

# BIG DARBY AREA





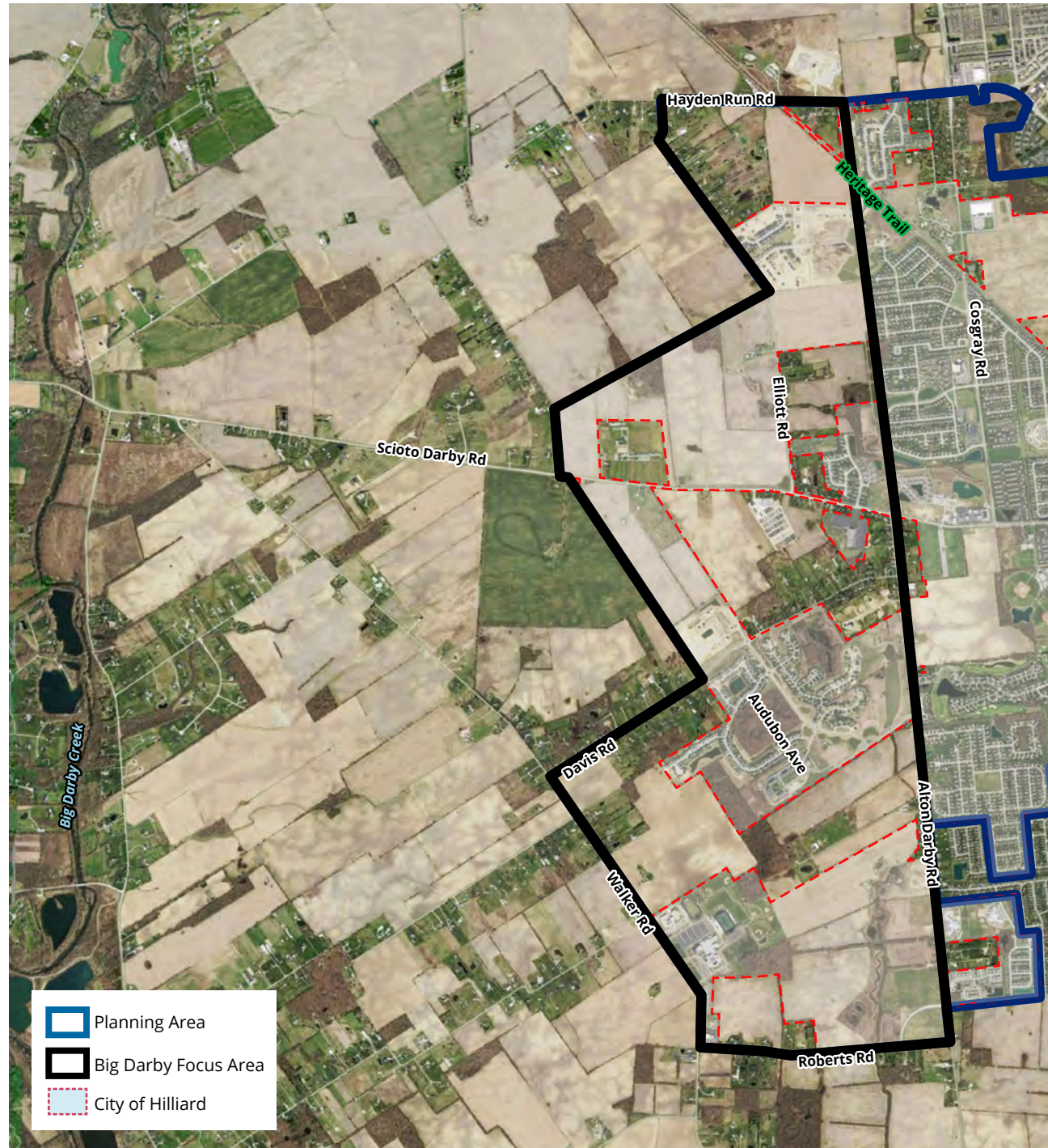
# BIG DARBY AREA

The western edge of Hilliard's exclusive utility service area is within the Big Darby Creek Watershed. Big Darby Creek, located about two miles west of this area, is a state and national scenic river and one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the Midwest.

In 2008, Hilliard and nine other jurisdictions adopted the Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan (BDAWMP) – a regional plan with growth and preservation strategies to help preserve, protect, and improve the Big Darby's unique ecosystem. The BDAWMP calls for a conservation growth pattern in which at least fifty percent of every development would be preserved as open space, and gross density would be limited to one dwelling unit per acre. In addition to the overall recommendations in the BDAWMP, Hilliard agreed to support up to an additional two thousand sewer taps or equivalent residential units (ERUs) in its service area.

Hilliard's 2011 comprehensive plan supported the basic guidelines set forth in the BDAWMP and encouraged conservation neighborhoods and low-impact development practices. Based on development approved between 2008-2021 however, the two thousand ERU limit has been met.

Today, there is land and sanitary sewer capacity to support additional development in this area. But, Hilliard would need to negotiate with Columbus and other Darby Accord stakeholders to allow it based on previous agreements.

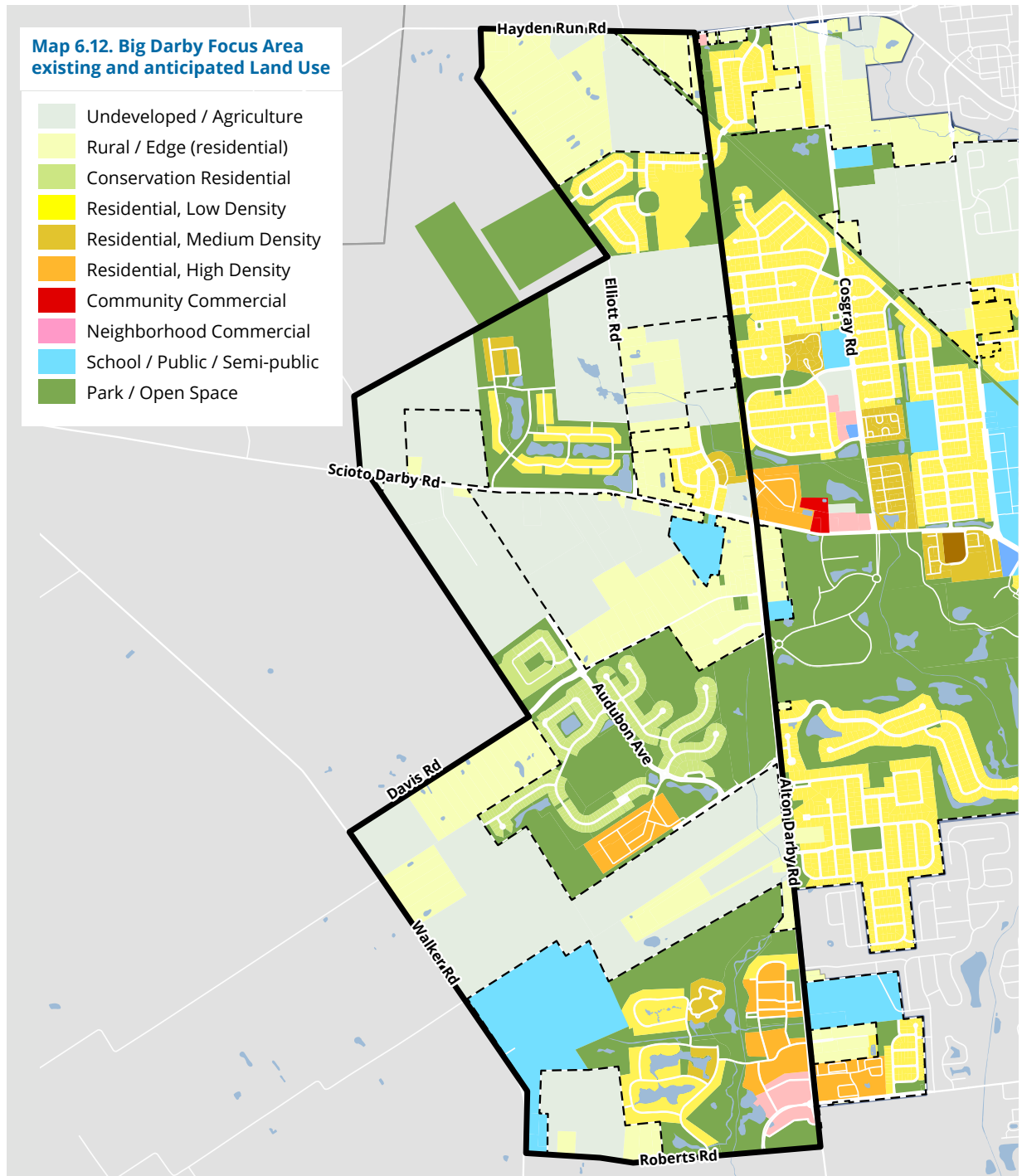


## Existing Land Use

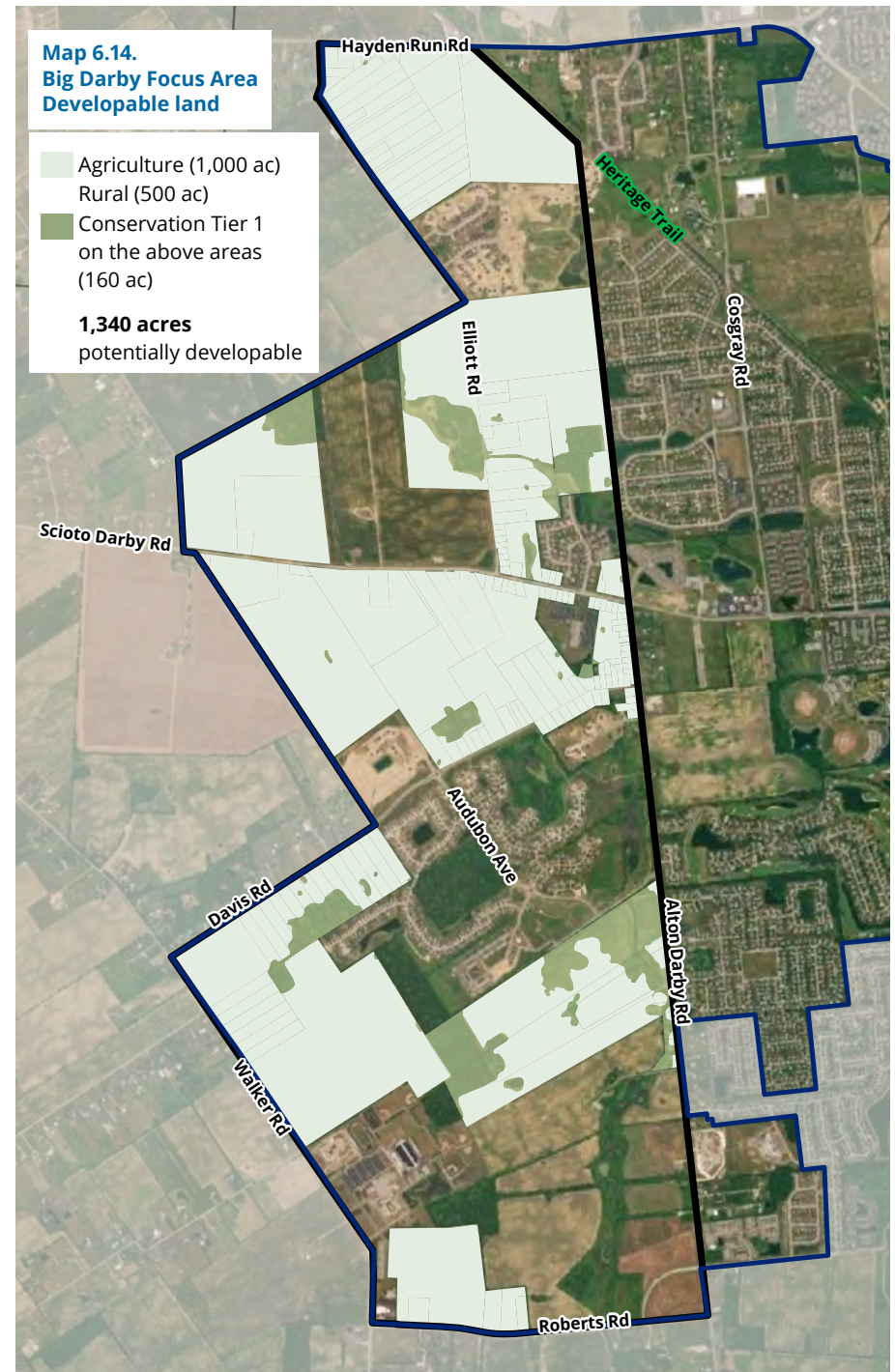
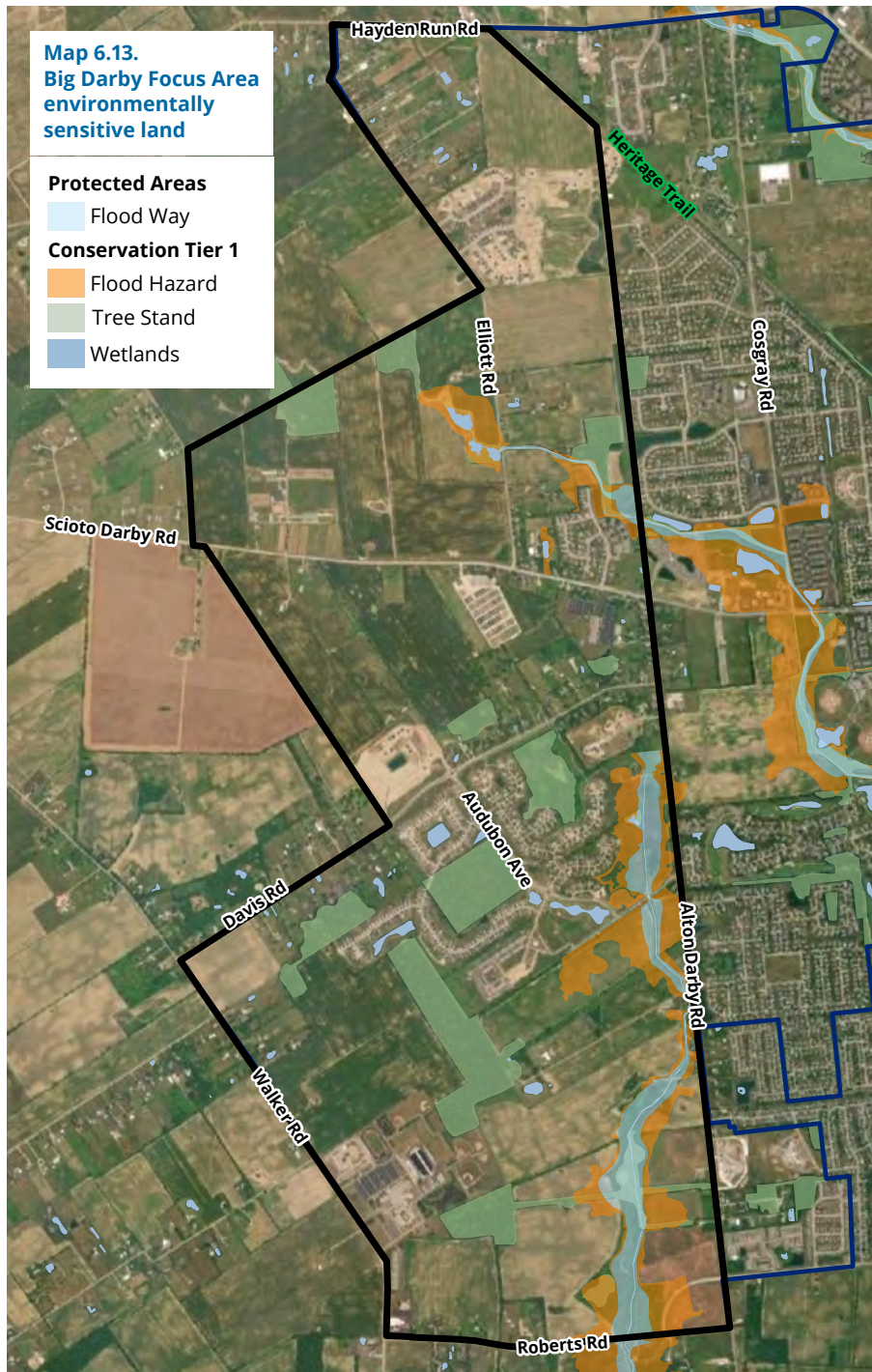
The total size of the focus area is roughly 2,800 acres. Approximately one thousand acres is undeveloped or in an agricultural use, and approximately five hundred acres is large lot rural residential outside of city limits. 650 acres is preserved open space and the remaining 650 acres is developed within the city limits.

There are 1,830 residential units in the area including existing housing and approved subdivisions currently under development, for an overall density of 0.65 units per acre.

If 970 additional residential units were built in this area, the overall area would have exactly one units per acre, which would meet the intent of the BDAWMP.









## Fiscal impact of pipeline development

Based on analysis of the net revenue impacts of various land uses in Hilliard, the recently approved developments of Hill Farm and Alton Place will together have a negative annual net fiscal impact to the city over the long-term. The commercial area in Alton Place is expected to generate income tax revenue to offset some, but not all of the long-term costs of infrastructure in these neighborhoods.

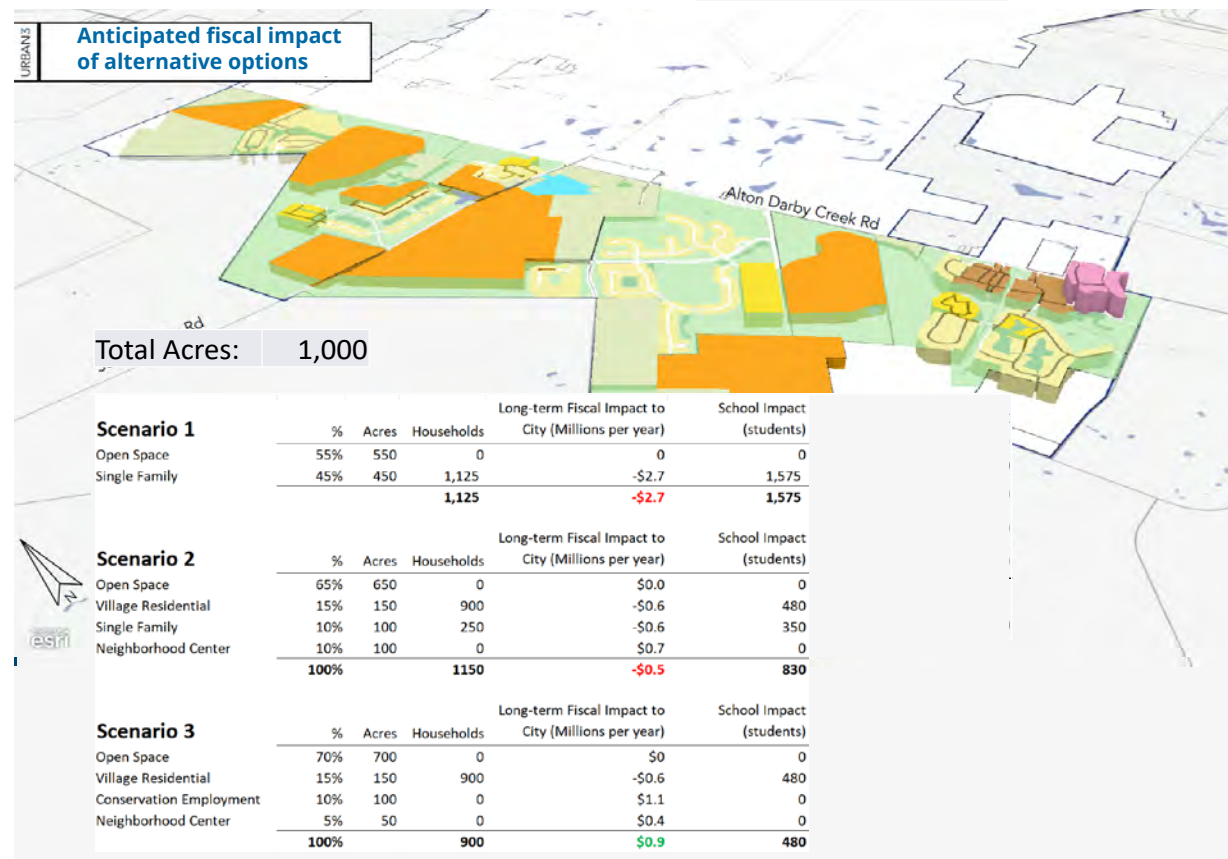


## Fiscal impact of development options

These scenarios illustrate the conceptual impact of various development options assuming a change of one thousand acres.

Residential development regardless of type will not have a net positive fiscal impact to the city over the long-term. Additionally, single family development similar to that approved in the Darby Area over the last ten years, will have a significant impact on the local schools by generating more students.

The third scenario with the most amount of open space, least amount of residential, and some employment use, would have a net positive fiscal impact and generate fewer students.



## Development Intent

Some additional development in the Big Darby Focus Area could have benefits for the city. If Hilliard were to obtain additional sewer allocations that are necessary to support any future development, the city should use that capacity to:

- 1. Prioritize land uses that provide a community benefit.** It is more important for the city's future prosperity and fiscal health to put resources towards infill and redevelopment in other focus areas east of the Darby Area such as the I-270 Area, Old Hilliard, and Cemetery Road Area (Big Idea 1: Focus growth inward). However, there will be continued interest in development within the Big Darby Area. The city can use that interest to its advantage but must be strategic with limited sewer allocations. It should support development that offers long-term economic, recreational, educational, or other community benefit. It should prioritize development proposals that would help the city achieve other goals such as preserving more land, creating a connected greenway system, or providing jobs that strengthens the city's fiscal health.
- 2. Conserve a larger proportion of remaining developable land.** The city should leverage development to preserve a greater amount of open space than the fifty percent per site that is recommended by the BDAWMP. Overall, the city should aim for fifty percent of the Focus Area to be preserved as natural areas or public open space. This open space should include land identified as preservation and Tier 1 environmental features including flood ways, flood plains, tree stands, and wetlands. But since much of that land is already protected, a significant amount of other land should be set aside. To achieve that, the city would need to support development in portions of the Big Darby Focus Area and allow for more concentrated development in some locations. Some potentially "developable" parcels could contribute less than fifty percent open space, while other parcels could be preserved entirely. The City should also seek to preserve open space west of the focus area to further protect the watershed.
- 3. Create a connected open space and greenway system.** The land that is preserved through future development should form a connected linear open space system along the city's western edge (Big Idea 7: Conserve a greenbelt). That system would support trail connections to local and regional destinations such as the community recreation center, various Metro Parks, and the Heritage Rail Trail.
- 4. Exhibit compact, low-impact, conservation pattern and design.** Future development in this area should utilize low-impact site and building design such as limiting impervious surfaces, providing green roofs, incorporating alternative energy generation and native landscaping. Conservation development may include neighborhood-scale mixed-use, services, public uses, and low-impact employment uses. New residential neighborhoods, while not a priority land use, should respond to the needs of the city, be distinctive to Hilliard, and be innovative (ex. neighborhoods that integrate agriculture or local food production.) These neighborhoods should offer a mix of residential types and price-points.
- 5. Create an educational component.** Provide educational and recreational opportunities, either through a city park or a partnership, to showcase and provide hands-on learning about the area's unique natural features, ecological significance, agricultural legacy, and sustainable development in the area.

## Concept Plan

This concept plan generally illustrates potential development areas and a connected greenway system. It assumes that the one thousand acres classified as agriculture today becomes either preserved open space or appropriately developed. The result is that 50% of the total land within the focus area is preserved as open space plus an additional amount of land west of the focus area is also preserved. To achieve that outcome, at least 65% of the remaining developable land within the area will need to be set aside as open space. The amount of development should be considered not only on a site-by-site basis, but for the focus area overall. To keep the entire focus area at or below one dwelling unit per acre, and have a positive fiscal benefit for the city, the remaining developable land should not be all residential. The "conservation development" areas shown are appropriate low-impact employment uses.

Map 6.15. Big Darby Focus Area Concept Plan

### Existing or Anticipated Land Use

- Suburban Residential (low)
- Urban Residential (high)
- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- School / Public / Semi-Public
- Rural Edge
- Park / Open Space
- Agriculture
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Major Streets / Connections

### Future Land Use Concepts

- Connected greenway system
- Conservation development areas (with additional open space)
- Street connections
- Roundabout (Potential or anticipated)
- Key Destinations

### Land Use Today (2,800 acres)

Rural Edge	Agriculture (or undeveloped)	Preserved Open Space	Developed in City
500 acres (18%)	1,000 acres (36%)	650 acres (23%)	650 acres (23%)
Assumed Change (1,150 acres)			
	750ac (65%)	400ac (35%)	

### Land Use Future (2,800 acres)

Rural Edge	Preserved Open Space	Developed in City
350 acres (13%)	1,350 acres (50%)	1,050 acres (37%)

Outside of Focus Area

Outside of Focus Area







### Alternative Residential Conservation: Agrihoods

As the name suggests, an agrihood is a type of planned community that integrates agriculture into a residential neighborhood. Agrihoods are part of the popular "farm-to-table" culture. Today, there are over 150 of these communities across the United States. Some operate on a "community supported agriculture" (CSA) model where owners pay an annual fee to support a working farm. This type of community could be an appropriate alternative form of residential development in the Darby Area. See [Agrihoodliving.com](http://Agrihoodliving.com)



### Conservation Development and Conservation Employment

Conservation development areas are intended to support development that protects environmentally sensitive land and limits the city's long-term infrastructure costs. These areas could accommodate a wide range of residential and non-residential uses in a pattern that clusters development and preserves at least fifty percent open space on a site. These areas should incorporate areas of forest, prairie, and wetland into the development's design and utilize other low impact building and site design practices. Architectural styles should be eclectic yet complement the rural character of the Big Darby focus area. Developments should be connected via pedestrian and automobile routes and incorporate public spaces and natural areas.

Employment uses in a conservation pattern could include low-impact office, research and development, neighborhood commercial, or other non-residential development that would have minimal negative impact on traffic, schools, and demand for services.



## Big Darby Area Actions

**FA E1 Obtain approval for additional low-impact development within the existing service boundary.** By allowing some additional development in the area, the city could obtain land for a connected greenway system and preserve a greater amount of open space than exists today. Hilliard should work with the Big Darby Accord Advisory Panel to obtain support for the city's long-term vision of conservation and development in the area. It should seek authorization for additional sewer taps from the City of Columbus for future low-impact development within the existing service boundary in exchange for a greater amount of preserved open space (which may include land preserved outside of that boundary).

**FA E2 Acquire land to create the greenbelt and linear park system.** Update the open space set aside requirements in the Hilliard Conservation District standards to require a larger amount of total open space be set aside and that some amount of open space is "usable" for passive recreation. Allow density bonuses to be tied to a greater amount of open space preservation than the minimum standard — including land that is outside of a proposed development site. Introduce a "fee-in-lieu" if sufficient open space cannot be set aside. Use these fees to fund future land acquisitions.

**FA E3 Incentivize non-residential "conservation development."** Since any additional development capacity in the Darby Area will be limited, it is vital that development contributes to its goals. Projects that have an employment component should be a priority to provide income tax revenue that will support the greenbelt and linear park system. One way to incentivize such development is through zoning and annexation. The city could create a "conservation commercial" subdistrict of the Hilliard Conservation District that would allow certain employment focused land uses by right with appropriate design standards. The city could then stipulate that any land annexed in the Darby area be automatically

zoned as conservation commercial. Then, appropriate non-residential development could potentially take place without a costly rezoning process, making it the easier path.

**FA E4 Update the Hilliard Conservation District standards.** An update to the Hilliard Conservation District standards should consider base permitted density, increased open space provisions, and revised criteria for density bonuses and other design attributes. See the following page for potential criteria.

**FA E5 Continue to advocate for an update to the Darby Accord Plan.** The BDAWMP was intended to be reviewed regularly and updated every five years. It has not been updated since it was created over fifteen years ago. Continue to work with the City of Columbus, Brown Township, and other Darby Accord partners to address mutual conservation and development goals for this area. Support a process to update the Darby Accord or a subarea of that plan.

**FA E6 Partner with Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks to establish a greenbelt and linear park system that connects to other existing metro parks.** Consider a partnership with Metroparks (or a similar entity) that allows that organization to develop and maintain regional park assets on land that has been acquired by the city.

**FA E7 Establish an educational space within the Darby area park system.** Look for opportunities to provide educational features or spaces in the Darby Area to showcase and provide hands-on learning about the area's unique natural features, ecological significance, agricultural legacy, and sustainable development. Consider incorporating such a feature within the design of the new community center campus.



## Potential development evaluation criteria

Proposed development in the Big Darby Area should be evaluated with respect to the following attributes. Each development should exhibit at least ten of these attributes.

### Fiscal Impact

- Incorporates an employment or mixed-use component
- Supporting infrastructure, land use pattern, and environmental factors don't negate the location

### Open Space

- Preserves and connects existing natural systems that extend through multiple properties
- Prohibits modifications to existing natural systems
- Locates new open spaces adjacent to abutting open spaces to create a continuous greenbelt
- Includes trail connections and trailheads at locations that logically connect to adjacent properties
- Implements off-site trail and open space connections

### Infrastructure

- Incorporates compact site design approaches
- Location is adjacent to existing development to reduces infrastructure costs

### Environmental

- Incorporates low impact site and building design techniques
- Reduces off-site stormwater impacts by incorporating appropriate water quality measures

### Community Facilities

- Dedicates land for the future site of a public facility (school, fire station, etc.)

### Housing

- Incorporates a variety of housing types within a single development
- Incorporates neighborhood concepts that would be distinctive to Hilliard
- Includes an affordability component



