

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Big Darby Town Center Master Plan Selected for Award of Excellence  
by the Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Association**

The Ohio chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Ohio) has chosen the Big Darby Town Center Master Plan for its 2013 Award of Excellence in their Focused Planning Project category.

The Focused Planning Project award is given to planning projects of unusually high merit dealing with a specific subject, such as economic development, environment, housing, historic preservation, transportation, or urban design.

The Big Darby Town Center Master Plan was adopted by a planning partnership between Franklin County, Brown Township, Prairie Township and the City of Columbus.

“We’ve worked hard to foster job creation and responsible development opportunities in Franklin County,” said Commission President John O’Grady. “Businesses create jobs that keep our residents working and providing for their families. At the same time, we’ve been mindful of the importance of keeping our environment thriving too. We’ve established policies and asked tough questions when making funding decisions to make sure these two things remain mutually compatible. The Big Darby Town Center Master Plan is an excellent example of how those two things remain priorities.”

“The Big Darby Accord partnership has been doing great work protecting the remarkable natural resources treasure we are so fortunate to have,” said Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman. “We are honored to share in this reward, and we thank all our partners for their dedication toward this effort.”

The plan utilizes a combination of strategic recommendations for development and conservation to mark a thoughtful approach to avoiding the negative effects of unchecked growth and sprawl in western Franklin County.

“This all started in 2006 with the adoption of the Big Darby Accord and its unprecedented agreement among ten local jurisdictions to protect, restore, and conserve the Big Darby watershed,” said Commissioner Paula Brooks. “This award for the Big Darby Town Center Master Plan is validation that we did the right thing then, and that we are continuing to do so now as we plan to responsibly develop around this ecological jewel.”

“I’m very proud of the efforts of our Economic Development & Planning Department staff and the key role they have played in the creation of the Accord and the development of the Town Center Master Plan,” said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. “This collaborative effort among local jurisdictions proves once again that we can accomplish so much more when we work together.”

The plan partners accepted the award at the APA Ohio Planning Conference during a luncheon today in Cleveland.

Since the plan’s adoption, the partners have been establishing a framework to enable the town center development and refining the strategies for implementation based on an updated market study. In addition, the Franklin County Sanitary Engineer is currently seeking bids to study alternatives for providing water and wastewater utility services to the town center area and other unincorporated areas of Franklin County in the Big Darby watershed.

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