



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**COMMUNITY LEADERS APPLAUD COLLABORATION ON
DARBY ACCORD TOWN CENTER MASTER PLAN**

Franklin County, the City of Columbus, and Brown and Prairie Township officials unveiled the Darby Accord Town Center Master Plan last evening to a crowd gathered at the Prairie Township Firehouse.

Presenters stressed the Big Darby Watershed's unique collection of scenic beauty, unique species and overall quality as a fresh water habitat.

In 2006, The Big Darby Accord Plan, a comprehensive growth management plan governing over 50,000 acres of land in western Franklin County was adopted by 7 jurisdictions committed to preserving a state and national ecological treasure.

The Accord's primary benefits are protecting the environmental health of the Big Darby Watershed, preserving open spaces, establishing a pattern of responsible growth in the region, restoring stream health and wildlife habitat, and establishing predictable and sustainable revenue sources for financing the Plan's elements.

The Accord's secondary benefits are promoting recreation opportunities throughout the watershed, strengthening the existing park system and leveraging newly created public-private partnerships for further cooperation elsewhere in Franklin County.

Ultimately, approximately 1,260 acres of green space will be permanently protected enhancing the water quality of the Big Darby Creek for generations. The notion of a compact, urban town center is not new in Ohio. The Big Darby Accord Plan's manifestation of this concept, however, is unique.

The Town Center Master Plan envisions a mixed-use, walkable, private development with significant open space and stormwater management systems located in the West Broad Street corridor on land that is the least environmentally sensitive.

"Preservation of our greatest natural resource, Big Darby Creek, remains one of our top priorities," said Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman. "The Darby Town Center Master Plan will preserve sensitive areas, and generate revenue to further protect and restore Big Darby Creek and its tributaries."

"This plan establishes a strategy for implementing the Town Center development vision consistent with the Darby Accord Master Plan," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "I applaud the collaborative nature in which the community has come together to achieve this goal."

The building program calls for 3,780 residential units on lots ranging from 6-acre conservation lots to garden-style rental units, 300,000-square feet of commercial space, 310,000-square feet of office space, and a 100-room boutique hotel. The real estate market analysis supported this program taking into account realistic price points.

"Prairie Township is happy with the quality of the background research that went into this plan, as well as the fact that it will result in a high quality development that protects water quality in the Big Darby," said Board Chair Doug Stormont. "I think that this and the other Big Darby Accord-related efforts are great examples of local governments working together to make positive things happen."

"The Darby Accord focuses on the compatibility of economic development and environmental sustainability," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "Throughout the accord process, we continue to pursue good jobs and a high quality of life so to protect the environment as well as the health and safety of the public, assuring that future generations will enjoy the scenic Big Darby."

"The Town Center Master plan is the culmination of many public meetings, gathering input from residents who want to see environmentally-responsible development of this ecological treasure," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "This project is a testament to the collaborative spirit and public-private leadership for which Central Ohio is known."

The adoption process will begin in May and will include the Big Darby Accord Advisory Panel, Brown Township Trustees, Prairie Township Zoning Commission, Prairie Township Trustees, Franklin County (Planning Commission, Rural Zoning Commission and Commissioners) and City (Development Commission, City Council).

The entire plan can be viewed online at tinyurl.com/DarbyTownCenter.

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