BROWN TOWNSHIP
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

DRAFT 05/30/13

Franklin County
Where Government Works

Commissioners
John O'Grady
Paula Brooks
Marilyn Brown

BROWN TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Franklin County
Economic Development & Planning
James Schimmer, Director
R. Lee Brown, Planning Administrator

150 South Front Street
FSL Suite 10
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Tel. 614-525-3094
Fax 614-525-7155
development.franklincountyohio.gov

Brown Township Comprehensive Plan

Lead planner
Scott Ulrich

Project manager
Matt Brown

Project team
Justin Barker
Alex Campbell
Anna Thomas

Disclaimer: We produced the maps, figures, tables and other information in this document only for Franklin County business purposes. While we made every effort to include complete information, the maps, figures, tables and other information are not guaranteed to be accurate. The content of this plan is for reference purposes only and shouldn't be used for any survey, engineering or commercial purpose. All photos courtesy of Franklin County unless otherwise credited.

5/30/13 10:05

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 depicted in the maps found on pages 4-5. The planning process is divided into three phases: information gathering and visioning, developing policies and writing the plan.

This document: Policy Recommendations

This document contains two sections. The first section provides a summary of the results from the first public meeting. The second includes a set of draft policy recommendations.

The recommendations are divided into three themes, each including a cover page with vision statements for the community's future. Following the cover pages are general goals that will help the community achieve its vision and specific actions to reach each goal.

We developed the draft recommendations based on the community's vision for the future. The community's vision was developed using information gathered from stakeholder interviews and a public meeting held on December 11, 2012. The policy recommendations are the steps to achieve the community's desired future.

Next steps

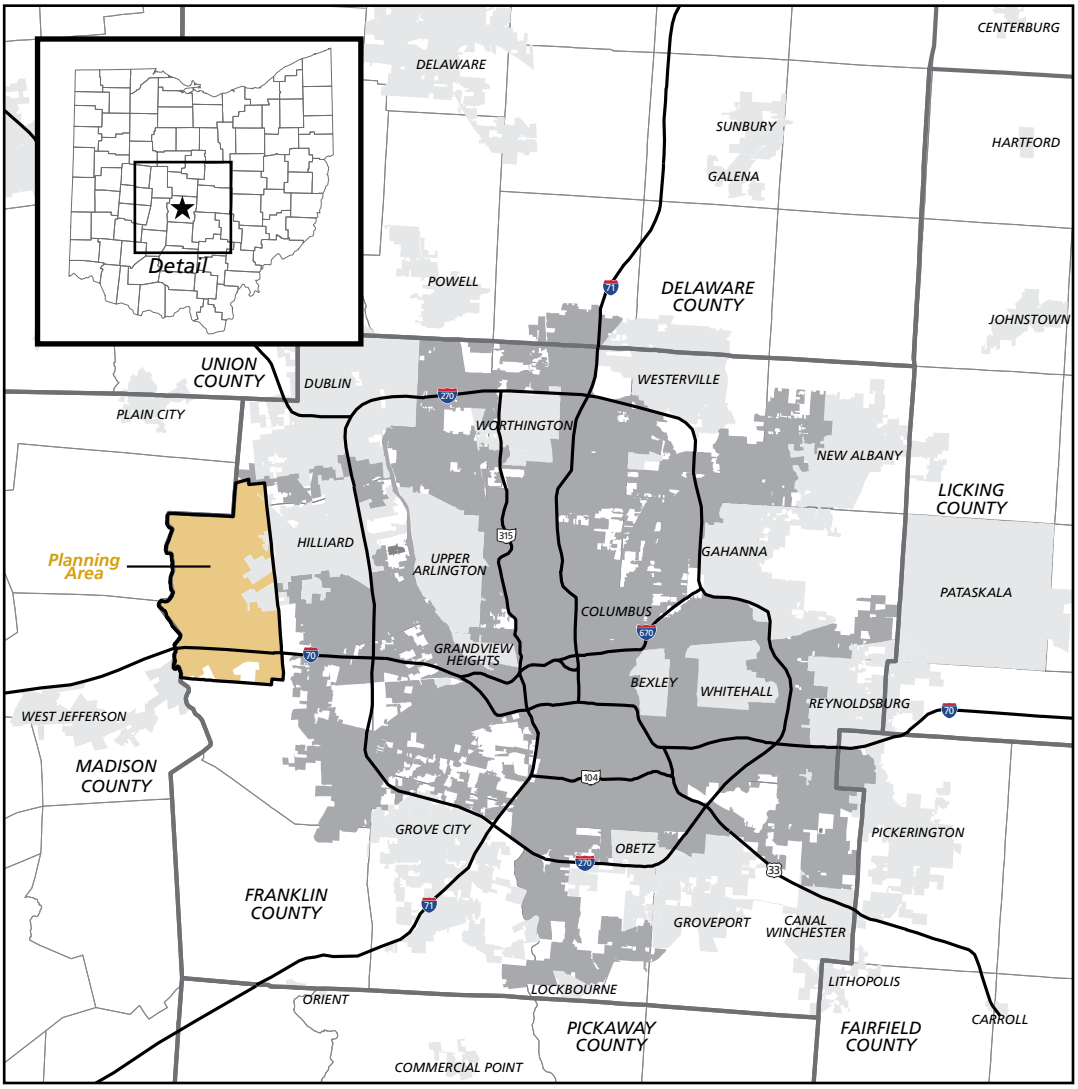
After the working committee reviews this document, we will conduct another public meeting to gather input on the draft policies.

Once the community endorses the policies, the project team will compile the current conditions, community vision and policy recommendations into the draft Brown Township Comprehensive Plan.

INSIDE THIS DOCUMENT

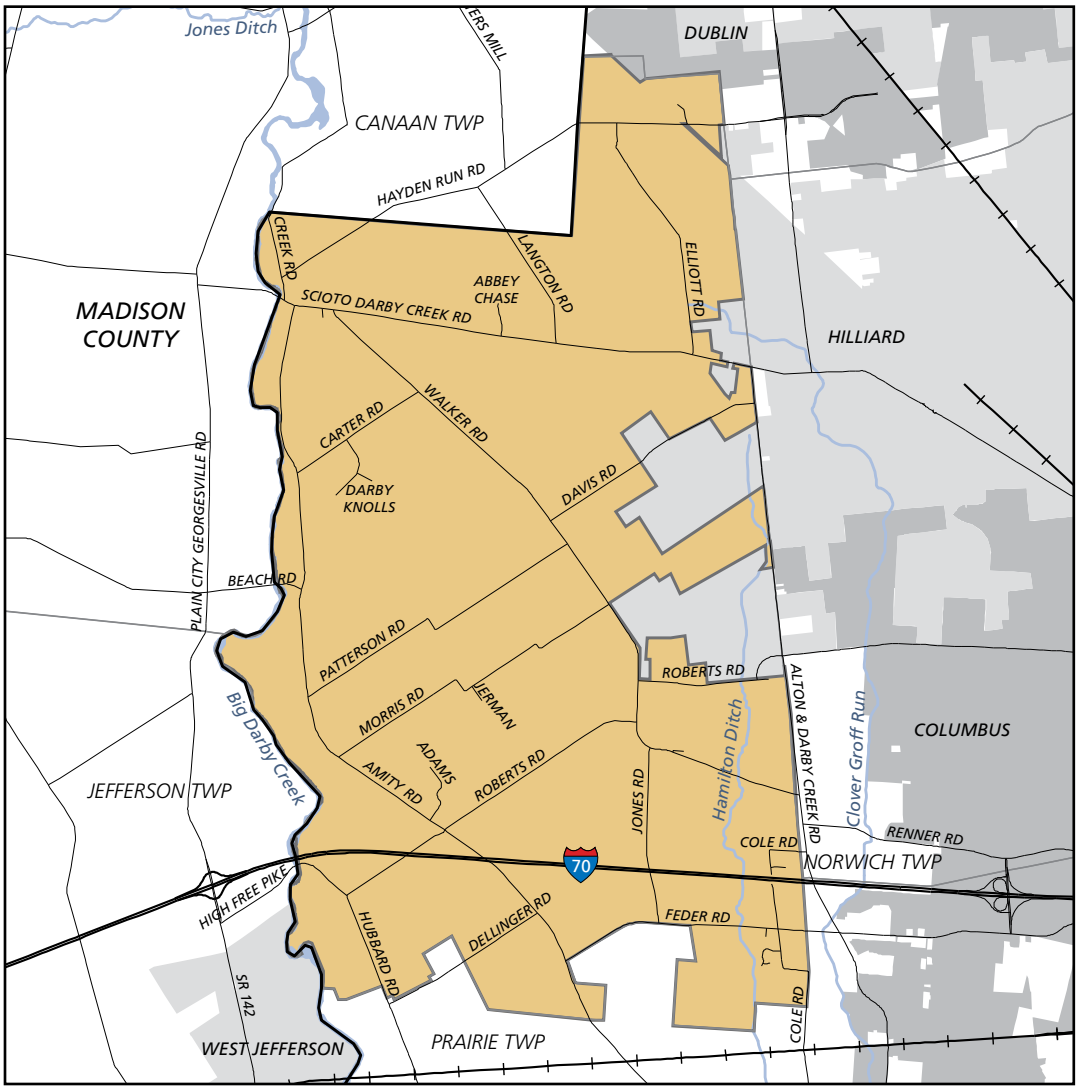
About This Document 3
Public Meeting Results 7
Recommendations 15
- Land Use 17
- Community 31
- Transportation 35

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

BLANK PAGE

PUBLIC MEETING RESULTS

Public meetings allow community members to provide input on their community's future. For the purposes of the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan, the vision for the future addresses how land is used, how the community looks and how people get around.

First public meeting

We held the first of three public meetings for the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan on December 11, 2012 at the Brown Township Hall, 2491 Walker Road.

Over 100 residents, property owners, business representatives and other interested individuals attended the meeting.

Gathering input

After a brief presentation by the project team, meeting attendees were asked to fill out a feedback form to give input on what they like about the community and what they would change.

The project team led attendees through a series of activities to gather input in the following three areas.

Public Preferences: Attendees were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with statements related to their community. These statements were used to gain insight into residents' vision for the future.

Vision Maps: Staff presented attendees with draft maps based on a compilation of existing plans for the area. We asked attendees if they agreed with the types and locations of land uses, bikeways, and road improvements shown on the maps, and if not, what they would change about the maps to match their preferences.

Likes/Dislikes: The final activity enabled attendees to reflect on their favorite ("likes") and least favorite ("dislikes") characteristics of the community in an open-ended fashion. This information helps determine what aspects of the township should be maintained and protected as well as those things that should be changed.

Other input opportunities

Those who were unable to attend the public meeting could complete a survey that was mailed to all households in the township and made available online. The survey questions reflected those used at the public meeting. We received 224 total responses from the public meeting, mailed survey and online survey.

Using the results

We used the results from the public meeting and the survey to establish the community's vision for the future, as presented in the Recommendations section. This vision provides the foundation for creating the plan's goals and actions. A summary of the public meeting results are presented on the following pages.

DRAFT 5/30/13 10:05

LAND USE

Note: The open-ended multiple-choice questions allowed respondents to choose as many options as they felt were applicable. Respondents could only choose one response for the Agree/ Disagree questions.

Land Use Comments

Respondents are concerned with development pressures from Hilliard.

Respondents prefer large-lot, low density housing. They generally do not want to see more conventional subdivisions.

Most respondents feel that the commercial uses and services in Hilliard are close enough to meet their needs.

MY PRIMARY CONCERN IS...

Category	Responses
Preserving the rural character of Brown Township	191
Protecting the health of the Big Darby Watershed	144
Other	23

Other responses include: development pressure, preserving property rights, speeding, and maintaining safety

"RURAL" TO ME MEANS...

Category	Responses
Agricultural fields and animal pastures	215
Natural areas and open space	200
Barns, stables, grain silos and split rail fences	199
Scattered residences on large-lots	181
Agriculture-related businesses	164
A mix of home sizes, styles and values	106
A few small businesses that serve everyday needs	54
Other	16
Industrial land uses	2
Conventional subdivisions	0
Road-side billboards	0
"Strip" style commercial development	0

Other responses include: slower traffic, narrow roads, quiet atmosphere, no high density housing, and wildlife

NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD...

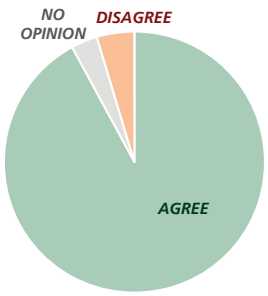
Category	Responses
Preserve scenic views and historic/cultural resources	177
Use design elements that reflect the surroundings	110
Group homes together in order to preserve large tracts of open space	47
Other	26

Other responses include: maintain low density, require minimum lot acreage, and have deep setbacks

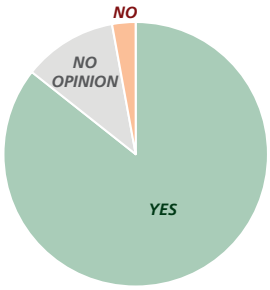
NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD...

Category	Responses
Be limited in size and in types of goods/services offered	117
Use design elements that reflect the surroundings	107
Locate near existing and future civic and residential clusters	81
Be safely and conveniently accessible by walking, biking or driving	61
Other	6

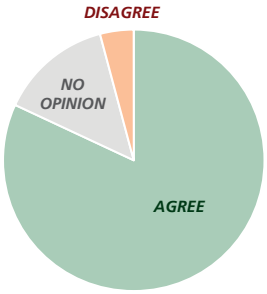
Other responses include: have specific development requirements, pay for roadways, and complement existing plans



All new development should preserve floodplains, wetlands, woodlands and highly erodible land.



Should agricultural uses protect the environment?



Consuming fresh, locally-grown food is important to me and my family.

DRAFT 5/30/13 10:05

COMMUNITY

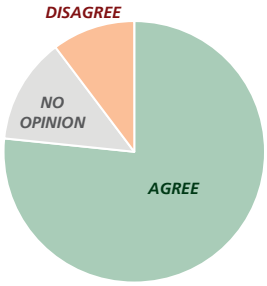
Community Comments

Most respondents view Brown Township's identity as a rural, agricultural, tight-knit community with generous open space.

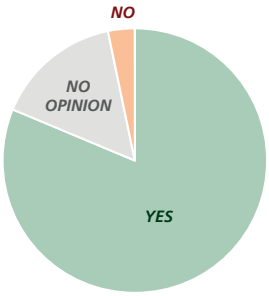
Most respondents feel existing parks are adequate to meet their needs. Many also believe that new parks and open space are needed if the population grows.

Many respondents would like to see more paths for horse riding and areas for dogs.

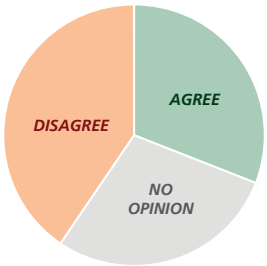
Most respondents desire to stay in the township. However, many believe that increasing costs will make this difficult.



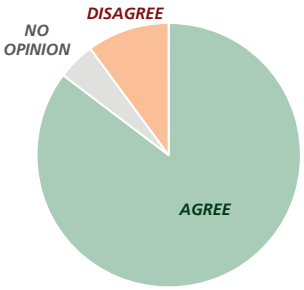
Brown Township has a distinct community identity.



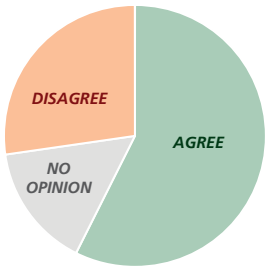
Are you proud of that identity?



Brown Township should encourage new development in neighboring jurisdictions to complement the township.



I am satisfied with the amount and types of parks and open space in/around the township.

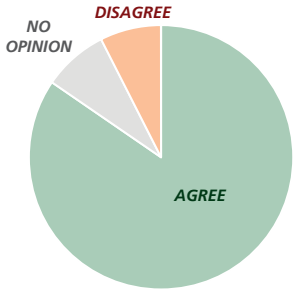


New parks and open space should be added as the population grows.

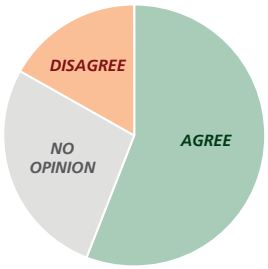
FUTURE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SHOULD INCLUDE...

Category	Responses
Passive recreation areas	165
Informal, naturally-vegetated landscapes	125
Community gathering spaces or structures	98
Large, community-serving parks	74
Small open space areas that serve individual developments	51
Active recreation	38
Formal, professionally-designed landscaping	18
Other	15

Other responses include: bridle paths, hunting areas, low-maintenance features, community gardens, accessibility features, and community centers



Staying in the township is important to me and my family as we get older.



All new development should include basic features to make them accessible to everyone – old and young, disabled and able.

DRAFT 5/30/13 10:05

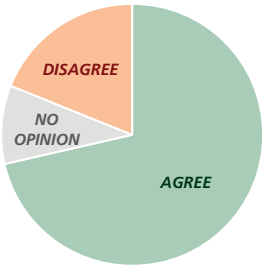
TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Comments

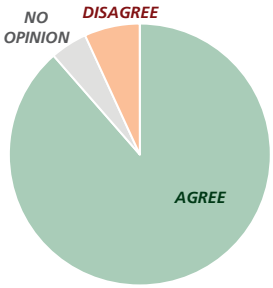
Most respondents are satisfied with the condition of roads in Brown Township.

Respondents are concerned with high speed limits and inadequate traffic enforcement.

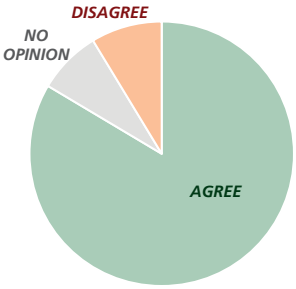
Although there is general support for a bicycle network in the township, there is also considerable concern regarding the associated cost, potential for road widening and lack of local demand for such facilities.



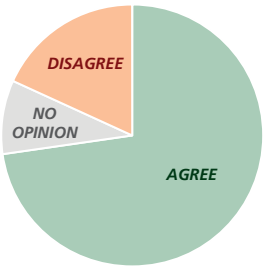
I am concerned by the traffic speeds and volumes experienced in the township.



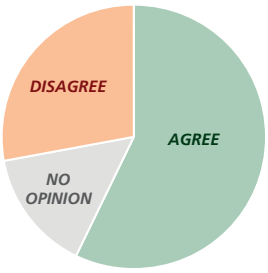
I am satisfied with the quality and maintenance of roadways in the township.



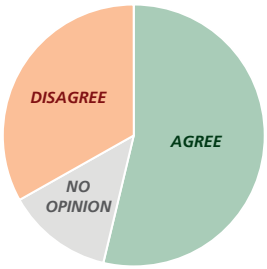
Narrow, winding roads contribute to the rural character of the township and should be preserved.



Township roads are not safe for bicyclists and pedestrians, particularly children.



There should be a bicycle network in the township that provides safe connections to destinations like parks and schools.



I would walk or bike more if roads were safer for such activities.

LIKES AND DISLIKES

RESIDENTS' LIKES AND DISLIKES

What residents like

- Open space, large lot sizes
- Rural character, farms
- Green space, parks, wildlife, woodlands
- Secluded but close to everyday needs
- Peaceful, quiet atmosphere
- Knowing neighbors, friendly people

What residents dislike

- Development pressures
- Speeding
- Lack of appropriate traffic control
- High taxes
- Lack of cable/internet
- Crime

VISION MAPS

Future Land Use Map

Respondents do not want to see uncontrolled commercial development. Most support limited commercial uses with strict design guidance.

Respondents would like a transitional development buffer around the Hilliard Growth Area to soften the rural-suburban boundary.

Bikeways Map

The majority of respondents do not want more bikeways.

If bikeways are installed, they should be separate from the roads.

Roadway Improvements Map

Generally, respondents do not want any roads widened and want speed limits reduced on most roads.

The intersection of Davis Road and Alton & Darby Creek Road is a safety concern to many respondents.

BLANK PAGE

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations section includes:

- The community's vision for the future
- Goals to help achieve that vision
- Actions to reach each specific goal

How they were developed: We combined the data in the Current Conditions analysis with the results from the first public meeting. Public meeting attendees told us what they want the community's future to look like. These recommendations will help to achieve that vision over the next 10 to 20 years.

How they are used: Citizens can use the recommendations to improve their community. Government officials and others will use the recommendations when making decisions on land use proposals and capital improvements, all directed at realizing a unified community vision.

The recommendations are divided into three themes: *Land Use*, *Community* and *Transportation*.

Land Use, p. 17

These recommendations address future development and conservation in the township. The actions will help the community retain its rural character and protect a sensitive environment.

Community, p. 31

Recommendations in the *Community* chapter address community identity, local foods and interjurisdictional cooperation. The actions help promote the township's unique characteristics, support a thriving agricultural community and encourage collaborative planning efforts.

Transportation, p. 35

These recommendations will ensure a safe, interconnected road system that reflects the community's rural character. It also addresses the accessibility of local trails and destinations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

BLANK PAGE

LAND USE

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A "rural-residential" landscape and lifestyle

Limited, attractive businesses that serve residents

Preserved open spaces that enhance environmental quality

Achieve this vision by

- Preserving farmland
- Maintaining rural residential character
- Guiding and managing commercial development
- Protecting the natural environment

How to use this section:

The visions outlined above are divided into achievable goals and individual action steps to accomplish those goals.

Goals *Broad objectives that achieve the community's vision* →

Actions *Individual action items that will help accomplish each goal* →

Description of Actions *Explains the action, including how it should be accomplished and who should do it* →

Goal A

Maintain residential and rural character

Action 1

Follow the Future Land Use map

The Future Land Use map shows the range of land uses the community would like to see in specific areas.

DRAFT 5/30/13 10:05

Goal A

Preserve farmland

Agriculture is central to both the heritage and economic future of Brown Township. It is at the heart of the community's distinctive character and the reason many residents chose to live in the township.

Action 1

Revise zoning regulations to maintain and encourage farming

Farming requires a sufficient amount of land area to remain viable. Current regulations encourage land divisions that reduce the land area available for farming and convert farmland to non-farm related uses.

Current regulations generally require 5-acre minimum lot sizes throughout the township. This requirement creates properties with large yards that require extensive maintenance and are too small for most farming purposes. The requirement results in the loss of valuable farmland.

Regulations should be revised to increase the minimum lot size to 20 acres, protecting farmland and ensuring sufficient land area exists for farming.

Franklin County should work closely with Brown Township and property owners to revise the zoning requirements in the Farmland Preservation Overlay areas shown on the Future Land Use map on page 27 to reflect this recommended minimum property size, while also allowing conservation development to occur at existing rural residential densities. More about conservation development on page 21.

ABOUT THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION OVERLAY

The Farmland Preservation Overlay is intended to identify prime agricultural land and prioritize it for protection and continued production.

Why we need it

Agriculture supports rural economies, provides access to fresh local food and contributes to the overall rural character of Brown Township. Well-managed agricultural land also helps control flooding, absorbs and filters stormwater, allows groundwater recharge, and has the potential to produce renewable energy.

Because this land is on the edge of a major metropolitan area and tends to be flat and open, it is ripe for development. As development encroaches on farmland, it increases the costs and risks of production and drives up land values beyond the reach of agricultural producers.

How it was created

The overlay area was defined by identifying parcels of land within the planning area that meet all of the following criteria:

- Composed of the most productive soils
- Enrolled in the Franklin County Auditor's Current Agricultural Use Value program
- Comprised of at least 50 acres
- Located outside Hilliard Growth Area and Big Darby Town Center Area
- Contiguous to at least one other parcel that meets the above criteria

How it is used

The overlay will be referenced when:

- Revising zoning regulations to maintain and encourage farming (above, Action 1)
- Designating "sending areas" for a transfer of development rights program (page 19, Action 2 and Action 3)
- Revising zoning regulations to allow agricultural support businesses (page 33, Action 7)

Action 2

Support changes to land use laws to allow the transfer of development rights

Transfer of development rights (TDR) benefits farmers, developers and the public by allowing the number of houses permitted on one property to be transferred to another property. This type of program preserves farmland and encourages development in appropriate areas, while remaining density-neutral overall.

Under such a program, the total number of homes built on two properties remains the same, but those homes are built on just one property, allowing farming to continue on the second property. More information on transfer of development rights is provided below.

Some County Prosecutors feel that Ohio laws do not enable counties and townships to implement transfer of development rights programs. Brown Township and Franklin County support state enabling legislation to make this tool available through a countywide program.

Action 3

Implement a transfer of development rights program

Franklin County should work with Big Darby Accord jurisdictions to develop a transfer of development rights program. Transferring development rights could help protect farmland in the Farmland Preservation Overlay area, shown on the Future Land Use map on page 27, by designating it as a "sending zone."

These development rights could be purchased by developers, after which agricultural and conservation easements would be placed on the property. In order to preserve projected Darby Accord revenue from new development, developers would also need to pay the development contributions for the rights that are purchased. The development rights could then be transferred to appropriate "receiving zone" areas such as the Hilliard Growth Area and Big Darby Town Center Area.

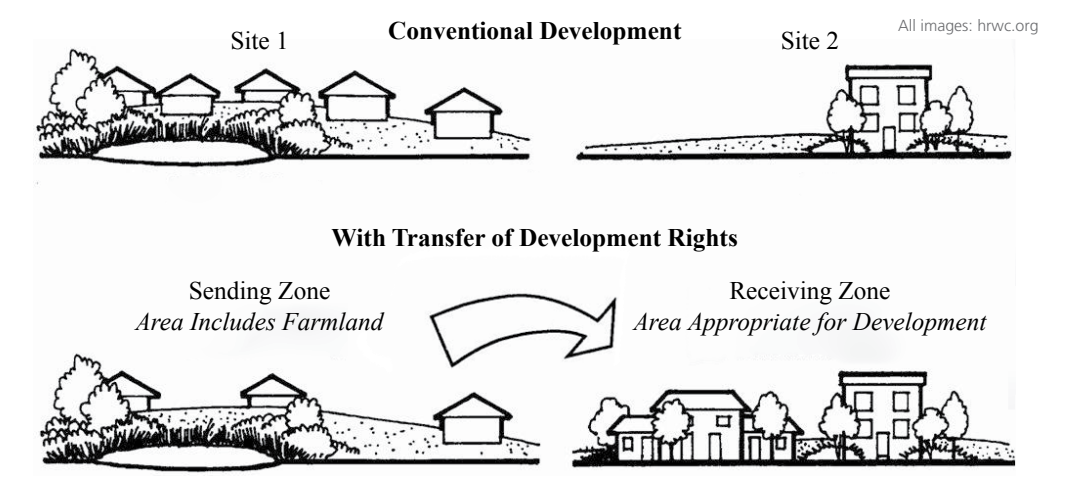
ABOUT TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Example

A farmer and a developer each own one property. Each owner could build five housing units. The developer wants to build more than the five homes permitted on her property. The farmer wants to continue farming and build no homes on his property. Transferring development rights allows the developer to build all 10 of the allowed units, but on just one property.

Benefits

Farmers benefit financially by selling a permitted number of housing units while still maintaining the ability to farm, and developers benefit by building denser developments. Communities benefit by preserving open space, maintaining rural character and reducing demand for new infrastructure.



Action 4
Inform farmers about Ohio Department of Agriculture farmland preservation programs

The Ohio Department of Agriculture administers three programs that preserve farmland.

Two programs permanently protect farmland from development by placing an easement on the land. These programs compensate landowners for their property's development potential or make them eligible for tax deductions while allowing them to continue farming.

The third program is a voluntary agreement by landowners to only conduct agriculture-related activities on their land for a 10-year period. This program gives landowners confidence that their area will remain agricultural for that period of time.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) should inform land owners about these programs and provide support through the application process.

Goal B
Maintain rural residential character

Brown Township's value lies in its rural character. As such, preserving the community's value is dependent on preserving this character. This requires balancing current homeowners' desires for limited growth with landowners' rights to develop their property.

Action 5
Follow the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use map shows the range of land uses the community would like to see in specific areas.

Franklin County Economic Development and Planning staff will refer to the Future Land Use map when any new development or redevelopment is proposed. A rezoning or variance for a property should only be granted when the proposed use is consistent with the Future Land Use map and land use category descriptions on pages 26-27.

Action 6
Revise subdivision regulations to reduce conflicts between new residents and farmers

In rural areas, conflicts often arise between new residents and existing farmers over agricultural activities that result in unwelcome noises, smells and dust. To limit conflicts, new residential subdivisions should be separated a minimum of 75 feet from existing agricultural uses.

In addition, new residential subdivision plats should contain a note warning future residents of such potential factors associated with living near agricultural uses. This will increase awareness of these issues and reduce conflicts between new residents and farmers.

Franklin County should revise subdivision regulations to require this buffer and plat note whenever a subdivision proposal is adjacent to agricultural land.

Action 7
Adopt conservation development regulations to preserve rural character and environmental resources

Rural areas are defined by very low density housing, agricultural uses and natural areas. Preserving this rural character will maintain the community's identity. One technique to preserve rural character is conservation development, which groups homes together and blends them into the landscape with natural features.

More information on conservation development is provided on page 21. Franklin County will work closely with Brown Township and other stakeholders to develop criteria and regulations to preserve rural character and environmental resources.

Action 8

Develop lighting standards to prevent light pollution in rural areas

While a certain amount of exterior lighting is required for public safety purposes, it often results in extensive, continuous over-lit areas. This can result in glare and light pollution. Excessive light increases the sky glow effect seen in urban areas, reduces the view of stars, wastes energy and impacts rural character.

Franklin County should adopt lighting standards to regulate the level of brightness based on the type of place being lit, ranging from rural (mostly dark) to urban (well-lit). Lighting should be encouraged to illuminate potential vehicle-pedestrian conflict zones, building facades and wayfinding elements.

Action 9

Discourage any new interchanges along Interstate 70 in Brown Township

The accessibility of land to the transportation network is one of the primary determinants of development pressure in an area. One of the reasons Brown Township has maintained its rural character is the lack of an interchange providing easy access to and from Interstate 70, which bisects the township. Brown Township and Franklin County should work with the Ohio Department of Transportation to prevent future interchanges in the township.

CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT

Conservation development preserves land and increases property values. Below is a comparison of conventional versus conservation development.

Pre-Development site *(top image)*

A site prior to development may contain large amounts of farmland and environmentally sensitive features. These areas can provide land for food production, wildlife and aquatic species habitats, and open space.

Conventional Development *(center image)*

In a conventional development, all land is privately owned, providing no protection of open space. Land is divided into lots without considering farmland and environmental preservation. This practice results in lost farmland, wildlife habitats and open space.

Conservation Development *(bottom image)*

In a conservation development, farmland and environmentally sensitive areas are set aside before land is divided into lots. Setting these areas aside before dividing the land preserves farmland, wildlife habitats and open space. The preserved open space can be enjoyed by all residents in the development. Studies show homes in developments with protected open space sell for higher prices and better retain their value. Each lot is slightly smaller than in a conventional development, allowing the same number of total lots.

Pre-Development

Conventional Development

Conservation Development

All images: landchoices.org

Goal C

Ensure commercial development preserves rural character

Limiting commercial development to designated areas helps to preserve rural character. If commercial development spreads haphazardly throughout the township, it damages the sense of rural tranquility. Designating specific areas for commercial development allows businesses that provide essential goods and services and also contribute to the township's revenue base.

Action 10

Limit commercial development to areas designated on Future Land Use Map

To preserve rural character, commercial development should be contained. Encroachment of commercial businesses into the rural landscape negatively impacts rural character by inviting traffic, creating noise and adding large buildings. To ensure that commercial uses are contained, no commercial rezonings should be permitted outside the boundaries shown on the Future Land Use Map.

These rural commercial centers are not intended to *stimulate* growth in the township, but rather to *capture* growth that would otherwise occur haphazardly. These areas provide locations for compact growth patterns as a substitute for scattered, low-density development that consumes large amounts of land and creates conflicts with agricultural and residential uses. Only development that is compatible with the traditional character and small scale of the surrounding community, and which is feasible to support with rural infrastructure, should be permitted in these areas.

Action 11

Apply design guidelines for rural commercial centers

Development regulations and standards highly influence a community's character. Where commercial development is permitted, it should be configured to fit in with the rural landscape and the agricultural character of Brown Township.

We have developed design guidelines for rural commercial centers, which can be found on page 23. These guidelines focus on providing a compact, unified layout, as opposed to linear strip commercial layout. In order to ensure these guidelines are applied in the site design process, only planned zoning districts should be considered for commercial rezonings.

Goal D

Protect the natural environment

Poor stormwater management, untreated wastewater and development within environmentally sensitive areas can lead to the destruction of important natural features. Identifying methods to reduce negative impacts can help to preserve these features.

Action 12

Follow the Conservation Strategy Map

When new development is proposed, developers and decision-making bodies should use the Conservation Strategy Map on page 29 as a guide for environmental protection. The map prioritizes areas for protection based on environmental sensitivity and identifies significant opportunities for other open space protection. Presence of environmentally sensitive features should be field-verified using the Conservation Strategy Map as a guide.

RURAL COMMERCIAL CENTERS

Even in rural areas, the need exists for community-serving amenities, resources and retail – particularly as the population grows. These rural commercial centers should be designed to respect, reflect and enhance rural character. In order to achieve this, the following design guidelines are recommended.

- Buildings should be one or two stories, small or moderately sized and agricultural or residential in character.
- Buildings should be grouped around a central court which can be used as a flexible gathering space.
- The primary orientation of the buildings should be toward the road; the secondary orientation may be to the side or rear.
- Parking and loading areas should be located behind or beside the buildings and screened with landscaping.
- Parking minimums should be reduced to approximately 75 percent of current requirements.
- At least 40 percent of the site should be preserved as open space.
- Lighting should be limited to down-cast, full-cutoff fixtures.
- Internally-illuminated signs should be prohibited in favor of monument-style signs.
- Split-rail fencing should extend along the full frontage of the site.

Franklin County's existing commercial zoning districts would not produce this type of development. To ensure commercial development follows these recommendations, any commercial rezonings should be to a planned district.

Planned zoning districts allow a combined rezoning–site design process that gives the community more input on the final development product. The community's preferences—as stated above and graphically depicted to the right—will form the basis for any approved commercial development in the township.

The three images at right show a typical rural road before development, after conventional strip development and planned with the recommended design guidelines. The same amount of floor space is depicted in both development scenarios, but considerable land is conserved and rural character is preserved by grouping the buildings closer together and placing parking in the rear.

Before development

Strip development

Planned rural development

All images: Dodson Associates

Action 13

Facilitate the use of alternative wastewater treatment systems for conservation developments

Public sewer service is not available outside of the Hilliard Growth Area. The smaller lots in conservation developments and poorly drained soils in Brown Township make household sewage treatment systems difficult or impossible to implement. Small community or regional wastewater treatment systems may be necessary in order to properly serve such development.

Brown Township and Franklin County should work together to find ways to facilitate the use of the most suitable sewage treatment systems within conservation development areas.

Action 14

Encourage the use of Low Impact Development techniques to manage stormwater

Land development and changes in land use can alter the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff. In developing areas, the most effective methods of controlling impacts from stormwater are to limit the amount of rainfall that is converted to runoff and to capture and treat the runoff that is generated.

Low Impact Development (LID) is an approach to stormwater management that reduces the negative impacts of development by treating stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product. LID promotes the natural movement of water by preserving or recreating natural landscape features and minimizing impervious areas. LID involves a range of tools and can be applied to new development, redevelopment, or as retrofits to existing development.

The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District should promote the use of LID techniques in Brown Township, using the following principles as a guide:

- Reduce the amount of impervious cover within proposed developments.
- Increase the natural land set aside for conservation.
- Use pervious areas for more effective stormwater treatment.

Action 15

Continue stream restoration efforts along Hamilton Run

Hamilton and Clover Groff Runs are degraded stream channels that negatively affect the health of the Big Darby Creek. The Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan indicates a priority stream restoration zone for the entirety of the Clover Groff and Hamilton Runs. Significant restoration activities have ensued in past years and such activities should continue.

Franklin County, the city of Hilliard, Brown Township and the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District should identify restoration opportunities in conjunction with development activities as they occur within the smaller watershed areas. Because of the small nature of these tributary channels, restoration should focus on channel stability to account for the changing watershed hydrology that may result from development activities.

Action 16

Inform farmers about conservation programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency

The Farm Service Agency administers voluntary conservation programs that protect soil and water resources while benefiting farmers. Eligible properties can enroll in these programs and farmers receive payment for the land they enroll. The programs include the Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Farmable Wetlands Program and the Source Water Protection Program.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Ohio Farm Bureau should inform land owners about these programs and provide support through the application process.

DRAFT 5/30/13 10:05

LAND USE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

Conservation Development: Rural Density

Allowed land uses: Single-family homes

Density: Maximum of 0.2 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

Allowed land uses: Limited range of retail uses, mostly neighborhood-scale, and offices.

Parks/Open Space

Intended for nature or recreation with minimal buildings

Farmland Preservation Overlay

Intended for agricultural production with limited development and agricultural support businesses

CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS

Land Use Category	Zoning Districts: Residential			Zoning Districts: Commercial	
	Rural	R-1	R-2	SO	NC
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 Future Land Use map shows the community's desired future land uses. It does not change the existing zoning of any land. The Corresponding Zoning Districts table shows a range of existing Franklin County zoning districts that would fit within each Future Land Use category.

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

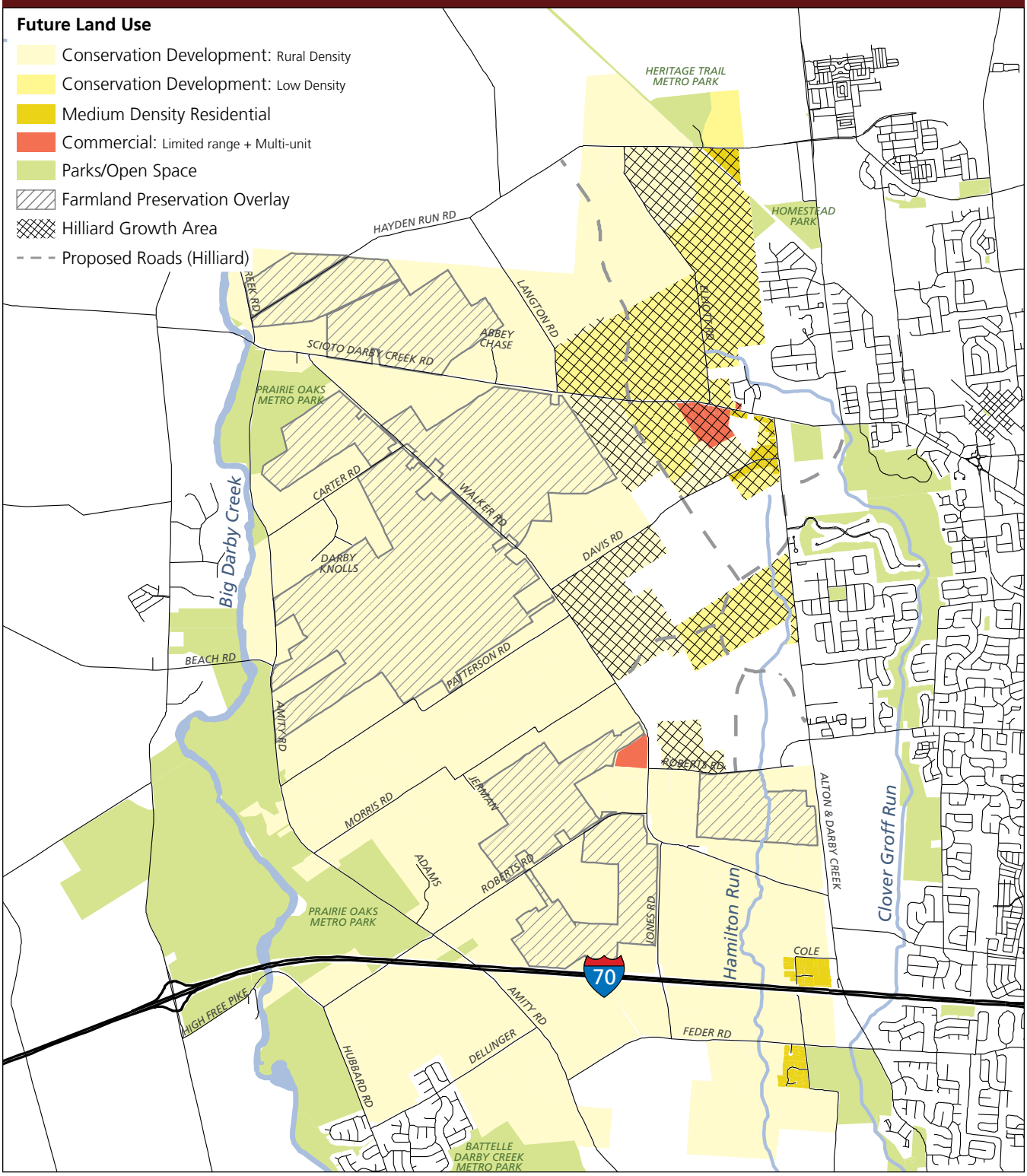
Rural: Rural
R-1: Restricted suburban residential
R-2: Limited suburban residential

Commercial

SO: Suburban Office
NC: Neighborhood Commercial
Note: The commercial zoning districts presented here are meant to provide a suitable range of uses for the areas designated on the Future Land Use Map. Any commercial rezonings should be to a planned zoning district.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

DRAFT 05/30/13



CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The Big Darby Accord created a conservation strategy that prioritizes areas for protection 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) 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.

New development in the planning area will require additional parkland 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 near neighborhood centers.

Protected Zone

Franklin County's Big Darby Creek Watershed Riparian Setback regulations protects about 1,446 acres of land in the planning area. These areas are shown as protected on the Conservation Strategy Map.

Conservation Tiers

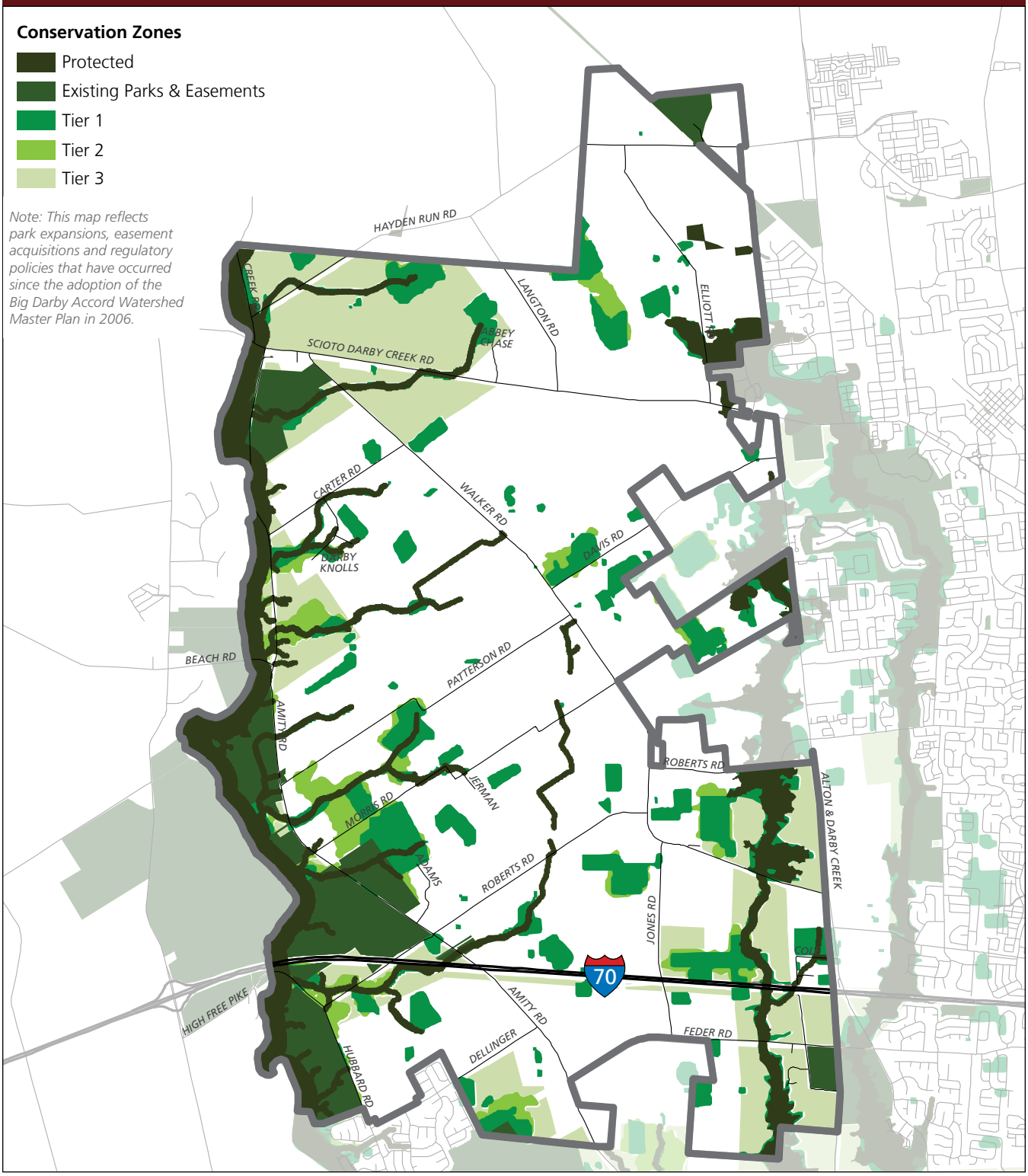
These areas should be conserved through permanent conservation easements, conservation development subdivisions and other suitable mechanisms.

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. Preservation of Tier 3 land will provide an integral piece of the open space network. These areas can provide habitat connectivity and buffer areas. Passive recreation and sensitively designed active recreation is suitable for Tier 3 areas.

CONSERVATION STRATEGY MAP



BLANK PAGE

COMMUNITY

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A strong community identity

An economically viable agricultural community

Well-established partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions

Achieve this vision by

- Promoting the township's unique characteristics
- Supporting a viable local food system
- Encouraging cooperative and complementary development

How to use this section:

The visions outlined above are divided into achievable goals and individual action steps to accomplish those goals.

Goals *Broad objectives that achieve the community's vision* →

Actions *Individual action items that will help accomplish each goal* →

Description of Actions *Explains the action, including how it should be accomplished and who should do it* →

Goal A

Maintain residential and rural character

Action 1

Follow the Future Land Use map

The Future Land Use map shows the range of land uses the community would like to see in specific areas.

Goal A

Promote the township's unique characteristics

Visual cues such as scenic corridors and historic structures compose the unique attributes that distinguish one community from another. Establishing visual cues helps to build community pride and a sense of ownership among township residents.

Action 1

Seek scenic byway designation

Scenic byways are roads recognized for their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. The Ohio Scenic Byways Program provides funding to support the protection of outstanding roads and landscapes. Designation as a scenic byway requires protection efforts aimed at preserving important resources and encouraging voluntary participation by landowners along the byway.

Brown Township and Franklin County should work with the Ohio Department of Transportation to designate Amity Road, and possibly Walker Road, as scenic byways. Other roads should be considered for designation based on community input.

Action 2

Highlight and protect historic and cultural resources

Brown Township is home to a number of historical sites. Drawing attention to these sites enhances their value to their owners, residents and visitors. These sites are also in need of protection, as evidenced by the recent destruction of a historic home for the construction of Hilliard Bradley High School. Brown Township should work with the Ohio Historical Society to identify and designate historic sites and structures in the township.

Action 3

Encourage agricultural barn preservation

Old agricultural barns are prominent landscape features in rural areas and play an integral role in defining rural character. In central Ohio and across the country the consolidation of family farms into larger farming operations has contributed to a loss of old agricultural barns and subsequently to a loss of rural character.

The Ohio Farm Bureau should work with the Ohio Historical Society to encourage local farmers to preserve and restore old agricultural barns. They should also provide information on the economic benefits of using existing barns and the methods available to preserve and restore them.

Franklin County should require new residential subdivisions to incorporate existing agricultural barns into their design. These buildings can be used as a gathering space for subdivision residents or put to other beneficial uses. Preserving barns will help preserve rural character and add to the aesthetic value of the subdivision.

Goal B

Support a viable local food system

A local food system is a network of farmers, consumers and communities that partner to create a more locally-based, self-reliant food system. A complete local food system provides healthy food choices and economic growth in agricultural areas.

Action 4

Implement a new farmer training program

The number of active farmers has dwindled in Brown Township and there are few young farmers to carry on the tradition. Significant barriers prevent many interested young people from entering the agriculture industry.

A new farmer training program would provide prospective farmers with mentoring and specialized business training like marketing, accounting, business planning and farming practices. It could also match new farmers with land owners throughout the Farmland Preservation Overlay who are interested in selling or leasing their land for continued agricultural production.

Brown Township should work with Franklin County Farm Bureau and the Ohio State University Extension to design and implement such a program.

Action 5

Direct small business programs and loans to new farmers and farming operations

Franklin County administers programs that provide grants and loans to small businesses. Some of these grants and loans should be directed at businesses in the township, especially ones dealing with preparing food for local consumption. If existing programs cannot address this need, new programs should be developed with this purpose.

Action 6

Provide information to connect producers and consumers of local food

Many consumers are increasingly interested in local food for its taste, nutrition and environmental benefits. Locally-grown food can be a challenge to find; it's often only available at farmers markets. Connecting local producers and consumers will both increase access to locally-grown foods and increase the economic vitality of local farming initiatives.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's Local Food Information Hub and the Ohio Department of Agriculture's "Ohio Proud" marketing program are two examples that make this vital connection. Brown Township and Franklin County should inform farmers about these initiatives.

Action 7

Revise zoning regulations to allow agricultural support businesses

Farming and livestock production require support services to remain viable. Examples of support services include food processors, seed and fertilizer providers, and veterinarians.

These types of uses are not allowed under current regulations. Franklin County should work closely with Brown Township and property owners to revise the zoning requirements in the Farmland Preservation Overlay areas to allow appropriate support services.

Action 8

Facilitate the development of agricultural support businesses

Having agricultural support services located nearby helps keep agricultural production costs low and creates jobs.

Franklin County will work with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, the Ohio Farm Bureau and local farmers to identify the area's existing and lacking support services.

Once they are identified, Franklin County and partner agencies should provide funding and technical, educational, and marketing support to encourage these businesses to expand or locate within the Farmland Preservation Overlay.

Action 9

Inform farmers of the economic benefits and markets available for specialty crops

A limited number of the planning area's farms produce specialty crops, livestock and poultry. Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables and nuts. These crops provide greater return on investment than row crops and Central Ohio's large population provides a consumer market for these products.

To encourage specialty crop, livestock and poultry production, MORPC should provide

information to farmers on the economic benefits and markets available for these products.

Action 10
Create incentives for farmers to convert to specialty crops

Converting from row crop to specialty crop production requires different equipment and methods of farming. The conversion may include high up-front costs that can prevent farmers from converting to specialty crop production.

Franklin County and its partners should provide incentives from existing small business programs to help area farmers cover these farming expenses.

Goal C
Encourage cooperative and complementary development in the Hilliard Growth Area

The Hilliard Growth Area has become a point of contention between Brown Township and the city of Hilliard. Although Hilliard has exclusive rights to provide utility services to this area with annexation, much of the area is still within Brown Township. Development density and design will have a significant impact on the township's character. The action in this goal is meant to ensure that this impact will be a positive one.

Action 11
Adopt a Non-Annexation Agreement with the city of Hilliard

A non-annexation agreement is a valuable tool to help townships maintain a role in all issues related to planning and development, especially in the portions of the township with the highest probability for development. Such agreements help facilitate cooperation between local governments regarding issues like economic development, joint provision of public services, and mutually beneficial planning and land use. This type of agreement helps to ensure that any future growth by Hilliard into Brown Township is mutually agreed upon, protects residents' property rights and provides adequate public services for the area.

The process of formulating a Hilliard-Brown Township Non-Annexation Agreement would consist of regular discussions by officials of the involved jurisdictions (Hilliard, Brown Township, Franklin County and Columbus) over multiple months. These discussions would explore the essential components of the agreement, including the geographic area, provision of services, and the sharing of both the responsibilities and the benefits of the agreement.

TRANSPORTATION

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A road system that preserves rural character and safely accommodates all users

Achieve this vision by

- Improving the safety of the road network
- Ensuring that roadways reinforce the rural character of the township
- Improving bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility

How to use this section:

The visions outlined above are divided into achievable goals and individual action steps to accomplish those goals.

Goals *Broad objectives that achieve the community's vision* →

Actions *Individual action items that will help accomplish each goal* →

Description of Actions *Explains the action, including how it should be accomplished and who should do it* →

Goal A

Maintain residential and rural character

Action 1

Follow the Future Land Use map

The Future Land Use map shows the range of land uses the community would like to see in specific areas.

Goal A

Improve the safety of the road network

The road network in the township is mostly composed of two-lane roadways with 55 mph speed limits. Accident data shows a number of high-accident roads and intersections. Community feedback reflects these findings, but also expresses a preference for an approach that maintains rural character.

Action 1

Encourage safety improvements on high-crash roads

Crash data shows crashes along several Brown Township roads. The data is supported by resident reports of excessive speed and unsafe conditions. Safety improvements should be sensitive to the rural context and could include "curve ahead" warning signs, speed limit reductions and low-cost traffic calming treatments such as pavement markings. The Franklin County Engineer's Office should consider safety improvements along Alton & Darby Creek, Amity, Feder and Walker Roads.

Action 2

Encourage safety improvements at high-crash intersections

Crash data and community input also shows several intersections in need of safety improvements. The Franklin County Engineer's Office should consider context-sensitive safety improvements at the following locations:

- Amity Road (all)
- Walker Road at Jones, Davis and Scioto & Darby Creek Roads
- Hubbard Road at Roberts Road

Goal B

Ensure that roadways reinforce the rural character of the township

Because rural roads are an integral part of the rural landscape, their design will either improve or degrade rural character. Rural character also creates economic value for the residents and property owners in Brown Township.

Action 3

Adopt rural road design guidelines for township roads

Conventional road design and performance standards address system performance issues such as maintaining automobile traffic speed and accommodating future automobile traffic volumes. This approach often widens, flattens and straightens roads, removing any unique character that a road contributes to its surroundings – particularly in rural areas with narrow, winding roads.

Federal transportation policies have increasingly encouraged road designs which focus on quality of life and community rather than on automobile speed and convenience. The Franklin County Engineer's Office should adopt a more flexible design standard for use on local township roads. The Engineer's Office should also consider such guidelines for rural collector and arterial road reconstruction projects, to the extent possible. See the following page for more information on rural road design guidelines.

Action 4

Design roads with resident input

Residents often view major road projects as a change in their community that they feel will threaten their safety, decrease their property value, or degrade their quality of life. In

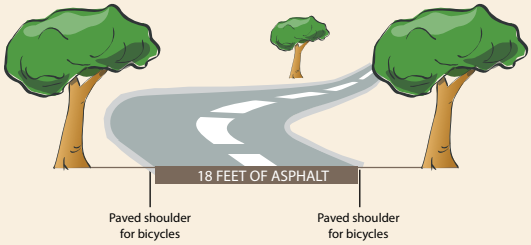
RURAL ROAD DESIGN GUIDELINES

Some of the techniques that may be used to maximize the "fit" between the road and rural landscapes are:

- Maintain natural and cultural roadside features, such as rock outcroppings, stone walls and rows of trees;
- Minimize road width, except for roads with significant use by trucks and farm machinery;
- Limit grading and clearing as much as possible, based on traffic volumes and visibility at curves;
- Align roads to complement the natural topography;
- Avoid bisecting open fields, agricultural lands, critical natural habitats and wetlands by aligning the road to fringe areas;
- Avoid the placement of guardrails that block extensive views and vistas;
- Use wooden or box beam guide rails, where appropriate, rather than standard corrugated models;
- Use landscape features to blend roadways and bridges into the natural setting;
- Use native, natural materials to blend colors and textures into the setting;
- Protect, create and enhance vegetative buffers along waterways and adjacent to wetlands and important natural habitats.

Existing Rural Road

Conventional Improvement



Recommended Improvement

addition, they feel as though they have little influence on such matters.

Residents bring valuable information to the table regarding the historical, environmental, scenic, economic and social implications of a proposed project. Using this information to guide project design will ensure a smoother process and an outcome that meets community needs.

The Franklin County Engineer's Office should consider a road design process that brings citizens into the process early—before design alternatives are developed—and keeps them involved throughout the design process.

Goal C

Create a roadway network that allows for orderly development and traffic management

Streets in developing areas are planned on a piecemeal basis by land developers and then turned over to the local government. Street layout and design is typically site-based,

addressing the interests of the landowner, and do not consider the negative consequences of a disconnected roadway network. The result is that major roadways become overwhelmed with traffic. Roadway systems should be planned before development progresses.

Action 5
Update the Franklin County Thoroughfare Plan

Thoroughfare planning provides a long term vision of the road network needed to meet future travel needs. A thoroughfare plan classifies roads by right-of-way width, access to adjacent land, mobility for through traffic and land use context, and may include proposed new roadways.

Thoroughfare planning must balance travel and land use impacts of the street network to meet community objectives. This requires coordination with comprehensive plans for the future of the study area. Franklin County should work with MORPC to update the Franklin County Thoroughfare Plan to reflect the future land use recommendations of the Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan, Big Darby Town Center Master Plan and Accord-member jurisdictions' comprehensive plans.

Action 6
Discourage proposed Hilliard road alignment with Morris Road

The city of Hilliard has proposed a new network of roadways to accommodate traffic as development occurs within the Hilliard Growth Area. One of these roads is proposed to terminate at Walker Road, in alignment with Morris Road. This alignment would encourage west-bound traffic on the new road to continue traveling along Morris Road. Depending on the volume of such traffic, it could drastically alter the quiet residential quality of Morris Road and increase the maintenance burden on the Township. Brown Township should work with the city of Hilliard and Franklin County Engineer's Office to find an alternative alignment.

Goal D
Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility

The township is largely rural and travel by automobile is by far the most popular mode of transportation. However, certain areas have higher volumes of pedestrians—primarily near schools—and people often bicycle in the township for recreational purposes. The transportation network does not accommodate these people well. Measures should be taken to improve their safety.

Action 7
Complete a Safe Routes to School Travel Plan

The Safe Routes to School program encourages children to walk or bicycle to school and makes walking and bicycling to school safer for children. This can enhance children's health, ease traffic congestion and improve the quality of life in a community. See below for more information on Safe Routes to School.

A Safe Routes to School Travel Plan studies routes that lead to and from schools, identifies dangerous intersections and proposes solutions. Franklin County should partner with Hilliard City Schools, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and the Ohio Department of Transportation to complete a Safe Routes to School Travel Plan for Brown Elementary School and Hilliard Bradley High School.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The Safe Routes to School program encourages children to walk or bicycle to school. It makes walking and bicycling to school safer and more appealing.

Successful projects have included:

- Improvements to crosswalks, sidewalks, bikeways, bicycle parking and traffic-calming features around schools
- Teaching children and parents about transportation choices and pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Community crossing guard programs and increased enforcement of speed limits and other traffic laws around schools
- Participation in *Walk to School Day*
- Maintaining a school car pool list for those who cannot walk or bicycle to school

Since 2005, communities across the state have received millions of dollars for Safe Routes to School projects. To be eligible for this funding, a school needs a Safe Routes to School Travel Plan. Plans can focus on a single school, multiple schools or an entire school district.

Montana NAPA

Action 8

Require new development to provide and reserve bikeway connections

The design and construction of greenways and trails should be a required improvement for all development plans that are near a regional trail or park and considered for smaller site developments. The network of greenways and trails throughout the planning area should link subdivisions with one another and with schools, parks and other natural areas. New developments should also provide connections to adjacent undeveloped property for future connectivity.

BLANK PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

Lana Ahlum, *Brown Township Working Committee*
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*
Mike Harrold, *Brown Township Working Committee*
Dep. Jesse Hatfield, *Franklin County Sheriff's Office*
Tracy Hatmaker, *Prairie Township*
Barbara Hoover, *Brown Township Working Committee*
David Hughes, *Madison County Building and Zoning Dept.*
Brady Koehler, *Franklin County Drainage Engineer*
Paul Lambert, *Brown Township Working Committee*
Maureen Lorenz, *Columbus Recreation and Parks Dept.*
Doug Lowery, *Hilliard City Schools*
Kim Lux, *Brown Township Working Committee*
Doug Maggied, *Brown Township Working Committee*
Eric Manske, *Norwich Township Fire Department*
Joe Martin, *Brown Township Trustee*
Malcolm Porter, *Building Industry Association*
Jim Ramsey, *Franklin County Drainage Engineer*
Stephen Renner, *Franklin County Sanitary Engineer*
Dave Reutter, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*
Nancy Rhynard, *Brown Township Working Committee*
Cornell Robertson, *Franklin County Engineer's Office*
Pam Sayre, *Brown Township Working Committee*
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*
John Tholen, *Brown Township Working Committee*
Neall Weber, *Brown Township Working Committee*
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*

Produced by:

Franklin County
Economic Development & Planning
James Schimmer, Director
R. Lee Brown, Planning Administrator

150 South Front Street
FSL Suite 10
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Tel. 614-525-3094
Fax 614-525-7155
development.franklincountyohio.gov