

# **OHIO MODERN: PRESERVING OUR RECENT PAST** *DAYTON and SURROUNDING AREA SURVEY REPORT*



Prepared for:  
Ohio Historic Preservation Office of the Ohio Historical Society

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***The authors dedicate this project in memory of Dr. William K.Laidlaw, Jr., who made it a priority to document and to nurture the preservation of the endangered genre of mid-century modern historic resources in Ohio.***

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## Section I INTRODUCTION

### *Introduction to the Ohio Modern-Dayton Survey*

*Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past, Dayton & Surrounding Area Survey Report* is the culmination of an architectural survey conducted in selected neighborhoods and transportation corridors of Dayton and several surrounding communities, including Kettering, Oakwood, Fairborn, Centerville, Huber Heights, Trotwood, and Vandalia. Dayton, Ohio, a designated Preserve America Community, and its surrounding suburbs exemplify the post-World War II explosion of development in Ohio and other U.S. cities during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Communities across Ohio, including Dayton, dramatically increased in population as a result of returning veterans and workers migrating to Ohio for industrial jobs. Post-World War II Dayton, home to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, as well as numerous automobile, aeronautical and commercial manufacturing sites, required an extraordinary amount of new development to accommodate this surge in population. This need was met through the rapid construction of housing, schools, churches, shopping centers, and commercial and recreational properties that created new, virtually self-contained suburban neighborhoods.

The Ohio Modern project was organized by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office staff, which recognized that resources of this era are minimally documented in Ohio. Conducted by a team of historic preservation professionals, reconnaissance and intensive level surveys were completed and each property of historical and architectural significance was documented on an Ohio Historic Inventory (OHI) form. The body of properties selected is a representative sample of buildings, sites, structures, and objects encompassing the range of age, materials, quality of construction, stylistic influences, and uses (residential, commercial, recreational, educational, religious, etc.) that predominated during this time period. In addition to documenting resources throughout the Dayton metropolitan area, this project will contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to this era of resources and serve as a model for other communities in Ohio conducting similar surveys.

This history-architecture survey and report is one of two components of the Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past Project. Gray & Pape, Inc., has prepared a separate statewide historic context document outlining the important social, political, and economic trends that shaped land use decisions, architectural styles, property types, and building technology in Ohio from 1940-1970 .

The Ohio Modern survey report provides a brief summary of Dayton's overall history, with special emphasis given to industry, transportation, and military development. Supplementing the Dayton history, the report provides general overview histories of each suburb surveyed. As

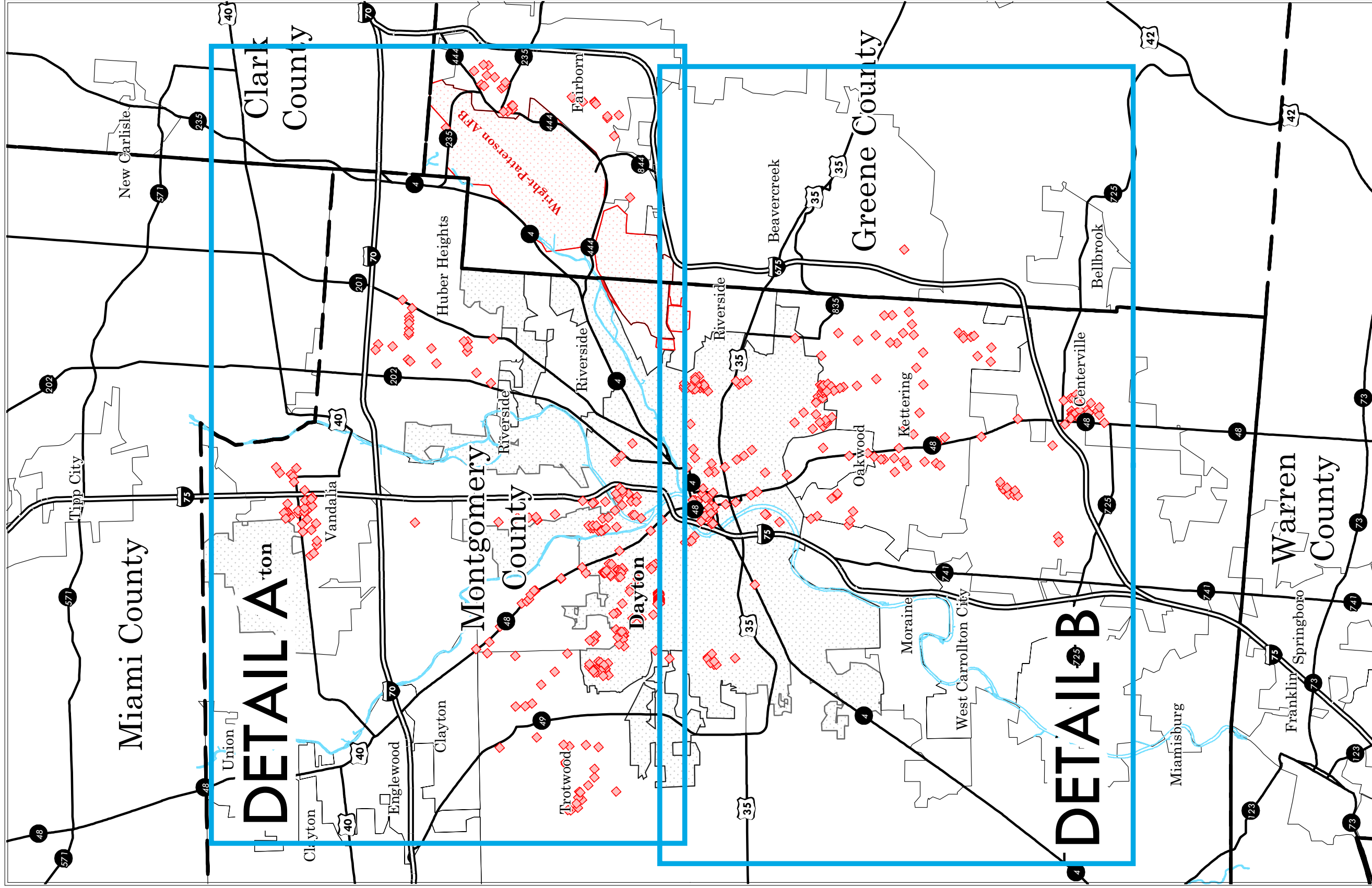
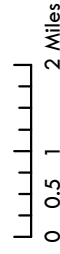


is standard practice, properties are referred to by their historic name, if known, throughout the survey report. The architect's name is provided when known.

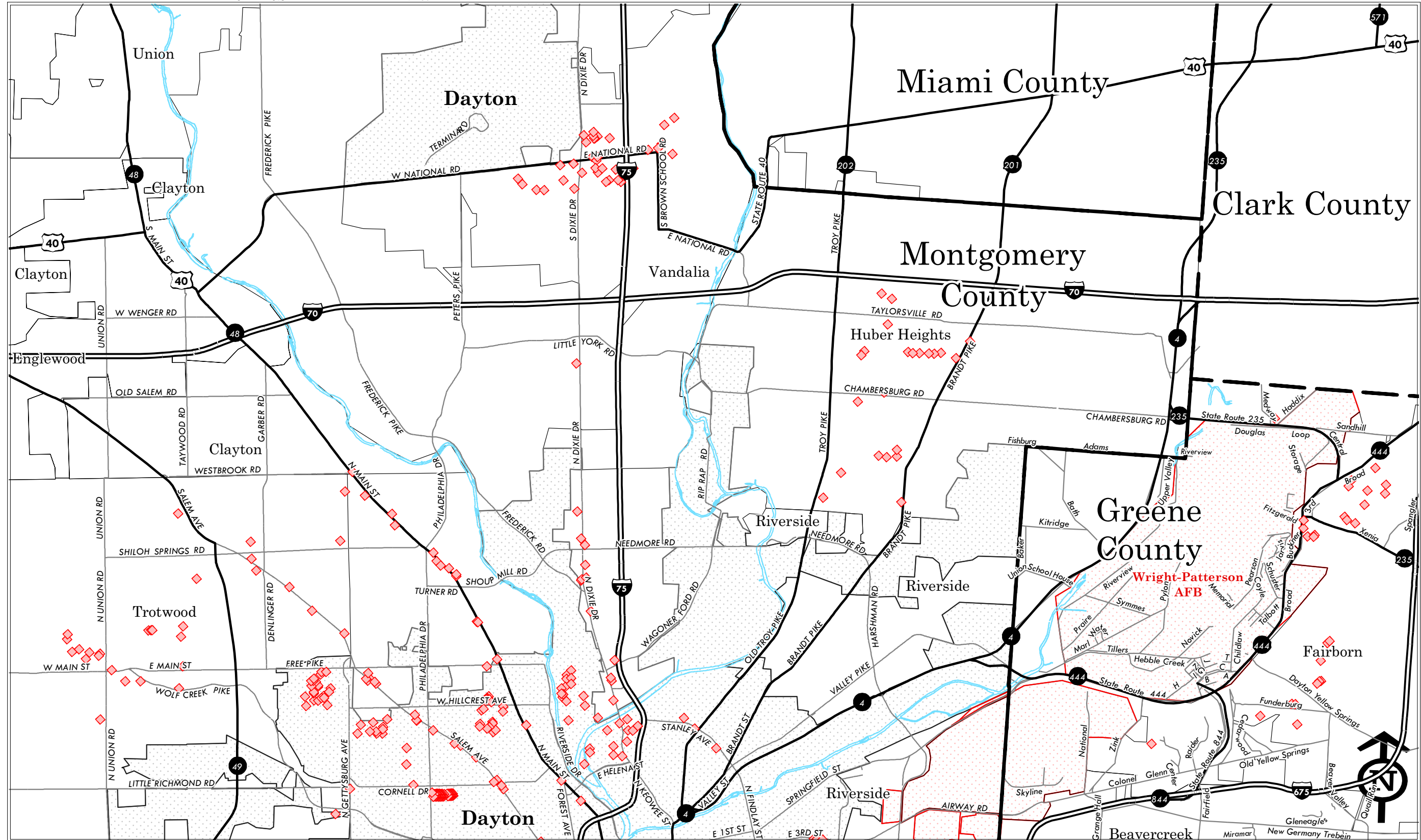
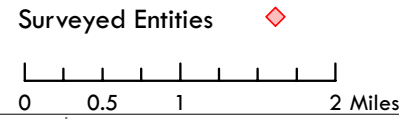
The Ohio Historic Inventory forms, survey report, and statewide historic context document are on file at the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Ohio Historical Center, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211.

# Ohio Modern Overview

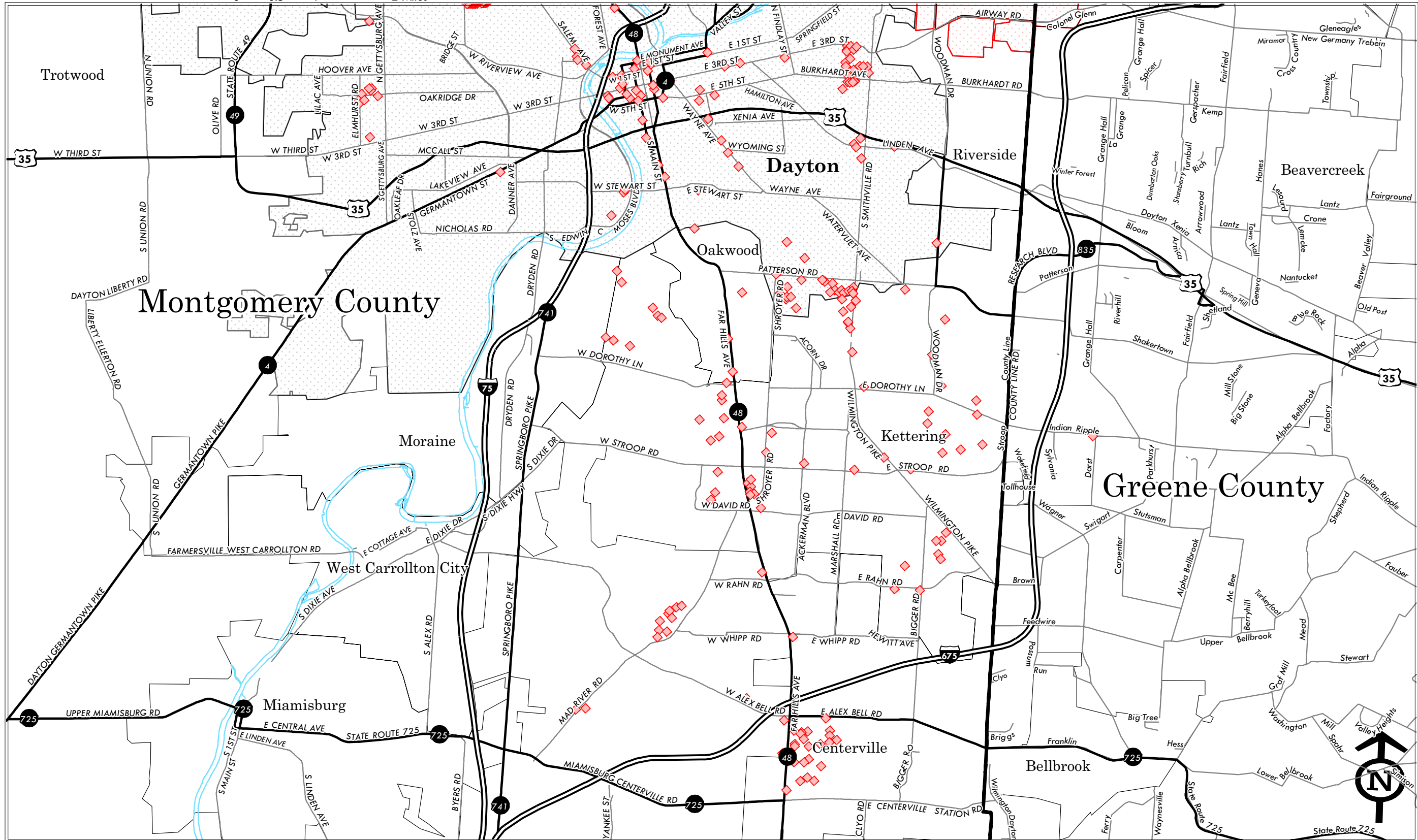
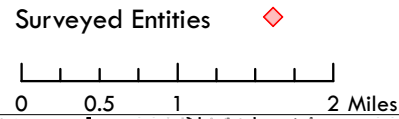
Surveyed Entities



# Ohio Modern Detail A



# Ohio Modern Detail B



## *Research Design — Objectives and Results*

***To create a body of knowledge of architectural and historical resources dating from 1940 to 1970 in Ohio.***

Five hundred and four properties were surveyed, researched and evaluated - 301 at the reconnaissance level, and 203 at the intensive level – resulting in a new body of work for study of the recent past of Ohio’s built environment. This survey report includes research design, local historic context, survey methodology, analysis, evaluation and recommendations, terminology, bibliography, and appendices with maps, figures, historic images and a summary of oral history interviews. This report complies with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Identification and Evaluation.

***To concentrate on the community of Dayton and its surrounding area as a pilot project for conducting surveys, creating a context for and gathering a better understanding of existing resources from the recent past.***

The survey project area incorporated approximately 3,390 acres. Properties surveyed for this project were selected as the result of a reconnaissance of all quadrants of the city of Dayton, including the following neighborhoods: Downtown, Midtown, Belmont, Burkhardt, Carillon, College Hill, Cornell Heights, Dayton View Triangle, Deweese, Fairview, Five Oaks, Grafton Hill, Hearthstone, Hillcrest, Linden Heights, Little Richmond, McCook Field, Mount Vernon, Northern Hills, Old Dayton View, Patterson Park, Princeton Heights, Residence Park, South Park, Springfield, University Park, Wesleyan Hill, Wright View. In addition, properties in the surrounding townships of Harrison, Miami and Washington (Brittany Hills, Forest View subdivisions) and the following nearby suburban communities were surveyed: Centerville (Pleasant Hill subdivision), Fairborn, Huber Heights, Kettering, Oakwood, Trotwood (Highland, and Morning Mist Circle subdivisions), and Vandalia (Airline Heights and Circle View subdivisions). A historic context is included in the survey report, illustrating themes and trends that affected postwar architecture in the Dayton area.

***To survey a sample of properties with a broad representation of age, type, style, use, building materials and quality of construction from this time period.***

The 504 properties surveyed ranged in age from 40 to 70 years old, and included at least six residential types (Cape Cod Cottage, Garrison Colonial, duplex, Ranch, Split-Level, apartment building) and five non-residential types (warehouse, professional, office, financial institution, Basilican Plan church), forty-six uses (such as churches, banks, offices, restaurants, schools), and sixteen styles (Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Tudor/English Revival, French

Colonial/Norman Revival, Swiss Chalet, Neo-Classical Revival, Art Deco, International, Art Moderne, Wrightian, Modern Movements, Miesian, Googie, New Formalism, Neo-Expressionism, Brutalism), as well as those without any academic style. A wide variety of building materials and range of quality of construction was recorded.

***To build on the existing vocabulary of terminology related to architectural types, styles, building materials and building components of the recent past.***

Throughout the duration of the project the consulting team noted relevant terminology not existing in the Ohio Historic Inventory database and made recommendations accordingly. An illustrated discussion of building materials, components, and related terminology from the time period is contained within the survey report.

***To survey a variety of types of housing from this time period, ranging from mass-produced tract housing in subdivisions to architect-designed single family homes.***

Surveyed housing included single family homes, duplexes, and multi-family apartment buildings along with related outbuildings (garages). The housing ranged from high style examples to those with no academic style, and included house types of Ranch, Split-Level, Cape Cod Cottage, Garrison Cape and duplex. In most cases, houses were surveyed at the reconnaissance level of documentation.

***To provide insight into applying criteria for evaluating the historical significance of recent past resources in Dayton.***

The context created from information on the numbers, types, condition, and degree of integrity of recent past resources in Dayton will contribute toward understanding the application of National Register criteria in evaluating the historic significance of these resources.

***To gather first-hand information about the era through oral interviews with individuals involved in the local and regional development and construction industry during this time period.***

Oral interviews proved to be a valuable source of information. Because the period of study is recent, many of those actively involved in this era of development are interested in sharing information. Interviews were conducted with five individuals involved in a variety of businesses related to the recent past era of development and construction in Dayton. We found many were involved in businesses extending through multiple generations of a family. We also met with representatives from several of the communities involved.

***To create a better understanding of sources available for conducting research on recent past resources.***

Other resources identified included building industry and home owner-targeted periodicals, local government planning documents, maps and archives, magazine advertising, developer and construction business archives, and traditional sources such as websites, newspapers, local and county histories, city directories, and criss-cross indexes.

***To create a heightened awareness of and appreciation for recent past resources in the greater Dayton area.***

Increased awareness of the recent past was created by site visits to all 504 properties, dialogue with residents and neighbors, contact with local government and local historical society representatives, oral history interviews, archival research at local governments, local historical societies, main and branch libraries, company archives, and trade associations as well as a project kick-off program in Dayton, publicity through the *Dayton Daily News*, and a statewide forum showcasing the results of the Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past project. The consulting team also presented at the Dayton Home Builders Association annual meeting.

Trends identified through the survey provide a context for postwar architecture in Dayton and its surrounding suburbs. Expected themes included the Baby Boom, Post-World War II suburban development and housing types, manufacturing and the work force, and the influence of the automobile in shaping the built environment and our lives since the period of the study.





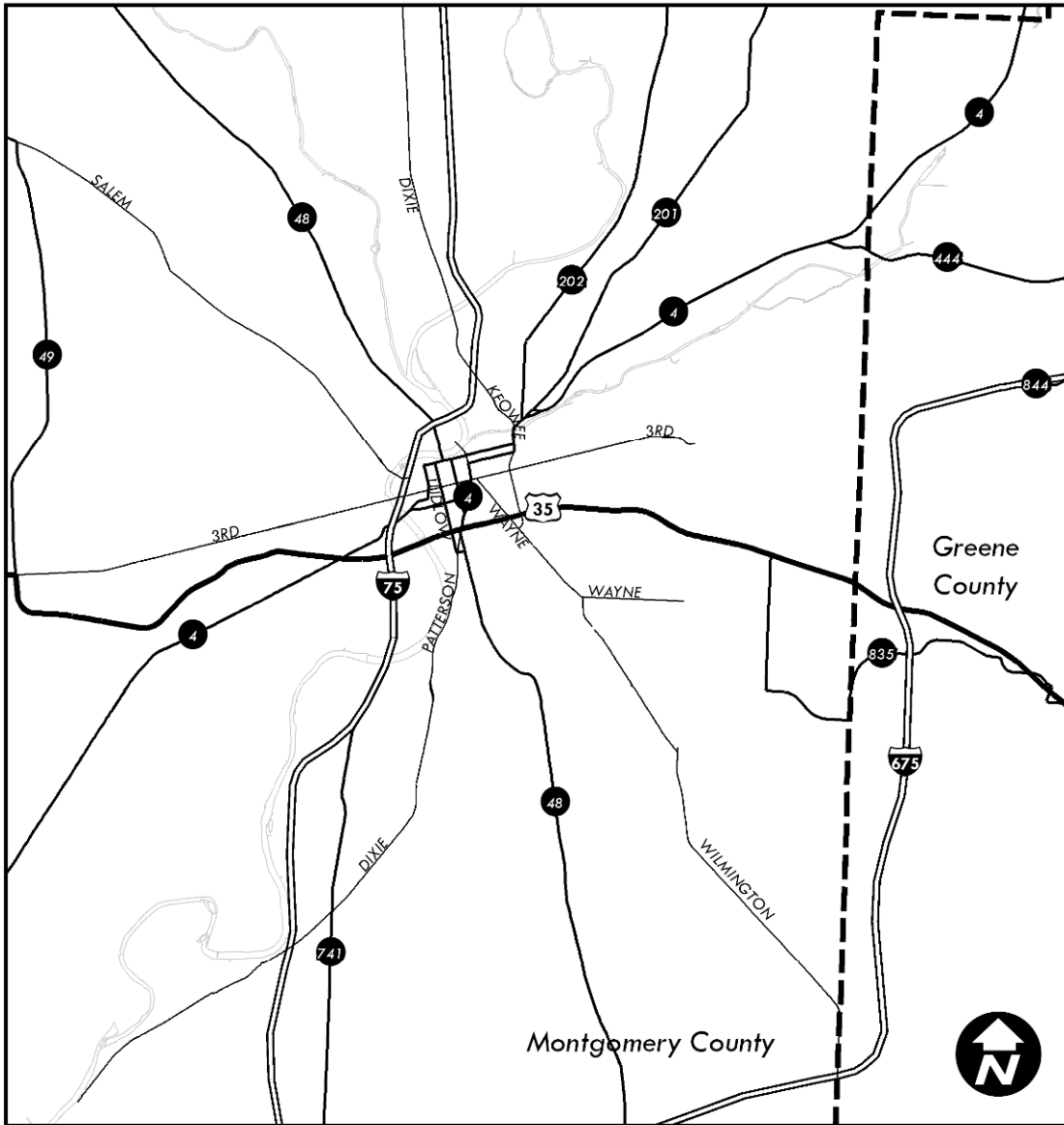
## *Environmental Setting*

### Topography of the Dayton Area

Dayton's topography is shaped by the confluence of two major rivers, the Mad and the Great Miami. The two rivers join just north of downtown. The Stillwater River flows into the Great Miami about a mile above the confluence, and Wolf Creek joins the Great Miami about a mile below. The waterways create a large flood plain in the center of the city. Elevation in the downtown area is approximately 740 feet. Northern Dayton has an elevation of around 770 feet, and the easternmost and westernmost areas range from about 830 to 880 feet. The southern boundary of Dayton, near the Great Miami, is the lowest area at about 720 feet. Except for areas south of Dayton near the river, most of the outlying suburbs are above 800 feet, with parts of Kettering rising to over 1,000 feet above sea level.

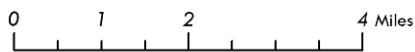
The city's original one-square-mile plat was south and west of a bend in the Great Miami. As bridges were built, development spread across the rivers. The city experienced seven major floods in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it was only after a devastating flood in 1913 that effective flood control measures were implemented. The Great Flood covered an area of more than seven square miles, with some areas under 20 feet of water. The Miami Conservancy District was created in 1915 as a direct result. By 1922, five dry dams had been constructed along the Great Miami and its tributaries. The system has protected the area from flooding more than 1,500 times since its construction. (Miami Conservancy District) Some residential and industrial areas had developed outside the city limits before 1913. In the first few years after the flood, a small exodus of people and businesses to higher ground occurred. However, since effective flood control was implemented, the topography has had little effect on development. By 1940, the center of the city was fully built up, and there was little undeveloped land available. The expansion of automobile transportation and the desire for space, not the topography, were the driving forces behind the outward spread of Dayton in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

# Transportation Overview - Ohio Modern Survey



## Legend

- Interstate
- U.S. Route
- State Route
- Streets of Note
- Rivers
- County



Sources: ODOT, USGS, Montgomery County Auditor's Office

## Historic and Modern Transportation Routes

Like other cities, Dayton developed along the major transportation routes of the era. Early industry located first near the Miami and Erie Canal and later near the railroad lines. The first residential neighborhoods were close to downtown, with later expansion near arterial roads and streetcar lines.

Early residents relied on a number of turnpikes that led to neighboring towns. Although the National Road bypassed Dayton to the north, local businessmen spearheaded the construction of the Dayton & Springfield Turnpike and the Dayton Western Turnpike (to Eaton) to connect Dayton with the National Road. Other historic turnpikes included the Dayton-Xenia, Dayton-Germantown, Dayton-Lebanon, and the Dayton-Montgomery, which ran between Dayton and Troy. After the coming of the railroads, the National Road and other turnpikes were used mostly for local travel and began a decline that lasted until the automobile age.

The Dixie Highway was conceived in 1915 as a dual route from the northern states to southern Florida. Two roughly parallel routes from the Midwest, one beginning in Chicago and the other at Michigan's Upper Peninsula, met in Chattanooga, Tennessee before continuing southward. The Ohio portion of the east route ran from Toledo to Cincinnati and passed through Vandalia and Dayton. After 1926, the U.S. Highway system was established, and the Dayton portion of the road became U.S. 25.

In the 1920s, increased auto traffic led to a demand for better roads. Dayton had begun street paving in the late 1880s, behind most other cities. Most of the downtown was paved by 1892, but residential streets were unpaved until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although the original plat featured wide, straight streets, haphazard growth, and lack of later planning led to streets of varying widths, jogs at intersections, and other anomalies that contributed to traffic problems. By the mid-1920s, plans were made to correct some of the problems, and regulations were enacted to ensure proper street width and tie-ins with new plats to prevent future problems.

As streetcars had done, automobiles allowed people to live farther from their workplaces. After the war, pent-up demand caused automobile ownership to explode. County auto registration increased by almost 50% between 1944 and 1950 (Dunham 84). Suburban expansion led retailers to open stores in the outlying areas, thus eliminating the need for people to travel to downtown to shop. Ridership into downtown via public transit dropped by nearly half between 1946 and 1957, from 66.4 million to 33.5 million a mere eleven years later. (Dunham 86)

In 1940, 71% of the population of Montgomery County resided in Dayton. Although both the city and county grew significantly in the 1940s, the percentage of the county population living

in Dayton had dropped to 61% by 1950. In 1950, there was approximately one vehicle for every three county residents. By 1960, only 49.7% of the county's residents lived in Dayton, and there was one vehicle per 2.6 people. By 1970, the number of registered autos in the county was 302,677, which was 3½ times the number in 1944. Only 40% of the county population resided in Dayton, and there was one vehicle for every two county residents. (All statistics - Dunham 84, U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, 1970 Table P-1)

The Interstate Highway System was authorized in 1956 with the intent of connecting cities, but later modifications allowed the roads to travel through cities as well. The section of Interstate 70 directly north of Dayton to the Indiana line opened in 1964, and Interstate 75 was completed through downtown in 1966. The interstate led to a further decline of retail in the downtown area as it allowed travelers to pass by the shopping areas in favor of the suburbs. The interstates increased outward development, providing a faster route for commuters and allowing people to live even farther away from the city center.

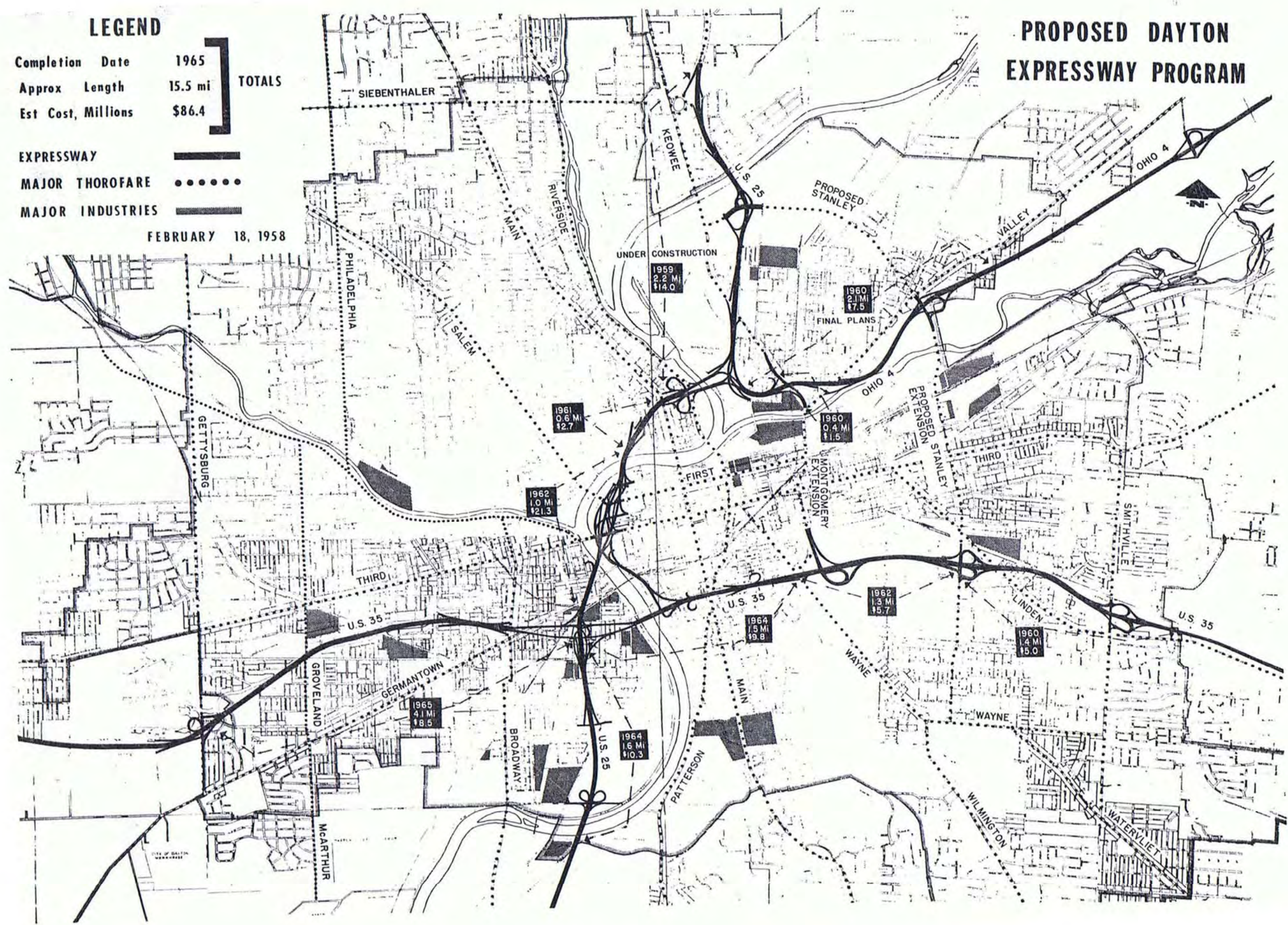
upper map

# PROPOSED DAYTON EXPRESSWAY PROGRAM

## LEGEND

Completion Date	1965	} TOTALS
Approx Length	15.5 mi	
Est Cost, Millions	\$86.4	
EXPRESSWAY		
MAJOR THOROFARE		
MAJOR INDUSTRIES		

FEBRUARY 18, 1958



A 1958 map of proposed highways showed two U.S. highways and one state route passing through Dayton. The route marked as U.S. 25 became the route of Interstate 75, which roughly followed the historic Dixie Highway. U.S. Route 35 was an east-west expressway that followed the route of the historic Dayton-Xenia turnpike on the east. State Route 4 served as a connector between the interstates, running from Interstate 70 into Dayton north of the Mad River and merging into U.S. 25 (I-75) just north of the confluence of the Mad and Great Miami. Later, the route was extended through the downtown area to connect with the historic Dayton-Germantown Pike southwest of downtown. Although not shown on the map, U.S. 40 followed the historic National Road north of Dayton, passing through Vandalia.

The Dixie Highway connected with U.S. 40 in Vandalia and ran south into Dayton, becoming Keowee Street and then South Patterson Boulevard before returning to its traditional name of Dixie Drive/Highway. The Dayton-Lebanon Pike eventually became State Route 48, which was Main Street in Dayton and Far Hills Avenue in Oakwood and Kettering. The Dayton-Western Pike, which was part of the National Road connector, became West Third Street. Other historic pikes that later became named state routes include the Brandt Pike (S.R. 201), which ran through Huber Heights and to the Bellefontaine Road, the Dayton-Montgomery Pike (S.R. 202), which ran north to Troy, the Dayton-Springfield Pike (S.R. 444), which connected State Route 4 and Interstate 70/U.S. 40, and the Springboro Pike (S.R. 741), which connected Dayton with the town of Springboro to the south.

The Miami and Erie Canal was filled in to create Patterson Boulevard, which starts at East Monument Avenue downtown and runs into South Dixie Drive in Kettering. Other major roads of the period included Valley, Linden, Wayne, Watervliet, Smithville and Wilmington in the area east of the Great Miami. West of the river, Broadway, McArthur, Groveland, Gettysburg, Philadelphia, Salem, Seibenthaler and Riverside were major streets. Main Street ran north and south from downtown. Third Street was a major east-west thoroughfare that continued on both sides of the Great Miami.

## Demographics and Racial Issues

Dayton's African-American community, although present from the earliest days, grew slowly throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Industrialization caused the population to explode in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, from 901 in 1890 to 20,273 in 1940. (Dunham 72) The West Side, which was bounded roughly by West Third Street on the north, Stewart and the B&O Railroad tracks on the south, Kilmer on the west and the Great Miami on the east, had a diverse population in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As the African-American population increased in the neighborhood in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the white population began to move to other parts of the city.

Although there were no laws establishing segregation in housing, *de facto* segregation was accomplished through threats, deed restrictions, and redlining. The City's 1924 Comprehensive Plan recommended setting aside racial expansion areas and deed restrictions for maintaining segregation in housing.

Housing discrimination kept over 85% of African-Americans in the West Side. (Dunham 75) The increase in population prior to World War II, combined with a limited housing supply, led to more overcrowding and deteriorating conditions. The Federal Housing Administration contributed to the decline of housing quality in the inner city by practicing discriminatory housing policies. The FHA, which was created in 1934, developed policies to insure mortgages only in racially homogeneous neighborhoods. Many inner-city neighborhoods were redlined, meaning no mortgage insurance would be granted for purchases in those areas. In effect, this policy made it less expensive to buy a house in the suburbs than to rent in the inner city.

Housing discrimination, in the form of restricted covenants, was also practiced against Jews. Wealthier Jews who wanted to move out of Dayton were prevented from buying in Oakwood, so many relocated to Upper Dayton View in the 1920s. The Dayton View area was the center of the Jewish community during the 1940-1970 period.

In 1950, the wealthier people who lived in Dayton were located in the Dayton View Triangle, bounded by Oxford, Salem and Philadelphia Streets, and in the southeastern section of the city adjoining Kettering. Outside the city limits, the wealthier areas were in the College Hill and Wesleyan Hill neighborhoods in Harrison Township, as well as Oakwood, Kettering, and Moraine. In addition, portions of Mad River Township and an area near Wright-Patterson Air Force Base had wealthier residents. In contrast, the poorest residents lived in downtown Dayton and adjacent areas to the east and on the West Side. The poorest areas of Dayton had a median income roughly half that of the wealthier areas. Income disparity between the inner city and the suburbs was even more dramatic; part of the area that became Kettering had a

median income more than three times the poorest section in the city. (U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, 1950)

In 1960, the suburban areas of Montgomery County had a median income significantly higher than the median income of Dayton. (U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, 1960) This was due in part to Kettering, which had a median income 1.5 times the median of Dayton. As it had been ten years earlier, the poorest neighborhoods in 1960 were on the West Side and in the inner-city areas near downtown.



