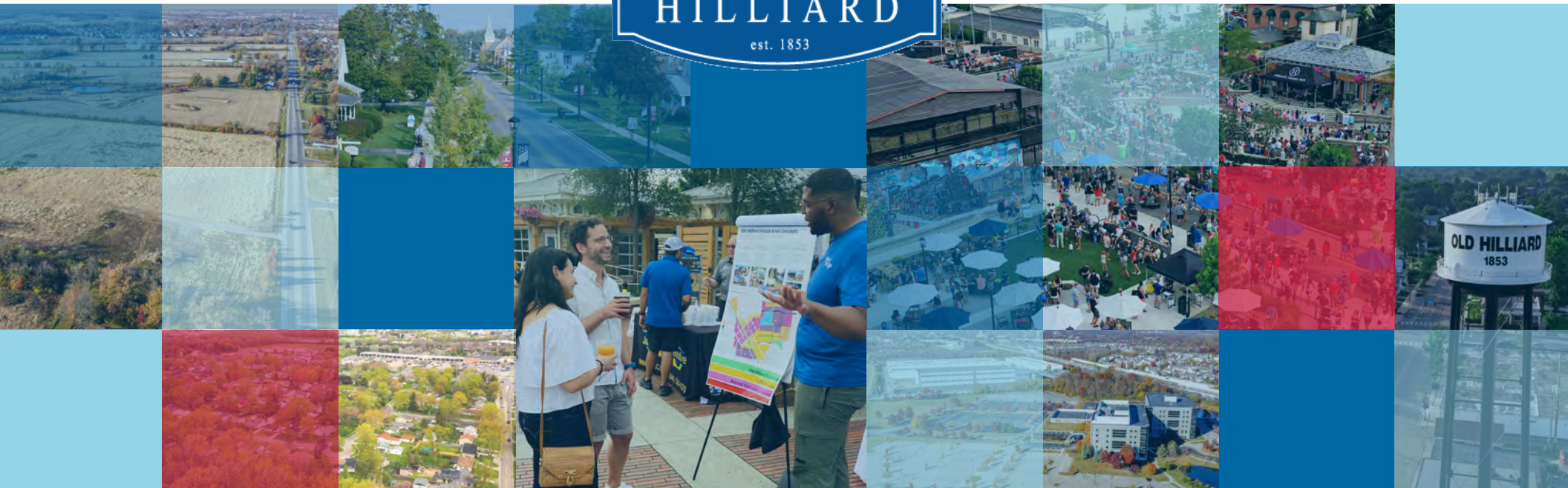


# COMMUNITY PLAN

**April 24, 2023**





Resolution: 23-R-28 (Amended)

Adopted: April 24, 2023

Page 1 of 2

Effective: April 24, 2023

**ACCEPTING THE "2023 HILLIARD COMMUNITY PLAN" FOR THE CITY OF HILLIARD, OHIO**

**WHEREAS**, by passage of Resolution No. 21-R-47 on June 28, 2021, City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a multi-year contract with planning NEXT to prepare an updated comprehensive plan (the "Plan") to address the changing needs and priorities of the City and to focus on making decisions that promote an economically, physically, environmentally and socially healthy community; and

**WHEREAS**, the planning process undertaken by planning NEXT sought to fully integrate land use, transportation, parks and public spaces, economic development, utilities and other public services to more effectively account for the needs of, and inter-relationships between each component in devising a long-range strategic plan for the City that is fiscally sound; and

**WHEREAS**, planning NEXT initiated a multi-year planning process which included three distinct rounds of public participation with online resources and the use of a Steering Committee to develop the Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, at its final scheduled public meeting on January 25, 2023, the Steering Committee reviewed final components of the Plan and forwarded the Plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration; and

**WHEREAS**, at its regularly scheduled public meeting on March 9, 2023, the Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the Plan and unanimously voted to forward a positive recommendation to City Council for its acceptance; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council of the City of Hilliard, Ohio, has reviewed the Plan and desires to accept said Plan to guide the City's future development.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Hilliard, Ohio, that:

**SECTION 1.** The "2023 Hilliard Community Plan," linked hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein, is approved and accepted by the City, which shall serve as a guide for making policy and development decisions for the betterment of the City and its citizens.

**SECTION 2.** As staff presents land use and zoning changes, they present each target area separately and Council begin those conversations in a Committee of the Whole meeting prior to Planning and Zoning.

**SECTION 3.** This Resolution is effective upon its adoption.

**ATTEST:**

**SIGNED:**

Diane C. Werbrich, MMC  
Clerk of Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of Council

# LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

On behalf of the community, the Hilliard by Design Steering Committee presents the City of Hilliard's Community Plan.

In the summer of 2021, the city recruited a diverse group of volunteers and tasked us with helping to shape a new plan for our community. The city asked, "How would you design the Hilliard of tomorrow? What would you change about public and private development? How would you change the community's parks? How would you plan local transportation?"

It's a challenge for most of us to envision the future. Who knew back in 2011 that Hilliard would add nine-thousand residents in ten years or that Old Hilliard would look the way it does today? Whether you realize it or not, many of the changes we've seen over the past ten years were guided by the city's 2011 Comprehensive Plan. But just as important as change, we asked ourselves, "What things about Hilliard are great today and should not change?"

This plan is a tool for the city to guide growth for the next ten years and beyond. It addresses change, but also how to conserve natural resources and retain many aspects of Hilliard's character. Specifically, this plan encourages growing inward rather than outward, continuing to focus on Old Hilliard, encouraging revitalization along Cemetery Road, creating more safe opportunities to walk and bike, developing more mixed-use places, and improving our city's tax base so that we can continue to improve the services and amenities that our community wants.

While not every recommendation in the plan will be supported by everyone, it reflects the committee's direction, the input of hundreds of other community members, and an understanding of data and trends.

Our city's previous plan, created over ten years ago, led to many positive changes in our community. We hope this plan will continue to make Hilliard the best place it can be – to live, to work, to run a business, to raise a family, and to play.

We want to thank every community member who offered their time and ideas to Hilliard by Design. We look forward to our continued collaboration over the coming years as we move through the hard work to implement this plan.

Sincerely,

Libby Gierach

Co-Chair  
Hilliard by Design Steering Committee

Joel Assenheimer

Co-Chair  
Hilliard by Design Steering Committee

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The city would like to thank the following individuals for their commitment and dedication in assisting with the Hilliard by Design initiative. Sharing your knowledge, thoughts, and ideas provided an invaluable service to your community. Additionally, the city would like to thank the many other community members who participated in Hilliard by Design or simply expressed their support and enthusiasm for the effort.

## City Council

Les Carrier  
Tina Cottone  
Peggy Hale  
Pete Marsh  
Omar Tarazi  
Andy Teater  
Cynthia Vermillion

## Planning Commission

Peggy Hale, City Council Rep.  
Jay Muether, Chair  
Bevan Schneck, Vice-Chair  
Chris Lewie  
Tracey Nixon  
Tom Pannett  
William Uttley  
Eric Gutknecht

## Steering Committee

Libby Gierach, Co-chair  
Joel Assenheimer, Co-chair  
Mark A. DiGiovanna  
Dan Ewald  
Jill Gerschutz  
Thomas Jacoby  
David L. Johnson  
Angie Kirk  
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Justin Malenky  
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Jayme Staley  
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Erin L. Duffee, Deputy Director, Recreation and Parks  
Clark Rausch, City Engineer  
Diane Werbrich, Clerk of Council

## Consultants

planning NEXT  
Burgess & Niple  
Toole Design  
Urban 3  
McBride Dale Clarion

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the City of Hilliard launched a process called Hilliard by Design to create a major update to the city's 2011 Comprehensive Plan. The process led to a bold vision, a series of big ideas, goals, and actions that are based on the values, needs, and aspirations of the community. The plan sets the direction for the city's growth and development, serves as a guide for decision makers and the community for future development and many aspects of our city's quality of life.

## What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan sets forth the long-range vision for physical development, transportation, community facilities and related topics. It includes specific actions (policies, projects and programs) and identifies timing and responsibilities for undertaking those actions. It also contains map-based recommendations that indicate the city's intent for where and how it will use land resources and design infrastructure improvements. The plan serves as the foundation for the city's budgeting process, zoning ordinance, land development regulations, and other ordinances. It is implemented over time through many distinct decisions including annual budgeting, departmental work programs, rezonings and subdivisions of land.

## The need for a new plan

To be effective, a plan must be periodically updated to account for changing conditions, data, new technologies, and other changes. Since 2011, the community and region have experienced many changes such as significant growth, demographic and market shifts, and a global pandemic.

The city's charter emphasizes the importance of long-term planning by requiring that the Comprehensive Plan be updated every ten years. This update builds on the progress the city has made, reinforcing much of the previous plan's direction, and identifying new opportunities and actions. It also introduces several notable policy changes involving the city's western edge and its Cemetery Road gateway and I-270, along with a stronger understanding of the economic impacts of land use choices.



## Chapter Contents

- What is a comprehensive plan?
- The need for a new plan
- Vision and Big Ideas
- Plan structure
- The planning process
- Key existing conditions and trends

# PLAN STRUCTURE

The plan is organized into two major parts: city-wide framework and focus areas.

## Citywide Framework

The city-wide framework includes four subtopics, each with a goal, several objectives, and actions.

### Land use and Development

*Development and conservation that is strategic and coordinated, creates distinctive places that enhance quality of life, highlights small-town character, exhibits strong environmental stewardship, and provides long-term fiscal health.*

### Economic Vitality

*A prosperous and fiscally strong community with a growing and diverse economic base where growth improves the city's ability to provide a high level of services and amenities.*

### Mobility and Connectivity

*A safe, smart, and efficient transportation network that features strong connectivity, serves people of all ages and abilities, offers attractive choices for biking and walking, and supports placemaking.*

### Parks and Public Spaces

*A community that is welcoming to everyone with outstanding parks and public spaces throughout the city, recreational facilities and programming that support a diverse population, and community events that serve residents and visitors.*

## Focus Areas

Five Focus Areas organize the plan and include specific design concepts and actions.

- **Old Hilliard**
- **Cemetery Road Corridor**
- **I-270 Corridor**
- **Retired Railroad Corridor**
- **Big Darby Area**

### Goals

Intended outcomes expressed in simple terms for the plan's five topic areas

### Objectives

Subthemes within the goal that serve to organize actions

### Actions

A project, policy or program

## Implementation

The Implementation chapter provides guidance on tracking and managing the implementation of the plan along with a summary of all the plan's actions.



# VISION

The vision statement captures the broadest aspirations for Hilliard.

**Authentic. Connected. Innovative.**

*Hilliard is a forward-thinking community where diverse businesses, organizations, and people thrive, where distinctive places are connected, and where actions shape our future and bring recognition to the community.*



# BIG IDEAS

Eight big ideas capture this plan's overall direction. These ideas are numbered for reference, but are not listed in any priority order.



## 1 Focus growth inward

Emphasize development and redevelopment of underutilized land and structures within the city rather than extending infrastructure and developing further west. Expansion of the city limits should be strategic and are limited to areas currently within the existing water and sewer service boundary agreement with Columbus.

### WHY

- Use infrastructure more efficiently
- Strengthen the city's long-term financial health
- Conserve open space
- Reduce negative perceptions of outdated development



## 2 Create more mixed-use, walkable places.

Build upon the success and distinct character of Old Hilliard by encouraging development with an integrated mix of uses (commercial, residential, civic, public, employment) at various scales and intensities throughout the city.

- Address market shifts in favor of mixed-use places
- Provide more opportunities for services, amenities, or destinations within walking or biking distance of residents
- Make existing employment areas more successful



## 3 Become a trail town

Expand the city's regional trail network and support unique development and public spaces along trails. Extend the Heritage Trail to Hilliard's southern boundary and work with partners to make connections to the Quarry Trails Metro Park and downtown Columbus. Create other regional destinations through the Central Ohio Greenway network.

- Build upon success of the Heritage Trail
- Create a truly unique public space feature that distinguishes Hilliard from other communities
- Catalyze development along the trail



## 4 Expand opportunities for walking and biking

Provide more opportunities for the community to walk and bike through the city by filling in gaps in the trail network. Address improved connectivity across I-270, between neighborhoods, schools, parks, mixed-use destinations, and to the regional trail network.

- Address community desires for safe bike and pedestrian routes through the community
- Provide a better non-vehicular crossing over I-270
- Support alternatives for short trips to potentially reduce traffic



# BIG IDEAS

Eight big ideas capture this plan's overall direction. These ideas are numbered for reference, but are not listed in any priority order.



## 5 Reimagine Cemetery Road

Revitalize the city's primary gateway corridor through streetscape improvements and redevelopment with a walkable mix of uses, architecture that frames the street, green space and public art.

### WHY

- Create a positive first impression of the community (for visitors and community pride)
- Maximize underutilized land
- Improve opportunities for future transit through more dense development



## 6 Encourage mixed-use development around premium office sites.

Allow for and encourage infill commercial and residential development on or adjacent to the sites of older corporate office buildings to create new walkable mixed-use places that surround the existing structures, to make these sites more viable as employment locations in the future, and to serve as neighborhood gathering places.

- Support economic development opportunities
- Make aging office locations more viable for future reuse
- Support other Big Ideas related to housing, inward growth, and mixed-use places
- Maintain long-term financial health



## 7 Conserve a greenbelt

As part of focusing growth inward, acquire and preserve land on the city's western edge to create a greenbelt and future linear park connected by trails. Connect the greenbelt to neighborhoods and regional parks (as described in Ideas 3 and 4).

- Conserve environmentally sensitive areas
- Respect the Big Darby Accord
- Maintain long-term financial health



## 8 Expand housing options

Encourage a wider range of housing types and price-points to support a growing and changing population, including new housing types or neighborhood types that are distinctive to Hilliard.

- Ensure that Hilliard is a place where anyone can live
- Address the need for housing for young adults and empty nesters
- Be a leader in addressing regional housing needs creatively

# PROCESS

The planning process was both intuitive and informed, shaped by quantitative research and input from the community. A diverse thirty member citizen steering committee helped with the process and substance of the plan. There were three rounds of public input opportunities throughout the eighteen month planning process.

## Steering Committee

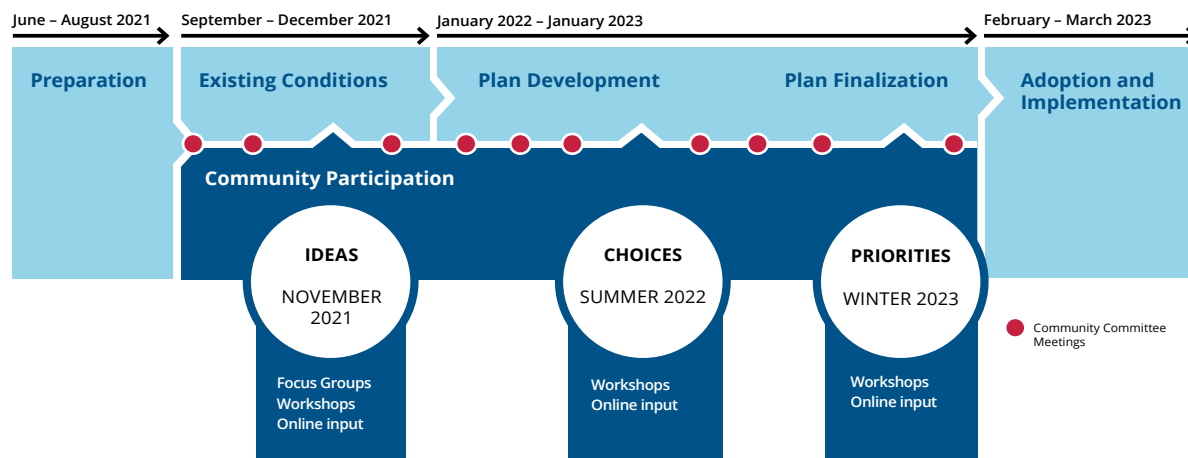
A thirty member steering committee formed through a widely advertised application process. The committee served as community advocates for the plan, assisted with community outreach, and provided guidance and direction regarding the substance of the plan. The committee held eleven official meetings and also assisted at several community input events.

## Stakeholder Input

At several stages in the process, the planning team interviewed stakeholders in small group sessions. Those stakeholders included Hilliard City School District officials, transportation officials, local and regional developers, and various special interests such as environmental advocates, biking, and senior citizens. The interviews were designed to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, and to gain insight on local knowledge.

## Research and Analysis

The technical analysis effort involved an analysis of existing conditions related to regional trends, land use and development, economic and fiscal impacts, multi-modal transportation, and public spaces. It also involved a review of the city's existing plans and studies.



*A major aspect of the technical work was an analysis of the fiscal impacts of land use specific to Hilliard. Refer to the Economic Vitality chapter for key findings.*



## Round 1, Autumn 2021

In November 2021, the city hosted Ideas Week with an open house style workshop, two virtual workshops, and an online input campaign. The purpose of Ideas Week was to gather ideas about development, transportation, and public spaces to help inform the direction of the plan. The events were widely promoted and open to anyone who cared about the future of Hilliard. The workshop, held in Old Hilliard, involved an open house format with activities designed for participants to easily drop in and share ideas at their own pace. Following the workshops, additional input was collected through a project page on the city's public input website, Talk2Us.HilliardOhio.gov. Visitors to the page could submit ideas and identify locations on an interactive map.

During the month of November, approximately 150 people participated in the workshops and contributed online. To gain more participation, steering committee members conducted additional small group sessions in December. Also, the activity boards and map were posted in City Hall to collect additional input through early January.

*"This is a very good thing that Hilliard is doing by listening to feedback from members of the community. Well done, and I hope that some great projects come out of this!"*

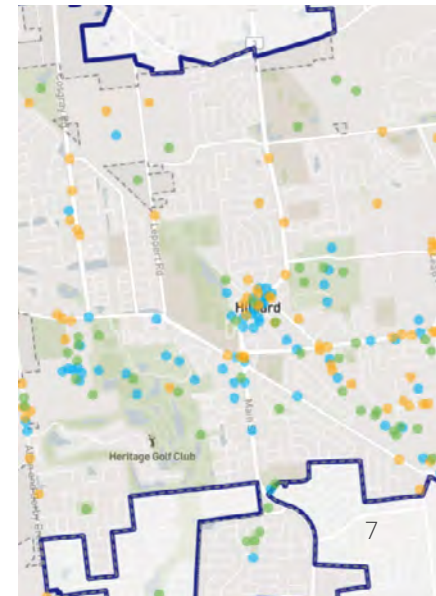
— Participant



## Publicity and Outreach

Competing interests, busy lifestyles, the long-term focus of comprehensive planning and the complexity of issues make enticing people to attend planning meetings very challenging. To inform the public about the importance of Hilliard by Design, the steering committee carried out a word-of-mouth and publicity campaign that included:

- Flyers and posters
- A social media campaign
- Email
- Newspaper columns
- City website
- Video promotion
- A presence at community events





## Round 2, Summer 2022

From June through August, the planning team and steering committee participated in several existing community events to raise awareness about Hilliard by Design and get feedback on the plan's big ideas and design concepts for each of the focus areas. The events included:

- Celebration at the Station (June 16 and July 14)
- Historical Society Art Show (June 25)
- Freedom Fest (July 2)
- Adult Recess (July 16)
- Online (June 16 to August 14)

During this round, the Hilliard by Design team spoke with over eight hundred people and obtained written comments from approximately 250.

## Round 3, Winter 2023

In February and March, 2023, the draft plan was presented online and comments were gathered for thirty days prior to the formal public adoption process.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Each section of the plan includes a summary of relevant conditions, trends, findings from analysis, and opportunities. The following points summarize the key regional and local growth trends and profile of the city's population (see planning area map on the following page). Additional maps and analysis are included in the Appendix.

## ➤ Central Ohio is a growing region.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) most recent population projections show that:

- Between 2020-2050, the seven-county Central Ohio region is on track to add over 550,000 people and 220,000 households, and reach a total population of three million.
- Central Ohio is the only region in Ohio that is growing in population.
- Columbus was the only large city in the Midwest that added more than 100,000 residents since 2010. Columbus has surpassed Indianapolis as the Midwest's second largest city.

## ➤ Central Ohio's growth is changing.

During the 2010s, the Central Ohio region saw growth occur differently than past decades:

- Shift to infill/redevelopment: seventy percent of the region's population growth was in Franklin County (compared with forty-two percent in the 2000s).
- Increasing migration: As much growth from migration as from births. Half of migration to region from foreign-born. Most domestic migration was from elsewhere in Ohio.
- Shift in housing demand: fifty-eight percent of new housing in last decade was multi-family.

## ➤ Hilliard has seen significant growth.

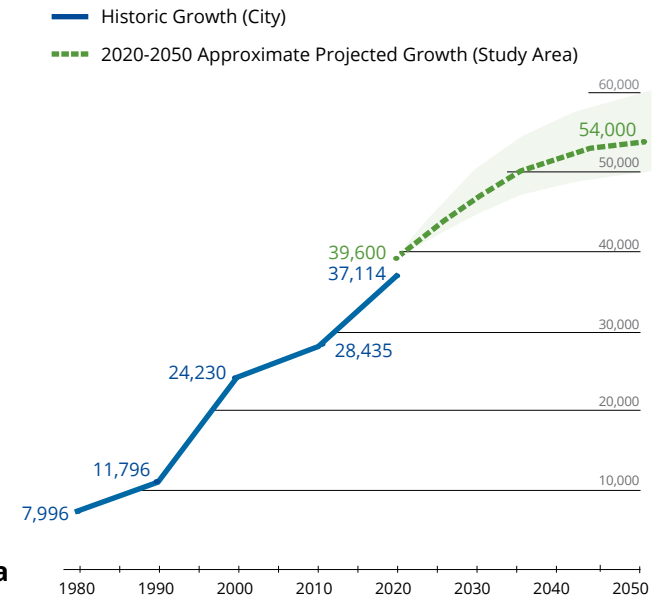
Hilliard has been among the fastest growing suburban cities in Central Ohio since it was incorporated in 1960. Since 2010, Hilliard experienced:

- The largest amount of growth of any of the suburban communities in the region
- Faster growth than forecast in the 2011 plan. At that time, the projected annual growth of 1.3% between was expected to yield a 2015 population of 30,500 and a 2020 population of about 32,500 (an increase of about four thousand people). The actual growth over the last decade was about three percent per year.

## ➤ Growth is projected to continue, but at a slower rate.

Recent projections from MORPC estimated for the study area (including developed land in townships) show increasing population in the city and planning area, but at a showing declining rate over time. The adjacent chart shows this projected growth, which is based on estimated regional population and on assessments of current plans/policies. The amount of and rate of growth are highly dependent on local policies and market conditions.

**Hilliard's Historic And Projected Population Growth**



**Fastest Growing Cities In Central Ohio (2010-2020)**

City	Pop. 2010	Pop. 2020	Change	% Change
<b>Hilliard</b>	28,435	37,114	+8,679	30.5%
Dublin	41,751	49,328	+7,577	18.2%
Delaware	34,753	41,302	+6,549	18.9%
Grove City	35,575	41,252	+5,677	16.0%
New Albany	7,724	10,825	+3,101	40.2%
Westerville	36,120	39,190	+3,070	8.5%

Map 1.1. Planning Area

- Hilliard City Limits
- Planning Area (Utility Service Area)

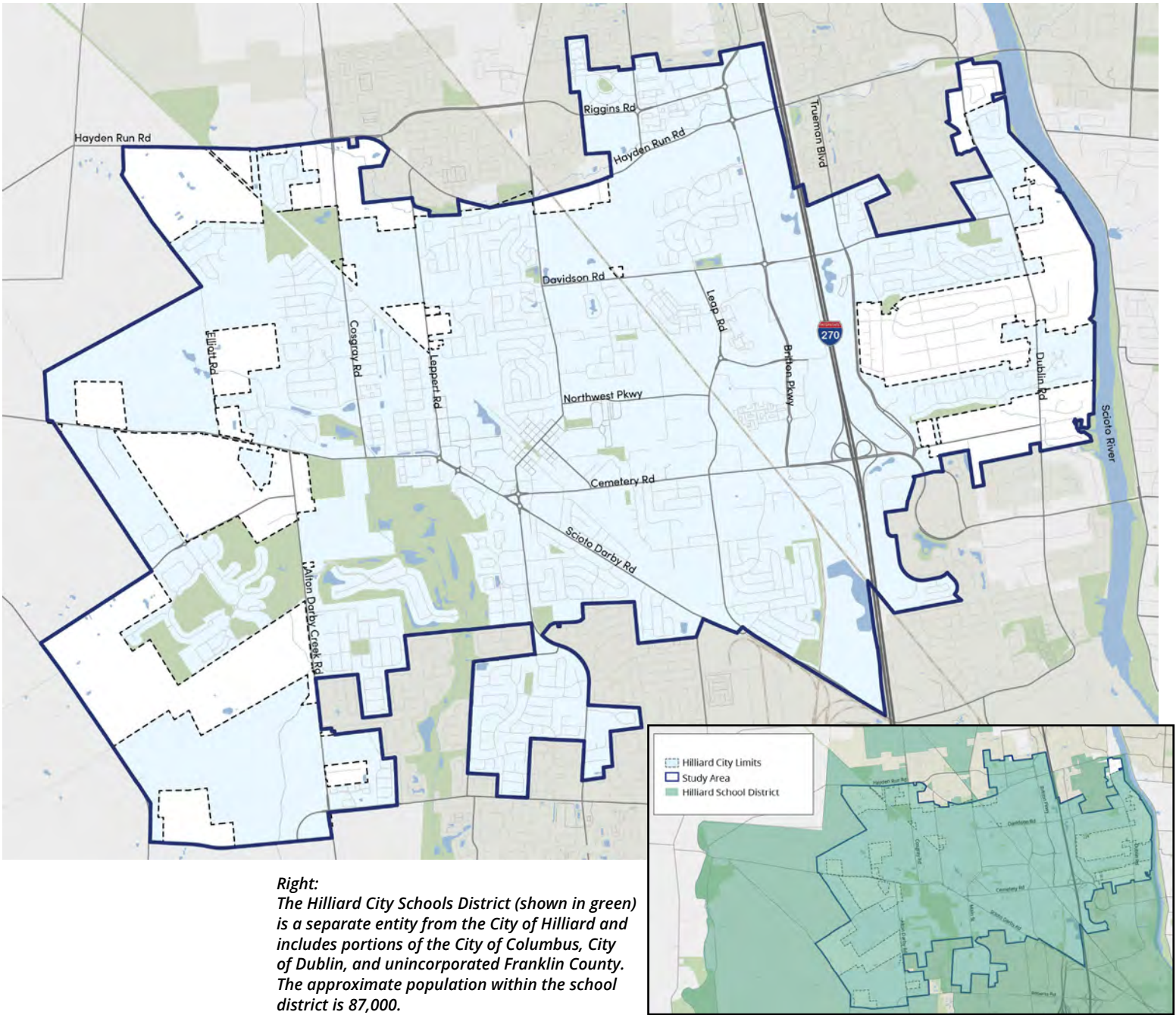
Current population

City: 37,114  
Planning Area: 39,600\*

Land Area

City: 14.5 sq. mi.  
Study Area: 17.8 sq. mi.

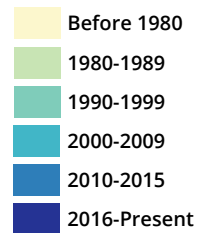
\*Based on MORPC projections prepared for the 2020-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018)



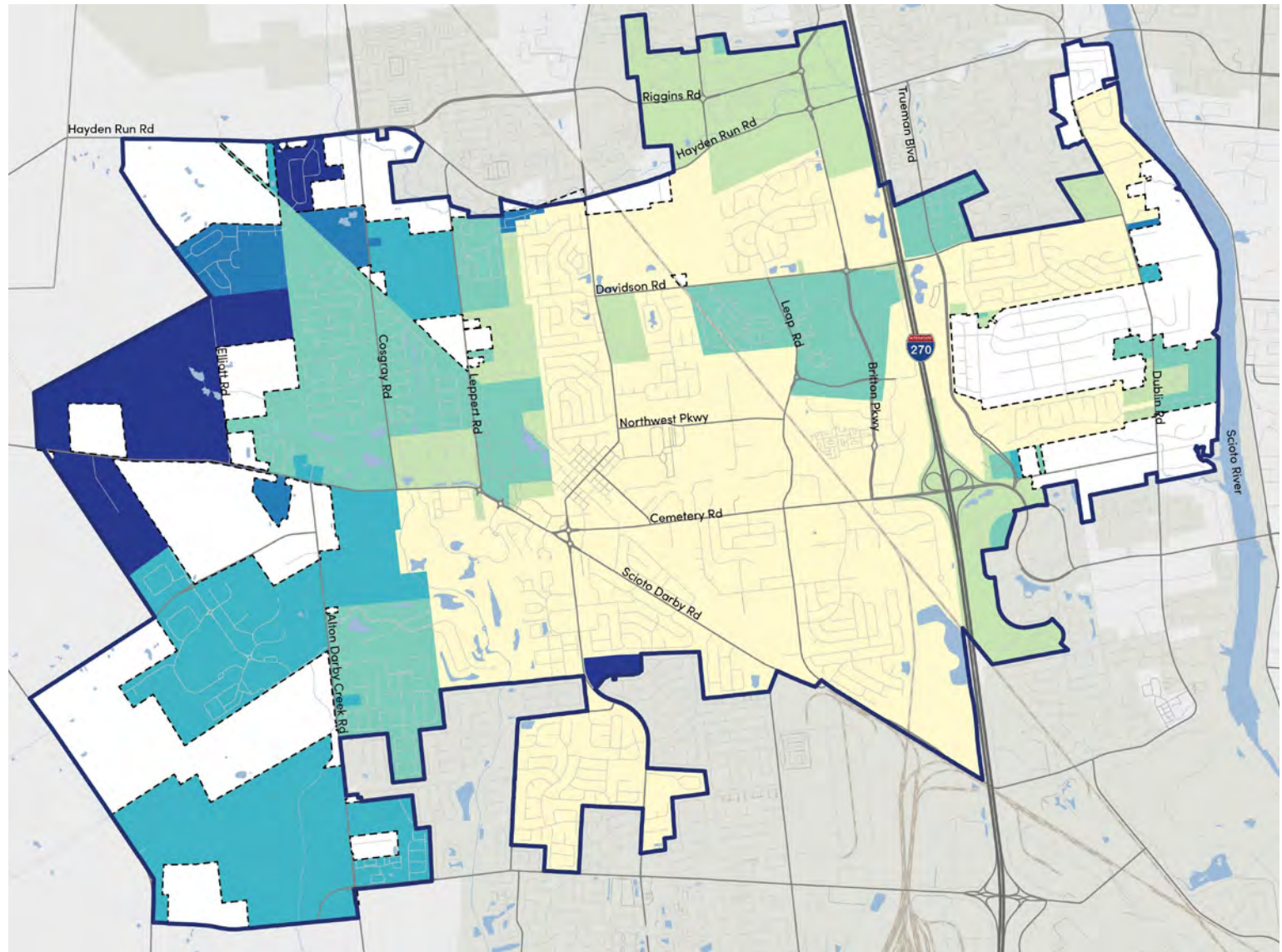
*Right:  
The Hilliard City Schools District (shown in green)  
is a separate entity from the City of Hilliard and  
includes portions of the City of Columbus, City  
of Dublin, and unincorporated Franklin County.  
The approximate population within the school  
district is 87,000.*



## Map 1.2. Annexation History



- There have been few annexations since 2016 (**591 acres**)
- Most growth over the past ten years has occurred in areas already within the city's boundary
- Future annexation is possible in western sections of the Planning Area.



## Population profile

Similar to the region, the makeup of Hilliard's population is shifting. While some of these changes are small, they potentially have significant implications for future needs and preferences.

### ➤ Households are getting smaller

- Total households have increased at almost the same rate as the population (30%).
- Average household size declined from 2.77 to 2.62 (2010-2019)
- The number and proportion of people who live alone (single person households) increased
- Family households grew 30%, but the average size declined from 3.26 (2010) to 3.15 (2019).

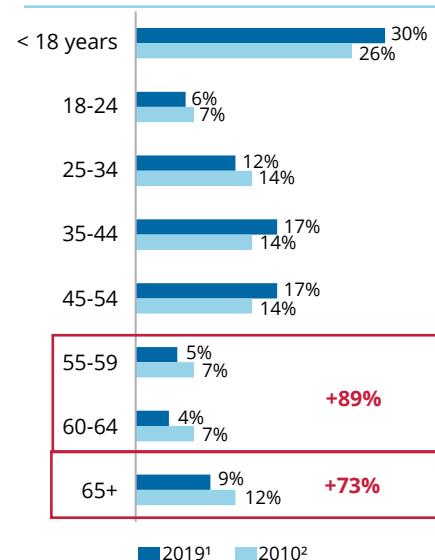
#### Households

Household Type	2010	2019	% change 2010-2019
Family	72%	72%	30%
Married	59%	56%	24%
w/ children <18 years	33%	26%	4%
Non-Family	24%	28%	51%
Single Person	20%	25%	60%
Avg. Size	2.77	2.62	-5%
Avg. Family Size	3.26	3.15	-3%

### ➤ The overall population is young

- Older groups are growing rapidly.
- The median age of 36.8 is younger than the State and most Central Ohio suburbs
- Since 2010, population aged 55-64 increased by 89% and the over age sixty-five increased by 73%

#### Population by Age

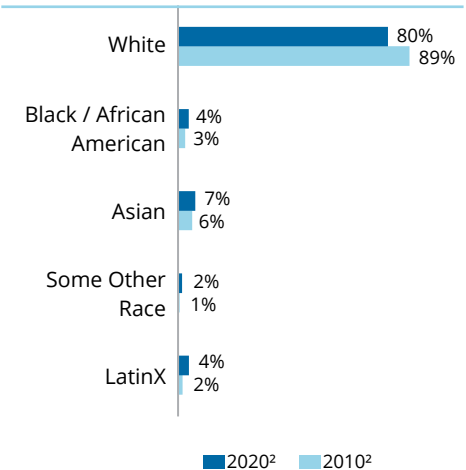


<sup>1</sup>ACS 5-year estimates  
<sup>2</sup>Census 2020

### ➤ The city's population has grown more diverse.

- The percent of the population identifying as a race other than white reached twenty percent in 2020, about double what it was ten years prior.
- The foreign born population has also increased (by twenty percent) since 2010.

#### Population by Race & Ethnicity



### Equity and Disadvantaged Populations

While the city's overall population is relatively affluent and more educated compared to the region, these metrics mask several statistics about some groups in the community:

- 25% of Hilliard households earn less than \$50k/year, median is \$97k
- 6% of families with children live below the Federal poverty line
- 29% of households rent and 71% of households own
- 44% of renters and 16% of owners are considered cost-burdened
- 20% of residents are non-white
- 7% of residents are foreign-born
- 25% of the population is considered cost burdened (when a household spends 30% of their income on housing costs)

➤ **The population is more educated and relatively affluent compared to the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).**

- Fifty-five percent of the population over age twenty-five has a bachelor's degree or higher. Another seven percent has an associate's degree. This level of educational attainment is above the MSA average and is comparable to central Ohio cities like Westerville and Delaware.
- The city's median household income (2019) is \$96,959. The median income is comparable to other central Ohio cities such as Westerville and Worthington.
- Five percent of the population is living below poverty level (2019). This is significantly lower compared to the Columbus MSA (thirteen percent) and the State (fourteen percent)

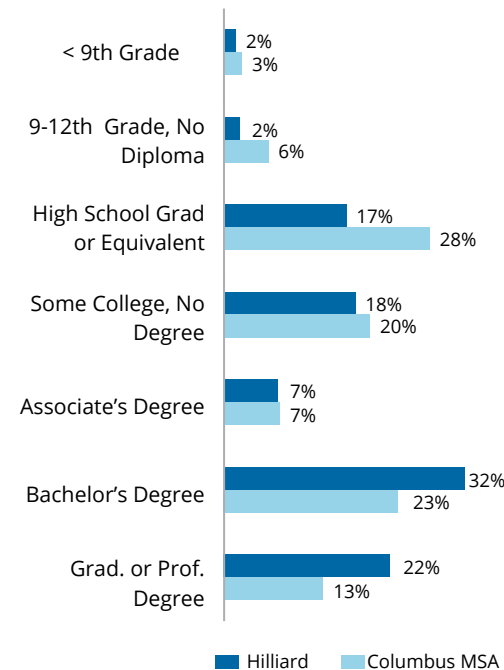
**Median Household Income of Comparable Central Ohio Cities, 2019<sup>1</sup>**

City	Median Income, 2019
Dublin	\$137,867
Upper Arlington	\$123,548
Worthington	\$104,362
Hilliard	\$96,959
Westerville	\$93,717
Columbus MSA	\$65,150
Grove City	\$56,602

<sup>1</sup>ACS 5-year estimates

<sup>2</sup>Census 2020

**Population Over 25 Years old by Educational Attainment, 2019<sup>1</sup>**



➤ **Most who live in Hilliard work elsewhere.**

Only about seven percent of residents live and work within the city. Ninety-two percent of jobs in Hilliard are filled by people living outside of the city.

