

Big Darby Accord Update

September 7, 2007

Central Ohio's partners moving forward with the Big Darby Accord

The Big Darby Accord is a historic and comprehensive plan to preserve the ecology of the Big Darby Watershed while providing direction for responsible, managed growth. The Accord was completed in June 2006, through an unprecedented partnership among ten jurisdictions in the Big Darby Watershed, who debated the best possible ways to ensure long-term environmental stewardship, while allowing economic and neighborhood growth that respected property owners rights.

The Big and Little Darby Creeks are classified as state and national scenic rivers in recognition of their natural beauty and high-quality plant and animal habitats. Despite widespread recognition of environmental sensitivity, advancing urban development threatens the plant and animal life in the watershed.

The Accord partners are:

- The cities of Columbus, Grove City and Hilliard
- The townships of Brown, Prairie, Pleasant, Norwich and Washington
- The village of Harrisburg
- Franklin County

The Accord lays out a comprehensive strategy to ensure that environmental protection goals are achieved. The plan:

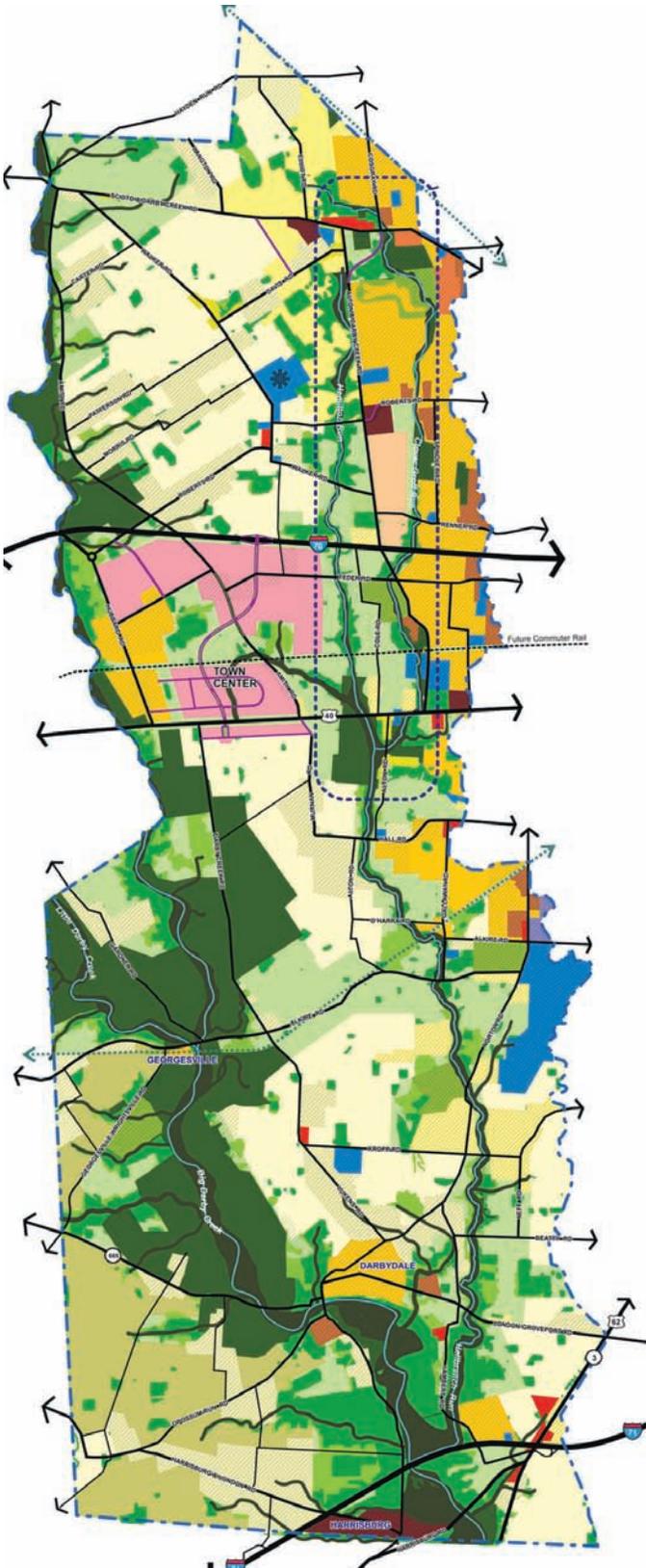
- Identifies and prioritizes environmentally sensitive areas
- Directs new development to a high density, mixed-use town center to manage growth responsibly
- Requires new development to pay for itself; current residents should not pay for new infrastructure
- Directs the Accord partners to take specific steps to ensure the plan is fully implemented

Making Progress

Moving Forward Together

The cornerstone of the Accord is collaboration among the jurisdictions within the Franklin County portion of the watershed and its success depends on continued commitment of the partners to work together to implement the plan. Since the plan was completed in 2006, six of the ten member jurisdictions have adopted the plan, representing 95% of the land within the planning area. Adoption is an important step because it signifies a governing body's commitment to the plan and its recommendations. The Accord partners hold monthly meetings to communicate,

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coordinate and advance the Accord's recommendations. Members that adopted the plan include: Brown Township, City of Columbus, Franklin County, Pleasant Township, Prairie Township and Washington Township.

Reviewing New Developments

To ensure that each of the partner jurisdictions can review development projects in a fair and consistent manner, an advisory panel was a key action item identified by the Accord. This was implemented in May with the creation of the Big Darby Accord Panel, which engages representation from all of the jurisdictions who have adopted the plan, plus an at-large member. Panel members attended two training sessions and considered the first development application in June. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm at Franklin County Memorial Hall, 280 E. Broad Street.

Advisory Panel Members:

- Anthony Sasson, The Nature Conservancy
- John Tetzloff, Darby Creek Association
- Lavea Brachman, Greater Ohio
- Steve Gladman, The Affordable Housing Trust
- Keith Goldhardt, Pleasant Township Trustee
- Dr. Steve Gordon, Ohio State University
- Joe Martin, Martin Control Systems
- Jeff Sharon, Brown and Caldwell
- Bruce Whyte, Retired Hilliard Schoolteacher

Ensuring Consistency in Legislation, Regulation and Operations

Since completion of the Accord, partner jurisdictions have been working to update their local codes and regulations to ensure consistency with the plan's recommendations. Franklin County (on behalf of Brown and Pleasant Townships) and Prairie Township are working together to establish stream setback regulations outlined by the Accord and the City of Columbus is preparing a zoning overlay to address conservation development, stream setbacks and open space requirements. This collaboration among jurisdictions is a direct result of the Accord planning process and the updated regulations will go a long way to protect

the health and habitat of the watershed.

Planning for a New Town Center

Balancing growth with responsible stewardship of the land is a primary goal of the Accord, and one way to accomplish this goal is to encourage higher density development of a mixed-use town center further away from environmentally sensitive areas. The Accord establishes a location for the town center and recommends that the jurisdictions jointly pursue a detailed master planning process. The master plan will address key issues related to land use, infrastructure, transportation, stormwater, open space, market analysis and urban design. Opportunities exist for the public to be involved in the planning process, from the first steps through to the final plan. Focus groups and public open houses have been held to get input on the types of issues that the plan must address and a committee of stakeholders, citizens and other interested parties is being formed to help write a request for proposals and select a consultant team. A consultant team to guide the planning process is expected to be hired in early 2008.

Paying the Way

The Accord's partner jurisdictions are committed to finding innovative ways to raise revenue and fund improvements so current residents do not bear the costs of new infrastructure. The Accord partners are exploring the revenue generating tools identified in the Accord in more detail, including efforts to revisit and refine revenue projections. This is a critical issue that must be agreed to by all of the jurisdictions. Towards this end, the Accord partners are working collectively with outside legal counsel to address outstanding issues and



create the legal framework to establish revenue streams. Once established these sources can be used to fund important activities such as land acquisition and watershed-wide water quality monitoring.

Keeping the Public Informed

The Big Darby watershed has a long history of active community involvement. The Accord supports these efforts and the partners are using technology to foster open communication. The website that was used during the planning process has been enhanced to be a one-stop source for all Accord news and information. The site has been reorganized for simpler navigation and an easy-to-remember web address - www.bigdarbyaccord.org - has been secured.

Staying Involved

Protection of the Big Darby watershed depends on the efforts and participation of local governments, citizens and partners. You can stay involved in the following ways:

- ➔ Visit www.bigdarbyaccord.org to keep informed of the latest Big Darby Accord news
- ➔ Attend a Big Darby Accord Advisory Panel meeting. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at Franklin County Memorial Hall, 280 E. Broad Street. You can find complete Panel information including agendas, past cases and upcoming case information at www.bigdarbyaccord.org
- ➔ Help with the Town Center Master Plan. There will be opportunities for public participation throughout the planning process beginning this autumn.

Big Darby Accord contact information:

Columbus	614-645-8036
Hilliard	614-876-7361
Grove City	614-277-3000
Brown Township	614-876-2133
Norwich Township	614-876-7694
Pleasant Township	614-877-3511
Prairie Township	614-878-3317
Washington Township	614-652-3920
Village of Harrisburg	614-877-4053
Franklin County	614-462-3094