



**Statement on the Housing Crisis and Prosperity in Union County, Ohio**  
**Union County Chamber of Commerce**  
**October 31, 2023**

The Union County Chamber of Commerce Board of Trustees' (COC) mission is to create a supportive environment that champions business growth and community advancement, with the ultimate goal of improving Union County's quality of life. The COC Board of Trustees, comprised of 23 business and community leaders, desires to make a statement on the existing housing crisis and future prosperity of Union County. COC Board of Trustees seeks to help inform the community on the critical importance of affordable and accessible housing opportunities to our businesses and residents that call Union County home. Both residential and commercial development done in a smart, incremental, and sustainable manner will allow for Union County to prosper. Coincidentally, for our businesses to expand, invest and create job opportunities, we must provide affordable and accessible housing opportunities for their employees. Housing opportunities and business growth together will ensure prosperity for our residents, families, and children now and well into the future.

Exhibit A, attached to this statement, provides recent datapoints about development trends in Union County and Ohio. As we discuss not only growth but our prosperity, we must take these datapoints into consideration. Union County is growing at a manageable rate while many counties in Ohio are losing population. The COC understands that there are some citizens who desire to keep the smalltown atmosphere of our community. The COC agrees with this desire, but also realizes that we must find ways to invest, develop, and revitalize the community with new opportunities in a manageable and sustainable way. Growing cities prosper, while shrinking communities do not.

Recent development proposals that have been approved or are being planned will bring new housing opportunities and options for different ages groups thereby creating a more sustainable workforce. These developments include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Vision Development is developing 240 apartments on the former Marysville Plaza site;
- Highland Development is proposing to develop Stillwater Farms on the west side of Marysville that will include 650 single-family and multi-family units;
- Rockford Homes is developing Cooper Run which includes 240 apartments in Mill Valley near Scooters Coffee off of SR 31;
- Pulte Homes is developing Amrine Meadows located on the east side of SR 31 north of US 33 which will include approximately 300 homes; and,
- Fisher Homes is developing 347 houses off of SR 4 near Bunsold Middle School that will include various different housing lines offering different price points.

In total, these developments seem like a lot of housing. However, these developments are being built over the next 3-5 years. Furthermore, as stated in Exhibit A and since the Great Recession, Union County has not provided the housing opportunities needed for the community. It also is important to note that developments that are approved today are not fully developed until 5-10 years in the future.

The City of Marysville has worked closely with developers requiring them to invest into infrastructure to support their respective developments. This ensures that development pays for itself. Some recent examples, including, but not limited to, are as follows:

- Woodside apartment (Weiler) developer along Columbus Avenue is investing approximately \$1.7M in the Marysville southern bypass and the Columbus Avenue intersection;
- Stillwater Farms developer (Highland) is planning to invest \$3M into the road network around US 33, SR 245 and Northwest Parkway;
- Amrine Meadows developer (Pulte) is investing \$650K into improvements along SR 31; and,
- Union Square and commercial outparcel developer south of Walmart is investing over \$200K into improvements to Coleman's Crossing Boulevard.

Union County is now at a critical juncture with two paths forward: (1) we grow in a manageable way to ensure prosperity for future generations; or, (2) we resist growth which threatens our quality of life. With over 8,300 unfilled jobs within a 20-mile radius and an average home sale price of over \$430K, it is becoming more difficult for businesses to grow and be successful. We simply do not have the bodies to fill the open job positions. Ultimately, if employers cannot find workers to fill these positions, the community decides to slow housing development, and the home sale price point stays at \$430K+, our community's quality of life will be in peril. It simply comes down to a supply and demand issue. Do businesses choose to close or relocate to other communities? With the employee shortage, can we attract new businesses to locate to Union County? These questions clearly underline the importance of why new housing opportunities are necessary for us to have the best schools, business growth, and a great quality of life.

Additionally, it is very important to point out that if we slow or stop housing or commercial development, the tax burden will grow for existing residents. New growth will cause the need for new infrastructure and services, but the new growth will also spread out the tax burden among the new residents. Housing and population growth will also provide new restaurant and retail opportunities – housing drives both sectors.

In closing, the COC encourages community leaders, citizens, employers, and employees to work together to support managed and sustainable growth and development. If we continue to resist or say no to development, developers and companies will simply look at other communities for future development.

The COC encourages community leaders, citizens, employers, and employees to:

- Become more engaged in the comprehensive planning process and the development review process (which occurs in public meetings).
- Work with city, township, and county staff in a positive and productive manner that brings a better development in a collaborative effort.
- Research and fully understand the benefits of developments such as Stillwater Farms before saying “no”.
- Talk with your city, village, township, and county leaders about developments to better understand their impacts.
- Understand that our future prosperity is dependent on how we embrace growth opportunities today.

With our major corporations, small businesses, top-notch schools, collaborative governments, and diverse citizenry, we clearly live in a blessed community. Let's celebrate our past but also work to support a future where growth and development are managed and embraced as opportunities to ensure our prosperity.

### **Union County Chamber of Commerce Board of Trustees**

Dave Amerine, President

Shannon Dishong, Vice-President

Stephen Smith, Treasurer/Secretary

## Exhibit A

### Recent Development Trends - Union County and Ohio

1. According to the Ohio Department of Development, Union County is one of approximately 14 counties out of the 88 counties in the state of Ohio that are projected to grow in population over the next 25 years.
2. Union County is the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing county in the state of Ohio. Over the past 20 years, Union County has grown approximately 3.3 people/day or 2.7% while Marysville has grown approximately 1.2 people/day or 2.9% annually, which is a very manageable rate.
3. Between 2011 - 2021, of the 600+ school districts in the state of Ohio, only 11% or 64 school districts have a growing student population. During the same time period, Union County schools actually decreased by 3.8% in total student population.
4. For the month of September 2023, according to the Columbus Area Board of Realtors, the average home sale price in Union County for a single-family home is just over \$430,000 – 2<sup>nd</sup> highest to Delaware County in the Columbus Region. As of October 2023, of the 25,300+ housing units in Union County, only 111 of these units are for sale.
5. As of October 30, 2023, there are just over 8,300 jobs that are left unfilled within a 20-mile radius of Marysville. Of these 7,900 jobs, just over 500 jobs are engineering positions.
6. Housing growth does not necessarily equate to a strain on school districts. Nationally and locally, household size continues to decrease. The average household size in Union County stands at 2.41 people per household.
7. Union County has 1.25 people (working age) per job which is 83<sup>rd</sup> out of 88 counties in Ohio. This means Union County has many more job opportunities for its residents than 82 other Ohio counties.
8. Each of the new apartment complexes being developed in Marysville and Union County are near or at full occupancy. Rental rates for the new apartments remain expensive with the average for a two bedroom is just over \$1,600 per month while a one bedroom is just over \$1,200 per month.
9. Rental homes in Union County also remain expensive with the average monthly rental between \$2600 - \$3,200 depending on the size of the house.
10. A recent Building Industry Association of Central Ohio (BIA) Housing Needs Assessment Study stated that over the last 20 years on average Union County has constructed approximately 428 housing units per year. Going forward, the study outlines that the County needs to grow housing units at a much more robust pace equal to between 483 and 629 housing units per year.
11. The BIA study also recommends that for each new job, a community should add one new housing unit. Between 2011 - 2021, Union County realized the creation of 8,111 new jobs while it only realized 6,850 new housing units. This is a deficit of 1,261 housing units or 126 housing units per year.
12. The City of Marysville, Village of Richwood, and Union County have made millions of dollars into infrastructure to support future growth. In the last 15 years, the City of Marysville has invested over \$250M into water, sewer, roads, and infrastructure to support the new growth.