

Ohio Balanced Growth Program

BEST LOCAL LAND USE PRACTICES

UPDATE Summer 2014



The Ohio Balanced Growth Program, and its Best Local Land Use Practices component, continue to work with watershed partnerships and local governments around the state on implementation of their state endorsed Watershed Balanced Growth Plans and recommended land use practices.

Case Studies Online

More than 30 case studies of Ohio projects implementing the recommended practices have been posted at balancedgrowth.ohio.gov. Showcasing innovative work by local governments, developers, property owners, and their consultants all over Ohio, the case studies demonstrate that state of the art practices are becoming part of every community's development portfolio.

Examples include the landmark Youngstown Comprehensive Plan and a transfer of development rights project in Hiram, Ohio. Conservation development projects in Aurora and St. Clairsville demonstrate the flexibility and improved site management that are possible with this open-space-conserving subdivision approach. Natural areas establishment practices have enabled the productive reuse of sites, including the Fernald nuclear production facility in Hamilton County.

Efforts in Columbus and Southwest Ohio to establish standards for protection of valuable groundwater are showcased in two projects. And there are many storm water practices highlighted, from pervious pavement to stream restoration to integrated site storm water management.

All of the case studies include contact infor-

*Image: Lick Run Case Study Rendering
(Human Nature, Inc., of Cincinnati, Ohio)*

mation for key stakeholders and implementers, cost information when available, and lessons learned. The link to the case studies is:

<http://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/BestLocalLandUsePractices/CaseStudies.aspx>.

Checklists for Code Reviews

Many of our technical assistance projects this year have involved aiding local communities with review of their comprehensive plans and zoning codes. To enable reviewers to quickly focus on the major areas to consider updating their policy, we have summarized key points in checklist form.

Changes in economic climate, demographics, the development environment, and the desires of the "new Millennial homebuyer" are driving many communities to update their comprehensive plans. Improved data availability means that communities are now able to more easily project demographic and fiscal trends and discover how land use influences their long term bottom line, as well as match with the real estate market. Just as a business plan makes a stronger business, a community with an up-to-date comprehensive plan is able to be fiscally responsible and resilient, and has a solid foundation for moving forward with zoning decisions.

The Ohio EPA's MS4 program is now maturing and most affected communities have basic provisions in place to meet regulatory requirements. However, meeting MS4 requirements over the long term may mean addressing inconsistencies and outdated code provisions. Code provisions can be found in many places – zoning codes, subdivision regulations, development regulations, storm water codes, building codes, and others. The checklists provide a structured guide for evaluations. The checklists are located on the web at:

<http://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/BestLocalLandUsePractices/BestLocalLandUsePractices2012.aspx#Checklist>

Additional Online Resources

The Best Local Land Use Practices web pages are designed for the local government, property owner and development community. Resources include a guidance document, with a chapter on each of the recommended practices, outlining key concepts and strategies. Each chapter has associated example regulations, and a matrix comparing possible approaches. A video shows community leaders and developers who have utilized the practices, and their benefits and lessons learned. A bibliography summarizes key research on the economic benefit of the practices.

If you are not able to access the hyperlinks in the text, more information about the topics above and other program resources are available online at:

<http://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/BestLocalLandUsePractices/>

The Best Local Land Use Practices (BLLUP) part of the Ohio Balanced Growth Program encourages implementation of a set of Best Practices, on a voluntary basis, to improve environmental quality and economic development opportunities in local governments across the state.

Top Priority Best Practices Include:

- * Comprehensive Planning
- * Compact Development
- * Conservation Development
- * Stream, Floodplain, and Wetland Protection
- * Storm Water Management/Erosion and Sediment Control
- * Natural Areas Establishment and Management
- * Source Water Protection

Additional Best Practices Include:

- * Woodland Protection
- * Steep Slope Protection
- * Brownfield Redevelopment
- * Agricultural Protection
- * Transfer of Development Rights
- * Historic Protection
- * Scenic Protection
- * Access Management

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