



Parks and Public Spaces

*“For Hilliard to become
a great town, it will need
at least ten great major
destinations.”*

*“Building Hilliard Around Places,”
A study conducted by Project for
Public Spaces, 2007.*

Chapter 7:

Parks and Public Spaces

Goal for Parks and Public Spaces

Hilliard will be a leader in offering quality parks, public spaces, and recreational opportunities for its residents, employees and visitors. Hilliard's parks and public spaces will be diverse, active and accessible while providing opportunities for physical activity, social interaction and education.

Properly planned parks and public spaces enhance the quality of life within the community, build a sense of identity, and improve the city's economic competitiveness. These spaces, which include gathering places, walkable commercial districts, and public buildings, also help to tie together the social fabric of the community, fostering a healthier and more social community that attracts both residents and businesses.

The City of Hilliard has provided a variety of parks to serve existing residents, and attract new residents and businesses. Historically, these parks

were generally designed with an active or passive recreational focus. In recent years, Hilliard has embraced the ideas of developing parks into complete public spaces, and creating new public spaces outside the park system as strategies for improving the quality of life in Hilliard. Continued efforts to develop Old Hilliard and other areas into great public spaces will be a critical component of improving the quality of life and driving economic development in Hilliard.

Beyond creating great public spaces, Hilliard has a need to add more parkland in eastern Hilliard,

including in the I-270 Corridor Focus Area. Though Hilliard has historically located most of its parkland in what is now the western half of the city, where land was generally available, this leaves residents and workers in the eastern half of the city with few options within walking or biking distance. This mirrors public input gathered during this comprehensive planning process in which 60 percent of respondents said they drive to the parks they visit most, and where 85 percent said distance and accessibility concerns were the main reason they did not walk or bike to that park.

Key Findings

As part of the plan update, significant public outreach was conducted to gather input from residents and stakeholders on the future of Hilliard. Technical research was also performed to understand how the parks are managed and funded. Both the public input and technical analysis of existing conditions formed the basis for creating the recommendations in this chapter.

Public Input

Input was collected from residents as a part of the public input process for the Comprehensive Plan, including an internet-based park survey, and input collected from a series of public meetings. The following findings were derived from this input.

• **Location and accessibility are challenges to improving park attendance.**

Approximately 60 percent of respondents to the parks survey indicated they drive to the parks they visit most often, and 85 percent list distance and accessibility concerns as the main reason they do not walk or bike.

• **Residents desire to have more features, programs, and activities in the City’s parks.**

More than 75 percent of residents who responded to the park survey indicated that a lack of features, programs, and activities was the reason they did not visit the park closest to their home more frequently.

• **Neighborhood parks are valued.**

More than 80 percent of residents who responded to the park survey felt their neighborhood park adds value to their home. This indicates parks are valued by the community as an amenity for recreation, and as an important attribute that attracts and retains residents, and maintains property values.

• **Residents desire updated and expanded facilities.**

A key theme identified during the public input process was that residents have a strong desire for improved and expanded facilities. Many ideas and comments were received through the process which related to this topic. The most commonly requested facilities include:

- Updated or new community center
- Additional soccer field facilities
- Facilities and programs
- Extended biking and walking trails
- Indoor aquatic center

• **Residents desire a signature public event.**

The City has a number of annual events, but lacks a key signature event. A key theme identified during the public input process was that the community needs a signature event that will bring the community together, attract visitors, and help boost the city’s image. The lack of a signature community event is also referenced in the large number of comments related to lack of identity in the city.

Public Input Highlights

Integrating public input the plan....

- Improve connections to and between parks
- Define existing park space to serve a variety of purposes and support new programs
- Enhance existing park space to serve as cornerstones to existing neighborhoods
- Expand existing multi-use paths
- Improve opportunities in Old Hilliard to host a signature community event

Existing Conditions

The following conditions provide a snapshot of Hilliard’s Parks and Public Spaces:

Program fees generate the majority of the Recreation and Parks Department budget.

The 2009 operating budget for the department was approximately \$788,000, with about \$700,000 of that amount having been generated from program fees.

Hilliard will need approximately 110 acres of park land by 2020 to meet the national standard.

Established by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA), the national standard calls for 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Using



this standard, Hilliard should have 286 acres of parkland. Hilliard currently has 240 acres of public parks today, 46 acres shy of the standard and providing 8.39 acres of parkland per thousand residents. By comparison, the average for most central Ohio communities is approximately 14.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Population growth of nearly 35,000 residents over the next decade is expected to create a need for 64 acres of parkland. In order to meet the planning standard for 35,000 residents (350 acres), Hilliard will need to add approximately 110 acres of parkland over the next nine years.

Additional active and passive park space can be planned and developed on the west side of Hilliard.

In 2009, a major commercial development was being planned near the intersection of Cosgray and Scioto Darby roads. As part of this develop-

ment approximately 60 acres of active park space were included as part of the plan. When fully built this facility may serve as a major sports complex drawing in visitors from around the region. This new park would be directly adjacent to Municipal Park. Collectively this area has the potential to become one of the larger outdoor sports complexes in the region. This facility will be well situated to promote and host large regional tournaments that will bring revenue to the parks, and bring both people and money into the city. These events will help support Focus Area development, particularly hotels, restaurants, and specialty retailers. In turn, the development of the Focus Areas will help Hilliard become a more attractive community to host regional tournaments.

The Land Use Plan calls for a large amount of conservation development west of Alton-Darby Road. As this area is developed, approximately 50 percent of the area will be preserved as open space. The City should encourage the majority of the

open space to be dedicated as passive park space with a conservation focus. These open spaces should be linked through a series of trails that connect to the rest of the community.

Most of the park space in the City of Hilliard is active in nature with very little space reserved for passive uses or habitat conservation.

With the exception of a proposed recently completed park in Old Hilliard, the majority of Hilliard’s parks are suburban in nature with expansive lawn areas, and are very active in nature (e.g. sports fields and courts). Though residential development in the Darby will provide more passive park space and provide local access to it, there is a need to develop more passive park space in other areas of the City.

The majority of Hilliard’s park space is located west of the Fairgrounds, providing few choices for those who reside in the eastern half of the city.

Fourteen of Hilliard’s 21 parks are located west of the Fairgrounds providing few options within walking or biking distance on the eastern half of Hilliard. The addition of new park space in the I-270 Corridor Focus Area has the potential to improve this disparity and provide needed amenities to the Britton Parkway corridor. There is a need for all kinds of parkland east of the Fairgrounds, including athletic fields, naturalized conservation spaces, and quality public spaces such as community greens, pocket parks, and plazas.

Table 7.1 – Central Ohio Parks Comparison

City	Population	Parkland (Municipal parks only)		Parkland (Municipal parks, nearby Metro Parks)	
		Acres of parkland	Ratio (acres per 1,000 residents)	Acres of parkland	Ratio (acres per 1,000 residents)
Dublin	41,093	1,000	24	2,037	50
Gahanna	33,224	631	19	-	-
Grove City	31,537	565	18	-	-
Worthington	13,314	221	17	1,380*	104
Westerville	36,361	559	15	1,444	40
Hilliard	28,697	240	8	2,228*	78
Reynoldsburg	33,657	275	8	918	27
Upper Arlington	33,686	172	5	-	-
* Metroparks within or adjacent to city limits Note: This analysis does not include land owned and maintained by local school districts.					

Park Usage

Parks reporting the most use were...

- Municipal Park
- Hilliard East Pool and Park
- Heritage Rails to Trails
- Tinnapple Park

Parks reporting the least use were...

- Conklin Park
- Hamilton Park
- Heather Ridge
- Latham Park
- Silverton Park

Source: Park Survey



Figure 7.1 — An image of the proposed Hilliard's Station Park in Old Hilliard.

The proliferation of small neighborhood parks help most Hilliard residents be no more than a mile long walk or bike ride from a local park

Virtually all of Hilliard's current residential areas are located within a mile walk or bike ride of some kind of park facility. Many of these facilities are small neighborhood parks, some equipped with playgrounds, shelter houses, and walking paths. Despite the high level of coverage across the city, many of these parks have common recreational amenities, principally a large grassy field (with or without a playground), one or more athletic fields,

and either a large wooded area or retention pond with a walking path. As a result, most of Hilliard's residents are not within walking or biking distance from both active and passive recreational opportunities.

Hilliard plans on opening Hilliard's Station Park, a new park in Old Hilliard.

City officials are currently working to develop a new park along Center Street in Old Hilliard. The park will not be far from the former site of Hilliard's Station, a train depot and center of business

activity in the 1800s. A concept of the proposed park is at left in Figure 7.1.

Public Spaces Planning Process

In 2007, the City invited Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to conduct a placemaking training seminar and prepare a report focused on the creation and revitalization of public spaces in Hilliard. The PPS report recommended that Hilliard define and develop at least ten great public spaces to become a great city.

Building on the PPS report, the city's top ten public places were identified as a part of the comprehensive planning process. With a consideration to the next five years, five of the top ten public places were selected as areas that should be the focus of development. These locations were identified as places that are important in defining the identity of Hilliard, and as projects that will help the City achieve other objectives of the plan. Recommendations have been provided to further improve these top five public spaces, starting on Page 144.

The recommendations of this chapter evaluate the public input, existing conditions, and the Project for Public Spaces report to provide recommendations for how to enhance Hilliard's parks and public spaces. The following steps were taken to develop these recommendations:

1. Inventory and Technical Analysis

The planning team worked with City staff to develop an inventory of the current park facilities and programs, identified challenges and opportunities, reviewed the operating budget, evaluated current parks space inventory compared



to industry standards, and reviewed current and future programming.

2. Public meetings

A series of public meetings were held to solicit public feedback regarding the city’s parks and public spaces. Topics of discussion included most visited public spaces, needed amenities, general concerns, and potential new programs or events.

3. Online Park Survey

An online survey was created to determine how the current parks are used by residents, and what future facilities or programming may be desired in each park. Over 600 people responded to the survey.

4. Identify Top 10 Public Spaces

Results of the public meetings and park survey were reviewed with the Task Force. The Committee then developed a list of the top ten public spaces for the city to focus their attention on over the next ten years. The top ten parks and public spaces include:

- Municipal Park;
- The Heritage Rail Trail, and its proposed extension;
- Weaver Park;
- The Library, J.W. Reason Elementary, and Hamilton Park area;
- Old Hilliard;
- The East Pool and Park;
- Cross Creek Park;
- St. Brendan’s Park;
- The Hayden Run corridor; and
- The Big Darby area.

5. Walking Audits

Members of the project team and Task Force visited each of the top ten public spaces and performed a walk audit of each site. The top 10 public spaces were evaluated and scored based on various criteria established by PPS including comfort, accessibility, security, activity and programming. During the walk audits the team also identified potential improvements and programming that would support the development of each park.

6. Identification of Top 5 Public Spaces

After completion of the walk audits the team met again with the Task Force to examine the top ten public spaces and develop a list of the top five public spaces as a priority for development/redevelopment. These spaces include:

- Old Hilliard,
- Weaver Park,
- The East Pool and Park,
- The Heritage Rail Trail, and its proposed extension; and
- Municipal Park.

The top five public spaces are the focus of the programming and design recommendations in this chapter. These recommendations start on page 144.

Project For Public Spaces

The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) report outlined four basic elements that make great public spaces. These basic elements were considered and integrated into the recommendations for the planning of parks in Hilliard. Below is a description of each of these elements as defined by PPS.

Activities and Uses

A good place will be filled with activities that bring people together and act as the glue of their communities drawing people in for companionship and relaxation.

Access and Linkage

Good public spaces are visible and easy to get to. People need to see that there is something to do and that others have gathered there. A public space also needs to be easily accessible from a variety of methods. The linkage of amenities in the park also needs to be carefully considered to help bring people together.

Comfort and Image

Good places entice people through well designed amenities such as seating, shade trees, bike racks, and bulletin boards.

Sociability

A social place is where people want to go to observe the passing scene, meet friends, and interact with a wide range of people that are different from themselves. Successful programming of social activities is crucial to the success of a public space.

Parks and Public Spaces Recommendations

Goal

Hilliard will be a leader in offering quality parks, public spaces, and recreational opportunities for its residents, employees and visitors. Hilliard’s parks and public spaces will be diverse, active, and accessible while providing opportunities for physical activity, social interaction and education.

Objective PPS-1: Increase the amount of parkland, both active and passive, within Hilliard with the goal of having 12 acres per 1,000 by 2020.

- **Action PPS-1.1:** *Continue to support the development of new park space in and around Old Hilliard, including the Hilliard’s Station park and Heritage Rail Trail extension to Main Street currently in development.*
Beyond Hilliard’s Station and the trail extension, these parks should continue to the southeast along the Retired Railroad Corridor.
- **Action PPS-1.2:** *Ensure new development within the Big Darby Focus Area create naturalized, publically accessible, passive park space.*
Such parkspace should preserve critical environmental areas and creates public access to new open space and parkland. These areas should

consist of native plants and habitats to the central Ohio region.

- **Action PPS-1.3:** *Develop new parks and active recreation opportunities in the eastern half of the City.*
- **Action PPS-1.4:** *As development occurs on the west side of the city, work to expand Municipal Park, and/or create new park space.*
These park spaces should create additional active recreational opportunities and a destination sports complex (e.g. soccer or baseball fields to host regional sporting events).
- **Action PPS-1.5:** *Require all new developments to create or dedicate park space or usable open space as a community amenity.*
- **Action PPS-1.6:** *As development occurs in the I-270 Corridor Focus Area, ensure new*

development includes a range of park and public space amenities including plazas, greens, naturalized stream corridors, and some athletic fields.

Objective PPS-2: Partner with local organizations and groups to help support great public events in the city, particularly Old Hilliard.

- **Action PPS-2.1:** *Work with local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Destination Hilliard, and others to create a signature event.*
- **Action PPS-2.2:** *Work to make Old Hilliard the primary destination to host a signature event in the City.*
- **Action PPS-2.3:** *Work with the Hilliard City School District to encourage the schools to host special events, such as outdoor plays, band/choir performances in Old Hilliard.*

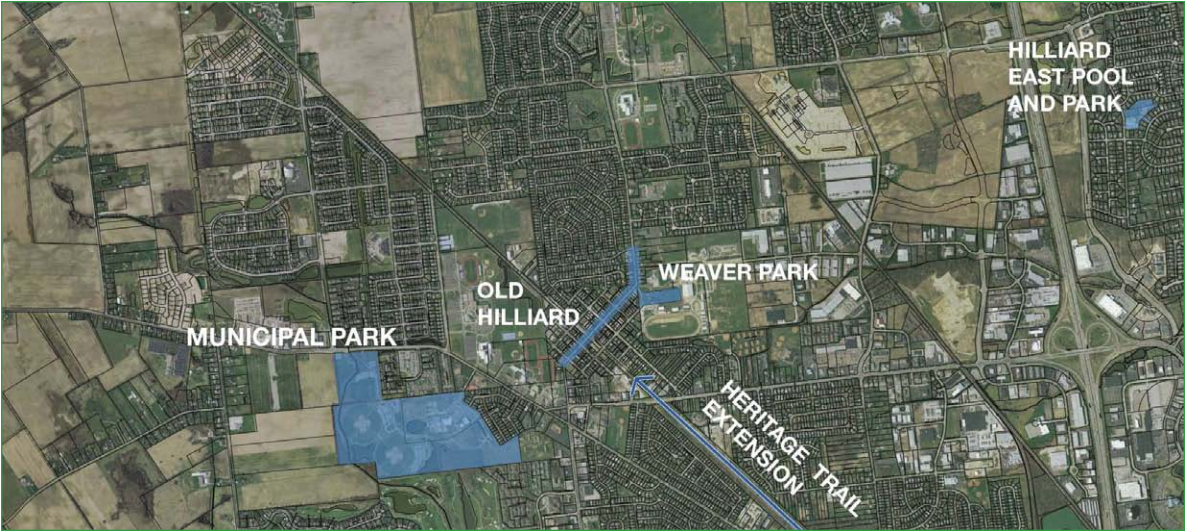
- **Action PPS-2.4:** *Work with local charitable organizations to host special events in Old Hilliard (e.g. Humane Society, American Cancer Society).*
- **Action PPS-2.5:** *Collaborate with the Franklin County Fair Board to host events that serve the fairgrounds and Old Hilliard.*

Objective PPS-3: Support the expansion of recreational trails throughout the city.

- **Action PPS-3.1:** *Extend the Heritage Rail Trail southeast from Old Hilliard to the Columbus corporation limit.*
- **Action PPS-3.2:** *Create new pedestrian/bike connections between neighborhoods and public spaces, improving access to existing parks and public spaces.*
Similarly, new developments should provide ample access to parks and open spaces within and adjacent to their developments.
- **Action PPS-3.3:** *Ensure future development projects provide ample access to parks and open spaces, both proposed and existing.*
Ample access is necessary to ensure that such spaces are accessible to all; not just to residents with homes adjacent to the park space.
- **Action PPS-3.4:** *Partner with developers and agencies to create a regional bikeway between Municipal Park to Prairie Oaks Metro Park.*

Objective PPS-4: Continue to maintain a high-quality Recreation and Parks Department and programs in the City.

Map 7.1 – Top Five Public Spaces



After Hilliard’s top ten public spaces were identified, audited, and recommendations for each were developed, the planning team and Task Force identified the top five parks and public spaces that the City should focus redeveloping/improving in the short to midterm (1-5 years). The top five parks and public spaces were identified as public spaces that could have the most impact on improving the quality of life for Hilliard residents. The development/redevelopment of these areas also builds on other goals and objectives of the plan. It should be the focus of the City over the next five years to develop and improve these spaces. The top five public spaces are identified on the map above.

- **Action PPS-4.1:** *Work with local philanthropic organizations (e.g. Rotary) to beautify the City at key entrances, and at City-owned property.*
- **Action PPS-4.2:** *Work with a funding specialist/grant writer to allocate state and federal funds to support ongoing capital projects in the parks system.*
- **Action PPS-4.3:** *Host regular park “clean-ups” together with other special events to help keep the parks clean.*

Objectives 5 through 9 support the development of the top five public spaces identified during the planning process.

These spaces include Old Hilliard, Weaver Park, the East Pool, the Heritage Rail Trail extension, and Municipal Park. Recommendations, sample images, and concept plans for each of the top five public spaces can be found on pages 144-163.

Objective 10: Support the development of the remaining top ten public spaces

These remaining spaces include the Library, J.W. Reason Elementary, and Hamilton Park area; Cross Creek Park; St. Brendan’s Park; the Hayden Run corridor; and the Big Darby Focus Area. Conceptual recommendations for these spaces were provided by the Parks and Public Spaces Task Force.

Top Five Spaces:
Old Hilliard

Objective 5: Continue to support the development of Old Hilliard.

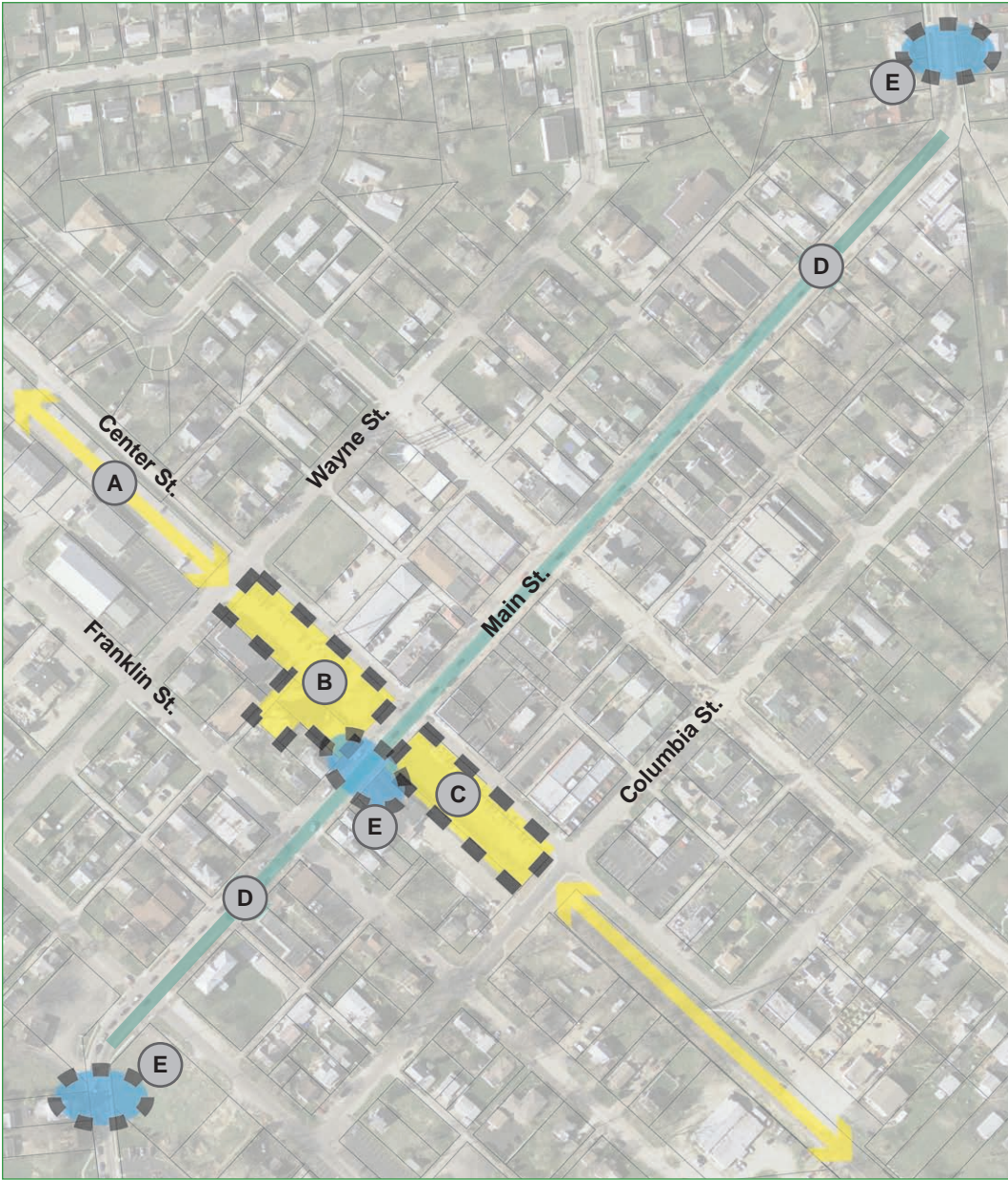
This focus on the downtown is expected to continue as the city works to develop the new parks and other amenities to bring more people into this district. Main Street scored well during the walk audit conducted by team members, particularly in response to new streetscape improvements that have added to the appeal of downtown.

Old Hilliard was identified as the most important public space in the city. Old Hilliard serves as the core of the city, and is one of the pinnacle places that define the community. Within Old Hilliard there are many public spaces. Recent investment in the Main Street and Norwich Street streetscapes have made quite an improvement, as has the recently completed First Responders Park.

Continuing efforts to develop Main Street as a regional amenity and destination will be a critical component of encouraging future economic development in Old Hilliard. Such efforts include the proposed Heritage Rail Trail extension to Main Street, the proposed Hilliard’s Station Park, private development of buildings and businesses that contribute to the vision of Old Hilliard, and potentially a new performing arts space.

Design and program recommendations are offered for Old Hilliard as a whole, and specific design and program recommendations for each of the primary public spaces within Old Hilliard.

Map 7.2 – Old Hilliard



- A Center Street Improvements/Proposed Heritage Rail Trail
- B Proposed Hilliard’s Station Park, and Heritage Rail Trail trailhead
- C First Responders Park
- D Streetscape restoration
- E Existing Streetscape Arches

Design Recommendations

- **PPS-5.1:** *Develop better overlay standards for architecture and site development, helping private development and investments complement the City's investment in developing Old Hilliard as the city's premier public place.*
- **PPS-5.2:** *Promote infill development along Main Street to create a continuous wall of structures along the street.*

- **PPS-5.3:** *Provide additional bike racks where needed throughout Old Hilliard.*
- **PPS-5.4:** *Provide better signage for bike circulation and public (automobile) parking areas.*
- **PPS-5.5:** *Develop signature private or public buildings at the northeast and southwest end of Main Street to establish terminating views for the street corridor.*



Figure 7.2 – Hilliard Arch and Streetscape Restoration

Program Recommendations

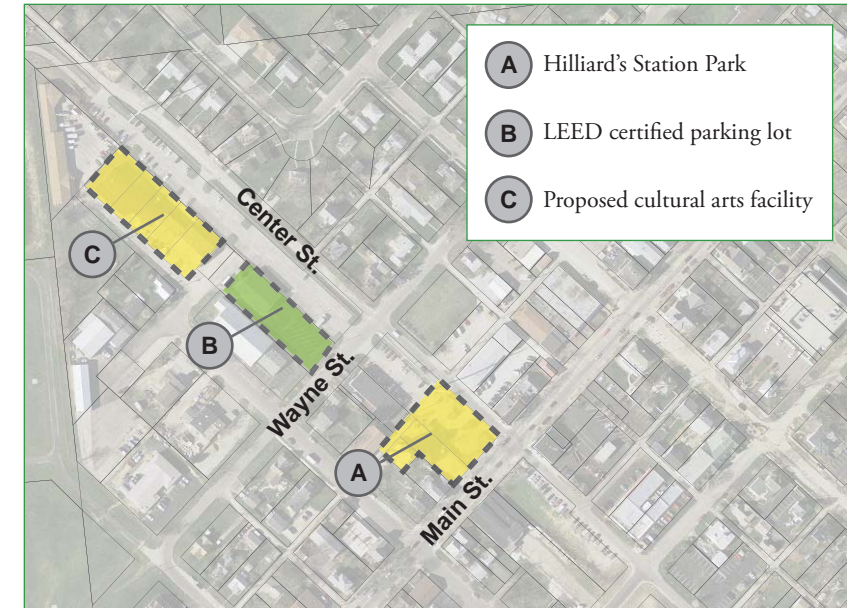
- **PPS-5.6:** *Sponsor, develop, and program community events in Old Hilliard and its parks (e.g. farmers market, pups on Main Street).*

**Qualities of Great Public Spaces
(PPS guidelines):**

- **Activities and uses:** Program events and activities in Old Hilliard's parks to refine the image and increase the sociability factor of the district.
- **Access and Linkage:** Restore, extend, and maintain the Main Street streetscape, signage, and pedestrian pathways throughout Old Hilliard, improving the pedestrian experience across the focus area.
- **Comfort and Image:** Create a new zoning overlay district to regulate site orientation and architecture, helping to create a distinct image for Old Hilliard. New signage and streetscape arches should add to the character of Old Hilliard.
- **Sociability:** Host events in Old Hilliard to create a vibrant and social atmosphere.



Figure 7.3 – Hilliard's Station Park



Map 7.3 – Hilliard's Station Park

Old Hilliard: Hilliard's Station Park

The proposed Hilliard's Station Park is a catalyst project that will help enhance Old Hilliard as a social, recreational, and entertainment destination. The park is designed as a year-round event space for the community.

At the entrance of the park, waterwalls will frame the walkway leading users to the core of the park where a spray park and amphitheater will be located. The stage and multi-level seating will enclose one of central Ohio's largest spray parks and be the backdrop for the community venue. The proposed year-round community shelter is designed with elements reflective of the old train depot, which has since been moved. Glass garage doors on the community shelter can be opened in the warmer months and closed in the winter months. An outdoor fireplace with seating will



Figure 7.4 – Proposed character and site elements for Hilliard Station Park



be adjacent to the building, while the sloped lawn panel gives additional seating and relaxation space around the spray park.

On the other side of Center Street, a LEED certified parking lot is proposed to give additional parking for community events and a designated

farmers market space. A public facility is also being considered in this area for cultural and performing arts. This project should be considered and planned in conjunction with the other planned projects in the areas.



Old Hilliard: First Responders Park

First Responders Park was constructed to acknowledge the dedicated men and women who answered the call to help the citizens of New York City in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Dedicated on the nine-year anniversary, the park memorializes those who lost their lives in the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Flight 93.

At the time of its dedication, Hilliard's First Responders Park was one of the nation's largest memorial parks dedicated to first responders or as a memorial of the events of 9/11. The park is made up of a series of contemplative spaces for reflection and prayer, and incorporates fountain features, seating areas, sculptures, memorial monuments, and most importantly, steel pieces from the World Trade Center for the plaza. The stainless steel sculpture at the center of the park was intended to convey the universal nature of human feeling.

First Responders Park also links Old Hilliard to the existing and proposed extension of the Heritage Rail Trail.



Figure 7.5 – First Responders Park





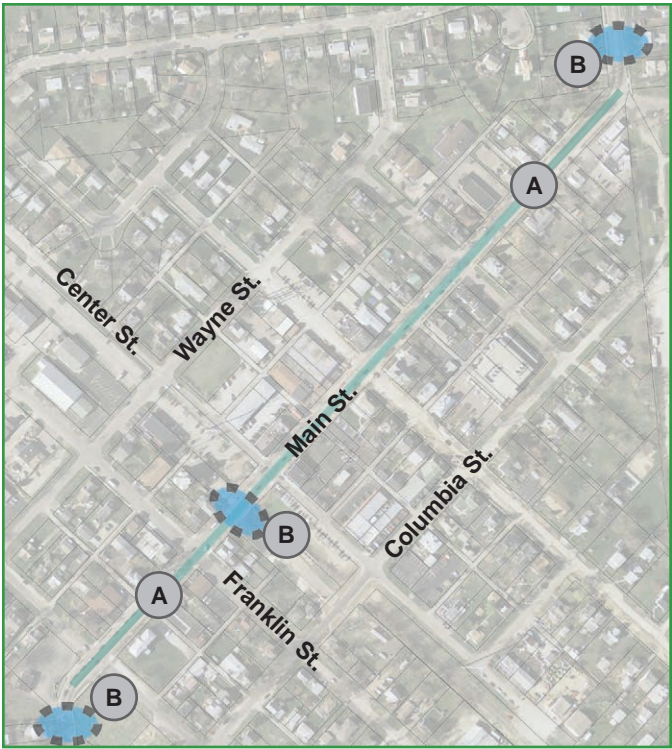
Figure 7.6 – Character images of Old Hilliard

Old Hilliard: Main Street

In 2008, the City of Hilliard completed a new streetscape along Main Street, the focal point and primary roadway through Old Hilliard. The new streetscape incorporates brick pavers, street lights, street tree planters and landscaped beds, bike racks, and benches. Recognizing that definition was needed to distinguish the historic core along this major street, two large arches were erected to announce the arrival into the downtown and a third was erected on Main Street near the historic site of Hilliard’s Station, a train depot.

The Main Street Restoration project is the first of a multi phase effort to revitalize Old Hilliard, improving connectivity, adding destinations, and supporting economic development within the historic center of Hilliard. Future projects will include improvements to Center Street, and a continuation of streetscape improvements on secondary streets such as Franklin Street.

Map 7.4 – Main Street



- A** Streetscape restoration
- B** Hilliard arch



Figure 7.7 — Old Hilliard Main Street streetscape elements

Old Hilliard: Heritage Rail Trail Extension along Center Street

The Heritage Rail Trail, stretching from Hilliard toward Plain City, ends two blocks northwest of Main Street in Old Hilliard. This seven-mile long trail is one of the more heavily used recreational amenities in Hilliard. Opportunities to improve the trail and trailhead’s accessibility, connectivity, and visibility were identified during the walk audit. Taking advantage of these opportunities will help build on the success of the Heritage Rail Trail.

Extending the trail to Main Street provides an opportunity for the trailhead of the path to be anchored by the Hilliard’s Station Park, creating a recreational hub at the park for people using the trail. The trailhead could include a “cooling zone” with self-propelled fountains, outdoor lockers, drinking water, and resting areas for those using the trail.

The reconstruction of Center Street and the adjacent public parking area will allow for the separation of vehicular traffic from the Trail’s bike/pedestrian traffic in a safe and aesthetically-pleasing way, defining the extension of the Heritage Rail Trail along the corridor. Defined crosswalks, street trees and planting treatments, corridor furnishings, street lighting and decorative hardscape elements should be incorporated into the improved Center Street. ‘Green Design’ principles should be implemented through the use of native plant material, permeable pavers, and rain gardens in parking areas.

Design Recommendations

- **PPS-5.7:** *Extend the Heritage Rail Trail through Old Hilliard and southeast along the Retired Railroad Corridor, and move the trailhead to the corner of Main and Center streets to improve trail access.*
- **PPS-5.8:** *Build better connectivity between the trail, surrounding neighborhoods, and schools.*
- **PPS-5.9:** *Establish pocket parks with water stops, shade, bike parking, and other amenities.*

Program Recommendations

- **PPS-5.10:** *Program and advertise organized rides or bicycle events to bring more users to Old Hilliard.*
This may include working with local businesses to sponsor such events.
- **PPS-5.11:** *Ensure a system of routine maintenance and policing to keep the trail clean and inviting.*
- **PPS-5.12:** *Install signage along the trail that educates trail users on the history of the rail in Hilliard.*

Map 7.5 – Rails to Trails & Center Street



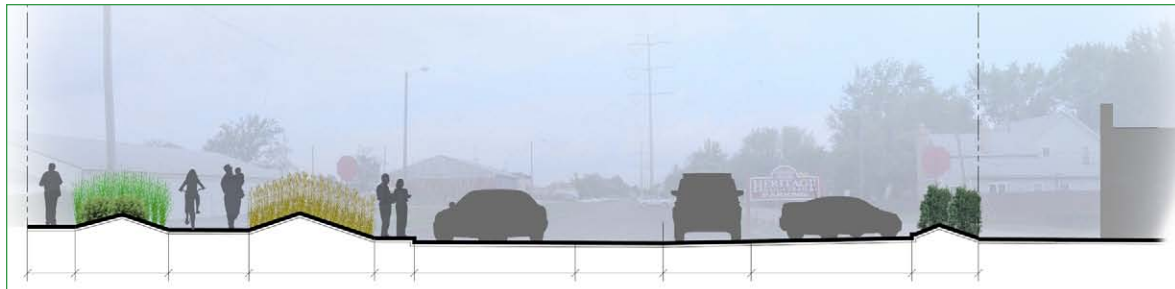


Figure 7.8 – Proposed character images for the Heritage Rail Trail extension along Center Street

Qualities of Great Public Spaces (PPS guidelines)

- **Activities and uses:** Move the trailhead to the corner of Main and Center streets to help to attract people to the trail and promote Old Hilliard as a destination for cyclists.
- **Access and Linkage:** Move the trailhead closer to Main Street, and extend the trail southeast to increase the length of and access to the trail.
- **Comfort and Image:** Provide well placed pocket parks for people to stop along the trail, making the trail feel more comfortable, inviting, and safe, and increasing use of the trail.
- **Sociability:** Program regular events along the trail (e.g. riding events) to increase their utilization of the trail and bring additional people into the community.



Top Five Spaces: Municipal Park

Objective 6: Continue developing Municipal Park and its broad array of amenities.

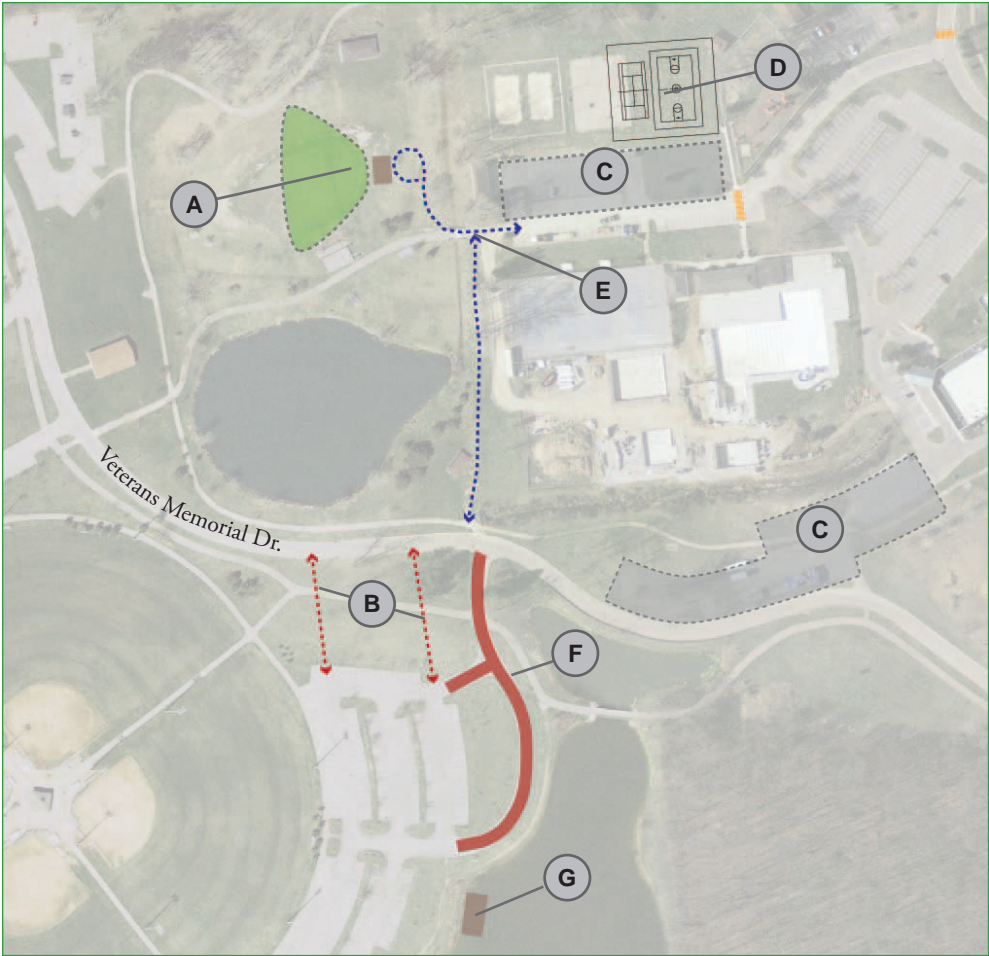
Municipal Park is Hilliard’s signature park and largest park in Hilliard’s inventory. The park is home to the Hilliard Family Aquatic Center, a community center, an amphitheater, a lake and walking paths, numerous baseball diamonds, soccer fields, and other athletic facilities. Strengths identified by the team members during the walk audit included the park’s form and vitality, comfort, and security; however, the park’s accessibility and amenities were seen as things that could be improved.

As Hilliard’s largest park, and as a park containing a variety of passive and active recreational areas, the following are recommendations offered for the passive recreational areas of Municipal Park.

Design Recommendations (passive areas)

- **PPS-6.1:** *Improve pedestrian accessibility along Veterans Memorial Drive and at the park entrance across from Coventry Manor Way (not shown in Map 7.6).*
- **PPS-6.2:** *Provide safer crossings across Scioto Darby Road between Hoffman Farms subdivision and Municipal Park (not shown in Map 7.6).*
- **PPS-6.3:** *Improve signage to improve the park’s visibility from Scioto Darby Road, and identify the park as a signature destination in Hilliard.*

Map 7.6 – Municipal Park



- A Re-orientation of amphitheater
- B New roadway
- C Additional parking
- D Sport courts
- E Pedestrian pathway
- F Removal of roadway
- G Fishing dock/pier



Figure 7.9 – Proposed character for Municipal Park

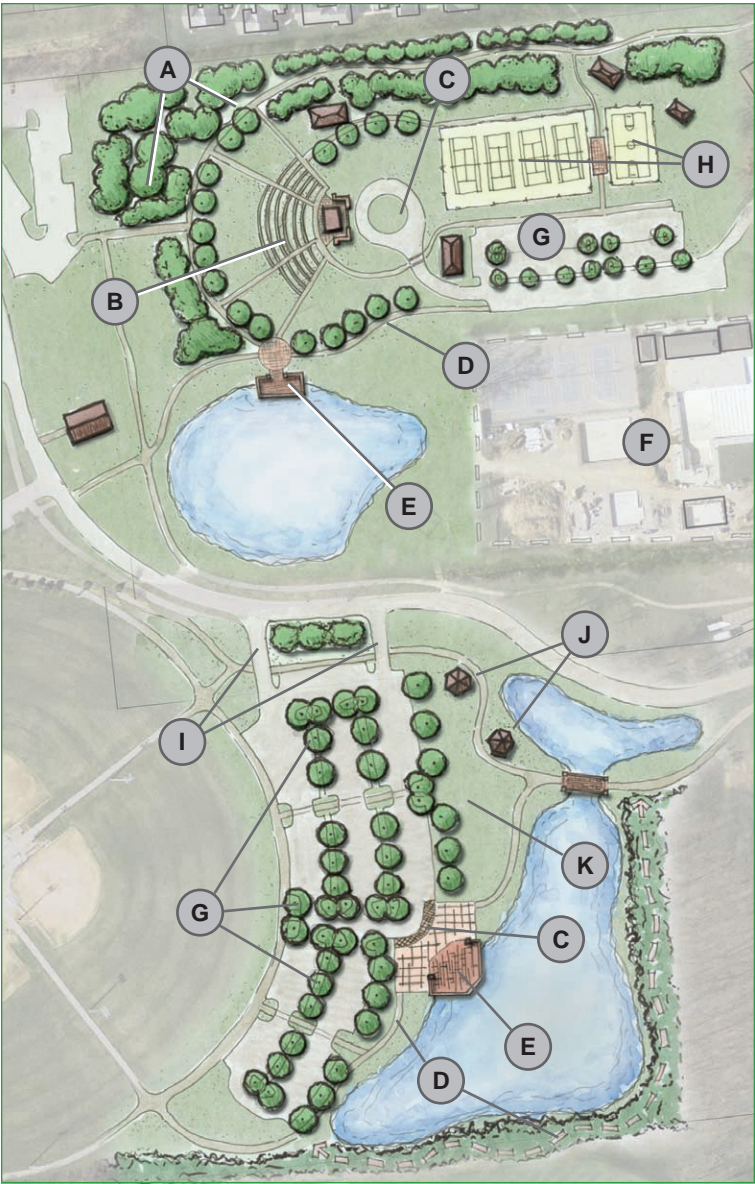
- **PPS-6.4:** *Improve the current amphitheater to support future programming.*
- **PPS-6.5:** *Enlarge the amphitheater with structured seating, open lawn space, and a new elevated stage.*

Program Recommendations (passive areas)

- **PPS-6.6:** *Host regular entertainment at the amphitheater such as music/theater to attract visitors to the park.*

Qualities of Great Public Spaces (PPS guidelines)

- **Activities and Uses:** Update the amphitheater and add two fishing docks to create additional passive recreation elements to attract residents.
- **Access and Linkage:** Enhance and increase the number of crosswalks within the park and across Scioto Darby Road to create a safer pedestrian environment for park visitors.
- **Comfort and Image:** Provide additional open space and seating for users during scheduled events to improve the comfort of the park. Re-orient the amphitheater and plant a landscape buffer to reduce impacts to the adjacent neighborhood.
- **Sociability:** Organize neighborhood events in the park to create new opportunities for people to interact and take advantage of the park.



- A Landscape buffer
- B Amphitheater
- C Drop-off
- D Pedestrian pathways
- E Fishing dock with plaza
- F Existing Hilliard Family Aquatics Center (west pool)
- G Parking lot with landscape enhancements
- H Sports courts
- I Driveway relocations and parking lot extension
- J Pavilions
- K Open lawn

Figure 7.10 – Proposed character for Municipal Park amphitheater area (above) and the Municipal Park south pond area.

The following recommendations are offered for the active recreational areas of Municipal Park.

Design Recommendations (active areas)

- **PPS-6.7:** *Develop additional paths around the sports complex to facilitate the movement of pedestrians.*
- **PPS-6.8:** *Provide additional public water fountains, especially near the sports complex, as an amenity for spectators and athletes. Water fountains should also accommodate pets.*
- **PPS-6.9:** *Provide more shaded areas adjacent to the baseball fields for spectators.*
- **PPS-6.10:** *Remove specified roadway segments to reduce pedestrian conflicts and provide additional open space adjacent to the baseball fields. Where appropriate, install bollards at pathway intersections to keep automobiles off of the pathway network (with the exception of access for deliveries and special events).*

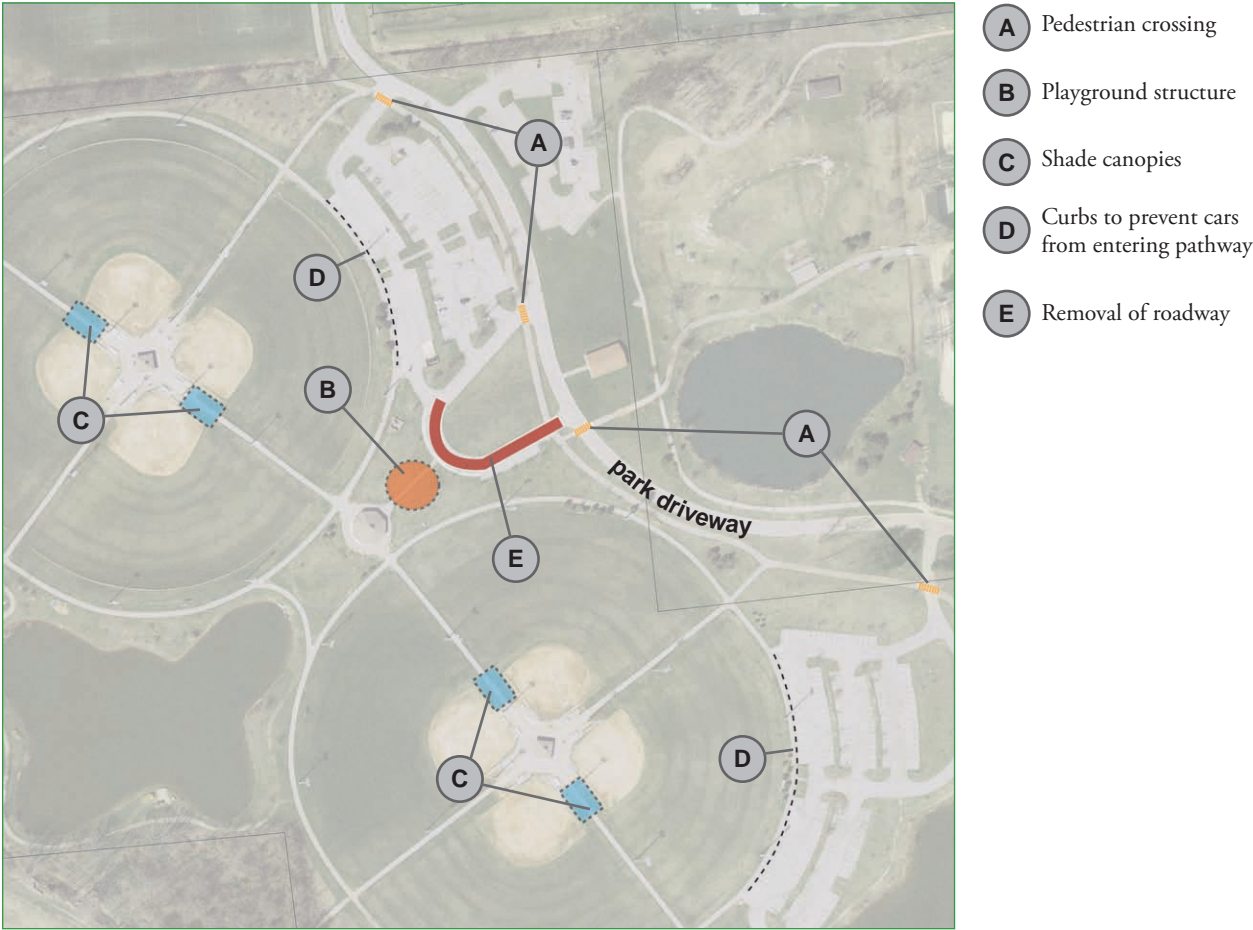
Program Recommendations (active areas)

- **PPS-6.11:** *Program baseball tournaments to attract visitors from surrounding communities to Hilliard.*
- **PPS-6.12:** *Host additional aquatic related events (e.g. additional fishing derbies, triathlons).*

Qualities of Great Public Spaces (PPS guidelines)

- **Activities and uses:** Increase the number of baseball events taking place on these fields.

Map 7.7 – Municipal Park Concept Plan



- **Access and Linkage:** Enhance crosswalks to create a safe pedestrian environment.
- **Comfort and Image:** Plant shade trees in the open lawn space to provide shaded area for users to relax between baseball games.
- **Sociability:** Program local and regional tournaments to increase visitors to the park, and provide another element of sociability.



Figure 7.11 — Proposed character the active areas of Municipal Park.



- A** Parking lot enhancements
- B** Parking relocation
- C** Pedestrian pathways
- D** Lawn
- E** Playground
- F** Existing pavilion
- G** Shade canopies

Figure 7.12 — Municipal Park Proposed Character

Note: The existing pavillion should be accessed via the multi-use path for deliveries and special events.

Top Five Spaces: Weaver Park

Objective 7: Develop Weaver Park to become a signature destination in Old Hilliard.

Home to several historic structures and a venue for educational programs, Weaver Park is a city park operated by the Hilliard Historical Society. The park has the potential to serve as a signature destination within Old Hilliard. Walk Audit members identified opportunities to improve the park’s visibility and accessibility, as well as to improve the range of activities and programming in the park.

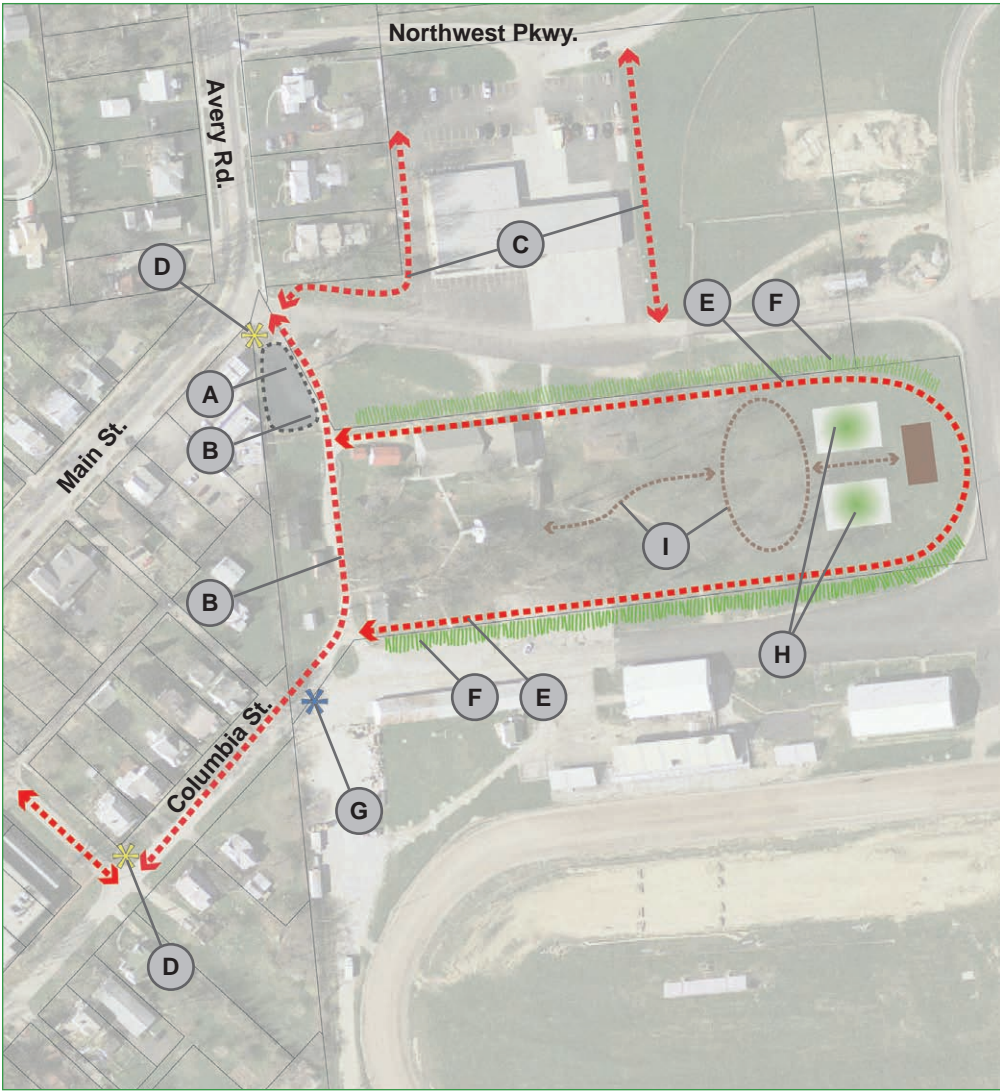
Design Recommendations

- **PPS-7.1:** *Increase the visibility and accessibility of the park through improved signage.*
- **PPS-7.2:** *Create sidewalk connections into the park from Main Street.*
- **PPS-7.3:** *Improve existing parking areas to better serve vehicular traffic to the park.*
- **PPS-7.4:** *Establish a community garden or botanical garden on the eastern portion of the property to bring additional people into the park and create another destination in Old Hilliard.*

Program Recommendations

- **PPS-7.5:** *Work with the Historical Society to increase the hours and staffing of the park to allow more people to tour the historical buildings.*
- **PPS-7.6:** *Work with the fair board to develop joint use and programming of the park and gardens.*

Map 7.8 – Weaver Park Concept Plan



- A** Additional park entry signage
- B** Define parking lot edges
- C** Pedestrian connectivity
- D** Entry signage
- E** Pedestrian pathway around historical buildings
- F** Landscape enhancements throughout park to help define site edges
- G** Pedestrian gate into Weaver Park
- H** Botanical garden
- I** Pedestrian pathways through garden, connecting to historical buildings

Note: The proposed botanical garden is an optional improvement. It is recognized that a proposed agreement between the City and Franklin County will regulate the extent to which this concept is developed. The intent is to create a use for this area that will serve the residents of Hilliard while celebrating agricultural education and history.



Figure 7.13 – Proposed character for Weaver Park

- **PPS-7.7:** Host garden events on a regular basis to bring people into the park throughout various blooming seasons, and to encourage increased use of the park.
- **PPS-7.8:** Create a partnership with local horticultural organization clubs for planting and maintenance of the gardens.

Qualities of Great Public Spaces (PPS guidelines)

- **Activities and Uses:** Create a botanical garden to increase the use and attractiveness of the park.
- **Access and Linkage:** Enhance signage, improve the parking area, and extend a new sidewalk path from Main Street to the park will improve visibility and access to the park
- **Comfort and Image:** Provide seating in the botanical garden and historic village to allow greater enjoyment of the passive nature of the park and gardens.
- **Sociability:** Program a variety of events to bring diverse groups of people into the park.



- A** Entry signage
- B** Pedestrian crossing
- C** Defined parking lot
- D** Roadway realignment
- E** Plaza
- F** Drop-off and entry plaza
- G** Pedestrian pathways
- H** Lawn and picnic space
- I** Storage building
- J** Pavilion and plaza
- K** Botanical garden and orchard

Figure 7.14 – Weaver Park - Proposed Character

Top Five Spaces: East Pool and Park

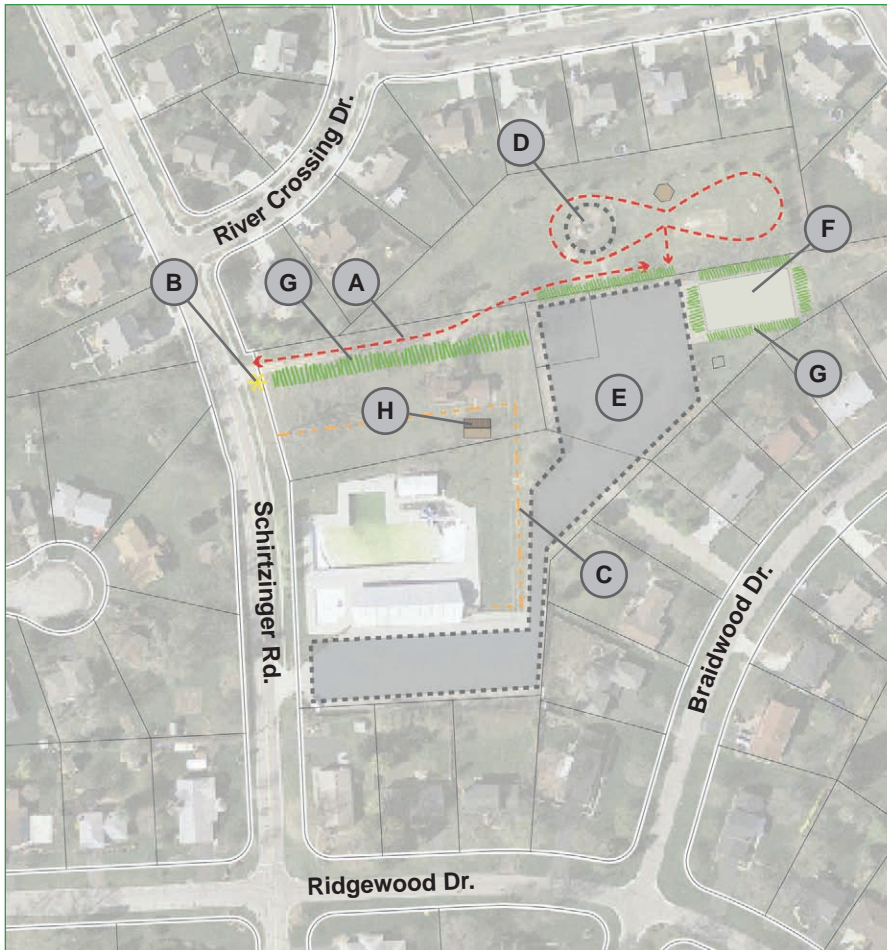
Objective 8: Improve the East Pool and Park as an asset for those who live in the eastern half of the city.

The East Pool and Park is an important asset to the City of Hilliard. This is one of the more heavily used facilities in the community, largely due to use of the pool by residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. During the walk audit, team members identified opportunities to improve the park's visibility, range of activities, and pedestrian connectivity.

Design Recommendations

- **PPS-8.1:** *Relocate the northern pool fence south of the existing shelter to improve access and visibility to the park.*
- **PPS-8.2:** *Create a new name and/or brand for the park, consider sponsorship for the naming of the park*
- **PPS-8.3:** *Improve signage for the park along Schirtzinger Road.*
- **PPS-8.4:** *Remove some of the excess parking in the very rear of the facility and convert that area to tennis or basketball courts for neighborhood use.*
- **PPS-8.5:** *Provide another source of activity and seating in the park.*

Map 7.9 – East Pool & Park Concept Plan



- A** Pedestrian pathway with seating spaces
- B** Entry signage for the park
- C** Fence relocation and upgrade
- D** Upgrade playground equipment
- E** Landscaping enhancements throughout the parking lots
- F** Replace far east end of parking lot with tennis courts.
- G** Landscape enhancements throughout park to help define site edges
- H** Building relocation

- **PPS-8.6:** *Extend a bike/pedestrian path from the sidewalk along Schirtzinger Road into the park.*
- **PPS-8.7:** *Improve/update the existing pool buildings.*

Program Recommendations

- **PPS-8.9:** *Promote the park as a space for neighborhood gatherings to bring people into the park, and better connect the park to the pool (summer cookouts, Easter egg hunt, movies in the park, etc.)*





Figure 7.15 — Proposed character image of East Pool and Park

Qualities of Great Public Spaces (PPS guidelines)

- **Activities and Uses:** Updating the pool area and add amenities to the park such as tennis or basketball courts and new play equipment will attract new park users.
- **Access and Linkage:** Moving the pool fence to the south improves access and visibility to the park.

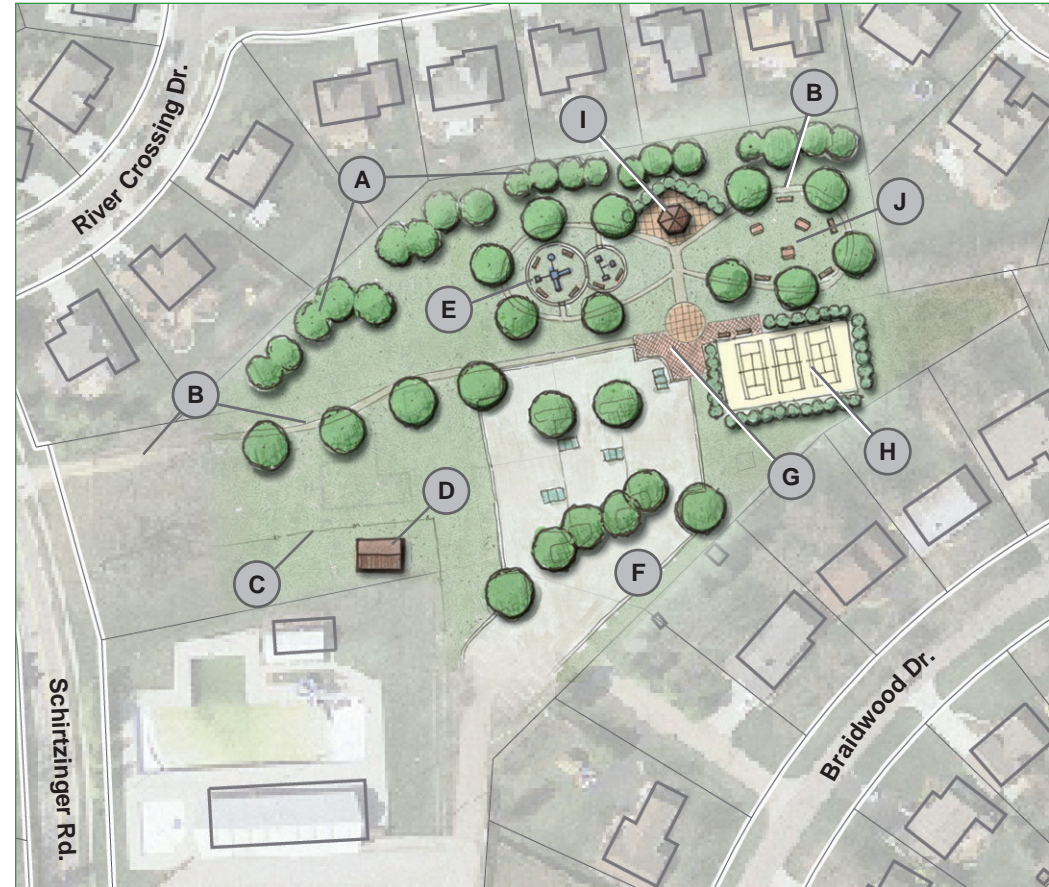


Figure 7.16 — East Pool and Park Proposed Character

- A** Landscape buffer
- B** Pedestrian pathway
- C** Fence relocation and upgrade
- D** Building relocation
- E** Playgrounds
- F** Existing parking lot with landscape enhancements
- G** Drop-off and entry plaza with seating for basketball court
- H** Tennis courts
- I** Pavilion relocation
- J** Lawn and picnic space

- **Comfort and Image:** Providing additional shaded seating in the park, and update the play equipment and pool facilities to attract neighborhood residents to the park.
- **Sociability:** Organizing neighborhood events in the park will create new opportunities for people to interact and take advantage of the new facilities.

Top Five Spaces: Linear Park and Heritage Trail Extension

Objective 9: Construct the Linear Park, including the extension of the Heritage Rail Trail to Columbus and beyond.

Design Recommendations

- **PPS-9.1:** *Extend the Trail through Old Hilliard and southeast along the railroad corridor, and move the trailhead to Main and Center Streets to improve trail access and visibility.*
- **PPS-9.2:** *Provide better connectivity between the trail, surrounding neighborhoods, and schools.*
- **PPS-9.3:** *Establish pocket parks with water stops, shade, bike parking, and other amenities.*

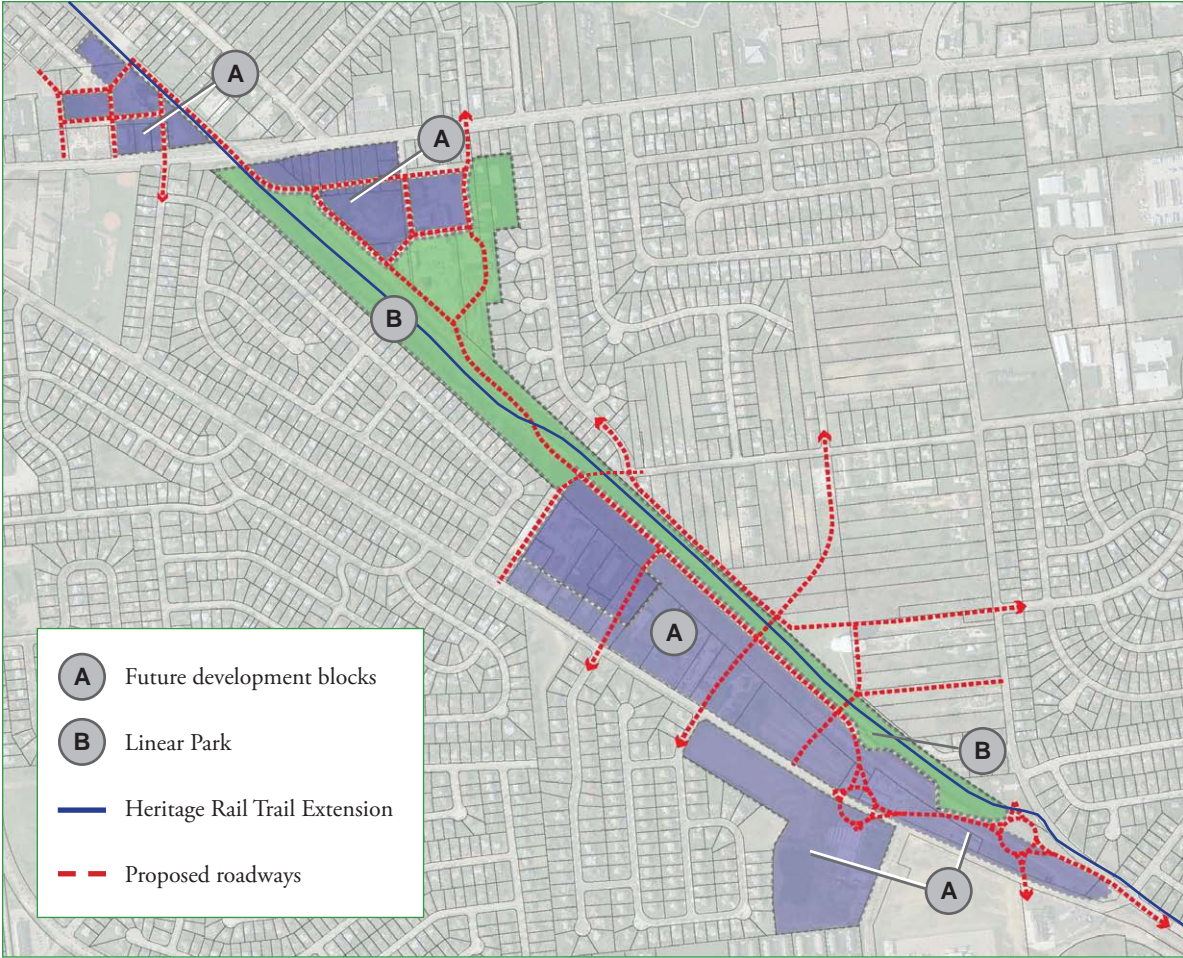
Program Recommendations

- **PPS-9.4:** *Program and advertise organized rides or bicycle events to bring more users to Old Hilliard.*
- **PPS-9.5:** *Ensure a system of routine maintenance and policing to keep the trailway clean and inviting.*
- **PPS-9.6:** *Develop signage along the trail that educates trail users on the history of the rail in Hilliard.*

Qualities of Great Public Spaces (PPS guidelines)

- **Activities and uses:** Moving the Trailhead to Main and Center Street will help to attract

Map 7.10 – Heritage Rail Trail Concept Plan



people to the trail and promote Old Hilliard as a destination for cyclists.

- **Access and Linkage:** Moving the trailhead closer to Main Street and extending the trail southward increases the visibility and access to the trail.
- **Comfort and Image:** Providing well placed

pocket parks for people to stop and enjoy along the trail will make the trail feel more comfortable, inviting, and safe and will increase the use of the trail.

- **Sociability:** Programming regular events along the trail (e.g. riding events) will increase the utilization of the trail and bring additional people into the community.



Figure 7.17 – Proposed character of the pathways and Cemetery Road pedestrian underpass



Figure 7.18 – Proposed Character of the Linear Park

- A** Existing silos
- B** Connection to Old Hilliard
- C** Linear park space
- D** Baseball fields
- E** Green space
- F** Connection to the City of Columbus

Top Ten Public Spaces

Beyond the top five public spaces profiled on pages 152 to 161, the following five spaces round out the top ten. Walk audit comments and brief recommendations are provided for further developing these spaces to help Hilliard develop 10 great public spaces.

Library, JW Reason Elementary, Hamilton park area

These areas were selected for their ability to connect several important public spaces and promote the library as a destination in the community. There is potential to create a pedestrian connection from the library, through the school and adjacent properties to the fairgrounds, Hamilton Park and potentially Weaver Park in the future. Accessibility and visibility were the biggest concerns for these areas. Recommendations for these areas include:

- Provide a bike/pedestrian connection between the library, the elementary school, and Hamilton Park with the intent of connecting to Weaver Park in the future.

- Provide better signage for Hamilton Park along Cemetery Road
- Work with adjacent retail property owners to develop new commercial (entertainment and dining) uses across from the main entry of the library with outdoor dining
- Work with the Columbus Metropolitan Library to develop new and improved outdoor public space

Cross Creek Park

This park was selected because of its visibility, large open areas making it ideal for programming events, and its access to existing neighborhoods. As a result of the walk audit, the project team and Task Force noted lack of activity and amenities in the park as elements that need to be improved. Recommendations for the park include:

- Provide additional parking areas along the access drive

- Provide some recreational amenities to attract people into the park (e.g. walking/jogging path around the perimeter)
- Provide shaded seating areas
- Provide pedestrian crossing on Main Street to connect the park to residential and commercial on the west side of the road
- Plant additional trees along the perimeter to provide additional shade.

St. Brendan’s Park

St. Brendan’s Park is a well used park on the east side of I-270, and is the city’s only active park on the east side of the community, aside from the East Municipal Pool. This park was selected because of its importance to adjacent neighborhoods, and high visibility from Davidson Road. As a result of the walk audit the project team and Task Force noted a lack of seating and shade, and a need to improve pedestrian crossings and connectivity to



Figure 7.19 – The Library is a destination in the community that can be enhanced by improving pedestrians connections, and creating new outdoor public spaces.



Figure 7.20 – A large area of open space in Cross Creek Park could be further developed to support programming for a variety of events and activities.



Figure 7.21 – The existing informal trail system at St. Brendan’s Park could be developed to enhance the recreational experience.

the park. Recommendations for St. Brendan’s Park include:

- Provide bike/pedestrian pathways into and around the park to facilitate movement to various areas of the park, including improved pedestrian crossings of Davidson and Dublin roads.
- Provide additional seating and shelter near existing athletic fields
- Provide permanent restroom facilities and drinking fountains
- Create youth soccer fields at the west end of the park
- Provide a well-defined nature trail through the existing woods
- Provide better pedestrian/bike connections to adjacent neighborhoods
- Beautify the entrance and provide better signage

Hayden Run Area

The Hayden Run area was selected because of its scenic value and ability to serve as an east/west bike and pedestrian connection. The Hayden Run area has already started to develop along Britton Parkway as part of the Britton Central Development. As part of the Britton Central development a linear park/preserve area was planned that will encompass the Hayden Run stream and provide a bike path within the preserve area. The team and Task Force did not perform

a full walking audit of the site as the area was selected mainly on its potential, but did come up with the following recommendations:

- Extend the recently developed bike/pedestrian trail west along the Hayden Run and provide connections to nearby neighborhoods
- Provide pocket parks with seating along the trail to take advantage of the scenic elements along Hayden Run.

Big Darby Area

The Big Darby Area was selected based on the potential to create a natural and scenic amenity for the City of Hilliard and surrounding area. Most of the current parks in Hilliard have an active focus and are not designed for passive enjoyment of the natural environment. The planning goals for the Big Darby Area calls for a conservation type development with a minimum of 50 percent of the area being preserved as open space. This presents an opportunity to create an interconnected network of natural open spaces with trails, meadows, streams, and wooded areas similar to a metro park. This is a unique opportunity which does not exist anywhere else in the City. The project team and Task Force did not perform a walk audit for the Big Darby Area, but instead brainstormed several ideas for the development of this area. Recommendations for this area include:

- Ensure that as plans and rezoning applications are presented to the city, usable open space and preservation areas are planned to connect to open space areas in adjacent development.

- In open areas, create a natural meadow by planting/seeding with native meadowland species.
- Create educational opportunities within the park areas. Ideas included alternative energy demonstrations (e.g. wind/solar similar to Glacier Ridge Metro Park), importance of farming and farming history (e.g. possibly incorporated within a community garden)
- Provide for the development of a community center that can be utilized by the community to host events and provide educational space.
- Ensure new development is connected via walking/biking trails.
- Linear path connection to Municipal Park to the east and Prairie Oaks Metro Park to the west.