

RETIRED RAILROAD CORRIDOR



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The Retired Railroad Corridor area is approximately 165 acres. It includes the inactive rail right-of-way which is envisioned to extend the Heritage Trail. Older neighborhoods are located within the area, some developed within the township's large lots. Several of these areas may be ripe for redevelopment.

The area also includes the Hilliard City Hall site and service center near Cemetery Road.

Promoting development along the Retired Railroad Corridor provides an opportunity to create a new district that will include a variety of housing options; new neighborhood retail, office, and civic space; as well as provide for the extension of the existing Heritage Rail Trail.

Collectively, the integration of these elements will help to enhance the image of the surrounding areas and city as a whole. Its central connection to Old Hilliard makes it an important priority growth area that has the potential to be a local and regional destination.

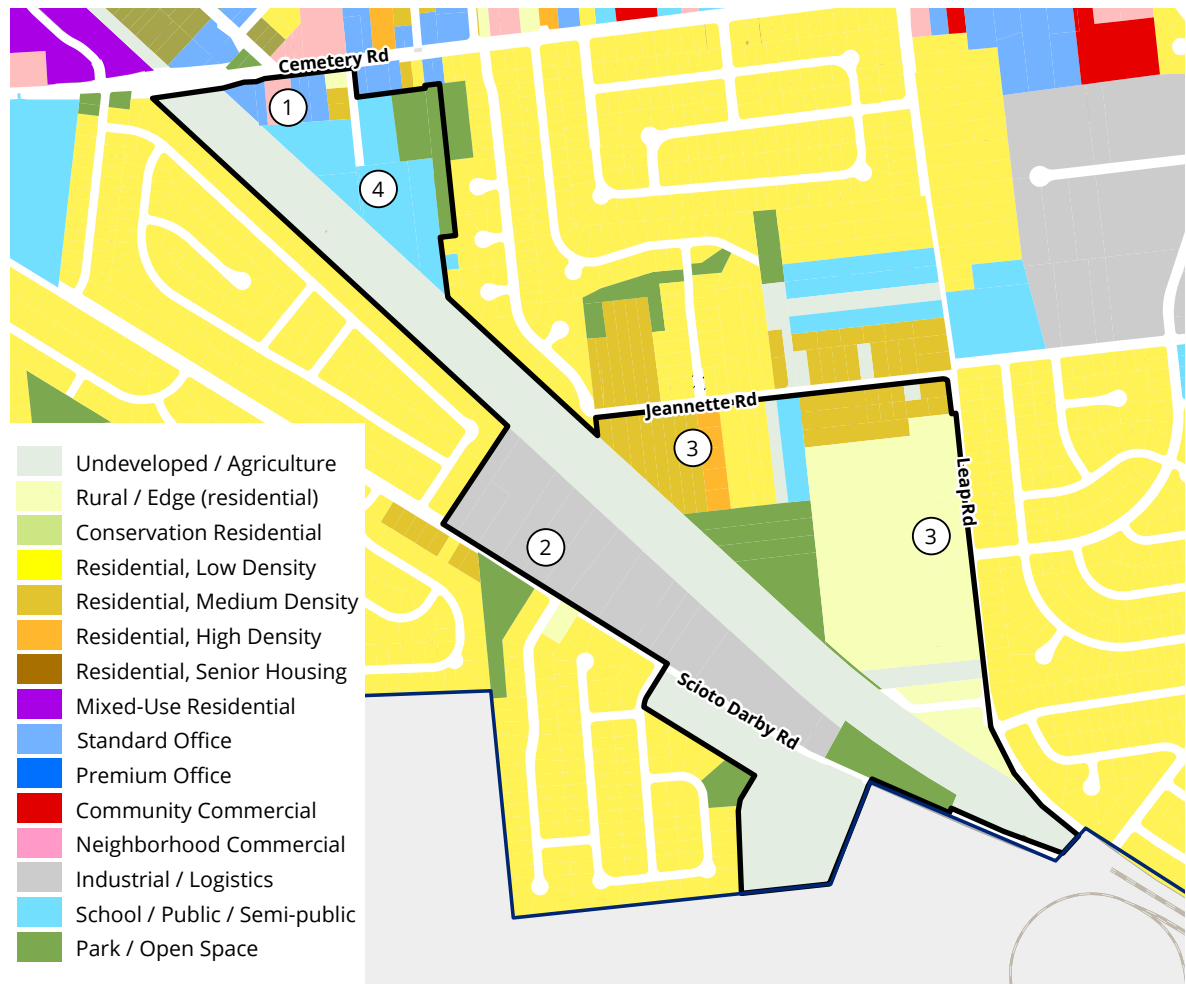


The Area Today

The existing land use and character map represents an assessment of conditions in 2021 based on parcel data and observation. The land use definitions are detailed in the Snapshot Part 1. The numbered locations generally indicate distinct conditions that apply to a site or subarea.

- ① Northern sections of the focus area have opportunities for redevelopment, retrofit, or infill development along Cemetery Road.
- ② On Scioto Darby Road there is 24.9 acres of light industrial, trucking logistics and smaller warehouses. This area along Scioto Darby may offer infill and redevelopment opportunities.
- ③ A mix of residential land uses are found along Jeanette/Leap Roads. This area could have potential for redevelopment.
- ④ Public/Civic uses include City Hall and other municipal sites.

Map 6.10. Retired Railroad Corridor Existing Land Use (2021)



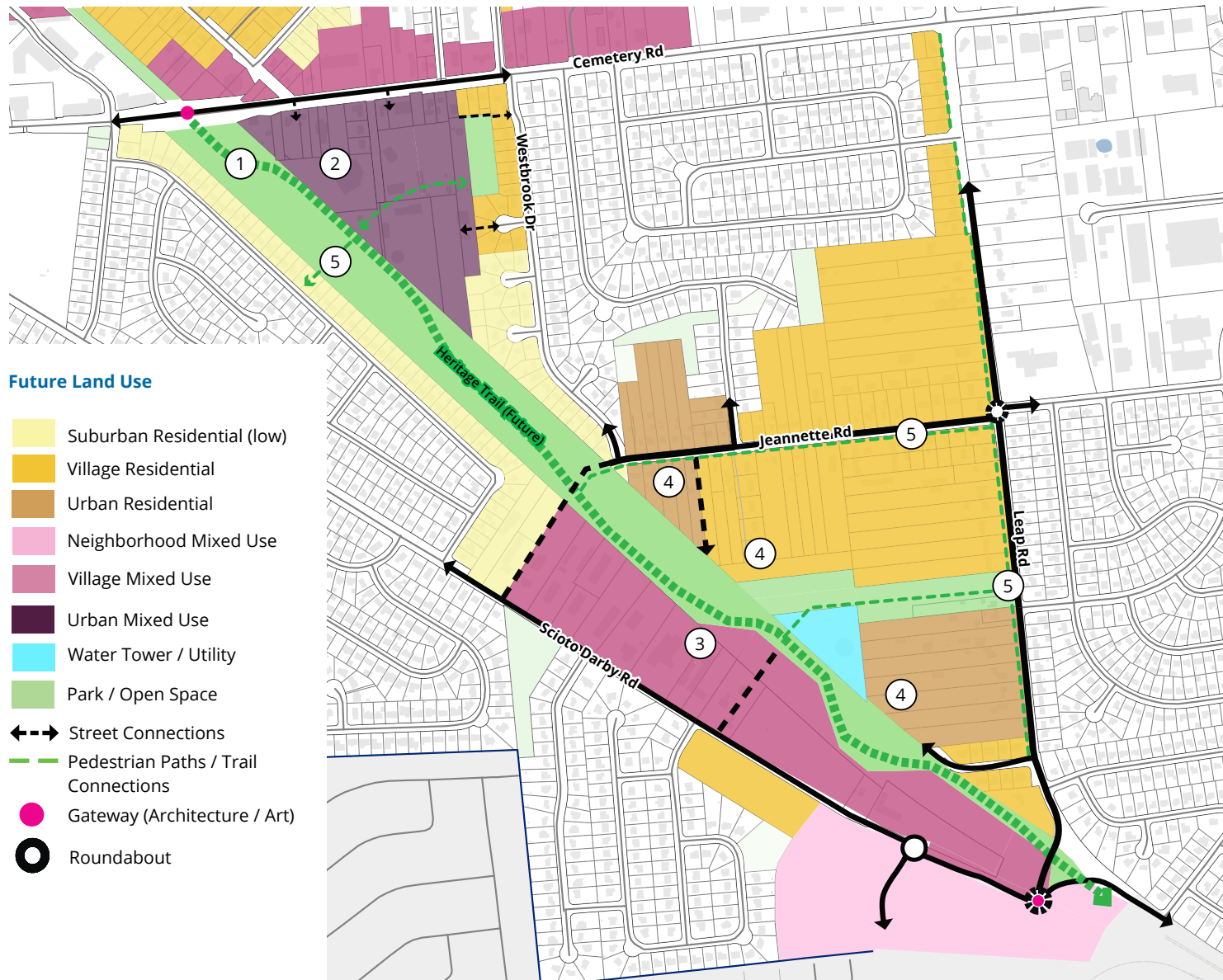
Concept Plan

This concept plan illustrates the future land use vision for the Retired Railroad Corridor focus area. The numbered concepts are described and illustrated on the following pages. These concepts build upon the citywide future land use definitions to provide more specific guidance in this area.

Concepts

- ① Extend the Heritage Trail and create a signature linear park
- ② Redevelop the Hilliard Municipal Site with trail-oriented and transit-oriented mixed-use
- ③ Trail-oriented village / neighborhood center
- ④ Neighborhood revitalization and residential infill/ redevelopment
- ⑤ New trail connections and street improvements

Map 6.11. Retired Railroad Corridor Focus Area Concept Plan



The Area Plan concepts are general guides to indicate potential development options. Plans are schematic only, and the actual mix of land uses, locations and configurations of buildings, parking areas, streets and access points will be determined through the public review process for individual development projects. Properties retain all existing rights.

1 Extend the Heritage Trail and create a signature linear park.

Acquire the retired railroad corridor and extend the Heritage Trail from Old Hilliard to connect to the Scioto Trail and the Central Ohio Greenway network. Develop the trail into a unique linear park with gathering places and public art. Progress on this concept will enable other concepts. Design of the trail should:

- Meander through the space creating areas that have a natural character and other areas that incorporate the trail into adjacent development
- Preserve existing views including those to Old Hilliard, Downtown Columbus, and Hilliard's water towers.
- Incorporate elements of railroad history throughout the Rail Trail through educational signs, rail ties, pavement patterns depicting the rail line, etc.
- Include gateway features with architecture or art
- Include a trailhead at the south end with parking and wayfinding.



Above: The 2011 Comprehensive Plan illustration showing changes to the bridge over Cemetery Road incorporating design elements of railroad history.

Below: Creative wayfinding features can add to the character of the space.



② Redevelop the Hilliard Municipal Site with trail-oriented and transit-oriented mixed-use.

Relocate City Hall to a more prominent location in the city and redevelop the current municipal site to create an urban mixed-use setting. Development should contribute to the vitality of Cemetery Road, Old Hilliard, and engage with the extended Heritage Trail.

- Create a street connection east to Westbrook Drive.
- Create a trail connection east-west between existing neighborhoods such as Luxair to connect to the Heritage Trail.
- Create a public space or trail connection through the mixed-use development between the Heritage Trail and the existing park space on the east edge of the site.
- Create an alley system parallel to Cemetery Road.



③ Trail-oriented village / neighborhood center.

Encourage small-scale trail-oriented mixed-use development that includes retail, office, and residential. Create well-defined pedestrian-focused streets with a park-once site design. Buildings should frame public spaces that engage with the Trail but not neglect the streetscape of Scioto Darby Road.

Increase residential opportunities in the area to make the center more viable. Create a central public / park space that integrates with the trail.



4 Neighborhood revitalization and residential infill/redevelopment.

Support infill and redevelopment of large parcels south of Jeannette Road with a mix of middle density housing types that engage with the trail.

5 New trail connections and street improvements

Improve connections between existing and new residential areas and the Heritage Trail by improving sidewalks and creating new trail connections. Use city-owned land for an east-west trail connection between the water tower and Leap Road to existing neighborhoods and potentially a new park. Extend Jeannette Road across the trail and add sidewalks to the existing section of Jeanette. Improve Leap Road to create a better experience for pedestrians and cyclists.



Trail-oriented development resource

The following is an excerpt from *The Right Path. A Trail-Oriented Development Primer* prepared by the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

"Communities across the country are investing in local trails and reaping the benefits of active transportation. Whether residents use them for biking to work or walking for recreation, new trails add to a community's list of amenities and improve public health. Through strategies such as public art, outdoor furniture, and trail-themed events, trails can also prompt investment in trail-adjacent properties.

Trail-oriented development intentionally blurs the boundary between trails and nearby properties by creating and expanding adjacent amenities. This primer offers tools, strategies, and case studies that can set local governments and trailside property owners on the right path for fostering local trail-oriented development. It will teach you how to identify candidate trails and parcels for new amenities and the site-specific strategies best-suited for each location. The primer can also be used to kick start conversations with local business owners, elected officials, economic development and tourism directors, planning and parks staff, and residents. "

Retired Railroad Corridor Actions

FA D1 Extend the Heritage Trail through the Retired Railroad Corridor Focus Area and, working with partners, to the Scioto Trail and Quarry Trails Metro Park. Identify and acquire necessary funding for land acquisition (i.e private-public partnership to redevelop trail-adjacent property). Extend the trail south from Cemetery Road to the Columbus Corporate limit. Collaborate with regional partners to establish a continuous greenway from Hilliard to Downtown Columbus, connecting to Quarry Trails Metro Park, Upper Arlington, Marble Cliff, and Grandview Heights.

The following actions should follow D1

- FA D2 Identify and evaluate options for relocation of City Hall.**
- FA D3 Create more safe ways to access the Heritage Trail from nearby neighborhoods.**
- FA D4 Work with property owners in the industrial area between the railroad corridor and Scioto Darby Road to encourage redevelopment.**
- FA D5 Create new street connections as indicated on the Focus Area plan.**
- FA D6 Create a trail head with parking in the southern end of the Focus Area.**
- FA D7 Work with property owners adjacent to regional trails to establish trail-oriented amenities.**

