

# Planning Matters



CITY OF COLUMBUS, MAYOR MICHAEL B. COLEMAN DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTOR BOYCE SAFFORD, III

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## The Path to 2012

### Mayor Coleman initiates intensive public participation process

by Vince Papsidero, AICP

At his State of the City address earlier this year, Mayor Michael B. Coleman challenged the community to think big and creatively about itself and its future – with a special focus on Columbus' bicentennial in 2012. He announced the creation of a visioning process and the upcoming appointment of a commission to recommend projects that will transform the city in time for its 200th birthday celebration.

Working with Linda LaCloche, Policy Advisor in the Mayor's Office, the Planning Division is providing assistance in the design and implementation of this complex consensus-based visioning process.

The visioning process has two main components:

- ▶ Reaching consensus on a set of projects that can be built or initiated by 2012 and thereby transforming the city.
- ▶ A list of neighborhood-based capital improvements for the 2008 Bicentennial Bond Package.

**Goals.** This is envisioned as an intensive process to conclude in May 2008 with the following goals:

- ▶ Engage a wide spectrum of the citizenry to think about the future of their city from a transformational standpoint and to establish agreed upon attributes of a great neighborhood.

BICENTENNIAL  
*dream it*  2012  
*do it*



- ▶ Use public input via the Columbus Think Tank and Columbus 2012 website to inform the agenda setting discussions of a citywide 2012 Commission with 13 focus groups targeting specific topical areas.
- ▶ Use public input to establish neighborhood-level capital improvement priorities that will be integrated into a possible \$1 billion Bicentennial Capital Bond Package to be presented to the voters in November 2008. ▶▶

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## The Path to 2012

### Mayor Coleman initiates intensive public participation process

The project is being undertaken as a joint staff – consultant – citizen effort, with several tasks already underway.

**Think Tank.** The Think Tank was unveiled at the Columbus Arts Festival and is scheduled to visit all major summer festivals, several neighborhood pride events, and other public venues through September. The Think Tank is a kiosk designed and built by the Neighborhood Design Center, which provides three touch-screen monitors and web cams that allow participants to complete a survey, write a blog, or record a video message. The software was designed by the city's Department of Technology. Input sampling will be posted on the 2012 website ([www.columbus2012.org](http://www.columbus2012.org)).

A Request for Proposal was issued June 8th to hire a consulting team that can assist the staff with managing the commission and focus group process, as well as five regional neighborhood meetings that will occur in the fall. The consultant will also assist with compiling the final recommendations that will be incorporated into the *Blueprint for the Bicentennial* report.

**2012 Commission.** The 2012 Commission will be comprised of a spectrum of community leadership. In the fall the first of two rounds of focus group meetings will be held with additional community leadership to review and crystallize citizen comments from the Think Tank.

The five regional neighborhood meetings will review the results of a neighborhood leadership survey already underway, consider



already identified capital projects for their neighborhoods, identify additional projects, and recommend project priorities. That input will be considered by the 2012 Commission as it prepares final capital project recommendations.

The *Blueprint for the Bicentennial* is to be completed by May 2008 in order to meet the schedule for a November bond package. While ambitious, the visioning process should successfully engage the community with the appropriate structure to ensure consensus is reached by next spring. ♦

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## Port Columbus Growth Partnership Creating a Premier Multi-Jurisdictional Jobs Center

by Devayani Puranik

The Port Columbus Area Joint Development study is a collaborative effort to develop a plan to jointly create a premier job center crossing jurisdictional lines. The partnership consists of three key jurisdictions: Columbus, Gahanna, and Whitehall, with significant stakeholder support coming from the Columbus Regional Airport Authority and Chalmers P. Wylie Veterans Clinic, among others.

Mayor Coleman initiated the planning process in his State of the City Address of 2007, stating "Today, I'm proud to announce that after long discussions with the Mayors of Gahanna and Whitehall, we are joining forces to create The Port Columbus Growth Partnership. The partnership will position the entire area around Port Columbus as a key job center for our region. Together, we will create a new economic development corridor called the Port Columbus Area Development District."

**Comprehensive Approach.** Generally, airport studies only link the location of businesses and their relationship to the airport. However Columbus has taken a more comprehensive approach to plan the area around regional centers like the airport and to involve the neighboring jurisdictions to develop

an economic and physical plan beneficial to all the stakeholders. This study not only brings different jurisdictions together but also various departments within the city of Columbus to work together to facilitate the process. The Columbus Planning Division is the lead facilitator for the working committee, providing data analysis and forecasting, and preparing the planning document that will be proposed for adoption to all three city councils.

The area around Port Columbus or the "airport district" has great potential to develop as a major gateway to the Columbus Metro. ►►



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## Port Columbus Growth Partnership Creating a Premier Multi-Jurisdictional Jobs Center

The largest stakeholder, Port Columbus International Airport is the 12th largest employer in Ohio employing 23,000 people and generating \$2.2 billion in economic activity. Major economic clusters within the district include Wholesale Trade, Construction, Manufacturing (Metal), and Accommodation/Food. The major employment clusters include Professional/Scientific/Technical, Retail Trade (Auto/Furn/Food/Gas), Construction, and Wholesale Trade.

**Economic Assets.** Other economic assets in the district include physical, locational, or economic attributes that support business activity, including airport-related facilities and support businesses; interstate highway access via I-670 and I-270; arterial access via Cassady Avenue, Stelzer Road, E. Fifth Avenue, Broad Street, Taylor Road, and Hamilton Road; rail access via CSX on the south side of Fifth Avenue; lodging, restaurant, and retail facilities that support economic activity in the planning area; rental car facilities at Port Columbus and vacant or under developed properties. The district offers more than 400 acres of vacant land and could potentially accommodate 2 million to 4 million square feet of development, representing about 10,000 to 20,000 new jobs. In addition many existing businesses have space to expand, generating additional jobs, such as DSCC.

Along with the assets, Planning Division analysis has identified some of the challenges which include consensus on financial strategies, environmental aspects such as storm water management, development of a high quality well-designed physical environ-

ment, and provision of the infrastructure to attract and retain new and existing businesses.

**Action Plan.** When completed, the *Port Columbus Growth Partnership Plan* will be a policy document addressing existing and future land use, development sites, development standards, incentives, infrastructure, capital improvements and financing, incentives, economic placemaking and marketing, and implementation. It will also establish procedures to encourage the purchase of goods and services from local businesses and hiring of citizens from the participating jurisdictions.

The city of Columbus and all the regional partners are continually striving for the best for their communities. They share assets including Port Columbus, infrastructure such as highways and major gateways to the region. By planning together, each community and the airport district will grow together, becoming a more successful premier economic engine and jobs center for the region for decades to come. ♦



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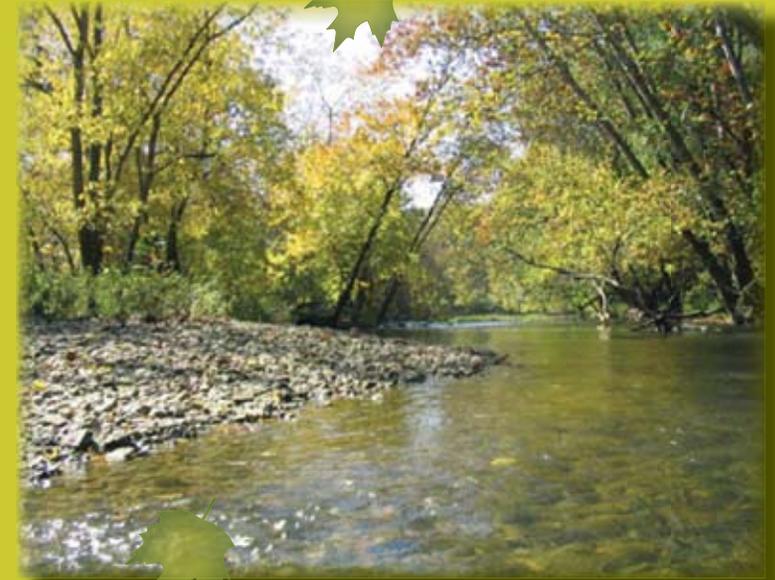
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## Big Darby Implementation Collaboration is Key in the Big Darby Area

by Adrienne Low-Joly

The protection of the Big Darby watershed is directly tied to how well the *Big Darby Accord Watershed Management Plan* is implemented. With the same spirit that shaped the Accord itself, the member jurisdictions are taking a collaborative approach to implementation. Since adoption last fall, a coordinated effort to enact the plan's key recommendations has begun. No single organization alone can ensure the watershed's protection, so the Accord calls for the creation of several advisory groups to oversee the plans components. Collaboration includes more than just the member jurisdictions. Local watershed groups, state agencies, neighborhood and civic associations, and landowners are being asked to participate in these efforts.

**Advisory Panel.** The primary focus of the Accord's implementation is the Big Darby Accord Advisory Panel. Development within the planning area will be reviewed by the Panel for compliance with the Accord before being heard by each jurisdiction's approval body (City Council, County Commission or Township Trustees). The Panel consists of nine members appointed by jurisdictions that have adopted the Accord and one at-large panel member. Members have attended two training sessions (May 8th and May 19th) prior to beginning to review development applications on June 12th. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm at Franklin County Memorial Hall.



**Town Center Master Plan.** Focusing development in less environmentally sensitive areas with an integrated, mixed-use town center is a recommendation of the Accord. Additional planning is necessary to develop a detailed master plan of the Town Center that includes the level and type of development, infrastructure and design guidelines. The member jurisdictions are organizing stakeholders and other interested parties to assist with writing a request for proposals and selecting a consultant team that will guide the planning process. ►►

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## Big Darby Implementation

### Collaboration is Key in the Big Darby Area

**Open Space.** To protect the water quality and natural resources of the watershed, the Accord identifies a conservation potential of 25,000 acres. This land is prioritized into tiers based on environmental sensitivity, trail connectivity and existing parkland and open spaces. The conservation approach is to utilize a collection of programs and strategies to acquire or otherwise permanently protect the land from development. To guide land acquisition, funding and other conservation efforts, the Accord recommends the establishment of an Open Space Advisory Council. Part of the Council's work will be public outreach to landowners to discuss the benefits of land conservation and inform them of conservation programs. The Accord identifies organizations that should have representation on the Council. The member jurisdictions have begun discussions with those groups to gauge interest and are defining the scope and work program for the Council.

**Environmental Monitoring.** The impacts of the Accord's recommendations on the long-term health of the Big Darby Creek should be assessed by monitoring water quality at both the site level and watershed level. Data collected will be used to develop trend analysis and be used to determine whether Ohio Environmental Protection Agency standards for the stream are being met. This comprehensive approach to monitoring is new to Franklin County and an entire program must be developed that addresses technical requirements, standards for data collection and interpretation, consistent application of guidelines and location of rain gauges.



As with other aspects of the Accord, the complexity of this program requires collaboration among multiple agencies and organizations. An Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) is recommended in the plan to establish the monitoring program and assist with other activities, such as stream restoration. The Accord jurisdictions have approached the EMG as an opportunity to engage outside groups with experience and expertise in this area. The jurisdictions are looking to build upon existing inter-agency initiatives, such as the Hellbranch Watershed Forum, to foster the Accord's monitoring goals.

**Revenue.** Many aspects of the Accord, such as land acquisition, cannot be fully realized unless there is a stable revenue stream available to the member jurisdictions. Ultimately, successful implementation of the Accord will require multiple funding sources and innovative approaches. The Accord identifies mechanisms that could be used to generate revenue and includes a preliminary assessment of their use. The member jurisdictions are fine tuning the revenue projections and creating the legal frame work to implement the recommendations. Once consensus is achieved, the participating jurisdictions will begin the process to establish the revenue streams. ◆

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## Darby Update: Zoning Overlay Detailing Policy Recommendations

by Brent Warren

The *Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan* was developed cooperatively by ten different jurisdictions within the Franklin County portion of the watershed. The plan (available at <http://assets.columbus.gov/Council/BDAccordlow-res.pdf>) contains many detailed policy recommendations, covering everything from the makeup of the Accord Panel to the benefits and limitations of rain water harvesting.

**Zoning Overlay.** The Long Range Planning section, as part of its efforts to implement the *Big Darby Accord*, has worked to identify all of the standards that could be enforced through a zoning overlay. The result is the first draft of a document called the *Big Darby Watershed Protection Overlay*.

An overlay builds on the base zoning of a specific area, applying stricter standards and criteria in addition to those of the underlying zoning. The Darby overlay would apply to the portion of the watershed within the City of Columbus, and would codify the many standards outlined in the plan. Franklin County is currently wrapping up work on a stream setback ordinance, and has plans to develop a conservation development zoning district as well. Both of those efforts would apply to the unincorporated areas of the watershed.

**Development Standards.** The Columbus overlay addresses a wide range of general development standards and includes sections on stormwater management, open space preservation and conservation development. In addition, one of the key elements is a section on ►►



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## Darby Update: Zoning Overlay Detailing Policy Recommendations

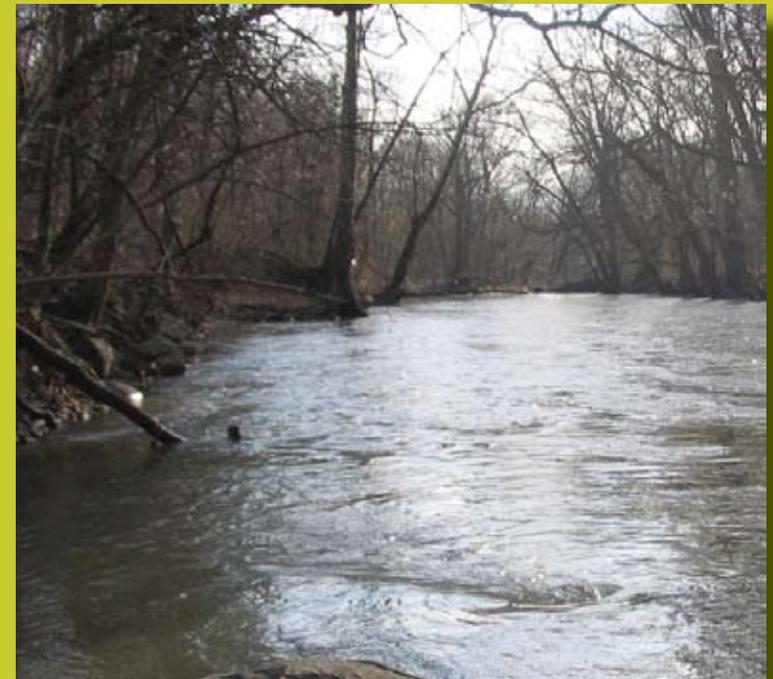
stream corridor protection. There are many benefits to protecting the land along streams, including flood mitigation, pollution control and stream bank stabilization. The overlay lays out a formula for determining the precise size of the stream corridor protection zone (which will vary depending on factors such as the size of the floodplain and drainage area), and then details the permitted and prohibited uses within the zone.

The overlay also expands existing parkland dedication requirements. Current city regulations stipulate five and a half acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, but the *Big Darby Accord* recommends a goal of ten acres per 1,000 residents. The overlay codifies this recommendation by applying the more stringent requirement for all development within the Big Darby watershed. This means that any development of more than one acre in size that requires a rezoning would have to provide enough dedicated parkland to meet the ten acre/1,000 residents standard.

**Stormwater Monitoring.** Another example of the more comprehensive approach that will now be required within the watershed is the post construction stormwater monitoring requirements. The *Big Darby Accord* recommends that sites continue to be monitored for the discharge of pollutants for a full five to ten years after construction. This way, if the integrity of the water quality declines as a result of new development, steps can be taken to respond to problems before the overall health of the watershed is affected.

Given the level of detail presented in the Accord plan and the high standard that it sets for environmental protection, the *Big Darby Watershed Protection Overlay* has the potential to be a very important part of the city's overall *Big Darby Accord* implementation strategy.

Long Range Planning is currently in the process of gathering feedback on the first draft of the overlay, and is planning to have a final version ready to present to the Columbus Development Commission by the end of the summer. ♦



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## Implementing the West Broad Street Strategy A Blueprint for Economic Revitalization of the Highland West District

by Christine Palmer

In 2005 the Planning Division worked with the Hilltop community to develop a strategic plan for the portion of West Broad Street from Highland to Terrace avenues. Months of intense community involvement culminated in the creation and adoption of the plan. Its main objective is to provide the city and community with a blueprint for revitalizing this portion of West Broad Street, known as the Highland West District.

With the assistance of a steering committee, the division developed the *West Broad Street Economic Development Strategy*. The steering committee consisted of representatives from the Greater Hilltop Area Commission, Greater Hilltop Community Development Corporation, Homes On The Hill, Columbus Urban Growth, Neighborhood Design Center, property owners within the district, and the Hilltop Business Association. Staff from the city of Columbus Economic Development, Neighborhood Services, and Transportation divisions also contributed to the planning process.

**Priorities.** Once the plan was completed, the steering committee chose to stay instrumental in the implementation of the plan. In August 2006 the committee met with the Planning Division to prioritize the economic development strategies. One of the first identified was a signature redevelopment project. The steering committee felt it was important to gain community input to help shape the signature redevelopment project for West Broad Street. The Neighborhood Design Center in collaboration with the division



Credit: Neighborhood Design Center.

held a short intensive design and planning session in November to stimulate ideas from the community. John Lowry, president of the Hilltop Business Association, stressed that "The design charrette is a good way to get involvement from the community, as they are the ultimate beneficiaries of redevelopment in the neighborhood. As the area is redeveloped their property values will rise."

Teams of designers and urban planners worked with meeting participants to address streetscape, image and marketing, redevelopment sites, and the business mix for the neighborhood. Residents, property owners, and Hilltop stakeholders attended the charrette. Gary L. Baker II, chairman of the Greater Hilltop ►►

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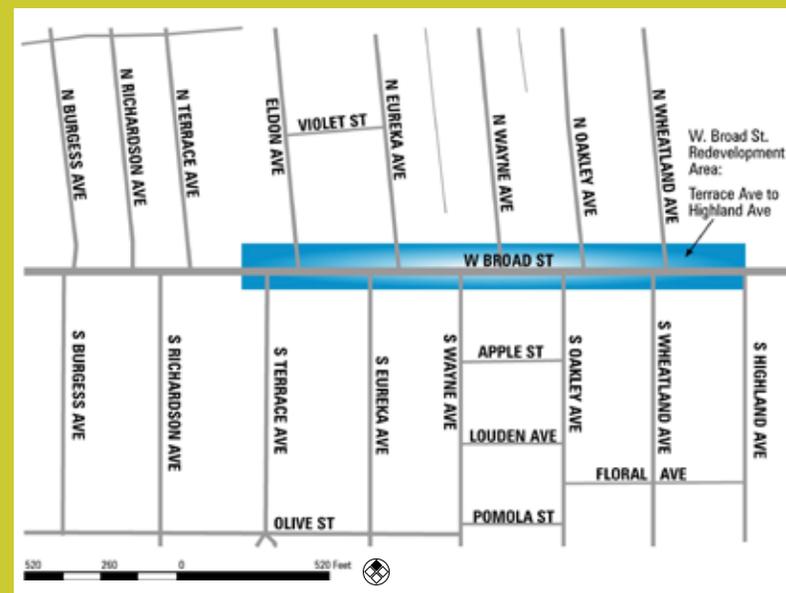
## The West Broad St Economic Development Strategy A Blueprint for Revitalization of the Highland West District

Area Commission, was pleased to see the community and city working together, stating "I'd like to thank the Planning Division and Neighborhood Design Center staff along with neighborhood participants for their hard work and dedication."

**Creating the Vision.** The evening proved to be very productive as the group developed a vision of the area through hands-on exercises. Using maps, photos of the streetscape, historic photos, and planning prototypes, group participants devised a vision for a revitalized West Broad Street. The Neighborhood Design Center in turn has taken this community input and developed a corridor plan. The plan includes: businesses uses appropriate for the neighborhood, streetscape improvements, branding and marketing strategy, community amenities, redevelopment projects, and pedestrian amenities. Design concepts illustrating the community's vision are included. The plan was presented to the community in the spring to get further feedback. Lowry said, "The steering committee has been working on the West Broad Street plan for the past couple of years and we look forward to seeing the tangible results that this implementation phase is moving toward. Once the community starts to see the improvements take shape at the street level, the momentum will really be in our favor."

In June the Greater Hilltop Area Commission adopted the *Highland West Visioning Plan*. The plan presentation can be viewed on the Neighborhood Design Center's website at [www.neighborhooddesign.org](http://www.neighborhooddesign.org). With the adoption of the plan, the community will now focus on implementing the plan.

**Additional Activity.** The plan is just one of the many exciting developments taking place in the Hilltop area. In addition to the redevelopment plan, the city has long targeted vacant property on Wheatland Avenue for residential units. At the same time a west side health center is being developed on the corner of Wheatland Avenue and West Broad Street. The health center will incorporate the old fire station and will utilize green building techniques (environmentally friendly building methods). Combined, these development projects will help revitalized West Broad Street. Baker stated, "The improvements to the Highland West District are critical to bringing about the Hilltop Renaissance." ♦



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## From the Administrator

by Vince Papsidero, AICP

It's late spring as this issue of *Planning Matters* goes into production. The Planning Division has been actively completing several current projects and preparing to initiate new planning processes.

### Operations

**Recent Projects.** Of particular note the *Milo-Grogan Neighborhood Plan* and the *Main and Broad Street Corridor Revitalization Plan* were adopted by City Council in May. The *Northeast Area Plan* and *Southeast Area Plan – Bixby Road Amendment* are scheduled to go to the Development Commission this month. And the *Far South Area Plan* and *Southside Plan – Merion Village and Schumacher Place Amendment* will both be completed this fall. Among the projects scheduled to be initiated this fall are the *Clintonville Neighborhood Plan* and planning for German Village.

The staff continues to work on the Port Columbus Growth Partnership planning process and has been actively engaged in the Mayor's Columbus 2012 initiative, including the Columbus Think Tank. And the Columbus Public Schools gained approval from the U.S. Department of Education as a public benefit transfer in order to gain the final piece of land at the Fort Hayes campus (Planning is managing the base relocation and closure process for the U.S. Army).

### Personnel

**New Hires.** In the Urban Design Section, **Corrin Wendell** has joined the staff as an Urban Designer. Corrin is a recent graduate of the OSU city and regional planning program and had previously worked as a practicing architect for a local design firm. She is a native of Marrin County, California.



Corrin Wendell

For the summer, the Planning Division has hired two interns. Joining us for a second gig is **Glenn Taylor Jr.**, a recent graduate of Whittenberg University, and **Scott Ulrich**, an undergraduate student attending Miami University. For the Columbus 2012 project, four interns are working in the Planning Division supporting the Columbus Think Tank and managing the public input. Those interns are OSU graduate students **Amber Cackler**, **Mark Lundine**, **Amy Miller**, and **Jim Thompson.** ♦



Scott Ulrich on the left and Glenn Taylor Jr. on the right.

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