

BROWN

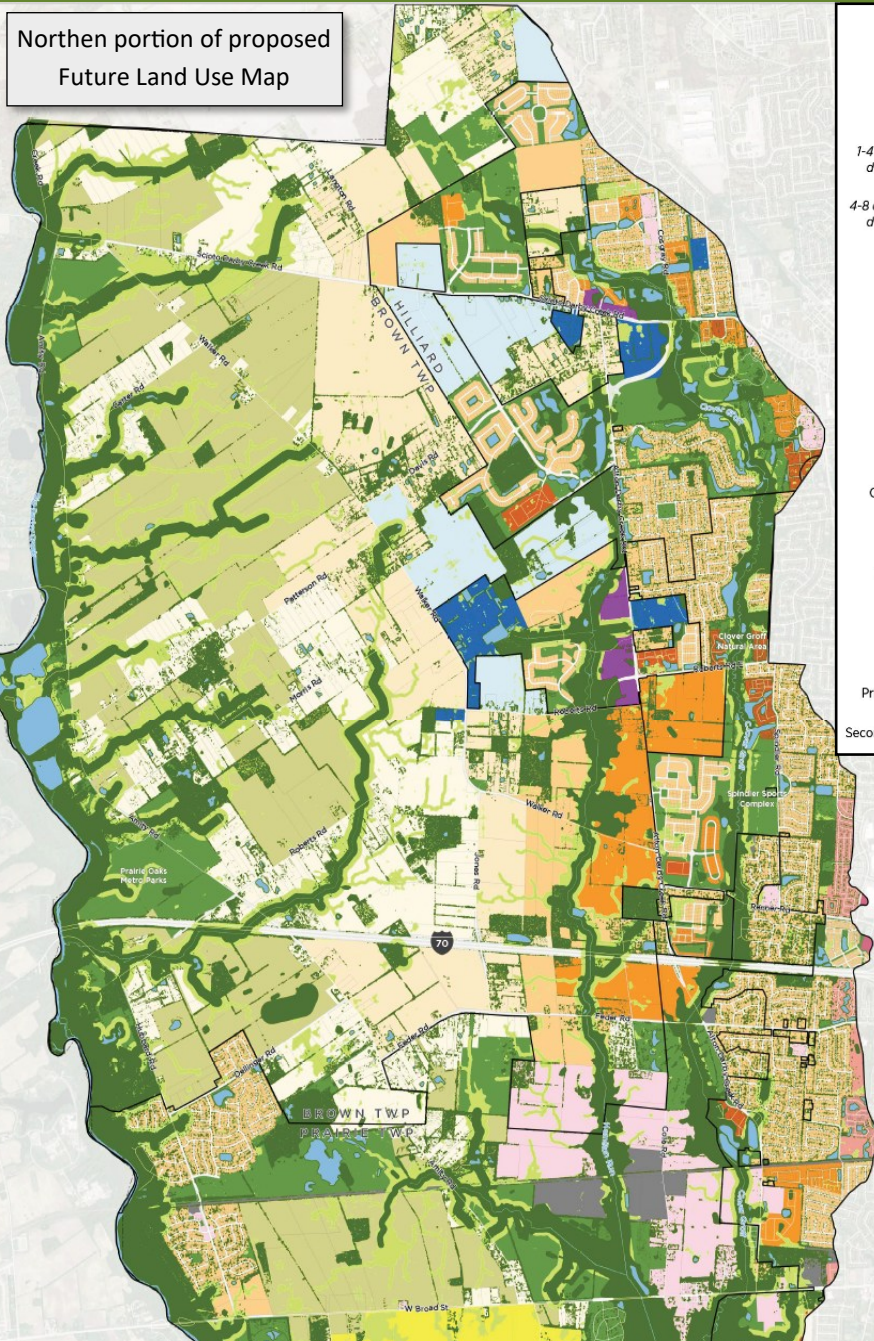
ESTABLISHED 1830

TOWNSHIP

Spring 2026

Proposed Big Darby Accord Amendment

Northern portion of proposed Future Land Use Map



Agriculture	0.2 du/ac	Light Green
Rural Residential 1	0.2-0.75 du/ac	Light Yellow
Rural Residential 2	0.5-1.5 du/ac	Light Orange
Neighborhood 1	1-4 du/ac (up to 6 du/ac with density bonus agreement*)	Orange
Neighborhood 2	4-8 du/ac (up to 12 du/ac with density bonus agreement*)	Dark Orange
Neighborhood 3	8-24 du/ac	Red
Low Density Mixed Use	1-1.5 du/ac	Purple
Mixed Use 1	12-24 du/ac	Pink
Mixed Use 2	24-48 du/ac	Red
Mixed Use 3	No density limit	Dark Red
Civic/Institutional		Blue
Conservation Employment		Light Blue
Green Energy		Yellow
Industrial and Warehouse		Grey
Utilities and Railroads		Dark Grey
Parks and Open Space		Green
Primary Conservation Areas		Dark Green
Secondary Conservation Areas		Light Green



Scan to see amendment

Big Darby Accord Amendment Proposed

Robust outreach occurred through various workshops and a public open house. It has now been released to the public.

Read the amendment online:

<https://arcg.is/1nS1qa0>

The Big Darby Accord is being amended for the first time since 2006. The proposed changes would allow housing density up to 12 units per acre, a dramatic increase from the current 1.3 units per acre. Areas designated as Neighborhood 1 & 2 (see map) could be annexed by Columbus and developed under Columbus zoning rules, removing local township oversight.

Brown Township Trustees, joined by Hilliard City Council, Norwich Township Trustees, and Hilliard City Schools, have raised concerns about environmental impacts, school capacity, and strained public services. Environmental advocates warn that protections in the current amendment draft are insufficient to safeguard Big Darby Creek's nationally significant ecosystem.

Columbus City Council will hear the first reading of the Big Darby Accord Amendment 5pm on April 20th at City Hall, 90 W. Broad St. in Council's Chambers.

Property Tax Issue

Governor DeWine Warns Against Eliminating Property Taxes

Thursday, February 5th, Governor DeWine spoke to township officials from across the state at the OTA's 2026 Winter Conference General Session. During his remarks, the Governor addressed the proposed constitutional ballot issue that would eliminate property taxes entirely.

Governor DeWine stated, "If that were to happen, it would create an immediate and severe crisis. Many local services that depend on property tax funding would disappear almost overnight. Property taxes are relatively predictable, unlike income and sales taxes which fluctuate more with economic conditions. These fluctuations make budgeting for public services more uncertain."

He went on, "As discussions continue in the media and in communities about proposals like this, it's important to consider the real-world consequences. No one likes paying taxes, but some taxes are necessary to maintain essential services. Eliminating property taxes would also mean a loss of local control. Today, voters can approve or reject levies in their communities. If funding shifted entirely to the state level, that local authority would largely disappear."

Ohio benefits from stable taxation and a competitive income tax rate. Governor DeWine shared that Ohio's state income tax rate is now 2.75% — the second lowest among states in the U.S. that have an income tax. He noted that to replace lost property tax revenue through income taxes, the state rate would need to increase to somewhere between 11 and 15 percent. Alternatively, if the replacement came through sales tax, the current 5.3% state sales tax rate would have to rise to roughly 15-18%.

Townships Provide Essential Services Every Day

Townships, the first form of local government in Ohio, provide essential, quality of life services to nearly 35% of the state's 11.8 million resident.

Property taxes collected by township are used to provide:

- Maintenance of 41,600 miles of local roads.



Gov. DeWine addresses township officials at the 2026 Ohio Township Association conference at the Columbus Convention Center.

- Care and preservation of over 3,000 cemeteries.
- Police protection in more than 100 townships.
- Fire and EMS services with more than 400 departments.
- Land use planning in more than 650 townships.

The proposed petition is to put a constitutional amendment on the November 2026 ballot to eliminate property taxes statewide, beginning January 1, 2027. There is no proposed replacement for this funding.

The petition needs approximately 418,000 valid signatures across at least 44 counties. The submission deadline is in July, at which time signature collection ends. After review, a 10 day cure period is provided to collect additional signatures, if needed.

Eliminating property taxes in Ohio would risk bond defaults and cripple levy-funded services, with no practical replacement via local income taxes.

Townships have few other income sources than property taxes. The amendment targets the state taxation system rather than townships specifically, but townships will be central in the debates due to heavy reliance on property taxes.

"...eliminate property taxes statewide, beginning January 1, 2027. There is no proposed replacement for this funding."

Zoning Resolution Open House

Where:

Firehouse Equipment Bay
2491 Walker Road

When:

April 28, 2026
4:00 P.M.—7:00 P.M.



Learn about NEW ZONING for Brown Township!

The Dever Building Hall Located at 2495 Walker Road

Is Available for Use by
Brown Township Residents

The Cost is \$50 per event

- No cost for Civic groups
- Resident must be present
- No alcohol

Contact Heidi Feathers

Heidi_Feathers@BrownTwp.org

(614) 876-2133



DIVISION OF
**NATURAL AREAS
& PRESERVES**
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Greater Central Ohio Rivers and Streams Integrated Prioritization System (IPS)

Study Phase 1 Technical Summary

The Big and Little Darby creeks comprise one of the highest quality river systems in Ohio, providing a home to rare aquatic life and outstanding recreational opportunities. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) initiated an Integrated Prioritization System (IPS) study with the goal of working with communities to protect this central Ohio natural treasure for generations to come.

Why an IPS study for Darby Creek?

The Big and Little Darby creeks are recognized as one of the most important stream systems for aquatic life in the Midwest and a premiere central Ohio natural amenity. They have received Ohio's highest designations for aquatic life (Exceptional Warmwater Habitat) and antidegradation protection (Outstanding State Resource Waters).

The system faces many challenges including rapid land use change. Urban area expansion creates additional hard surfaces, known as impervious cover, that do not absorb precipitation. Urban areas shed as much as five times the amount of water, which carries increased polluted runoff, to streams after rain events. Declines in stream quality and loss of sensitive species have been shown to occur at as little as 5% impervious cover, which some portions of the Darby watershed have reached.

What is the IPS study?

In late 2024, the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves' Ohio Scenic Rivers Program initiated an IPS study which was completed in early January 2026 by the Midwest Biodiversity Institute (MBI). The IPS is a model that organizes and analyzes information to help understand patterns in stream health. It can explain current conditions and predict what to expect as conditions change.

The goal of the project is to better understand what is needed to protect the Big and Little Darby creeks in their current outstanding condition. The study will make data available to local communities to assist with land use and other conservation decisions. Phase 1 of the project is complete, and Phase 2 will be completed in late 2026.

Darby Creek: By The Numbers

100 fish species (5 endangered)

45 freshwater mussel species (8 federally endangered/threatened)

IPS Phase 1: Stressor Thresholds

The study used extensive water quality data collected at 2,600 sites over 45 years. The study area encompasses the upper Scioto River basin including Big and Little Darby creeks as well as the western Licking River, Kokosing River, and upper Paint Creek. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has collected most of this data including water chemistry, biology (fish, macroinvertebrate), and stream habitat. The study also examines available freshwater mussel data.

IPS analysis examined more than 300 parameters that could potentially cause water quality impacts, referred to as stressors. These include metals and chemical parameters, such as nutrients and chlorides that are commonly thought of as "pollutants," as well as parameters such as physical stream habitat, land use, and dissolved oxygen that are not directly toxic but can lead to an impairment when too high or low. Land uses that were analyzed included agriculture, forest and urban, including percentage of impervious cover.

Stressor thresholds were developed for approximately 100 of these parameters that were shown to have a meaningful impact on water quality. Stressor thresholds signify the amount of a stressor that a stream can withstand before experiencing declines in water quality and loss of biological diversity. Thresholds were established across Ohio EPA Tiered Aquatic Life Uses (TALUs) and antidegradation tiers that correspond with narrative rankings from "outstanding" to "very poor."

Thresholds were also developed for four classes of stream and river size: small headwater, headwater, wadable, and boatable rivers.

Warmwater Habitat (WWH) stressor thresholds were derived for chemical, habitat, and land use variables at the 25th percentile of parameter values (for positive attributes like QHEI) at sites that met WWH standards. This approach mimics how TALUs were originally established in the 1980s by the Ohio EPA. Thresholds were then derived for Exceptional Warmwater Habitat (EWH) and Outstanding State Resource Waters (OSRW), the highest antidegradation tier. These thresholds are more protective and set at the 25th percentile of sites meeting EWH standards that also had sensitive species. For OSRW, stressor thresholds were set at 25th percentile of existing conditions.

Additionally, Phase 1 outputs provide percentiles for stressor statistics ranging from the 2nd to 98th percentile for sites meeting WWH or better. These are useful in highlighting outlier values as well as more protective benchmarks. For instance, the 75th to 90th percentile for positive parameters, such as stream habitat (QHEI), are more representative of very high-quality sites in the Big Darby Creek watershed that perform above the EWH or OSRW baseline.



Phase 1 Study Results

The table below includes a summary of stressor thresholds for key parameters. Thresholds are not regulatory; they are intended to be used as a tool to guide local decision making. The full Phase 1 report as well as a link to a data dashboard created by MBI is available at ohiodnr.gov/darbystudy.

Analysis of the strength of association between stressor and aquatic life outcome were reported as a FIT (“goodness-of-fit”) value. Land use variables were found to be the most strongly related to aquatic life outcomes, followed by stream habitat and chemical variables. Phase 2 of the study will include additional statistical analysis to refine which stressors are most important.

Instances in which streams perform well despite exceeding stressor thresholds may occur for a few reasons. Regarding land use, for instance, sites that have recently experienced urbanization may not yet reflect degradation that can take time to appear or may indicate conditions on the brink of decline that will be reflected in Phase 2 Threat Rankings. They might also signify natural supportive factors such as beneficial ground water flow or effective use of best management practices. Further analyses conducted in Phase 2 will

examine these outliers further with a goal of determining the factors (e.g., key stressors, age of land use changes, extent of wooded stream buffers) that explain better biological performance.

Phase 2 – Threat, Susceptibility, and Restorability Rankings

In addition to Phase 2 analysis discussed above, this phase of work will utilize stressor thresholds as the basis for developing Restorability, Susceptibility, and Threat rankings:

- Susceptibility rankings will be developed for sites that are in good or excellent condition to prioritize protection.
- Threat rankings will focus on sites that are in good condition but have high stress loads and are at risk of becoming impaired with additional pressure. Analysis will determine which stressors are most important and help focus action before streams become impaired.
- Restorability rankings will be developed for impaired sites based on the number and severity of stressors present to prioritize restoration where it will be most successful and cost effective.

While Phase 1 stressor thresholds apply to the entire central Ohio study area, Phase 2 rankings will apply within the Big Darby Creek watershed at the site, reach, and subwatershed (HUC 12) scale.

This information will allow communities to further examine local stream sites to consider the severity of stressors present when exploring restoration or protection actions.

What’s Next: Watershed Planning

To advance Phase 2 and provide additional community outreach, the division has received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The grant will fund additional staff and consultant support in sharing study results and how stressors impact streams as well as learning about community needs.

Ohio Scenic Rivers Program staff will seek collaborative development of solutions related to land use and conservation, including technical tools, which align with community goals such as flood prevention and recreational value.

Phase 2 will culminate in the development of a community-based watershed conservation plan which provides guidance for the long-term protection of the exceptional Big and Little Darby system.

Funding

Funding for Phase 1 of the IPS was provided by the Ohio Department of Natural Resource’s Division of Natural Areas and Preserves and H2Ohio Rivers Program with additional support from the Franklin and Madison county soil and water conservation districts, and The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Chapter.

For more information

To learn more about the division’s Darby Conservation Project, visit <https://ohiodnr.gov/darbystudy>

For more information about the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program, visit <https://ohiodnr.gov/scenicrivers>

Parameter	Taxa Group	Stressor Thresholds					Ohio WQS
		OSRW Outstanding	EWH Excellent	WWH Good	MWH Fair	LRW Poor	
Land Use Parameters							
% Impervious	Fish	2.8	3.6	4.0	31.7	59.3	NA
% Agriculture	Fish	81.0	79.2	84.0	89.4	94.7	NA
% Forest	Mussels	6.2	6.2	6.1	4.6	3.8	NA
Chemical Parameters							
Chloride (mg/L)	Macros	44.1	49.3	52.0	98.0	235.9	500
Total Suspended Solids (mg/L)	Macros	28	33	33	70	179	NA
Total Phosphorus (mg/L)	Mussels	0.10	0.09	0.19	0.55	1.61	NA
Nitrate-N (mg/L)	Fish	3.4	2.6	2.8	4.1	7.8	NA
Ammonia (mg/L)	Mussels	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.23	0.74	0.3
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN) (mg/L)	Mussels	0.52	0.50	0.60	0.92	1.76	NA
Cadmium (µg/L)	Macros	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.40	1.00	5.8
Copper (µg/L)	Mussels	10.0	3.5	10.0	11.2	14.7	24
Zinc (µg/L)	Mussels	12.2	11.6	14.2	21.2	42.4	300
Habitat Parameters							
QHEI	Fish	72.0	72.0	66.5	52.0	37.5	NA
QHEI - substrate score	Fish	14.0	14.5	13.5	8.7	3.8	NA
QHEI - riparian score	Fish	5.5	5.0	5.0	3.7	2.3	NA

Table 1: Selected thresholds for Wadeable Streams across the OSRW Antidegradation and Aquatic Life Use Tiers.

OSRW - Outstanding State Resource Water antidegradation tier	WQS - Water Quality Standards
EWH - Exceptional Warmwater Habitat	QHEI - Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index
WWH - Warmwater Habitat	
MWH - Modified Warmwater Habitat	
LRW - Limited Resource Habitat	



Community Update

Coming Spring 2026: The DEN Firefighter Training Facility

The Norwich Township Fire Department is proud to announce the upcoming opening of The DEN, its dedicated firefighter training facility, scheduled for Spring 2026. This state-of-the-art facility will provide Norwich Township firefighters with advanced training opportunities designed to enhance operational readiness and safety. Among its many features, The DEN will support Class A “live fire” training, an essential component of firefighter education that cannot be fully replicated through classroom instruction or simulations.



Live fire training allows firefighters to operate in real fire conditions, including heat, smoke, and dynamic fire behavior, within a controlled and supervised environment. This hands-on experience strengthens decision-making, builds confidence, and prepares crews to respond more effectively and safely during emergency incidents. In addition to live fire evolutions, The DEN will support training in ventilation techniques, hose line advancement, rope rescue operations, firefighter survival skills, building search procedures, incident command, and a variety of other critical disciplines.

The DEN has been designed in accordance with NFPA 1402, the National Fire Protection Association standard for fire training facilities. Compliance with this standard ensures the structure reflects modern building construction and realistic fire behavior while maintaining safety and durability. By adhering to NFPA 1402, the Norwich Township Fire Department can provide consistent, high-quality training in a facility built to withstand repeated thermal stress and support effective training objectives. This invest-

ment reinforces the department’s commitment to firefighter safety, professional development, and the continued protection of the Norwich Township, Brown Township and Hilliard community.



This training facility has been named The DEN, an acronym representing

- Development
- Encouragement
- Necessity

These are the three principles that reflect the critical role of ongoing training in the fire service. The facility’s logo also incorporates the three Hilliard High School mascots, symbolizing the Norwich Township Fire Department’s continued commitment to and support of the Hilliard community.

Brown Township Spring Food Drive Neighbors Helping Neighbors



Last November, our community stepped up in a big way during government shut-down and the question around SNAP benefits.

This year, we are making it official! Brown Township is proud to announce our Annual Spring Community Food Drive.

While the holidays are a popular time for giving, food pantries often face empty shelves as spring arrives. Children are out of school and cannot rely on school lunches. Many kids in our community face food



insecurity and hunger. Let’s work together to ensure no child in Hilliard goes hungry.

Brown Township FOOD DRIVE

Dates: April 25 – May 2

Benefiting: Hilliard Food Pantry

How It Works

We’re making it easier than ever to give back this year:

The Brown Bag Arrival: Keep an eye out! Volunteers will be dropping off brown donation bags to homes throughout Brown Township.

The “Wish List”: Each bag includes a list of the most critically needed items for the Hilliard Food Pantry.

Easy Pickup: Once your bag is filled, simply Text the number printed on the bag. This lets us know you’re ready for a porch pickup! Leave the donation on your front steps and we will swing by to pick it up.

Drop-Off Option: If you want to drop off goods, we will have a collection point at 7885 Patterson Road (*Honeybee Homestead*)

Cash Donations: On the bag there will be a QR code with a direct link to the Hilliard Food Pantry. Each \$1 donation gets the pantry over \$5 through partnerships. This is the best way to support the Hilliard Food Pantry. Stronger Together

We are thrilled to announce that *Brown Elementary, Bradley High, and Memorial Middle School* are officially participating in this year’s drive. Students are joining the effort to support our neighbors, making this a true community-wide event!

Goal: To fill the pantry for the summer months ahead!

Thank you for your continued generosity and for making Brown Township such a supportive place to call home.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer your time to assist with bag, drop off/food pickup, please reach out to:

Nichole Mulvane at 614-425-0245
Matthew Mulvane at 614-717-3055

BROWN TOWNSHIP
ESTABLISHED 1830



L-R: Trustee Pete Marsh, Fiscal Officer Becky Kent, Trustee Pam Sayre, Trustee Joe Martin.



Brown Township
2491 Walker Road
Hilliard, OH 43026

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE

Brown Township Administrative Offices

2491 Walker Road, Hilliard, Ohio 43026
Main Number • (614) 876-2133

Officers

- Pam Sayre, Trustee • (614) 582-0191
- Joe Martin, Trustee • (614) 309-8879
- Pete Marsh, Trustee • (419) 575-1137
- Becky Kent, Fiscal Officer • (614) 446-2359

Website

www.BrownTwp.org

Norwich Fire Department

Dave Baird, Chief • (614) 876-7694

Franklin County Sheriff's Department

Emergency • 911
Non-Emergency • (614) 525-3333

Regular public meetings

Third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
Upstairs Meeting Room of Firehouse
2491 Walker Rd., Hilliard, Ohio

PUBLIC SAFETY SUMMARY

Each issue of the Brown Township newsletter contains a quarterly wrap-up of public safety reports and calls in Brown Township.

Norwich Township Fire Department

Calls to addresses in both incorporated and unincorporated portions of Brown Township.

Fire Calls EMS Calls

Incorp Unincorp Incorp Unincorp

DEC 2025	1	7	5	19
JAN 2025	2	5	6	24
FEB 2025	1	7	6	24

Franklin County Sheriff

Calls to addresses in Brown Township:

December 2025

No Criminal/Theft Incidents occurred in Brown Township

January 2026

- 1/14- Theft occurred on Cole Rd
- 1/15- Theft occurred on Walker Rd
- 1/18- Theft occurred on Hayden Run Rd

February 2022

2/3- Theft occurred on Elliott Rd

Hilliard Division of Police

Non-routine calls to addresses in Brown Township:

December 2025

No calls reported.

January 2026

No calls reported.

February 2026

No calls reported.

Medication Disposal

Dispose of unused medication in the red disposal station inside main entrance of the Joint Safety Services Building located at 5181 Northwest Parkway, which is next to the Franklin County Fairgrounds.