



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

DRAFT 9/28/09

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Blendon Community Plan

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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.

About this document



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

The planning process involves analyzing the area's current conditions, creating a vision for the future and developing ways to achieve that future.

About the Blendon Community Plan

The Blendon Community Plan focuses on unincorporated areas of Blendon Township. The planning process is divided into four phases: information gathering, creating a vision, developing policies and assembling the plan.

Planning Area Boundaries

The planning area is located in northeastern Franklin County approximately 11 miles from downtown Columbus. The planning area's boundaries are roughly bounded by:

- North: County Line Road
- East: Hamilton Road/Schott Road
- South: Morse Road
- West: Cleveland Avenue

The unincorporated area is approximately 5 square miles or 3,200 acres.

Policy Recommendations

This document contains the proposed policy recommendations, which are the ways to achieve the community's vision for the future.

The policy recommendations are the bridge between the community's present state and its desired future. The recommendations are a direct result of the community vision, which was prepared using information gathered from stakeholder interviews and public input meetings held on July 13 and September 14, 2009.

Next steps

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

Once the community endorses the policies, the project team compiles the current conditions, vision and policies, which constitutes the draft Blendon Community Plan.

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Land Use

Recommendations



Vision

Land uses that support and respect current areas, maintaining quiet neighborhoods and supporting vibrant mixed-use areas.

Commercial development that is attractive and economically sustainable.

Nurture a sense of place in neighborhoods and along commercial corridors.

Achieve this vision by:

- Keeping neighborhoods exclusively residential
- Adopting the Smart Growth Overlay for mixed-use corridors
- Implementing the Westerville Road Streetscape Improvement plan
- Installing gateway and wayfinding signage

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Nonresidential uses should not be permitted within residential neighborhoods

Large building setbacks along rural roadways preserve rural character



Goal A

Maintain residential character of existing neighborhoods

Huber Ridge, Sunbury Woods and Cleveland Heights are exclusively residential neighborhoods with a variety of housing types.

Action 1

Allow only residential land uses in the existing neighborhoods

The future land use map recommends medium density residential uses for Huber Ridge, Sunbury Woods and Cleveland Heights. Nonresidential development proposals should only be approved outside the residential zones. This includes more-intense home occupations currently available with a conditional use permit. The county should pursue an amendment to the zoning resolution to allow only permitted home occupations in these neighborhoods.

Action 2

Adopt the conservation development regulations in areas of Cleveland Heights as identified on the future land use map

A large part of Cleveland Heights is undeveloped. The most heavily wooded areas are subject to the conservation development overlay. This requires development to be arranged in a way that preserves natural resources and ensures efficient and responsible use of land.



Goal B

Maintain the rural character of the area east of Big Walnut Creek

The area east of Big Walnut Creek is characterized by low density housing, farmland, old growth forests, and scenic waterways.

Action 3

Build away from environmentally sensitive features

Development should preserve and showcase natural features such as ponds, wetlands, trees, and topography. Using natural features in a development helps maintain rural character.

Action 4

Setback new development from rural corridors

Future development should respect the setback of existing homes to preserve scenic vistas and minimize visual impact to travelers.

Action 5

Encourage residential shared-access points

Future development should limit the number of residential access points. This makes it safer for motorists and bicyclists while also preserving rural character.

Action 6

Design residential lot splits so that lots and structures are clustered

Lot splits should strive for rural preservation. Arrange new lot splits in a clustered way to preserve environmental features and scenic vistas.

Action 7**Require new development to provide rights-of-way to accommodate trails as designated on the Bikeways Plan Map**

New development along bicycle corridors should dedicate rights-of-way for bikeways in addition to requirements of the Franklin County Thoroughfare Plan. These rights-of-way should be a minimum of 20 feet to accommodate future shared-use paths along the roads.

**Goal C****Ensure that development has little impact on the environment**

New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas and have minimal impact on the environment.

Action 8**Build away from environmentally sensitive features**

Development should preserve and showcase natural features such as ponds, wetlands, trees, and topography. Using natural features in a development maintains rural character and protects the environment.

Action 9**Adopt regulations that require the use of stormwater best management practices**

Rain gardens, bioswales, pervious surfaces and other techniques are used to control stormwater runoff and stabilize soil to prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Action 10**Adopt regulations creating a stream buffer zone along Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and their tributaries**

The stream buffer is an environmentally sensitive area that includes waterways, the 100-year floodplain and steep slopes. Prohibited uses within the buffer include construction, parking lots, dredging and filling. Permissible uses include passive and active recreation such as trails.

Development that respects the natural environment

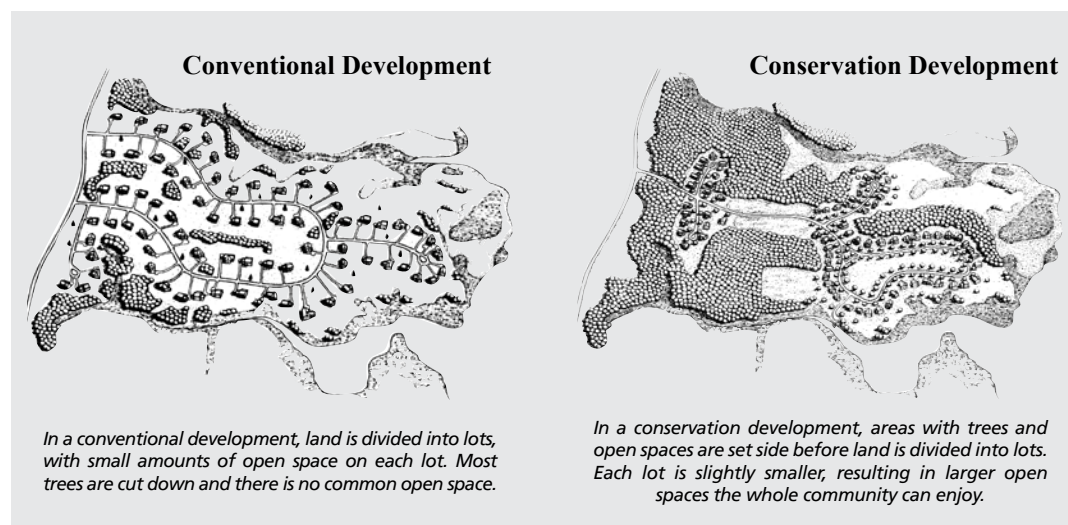


Figure 1
Benefits of Conservation-style development

Action 11

Require dedication along Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and Spring Run for public use

For new development along waterways, an easement should be dedicated for public use such as trails or open space.

Action 12

Adopt the conservation development regulations in areas designated on the Future Land Use map

Conservation development protects farmland and/or natural resources. Development is arranged in a way that preserves land and natural resources.

Action 13

Encourage density bonuses for extraordinary conservation in cluster-style development projects in the Conservation district east of Big Walnut Creek

Developers who exhibit extraordinary effort in preserving environmental features should be awarded with an increase in development density.



Well-designed commercial development attracts customers and helps strengthen the business environment

Goal D

Encourage attractive and economically sustainable commercial development

New commercial development should be built to high standards to attract and retain business and investment providing a strong tax base for Blendon Township.

Action 14

Adopt the Smart Growth Overlay for mixed-use commercial corridors.

The Smart Growth Overlay encourages pedestrian-oriented design through reduced building setbacks, parking to the rear or side, and higher building standards. It should be adopted along the following corridors: Westerville Road, Cleveland Avenue, Morse Road, Sunbury Road, and Executive Parkway.

Action 15

Implement recommendations of the Westerville Road Streetscape improvement plan

The Westerville Road Streetscape improvement plan was created by the Neighborhood Design Center with input from township residents. The plan makes design recommendations for streetscape improvements and township identity.

Franklin County and Blendon Township should work closely with ODOT and MORPC and seek funding sources to implement recommendations of the plan.

Action 16

Conduct a market analysis of the Westerville Road corridor

Market studies identify realistic business and real estate development opportunities. A more thorough understanding of the corridor will help in implementing the Westerville Road Streetscape Improvement plan and future redevelopment of the area.

Action 17

Establish regulations limiting no more than 1 auto-related business per every XXX yards

The Westerville Road and Cleveland Avenue corridors have a high number of unattractive auto-related businesses. Limiting auto-related businesses will draw more attractive and economically sustainable development.

Action 18**Provide matching grant funds for facade and landscaping improvements**

Improving a building's appearance by performing exterior facade improvements can attract more business. Providing matching grant funds for these improvements will help business owners finance these changes.

Action 19**Support small business development**

Franklin County administers several programs to help small businesses. Information should be provided on programs that support the growth of small businesses.

Action 20**Adopt regulations that require shared access points and cross access parking easements**

A road with many curb cuts is dangerous for pedestrians and inefficient for traffic. Shared access points and cross access parking easements consolidate and limit curb-cuts making a safer and well-functioning street.

Action 21**Require installation of sidewalks and bicycle parking for new development**

New office, commercial, industrial and multi-family residential developments should be required to install sidewalks and provide bicycle

Smart Growth Overlay

The *Smart Growth Overlay* is a set of design standards for building location, landscaping and parking that differs from the traditional suburban-style standards commonly found in zoning regulations. The overlay makes development more attractive and accessible to pedestrians and motorists alike. These improved standards will support the economically successful commercial corridors. Below is an outline of the *Smart Growth Overlay* design standards.

Building setbacks

- Approximate 24-foot consistent front building setback along main roads
- Maximum side-yard setbacks

Accessibility

- Sidewalks, 5 feet wide
- Bicycle parking
- Main building entrances face main roads
- Walkways from sidewalk to building entrance

Building design

- Buildings are oriented toward a main road

- Minimum building height of 16 feet
- Large buildings incorporate articulation or offset to break up facade

Landscaping

- Front yard is landscaped
- Shade trees planted along street
- Trees and landscaping planted within interior of parking lot

Parking and vehicles

- Parking lots located at side or rear of building
- Drive-through windows oriented toward side or rear
- Reduction in number of parking spaces required
- Screening of parking lots with fence or shrubs

Signs

- Ground-mounted, monument-style signs
- Pedestrian-scale maximum sign height
- Oversized or numerous signs not permitted

parking. This will create a network which pedestrians and bicyclists can navigate safely.

Action 22

Improve bicycle parking on public and private property

Convenient bicycle parking near destinations encourages cycling. Existing business owners should be encouraged to provide bicycle parking for current developments.

commercial corridors and neighborhood streets with higher traffic volumes.

Action 25

Install streetlights in priority areas

Streetlights improve public safety and give communities visual identity. Priority areas for installation include commercial areas and residential neighborhoods.

Action 26

Use the concrete barrier on Sunbury Road as a public arts space, vertical garden, or other use that benefits the community

The concrete barrier is a highly visible, under utilized space. Murals add visual interest and help define a community's identity.

Another option is a vertical garden. Vertical gardens make it easy to care for plants, harvest food, and provide visual interest.

Action 27

Install traffic calming devices in priority areas

Traffic calming devices reduce vehicle speeds. They can also be visual amenities and beautify neighborhoods. Traffic calming devices should incorporate landscaping elements in their design.

Installation should be located in high speeding areas such as: Buenos Aires Boulevard, Paris Boulevard, Executive Parkway, Valley Quail Drive and Dempsey Road.

Using visually consistent signs at key locations helps build pride and a sense of community.



Goal E

Nurture a sense of place in neighborhoods and along commercial corridors

Features such as gateways signs, street signs, and distinctive streetlights give neighborhoods a common visual identity which can build pride and ownership within a community.

Action 23

Install gateway and wayfinding signage in priority areas

Gateways tell neighborhood residents and visitors when they enter the community. Consistent gateway and wayfinding signage creates visual identity and helps motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists better navigate through a community.

Important township gateways include: 161 and Westerville Road, Interstate 270 and Westerville Road, 161 and Sunbury Road, and Sunbury Road and Valley Quail Drive North.

Action 24

Install street signs with consistent design in priority areas

The installation of decorative street signs is a simple way to create visual identity in a community. Priority areas for installation include

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Land Use Category Descriptions



Low density residential

Allowed land uses: Single family homes only

Density: Maximum of 1 unit per acre



Medium density residential

Allowed land uses: Single-family and two-family homes

Density: Minimum of 2 units per acre, maximum of 8 units per acre



High density residential

Allowed land uses: Townhomes and multi-unit buildings

Density: Minimum of 8 units per acre, maximum of 24 units per acre



Office + Residential

Allowed land uses: Offices, single- and multi-family housing. Uses may mix within the same building.

Density: For buildings without offices, minimum residential density of 4 units per acre. For all buildings, maximum residential density of 24 units per acre



Commercial: Limited range + Multifamily

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

Density: Maximum residential density of 24 units per acre



Commercial: Full range + Multifamily

Allowed land uses: Full range of retail and office uses, plus multi-family housing and townhomes.

Density: Maximum residential density of 24 units per acre



Light Industrial + Office

Allowed land uses: Range of uses from office, industrial, storage and warehousing.



Parks/Open Space

Intended for nature or recreation with minimal buildings.



Stream buffer

Environmentally-sensitive area that includes streamways and 100-year floodplain.

Prohibited land uses: Construction, parking lots, and dredging or filling.

Allowed land uses: Permissible uses are passive and active recreation, trails. If a stream buffer area is permanently protected, development density may be transferred elsewhere on the same property or an immediately-adjacent property.



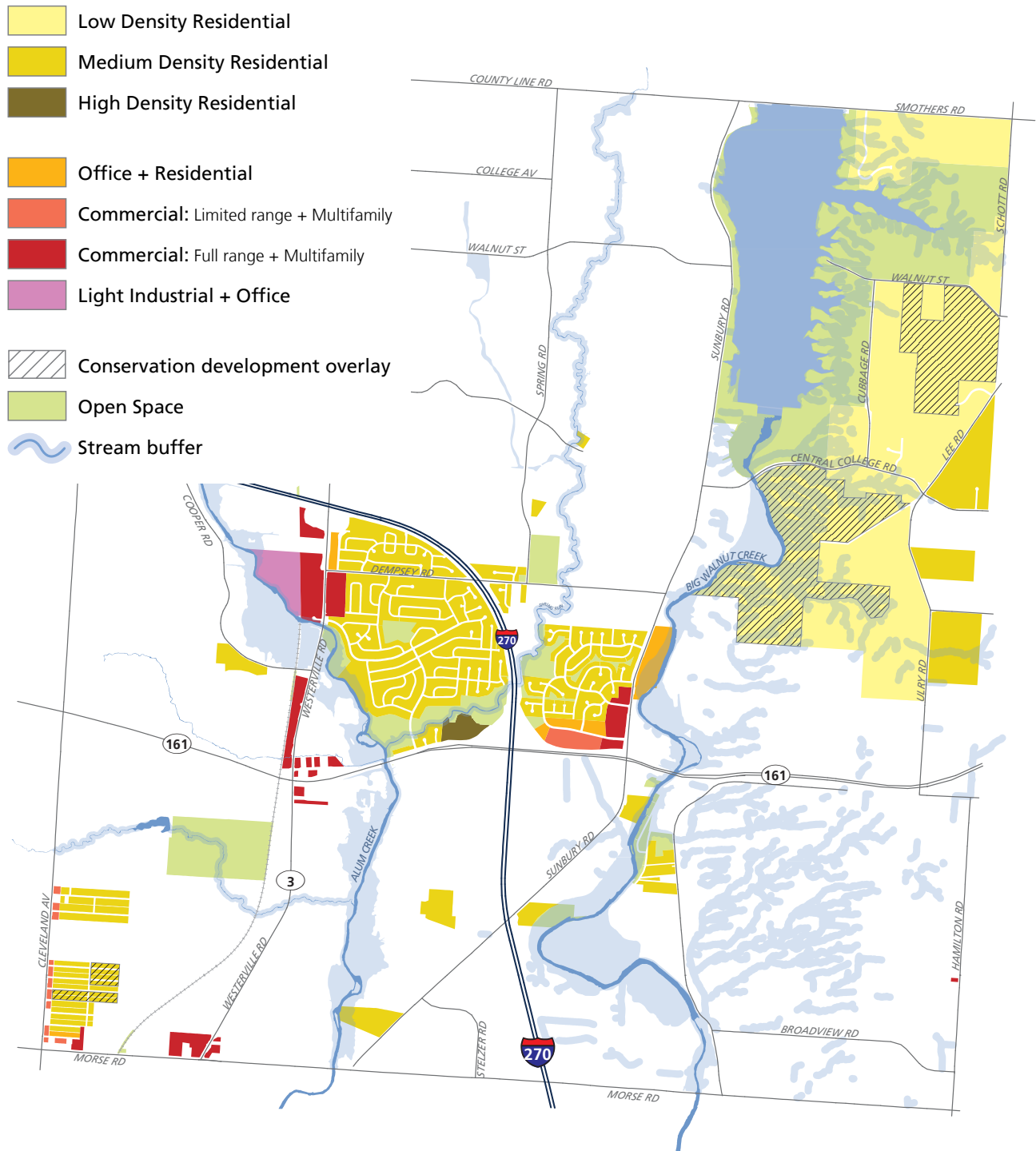
Conservation development overlay

Preservation of natural features including trees and steep slopes is required.

Cleveland Heights area must have dedicated open space of 25 percent. The area east of Big Walnut Creek must have 50 percent dedicated open space.

Net density not to exceed maximum density permitted in underlying district.

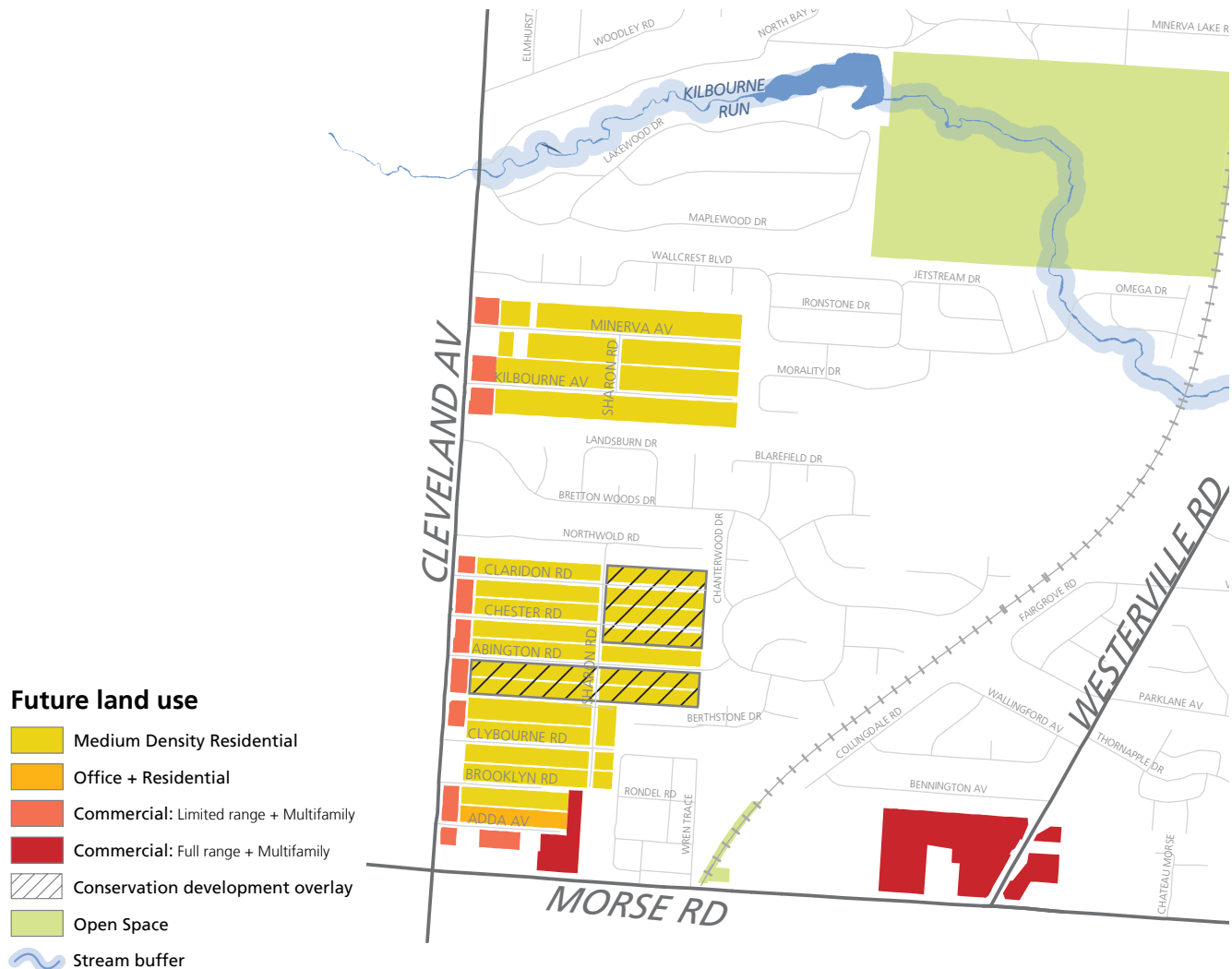
Future land use



Future land use map

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Cleveland Heights

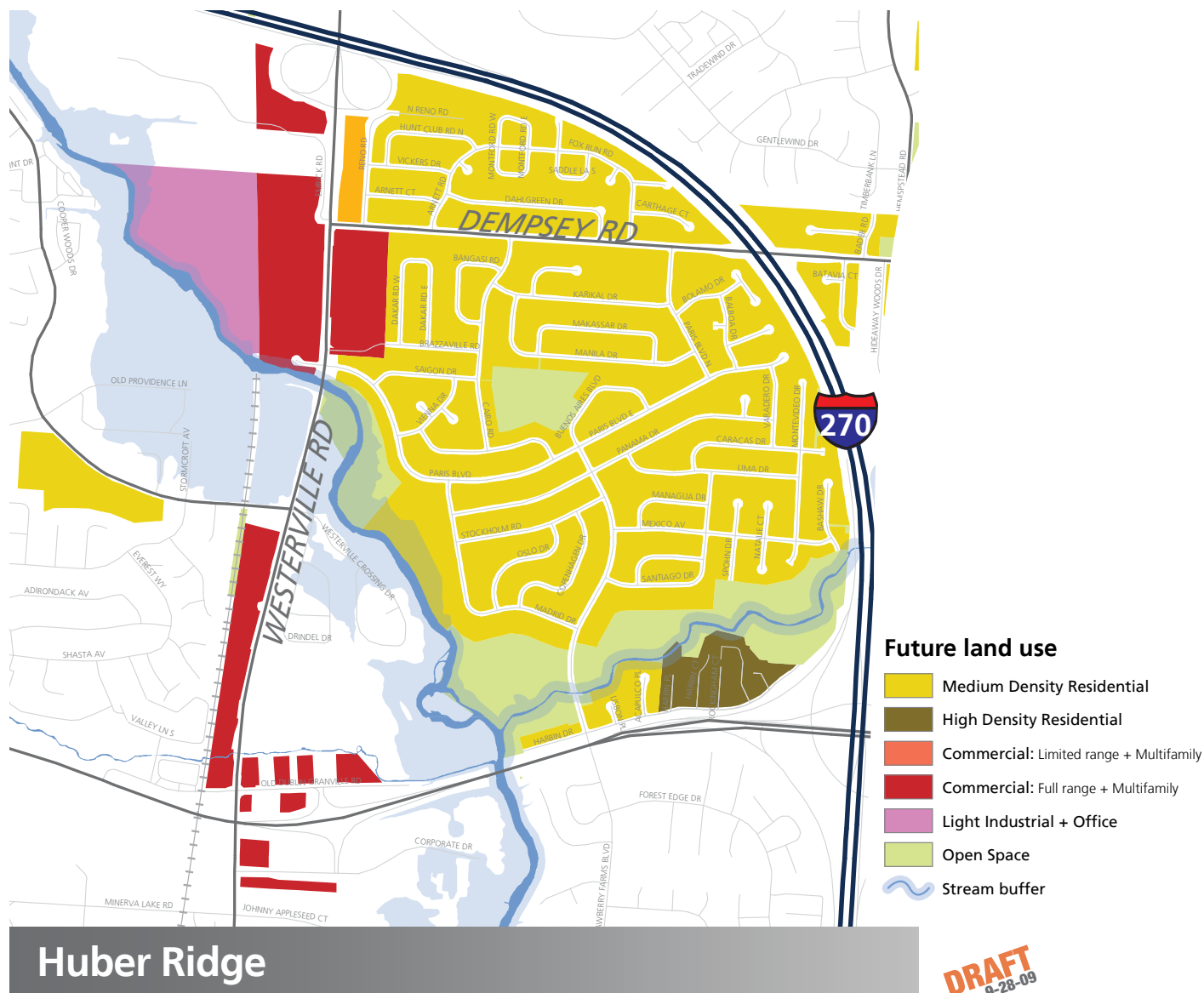
Cleveland Heights Conservation Area

The conservation area is intended to preserve trees by clustering new homes. Recommended housing types include townhouses, row houses and condominiums, with a maximum three-storey height.

New housing density should be a maximum of 8 units per acre and 25 percent of land area should be dedicated open space.

Cleveland Avenue

This corridor is intended to provide retail and office opportunities, targeted to neighborhood residents. This complements an abundance of regionally-targeted retail establishments on Morse Road. Multi-family residential development is permitted with a maximum density of 24 units per acre.



Spring Run Open Space

The undeveloped areas along Spring Run are recommended to remain as open space that will provide recreational opportunities to residents.

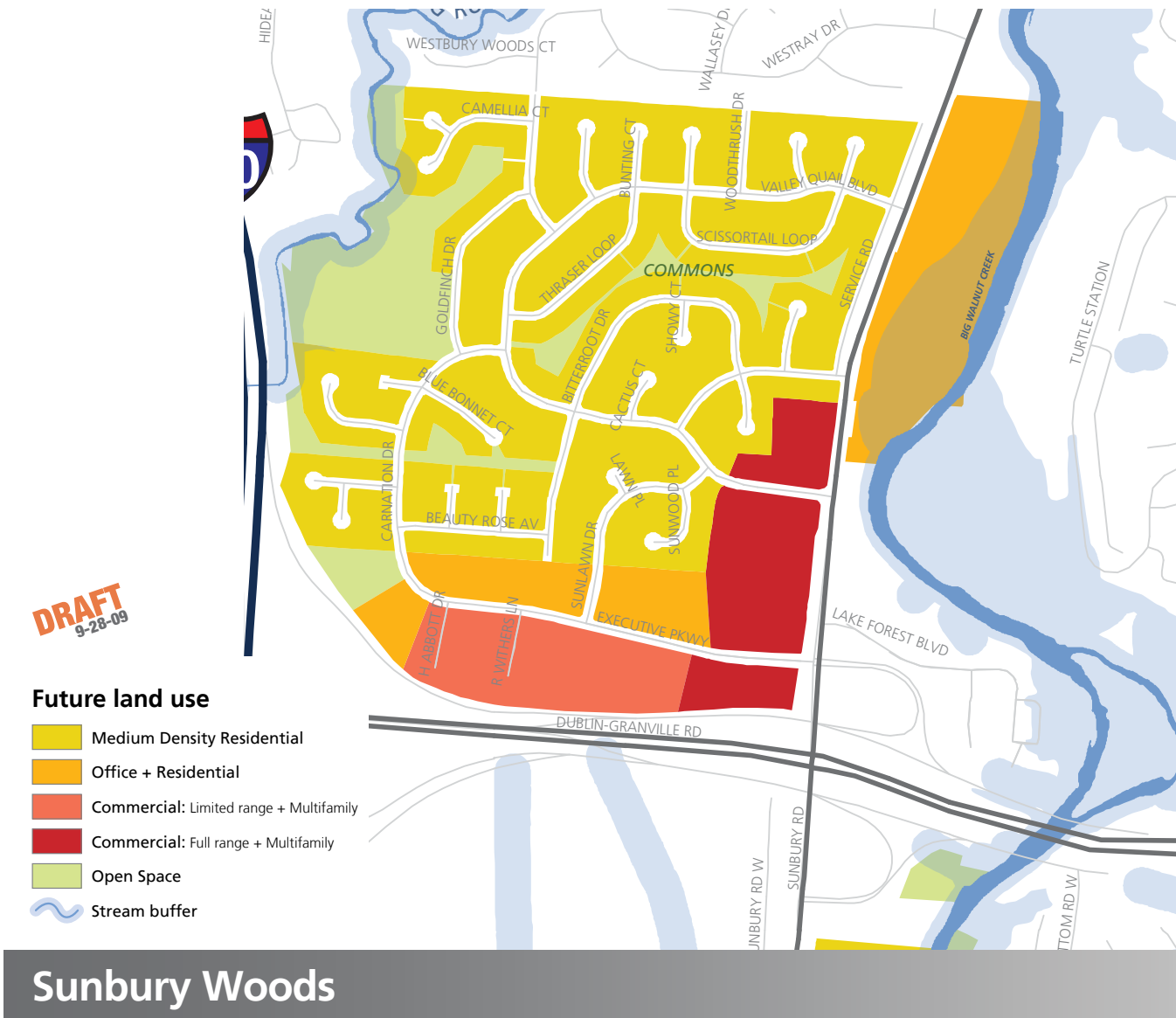
Westerville Road Office and Residential

The area north of Dempsey Road and east of Westerville Road is intended for office and residential uses that will buffer the medium-density residential neighborhood to the east.

Westerville Road Commercial

Businesses along the Westerville Road corridor attract customers from both the local and regional areas. The corridor is recommended to remain commercial in nature with a full range of commercial activities and residential uses permitted.

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Executive Parkway Land Uses

Land uses along Executive Parkway should provide a transition from large-scale retail along Sunbury Road to residences within Sunbury Woods.

Buildings on the north side of Executive Parkway should be built closer to the road in order to buffer the residential uses to the north.

New buildings should not exceed three-stories in height and residences should be of the townhouse, row house or condominium design.

Sunbury Open Space

The undeveloped parcel on the west end of Executive Parkway is recommended to be open space to buffer the neighborhood from commercial uses along the roadway.

Sunbury Road Office and Residential

The area east of Sunbury Road is recommended for office and residential uses. Development in this area must

consider steep slopes and floodplain in site design.

Wilder Elementary and Blendon Township Complex Open Space

Future land uses should be limited to open space, community recreation facilities and other park-type uses.

Rural East Conservation Area

The conservation area is intended to preserve trees and other natural features by clustering any new housing. Recommended housing types are single-family detached structures with a net density not to exceed 1 unit per acre. Fifty percent of land area must be dedicated open space.

Medium Density Residential

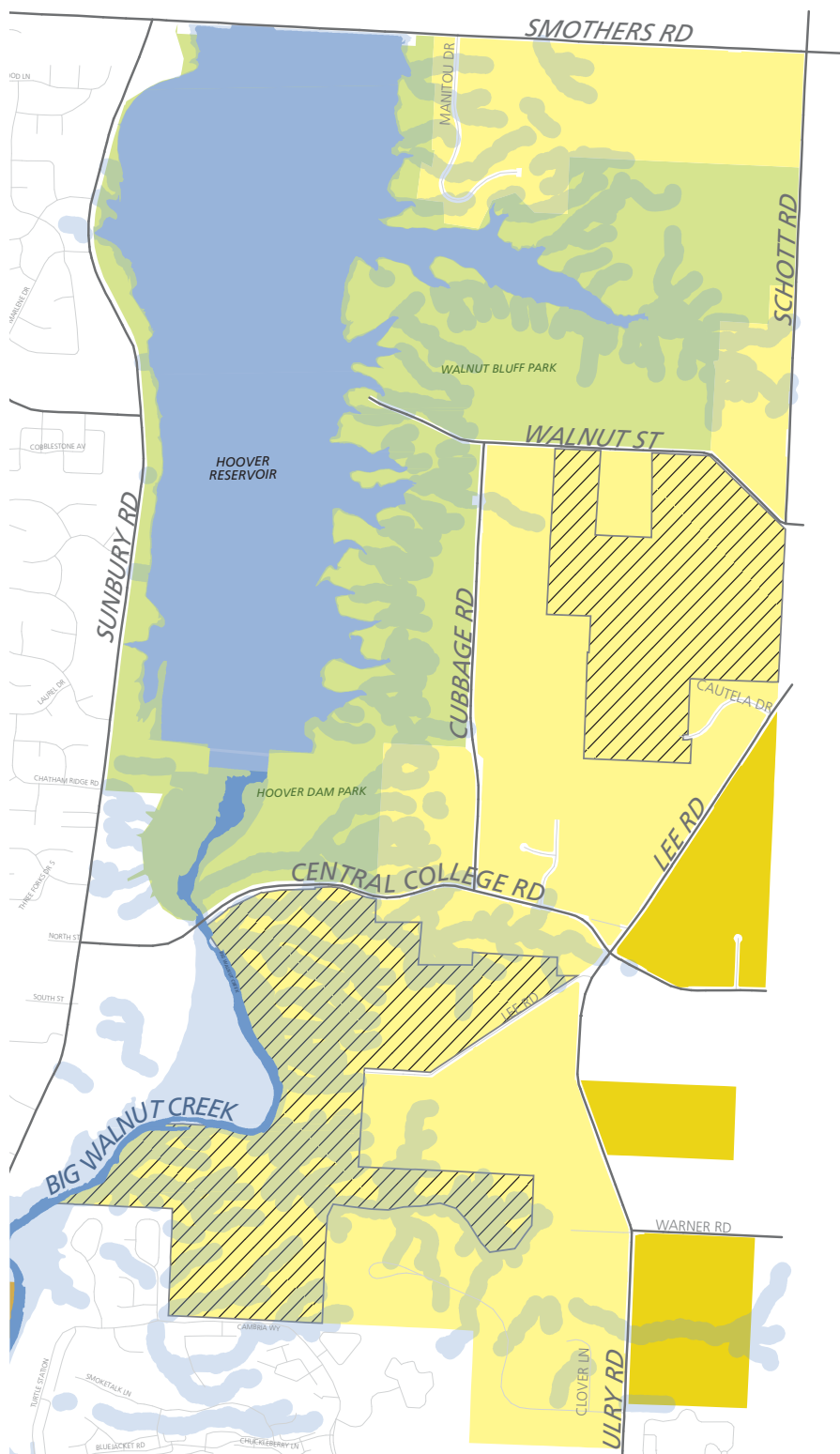
The area east of Ulry and Lee Roads is recommended for medium density residential development. Recommended housing types are single-family detached and attached structures. Net density not to exceed 8 units per acre.

Hoover Reservoir Open Space

Developed properties indicated as open space may be redeveloped for parks-related uses such as canoe liveries. Undeveloped properties indicated as open space should remain undeveloped.

Future land use

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Conservation development overlay
- Open Space
- Stream buffer



Rural East

Housing

Recommendations



Vision

A variety of housing types with healthy indoor environments that respect existing development patterns

Achieve this vision by:

- Using universal design elements to make housing accessible to all
- Improving the appearance of rental properties
- Helping homeowners perform minor home maintenance
- Using building materials that produce clean indoor air

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Zero-step entryways ensure accessibility for all people regardless of physical ability



Goal A

Provide a variety of housing options that facilitates aging in place

A community with a variety of housing options is a desirable place for all. Aging in place allows seniors to maintain their quality of life by growing old in their familiar surroundings.

Action 1

Require conformance with sustainability and universal design standards of the AWARE manual for projects receiving public funds

Home construction has both environmental and social impacts. It is important for homes to be energy-efficient and accessible. The AWARE manual standardizes requirements for new and rehabilitated homes that use public funds to ensure construction of high quality homes that are accessible to all.

Infill development should respect existing setbacks and building size

Action 2

Support the use of universal design and visitability standards in the new construction and rehabilitation of residential units

Homes built with universal design and visitability elements are more comfortable, user-friendly and appeal to a larger market. Basic features such as zero-step entrances, wide doorways and a wheelchair accessible bathroom on the first floor help make homes accessible for all. Franklin County will provide information to builders on these standards when applying for a building permit.

Action 3

Make conversion and construction of Accessory Apartments (Granny Flats) more attractive

Accessory Apartments (Granny Flats) are additional housing units secondary to the main residence. They are ideal for extended families or to rent out for supplemental income. Revision of section 302.039 of the Franklin County Zoning Resolution could encourage more of this housing type.

Action 4

Increase the homeownership rate

Homeowners move less often and are more engaged in their neighborhood and civic affairs. Neighborhoods with high homeownership rates generally have less crime and better neighborhood upkeep. Several existing programs aid first time home buyers with the purchase of a house.



Goal B

Maintain an area's character by respecting existing development

New development should compliment the use, density, setback and scale of existing development.

Action 5

Facilitate rehabilitation and compatible infill housing

Well-maintained housing is important to neighborhood stability. Building in existing neighborhoods is an efficient use of land. Many funding sources and programs help homeowners and developers finance minor renovations and home construction.

Action 6**Amend applicable sections of the Franklin County Zoning Resolution to include a minimum residential density**

A minimum density in residential neighborhoods ensures efficient use of land and that development appears consistent with surrounding homes.

Action 7**Continue enforcement of the Blendon Township Property Maintenance Code**

A property maintenance code includes regulations that provide a safe environment and maintain property values. Blendon Township is the only township in Franklin County to have adopted a property maintenance code. Continued code enforcement is essential to the upkeep of neighborhoods and commercial properties.

Action 8**Direct financial assistance programs to help low income families perform home maintenance and resolve building and zoning violations**

Many property owners are unable to resolve violation issues due to limited resources. Information on existing financial assistance programs can be provided to help families perform home maintenance and resolve violations.

Action 9**Turn around tax-delinquent properties in partnership with the Franklin County Treasurer's Office**

Vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties bring down the image and value of neighborhoods. The Franklin County Treasurer pursues properties for back taxes. Township officials should keep the Treasurer's office informed of vacant and abandoned properties and partner to return them to productive use.

Action 10**Consider the feasibility of a rental residential inspection pilot program**

Neglected rental housing is an eyesore and lowers property values. An inspection program's goal is to promote greater compliance with health and safety standards by conducting door-to-door inspections in focused areas. Funding should be directed at rental properties to improve their quality.

Action 11**Create a program to improve the appearance of rental homes**

The curb appeal of rental homes can be improved through landscaping and minor home improvements. The county, township and rental companies should work collaboratively to improve the appearance of rental homes.

Action 12**Outline a procedure for the preservation and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing**

Rental housing is an affordable option for singles, young families and seniors. Affordable rental housing should be preserved and rehabilitated when feasible to appear consistent with the surrounding housing stock.



Solar panels reduce reliance on nonrenewable energy sources

Goal C**Encourage housing that is environmentally sensitive and healthy**

A healthy home has clean indoor air and a limited impact on the environment.

Action 13

Encourage the use of building materials that promote healthy indoor air

Conventional building materials often use chemicals which emit harmful fumes in homes long after construction. Houses built or rehatted with public funds should only use materials which promote healthy indoor air.

Action 14

Support the use of alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal

The use of alternative energy reduces reliance on non-renewable resources. Franklin County can provide information and incentives for the use of alternative energy sources.

Action 15

Provide information regarding energy efficiency programs such as the Home Weatherization Assistance Program

Reducing household energy consumption is environmentally friendly and reduces utility costs. The HWAP replaces electric appliances, light fixtures, furnaces, water heaters, and gas cooking stoves which reduces energy consumption. The program is administered by MORPC and services are free to income-eligible clients.

Action 16

Provide information on incentives to developers and homeowners using energy efficient practices

Utility companies, water agencies and public-private organizations offer a variety of financial incentives and technical help for energy-efficient appliances, equipment, lighting and buildings.

Recreation

Recommendations



Vision

An accessible, well-maintained park and recreation system

Achieve this vision by:

- Utilizing Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and Spring Run as recreational assets
- Conducting a parks master plan
- Providing connections to the existing trail system

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Parkland is a major asset to a community providing recreational opportunities to residents

Township parks and facilities enable residents to enjoy nature and encourage physical activity



Goal A

Increase the amount of parkland and recreation facilities

Parks and recreation facilities are important to community health by allowing individuals the opportunity to be physically active.

Action 1

Utilize Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and Spring Run as recreational assets

The scenic Alum and Big Walnut Creeks are biologically diverse aquatic systems. They can provide educational, environmental, and recreational opportunities if properly protected and utilized.

Action 2

Explore the feasibility of installing a wellness garden and rain garden at the Township Senior Center

A wellness garden is handicapped accessible green space that enables physical and mental activity. Amenities include exercise stations, walking trails and meditation gardens.

A rain garden is an area planted with natural vegetation that reduces stormwater runoff to storm sewers and waterways. Installation in a high-profile area can lead to more prevalence of rain gardens in the township.

Action 3

Work with Metro Parks to protect environmentally sensitive land

Franklin County will work with Metro Parks to facilitate the addition of land to the parks system. This will protect environmentally sensitive land and provide more parkland for the public to enjoy.



Goal B

Maintain, improve, and expand existing township parks and recreational facilities

The township's parks and recreational facilities are assets to township residents providing opportunities to be physically active.

Action 4

Consider a levy for parks

A property tax levy for parks is one option to generate more funds. If approved by voters, additional funds could be used for maintenance, general improvements or land acquisition.

Action 5

Set aside general maintenance funds for each park

Well maintained parks are visited and enjoyed by residents. Parks with insufficient maintenance funds often fall in disrepair. Dedicating funds each year specifically for maintenance ensures the upkeep of parks and facilities.

Action 6

Create a citizen parks advisory board to oversee the maintenance and development of the parks system

A parks board would be an advisory group that makes recommendations on the distribution of parks funds and makes decisions regarding the parks system.

Action 7

Conduct a parks master plan

A parks master plan would outline the recreational needs of the township. It would guide development of parks, greenways and rec-

reational facilities according to the residents' wishes.



Access to parks helps people enjoy nature and learn about their environment

Goal C

Improve the accessibility of the park and recreation system

A parks and recreation system should be accessible to users of all ages and mobility.

Action 8

Provide public access to stream corridors

Riparian corridors are prime locations for recreational opportunities. Public access should be created where feasible.

Action 9

Provide connections to the existing trail system

The Big Walnut and Alum Creek trails provide many recreational opportunities. However, neither is easily accessible from the township neighborhoods. Connections to trails give residents access to more recreational opportunities.

Action 10

Provide sufficient bicycle parking at parks

Convenient bicycle parking near destinations encourages cycling. An increase in the number of cyclists can reduce demands for vehicle parking.



Environment

Recommendations

Vision: A healthy and protected environment

Achieve this vision by:

- Creating a no-build zone along Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and their tributaries
- Adopting conservation subdivision regulations
- Signing the Central Ohio Green Pact
- Converting under-utilized sites to community gardens

Rain barrels and other backyard conservation techniques reduce the amount of stormwater runoff entering streams



Goal A

Protect Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and their tributaries

The scenic Alum Creek and Big Walnut Creeks are biologically diverse aquatic systems which are assets to the township.

Action 1

Adopt regulations creating a stream buffer zone along Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and their tributaries

The stream buffer is an environmentally sensitive area that includes waterways, the 100-year floodplain and steep slopes. Permissible uses within the buffer include passive and active recreation such as trails.

Action 2

Support acquisition of scenic and sensitive land located along the creeks

Certain properties along Alum Creek and Big Walnut Creek may be habitats for plants or animals, or filter water and prevent pollution. The township and county should support public acquisition of these properties.

Action 3

Adopt regulations that require the use of stormwater best management practices

Rain gardens, bioswales, pervious surfaces and other techniques are used to control stormwater runoff and stabilize soil to prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Action 4

Promote backyard conservation

Backyard conservation includes practices such as composting, tree planting and water

conservation. These practices help protect the environment and add beauty and interest to one's surroundings

Action 5

Build and maintain relationships with local watershed groups

Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries and Friends of Big Walnut Creek are non-profit organizations that support watershed protection and stewardship. Collaboration with these groups is important to preserving the creeks and their watersheds.



Goal B

Ensure that new development preserves natural features including mature trees, slopes, wetlands and ponds

New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas and have a minimal impact on the environment.

Action 6

Adopt regulations creating a stream buffer zone along Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and their tributaries

The stream buffer is an environmentally sensitive area that includes waterways, the 100-year floodplain and steep slopes. Permissible uses within the buffer include passive and active recreation such as trails.

Action 7

Adopt the conservation development regulations in areas designated by the future land use map

Conservation development protects farmland and/or natural resources. Development is

Conservation-style development allows the same number of homes as a conventional design while preserving natural features

arranged in a way that preserves land and natural resources.



Goal C

Promote environmental awareness and stewardship

Public awareness of environmental issues can promote the responsible use of natural resources

Action 8

Sign the Central Ohio Green Pact

The Central Ohio Green Pact is a multi-jurisdictional commitment to make our region more sustainable. It supports policies that enhance quality of life, protect the environment and facilitate economic development.

Action 9

Conduct an energy audit of buildings at the township complex and adopt practices to reduce energy consumption

The township has the opportunity to become a visible advocate of green practices. Performing an energy audit and reducing energy consumption sets an example to residents and other communities in Central Ohio.

Action 10

Support participation in the GreenSpot program

The GreenSpot program is administered by the city of Columbus and recognizes residents, businesses and community groups for their work to promote a sustainable future. It also provides resources to help people meet their goals of sustainability.



Goal D

Support a sustainable 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.

Action 11

Provide information to connect producers and consumers of local foods

Locally-grown food is often difficult to find and usually only available in farmers markets. Connecting local producers and consumers will increase access to locally grown foods and the economic vitality of local farming initiatives.

Action 12

Support the transition of back and front yards, window boxes, rooftops, and unused land into food production areas

Urban gardening creates independence from corporate food systems, fosters community involvement and gets people closer to the natural environment. Programs provide resources to start gardens and education on urban gardening practices.

Action 13

Investigate the feasibility of locating a farmers market at the Glengary Shopping Center, Sunbury Plaza or the Blendon Township Complex

Access to fresh foods leads to better eating habits and a healthier community. Farmers markets connect producers and consumers of local foods. A farmers market could be located in the parking lot of Glengary Shopping Center, Sunbury Plaza or the Blendon Township Complex.

Community projects such as rain garden installations increase the public's awareness of environmental issues

Community gardens are a good use of undeveloped lots and help promote healthy eating

Action 14

Explore a Community-Supported Agriculture business model

In a Community-Supported Agriculture model customers buy shares from local farmers which serve as capital to buy seeds, fertilizer, and equipment. Customers receive a weekly share when the crop is harvested.

Action 15

Provide support to local food production and processing enterprises

Franklin County has recently implemented a food service business incubator program. This will assist income eligible persons in developing their small business. This model should be extended to include Blendon Township.

Action 16

Identify underutilized sites and outline a way to convert them to community gardens

Community gardens are self-maintained by members of the organization. They build self-reliance, a sense of community and support local food systems.

Transportation

Recommendations



Vision

A complete transportation system where people can easily travel by foot, bicycle, transit and car.

Achieve this vision by:

- Installing sidewalks in priority areas
- Connecting to existing bicycle trails
- Adding amenities at existing bus stops
- Designing streets to accommodate all users

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Sidewalks allow residents to travel safely to nearby destinations



Goal A

A well maintained, complete network for pedestrian traffic

Walking has environmental, social and health benefits. A complete network for pedestrians means that people can get to destinations safely on foot.

Action 1

Maintain and improve existing sidewalks

The majority of streets in the residential neighborhoods have existing sidewalks. These should be properly maintained to ensure safety and their continued use.

Action 2

Install new sidewalks and improve crossings in targeted areas according to the Sidewalk priorities map

Sidewalks are essential to public safety and beneficial to neighborhood stability. Road improvements should include sidewalk installation and sidewalks should be at least five feet wide.

Action 3

Require sidewalks for new development

New office, commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential developments should be required to install sidewalks. This will create a network which pedestrians can navigate safely.

Action 4

Use pedestrian friendly design within shopping centers and along commercial corridors

In large shopping centers with lots of automobile traffic, defining walkways for pedestrians can prevent accidents. In turn, better pedestrian

friendliness can lead to more people traveling on foot.

Action 5

Use pedestrian friendly design for major intersections along commercial corridors

Intersections are primarily where pedestrians come into contact with automobile traffic. Improving the safety of intersections will decrease accidents and encourage more people to walk.

A PedFlag program is one tool to make intersections safer. It involves the placement of flags at each end of a cross walk. Pedestrians use them while crossing to increase their visibility therefore making crossing the street faster, safer and more pleasant.



Goal B

A complete bicycle network for recreation and transportation

Bicycling has environmental, social and health benefits. A complete networks for bicyclists is one where people can get to destinations safely by bicycle.

Action 6

Use the Bikeways map to guide development of an area-wide bicycle network

The Bikeways map is a compilation of area and regional bikeways plans and specific recommendations for the township. The county and township should consult the Bikeways map when expanding bicycle facilities. This ensures the creation of a well connected bikeway system.

Bikeways provide transportation and recreation opportunities

Action 7**Provide connections to existing bikeways**

There are existing bikeway facilities near the township including the Big Walnut Creek and Alum Creek trails. Connecting with these is essential to creating an area-wide bikeway system.

Action 8**Locate buildings outside the railway corridor near Westerville Road**

The abandoned railway right-of-way has the opportunity to become part of the bikeway system. Locating buildings outside of this corridor ensures that it will be open in the future for development as a regional bikeway.

Action 9**Improve bicycle parking on public and private property**

Convenient bicycle parking near destinations encourages cycling. Existing business owners should be encouraged to provide bicycle parking for current developments.

Action 10**Prioritize bike routes through the Huber Ridge and Sunbury Woods neighborhoods**

Traffic calming devices and signage direct bicyclists safely through a neighborhood.

Recommended bike routes include: Paris Boulevard, Buenos Aires Boulevard and Valley Quail Drive.



Bus shelters make the use of transit services more appealing to residents

Goal C**A transit network offering sufficient destinations for riders and frequency of bus service**

Transit complements other modes of transportation and provides options to those who do not drive.

Action 11**Improve pedestrian infrastructure to facilitate transit use**

Using transit is more attractive with better pedestrian infrastructure. A safe path to a bus stop will encourage transit use.

Action 12**Encourage installation of bus shelters, benches, trash cans, route maps and schedule displays at existing bus stops**

The addition of amenities at bus stops can lead to increased transit use.

Action 13**Investigate the possibility of locating a Park and Ride in the Sunbury Woods area**

Park and ride facilities allow commuters to avoid driving during the most congested times of the day. COTA's long range plan recommends the addition of a park and ride facility in the Sunbury Woods area.

Action 14**Expand the proposed Westerville LINK route to include Huber Ridge and Sunbury Woods**

LINK routes provide services within neighborhoods and activity centers using smaller, neighborhood-friendly buses. COTA's long range plan recommends a LINK route in the

Physical treatments help calm traffic along neighborhood streets

Westerville area which could be extended to include Huber Ridge and Sunbury Woods



Goal D

A well maintained auto network with continued good access that promotes safety

The road network is the primary means of transportation within the planning area. The township's easy access to freeways and major roads is an asset.

Action 15

Adopt a complete street policy for future road improvements

A complete street is one designed for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists. A network of complete streets is safer, more livable and welcoming to everyone. Future road construction projects should be designed and constructed with all users in mind.

Action 16

Improve damaged roads and roadside drainage infrastructure

Damaged roads and poor drainage pose a threat to motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Township and county agencies can work together to improve the condition of these roads.

Action 17

Install traffic calming devices in priority areas

Traffic calming devices reduce vehicle speeds. They can also be visual amenities and beautify neighborhoods. Traffic calming devices should incorporate landscaping elements in their design.

Installation should be located in high speeding areas such as: Buenos Aires Boulevard, Paris Boulevard, Executive Parkway, Valley Quail Drive and Dempsey Road.

Action 18

Encourage speed limit reductions on high-accident roads

Roads identified through accident data and reports by residents of excessive speeding should be reviewed for speed limit reductions.

Action 19

Encourage safety improvements at high-accident intersections

Safety improvements are recommended at intersections identified by residents that are difficult or impossible to cross.

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Types of proposed bikeways

Bikeways map

What it is: The bikeways map shows locations of current and proposed bikeways in Columbus, Westerville and Blendon Township. The proposed bikeways connect residents to both existing and planned bikeways.

Why we need it: Since bikeways allow people to cover wide distances, it is critical to plan for bikeways.

The Bikeways map contains information from the following sources: Columbus Bicentennial Bikeways Plan, Westerville Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan and MORPC Regional Bikeways Plan and Metroparks trail plan



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



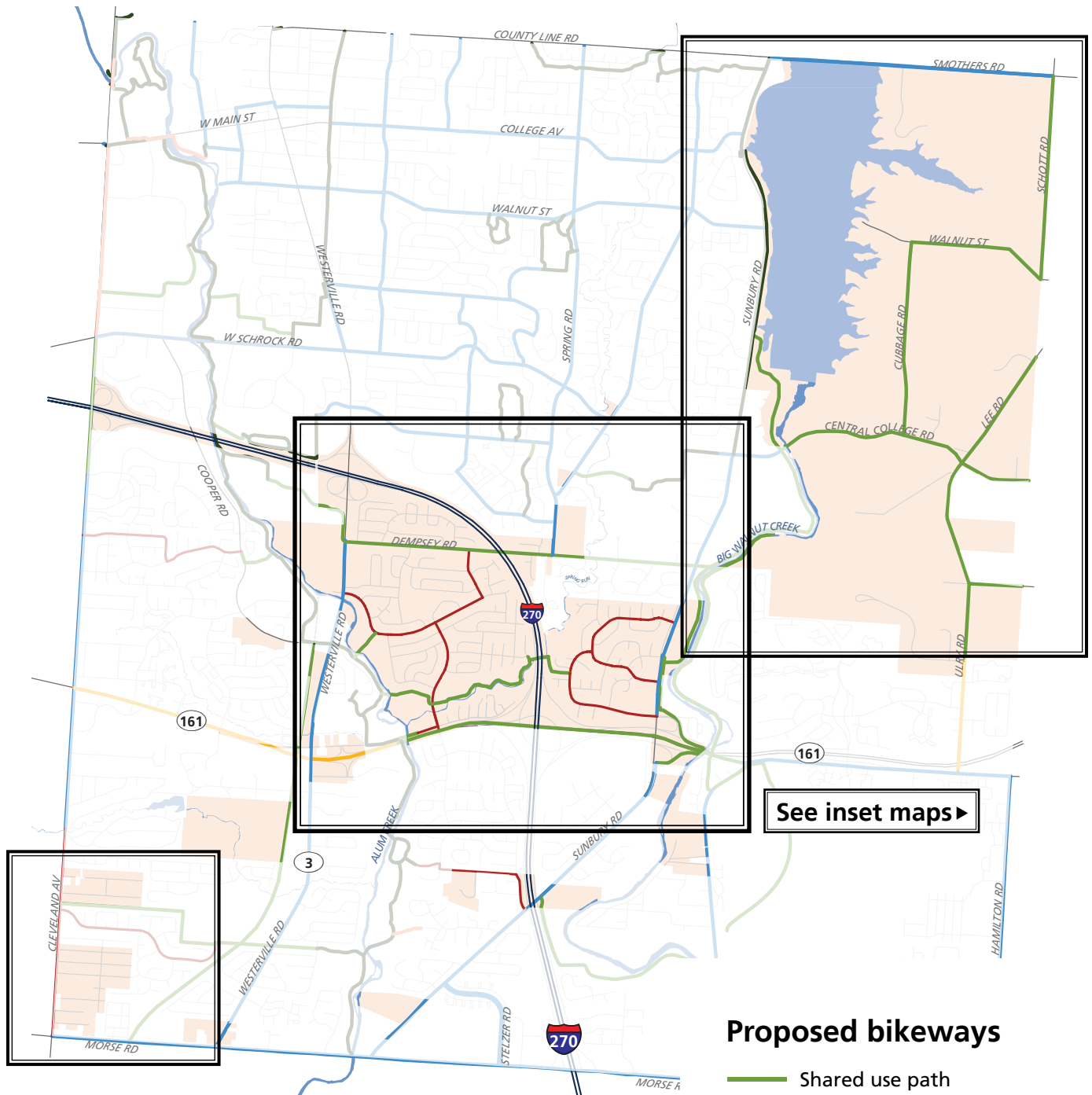
On-street striped lane for bicycles, 4 to 6 feet wide, usually next to the outermost travel lanes.



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



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



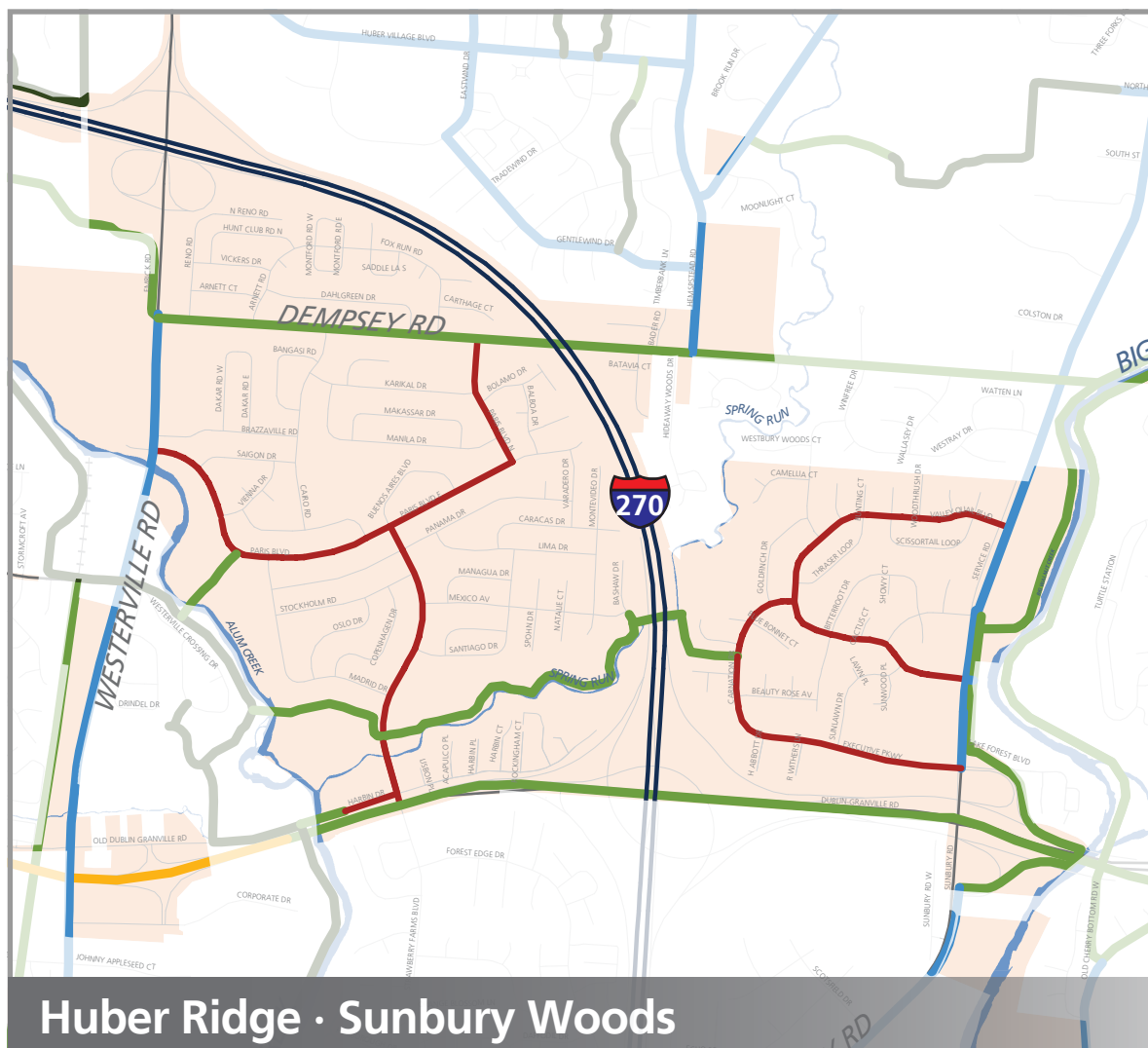
Proposed bikeways

- Shared use path
- Shared use path (existing)
- Bicycle lane
- Signed shared roadway
- Paved shoulder

Bikeways map

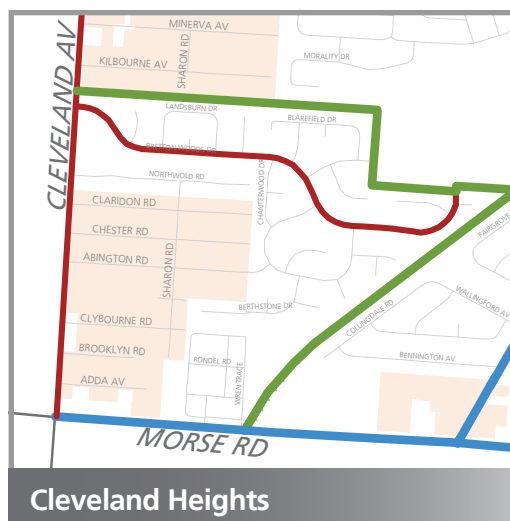
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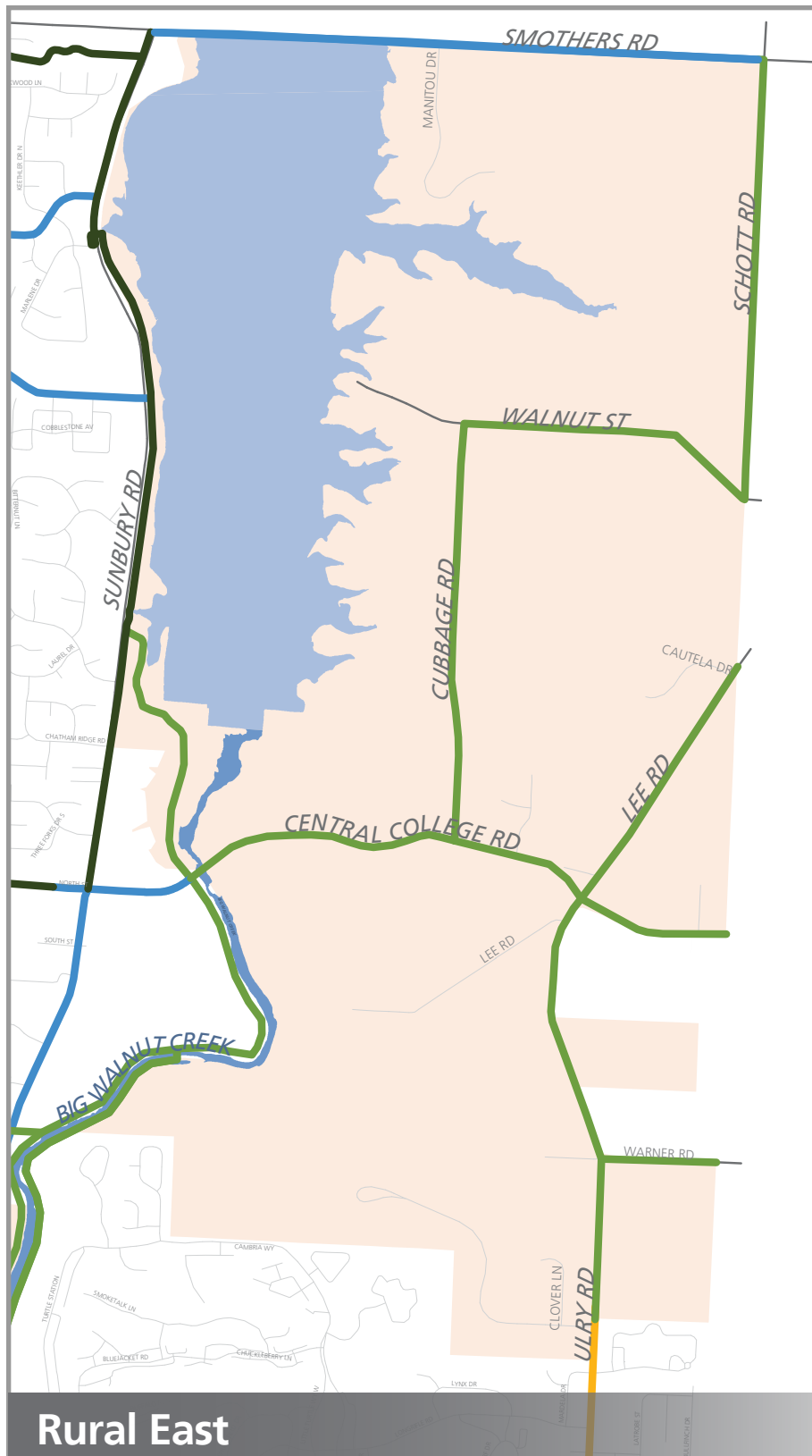


Proposed bikeways

- Shared use path
- Shared use path (existing)
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- Paved shoulder



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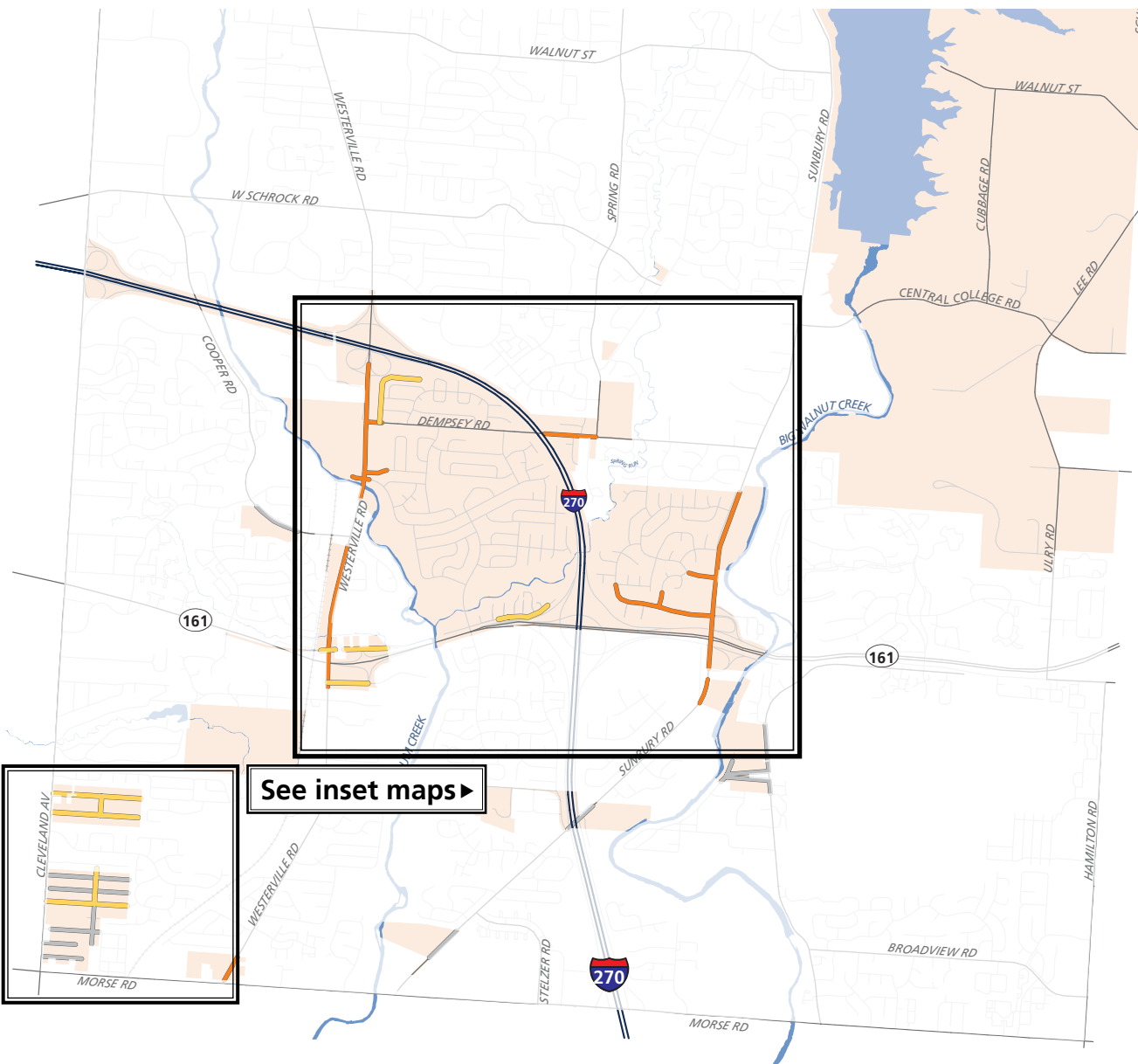
Sidewalk priorities

What it is: Sidewalks have benefits for the entire community. Having sidewalks keeps people safe, promotes fitness and reduces traffic congestion. Business owners have found that more pedestrian traffic creates a pleasant shopping experience and feeds additional traffic to businesses.

Why we need it: Installing sidewalks costs money. Realizing that funds are limited, the sidewalks maps prioritizes

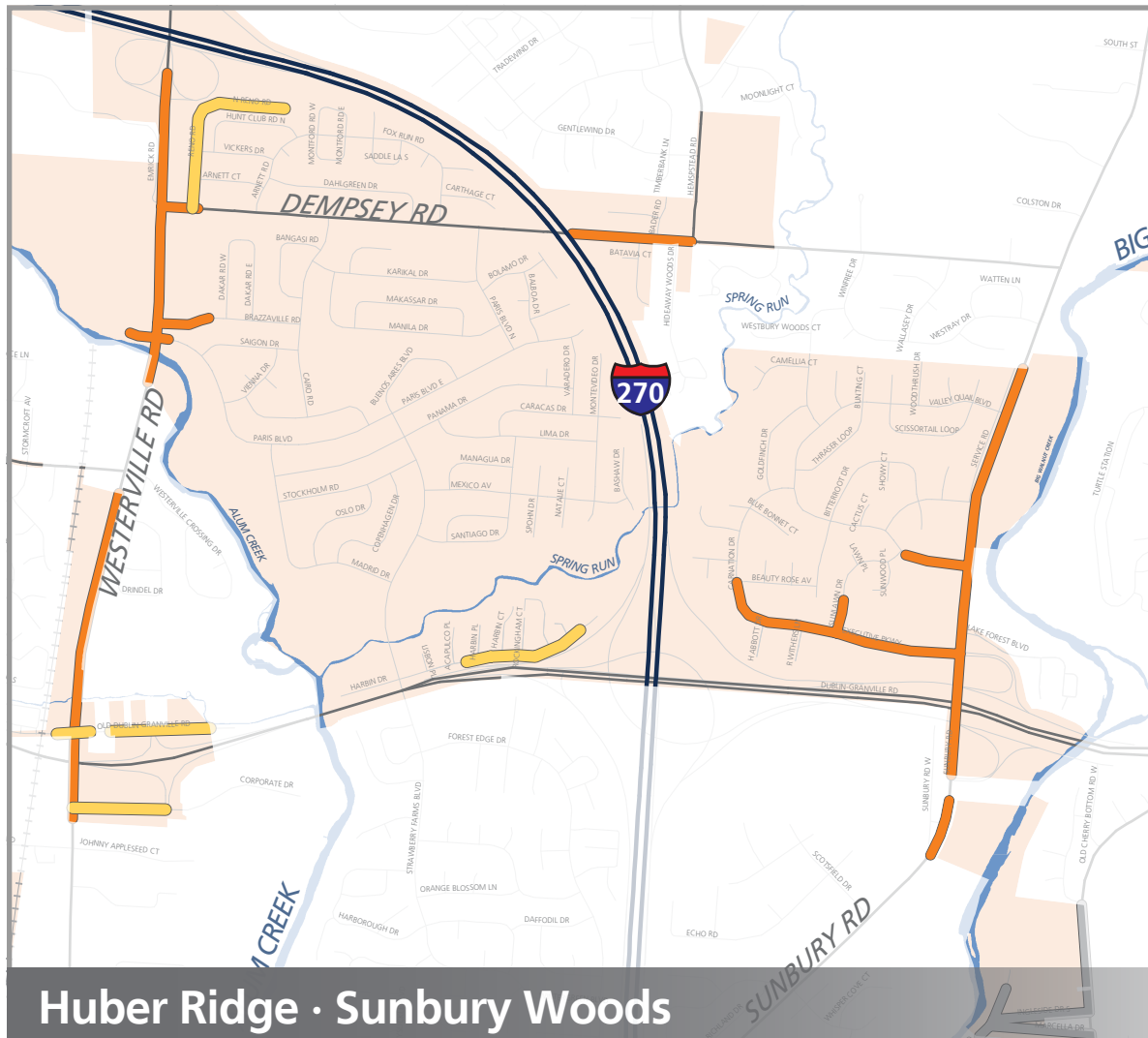
sidewalks: primary priorities are sidewalks that should be installed first. Secondary priorities are sidewalks that should be installed after all the primary priorities are installed. Sidewalks shown as “Install with new development” should be provided at any time new development or redevelopment is occurring.

The primary and secondary priorities reflect the community’s stated desires for new sidewalks.



Sidewalk installation priorities

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Sidewalk installation priorities

- Primary priority
- Secondary priority
- Install with new development

Sidewalk priorities map

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Next steps



Working Committee review

The Blendon Community Plan Working Committee will review the policy recommendations at an October 5, 2009 meeting.

Working Committee members will provide feedback on the recommendations and discuss strategies to ensure successful implementation of the policies once the plan is adopted.

The project team will complete revisions to the recommendations, based on working committee feedback.

Public meeting

The project team will present the revised policy recommendations at an October 26, 2009 public meeting. Attendees will be asked to endorse the recommendations.

The project team will collect feedback from the public and revise the recommendations as necessary.

Plan assembly

The project team will then assemble the current conditions, community vision, policy

recommendations and implementation strategies into a plan document.

The plan document will be presented to the working committee and the public for feedback in early 2010.

Adoption process

After the working committee and public reviews, the project team will guide the plan through the adoption process.

The process involves presenting the document for adoption at public hearings by the following entities:

- Blendon Township Board of Trustees
- Franklin County Planning Commission
- Franklin County Rural Zoning Commission
- Franklin County Board of Commissioners

Distribution and conclusion

After adoption, the plan is printed and bound. The project team distributes final copies to the Working Committee and Blendon Township Board of Trustees. Upon distribution of the plan, the project is complete.

Acknowledgements

The project team thanks the following individuals and groups for input, technical advice and assistance overall with the Blendon Community Plan:

Mike Adair, *Franklin County Board of Health*
 Kristen Ball, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Susan Banbury, *Westerville Planning & Development Department*
 Ralph Barrell, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Mark Bell, *Representative Patrick Tiberi's office*
 Dan Binder, *Friends of Big Walnut Creek*
 Phillip Bouton, *Sunbury Woods Neighborhood Association*
 Jack Brown, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Ron Burkey, *Larry B's Sports Lounge*
 Deborah Candow, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 John Carter, *Columbus Department of Public Utilities*
 Delena Ciamacco, *Private property owner*
 Joe Clase, *Genoa Township - Development and Zoning*
 Pamela Clegg, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Amelia Costanzo, *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*
 Wade Estep, *Blendon Township Fiscal Officer*
 Stewart Flaherty, *Blendon Township Trustee*
 Josh Garver, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*
 Chris Gawronski, *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*
 Hanna Greer, *Franklin County Public Affairs*
 Martha Gilson, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*
 Ariel Godwin, *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*
 Albert Harter, *Friends of Big Walnut Creek*
 Jan Heichel, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Tom Heichel, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Michael Hooper, *Westerville Department of Parks and Recreation*
 Gregory Horsch, *Columbus Department of Public Utilities*
 Paul Hrnicek, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Jim Hutchinson, *Central Ohio Transit Authority*
 Zhoujun Jiang, *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*
 Donna Jordan, *Blendon Township Senior Center*
 Richard Kight, *Westerville Planning & Development Department*
 Brady Koehler, *Franklin County Engineer's Office*

Lisa LaMantia, *Westerville Planning & Development Department*
 Eric Leibowitz, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Kenneth Linn, *Columbus Department of Public Utilities*
 Maureen Lorenz, *Columbus Department of Recreation & Parks*
 Bill Lorenzen, *Glengary Shopping Center*
 Justin Lorenzen, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Cheri Mansperger, *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*
 Joe Marcum, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Michael McCann, *Central Ohio Transit Authority*
 Eric Moore, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Bruce Motsch, *Ohio Department of Natural Resources*
 Nick Olah, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Nancy Reger, *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*
 Stephen Renner, *Franklin County Sanitary Engineers*
 David Reutter, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Bryan Rhoads, *Blendon Community Plan Working Committee*
 Cornell Robertson, *Franklin County Engineer's Office*
 Dave Ruetter, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*
 Thomas D. Shockley, *Franklin County Sanitary Engineers*
 Tom and Jan Spangler, *The Best Restaurant*
 Alex Stallings, *Blendon Township Trustee*
 Steven Studenmund, *Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District*
 Barbara Wallace, *Huber Ridge Elementary School*
 Jerry Ward, *Blendon Township Trustee*
 Emily Weber, *Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*
 James Welch, *Huber Ridge Neighborhood Association*
 Brad Westall, *Columbus Department of Recreation & Parks*
 Kevin Wheeler, *Columbus Department of Development*
 Emily Wickham, *Franklin County Public Affairs*
 Kim Williams, *Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries*
 Lorraine Winters, *Columbus Department of Public Utilities*
 Rebecca Yanni, *Wilder Elementary School*

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

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