



June 8, 2021

An Open Letter to Our Community:

The Union County Chamber of Commerce represents 533 members throughout Marysville and Union County. We are dedicated to the economic vitality of our community, and as such, our Board of Trustees believes that the availability of residential housing at all price points should be a top priority for the future growth and development of Union County.

We celebrate that Union County is one of the fastest growing counties in Ohio. However, our County currently has a shortfall of available housing, and at the current development rates, that shortfall will continue. Unfortunately, at the same time, there seems to be a growing sense of opposition to new housing developments among some residents and even local officials. We believe that education about our housing situation is important to counter this opposition. For more than 10 years, housing supply has not kept up with demand. We believe that growth of housing units will allow our County to help reduce “brain drain” and the loss of young, middle-income adult residents who would otherwise need to find housing outside of Union County.

Additionally, our employers, large and small and across all sectors, are facing a critical need for talent. Currently, there are more than 9,200 unfilled positions within a 20-mile radius of Marysville. If trends are left unchecked, our County will lack the resident talent necessary to support the growth and development of existing and new businesses thereby threatening our long-term economic vitality. New residential development at all price points and a growing population will expand our workforce and provide more opportunities for businesses to remain viable.

To counter our housing shortage, the Union County Housing Taskforce, comprised of public and private leaders, was created two years ago. We applaud the work of the taskforce and support the four action steps it identified to better the environment for future residential development:

1. Educate Local Stakeholders on Residential Issues
2. Identify Housing Development and Redevelopment Needs and Opportunities
3. Incentivize Desirable Housing Development and Redevelopment Needs
4. Streamline Local Government Approvals

We ask community leaders and residents to embrace these action steps and ensure housing for each stage of a family’s growth in our community – from the apartment to the starter home for the young family to the established family and on to the empty nester and finally to the retirement. We also recommend that the Union County community adopt the recommendations outlined in the housing study completed by the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio (BIA). The BIA study highlights the need for more housing to meet our growing population.

Union County has demonstrated time and time again that it can come together to address major challenges. We strongly believe that our communities can and should support additional residential growth and still protect the quality of life of existing residents and the rights of landowners. With proper planning, we can preserve our agricultural heritage and natural resources, maintain our public infrastructure, support our schools, and ensure that we meet the demand for social services.

The Union County Chamber of Commerce looks forward to working with our leaders and residents to promote the growth and development of our County in a smart and sustainable manner. We value dialogue and discussion on these issues and encourage our communities to work together with us to provide adequate housing at all price points so our County's economy remains strong.

We urge our leaders and residents to carefully evaluate future residential projects with a sense of how they can help address Union County's housing needs and workforce challenges thereby ensuring our economic vitality.

Sincerely,

Union County Chamber of Commerce Board of Trustees



Cory Hixson, President



David Amerine, Vice-President



Stephen Smith, Treasurer