BROWN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Brown Township, Franklin County, Ohio

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Produced by:

Franklin County
Economic Development & Planning
James Schimmer, Director

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.

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QUICK START

If you're looking for... *...start here*

General overview

Overall summary
A two page summary of this plan

Plan Summary
Page 14

Just the maps
Recommendations for
future land use and conservation

Map Center
Page 17

Specific information

Detailed recommendations
The plan's recommendations, organized by theme

Recommendations
Page 47

BROWN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Mike Meeks
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Cornell Robertson
Brent Welch

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Franklin County Economic Development & Planning Department
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Joe Bailey
Deborah Branham
Justin Barker
Matthew Brown
Alex Campbell
Paul Eberts
Jamie Edwards
Rick Erbe
Shawn Fields
Anthony Hray
Michael Kelleher
Hope Kingsborough
David Lowell
Kathleen Matheny
Mark Paxson
Joe Ryan
Alyssa Taylor
Anna Thomas
Scott Ulrich
Bertram Walker

The project team thanks R. Lee Brown for his years of leadership and guidance as Planning Administrator for Franklin County. His service and dedication have been invaluable to economic development and community planning efforts throughout Franklin County.

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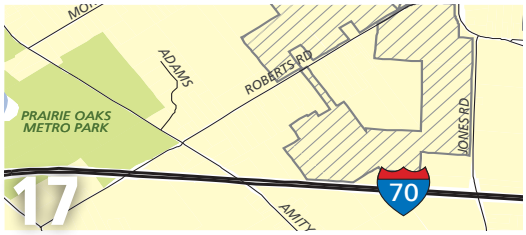
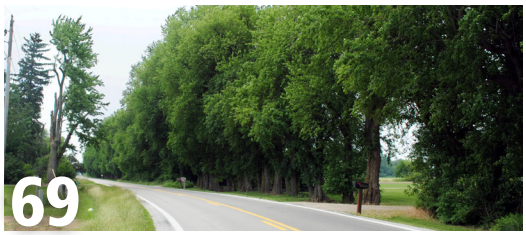
MAP CENTER



LAND USE

COMMUNITY

TRANSPORTATION



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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

In this section you'll find an overview of the process we used to develop the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan, a map of the planning area, and a summary of the plan's recommendations.

For an in-depth look at the recommendations, see *Section 5: Recommendations* beginning on page 47.
Here's what you'll find in this section:

About This Plan, p. 9

What is a plan? This section explains what a plan is, how it's created, and how recommendations are developed.

Policy Statements, p. 10

Policy statements are the guiding principles we used to develop the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan. The Franklin County Commissioners endorse these principles as best practices that form the foundation of community plans.

Planning Area Maps, p. 12

The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan will guide future development and redevelopment in unincorporated Brown Township in Franklin County, Ohio. The regional map shows the location of the planning area in central Ohio.

The planning area map shows detailed boundaries of the planning area. The map displays where the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan's recommendations apply.

Plan Summary, p. 14

The Plan Summary highlights the vision statements and key actions of the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan. The vision statements follow the plan's three themes: Land Use, Community, and Transportation.

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ABOUT THIS PLAN

What is a plan?

A land use plan represents a community's desires for the future: how land is used, what new buildings look like, and how people travel around and through the community.

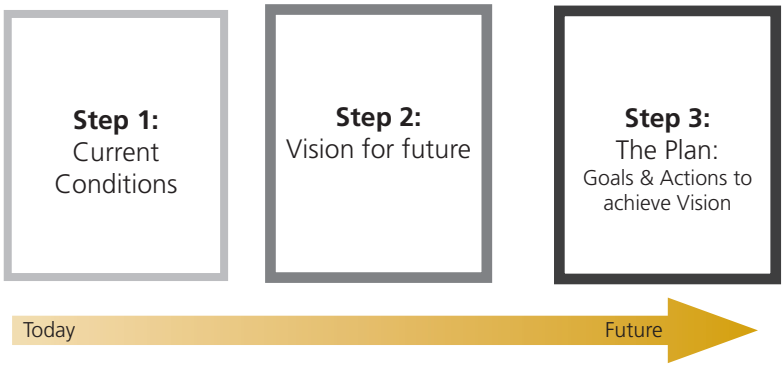
Steps in creating a plan

A plan begins by assessing a community's existing state—the current conditions of land use, building appearance, residential areas, and transportation network. The second step is deciding on a vision—a view of the community at a point 10 to 20 years in the future. The third step is developing the bridge from the present to the future: the plan's recommendations. The recommendations explain in detail how the community, starting in the present, achieves its desired vision for the future.

The recommendations: goals and action items

To develop the plan's recommendations, a community takes the desired vision for the future and divides it into smaller pieces, called goals. Each goal is a piece of the vision. Here's an example:

A community has a main street with a large shopping center. The shopping center is in poor condition and is only half-occupied. Arriving by car is the only convenient travel method. For its land use plan, the community imagines the future: the vision for the shopping center is an attractive, fully-occupied shopping center with housing near or above the stores and convenient transportation for pedestrians. The community breaks its vision down into goals and each goal into specific action items.



Just like the example, the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan sets overall visions and divides the visions into goals. The plan then lists action steps to achieve each goal. Each goal works both separately and together with the other goals to achieve the desired future for the planning area.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Each of these statements describes how the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan abides by policies, endorsed or adopted by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners.

SUSTAINABILITY RESOLUTION

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners passed resolution 683-06 stating its commitment to the mutually-compatible goals of environmental protection and economic growth. The resolution covers a range of county activities. For land use plans, the resolution states two important policy goals: practicing environmentally responsible land use and preserving natural resources. This plan complies fully with the resolution.

Environmentally responsible land use

This plan recommends conservation-style residential development to ensure environmentally-sensitive areas are protected. Implementing alternative wastewater treatment systems, such as those recommended on page 56, will help make conservation developments a plausible option in the township.

Preservation of natural resources

The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan recommends preserving farmland throughout the township and limiting commercial development to specific areas. These recommendations stem from strong community support to maintain rural character. Limiting development in small nodes ensures the overall character of the township will remain the same.

The planning area includes Big Darby Creek, Hamilton Run and many environmentally-sensitive areas. This plan recommends the protection and preservation of these natural resources.

The plan recommends maintaining a no-build zone around the creeks and their tributaries to aid stream restoration efforts. Following the Conservation Strategy Map on page 23 will preserve the environmentally-sensitive tiered land designated by the Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan. These efforts will preserve wildlife habitats and improve water quality throughout the watershed.

For new development, the plan recommends the use of stormwater best management practices. Hard surfaces such as roofs and pavement create stormwater runoff when it rains. Instead of untreated water going directly into streams, the runoff should be directed to specially-planted areas designed to help water soak into the ground gradually. This helps recharge ground water and provides attractive areas of landscaping—all the while keeping pollutants out of the water system.

The Board of Commissioners will practice environmentally responsible growth when establishing policy on land use.

—Resolution 683-06

In addition to preservation, the plan recommends more interaction between people and nature. The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan aims to connect existing bike trails, provide new ones in new developments and improve parks throughout Brown Township. Having a closer relationship with nature allows people to appreciate the importance of green areas.

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

We wrote the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan in plain language, with residents, developers, public officials, planners and all community members in mind. Plain language is a clear, straightforward way of writing.

Plain language keeps documents simple, using only the necessary number of words. But plain language isn't overly-simplified English. It's a way of writing that lets a reader concentrate on the message, instead of being distracted by complicated language.

We wrote this plan in plain language to help you, the reader. Too often, government documents use long sentences and lots of jargon. Writing in plain language should allow everyone to understand what's in this plan.

For more information on plain language, visit these websites:

www.plainlanguage.gov

www.centerforplainlanguage.org

www.plainlanguagenetwork.org

CENTRAL OHIO GREEN PACT

Beginning in 2007, communities throughout Franklin County have adopted the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's Central Ohio Green Pact, a shared commitment to making the region more sustainable. The Green Pact addresses various sustainability topics, including: reducing household waste, building greener buildings and growing a green economy. One of the pledges is adopting sustainable land use policies.

From the Green Pact:

The way our communities grow can have a significant impact on the environment. We agree to examine our codes and policies to determine how we can: create walkable, bikeable communities; promote infill; protect natural resources such as trees; protect our rivers through stormwater controls; and create more green neighborhood infrastructure, such as green roofs, bio-swales and rain gardens.

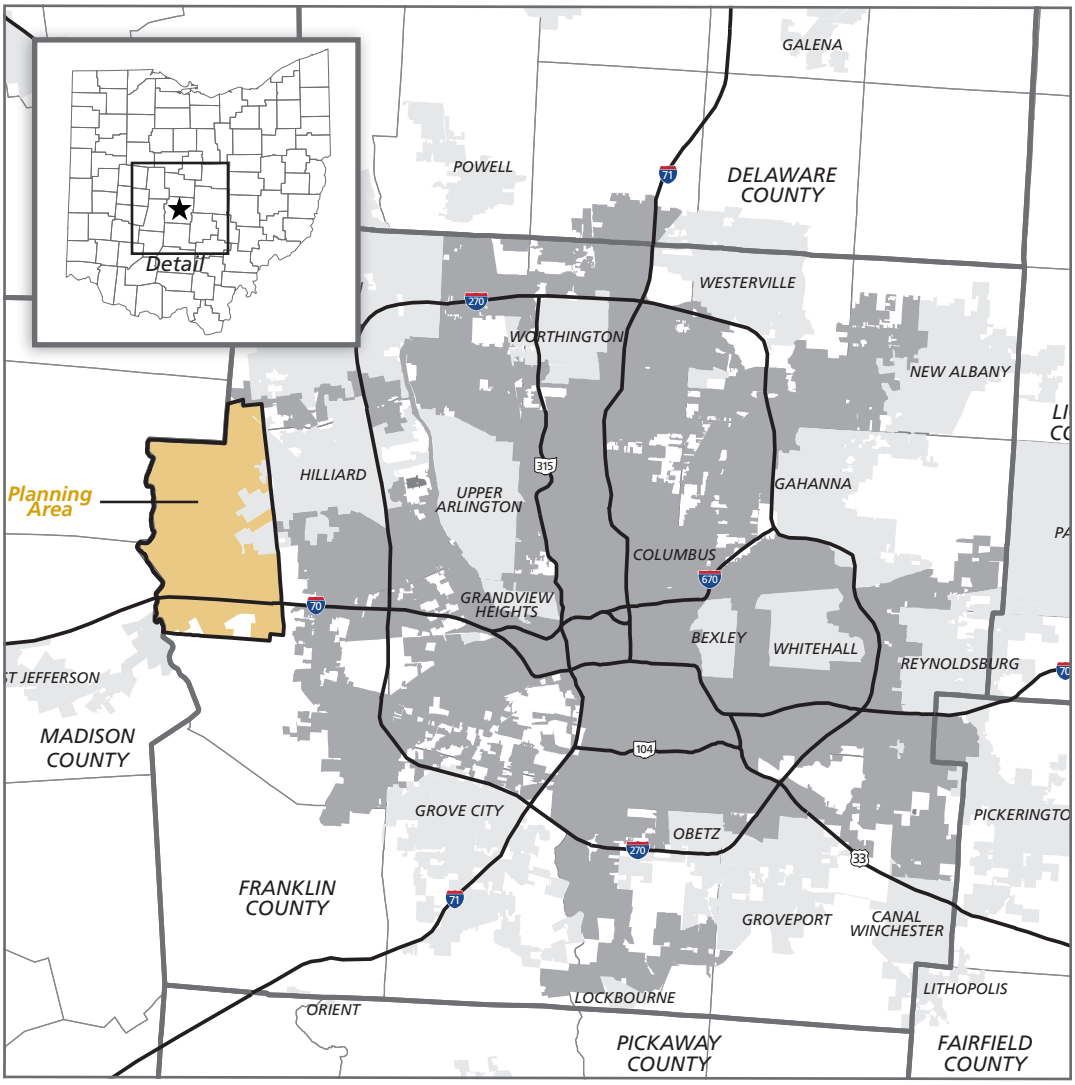
The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan fully complies with the Central Ohio Green Pact. The plan's recommendations promote limited density and agricultural preservation on the urban periphery.

The plan aims to protect natural resources through the use of stormwater best management practices and by preserving sensitive land along streams. Conservation-style development will ensure that green infrastructure is created throughout the community.

The Central Ohio Green Pact recommends protecting rivers and creating accessible communities

REGIONAL MAP

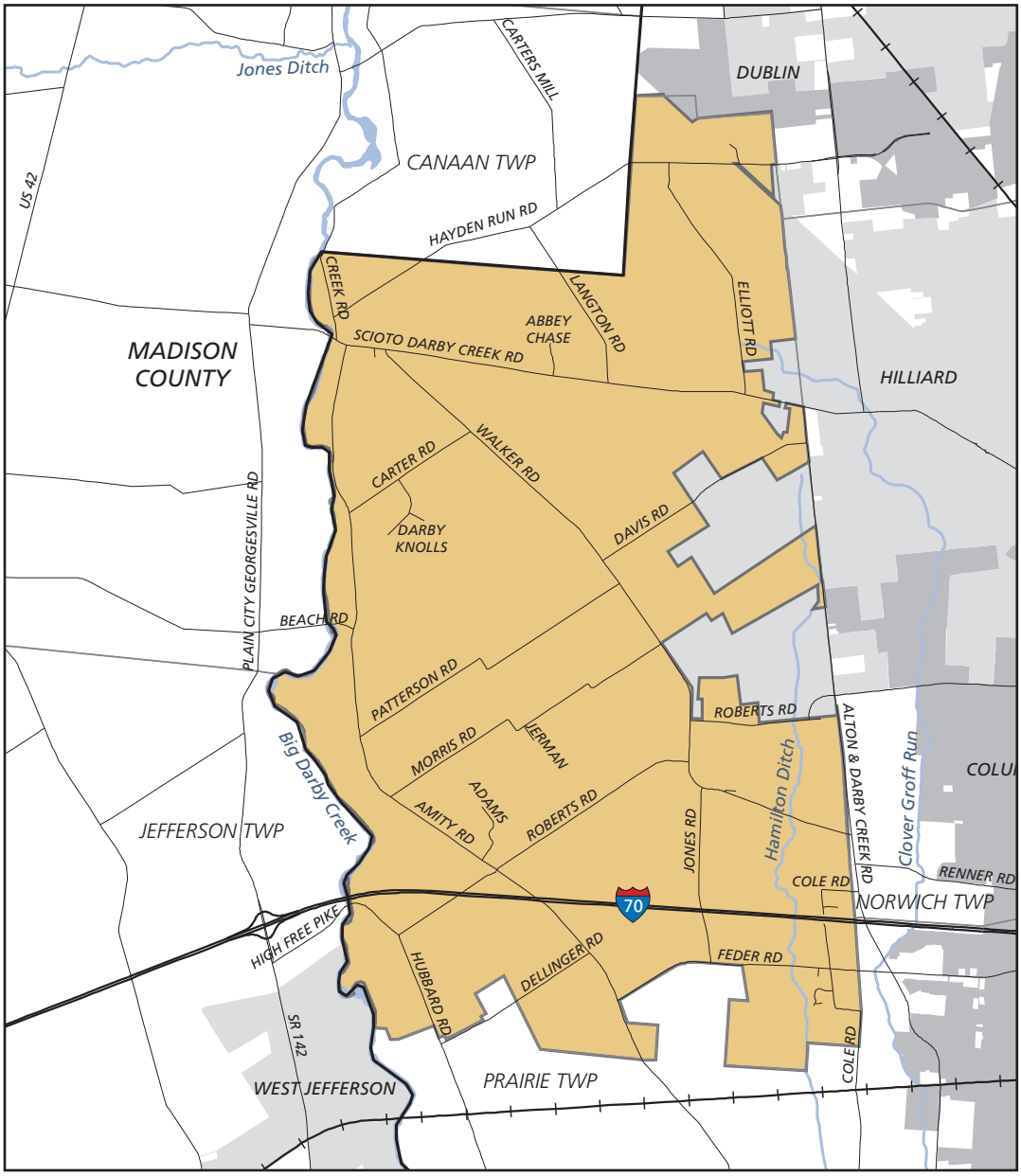
PLANNING AREA LOCATION



The Brown Township Planning Area is shown in tan

PLANNING AREA

Unincorporated Areas



The Brown Township planning area consists of 20.39 square miles in western Franklin County, Ohio

BROWN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PLAN SUMMARY

The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan is a guide for future development throughout unincorporated Brown Township. The planning process started with an analysis of the current conditions of the township and its residents. Detailed recommendations to guide how land is used, how the community looks, and how people get around were created based on how the community curently looks. To make sure the recommendations are carried out, implementation tables have been created to assign responsibilities to specific agencies and groups. Community input is the cornerstone of the plan, and the strong public participation that Brown Township showed throughout the planning process ensures the plan and its recommendations reflect their visions and desires.

Recommendations follow three themes:
Land Use, Community, and Transportation

Land use recommendations seek to preserve farmland. With the understanding that development cannot be prevented everywhere, additional recommendations ensure that any future development will preserve rural character and environmental resources.

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

Community recommendations seek to strengthen the township's community identity, support the local agricultural economy, and encourage cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions.

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

Transportation recommendations aim to preserve the rural character of the township's roadways while improving safety and accommodating all road users to the extent practical.

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

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SECTION 2

MAP CENTER

The maps in this section reflect the visions for the future: what land uses people want to see and how land will be used. We developed the maps based on community input. You can see how the public got involved in *Section 4: Public Process* beginning on page 41.

Future Land Use Map, p. 19

This map shows what types of land uses the community wants to see in the future.

The Future Land Use Map is used most often when a landowner proposes a new development or redevelopment. If the proposal requires a rezoning or a variance, officials reviewing the proposal can see if it matches the community's vision for their future.

Including a Future Land Use Map in the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan allows residents to communicate their land use opinions to the appointed and elected officials who make zoning decisions.

Conservation Strategy Map, p. 23

The Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan included a conservation strategy that prioritizes protection areas throughout the watershed, based on environmental sensitivity.

This map should guide the location of development and restoration projects. The map also provides a blueprint for open space programs and land acquisition efforts.

LAND USE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

Conservation Development: Rural Density
Allowed land uses: Single-family homes
Density: Maximum of 0.2 units per acre
Permitted in the Farmland Preservation Area

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 at neighborhood-scale and offices.

Farmland Preservation Area

Intended for agricultural production with limited development and agricultural support businesses

Parks/Open Space

Intended for nature or recreation with minimal buildings

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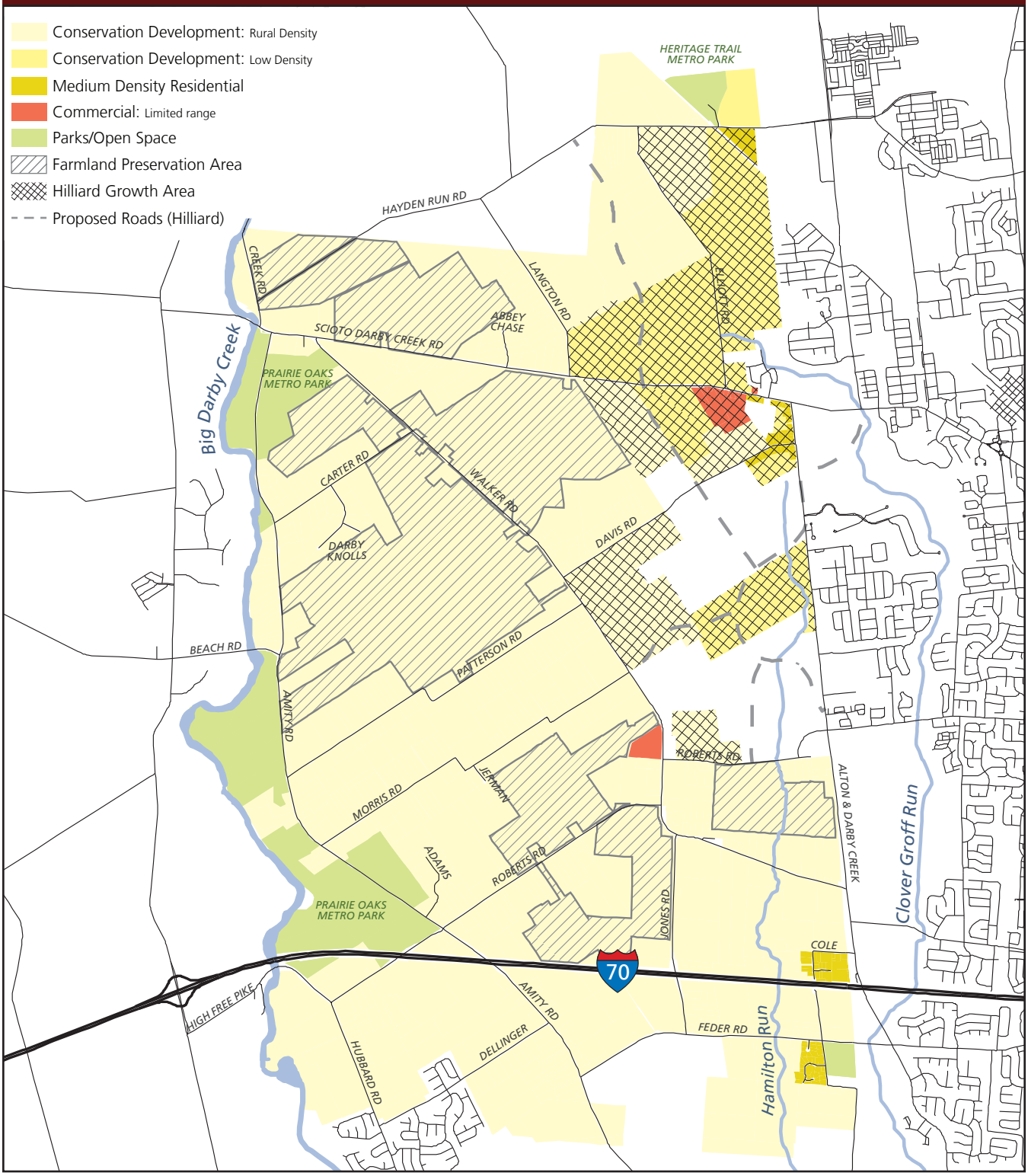
FUTURE LAND USE



CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS

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

● Indicates appropriate zoning districts for each 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 Future Land Use categories are matched to existing zoning districts in the corresponding zoning district table.

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.

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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

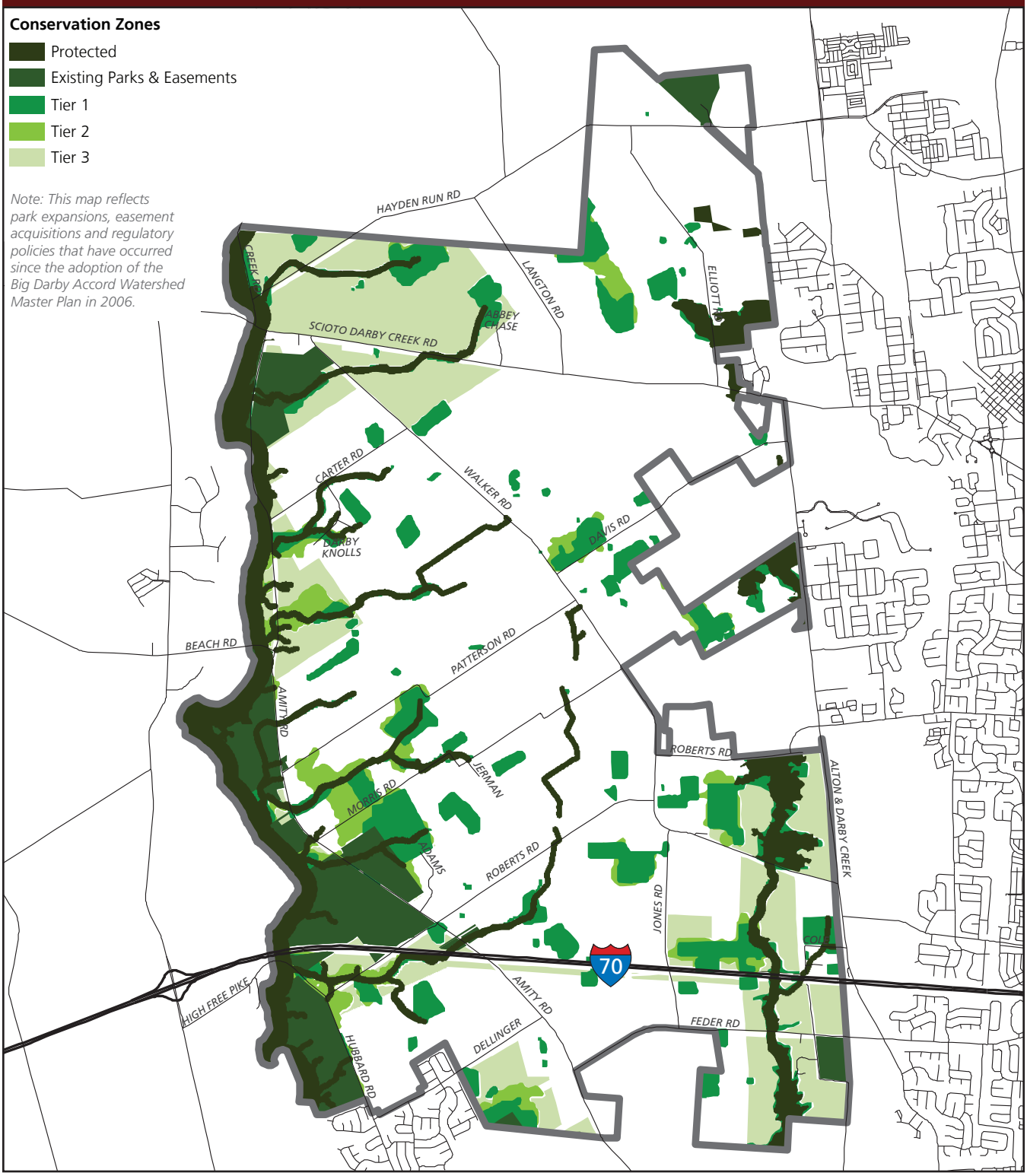
These areas should be conserved through permanent conservation easements, conservation development subdivisions and other suitable mechanisms.

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



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SECTION 3

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The first step in creating a plan is finding out what a community is like today, also called its current conditions.

We gathered information from published sources such as the U.S. Census and from face-to-face interviews with community members.

After assessing the current physical conditions, we conducted a large-scale public input meeting. Over 120 attendees told us what they like about Brown Township and what they want to see changed. The data, interviews, and public input results provide the plan's strategic direction and basis for its recommendations.

For detailed information about the public meetings and their results, see *Section 4: Public Process* on page *41*.

Planning Context, p. 26

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

Stakeholder Interviews, p. 30

This section describes the groups we interviewed and the major issues facing the planning area. This level of research shows the immediate concerns of residents and business owners.

People and Community, p. 31

People and Community provides information on people, housing, employment, and community facilities in Brown Township. This information is the first look into a community, providing a high-level overview.

Current Conditions Maps, p. 33

The maps section shows the current land uses, zoning, environmentally sensitive areas, transportation overview, infrastructure availability, and community facilities in the planning area.

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

.

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 land-owners' 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.

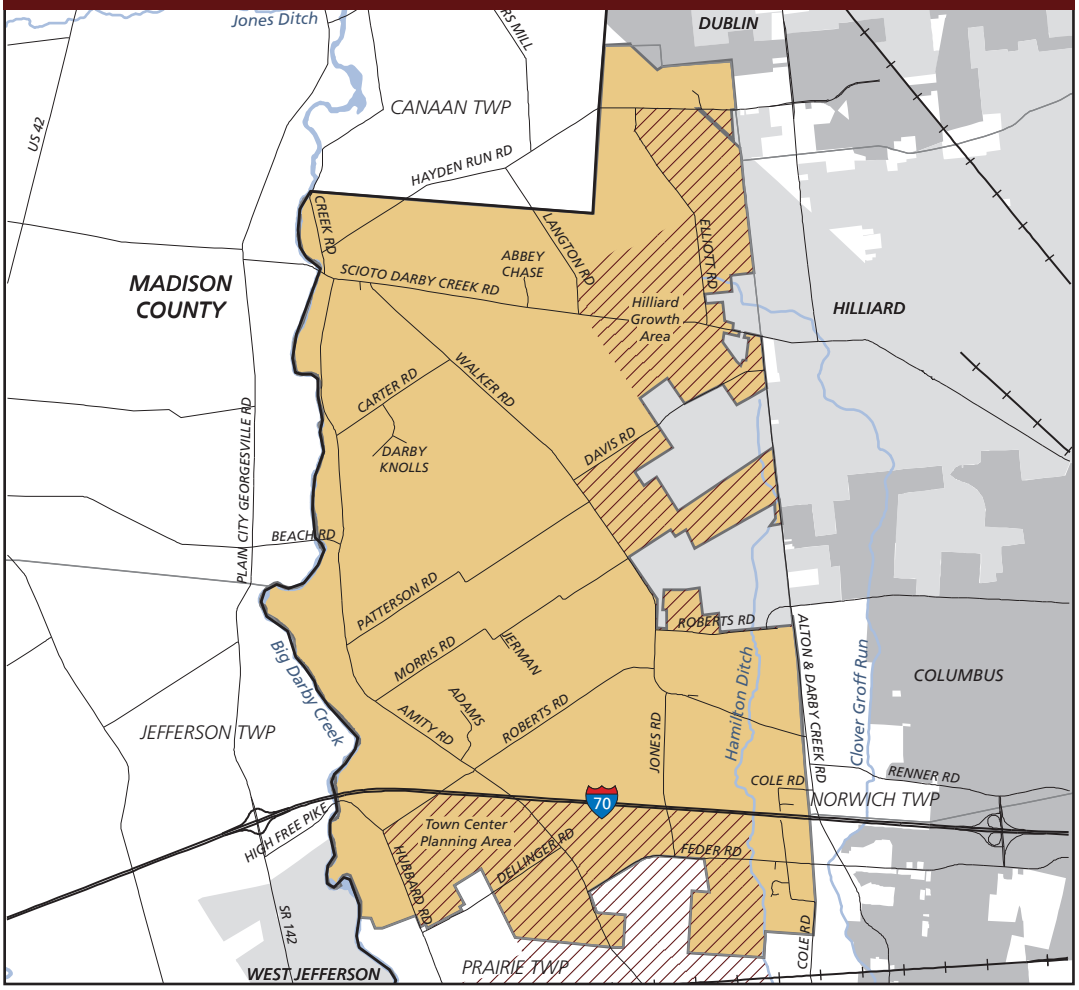
Big Darby Town Center Master Plan

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

PLANNING CONTEXT MAP



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.

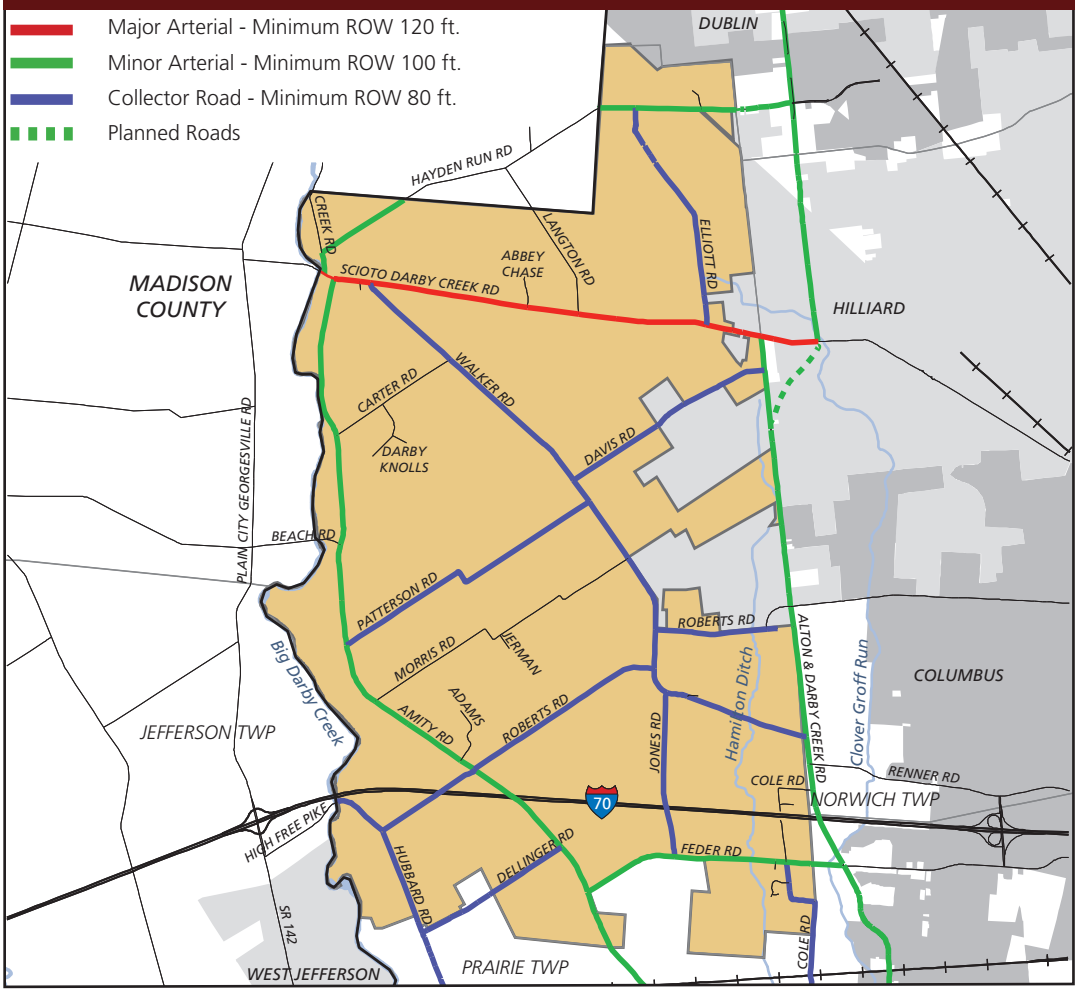
The 2007 update to the Prairie Township Comprehensive Plan recommends four major categories of future land use, each with specific policies based on the recommendations of the Big Darby Accord. Infill development is recommended for existing urbanized areas. "Suburban edge" development (3-5 units per 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 on page 26 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.

FRANKLIN COUNTY 2020 THOROUGHFARE PLAN



FRANKLIN COUNTY THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The current Franklin County Thoroughfare Plan designates major roads by their position in the overall county road hierarchy. Freeways/expressways and major arterial roads are intended for higher traffic volumes traveling longer distances. Minor arterials and collector roads serve lower volumes of traffic over shorter distances while serving as an access to nearby roads. Local roads are intended primarily for property access.

The following roads are designated on the current Franklin County Thoroughfare Plan:

Freeway/Expressway: I-70

Major Arterial: Scioto and Darby Creek Road

Minor Arterials: Alton-Darby Road, Amity Road, and Hayden Run Road

Collectors: Davis Road, Dellinger Road, Elliot Road, Hubbard Road, Jones Road, Patterson Road, Roberts Road, and Walker Road.

Note: Township roads are not maintained by the Franklin County Engineer's Office.

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.

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 2012 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

CURRENT CONDITIONS MAPS

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

Current Land Use, p. 34

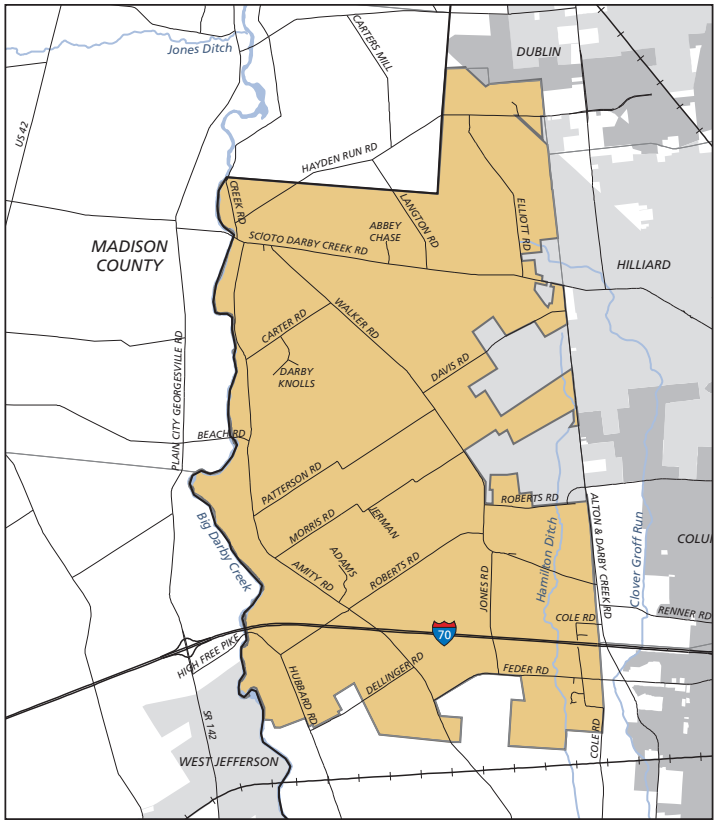
Current Zoning, p. 35

Environmental Sensitivity, p. 36

Transportation, p. 37

Infrastructure, p. 38

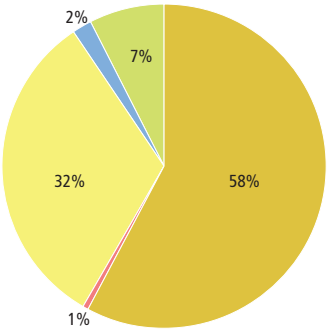
Community Facilities, p. 39

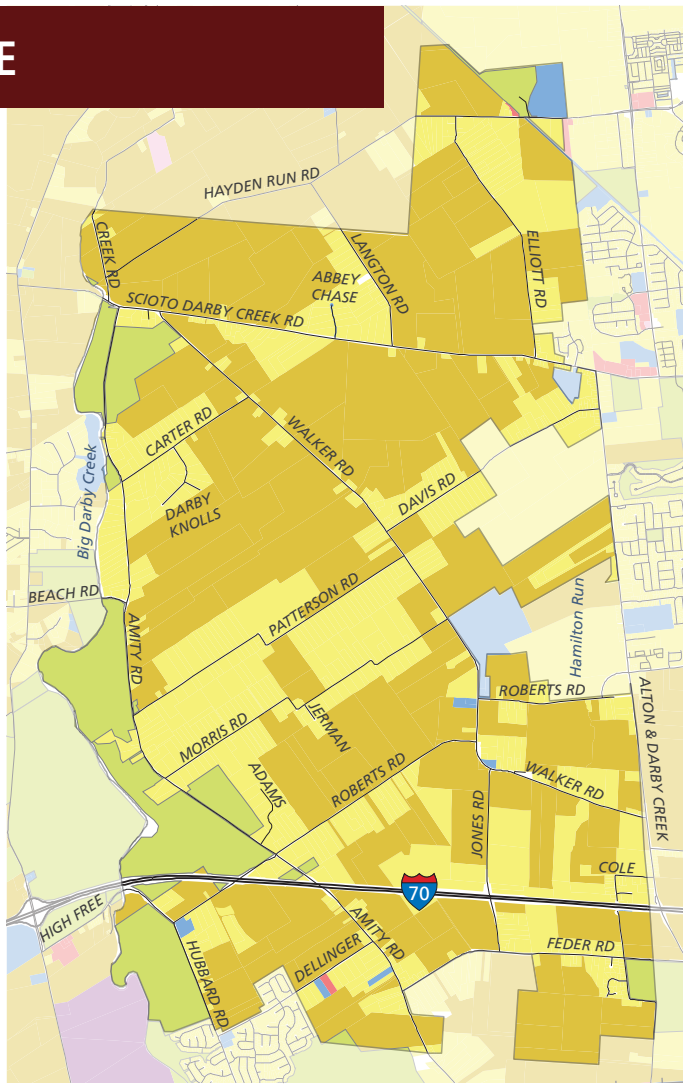


Unincorporated Areas

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.

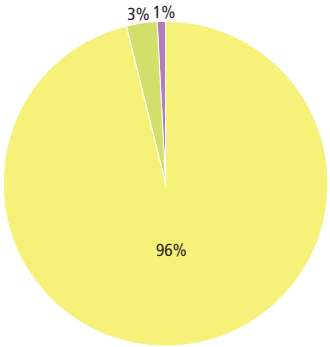
Parks and open space make up seven percent of the planning area, which includes Heritage Trail and Prairie Oaks Metro Parks.

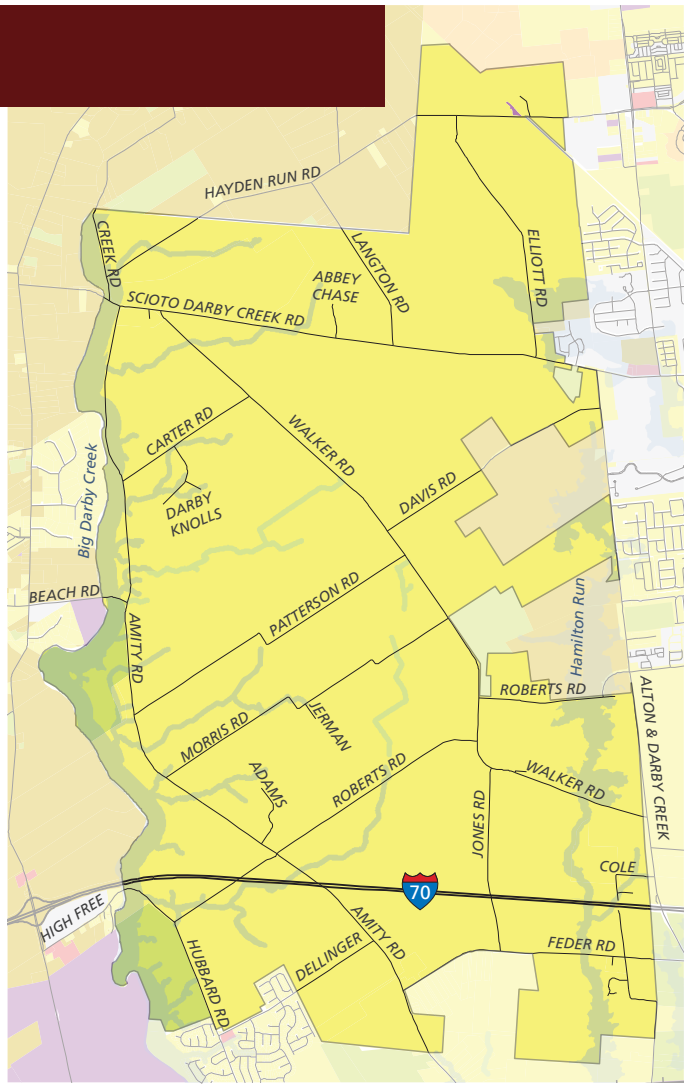
Commercial uses are mostly small in scale and scattered throughout the planning area.

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

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





** Stream buffers include floodplain, wetlands, steep slopes and riparian setbacks determined by the regulations set forth in the Franklin County Zoning Resolution.*

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

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

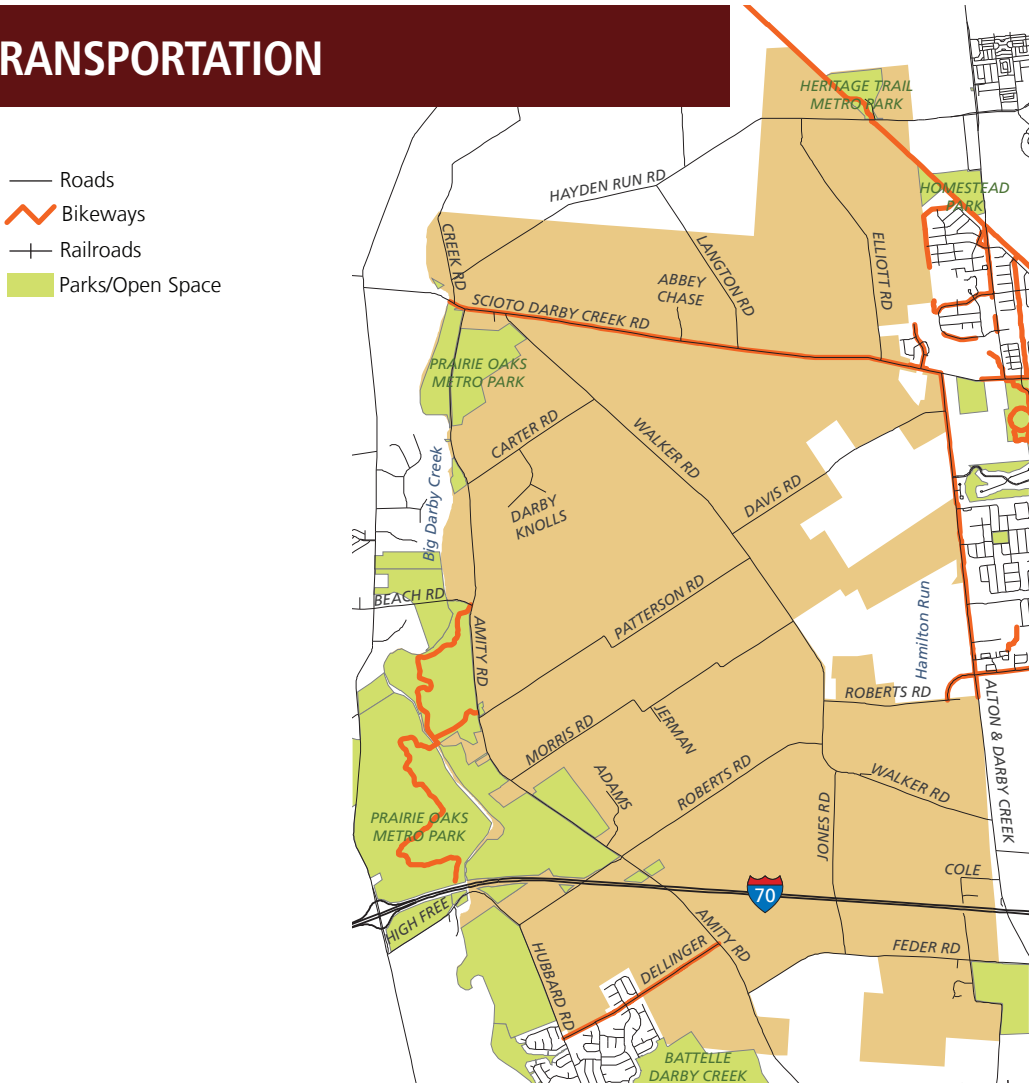
The Big and Little Darby creeks were designated state scenic rivers in 1984, and national scenic rivers in 1994. The watershed is one of the healthiest and most diverse aquatic systems in the Midwest. The exceptional water quality of the Big Darby Creek is threatened by changes in the landscape from natural vegetation to agriculture and urbanization.

The watershed is approximately 560 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



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.

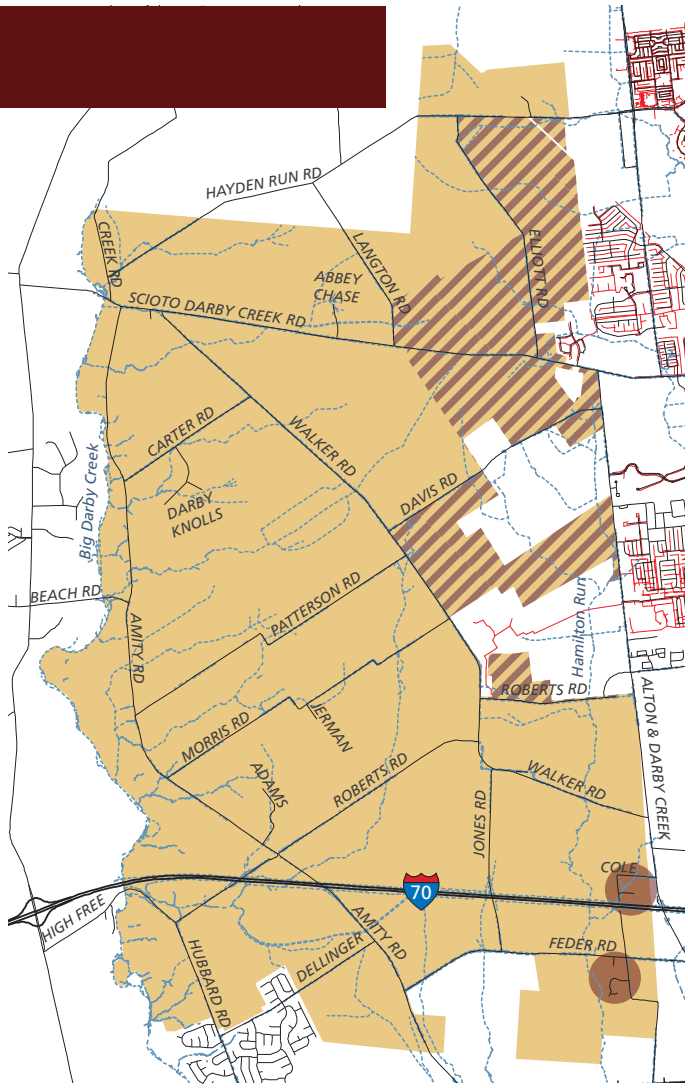
Walker Road is one of the most highly traveled roads in the township, serving as a diagonal cut-through route with convenient access to the Hilliard & Rome Road interchange via Renner Road.

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.

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 the Hilliard Growth Area (with annexation) and Big Darby Town Center area, south of Brown Township (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.

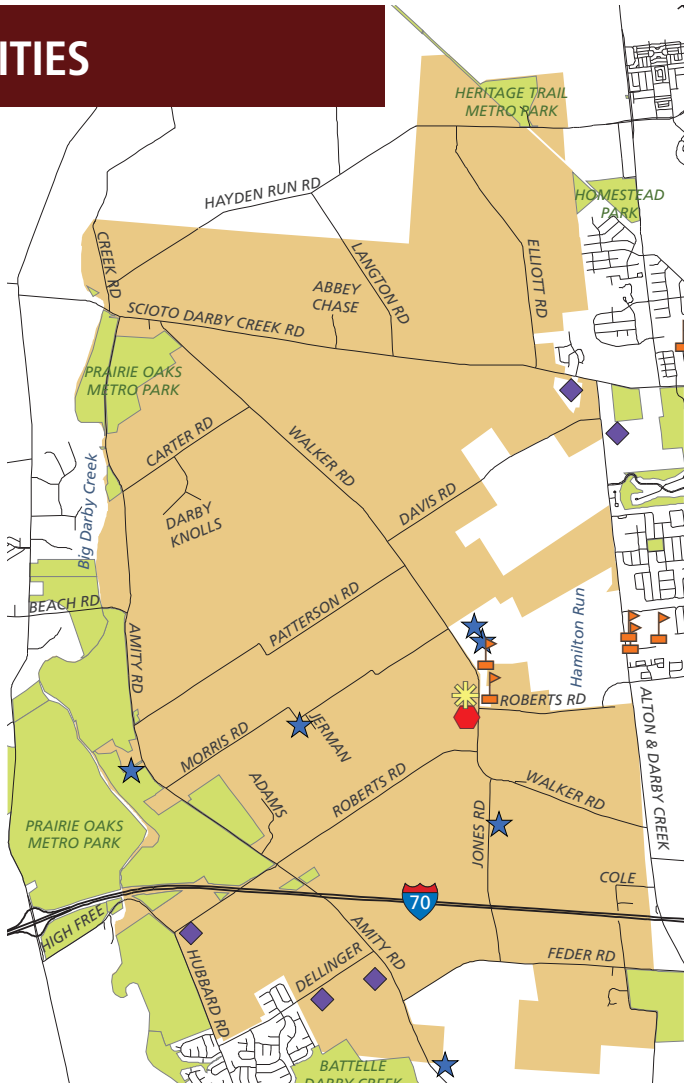
Existing development in the township uses household sewage treatment systems—primarily septic systems with leachfields or residential aeration systems. Two areas within the township have been identified by Franklin County Public Health as "areas of concern". These areas are potentially polluted due to 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 partially 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



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 completed a new dog park within the park at the end of 2012, which had 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 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 archaeological 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.
- 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

Archaeological Sites

The Ohio Historical Society has indicated four sites with archaeological 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 4

PUBLIC PROCESS

Following the review of Current Conditions data, the next step in creating an effective plan is to ensure it aligns with the community's desires for the future. This is achieved by conducting public meetings and other public outreach activities. The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan included three public meetings throughout the planning process with the goal of engaging members of the community to help guide the direction of the plan's recommendations.

In addition to the public meetings, we assembled a Working Committee that consisted of major stakeholders in the community – ranging from farmers to local government officials. The Working Committee assisted in the preparation and revision of documents and presentations for each public meeting.

The Brown Township community was very responsive and active throughout the planning process, providing feedback that helped the plan focus on critical issues in the community.

Public Process Overview, p. 42

This summary of the public engagement process details how, when and where public meetings occurred. It also details the importance and impacts of the public meetings.

Working Committee, p. 43

This section provides a brief look at who the working committee is and how their input helped guide the plan to successful completion.

Public Process Flowchart, p. 44

A visual summary of the public engagement process for the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan.

For detailed information about the public meeting results, see the separate Public Meeting Results documents.

PUBLIC PROCESS OVERVIEW

A successful plan requires public engagement to ensure it will be effective and desirable. To determine if the final Brown Township Comprehensive Plan reflects township resident's desires, we held three public meetings throughout the project.

Current Conditions and Vision

We held the first of three public meetings for the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan on December 11, 2012 at the Brown Township Hall. Over 100 residents, property owners, business representatives and other interested individuals attended the meeting. 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.

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. We used the results from the public meeting and the survey to establish the community's vision for the future. This vision provided the foundation for creating the plan's goals and actions.

Policy Recommendations

The second public meeting for the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan was held on June 25, 2013 at Hilliard Bradley High School. More than 100 people attended the meeting to provide input on the plan's draft goals and key policy recommendations. The project team provided an overview of the planning process and a summary of the input that they received at the first public meeting held in December 2012. The project team then presented the draft goals of the plan and key policy recommendations to achieve those goals.

Meeting attendees rated their level of support for the goals and recommendations and provided suggestions for improvements. In addition to providing feedback at the meeting, interested individuals could complete an online survey. A total of 102 feedback forms and online surveys were submitted. We used the results to revise the policy recommendations and set the direction for the draft plan.

Draft Plan Open House

The final public meeting will be held on November 12, 2013 at Hilliard Bradley High School.

THE WORKING COMMITTEE

The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan Working Committee was comprised of 12 community members. They were chosen by the Township Trustees to reflect and represent the township. Members included a farmer, a realtor, two school board members, current and former Trustees, a fire marshall, and several long-time residents.

Throughout the planning process, the Working Committee has been responsible for:

- Assisted the department with fieldwork to assess and document the features of the planning area
- Attended separate meetings specifically for the working committee
- Reviewed and critiqued all materials prepared during the planning process
- Conducted community outreach to encourage public participation
- Reviewed the draft plan
- Assisted the planning department with presentations during the adoption phase

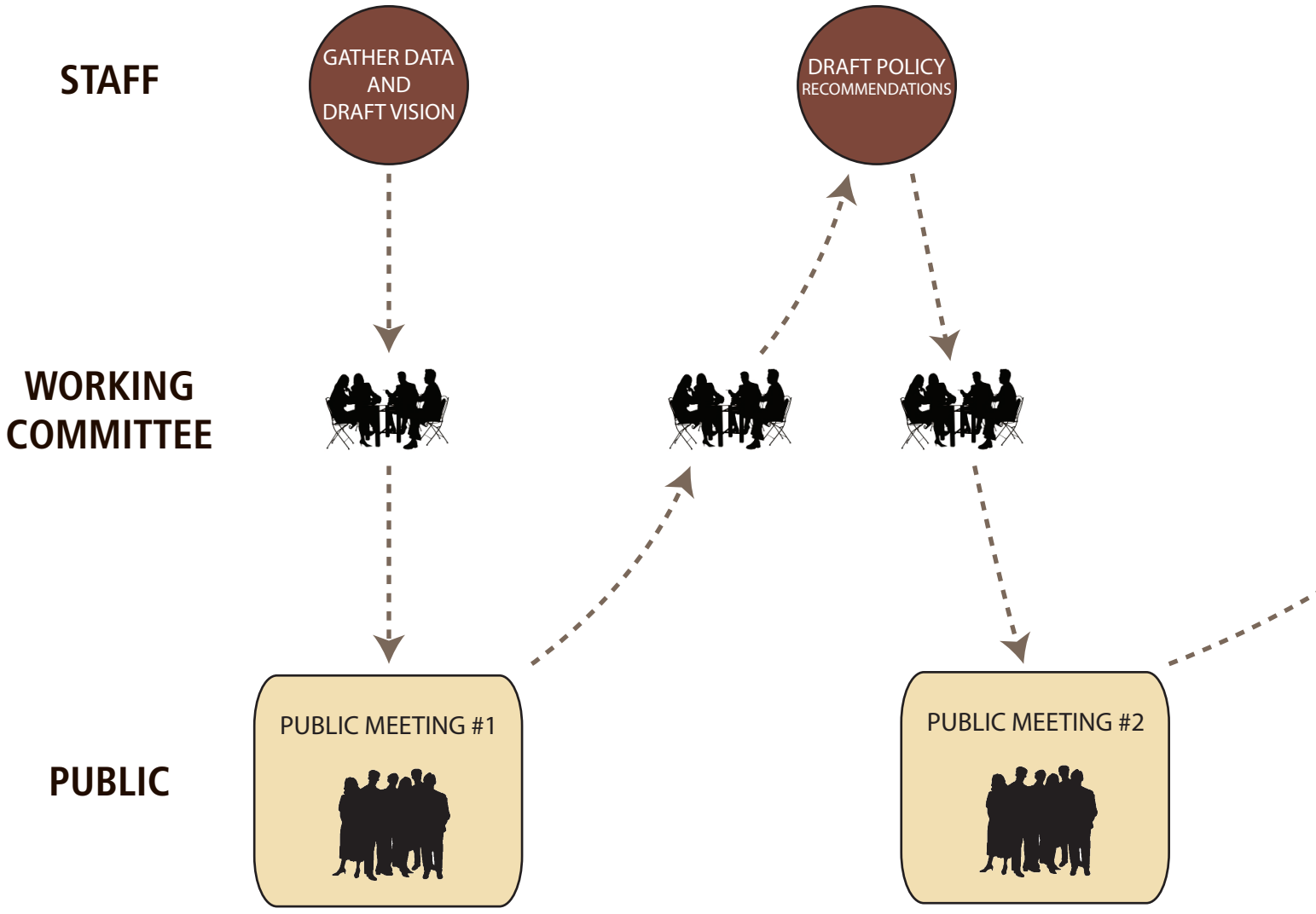
The Working Committee reviewed all documents and presentations that were produced throughout the planning process to verify they accurately reflected the community's desires. Their guidance refined planning documents and presentations prior to the public meetings. Additionally, their presence at the public meeting established a working relationship between the planning team and the community by having local residents closely involved in the planning process.

In addition to assisting with document revisions, the Working Committee also attended a special educational meeting about specific policy recommendations hosted by experts in related fields. This enabled the Working Committee to make informed decisions about the recommendations.

The Working Committee's guidance helped direct the planning process throughout the course of the project. Their assistance ensured the plan's success and encouraged public participation and support.

For a full list of Working Committee members, see the Acknowledgments on page 85.

PUBLIC PROCESS FLOWCHART

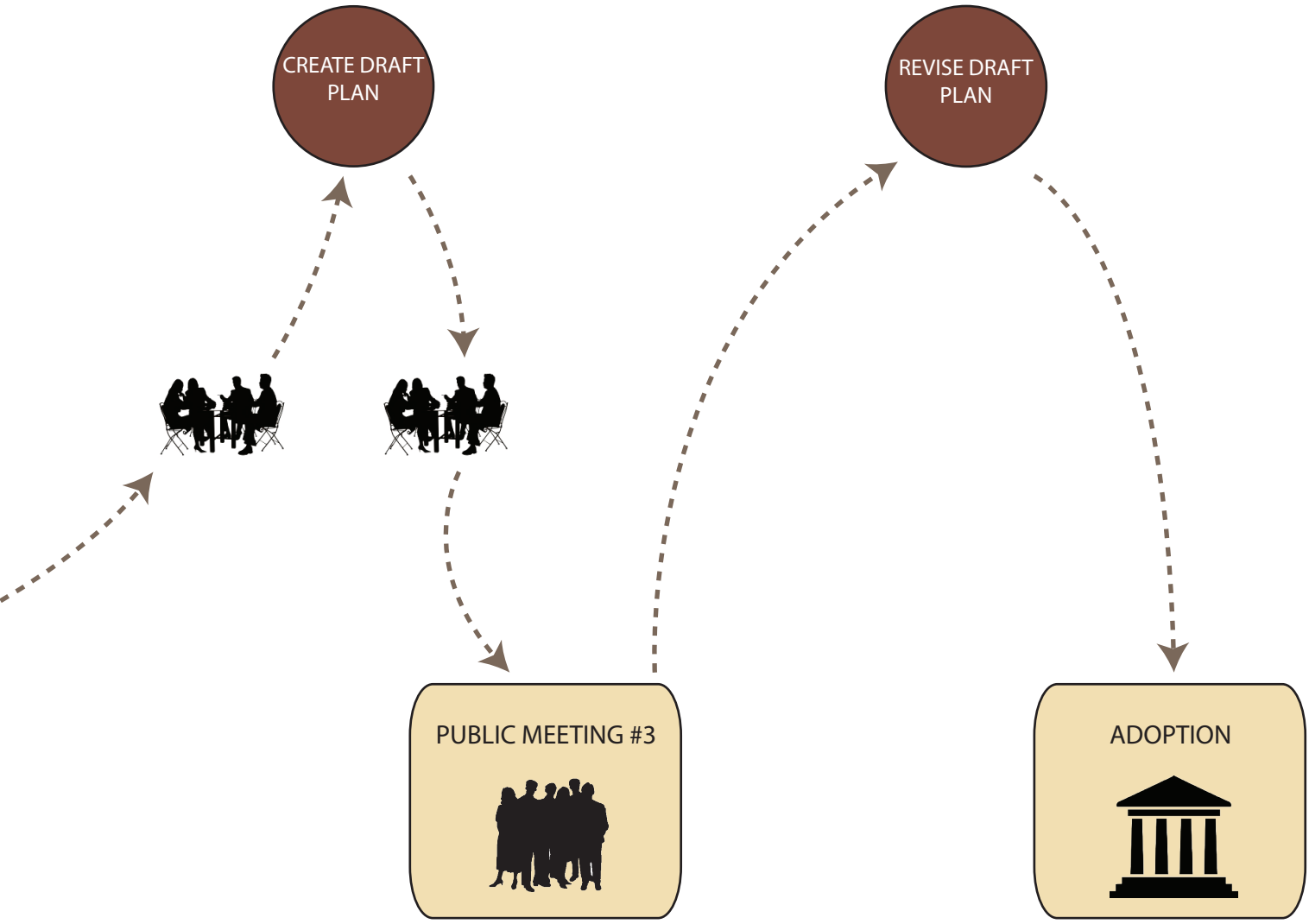


PHASE ONE

We gather information to assess the current state of affairs. Data is collected from published and personal sources such as the census, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders. Based on this information, we develop a draft vision. A vision is an ideal future state for the community.

PHASE TWO

Based on the community vision we worked with the Working Committee to develop draft policies. Policies are the specific actions we take to achieve our vision. The policies are a direct result of the vision, which was developed by consensus from public input.



PHASE THREE

Information gathered and developed during the first two phases were combined to form a draft plan. The plan explains the current state of affairs, lays out the vision, and describes the policies to achieve that vision. The plan takes everyone's input and sets forth a method to achieve the community's desired future.

ADOPTION

The final Brown Township Comprehensive Plan is reviewed by the Brown Township Board of Trustees prior to adoption. After approval by the Trustees, the Plan is submitted for adoption by the Franklin County Commissioners.

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SECTION 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations section includes:

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

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

How they are used: Community members can use the recommendations to improve their neighborhoods. 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. 49

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

Community, p. 65

Recommendations under *Community* 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. 69

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.

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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

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 Area shown on the Future Land Use map on page 59 to reflect this recommended minimum property size. Revising zoning requirements will allow conservation development to occur at existing rural densities. More about conservation development on page 53.

ABOUT THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION AREA

The Farmland Preservation Area 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 experiences high development pressure. 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 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 area 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 51, Action 2 and Action 3)
- Revising zoning regulations to allow agricultural support businesses (page 67, 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.

State law currently does not specifically allow the transfer of development rights. Brown Township and Franklin County support state enabling legislation to make this tool available to counties and townships.

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 Area, shown on the Future Land Use map on page 59, 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. The development rights could then be transferred to appropriate "receiving zone" areas such as the Hilliard Growth Area and Big Darby Town Center Area.

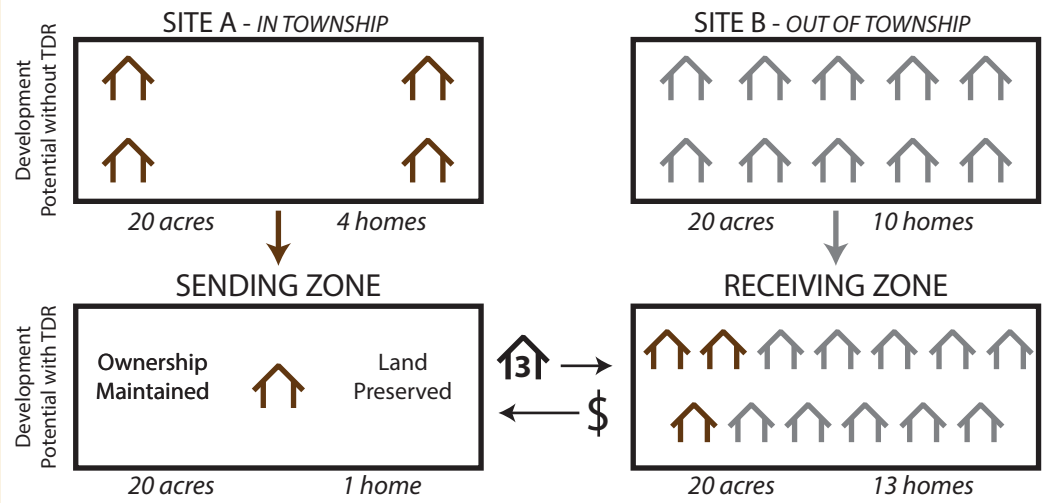
ABOUT TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

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 land owners 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 page 58.

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 53. 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)*

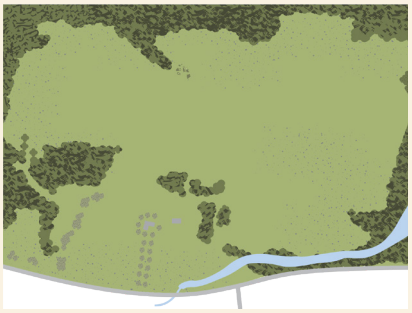
A site prior to development may contain large amounts of farmland and environmentally sensitive features. These areas can provide land for food production, wildlife and aquatic species habitats, and open space.

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, non-agricultural 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 55. 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

Inadequate 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 62 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

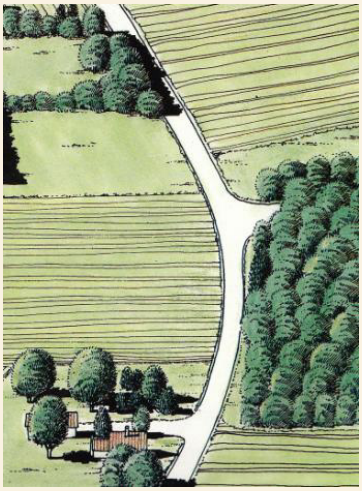
Even in rural areas, the need exists for community-serving amenities, resources and retail – particularly as the population grows. These rural commercial centers should be designed to respect, reflect and enhance rural character. In order to achieve this, the following design guidelines are recommended.

- 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.

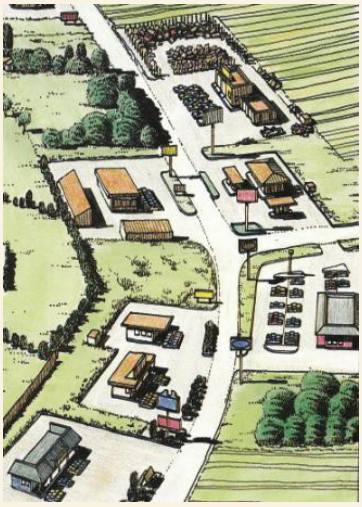
Franklin County's existing commercial zoning districts would not produce this type of development. To ensure commercial development follows these recommendations, any commercial rezonings should be to a planned district.

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.

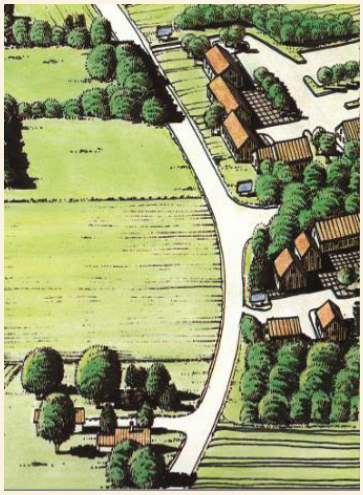
The three images at right show a typical rural road before development, after conventional strip development and planned with the recommended design guidelines. The same amount of floor space is depicted in both development scenarios, but considerable land is conserved and rural character is preserved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



Before development



Strip development (avoid)



Planned rural development (recommended)

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

Adopt a stormwater utility to fund drainage infrastructure improvements

A number of stormwater flooding issues exist in Brown Township. Specific problem areas include Carter, Davis, Langton, Morris, Patterson and Walker Roads, as well as the Franklin County Drainage Engineer's petition ditches. Additional funding is needed to complete the maintenance and improvements needed to address these issues.

The Drainage Engineer convened a stormwater advisory committee and contracted with a local consultant to study stormwater maintenance needs in unincorporated Franklin County. The study included a review of possible funding mechanisms and found that a stormwater utility fee is the most practical method to meet stormwater infrastructure needs in unincorporated Franklin County.

Action 15

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 16

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 17

Inform land owners 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 land owners. Eligible properties can enroll in these programs and land owners 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.

LAND USE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

Conservation Development: Rural Density
Allowed land uses: Single-family homes
Density: Maximum of 0.2 units per acre
Permitted in the Farmland Preservation Area

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 at neighborhood-scale and offices.

Farmland Preservation Area

Intended for agricultural production with limited development and agricultural support businesses

Parks/Open Space

Intended for nature or recreation with minimal buildings

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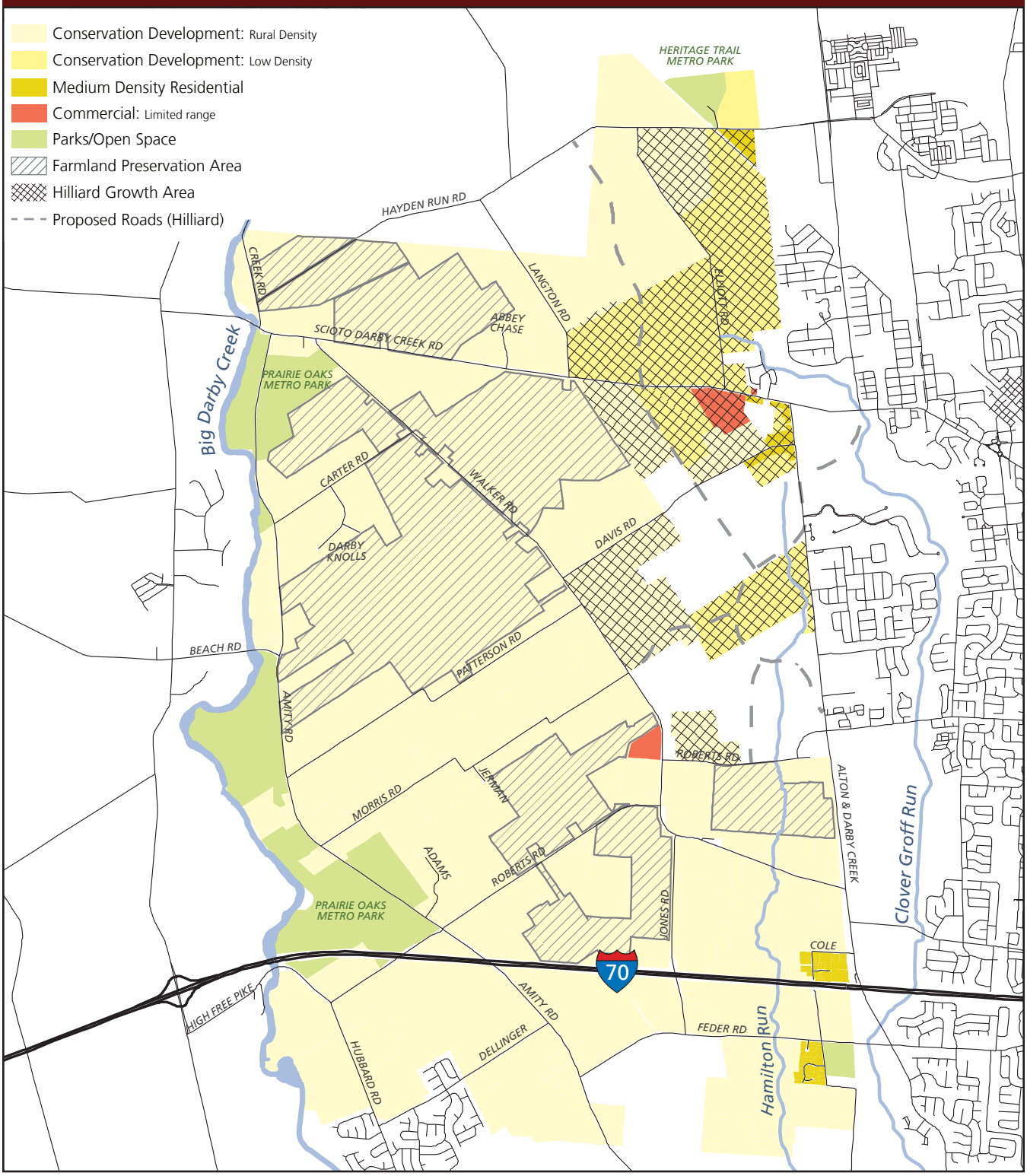
FUTURE LAND USE



CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS

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

● Indicates appropriate zoning districts for each 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 Future Land Use categories are matched to existing zoning districts in the corresponding zoning district table.

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.

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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

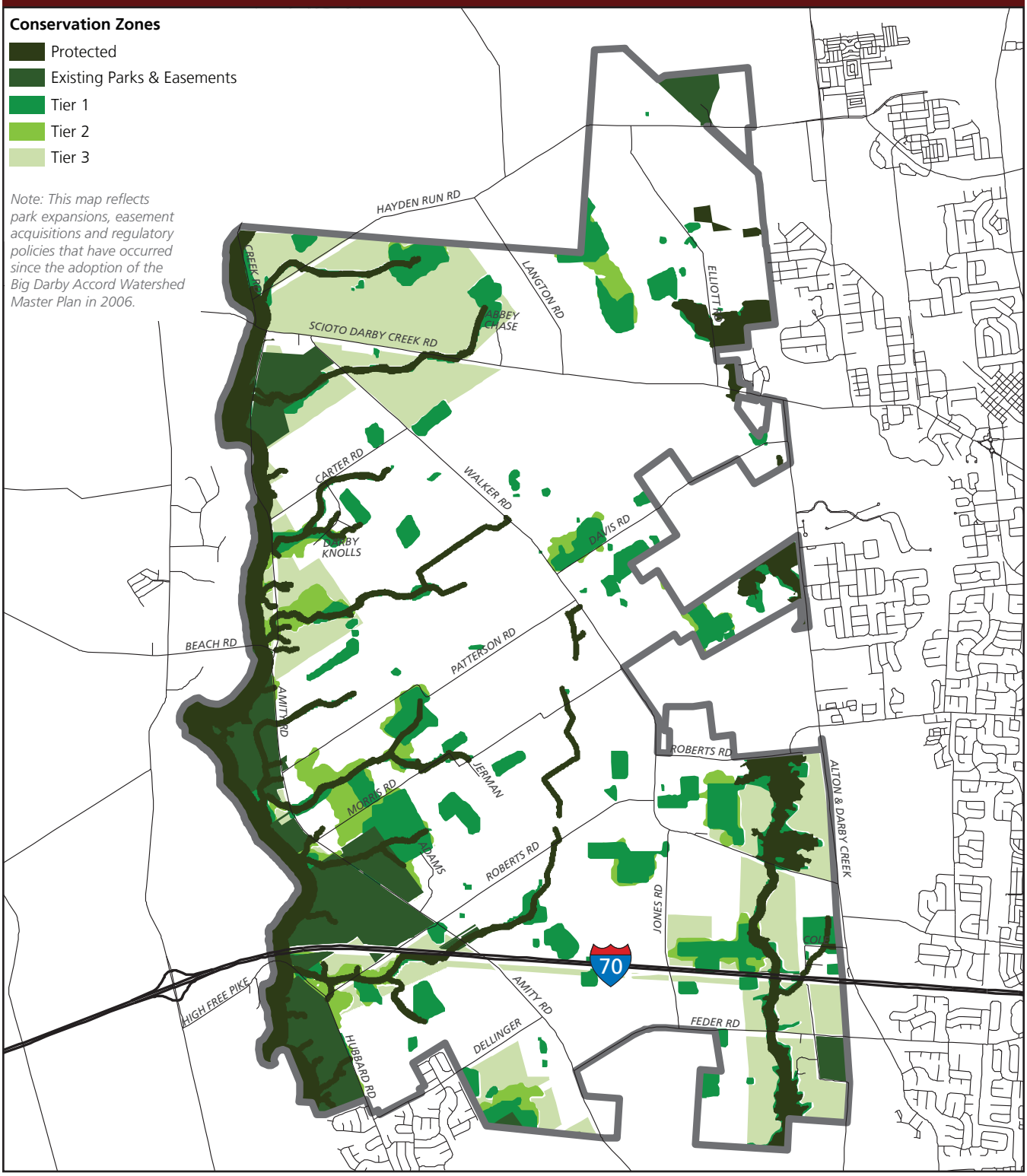
These areas should be conserved through permanent conservation easements, conservation development subdivisions and other suitable mechanisms.

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



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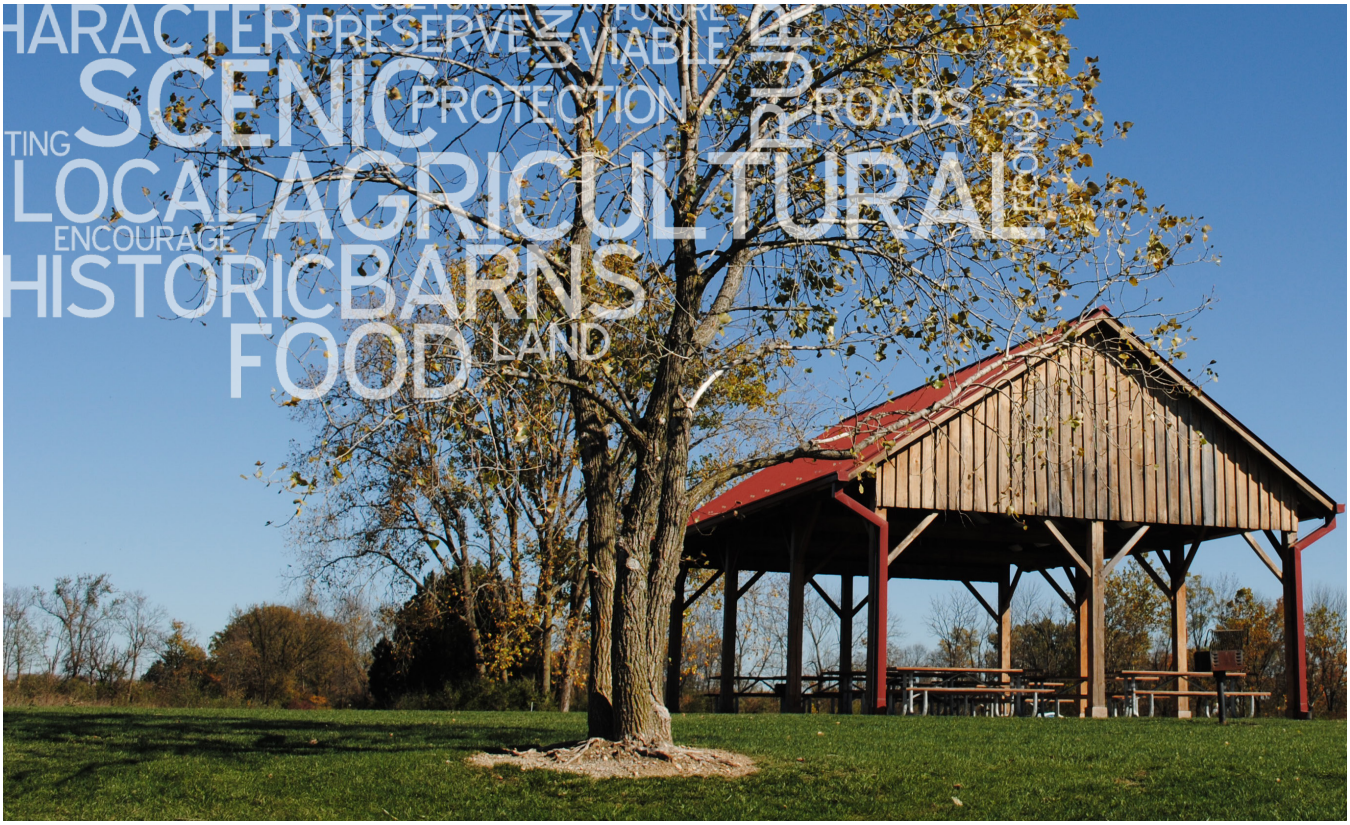
COMMUNITY



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

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. For a list of historical sites in Brown Township, see Historic Sites on page 40.

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 Area 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 farm markets, bed & breakfasts 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 Area 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 Area.

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

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

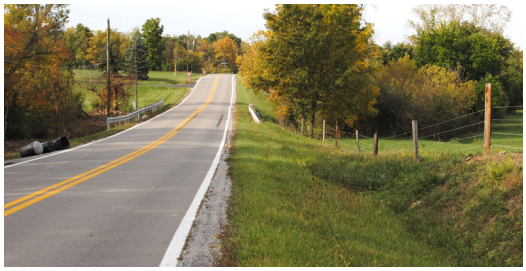
Crash data shows crashes along several Brown Township roads. The data is supported by resident reports of excessive speed and unsafe conditions. Safety improvements should be sensitive to the rural context and could include "curve ahead" warning signs, speed limit reductions and low-cost traffic calming 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.

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SECTION 6

IMPLEMENTATION

How will the actions outlined in the previous section be accomplished? The implementation section contains recommendations to ensure the plan is carried out. This section:

- Assigns responsibilities for carrying out each action
- Designates priorities for implementation
- Establishes clear lines of communication among community stakeholders
- Lays out a predictable review process to ensure new development follows the plan

These items will ensure actions are completed to achieve the community's agreed-upon vision.

Implementation Tables, p. 77

Here, we identify the organizations best suited to carry out action recommendations. The tables are an easy way to see the main parties involved in the actions. Other organizations not listed may be able to help complete the actions.

New Development Checklist, p. 83

This checklist will ensure that new development proposals comply with the plan's recommendations listed under *Section 5: Recommendations* on page 47.

Once a developer completes the checklist, officials with decision-making responsibilities make sure development proposals follow the community's wishes as described in the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan.

COMMUNITY PLAN SUCCESS

Successful implementation of the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan's recommendations is essential in achieving the community's shared vision. This will be made possible by:

1. Assigning responsibility
2. Establishing clear lines of communication
3. Being accountable
4. Updating the plan

Assign Responsibility

Responsible parties for each action item are listed in the implementation table. This table clearly identifies the specific government, non-profit and private sector entities responsible for implementing each action.

Development proposals should be reviewed for consistency with the plan's recommendations. The new development checklist helps ensure that a proposed development is in line with the plan's recommendations. It should be used by:

- Applicants for a rezoning or variance
- Agencies and stakeholders for development review
- Franklin County Economic Development and Planning staff during internal review of zoning and variance applications
- Franklin County and Brown Township offices as community facilities and infrastructure investments are made

Public involvement is key to successful plan implementation

Communication

Clear lines of communication between Franklin County, Brown Township and community residents is essential for the successful implementation of the plan's recommendations. This can be achieved by:

- Designating a township official for transmittal of development and zoning-related information
- Designating a Franklin County staff member to be responsible for monitoring and implementing the plan
- Establishing a community plan implementation committee to take responsibility for plan implementation

Accountability

In order to track the progress of the plan's implementation, each year a staff member from the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department should prepare a brief report to be presented to the Brown Township Board of Trustees. This report should list the year's development proposals and their conformance with the plan. It should also track progress on implementation of the plan's proactive recommendations.

Plan Updates

The Brown Township Comprehensive Plan will guide development for the next 10 to 20 years. It should be revisited in 4 to 5 years and amended as applicable to ensure that the document continues to represent the vision of township residents. Minor updates of the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan may be completed as necessary.

Request to Surrounding Jurisdictions

This plan is a collection of residents' recommendations for the future of Brown Township. Should parts of the planning area be annexed, residents request that recommendations of this plan be followed. Please follow this request until your community has completed a public planning process for the annexed area.

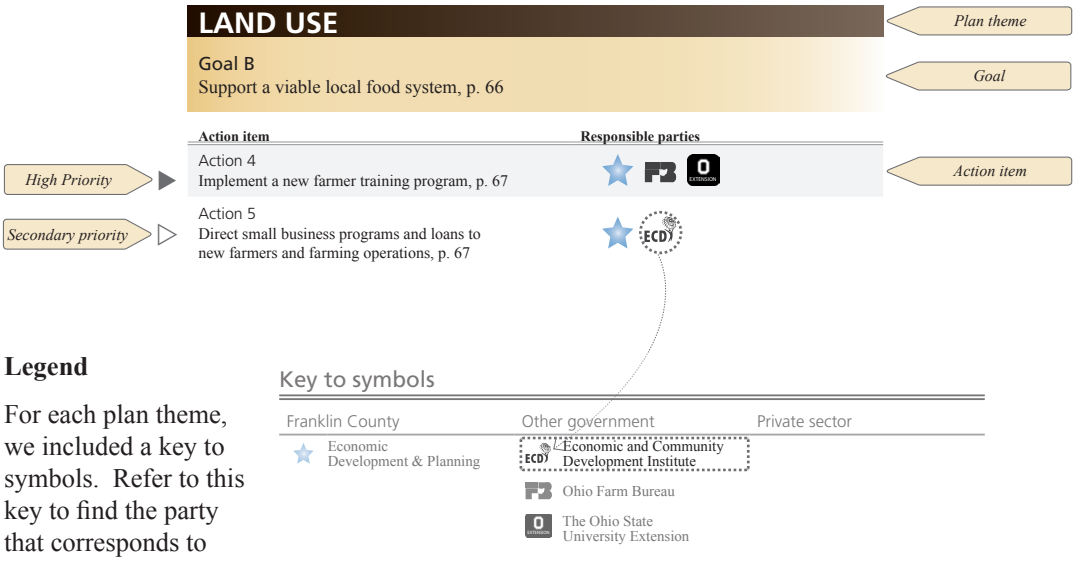
IMPLEMENTATION TABLES

This section explains who is responsible for completing the action items listed in this plan. Community improvement depends on a network of relationships among government agencies, non-profits and the private sector. Accordingly, we attempt to identify the parties best positioned to complete the action items.

How to use this section

We organized the action items by plan theme. Under each theme, you will find the action items from the Plan Themes section—in the same order they appear in that section. To the right of each action item we list the responsible parties: the organizations in the public, non-profit and private sectors who are best able to complete the action item.

By listing the parties we don't intend to be exclusive; other organizations are encouraged to help.



Legend

For each plan theme, we included a key to symbols. Refer to this key to find the party that corresponds to each symbol.

LAND USE

Goal A
Preserve farmland, p. 50

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 1 Revise zoning regulations to maintain and encourage farming, p. 50	B
Action 2 Support changes to land use laws to allow the transfer of development rights, p. 51	morpc, CCAO, OTA
Action 3 Implement a transfer of development rights program, p. 51	B
Action 4 Inform land owners about Ohio Department of Agriculture farmland preservation programs, p. 52	ODA, FB

Goal B
Maintain rural residential character, p. 52

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 5 Follow the Future Land Use Map, p. 52	
Action 6 Revise subdivision regulations to reduce conflicts between new residents and farmers, p. 52	
Action 7 Adopt conservation development regulations to preserve rural character and environmental resources, p. 52	B, BIA
Action 8 Develop lighting standards to prevent light pollution in rural areas, p. 53	
Action 9 Discourage any new interchanges along Interstate 70 in Brown Township, p. 53	B

Goal C
Ensure commercial development preserves rural character, p. 54

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 10 Limit commercial development to areas designated on Future Land Use Map, p. 54	B
Action 11 Apply design guidelines for rural commercial centers, p. 54	B

Goal D
Protect the natural environment, p. 54

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 12 Follow the Conservation Strategy Map, p. 54	B
Action 13 Facilitate the use of alternative wastewater treatment systems for conservation developments, p. 56	B
Action 14 Adopt a stormwater utility to fund drainage infrastructure improvements, p. 56	B
Action 15 Encourage the use of Low Impact Development techniques to manage stormwater, p. 56	B
Action 16 Continue stream restoration efforts along Hamilton Run, p. 56	B
Action 17 Inform land owners about conservation programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency, p. 57	USDA

Key to symbols

Franklin County
- Economic Development & Planning
- Engineer's Office
- Soil and Water Conservation District
- Sanitary Engineer
- Public Health

Other government
- Brown Township
- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Ohio Department of Agriculture
- Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
- United States Department of Agriculture
- County Commissioners Association of Ohio
- Ohio Township Association

Non-profit sector
- Farm Bureau
- Building Industry Association of Central Ohio

Private sector
- Private property owners

COMMUNITY

Goal A
Promote the township's unique characteristics, p. 66

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 1 Seek scenic byway designation, p. 66	B
Action 2 Highlight and protect historic and cultural resources, p. 66	B
Action 3 Encourage agricultural barn preservation, p. 66	

Goal B
Support a viable local food system, p. 66

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 4 Implement a new farmer training program, p. 67	FB, OSU EXTENSION
Action 5 Direct small business programs and loans to new farmers and farming operations, p. 67	ECD
Action 6 Provide information to connect producers and consumers of local food, p. 67	ODA, morpc
Action 7 Revise zoning regulations to allow agricultural support businesses, p. 67	FB
Action 8 Facilitate the development of agricultural support businesses, p. 67	FB, ECD, OSU EXTENSION
Action 9 Inform farmers of the economic benefits and markets available for specialty crops, p. 67	ODA, morpc, FB
Action 10 Create incentives for farmers to convert to specialty crops, p. 68	ODA, ECD

Goal C
Encourage cooperative and complementary development in the Hilliard Growth Area, p. 68

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 11 Adopt a Non-Annexation Agreement with the city of Hilliard, p. 68	

Key to symbols

Franklin County	Other government	Non-profit sector	Private sector
Economic Development & Planning	Brown Township	Farm Bureau	Private property owners
	City of Hilliard	Economic and Community Development Institute	
	City of Columbus	The Ohio State University Extension	
	Ohio Department of Agriculture	Ohio Historical Society	
	Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission		

TRANSPORTATION

Goal A
Improve the safety of the road network, p. 70

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 1 Encourage safety improvements on high-crash roads, p. 70	★ ★ B morpc
Action 2 Encourage safety improvements at high-crash intersections, p. 70	★ ★ B morpc

Goal B
Ensure that roadways reinforce the rural character of the township, p. 70

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 3 Adopt rural road design guidelines for township roads, p. 70	★ ★ B
Action 4 Design roads with resident input, p. 70	★ ★ B

Goal C
Create a roadway network that allows for orderly development and traffic management, p. 71

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 5 Update the Franklin County Thoroughfare Plan, p. 72	★ ★ morpc
Action 6 Discourage proposed Hilliard road alignment with Morris Road, p. 72	★ ★ B HILLIARD

Goal D
Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility, p. 72

Action item	Responsible parties
Action 7 Complete a Safe Routes to School Travel Plan, p. 72	★ ★ B
Action 8 Require new development to provide and reserve bikeway connections, p. 73	★ ★

Key to symbols

Franklin County	Other government	Non-profit sector	Private sector
★ Economic Development & Planning	B Brown Township		
★ Engineer's Office	HILLIARD City of Hilliard		
	morpc Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission		

NEW DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

BROWN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PURPOSE

This checklist helps developers and property owners comply with the plan. A completed checklist also informs appointed board members and planning staff whether a proposal complies with the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan.

DIRECTIONS

1. Fill out the first section for all new developments
2. Fill out the commercial development section if applicable
3. Fill out the Project Information box and return this checklist to us with your development application

ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT:				
	Yes	No	n/a	Notes
Matches Future Land Use Map	◯	◯	◯	
Follows Conservation Strategy Map	◯	◯	◯	
Preserves historic structures and agricultural barns	◯	◯	◯	
Is set back from environmentally sensitive areas	◯	◯	◯	
Uses stormwater best management practices	◯	◯	◯	
Provides sufficient rights-of-way for bikeways	◯	◯	◯	
Provides connections to existing bikeways	◯	◯	◯	
Reserves connections for future bikeway links	◯	◯	◯	

NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:	Yes	No	n/a	Notes
Is clustered to protect open space/environmental features	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Is set back from scenic corridors	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Uses site design techniques to preserve rural character	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Provides a buffer to existing agricultural uses	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Includes plat notes about nearby agricultural uses	⬭	⬭	⬭	

NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT:	Yes	No	n/a	Notes
Conforms to the Rural Commercial Design Guidelines	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Accommodates pedestrians	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Accommodates bicyclists	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Provides appropriate buffering, setbacks or screening from adjacent residential uses	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Limits and mitigates floodplain development	⬭	⬭	⬭	
Includes attractive façades and signage	⬭	⬭	⬭	

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Case No.	
Project name	
Address	
Phone	Fax
Email address	
Checklist completed by:	
Signature	

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*

The project team also thanks the community members who attended our public input meetings

Produced by:

Franklin County
Where Government Works

Economic Development and Planning Department
150 South Front Street
FSL Suite 10
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Tel. 614-525-3094
Fax 614-525-7155
www.franklincountyohio.gov/edp