

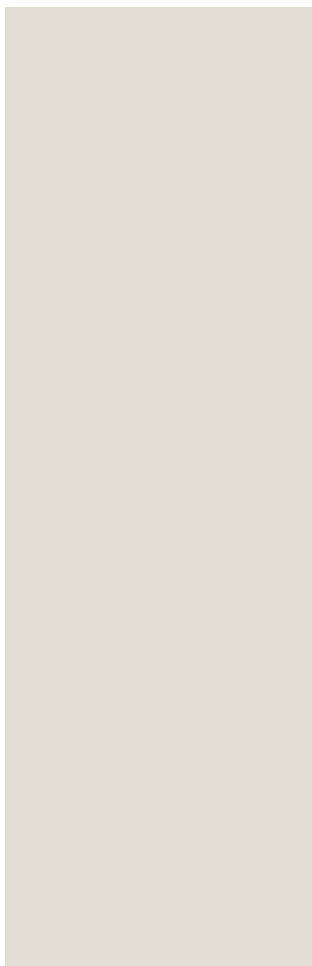
## Section 4

# Recommendations

**Rural Character** 55

**Safe Transportation** 63

**Environmental Protection** 69





# Rural Character

## Plan theme



Franklin County

**Goal: Preserve rural character through land use and site design**

### Chapter highlights

- Encourage the use of cluster-style design in new residential growth
- Target commercial development to specific areas of the township and enhance character by using site design and architectural style guidelines
- Preserve agricultural land and increase its productivity

### Strategy A

#### Designate areas for future residential growth that use site design techniques to protect rural character

To preserve rural character, this plan recommends that the predominant land use remains agricultural. Township residents stated that any new residential growth should not negatively impact rural character. Site design techniques can be used to allow for new residential development that does not negatively impact the rural landscape.

### Action 1

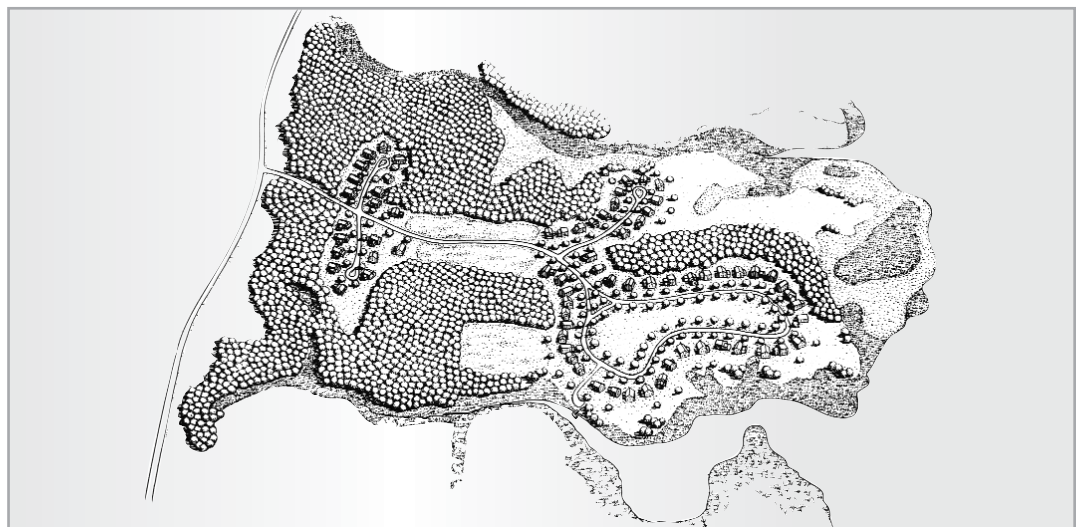
#### Use cluster-style development to protect rural character

Cluster-style design allows for residential growth while maintaining rural character. Instead of dividing land into large, rectangular lots, cluster-style development groups lots together in a manner that protects the rural views and character for residents and visitors.

This design technique preserves rural scenery while also protecting environmentally sensitive features.



**Figure 1**  
Conventional  
development clears  
away natural resources



**Figure 2**  
Conservation-style  
development retains  
natural resources, allowing  
everyone to enjoy them

**Action 2****Build away from environmentally sensitive features**

Development should respect and accentuate natural features. The features should be preserved and serve as a showpiece for new development rather than being hidden or eliminated. Using natural features in development helps maintain rural character.

**Action 3****Set back new development from scenic corridors**

New development should not spoil scenic vistas viewable from the road. One of the township's assets is the spacious, wide-open feeling. Development should minimize visual impact to travelers.

**Action 4****Require new development to provide rights-of-way to accommodate trails as designated by the Bikeways Plan map**

New development along bicycle corridors should dedicate adequate right-of-way for bikeways, in addition to requirements of the Franklin County Thoroughfare Plan. This right-of-way can accommodate future bicycle lanes or paths along the roads.

**Action 5****Encourage residential shared-access points**

New development should minimize new access points to existing roads. Fewer access points preserve rural character and maximize safety for motorists and bicyclists.

**Action 6****Design residential lot splits so that lots and structures are clustered to have minimal impact on sensitive land and view-sheds**

Lot splits should strive for the same rural preservation ideas as major subdivisions. New lots should be clustered together to avoid super-large lots, preserve environmental features and leave scenic vistas intact.



Franklin County

**Action 7****Encourage density bonuses for extraordinary conservation in cluster-style development projects as outlined in the Big Darby Accord**

The Big Darby Accord recommends increases in density for developers who go above-and-beyond in preserving environmental features and restoring previously-disturbed nature to its original state. This plan endorses the bonuses for extraordinary developer effort.

*New houses set back from the road allows retention of scenic character*

**Action 8****Keep residential development density neutral, outside of density bonuses for extraordinary conservation: Only allow increased densities if density is reduced elsewhere in the township**

Where extraordinary environmental restoration steps are not taken, developers should be limited to existing development rights for a parcel of land. If a developer wishes to increase the number of units beyond existing rights, an increase should only be granted contingent on retiring developable units elsewhere in the township. For example, if a developer wishes to place an additional four units on one parcel, she may purchase the development rights for four units on a second parcel from a willing seller. The second parcel would then remain agricultural or undeveloped.



**Action 9****Install underground utilities for new development projects where feasible**

For new development, extension of electric and cable lines should be placed underground to preserve scenic rural character. This practice will also alleviate outages due to severe weather. Underground placement should be avoided where environmental features could be harmed or in cases of extraordinary cost.

**Action 10****Maintain and encourage farming in the Agriculture zone while allowing property divisions consistent with current zoning**

Under current zoning regulations, original parcels are limited to four, 2.5-acre property divisions from their configuration in 1966. This limitation should be maintained. After the four property splits are exhausted, the minimum parcel size should be 20 acres.

**Strategy B****Designate limited areas for commercial development, using site design techniques to protect 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. Both new and long-time residents rely on the residential and agricultural nature of much of the township to maintain their quality of life. By designating specific areas for commercial development, residents can be sure that commercial activities won't intrude on their neighborhood, while allowing essential development that contributes to the township's revenue base.

**Action 11****Allow commercial development only in the commercial and mixed-use areas shown on the future land use map**

To preserve rural character, commercial development should be contained. Encroachment of commercial businesses into the rural landscape negatively impacts rural character by inviting traffic, creating noise and adding large buildings.

The area around Interstate 71 and Harrisburg Pike is designated for commercial uses only. This area is home to several existing commercial businesses and has excellent freeway access. Non-commercial rezonings are discouraged within the area designated on the future land use map.

To ensure that commercial uses are contained, no commercial rezonings, planned district or otherwise, should be permitted outside the boundaries shown on the map.

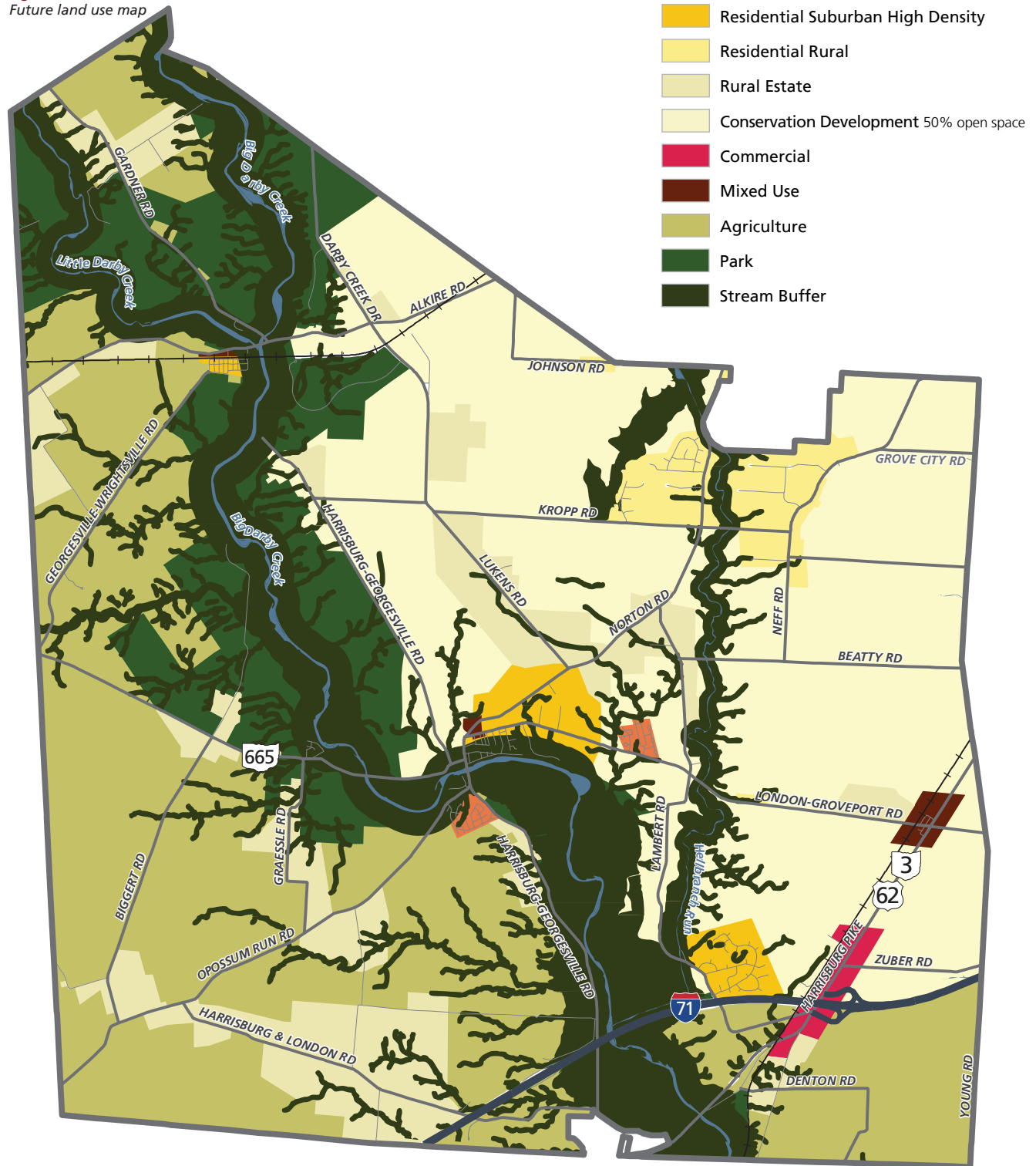
**Action 12****Implement new development standards for buildings in the commercial and mixed-use areas**

Physical development regulations and standards highly influence a community's character and perception by both residents and visitors. Where commercial development is permitted, new development should be configured to fit in with the rural landscape. Buildings should be small or moderately-sized, architecturally compatible with surrounding buildings and well-landscaped. They should also have street presence and be visible from the road, with parking orientated to the side and rear.

*Limited areas for commercial development allows commerce while protecting rural character*



Figure 3  
Future land use map



## Future Land Use map

Use this map in conjunction with the  
Conservation Strategy Tiers map, p. 71



*Widespread farming adds to Pleasant Township's rural feel*

These design standards will apply to new buildings and changes in land use. With the support of the township and county agencies, these standards should be incorporated in the Franklin County Zoning Resolution.

**Action 13**  
**Seek zoning changes to prohibit inappropriate uses in areas without central utilities**

Much of the township does not have access to central utilities. Some of these lands are commercially-zoned with the possibility of utility-intensive uses. The current situation has the potential to be a public health issue. Zoning changes must be made to disallow utility-intensive uses for properties without utility access.

Until these zoning changes are complete, rezonings will continue under the Select Commercial Planned District amendment to the 2001 comprehensive plan. This amendment prevents permitting uses that require centralized utilities, using a development plan and text that limits permitted uses. While following this amendment, development texts should allow a range of uses to minimize burdens on business owners and keep properties economically productive. To be consistent with the future land use map, the ranges should allow uses listed in the Corresponding Zoning Districts table, located in the Map Center section.

**Action 14**

**Allow permitted-use home occupations only**

Under the current zoning regulations, modest home occupations are a permitted use in residentially-zoned areas. Expanded home occupations are allowed with a conditional use permit granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Township residents want to make sure commercial development does not intrude into residential areas. Numerous conditional use home occupations have become code enforcement issues. Furthermore, legitimate business owners who rent commercial space cannot compete with residents running full-scale businesses out of their homes. Zoning regulations should be revised to disallow these expanded conditional use home occupations in the township.

**Strategy C**

**Enhance sense of place**

Visual cues such as gateway signs and scenic byway designations give area residents a sense of belonging. Establishing visual cues helps to build community pride and a sense of ownership among township residents.

**Action 15**

**Establish gateways consisting of monument-style signs on major arterial roadways**

Gateway signs will visually define the township and increase resident pride. The township should choose a design or theme to use throughout the area, especially one that reflects the township's history and desired future. The township should partner with the Franklin County Engineer's Office to install the signs.

**Action 16**

**Establish scenic byways on appropriate roads**

Scenic byways are nationally-recognized roads based on archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. The scenic byways program provides funding to support outstanding roads. The program also promotes tourism and economic development.

Pleasant Township has a number of outstanding roads that meet the scenic byways program



criteria. The township, working with the Ohio Department of Transportation, should pursue scenic byway designations for the following roads:

- Gardner Road
- Georgesville-Wrightsville Road
- Boyd Road
- Gay Road
- Harrisburg-Georgesville Road
- Darby Creek Drive

#### Action 17

##### Highlight and protect historic and cultural resources

Pleasant Township is home to a number of historical sites, including Tom Cannon Mound. Highlighting these sites enhance their value to their owners, residents and visitors. Drawing attention to the resources will also help the township's status as a scenic, rural destination.

#### Strategy D

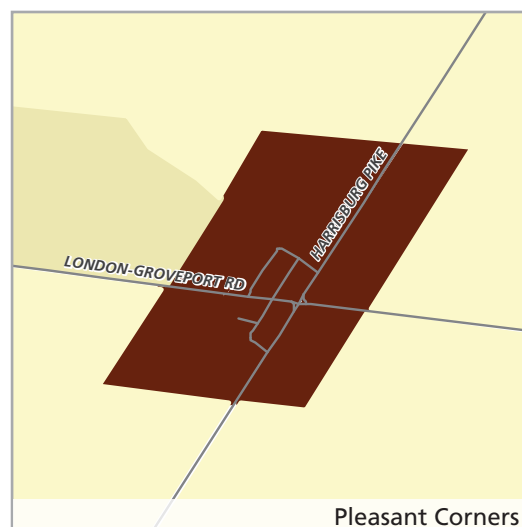
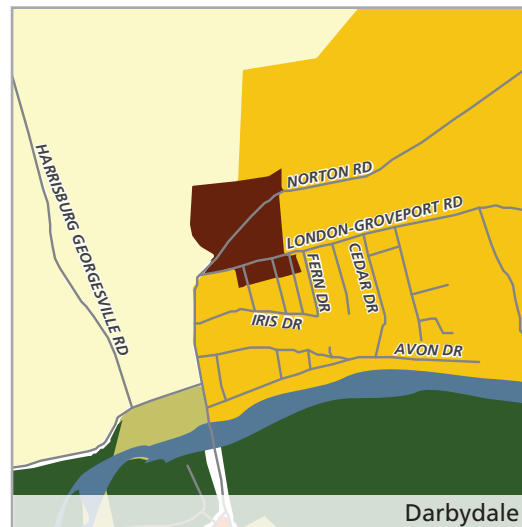
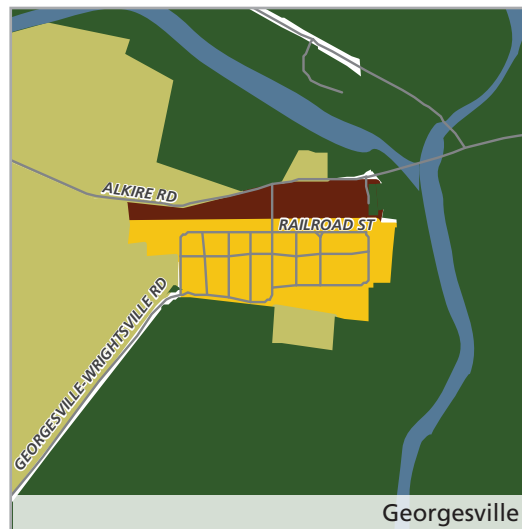
##### Preserve and enhance agricultural production

Agriculture is a large part of the history of Pleasant Township. It helps define the character of the area. Additionally, since most of the township consists of poorly-drained hydric soils, agriculture is better suited to these soils than residential development.

#### Action 18

##### Provide information to connect producers and consumers of local foods

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.



**Figure 4**  
Mixed-use areas, as shown on the future land use map

**Action 19****Encourage property owners to enroll in conservation programs, land stewardship programs and agricultural subsidies**

Several programs exist that pay farmers a portion of the difference between the development value of land and its agricultural value. These programs benefit consumers and residents by supporting the local agricultural economy and preserving the rural character of a community. The farmers benefit by receiving an additional income stream that allows farming to remain economically viable. Enrollment in these programs should be encouraged.

**Action 20****Direct existing Franklin County small business programs/loans to new farmers or 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.

**Action 21****Direct funds generated from The Big Darby Accord to purchase agricultural easements from farmers interested in farmland conservation**

According to the Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan, revenues generated from new development will be used for conservation purposes elsewhere in the watershed. Funds will be apportioned by following the prioritized conservation tiers. Funds should also be considered to purchase agricultural easements. This way, farmers receive payment for keeping their land in agriculture while ensuring the land is not converted to rooftops and driveways in the future.



# Safe Transportation Plan theme

**Goal: Provide a safe transportation network that accommodates automobiles, pedestrians and bicyclists**

## **Chapter highlights**

- Improve safety for pedestrians in dense areas
- Expand the bicycle network, both on- and off-road
- Improve safety of the road network

### Strategy A

#### Improve pedestrian accessibility in areas with high demand

Although the township is largely rural, and travel by auto is the most popular mode of transportation, certain areas have higher volumes of pedestrians. These areas are places with denser populations and areas near schools. Pedestrian safety can be greatly increased through improvements in these areas.

#### Action 1

#### Designate pedestrian priority zones as illustrated on the Bikeways and Pedestrian Priority Zone Map

The Bikeways and Pedestrian Priority Zone Map shows areas with high pedestrian demand. Areas along main roads have the greatest conflict between people and cars. Additional conflict exists in densely-populated areas or near schools. For each priority zone, the following improvements should be made to increase pedestrian safety and encourage travel on foot:

*Require 5-foot sidewalks:* Sidewalks separate vehicle and pedestrian traffic, dramatically reducing the potential for accidents. Five-foot sidewalks allow two adults sufficient room to walk comfortably side-by-side.

*Install “watch for pedestrian” signs:* Motorists can become distracted along roads with little traffic or that are straight for long distances. A ‘watch for pedestrian’ sign will signal to motorists that people are walking in the area.

*Increase safety of existing crossings:* Some pedestrian priority zones already have crossings. In these areas, there should be better signage and pavement markings to both signal a crossing to a motorist and encourage pedestrians to use these safer, defined crossings.

*If demand warrants, establish new crossing:* In some areas, there may not be an established pedestrian crossing, but people might want to cross there. New crossing should be established in these areas with signage and pavement markings as listed above.

### Strategy B

#### Improve the safety of biking along existing roads

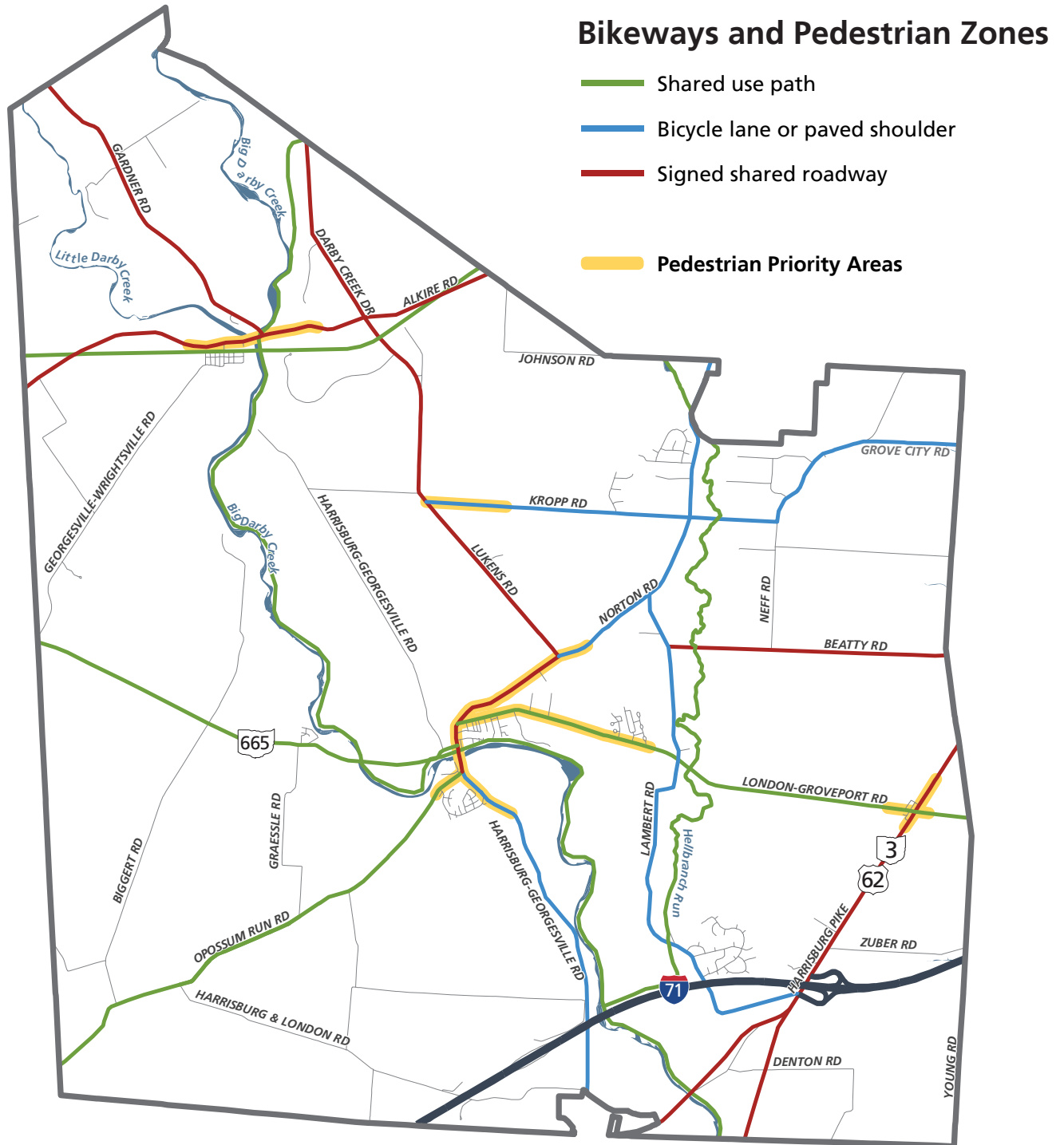
People bike in the township largely for recreational purposes. Scenic vistas, wide open spaces and destinations such as the metro park draw cyclists. The road network does not accommodate bicycles well. Many thoroughfares have stretches with long straightaways and 55 mph speed limits, which contribute to high vehicle speed and driver inattention. This increases the potential for collisions with cyclists. Measures should be taken to improve safety for cyclists.

Bicycle-oriented recommendations are designed for compatibility with current efforts to promote bicycling in Central Ohio. Recommendations by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks and the Columbus Bicentennial Bikeways Plan are incorporated into this plan.

*Pedestrians face danger on London-Groveport Road, at Pleasant Corners (left) and near Darbydale*



**Figure 5**  
Bikeways and pedestrian  
priority areas



## Bikeways and Pedestrian Areas map



**Action 2****Designate roads for “Share the Road” bike signage**

Share the Road bike signage lets motorists know bicyclists are using the road. The signs remind bicyclists and motorists alike to respect each user’s right to use the public road. Signs should be installed on the following roads:

- Darby Creek Drive
- Alkire Road
- Lukens Road
- Norton Road, west of Lukens Road
- Beatty Road
- Harrisburg Pike
- Stahl Road
- Gardner Road

**Action 3****Designate roads for paved shoulders or bicycle lanes**

Additional paved areas in the form of paved shoulders or bicycle lanes provide designated areas for bicyclists to travel safely. These areas are especially critical on roads with higher traffic volumes or those with limited visibility because of topography. Bicycle lanes should be installed on the following roads:

- Kropp Road
- Grove City Road
- London-Groveport Road, west of Big Darby Creek
- Lambert Road
- Norton Road, east of Lukens Road

**Support the establishment of shared-use paths**

Shared-use paths are pavement areas for bicycles and pedestrians that are separated from regular traffic. Especially attractive for shared-use paths are waterways and railways with a defined right-of-way. These paths are well-suited for recreation and should be installed along the following roads:

- Big Darby Creek
- Hellbranch Run
- Camp Chase Railway
- London-Groveport Road, east of Big Darby Creek
- Opossum Run Road

**Strategy C****Improve the safety of the road network**

Most roads in the township have two lanes, many with 55 mph speed limits. Accident data shows several high-accident roads and intersections. Improvements should be made to increase safety.

**Action 4****Maintain existing narrow roads for slower traffic**

Many township roads are narrow compared to county- and state-maintained roads. Studies show narrow lanes cause drivers to reduce speed. For safety, the roads should maintain their narrow width.

*Narrow roads encourage slower traffic. Shown here are Gay Road and Young Road*



**Action 5****Encourage speed limit reductions on high-accident roads**

Accident data shows crashes on several Pleasant Township roads. The data is backed by resident reports of excessive speed. The township, however has no direct authority to order a reduction in speed limits. Speed limit reductions must proceed through a process defined by the Ohio Department of Transportation. That process should review speed limits on the following roads:

- London-Groveport Road
- Harrisburg Pike
- Lambert Road
- Lukens Road
- Norton Road



Franklin County

*Bicyclists on a rural highway***Action 6****Encourage safety improvements to high-accident intersections**

Residents identified intersections with a high degree of perceived danger. Although townships have limited authority on county and state roads, this plan encourages the state and county to consider safety improvements at the following intersections:

- Norton Road and Kropp Road
- Lambert Road and London-Groveport Road



# Environmental Protection

## Plan Theme



Franklin County

**Goal: Enhance and preserve the environment**

### Chapter highlights

- Prioritize preservation of highly environmentally-sensitive land
- Follow recommendations of the Big Darby Accord
- Use stormwater best management practices to protect streams
- Encourage reduction in household energy use



### Strategy A

#### Harmonize township environmental policies with the Big Darby Accord

The Big Darby watershed has been the focus of recent efforts to preserve and protect the watershed's delicate ecological balance. A culmination of many efforts is the Big Darby Accord, a historic multi-jurisdictional partnership in which four municipalities, five townships and Franklin County agreed to work collaboratively to outline land use and environmental policies that preserve and protect the watershed.

The Big Darby Accord outlines a land use plan and a series of development and environmental policies that preserves and protects the watershed. The Pleasant Township plan seeks to uphold all the policies in the Accord.

#### Action 1

##### Adopt the conservation tiers of the Big Darby Accord

The Big Darby Accord performed a comprehensive inventory of environmental resources throughout the watershed. The document ranked all environmentally-sensitive areas using a tiered priority system. To maximize protection of environmental resources, this plan adopts those tiers.

*The Big Darby Creek is an environmental asset to Pleasant Township*



Franklin County

#### Action 2

##### Require new developments to adequately preserve significant natural features

When new development is proposed, developers should use the conservation tiers as a guide for locating development. Presence of natural features should be field-verified using the conservation tiers as a guide.

#### Action 3

##### Use Low Impact Development techniques

Low Impact Development is an approach to managing stormwater using natural processes rather than engineered solutions. LID involves a range of tools used throughout the development process, from site selection to construction and maintenance. LID results in cleaner water and lower costs than conventional practices. Pleasant Township, working with environmental partners, strongly promotes the use of LID techniques, such as the following:

- Bioswales: Planted areas that accept stormwater, helping recharge ground water and preventing pollutants from rushing off paved areas and into streams
- Native Landscaping: Using native plants that are well-adapted to the central Ohio climate, drought-tolerant and resistant to invasive species
- Pervious Paving: Hard surfaces for driveways and parking areas that allow rain water to soak into the ground rather than running off to ditches
- Rain Gardens: Small planted areas that accept rain water, helping recharge ground water and preventing pollutants from rushing off paved areas and into streams

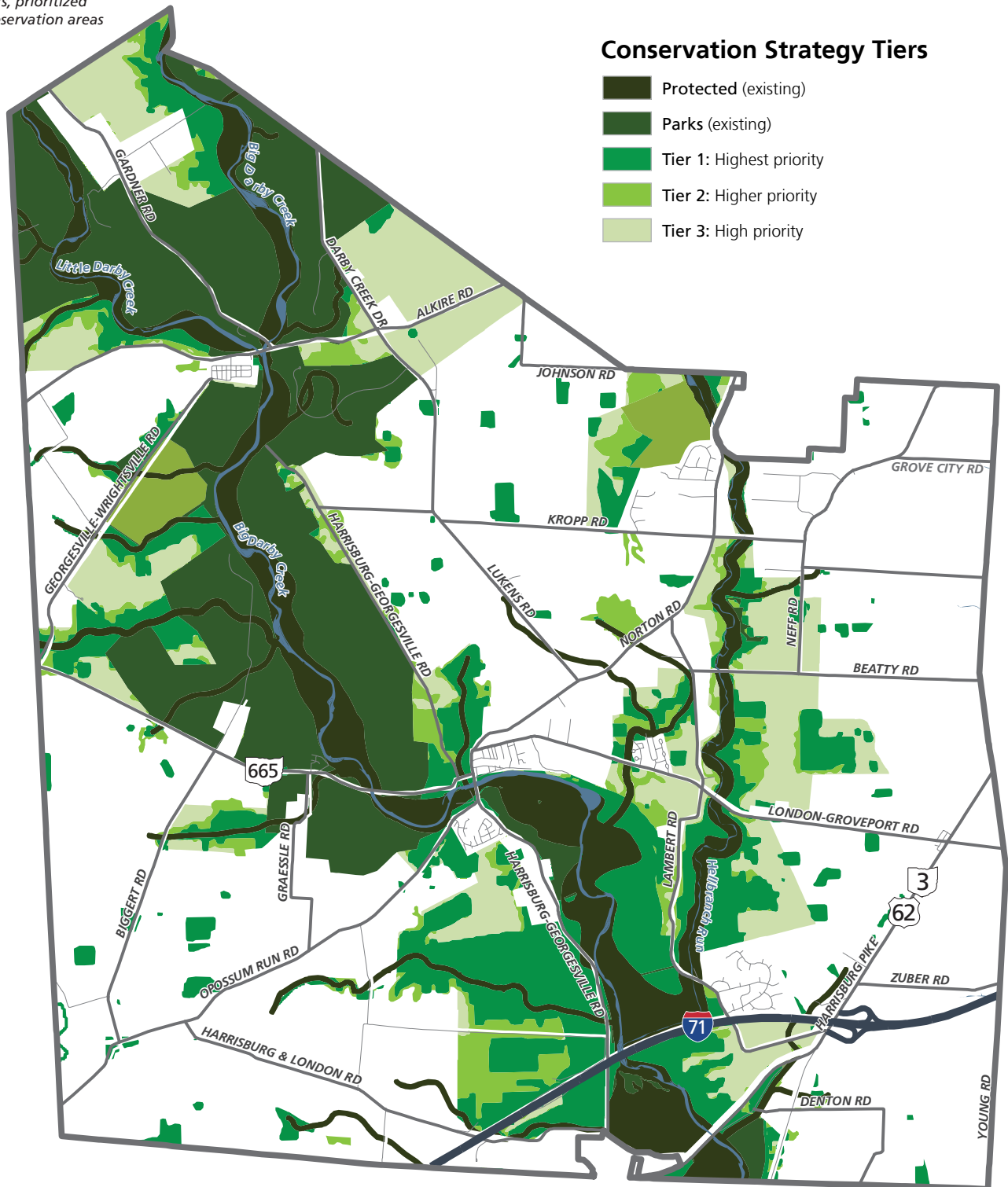
### Strategy B

#### Increase awareness and education of environmental stewardship

Public awareness of environmentally-sensitive development practices is increasing, but has a long way to go. Successful results can be achieved by providing better explanations about the consequences of developing in a conventional manner. With better education and out-



**Figure 6**  
Conservation  
tiers, prioritized  
preservation areas



## Conservation Strategy Tiers

Use this map in conjunction with the  
Future Land Use map, p. 59

### **Impact Development, Best Management Practices, Conservation Easements and other public programs**

Public agencies and environmental groups should coordinate to provide information on development techniques that minimize damage to the environment. Since there are many ways to use LID, coordinating efforts from multiple information sources will provide people with a range of options.

#### **Action 5**

#### **Pilot a rain garden project to inform residents of its ease and aesthetic value**

A rain garden is a planted area that receives stormwater. Instead of sending stormwater to a storm sewer or drainage ditch, water is sent to the rain garden. Rain gardens are planted with native vegetation that can tolerate both wet and dry conditions. As a demonstration project, the township should partner with the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation district to install a rain garden in a high-profile area, such as the township hall or local school. Wider awareness of rain gardens translates into wider prevalence.

### **Strategy C**

#### **Encourage reduction in household energy use**

Higher energy costs and environmental concerns have sparked consumer interest in alternative energy. Some are drawn by cost savings, others by concern for diminishing fossil fuel resources. New development in Pleasant Township should embrace and encourage reductions in the use of non-renewable fuels.

#### **Action 6**

#### **Encourage alternative energy use for new construction**

With rising costs for non-renewable fuels, renewable energy is often price-competitive with conventional solutions. There are numerous ways to employ these uses in new construction, such as geothermal heating and solar hot water heaters. These energy sources should be encouraged in new development.

#### **Action 7**

#### **Encourage residents to explore alternative energy techniques for their homes**

Alternative energy sources, like solar and wind, can reduce energy costs and have no emissions. Pleasant Township should encourage siting of alternative energy sources while being careful not to damage rural character.

#### **Action 8**

#### **Allow for the installation of non-emitting alternative energy sources or passive energy reductions in new developments**

New developments often include a set of restrictions as part of a deed or homeowners association. No deed or homeowners association should place new restrictions on the installation of alternative energy sources that are emission-free, such as solar panels or small wind turbines, or on the use of passive energy reductions, such as the line-drying of clothes.