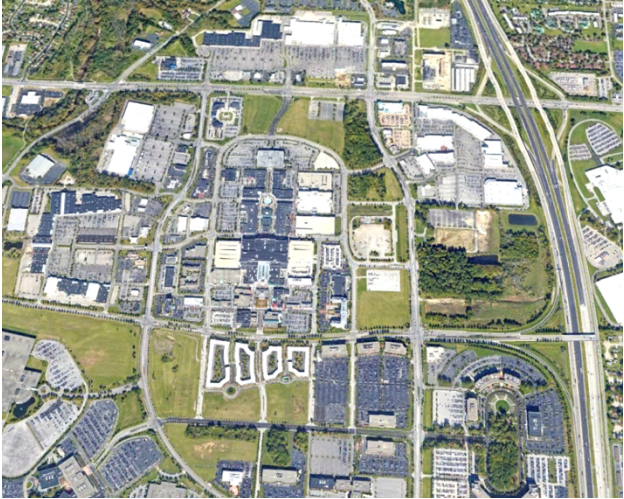


Image 1 - Planned Commercial Typology

Proposed Zoning District (Manufacturing and Distribution)

During the 2022 comprehensive plan process, the area north of the SR 37 / SR 161 intersection was envisioned to be a mixed use, planned commercial district similar in style to Image 1 above. To accomplish this goal, form based code was recommended for the areas of potential development. Form based code is discussed further in this report.

The applicant is proposing to rezone the property to Manufacturing and Distribution. Although the planned use of the property as stated by the applicant is for a ready-mix concrete facility, the potential future uses must be considered. According to the Township Zoning Resolution (see Section 1601) the following uses would be allowed if rezoned to Manufacturing and Distribution:

1. Any use permitted in a Neighborhood Business district (NB) or General Business district (GB) except residential uses.
2. (31-33) Manufacturing: (311) Food Manufacturing, including all except (311613) Rendering and Meat Byproduct Processing; (312) Beverage and Tobacco Product

Manufacturing; (313) Textile Mills; (314) Textile Product Mills; (315) Apparel Manufacturing; (316) Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing; (321) Wood Product Manufacturing; (323) Printing and Related Support Activities; (332) Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing; (333) Machinery Manufacturing; (334) Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing; (335) Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing; (336) Transportation Equipment Manufacturing; (337) Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing; and (339) Miscellaneous Manufacturing.

3. (42) Wholesale Trade: (423) Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods; (424) Merchant Wholesalers, Non- Durable Goods; and (425) Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers.

4. (48-49) Transportation and Warehousing: (484) Truck Transportation; (488) Support Activities for Transportation, with or without dining, provided any repair operations are conducted within a fully enclosed building and there is no open storage of wrecked vehicles, dismantled parts, or parts visible beyond the premises; and (493) Warehousing and Storage.

5. (51) Information: (511) Publishing Industries (except Internet).

6. (56) Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services: (562) Waste Management and Remediation Services, limited to (562111) Solid Waste Collection, (56292) Materials Recovery Facilities, and (562991) Septic Tank and Related Services.

7. General: Other manufacturing uses of a light nature, free from any objectionable odors, fumes, dirt, vibration, or noise detectable at the lot line. A registered engineer or architect indicating that every reasonable provision will be taken to eliminate or minimize gas fumes, odors, dirt, vibration or noise, shall not establish such uses without an application for a permit. In the event of the denial of such permit, an applicant shall have a right of appeal to the Board Zoning of Appeals as outlined in Article 5, "Administration." However, junkyards or similar uses are prohibited.

Form-Based Code

The Township began the process to create a form-based code and rewrite the zoning resolution months ago. To date, the Township has completed a new and modern planned unit development code, held two work sessions to review the proposed form-based code. The third work session was held tonight, July 27th, 2023. The draft of the form-based code is available to review on the Township website.

The following are reasons the Township has started the process to adopt a form based code for the area considered for this rezoning.

Emphasis on Design and Urban Form: Form-based codes prioritize the physical characteristics and design elements of a development, such as building placement, scale, architectural style, and street layout. This focus on urban form helps create visually appealing and cohesive neighborhoods that contribute to a sense of place and community identity.

Flexibility and Adaptability: Unlike traditional zoning, which often relies on rigid land use classifications, form-based codes provide greater flexibility. They can accommodate a mix of uses within a single building or block, allowing for more diverse and vibrant urban environments. This flexibility enables adaptive reuse of buildings, encourages innovative designs, and supports the evolution of neighborhoods over time.

Walkability and Connectivity: Form-based codes promote walkable and connected communities by emphasizing pedestrian-friendly design principles. They typically prioritize the arrangement of streets, sidewalks, and public spaces to encourage active transportation, reduce reliance on cars, and foster social interaction.

Contextual and Responsive Approach: Traditional zoning often applies a one-size-fits-all approach, which may not consider the unique characteristics of a neighborhood or the desires of its residents. Form-based codes, on the other hand, aim to be context-sensitive and responsive to local conditions. They can be tailored to reflect the existing built environment, cultural heritage, and community aspirations, ensuring that new developments complement the character of the area.

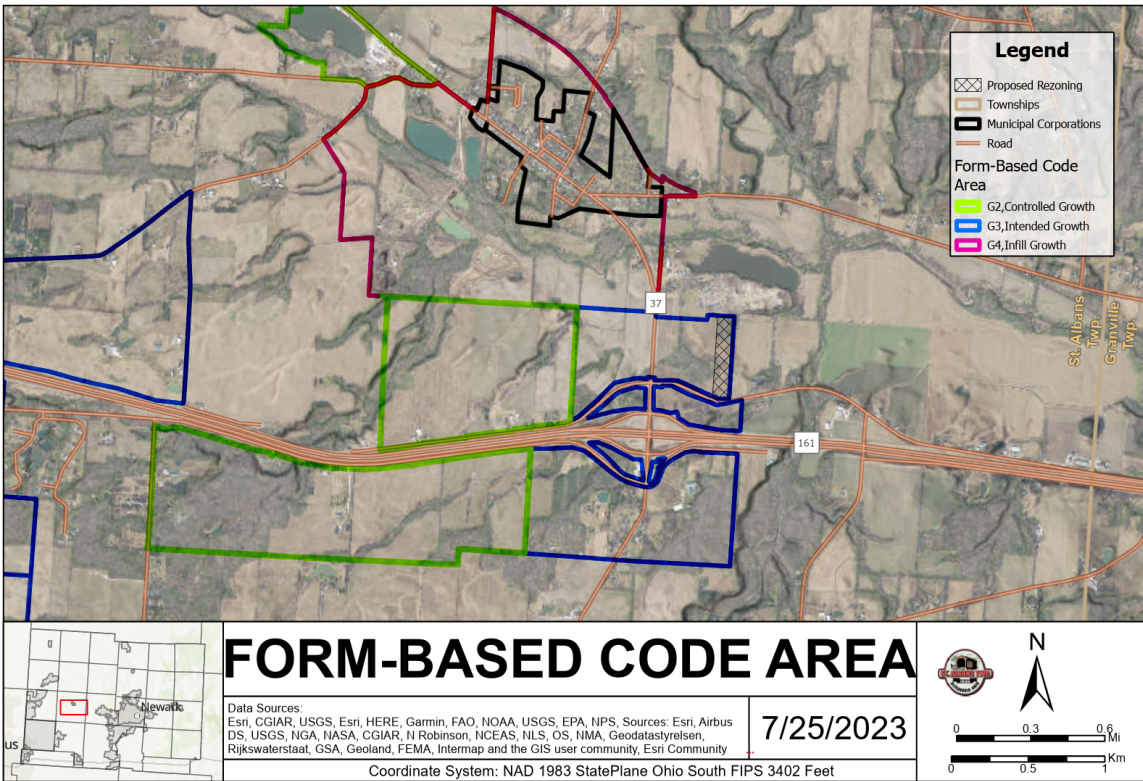
Predictability and Streamlined Review Process: Form-based codes provide clear guidelines and standards for developers, architects, and planners, which can reduce uncertainty and streamline the review process. With explicit design parameters, the codes facilitate faster and more consistent decision-making, enabling efficient development while still maintaining quality standards.

Encouragement of Mixed-Income and Mixed-Use Development: By allowing a mix of housing types, densities, and uses within a given area, form-based codes promote diverse and inclusive communities. This approach can facilitate the integration of affordable housing, create opportunities for small businesses, and support a more balanced and sustainable urban fabric.

Environmental Considerations: Form-based codes can incorporate sustainability principles and green design standards. They can encourage energy-efficient buildings, green spaces, stormwater management, and other environmental features, contributing to the overall ecological resilience of the community.

Overall, form-based codes offer a more comprehensive and holistic approach to urban planning and development, focusing on the physical characteristics and design of the built environment. By prioritizing aesthetics, walkability, flexibility, and context sensitivity, these codes help create livable, vibrant, and sustainable communities.

Map 1 - Areas for Form-Based Code



Environmental Considerations

Groundwater Vulnerability - In 2022, the Ohio EPA Groundwater Program updated and replaced its existing Groundwater Pollution Potential maps with a new statewide, seamless Groundwater Vulnerability map.

Groundwater Vulnerability (GV) maps depict an area's vulnerability to groundwater contamination based upon its hydrogeologic, topographic, and soil media characteristics. Conceptually, these maps consider the case in which a generic contaminant is introduced at the land surface and allowed to percolate into the

aquifer, be attenuated by natural processes, or be transported out of the area. As the hydrogeologic parameters controlling the fate of the contaminant change, the likelihood of the aquifer's contamination increases or decreases. This likelihood is reflected in the overall GV Index.

Notably, GV maps do not consider the presence of contaminant sources, only the hydrogeology of the area in question. Therefore, a pristine, uninhabited plot of land with hydrogeologic characteristics conducive for water to flow into its aquifer would exhibit (despite having no known case or source of contamination) a GV Index higher than the location of a chemical storage facility, if hydrogeologic conditions at the facility limited the aquifer's potential pathways for contamination. In short, GV Index is a contaminant and land use indifferent measure of groundwater contamination potential.

Flood Hazard Area - Preserving floodplains during property development is of paramount importance from an environmental and risk management perspective. Floodplains serve as natural mechanisms that absorb and regulate floodwaters during heavy rainfall or flood events. Allowing floodplains to function as intended mitigates flooding downstream, reducing potential damage to properties and infrastructure.

From an ecological standpoint, preserving floodplains maintains essential habitats for various plant and animal species that have evolved to thrive in these periodically inundated areas. Disrupting floodplain ecosystems can lead to the loss of biodiversity and negative impacts on regional ecology.

In addition to the environmental considerations, there are significant social and economic benefits to preserving floodplains. By avoiding development on flood-prone areas, communities can protect their residents from flood-related hazards and reduce the need for costly disaster relief efforts. Furthermore, safeguarding the floodplain contributes to improved water quality and minimizes sedimentation in adjacent water bodies, promoting healthier ecosystems.

Compliance with local regulations and zoning laws that prohibit or restrict development on floodplains is vital. Responsible development practices ensure that the natural environment is respected, and potential risks are adequately mitigated.

With climate change leading to increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, the importance of preserving floodplains is magnified. These areas can

provide critical resilience by acting as buffers against floods and supporting adaptation efforts.

The preservation of floodplains is a key component of sustainable and resilient development. Recognizing their significance in flood control, ecological preservation, social well-being, and economic stability is essential for long-term environmental stewardship and community welfare.

Water Wells - When a large water user, such as an industrial facility, agricultural operation, or even a densely populated urban development, begins to draw large amounts of water from groundwater sources near existing ground wells, several potential consequences may arise:

Lowering of the water table: Drawing substantial amounts of water from nearby groundwater sources can lead to a lowering of the water table. The water table is the underground depth at which the soil and rocks are fully saturated with water. When excessive pumping occurs, the water table can drop, potentially causing existing ground wells to experience reduced water levels.

Well yield reduction: Ground wells rely on the water stored in the surrounding aquifer to supply water to the surface. If the nearby large user draws water at a faster rate than the aquifer can naturally recharge, the yield of the affected ground wells may decrease. This means that the wells may not be able to produce water at the same flow rate as before.

Well drying or depletion: In extreme cases, excessive water pumping by a large user can lead to the drying up or depletion of ground wells. If the pumping rate exceeds the recharge rate of the aquifer over an extended period, the groundwater levels may drop below the depth of the well intake, rendering the well unable to extract water.

Contamination risk: Intense groundwater pumping can alter the flow direction and speed within the aquifer. This altered flow may potentially transport contaminants from the large user's site or other areas into the vicinity of existing ground wells. Consequently, there could be an increased risk of groundwater contamination.

Subsidence: Excessive groundwater withdrawal can cause land subsidence, a phenomenon where the land surface sinks. This occurs when the reduction of water in the subsurface soil layers causes them to compact. Subsidence can damage

infrastructure, create sinkholes, and further complicate water availability for ground wells.

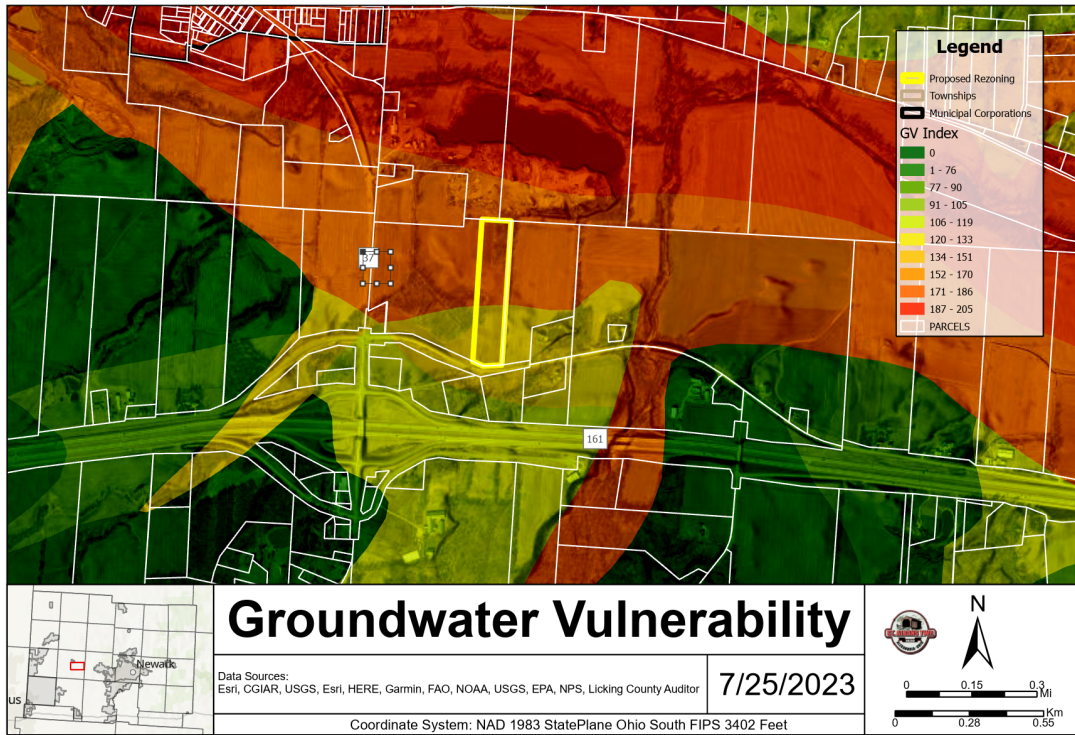
Groundwater Recharge - Groundwater recharge refers to the process by which water from various sources, such as precipitation, surface water bodies, or irrigation, infiltrates through the soil and replenishes underground aquifers. Aquifers are layers of permeable rock or soil that can store and transmit water, acting as natural underground reservoirs.

During the recharge process, water percolates downward through the soil and underlying geological formations until it reaches the water table, which is the upper boundary of the saturated zone where the ground is fully saturated with water. The rate of recharge depends on factors such as the soil's permeability, the intensity and duration of rainfall, and the land's surface characteristics. Several mechanisms contribute to groundwater recharge:

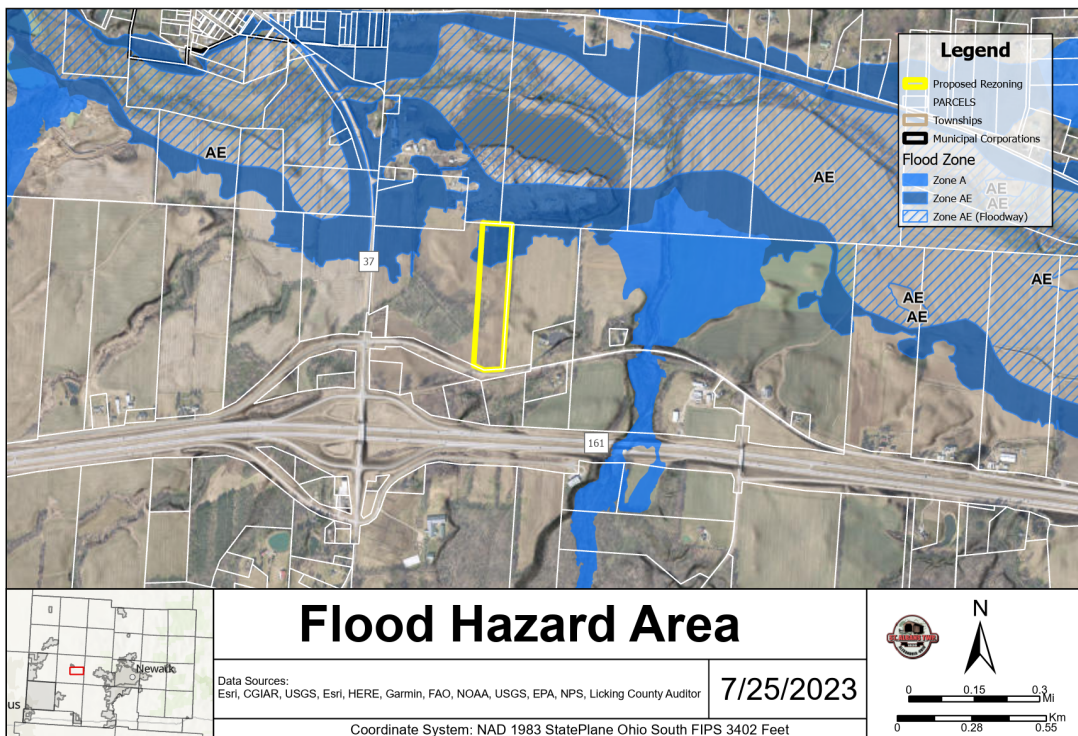
1. **Infiltration:** Rainfall, snowmelt, or irrigation water that falls on the ground's surface infiltrates into the soil. The water moves through the pores and spaces in the soil until it reaches the water table.
2. **Streamflow infiltration:** In some cases, surface water bodies, such as rivers, lakes, or streams, may overflow during periods of heavy precipitation. This excess water can seep into the surrounding soil and recharge the underlying aquifers.
3. **Bank storage:** Along riverbanks and lake shores, groundwater can interact with surface water bodies. During high-flow events, water from the river or lake may infiltrate into the adjacent soil, increasing groundwater levels.
4. **Inflow from other areas:** Water can also move laterally from one area to another within the aquifer. In regions where groundwater flows horizontally, recharge from distant areas can contribute to maintaining groundwater levels.

Groundwater recharge is a crucial natural process that sustains the availability of groundwater resources, which are vital for human consumption, agriculture, and ecosystem health. Understanding and managing groundwater recharge are essential components of sustainable water resource management, ensuring the long-term viability and reliability of groundwater supplies for various uses. Proper land use practices, water conservation efforts, and protecting natural recharge areas are some strategies employed to maintain and enhance groundwater recharge rates.

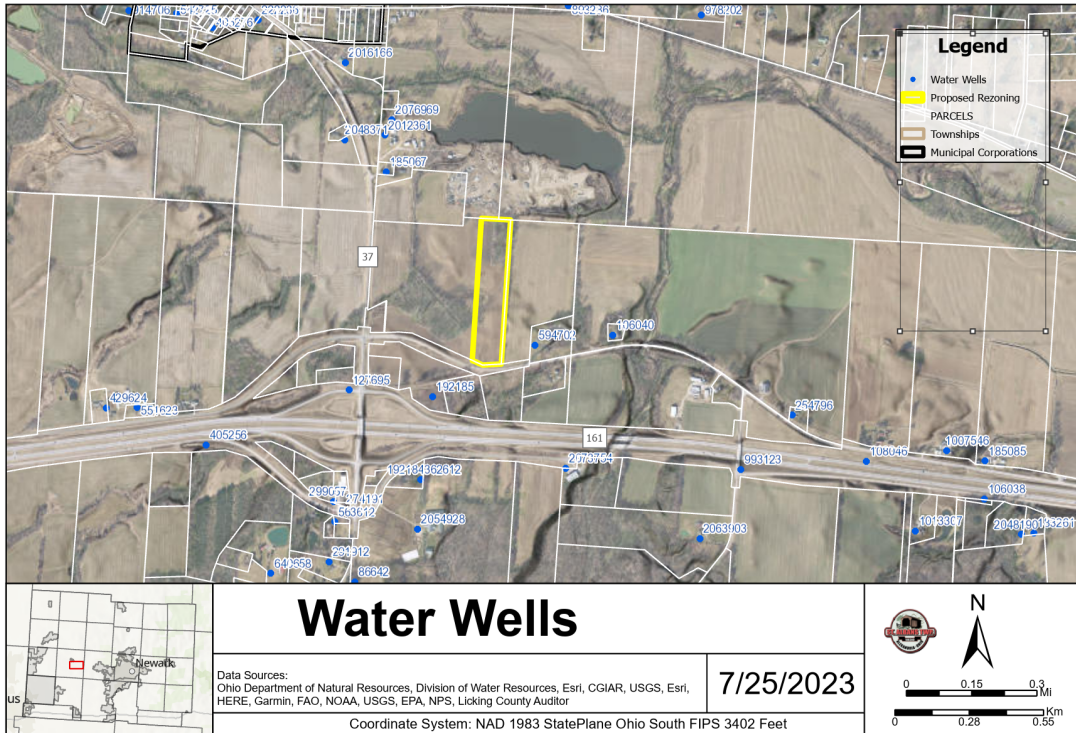
Map 2 - Groundwater Vulnerability



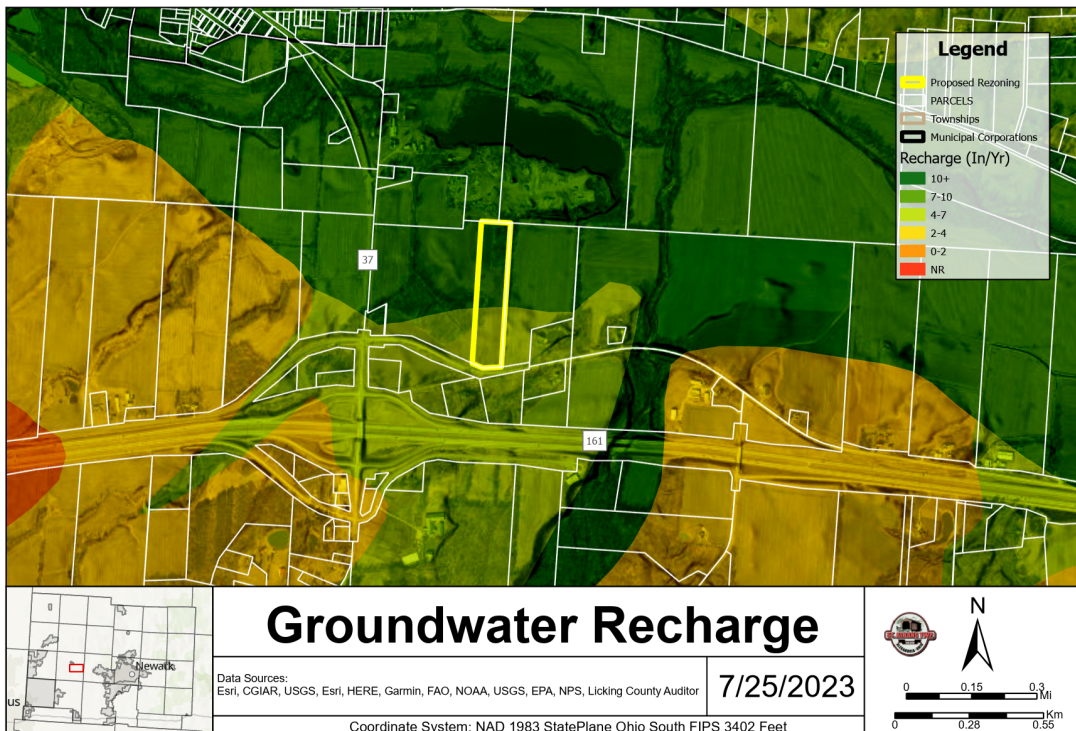
Map 3 - Flood Hazard Area



Map 4 - Water Wells



Map 5 - Groundwater Recharge Rate



Traffic

Crash Frequency - From 2018 to 2022, there were eight documented crashes at each of the two intersections (16 total) nearest to the proposed rezoning. The crash severity is broken down below and displayed on Map 6:

Intersection	Total Crashes (2018-2022)	Fatal	Serious Injury Suspected	Minor Injury Suspected	Injury Possible	Property Damage Only
Moots Run & SR 37	8	-	-	3	1	4
SR 37 & On/Off Ramp	8	-	-	-	-	8

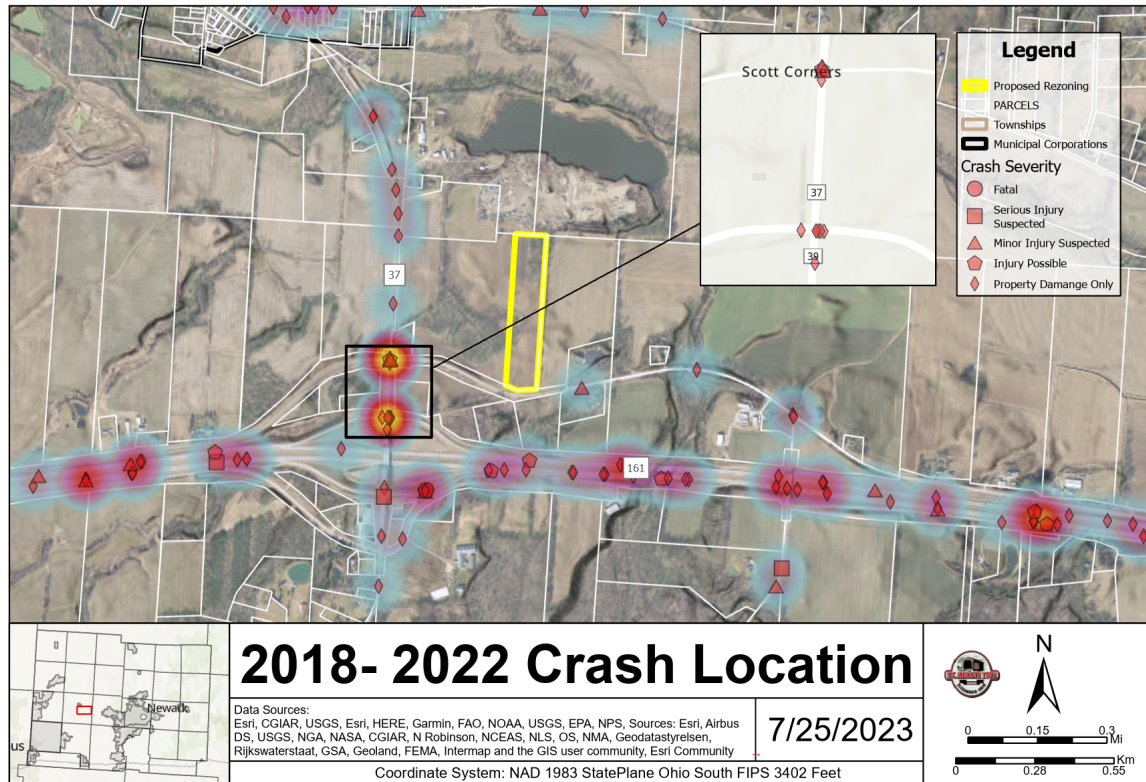
Truck Trips - To better understand the amount of traffic generated from a batch plant, I did brief research to determine what amount of traffic could be generated from this use. The information is meant to show approximate truck trip generation based on the assumptions below.

A traffic generation report¹ for a similar type of batch plant found a total of **58 truck** trips would be generated from a site with nine employees working one shift seven days per week. The mixer trucks operate from 6:00am to 7:00pm on weekdays. Other assumptions in the report include:

- Truck drivers will start to arrive at 6:00 AM and leave at 7:00 PM on weekdays.
- Trucks will load/operate from 6:30 AM to 7:00 PM.
- Trucks will load once every 15 minutes at the busiest time.
- The busiest truck departures will be between 7:00 AM and 9:30 AM Monday through Saturday.
- One supplies delivery truck will arrive once per day

¹ <https://www.ci.azusa.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/40384/Traffic-Generation-Analysis---Consolidated-Ready-Mix---162-N-Aspan-Avenue>

Map 6 - Crash Severity and Location



Recommendation:

As the author of the St. Albans Township Comprehensive Plan, I attended all committee meetings, attended the public hearings of the Zoning Commission and Township Trustees during the adoption process and spoke with many residents about the plan. Most acknowledge growth is inevitable but wish to do so in a controlled and sustainable manner. The way to accomplish this goal is to adhere to the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Adherence to the Comprehensive Plan is the fundamental pillar of proper community growth. The recommendation for not approving the rezoning request is based upon the following:

1. The rezoning from AG to M&D does not conform with the recently adopted St. Albans Township Comprehensive Plan.
2. Allowable uses in the M&D district do not meet the intent of the Planned Commercial district of the Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Township has identified areas appropriate for Manufacturing and Distribution (M&D) in the Comprehensive Plan.

This report was prepared by Jim Lenner, President + CEO of Neighborhood Strategies who serves as development advisor to St. Albans Township.