BROWN TOWNSHIP
CURRENT CONDITIONS & VISION REPORT

DRAFT 11/19/12

Franklin County
Where Government Works

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BROWN TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Brown Township Comprehensive Plan

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Land use planning helps improve communities by empowering residents to collectively envision their future.

The planning process involves identifying current conditions for an area, agreeing on a vision for the future and developing ways to achieve that future.

The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan

The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan focuses on the unincorporated territory within the planning area boundaries outlined below. The planning process is divided into three phases: information gathering and visioning, developing policies and writing the plan.

Planning area boundaries

The planning area is located in western Franklin County approximately 10 miles west of downtown Columbus. The planning area includes all unincorporated areas of Brown Township. It encompasses approximately 13,050 acres at the date of this publication.

This document

The Current Conditions and Vision Report is a product of the first planning process phase, which includes information gathering and visioning. The project team analyzed published data, conducted stakeholder interviews and performed field research to develop the document's content.

Next steps

The project team will use the Current Conditions and Vision Report as a basis for the remainder of the planning process. We will conduct a public meeting to present these findings and gather input on the draft community vision. Once the community agrees on a vision, the project team will develop draft policies to achieve the community's vision.

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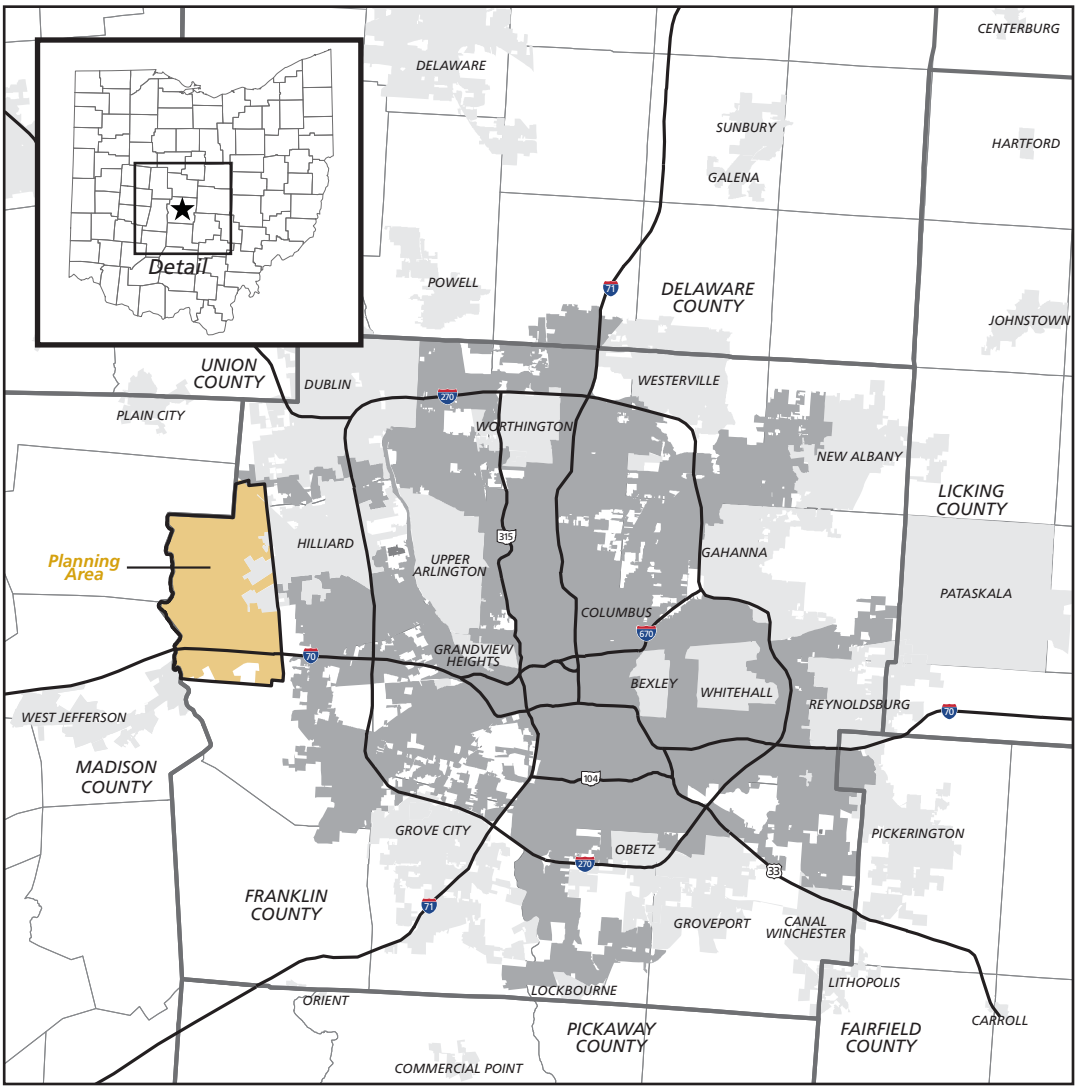
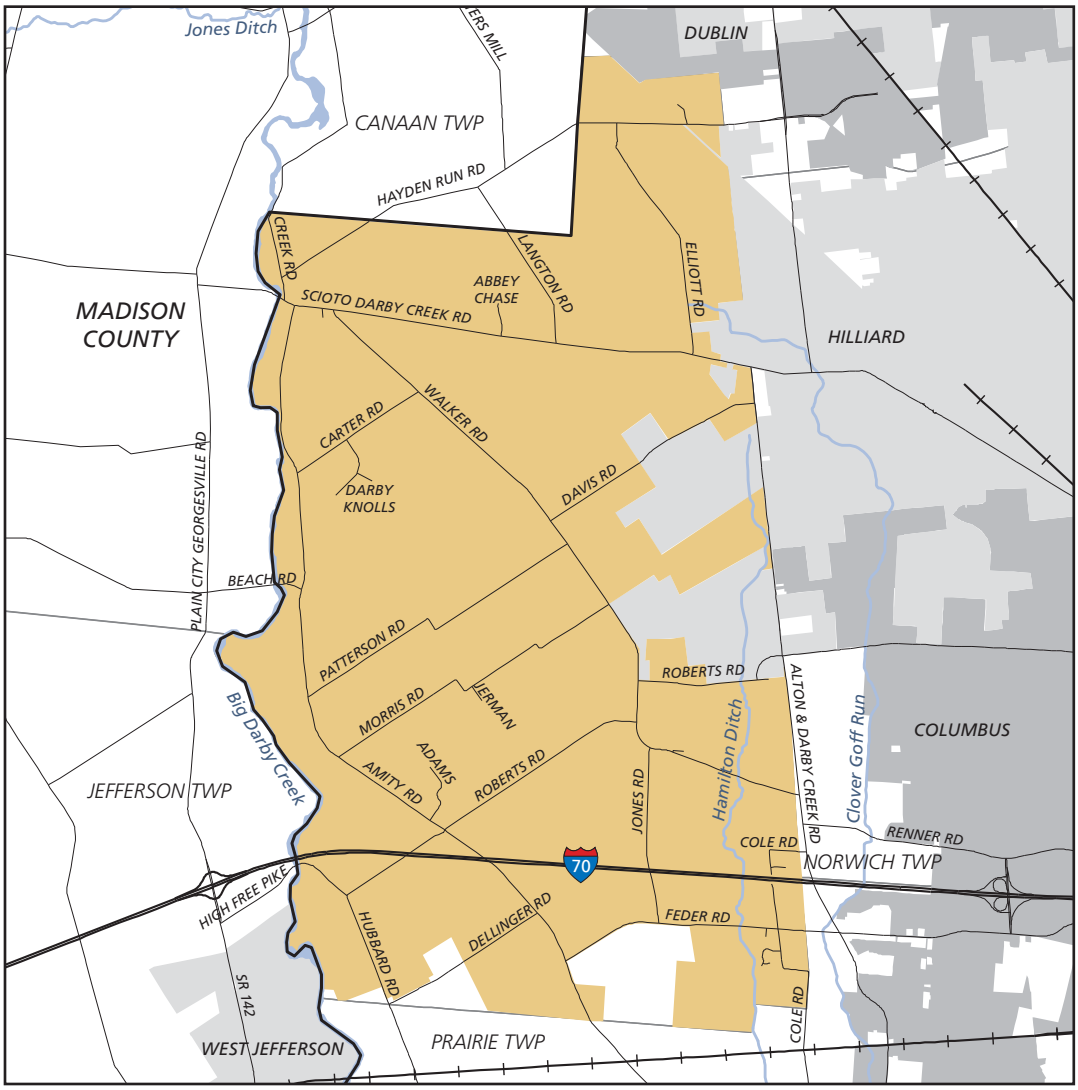
REGIONAL MAP



The Brown Township planning area is shown in brown

PLANNING AREA MAP



Unincorporated Areas

The Brown Township planning area consists of 13,050 acres in western Franklin County, Ohio

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SECTION 1
HISTORY

Brown Township evolved as a prime agricultural territory. It remains so today, contributing to its scenic rural character. Brown Township has a rich and varied history extending back thousands of years. Before the arrival of the early settlers in 1808, Native Americans found this area an excellent hunting area rich in game, especially along the Big Darby Creek, which the local natives called Crawfish Creek.

Brown Township was created in 1830 from parts of Norwich, Prairie, and Washington Townships and is the smallest township in the county. Many of the early settlers were natives of Virginia, settling on land granted to them in the Virginia Military District, an area reserved for former Virginia soldiers which included all of Brown Township.

Settlements first occurred along Big Darby Creek, which was the source of energy for early sawmills used to cut timbers for area homes and railroads.

A major portion of north central Brown Township was a timbered marsh and largely unusable. However, after years of effort, much of the area was drained and became some of the most productive farmland in Franklin County. Drainage was such a significant factor in the use of land that a drain tile manufacturing operation was established to supply the area.

Only two towns by name existed in Brown Township: Mudsock and Hayden. Mudsock was located at the intersection of Roberts Road and Alton & Darby Creek Road and has all but disappeared. Hayden was located where the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad (now the Heritage Rail Trail) once crossed Hayden Run Road. Hayden consisted of a store, a Baptist Church, the West Hayden Post Office, and the only railroad station in Brown Township – all of which are now gone. At its peak, the population of Hayden was around 25 residents.

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SECTION 2

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Current Conditions section is a product of the information-gathering phase. The project team analyzed published data, performed field research and conducted stakeholder interviews to develop this section's content.

The Current Conditions section has two components: people and community, and current conditions maps.

People and Community

This section provides information on the planning area's population, age distribution, housing and businesses. Unless otherwise noted, all data is from the 2010 US Census. This information is the first look into the community, providing a high-level overview.

Current Conditions Maps

The maps show the physical features of what exists in Brown Township today:

Current Land Use: Activities occurring in the planning area

Current Zoning: The range of uses permitted on a given property

Environmental Sensitivity: Constraints to development and assets to be protected

Transportation: Location of roads, railroads and bikeways

Infrastructure: Location of municipal water and sewer services and drainage infrastructure

Community Facilities: Schools, parks, safety services, and historical sites

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PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

POPULATION

Population growth is steady

Brown Township is the second fastest growing township in Franklin County and is growing more quickly than Franklin County as a whole. The greatest population gain came between 1980 and 1990, when it increased by nearly 19 percent. More recently the growth rate has leveled off, staying around 11 percent from 1990 to 2000 and from 2000 to 2010. By contrast, unincorporated areas of Franklin County have been losing population since 1980.

Older population with few young adults

Brown Township's population is dominated by middle-aged and elderly people, and their share of the population is growing. More than half of township residents are over the age of 45, up from 39 percent in 2000 and compared to 34 percent in Franklin County as a whole. The most noticeable disparity in Brown Township is people age 18-34, whose proportion in the township is less than half that in the county.

Diversity is low but rising

Only four percent of Brown Township residents identify as a non-white race, compared to 31 percent in Franklin County overall. However, this figure is up from three percent in 2000.

Deeply rooted residents

Approximately 27 percent of Brown Township residents have lived in their current residence for more than 20 years, and more than half have lived there for more than 10 years. Most Franklin County residents are much more mobile, with only about one-third of all residents having lived in their current residence for more than 10 years and half as many having lived there for more than 20 years.

POPULATION AND HOUSING UNITS

	Population	Housing Units
1980	1,538	--
1990	1,825	511
2000	2,031	720
2010	2,249	817
*2035**	*3,511*	*1,282*

**Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission projection*

DEMOGRAPHICS

	Brown Township	Franklin County
Race		
White	96%	69%
Black	1%	21%
Asian	2%	4%
Other	0%	2%
2 or more	1%	3%
Age		
Under 18	25%	24%
18 to 24	7%	12%
25 to 34	6%	16%
35 to 44	11%	14%
45 to 54	23%	14%
55 to 64	16%	11%
65 & Over	12%	12%

HOUSING

Housing growth has slowed and stabilized

Twenty-five percent of the township's homes were built in the 1990s. Since then, the average rate of growth in housing units has steadily declined.

Home ownership rate is high and increasing

Owner-occupied housing units remain the predominant form of tenancy in the township. Of the 817 housing units in 2010, 93 percent were owner occupied, up from 91 percent in 2000 and 87 percent in 1990. The vacancy rate in 2010 was only two percent, down from 2.5 percent in 2000 and 3 percent in 1990. In Franklin County as a whole, owner-occupied units only comprised 50 percent of the housing stock in 2010 and the vacancy rate had risen to 9.5 percent in 2010 from just below 7 percent in 1990 and 2000.

Mostly newer homes

All of the housing units in Brown Township are single-family detached homes, 80 percent of which were built after 1960. Only 7 percent of the homes were built prior to 1940, and the number of such homes has declined by 50 percent since 2000.

Homes are increasingly expensive

From 2000 to 2010, the median home value in Brown Township rose twice as much as Franklin County's. In 2000, more than half of the homes in Brown Township were valued less than $200,000. By 2010, that proportion had dropped to just 20 percent.

MEDIAN HOME VALUE

	Brown Township	Franklin County
2000	$189,900	$116,200
2011	$311,190	$155,300
Change	***+64%***	***+34%***

EMPLOYMENT

Very low unemployment rate

In 2010, Brown Township experienced a very low unemployment rate at 3.5 percent, compared to the Franklin County rate of 6 percent. However, both the township and county unemployment rates had doubled since 2000.

Increasingly professional labor force

The most common industry of employment among township and county residents is educational services and health care. The township has seen a marked decline in blue collar workers and a corresponding increase in white collar workers since 2000. But while the township's employment profile now closely matches the county's, this shift has occurred at a rate double that which the county overall has experienced.

INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT

	Brown Township	Franklin County
White Collar	55%	54%
Service Sector	25%	29%
Blue Collar	19%	17%

Increasingly affluent households

In 2010, the median household income in Brown Township was $102,625 – more than double that of Franklin County overall. The township also saw a 50 percent increase in its median household income between 2000 and 2010, whereas the county only experienced an increase of 15 percent. In 2010, more than half of the households in the township had incomes greater than $100,000. This represents a significant shift since 2000, when the vast majority of households had incomes below $100,000.

Predominantly automobile-oriented

Almost all Brown Township residents commute to work by car, most of whom drive alone. However, the average travel time for those trips is getting shorter.

COMMUTING

	2000	2010
Drove Alone	82%	87%
Carpooled	8%	9%
Walked	1%	1%
Worked at home	9%	3%
Average travel time	27 min	22 min

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CURRENT CONDITIONS MAPS

Maps on the following pages show spatial data about the planning area:

Current Land Use, p. 14

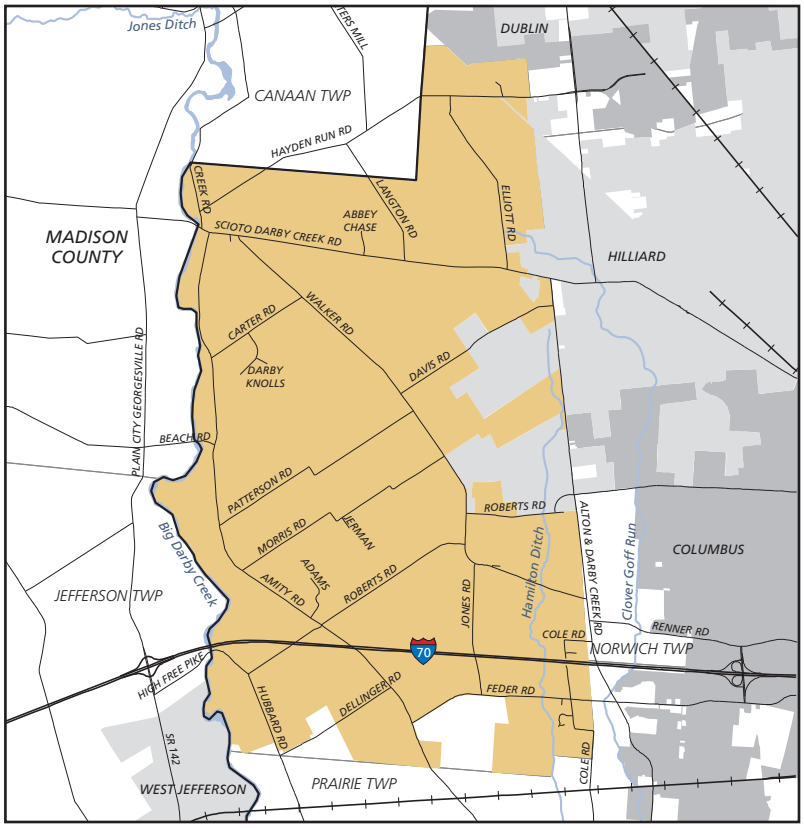
Current Zoning, p. 15

Environmental Sensitivity, p. 16

Transportation, p. 17

Infrastructure, p. 18

Community Facilities, p. 19



Unincorporated Areas

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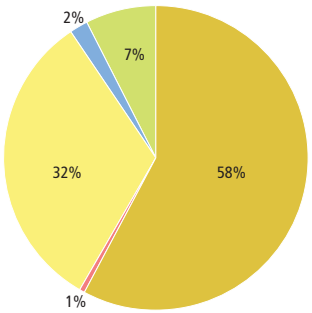
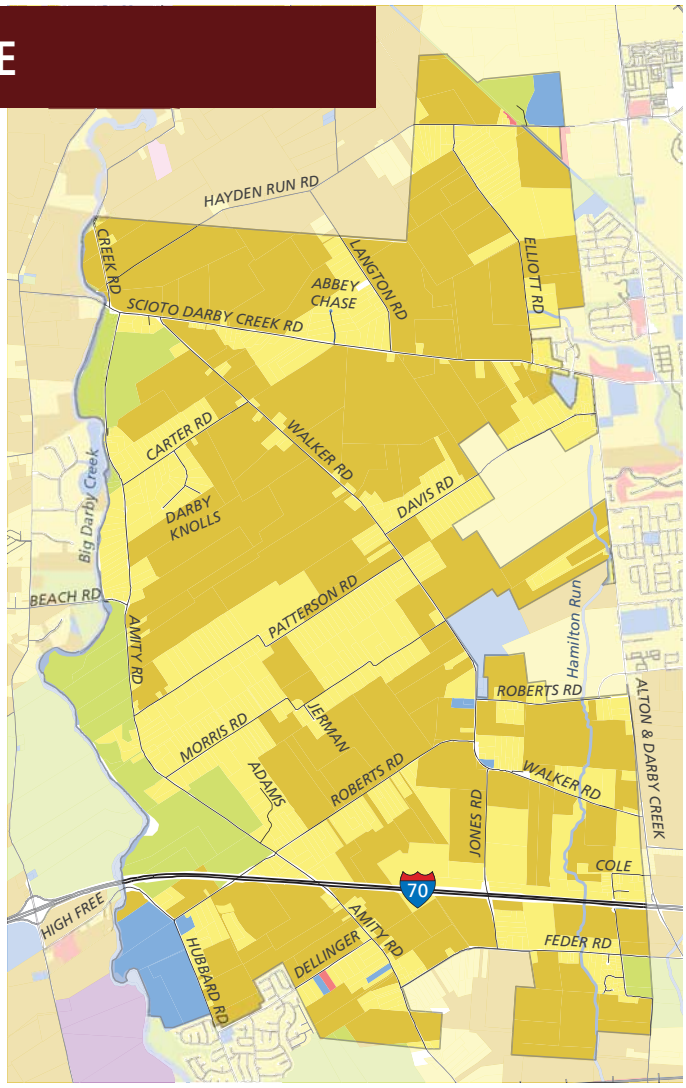
CURRENT LAND USE

Current Land Use

- Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Public Service
- Industrial
- Parks/Open Space
- Agricultural





The Current Land Use map shows what types of activity currently occur in certain areas.

When planning for an area's future land use, it is important to understand and ensure compatibility with existing land uses.

Agriculture is the most prevalent land use in the township. Row crops and animal husbandry—particularly equestrian—are the most common uses of this type in the planning area. Other such uses include a nursery and a farm market.

Residential uses also make up a significant portion of the township. Large-lot (5 acres or more) residential areas include Morris and Patterson Roads as well as the Abbey Chase, Adams Estates, and Darby Knolls subdivisions. Much smaller lots (1/2 acre) can be found in the Golfview, Hardwoods, and Spicewood subdivisions.

Parks and open space make up seven percent of the planning area, which includes Heritage Trail and Prairie Oaks Metro Parks.

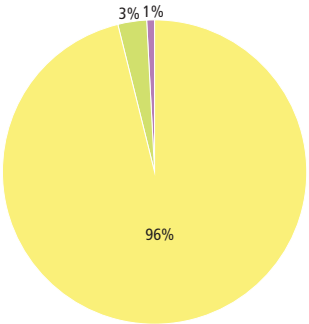
Commercial uses are mostly small in scale and scattered throughout the planning area.

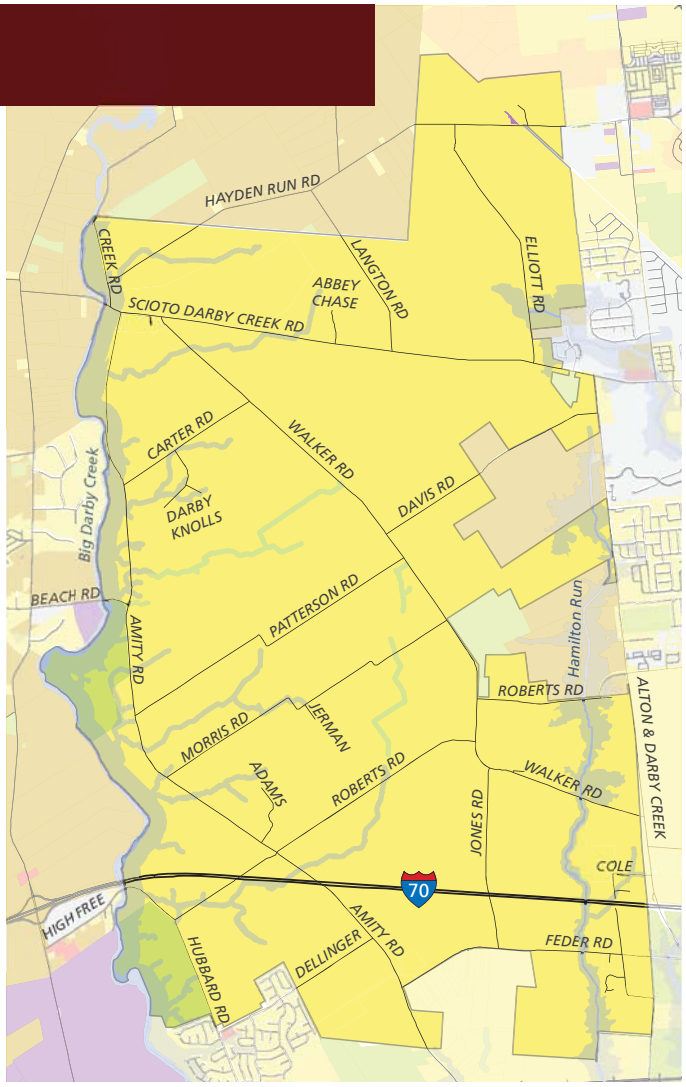
Public service uses include government institutions, schools, and churches, as well as a large Girl Scout Camp in the southwest corner of the planning area and a large AEP electrical facility in the northeast corner.

CURRENT ZONING

Current Zoning

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Industrial
- Mixed-Use
- Open Space
- Agricultural
- Stream Buffer





A property's zoning classification determines the types of land uses permitted on that property. The Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department administers zoning regulations in the planning area.

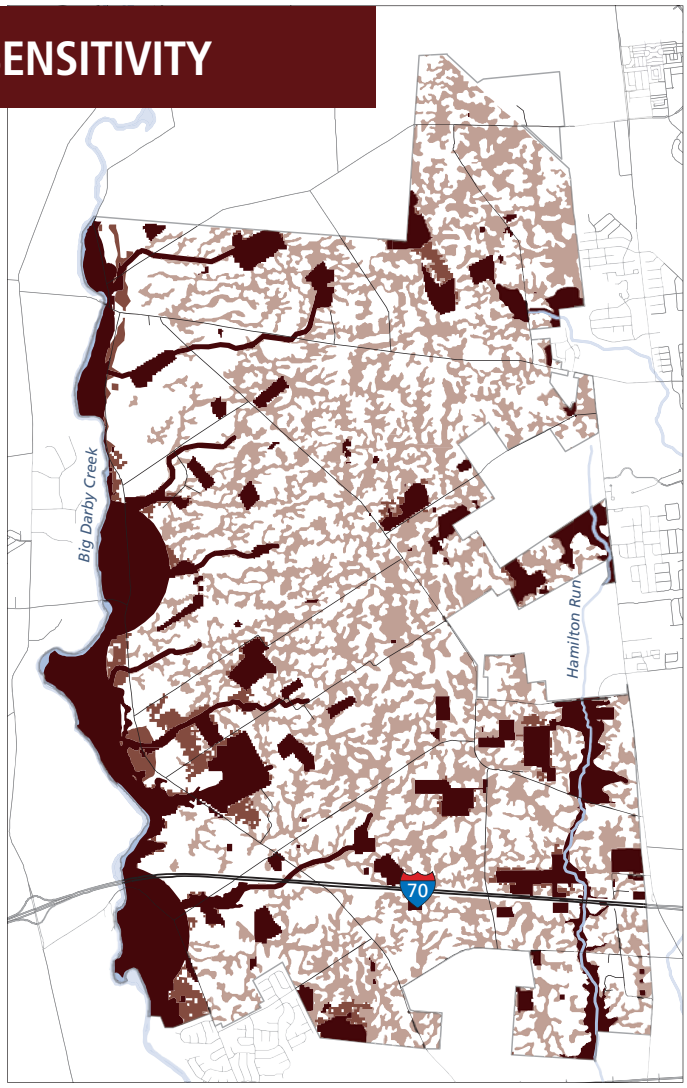
The community must consider existing zoning and currently permitted uses when making recommendations for future land uses. This helps ensure that land use recommendations are compatible with currently permitted uses.

Generalized zoning maps allow us to quickly see which uses are permitted in a given area. The Current Zoning map above groups individual zoning classifications into general categories such as residential, commercial, and industrial, although there are multiple zoning districts of each type.

The vast majority of land in the planning area is zoned for single-family residential and agricultural uses. In addition to a very small portion zoned for industrial use, the remainder of the township is zoned for special uses but are permanently protected as open space.

Stream buffer zones are additional "overlay" zoning regulations that exist around waterways. Areas within the stream buffer zone retain their underlying zoning classification, but must remain undisturbed and in their natural state to protect water quality and prevent streambank erosion.

ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY



Environmental Sensitivity

- High
- Medium
- Low

The Big Darby watershed has been the focus of recent efforts to preserve and protect the watershed's delicate ecological balance.

The Big and Little Darby creeks were designated National Scenic Rivers in 1984. The watershed is the healthiest and most diverse aquatic system of its size in the Midwest. The exceptional water quality of the Big Darby Creek is threatened by changes in the landscape from natural vegetation to agriculture and urbanization.

The watershed is 580 square miles and covers portions of six counties in central Ohio, including Franklin County. Almost all of Brown Township is within the Big Darby watershed, and the Big Darby Creek forms the western boundary of Brown Township.

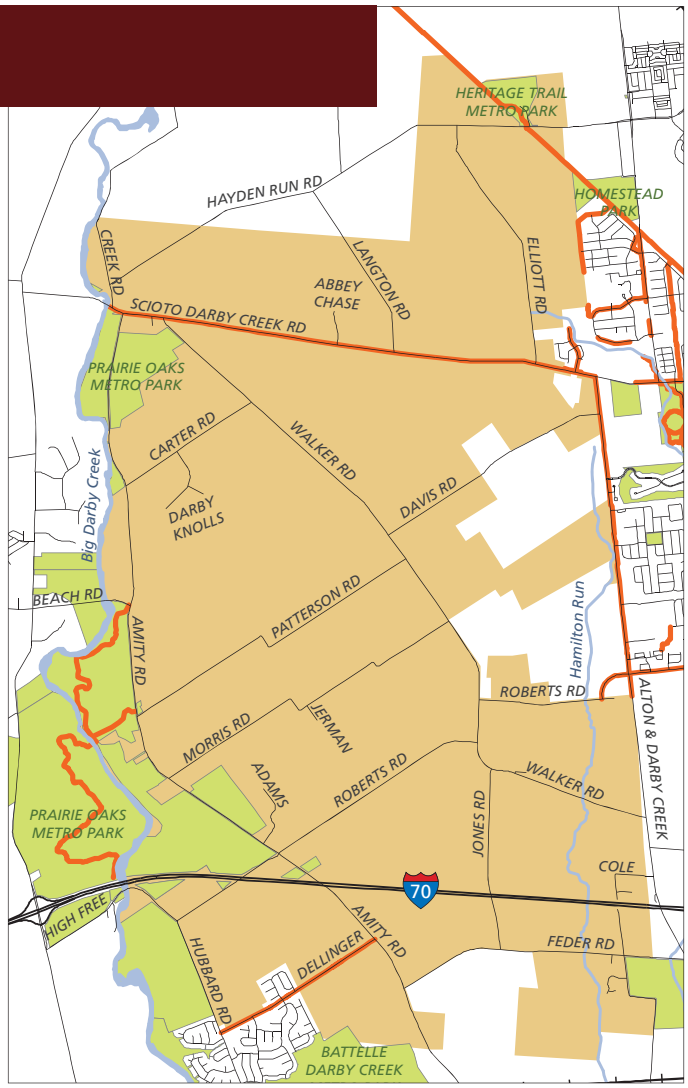
With increasing development pressure in Brown Township, preserving the rare natural resources of the Big Darby watershed is particularly important.

The Environmental Sensitivity map above is derived from an analysis conducted in the Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan. It identifies groundwater-related, surface water-related, and ecological resources in the planning area. This sensitivity analysis will be used to create a conservation strategy that prioritizes areas for open space, parks, and preserved land in the township.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation

- Roads
- Bikeways
- Railroads
- Parks/Open Space



Roadways

Interstate 70 runs through the southern portion of the planning area. The nearest interchanges are to the west at State Route 142 in Madison County and to the east at Hilliard & Rome Road in Columbus.

Scioto & Darby Creek Road and Roberts Road serve as the primary east-west routes. Alton & Darby Creek Road and Amity Road serve as the primary north-south routes.

Walker Road is one of the most highly traveled roads in the township, serving as a diagonal cut-through route with convenient access to the Hilliard & Rome Road interchange via Renner Road.

Bikeways

The map above also shows existing bikeways in the planning area. Bikeway types can include signs and markings to share road lanes, bicycle lanes, informal paved shoulders, and separate multi-use paths.

Existing multi-use paths can be found along the Big Darby Creek and Heritage Rail Trail. Other existing bikeways include bike lanes along Alton & Darby Creek Road as well as paved shoulders along Scioto & Darby Creek Road and Dellinger Road.

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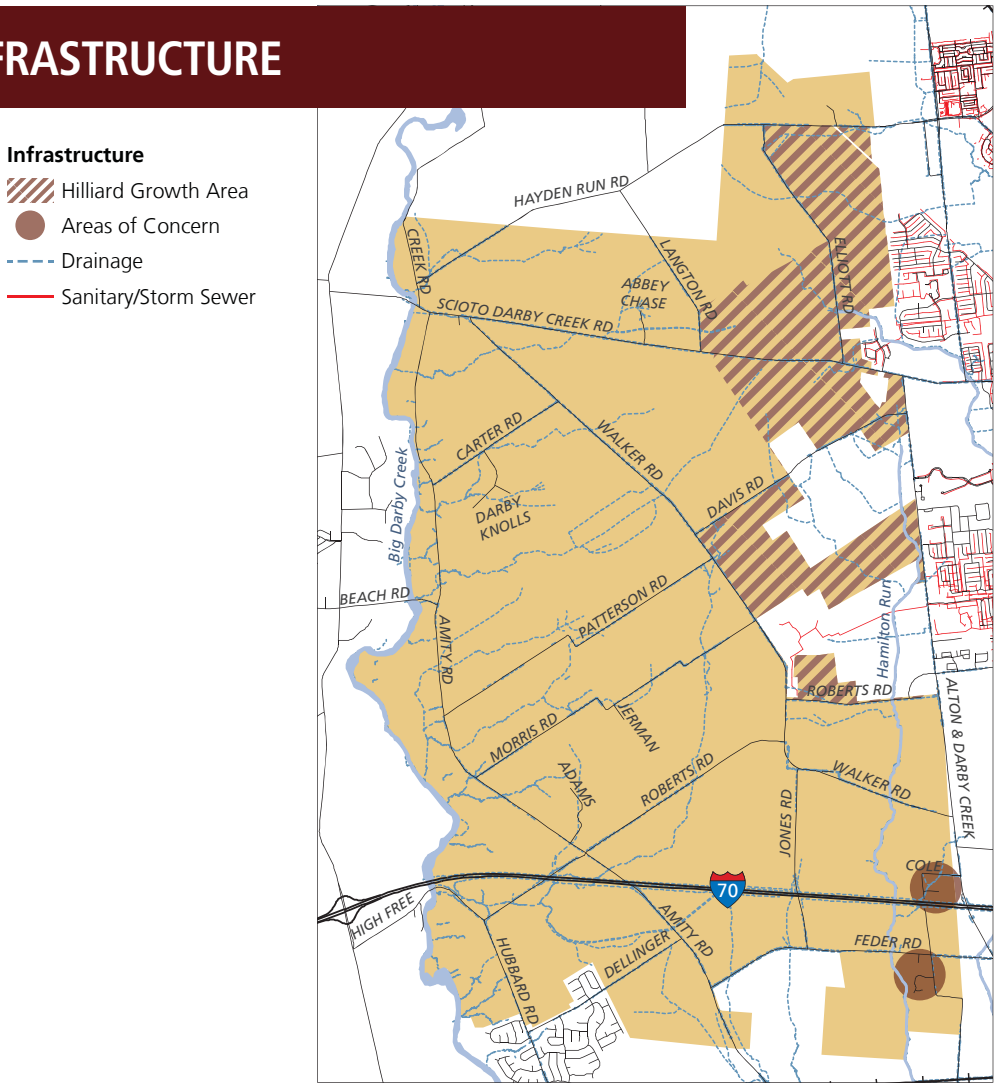
INFRASTRUCTURE



Water and Sewer

Centralized water and sewer service do not extend beyond the boundaries of the cities of Hilliard or Columbus. However, these services will be extended to areas within the Hilliard Growth Area (with annexation) and Big Darby Town Center (without annexation).

Future conservation developments within the township will only receive centralized water service without annexation. These developments must use either household or community-based sewage treatment systems.

Existing development in the township uses household sewage treatment systems—primarily septic systems with leachfields or residential aeration systems. Two areas within the township have been identified as "areas of concern," which are potentially polluted due to failing household sewage treatment systems.

Drainage

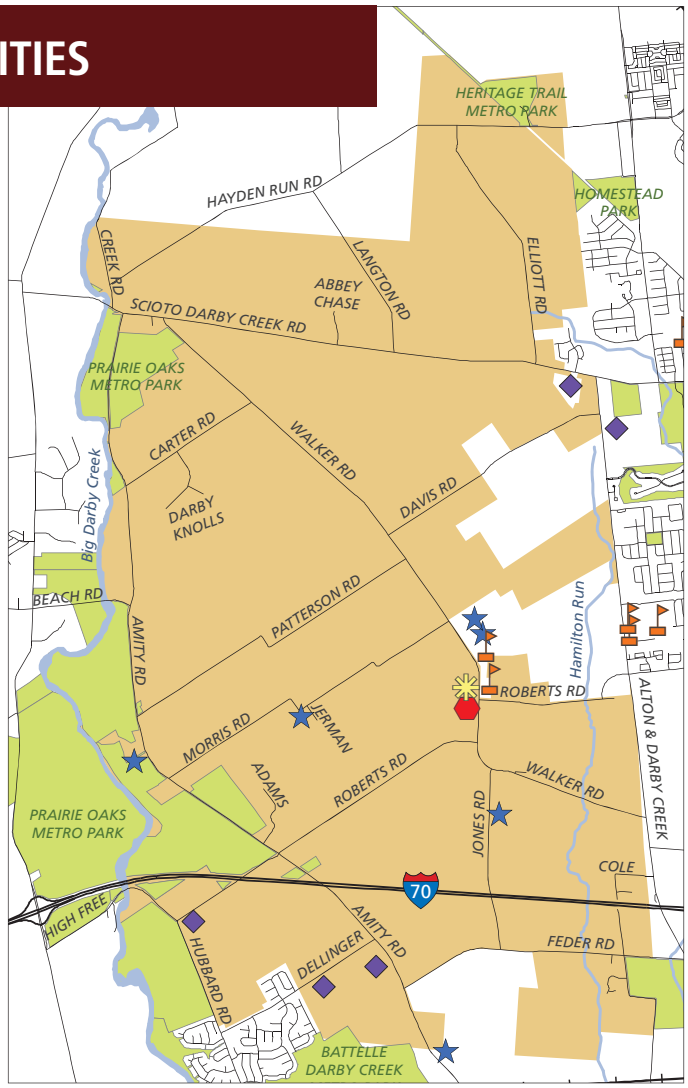
Due to the flat topography and poorly drained soils throughout Brown Township, drainage is a major determinant of the land's suitability for development and on-site wastewater treatment.

Many ditches in Brown Township were originally streams but were channelized. However, existing ditches such as Hamilton and Clover Groff have been restored to a more natural channel design with meanders and riparian zones, improving the function of the ditch and protecting the water quality.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community Facilities

- Schools
- Government
- Fire Stations
- Houses of Worship
- Historical Sites
- Parks/Open Space



Parks and Recreation

Brown Township is well-served by park facilities, considering its rural character and dispersed population.

Prairie Oaks Metro Park spans approximately 2,200 acres, about 1,000 of which lie in the township. Visitors can enjoy hiking, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, non-motorized boating and picnicking.

Heritage Trail Metro Park provides access to the Heritage Rail Trail, a 7-mile trail converted from abandoned railroad right-of-way. Metro Parks is planning to finish a new dog park within the park by the end of 2012, with a grand opening in spring 2013.

Just outside the planning area, and along the Heritage Trail, lies Homestead Park. This park is managed by Washington Township in collaboration with Brown and Norwich Townships. The park provides special play areas for children such as a water fort and toddler play area, as well as basketball and sand volleyball courts. The Washington Township Parks and Recreation Department recently created a conceptual design for a new water play area at the park.

Schools

All of the Brown Township planning area is located in the Hilliard City School District. Undeveloped areas that are annexed by the City

of Columbus will become part of the Columbus City School District.

The planning area does not contain any schools, although there are two Hilliard schools within the historic Brown Township boundaries.

Brown Elementary School has an enrollment of 535 students and provides schooling for grades K–5. An elementary school has existed in this location since 1931.

Bradley High School has an enrollment of 1,500 students and provides schooling for grades 9–12. The school was built in 2008 with a variety of environmentally-friendly features and stormwater controls.

Hilliard City School District plans include a potential new middle school in the vicinity of Brown Elementary and Bradley High schools. Construction of this middle school is dependent on future need, which is dependent on future residential development in the area.

Fire

The Norwich Township Fire Department provides fire fighting and emergency medical services to the planning area, although Brown Township built and manages the firehouse on Walker Road.

Mutual aid agreements exist between the adjacent townships and cities, allowing each to receive additional help from the others when needed.

Police

The Franklin County Sheriff's Office provides police services to the entire planning area.

Crime in the township is primarily related to thefts, although there have been some illegal fires and dumping reported.

The Brown Township Block Watch was formed in 2010 in response to increased crime levels. Since that time, crime has decreased significantly. The Block Watch has 19 streets throughout the township organized with captains.

Historic Sites

The following is a list of historical and archeological resources known in Brown Township:

- Yost Peter House – Located at 8215 Morris Road, the home was built around 1850 in the Ohio Farmhouse architectural style.
- J. Trakavich Root Cellar – Located at 1866 Jones Road, the root cellar was built around the 1870s. The structure is vernacular in style, was used originally as a root cellar and is also know as the John Hillburn Family Farm.
- Harold Bishop Residence – located at 710 Amity Road, it was built in 1860.
- Emmelainz Home – Located at 2800 Walker Road, the home was built in the 1870s. Romanesque in style. It is also known as the "Jones" property.
- Barrett Home – Located at 2948 Walker Road, the home was built around 1880. This Victorian-Italianate styled residence was also known as Herbert Farm in reference to the original owner.
- Schoolhouse – a former schoolhouse located at 2263 Amity Road is now a residence.
- Distlehorst Home – located on Morris Road has been restored and is now the Baumgartner home. The current home was built around 1880.
- Earth sided home – located on Alton & Darby Creek Road

Archeological Sites

The Ohio Historical Society has indicated four sites with archeological value in Brown Township:

- Intersection of Walker and Carter Roads
- Intersection of Davis and Alton & Darby Creek Roads
- Alton & Darby Creek Road – Paleo-archaic material reportedly found
- Amity Road – Evidence of a burial mound on the Metro Parks property

SECTION 3

COMMUNITY VISION

The Community Vision is a collection of draft statements and maps that outlines the community's desired future.

The Vision was guided by information gathered from existing plans, stakeholder interviews, and the Current Conditions assessment.

The Community Vision is the foundation upon which the plan's recommendations will be based.

Planning Context

This summary of relevant plans provides vital context regarding the forces at work in and around Brown Township.

Stakeholder Interviews

People who have an interest in Brown Township's future provide a variety of perspectives.

Vision Statements

The Vision Statements describe the community's desired future in simple terms. The statements are divided into topic areas that address the most critical aspects of the physical environment and community life.

Vision Maps

The Vision Maps illustrate the community's future graphically in three specific topic areas:

Future Land Use: In general, the types of land uses the community wants to see and where they want to see them.

Conservation Strategy: The community's priorities for land conservation and preservation.

Transportation: Locations of existing and future roadways and bikeways to make travel safer.

Next Steps

After review by the working committee and public, the project team will finalize the community vision and develop draft policies and actions to achieve the agreed-upon Vision.

PLANNING CONTEXT

PREVIOUS BROWN TOWNSHIP PLANS

Brown Township has a history of sound land use planning and extensive public involvement. These efforts have resulted in the following documents: the 1992 Comprehensive Plan, the 1998 Comprehensive Plan Update, the 2002 Agricultural Preservation Committee Report, and the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Each plan built on the previous, becoming more specific with regards to tools and strategies for conservation and development in the township.

The 2005 plan included the following key recommendations:

- Enact Conservation Development Regulations
- Revise the Subdivision Regulations to allow common private access drives
- Enable the use of alternative and community-scale wastewater treatment systems
- Improve stormwater management standards
- Establish design guidelines for non-residential development
- Limit the designation of signed shared roadways for bicycle usage
- Pursue agreements with other jurisdictions to reduce the impact of annexations on service delivery

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BIG DARBY WATERSHED

Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan

The Big Darby Accord ("Accord"), completed in 2007, was created collaboratively by Brown Township and nine other jurisdictions. It is intended to serve as a multi-jurisdictional guide to balance environmental protection and responsible growth in the Big Darby Creek Watershed.

The Accord recommendations included mechanisms to use revenue from future development to pay for the protection of environmentally sensitive features and allow revenue sharing among Accord members. It also resulted in agreements to extend adequate public services to growth areas while enabling development without annexation in other areas. It did this all while recognizing the rights of existing landowners' under current zoning regulations.

A general land use plan was adopted as part of the Accord. The plan recommended conservation-style development for almost all of Brown Township. Such developments would preserve 50 percent of the overall site as open space and have densities of 0.2-0.5 dwelling units per acre in rural areas and one dwelling unit per acre in the Hilliard Growth Area. Small nodes of commercial and mixed-use development were also recommended for the intersections of Roberts and Alton & Darby Creek Roads and Elliot and Scioto & Darby Creek Roads, respectively.

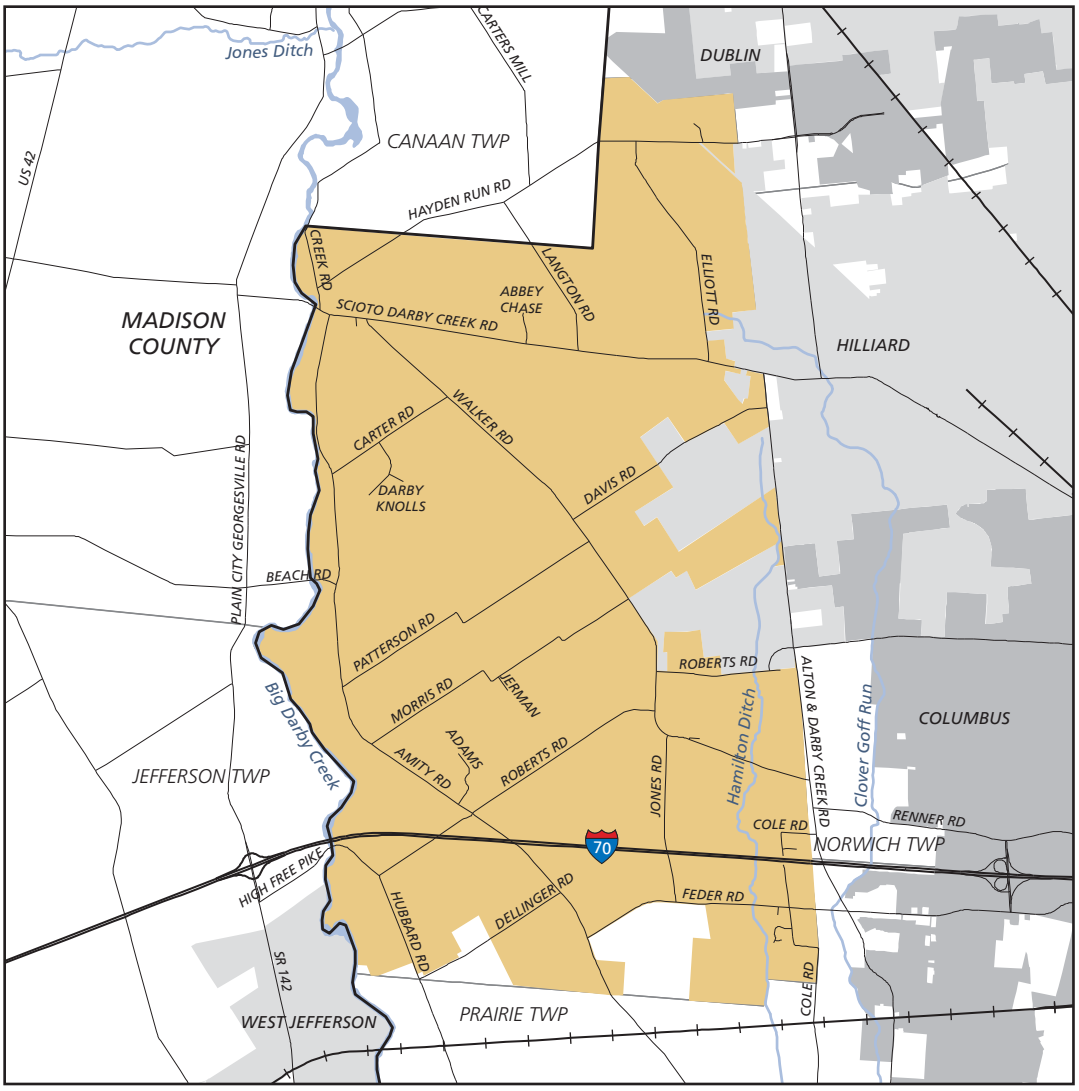
The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan will build upon the Accord's foundation while incorporating other goals expressed by residents.

Big Darby Town Center Master Plan

The Big Darby Town Center Master Plan, adopted in 2011, is a focused development plan for the central portion of the Darby Accord planning area. The goal of the Town Center is to concentrate development and generate a substantial portion of development-based revenue. In return, this revenue will be used for Darby Accord purposes such as acquiring sensitive land in the watershed.

The Town Center planning area covers approximately 2,500 acres. It includes a portion of Brown Township south of Interstate 70 and extends south into Prairie Township to Kuhlwein Road.

The area within Brown Township is recommended for conservation-style development. These developments could also include "farmstead centers," which are small groups of commercial and institutional uses within farmstead buildings grouped around a central



court. Such centers would provide community-serving amenities, resources, and retail in a way that respects, reflects, and enhances the rural character of the area.

The higher-density, mixed-use village portion of the Town Center is within Prairie Township and is currently designed to accommodate a full mix of residential and commercial uses. Housing types will range from single-family detached to multi-family. Commercial uses will include street-level retail, professional offices and hospitality uses. The village area will also provide public amenities such as schools and a location for a new fire station.

CITY OF COLUMBUS

Beginning in the 1950s, Columbus began an aggressive municipal annexation plan that resulted in the geographic expansion of the city toward Brown Township. The areas of Columbus that most impact Brown Township are the Hayden Run Corridor and the Trabue-Roberts Area.

Hayden Run Interim Corridor Plan

The Hayden Run Interim Corridor Plan was adopted by the City in 2004 in response to increased annexation requests, proposals for rezoning, and other development pressures in

the corridor. The plan covers the area west of Interstate 270 between the cities of Hilliard and Dublin, and includes the northeast corner of Brown Township north of Hayden Run Road.

Key elements of the plan include a potential light rail stop and transit-oriented development along the CSX rail corridor; new east-west connector roads; natural buffers and a multi-use greenway along Hayden Run; commercial nodes rather than "stripped-out" corridors; and lower-density cluster residential development in the corridor's western area (including a portion of Brown Township).

Trabue/Roberts Area Plan

The Trabue/Roberts Area Plan was adopted in 2011. This plan does not include any land within Brown Township, but covers a significant amount of land along its eastern border within the City of Columbus and Norwich Township.

The land use recommendations of the Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan are incorporated directly into this plan, and the provisions of the Accord take precedence in those portions of the planning area within the watershed.

Of note is a proposed residential and mixed-use area along Alton & Darby Creek Road. The area is to be developed at approximately 3 dwelling units per acre, and the capacity for this area is approximately 1,400 dwelling units.

CITY OF HILLIARD

The City of Hilliard is located to the east of Brown Township and had a population of 28,435 in 2010. The city annexed about 1,000 acres from Brown and Norwich Townships between 2008 and 2011. Hilliard's water and sewer service area includes an additional 11,500 acres in Brown and Norwich Townships that could be annexed in the future (referred to in this document as the "Hilliard Growth Area").

The Hilliard Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2011. The study area for the Plan included all land currently within the City as well as the Hilliard Growth Area.

The plan includes a Big Darby Focus Area which is composed of land that falls within the Big Darby Creek Watershed. The plan adopts the Accord's recommendations for conservation development and allows higher net densities as long as the gross density of the Focus Area does not exceed one dwelling unit per acre. It also recommends that open space for individual developments is accessible to the public and cohesively linked with open space from adjacent developments and public spaces.

PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP

Prairie Township has two distinct development patterns: rural and urbanized. The western portions of the township south of West Broad Street are predominantly rural. Urbanized areas include commercial and planned residential development along West Broad Street and two suburban-style subdivisions along Hubbard Road.

The 2007 update to the Prairie Township Comprehensive Plan recommends four major categories of future land use, each with specific policies based on the recommendations of the Big Darby Accord. Infill development is recommended for existing urbanized areas. "Suburban edge" development (3-5 units per acre) will act as a transitional land use adjacent to existing subdivisions. The Town Center area is centered on Broad Street and extends north to the Norfolk Southern railroad (see Town Center Master Plan, above, for details). The western portion of the township is intended to remain rural or become conservation-style development.

MADISON COUNTY

The Madison County Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted in 2005 and describes goals, objectives, and policies related to land use, transportation, environment, and drainage.

Canaan and Jefferson Townships in Madison County both share a border with Brown Township. Canaan Township is recommended almost exclusively for agriculture uses, with some single-family residential. Jefferson Township is recommended mostly for agriculture and single-family residential uses, as well as a commercial and light industrial node at the Interstate 70 interchange at US Route 142.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The project team interviewed stakeholders that have an interest in Brown Township's future. We spoke with township leaders, government officials, non-profit representatives, developers and others to gain a preliminary understanding of people's hopes and concerns. Below is a summary of what we heard. This information will help guide recommendations in the project's next phase.

Land Use

Agriculture: Agricultural uses are the hallmark feature of the township, one which residents respect and from which they derive a sense of pride. Preservation efforts should focus on productive farmland as well as historic barns and farmsteads.

Residential: Conservation-style development is the desired form for future residential subdivisions. Homes should be single-family in character and gross densities should not exceed what is allowed by existing zoning. Alternative community-based sewage treatment systems should be pursued due to concern that continued proliferation of household sewage treatment systems will further degrade water quality.

Commercial: The area's commercial activity is scattered throughout the township and very low intensity. Those interviewed fear that additional commercial development may compromise the rural character of the community. The area around the Walker and Roberts Roads intersection could be suitable for a limited range of commercial uses.

Environment: Nearly all of those interviewed placed a high priority on protecting the quality of the Big Darby Creek. The preservation of open space is viewed as a key component of maintaining the township's beauty and a healthy environment.

Transportation

Increased traffic: Surrounding development and new community facilities, such as Hilliard Bradley High School, have increased traffic on township and county roads. Amity Road and Walker Roads, in particular, are experiencing traffic levels that they were not built to handle.

Road width: Narrow roads are a key element of the township's rural character. However, narrow roads create problems for farm and fire equipment.

Bikeways: The township is experiencing less bicycling than in recent years, possibly due to increased traffic on narrow rural roadways. Safer connections to schools and parks are desired, particularly as the area population increases.

Community Identity

Annexation: Many interviewees expressed concern about the loss of township land by annexation to adjacent municipalities. In addition, they expressed concern about the character of the development that follows annexation. The community desires better collaboration and joint discussions with neighboring jurisdictions on new development.

Character: Those interviewed view Brown Township as the "last rural frontier" in Franklin County, and want the township to maintain the appearance and housing density that forms its rural character.

Parks: Residents enjoy the area's parks and feel that sufficient recreational opportunities are provided.

Schools: The Hilliard City School District is the tie that binds Brown Township residents together. There is fear, however, that the recent construction of Bradley High School will draw new housing development to the planning area, and that the revenue from such development will not cover the cost of providing services (particularly education) to the area.

VISION STATEMENTS

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Land Use

Land uses that support a healthy watershed

Site design that fits with existing character and mitigates adverse environmental impacts

Preserved open space that maintains the township's physical beauty and environmental quality

A rural residential landscape and lifestyle

A prominent and economically viable agricultural community

Transportation

A well-maintained road system that enhances safety and preserves rural character

A bicycle network that provides connections to nearby trails and destinations

Community

A well-maintained park system that meets residents' needs

A community identity that builds township pride and encourages interaction

Well-established partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions

VISION MAPS

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About the maps

The maps in this section reflect visions for the future: what land uses people want to see, what natural areas to preserve, and how people travel.

Future Land Use Map, p. 29

What it is: The future land use map is part of the Community Vision. The map shows, in general, what types of land uses the community wants to see in the future.

How it's used: Most often, the future land use map is used when a landowner proposes new development or redevelopment. If the proposal requires a rezoning or zoning variance, officials reviewing the proposal can see whether it matches what the community wants.

Why we need it: Including a future land use map allows residents to communicate their land use opinions to appointed and elected officials making zoning decisions. By participating in the community visioning process, residents can weigh in on future development without attending numerous public hearings.

Conservation Strategy Map, p. 31

What it is: The Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan included a conservation strategy that prioritizes protection areas throughout the watershed, based on the environmental sensitivity current conditions map.

Why we need it: This map should guide the location of development and restoration projects. The map also provides a blueprint for open space programs and acquisition efforts.

Transportation Map, p. 33

What it is: The transportation map shows locations of roadway improvements as well as proposed bikeways in the planning area. The proposed bikeways connect residents to existing and planned bikeways and parks.

Why we need it: This map should guide transportation investments and it is critical to plan for bikeways on a region-wide basis to ensure proper connectivity and accessibility.

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LAND USE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

Conservation Development: Rural Density

Allowed land uses: Single-family homes

Density: Maximum of 0.4 units per acre

Conservation Development: Low Density

Allowed land uses: Single-family homes

Density: Maximum of 1 unit per acre

Medium Density Residential

Allowed land uses: Single-family homes

Density: Maximum of 2 units per acre

Commercial: Limited range + Multi-unit

Allowed land uses: Limited range of retail uses, mostly neighborhood-scale, plus offices and multi-unit housing and townhomes.

Density: Maximum residential density of 8 units per acre

Parks/Open Space

Intended for nature or recreation with minimal buildings

CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS

Land Use Category	Zoning Districts: Residential					Commercial	
	R-8	R-4	R-2	R-1	Rural	NC	SO
Conservation Development: Rural Density					●		
Conservation Development: Low Density				●			
Medium Density Residential			●	●			
Commercial: Limited range + Multi-unit	●	●				●	●

● Any use listed in this zoning district is permitted in the land use category

CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS TABLE

What it is: The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan's future land use map categories are matched to existing zoning districts in the corresponding zoning district table.

The Future Land Use map shows the community's desired future land uses. The zoning district regulations govern which uses are permitted.

Why we need it: When evaluating a development proposal, public officials use the table to determine whether a development proposal's desired zoning district matches the Future Land Use map. Since the map represents the community's desires for the future, following the map ensures the community's wishes are followed.

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS

Residential

R-8: Restricted urban residential
R-4: Suburban residential
R-2: Limited suburban residential
Rural: Rural

Commercial

NC: Neighborhood Commercial
SO: Suburban Office

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

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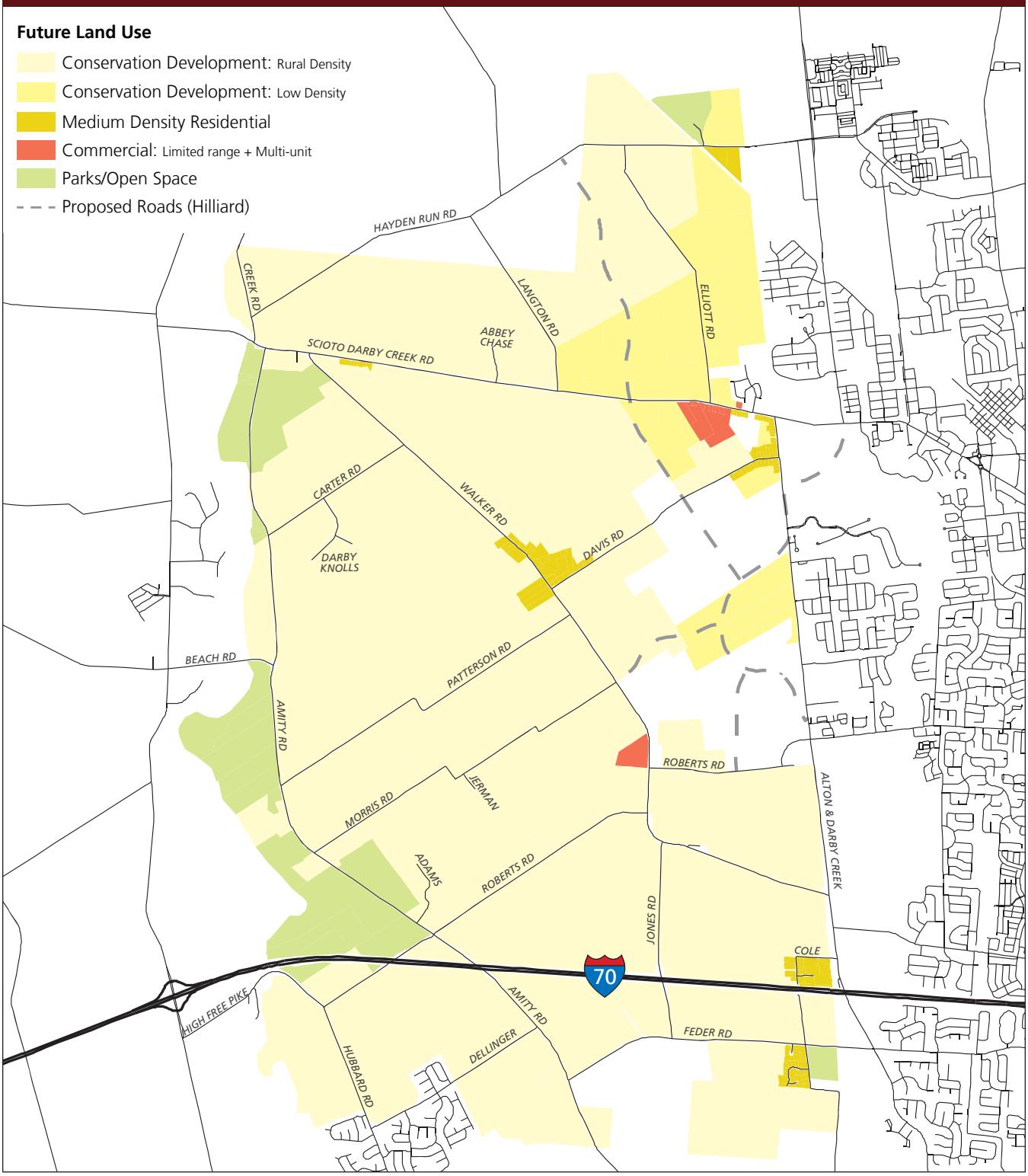

CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The Big Darby Accord created a conservation strategy that prioritizes protection areas throughout the watershed. The Conservation Strategy is presented here in a system of environmental conservation zones identified as Tiers. Protection and conservation of all land within the Tiers is encouraged, but this structure should guide the prioritization of protection through land acquisition and other programs.

Existing Parks and Easements

The Prairie Oaks and Heritage Trail Metro Parks encompass and protect 1,314 acres within the planning area. Prairie Oaks, located along the Big Darby Creek, includes significant riparian zones, forests and open space, and represents the single largest contiguous tract of land currently in conservation within the planning area. Metro Parks is an integral partner in implementing the Conservation Strategy through its work with habitat restoration areas, community restoration areas, community open space and the Central Ohio Greenways trail system.

The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (FSWCD) currently has easements on 13 acres of land within the planning area. The FSWCD mission is to "promote responsible land use decisions for the conservation, protection and improvement of soil and water resources by providing assistance through effective partnering and technical guidance in Franklin County". Their services include education, public information, construction and post construction review and inspection, backyard conservation, conservation implementation on private lands, county drainage mapping, and conservation easements.

Increased development westward into the planning area as well as planned future development areas identified in this plan will require additional park land and facilities. The Conservation Strategy map has identified general areas for future facilities (see Tier 3). Generally, the location of facilities should maximize access and be centrally located to neighborhood centers.

Protected Zone

Current County land use regulations provide for the protection of about 1,446 acres of land in the planning area that is encompassed by the Big Darby Creek Watershed Riparian Setbacks (see Current Zoning map description for more information about stream buffer zones). These areas have been categorized separately and will retain their protected status in this plan.

Conservation Tiers

Unless further policies are developed to protect Tiered land, development can occur in these areas subject to current regulations. These areas should be conserved through permanent conservation easements, conservation development subdivisions, and other suitable mechanisms.

Tier 1: Land within Tier 1 is considered the primary priority for protection. Tier 1 areas include: the 100-year floodplain, riparian corridors, wetlands, and critical groundwater recharge and pollution potential zones. The protection of these elements provides a buffer for sensitive aquatic habitats and is critical to the health of the watershed.

Tier 2: Land within Tier 2 is considered a secondary priority for protection. Areas within Tier 2 include highly erodible soils and contiguous wooded areas that are greater than three acres in size.

Tier 3: Land within Tier 3 is considered a tertiary priority for protection. Tier 3 is envisioned as providing an integral piece of the open space network. These areas can provide habitat connectivity and buffer areas. Passive recreation and certain types of sensitively designed active recreation is considered suitable for Tier 3 areas.

CONSERVATION STRATEGY MAP

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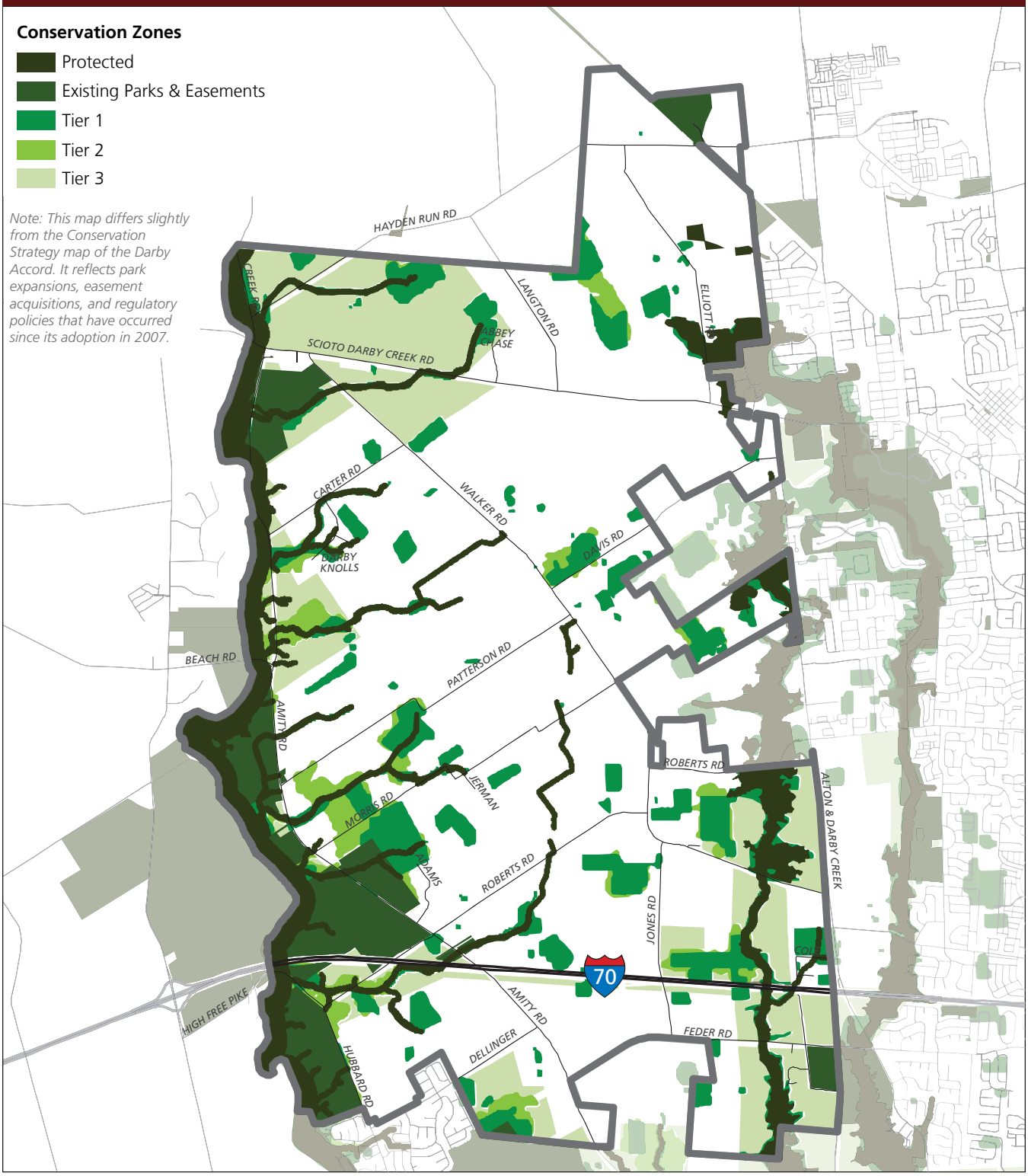

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TYPES OF PROPOSED BIKEWAYS

Bikeways map

What it is: The Bikeways map shows locations of existing and proposed bikeways. The proposals support a bikeway network for transportation and recreation.

Why we need it: Since bikeways allow people to cover wide distances, communities plan for bikeways on a regional basis. This ensures we connect destinations for people living in the planning area and throughout central Ohio.

A path for bicycles and pedestrians, separate from a road. Generally 10 to 14 feet wide.

On-street, striped lane for bicycles, 4 to 6 feet wide, usually next to the outermost travel lanes.

A paved area beyond outside travel lanes, 4 feet wide. Common on narrow rural roads.

All images: pedbikeimages.org

Standard road with a combination of traffic calming, signage and "sharrows" (shown at right), or a high-volume road with 14-foot or wider outside lanes.

In addition to Brown Township Comprehensive Plan bikeways recommendations, the map contains information from these sources: Columbus Bicentennial Bikeways Plan, MORPC Regional Bikeways Plan, Metro Parks, and the Hilliard Comprehensive Plan.

TRANSPORTATION MAP

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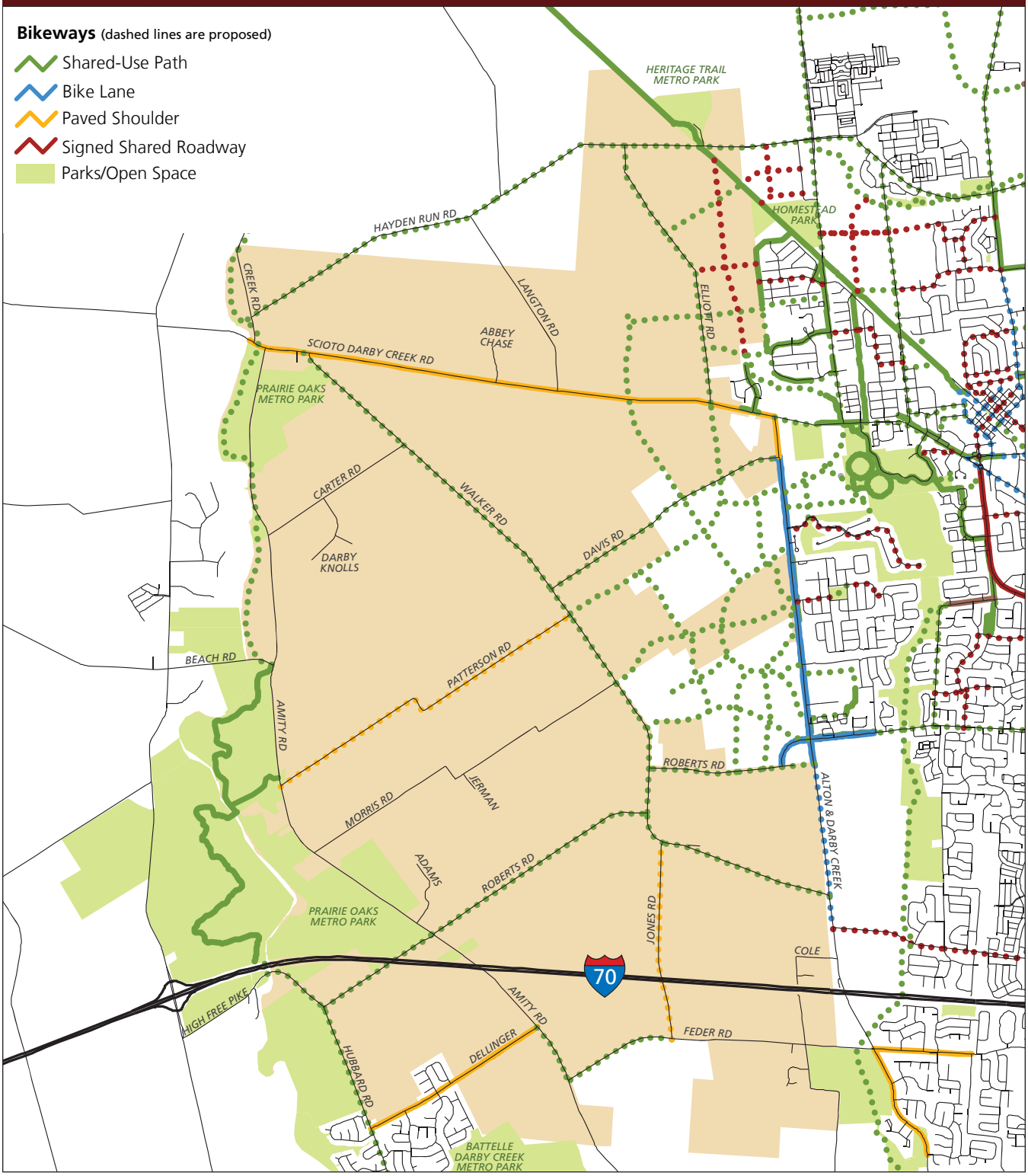

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project team thanks the following individuals and groups for input, technical advice and assistance overall with the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan Current Conditions and Vision Report:

Ann Aubrey, *Columbus Department of Public Utilities*
Charles Broschart, *Franklin County Public Health*
Sgt. Charley Brown, *Franklin County Sheriff's Office*
Amelia Costanzo, *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*
Beth Clark, *Brown Township*
Gary Dever, *Brown Township Trustee*
Josh Garver, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*
Martha Gilson, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation Dist.*
Tim Hamilton, *Hilliard City Schools*
Dep. Jesse Hatfield, *Franklin County Sheriff's Office*
Tracy Hatmaker, *Prairie Township*
David Hughes, *Madison County Building and Zoning Dept.*
Brady Koehler, *Franklin County Engineer's Office*
Maureen Lorenz, *Columbus Recreation and Parks Dept.*
Doug Lowery, *Hilliard City Schools*
Eric Manske, *Norwich Township Fire Department*
Malcolm Porter, *Building Industry Association*
Jim Ramsey, *Franklin County Engineer's Office*
Stephen Renner, *Franklin County Sanitary Engineer*
Dave Reutter, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*
Cornell Robertson, *Franklin County Engineer's Office*
Pam Sayre, *Brown Township Trustee*
Clyde Seidle, *Hilliard Public Service Department*
David Stewart, *Hilliard City Schools*
Jamie Stout, *Franklin County Emergency Management*
Steve Studenmund, *Metro Parks*
John Tetzloff, *Darby Creek Association*
Bob Weisenberger, *Washington Township*
Brent Welch, *Franklin County Engineer's Office*
Kevin Wheeler, *Columbus Department of Development*
Ron Williams, *Brown Township Trustee*
Kyle Wilson, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*
Nathaniel Vogt, *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*

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