

## ORGANIZATION FOUNDED AS FRIENDS OF BIG CREEK CELEBRATES ITS 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

### DEVELOPS NEW WIDE-RANGING PLANNING INITIATIVE

**B**ig Creek Connects celebrates ten years since its formal organization in May of 2005. Last year the new name was adopted to better reflect our programs and mission statement. In addition to implementation of the Big Creek Watershed Balanced Growth Plan and related watershed stewardship efforts, the organization's programs focus on implementation of the Lower Big Creek and Brooklyn Greenway Plans, completed in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The plans complement the organization's founding vision of a 6-1/2 mile greenway-trail corridor from the Towpath Trail along the Cuyahoga River to Brookpark Road and the Big Creek Reservation in Parma.

A related program area entails a comprehensive planning Initiative that spans the geographic area adjoining and overlapping the two greenway plans. *The Big Creek/I-71 Relocation & Restoration Initiative* examines relocating sections of Interstate 71 and redirecting the flow of Big Creek back into part of its original channel to improve stream hydrology, expand greenspace and recreational trails, improve highway access, and create



Big Creek in Cleveland Metroparks Brookside Reservation: existing drop structure (left) and proposed realignment (right)

community and economic development opportunities. The first phase of study undertaken by Big Creek Connects and funded by the cities of Brooklyn and Cleveland and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District was completed in March 2015. See Concept Plan C-3 inside. The full study and links to *Plain Dealer* and *Plain Press* articles can be found at [www.bigcreekconnects.org](http://www.bigcreekconnects.org).

## Big Creek Created Wetland Project

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE!

**T**he **Fern Hill Stormwater Treatment Wetland project** is located in Cleveland Metroparks Fern Hill Picnic Area in the Big Creek Reservation. A 36" stormwater outlet to Big Creek that drains over 50 acres of residential neighborhoods is diverted into a created wetland that captures, slows and infiltrates its flow and provides water quality treatment for lawn chemicals, road salt and a host of automotive residuals before entering the creek. The project also provides a new wildlife habitat with a wide diversity of plantings, and acts as a demonstration project with interpretive signage.



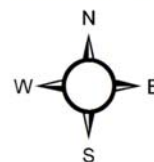
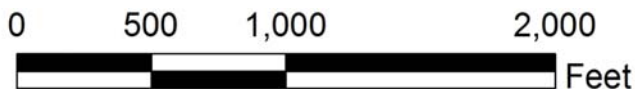
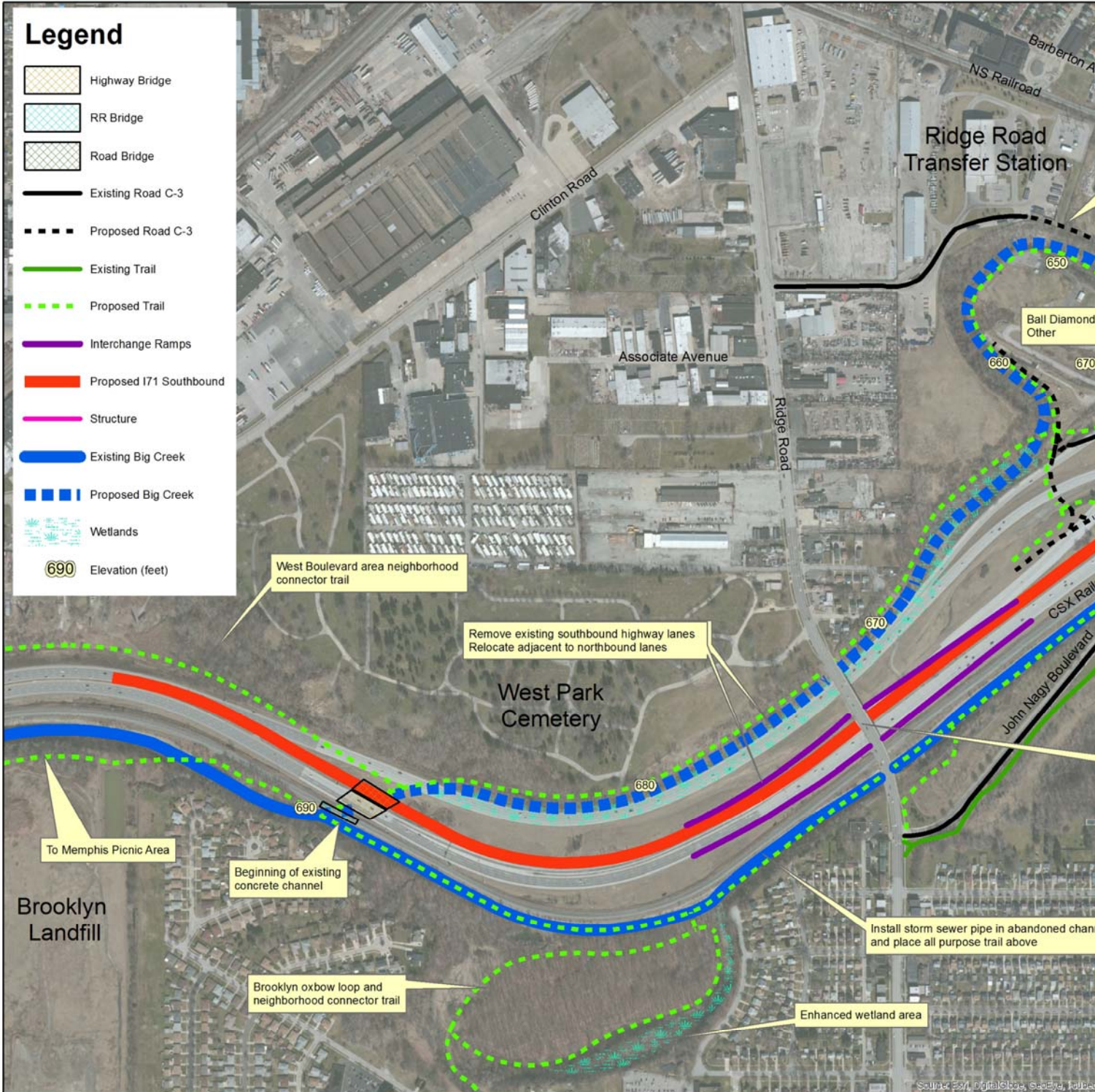
The project was funded in part through a \$150,000 grant from the Ohio EPA under the provisions of the Surface Water Improvement Fund (SWIF) and the USEPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative with engineering and construction managed by Cleveland Metroparks. The City of Parma and Cleveland Metroparks partnered with Big Creek Connects for the SWIF grant while the General Motors Foundation contributed \$4000 towards the project. Big Creek Connects provided support to Cleveland Metroparks in education and outreach. Completion date was June 2015. To learn more visit [bigcreekconnects.org/FernHill](http://bigcreekconnects.org/FernHill).

Conceptual design work for the wetland project was developed as part of the Big Creek Watershed Stormwater Retrofit Ranking Project, funded by the Lake Erie Protection Fund (LEPF) and completed in March 2013. Noting its initial success, Big Creek Connects received funding through the LEPF for a second phase of the project. Completed in August 2014, this phase performed field studies on another 20 sites identified in the initial project and produced 3 additional conceptual plans to be used towards financing for engineering and construction. More information about the phased ranking project is online.



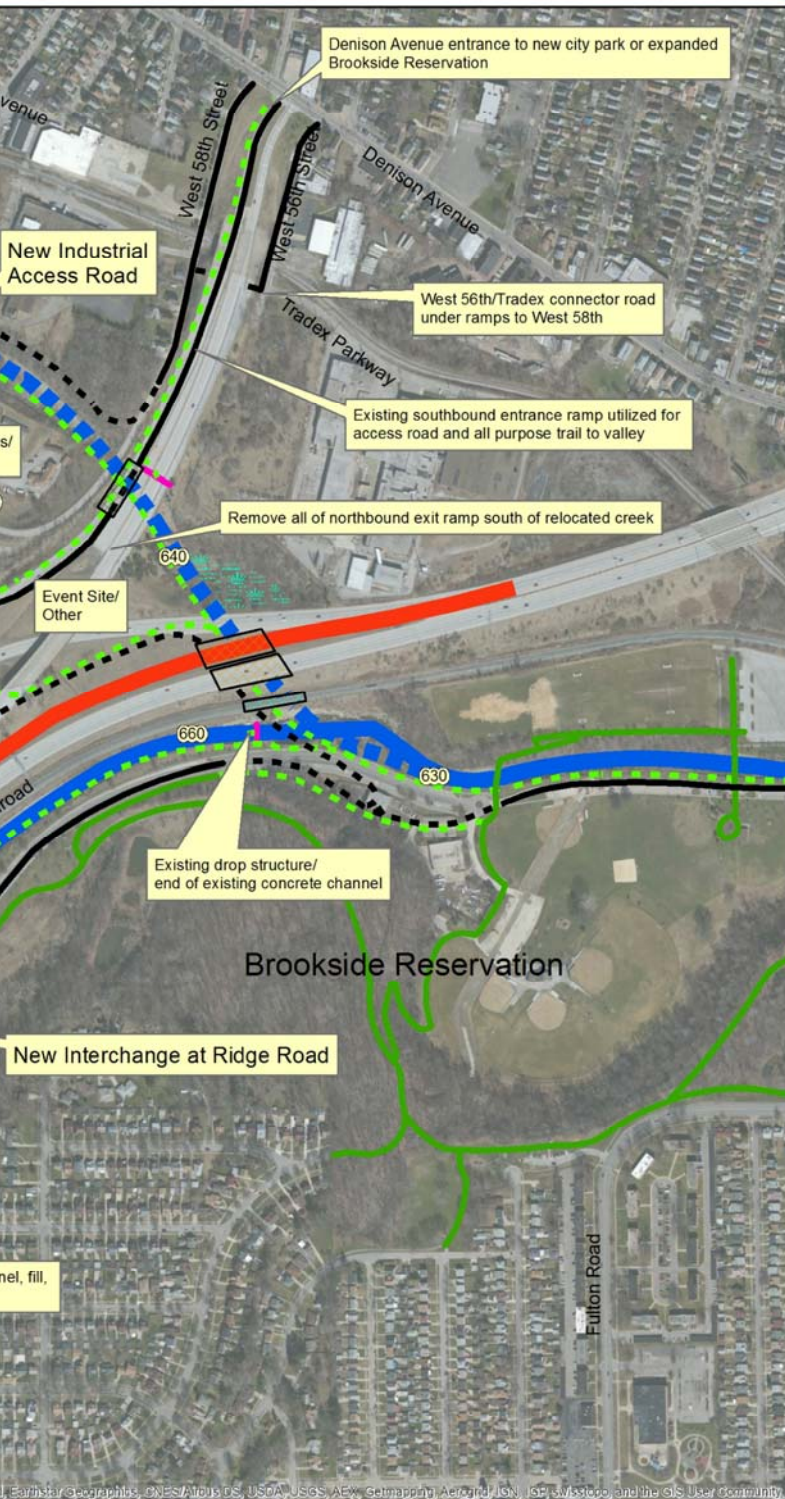
# Big Creek / I-71 Relocation & Restoration

## Concept Plan C-3





# on Initiative



The Big Creek / I-71 Relocation and Restoration Initiative questions the value of the Denison Avenue partial interchange and proposes removing part of its ramps and opening up land that will allow Big Creek to be naturalized by re-routing it into much of its historic streambed, thus addressing flooding, erosion and water quality issues and allowing fish passage upstream into the Big Creek Reservation and other areas.

Concept plans were developed that propose the stream re-alignment along with expanded recreational space and a trail system that connects the Brookside and Big Creek Reservations to each other and the surrounding communities. Concept plan B adds a new I-71 interchange at Ridge Road to capitalize on its economic potential and its potential to divert truck traffic away from residential areas. It proposes that the interchange could help address issues related to urban sprawl and redirect investment into this urban core.

Although a full interchange may be more valuable than the existing partial interchange, concerns were raised that the loss of the I-71 Denison Access ramps may cause a burden to industrial and commercial activity currently dependent on it. This led to the development of three concept plan options that built on a previously proposed idea of constructing a connector road from the Denison Access ramps to Ridge Road utilizing the existing road network in the Ridge Road [Waste] Transfer Station. The third option, Concept Plan C-3, is shown here.

To learn more about each concept plan, the full study can be downloaded at [www.bigcreekconnects.org](http://www.bigcreekconnects.org)

*Big Creek Connects*

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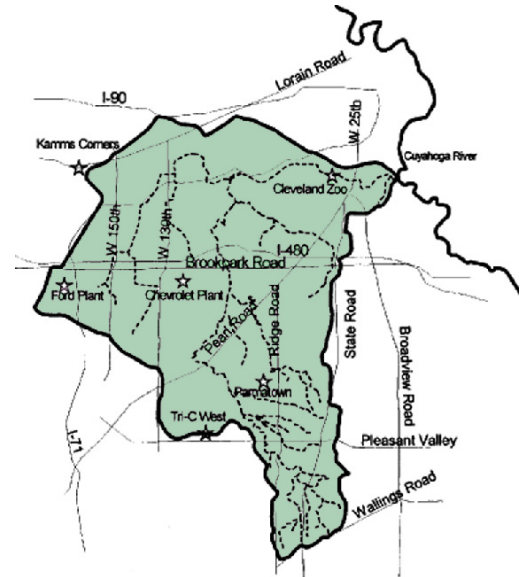
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**Big Creek** is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest tributary of the Cuyahoga River. Its watershed contains over 130 miles of streams and culverts. Together they drain nearly 39 square miles from 8 municipalities - Cleveland, Brooklyn, Linndale, Parma, Parma Heights, Brook Park, Middleburg Heights, and North Royalton. Over 90% of the watershed's area has been developed and 39% of the land surface has been made impervious, making Big Creek the most heavily urbanized watershed of any major tributary in the Cuyahoga River Watershed. This degree of urbanization provides tremendous challenge ... and opportunity.

**Big Creek Connects (formerly Friends of Big Creek)** is a greenway advocacy and watershed stewardship 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Supported in part by financial assistance from:



*To conserve, enhance, and bring recognition to the natural and historic resources of the Big Creek Watershed and develop a recreational trail network that connects these resources to each other and the community.*

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