

# Best Local Land Use Practices: An Overview

A Project of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission

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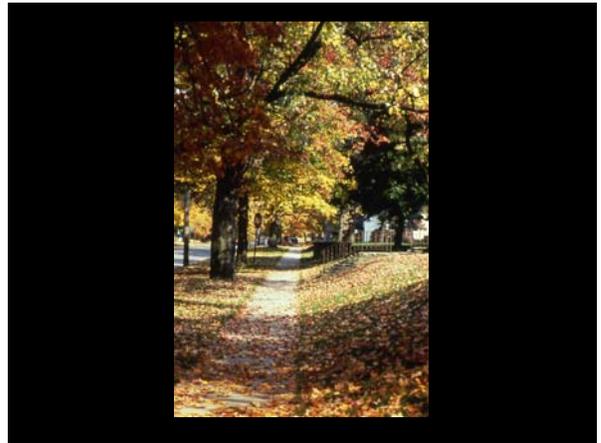
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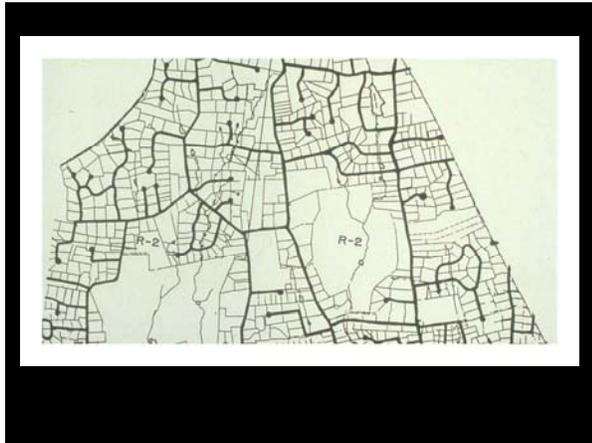


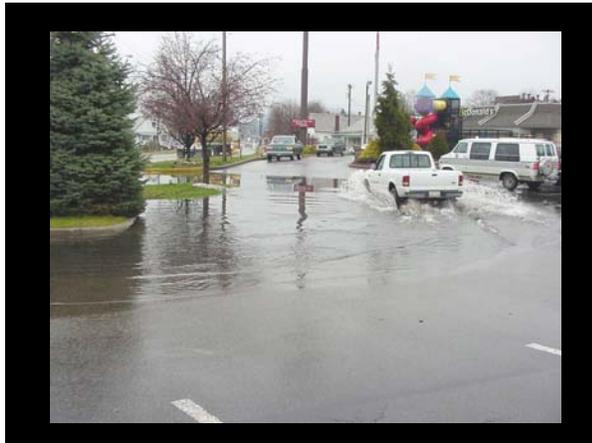
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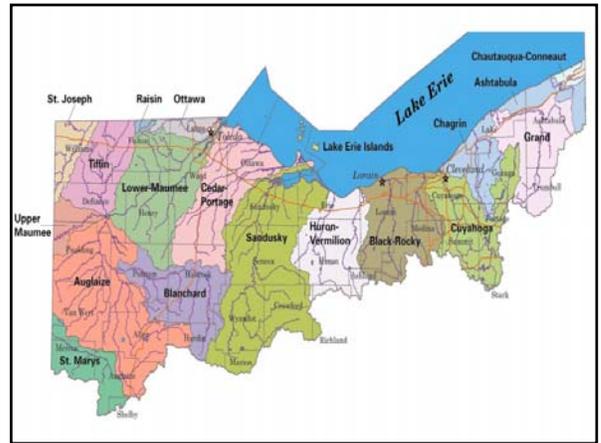








*Balanced Growth is a strategy to protect and restore Lake Erie and its watersheds to assure long-term economic competitiveness, ecological health, and quality of life.*



*Local Governments Can Have a Big Impact on Watershed and Community Quality*

- Location of development for minimum impact
- Management and control of storm water and erosion
- Protection of riparian and wetland areas so they can do their job as “free infrastructure”
- Protection of scenic, historic and natural resources to help retain our “great place”

**Best Local Land Use Practices:  
Primary Models**

- Erosion/Sediment Control (Construction Stormwater Runoff Control)
- Storm Water Management (Post Construction Stormwater Runoff Control)
- Riparian and Wetlands Setbacks
- Meadow Protection
- (Coastal Protection)

**Best Local Land Use Practices:  
Primary Guidance**

- Comprehensive Planning
- Compact Development
- Conservation Development

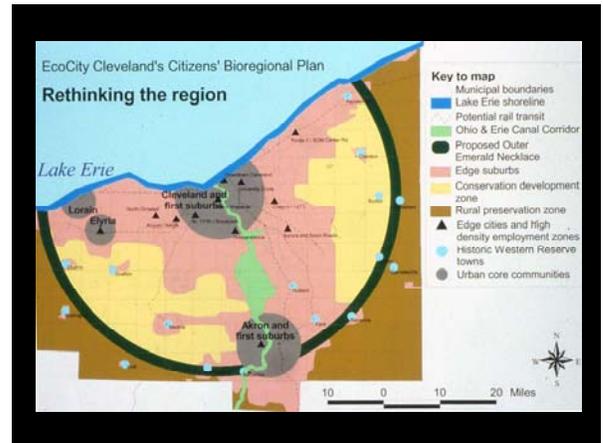
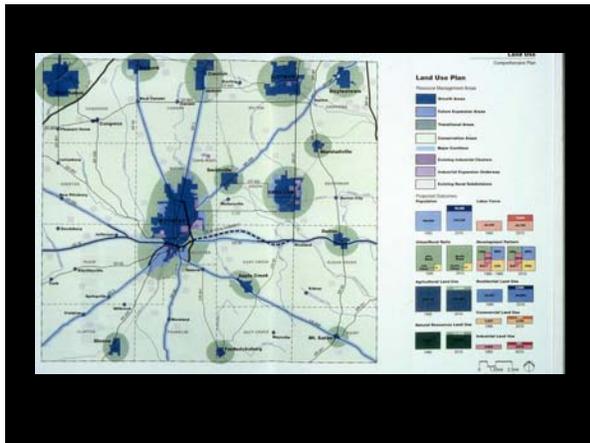
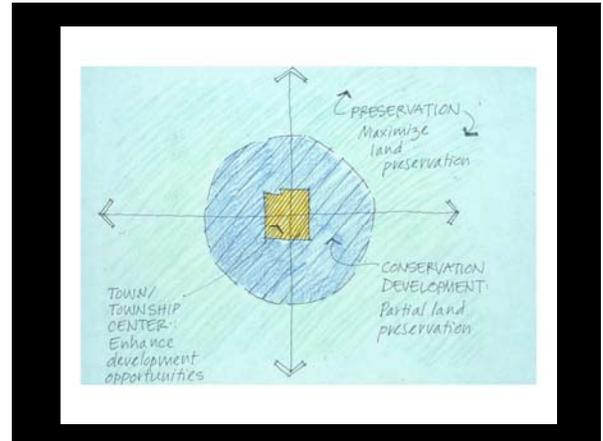
**Best Local Land Use Practices:  
Secondary Guidance**

- Woodland Protection
- Steep Slope Protection
- Historic Resource Protection
- Scenic Protection
- Transfer of Development Rights

**Best Local Land Use Practices:  
Additional Guidance**

- Agricultural Lands Protection
- Brownfields Development/Redevelopment
- Source Water Protection
- Access Management

**Comprehensive Community  
Planning**

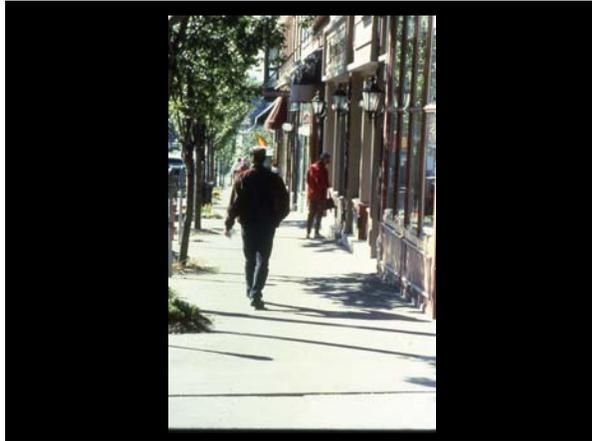


## Balancing Conservation and Development

- Up front community vision and planning
- Landowner planning and assistance
- Effective zoning implementation
- Good development projects

## Comprehensive Planning: the Key to Balance

- Sets development and conservation goals in an organized fashion
- Plans for long-term financial stability
- Resolves tradeoffs up-front
- Provides for future logical, consistent decision making
- Legal stability: logical justification of decisions
- Sets a framework for implementation



### Compact Development

- Residential, commercial or mixed use
- Strong neighborhood design
- Pedestrian walkability
- Range of housing choices
- Range of transportation choices

### Benefits of Compact Development

- Provides diverse set of housing/commercial products for diverse buyer markets
- Helps to revitalize small towns and existing neighborhoods
- Fits well into new “lifestyle center” projects
- Provides an exciting civic environment, enhancing community character
- When implemented across a watershed, will improve overall runoff characteristics of the watershed





## Examples of Compact Development

- City of Barberton: New Haven
- City of Brunswick: Town Center
- City of Hudson: First and Main
- City of Shaker Heights: Lee/Chagrin

## Conservation Development

- A planned unit development with special standards for preserving resources
- Residential, commercial, institutional or mixed use
- Usually an option, with incentives
- Concentrates permitted development capacity on the site, while conserving the rest in open space
- Based on “neutral density” concept



## Is it Conservation Development?

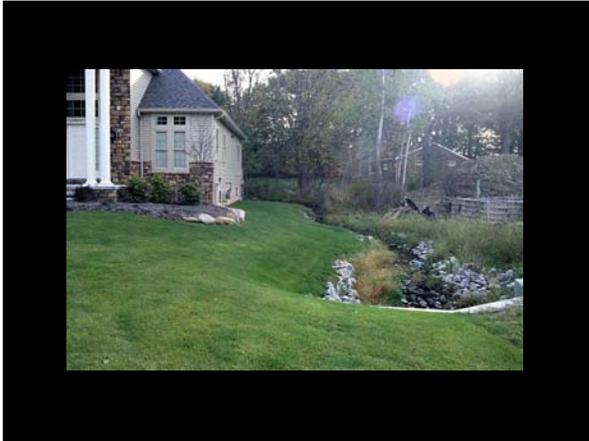
- 40% of property is permanently protected open space
- Open space is high quality
- Open space is used for resource protection
- Intensity of development is suitable for location



## Benefits of Conservation Development

- Property values are enhanced or remain the same
- Diversity of housing product to accommodate diverse buyer market
- Protects natural, scenic and cultural resources
- Can reduce storm drainage, infrastructure costs
- Reduces impervious surface
- Open space provides options for riparian, wetland, and storm water protection
- Provides opportunity to restore/enhance vegetation







### Examples of Conservation Development

- 12 municipalities and 21 townships in Northeast Ohio alone, including:
- Aurora City
- Hudson City
- Hiram Village and Township
- Pittsfield Township
- .....

### Riparian And Wetland Setbacks

- Zoning setback similar to front and side yards
- Improves storm drainage infrastructure function of creeks and waterways
- Width determined by drainage area of the sub watershed, or wetland category
- Typical setback provisions apply (variances, grandfathering, enforcement)



### Benefits of Riparian and Wetland Setbacks



- Provide free storm water and flood protection infrastructure
- Reduce capital and maintenance costs
- Work better than engineered solutions
- Enhance design quality of development

### Why Riparian and Wetland Setbacks?

- Limit streambank erosion
- Vegetated streambanks are up to 20,000 times more resistant to erosion than bare streambanks
- Reduces channel migration
- Vegetation increases strength of streambanks



## Why Riparian and Wetland Setbacks?

- Reduce Flood Size Flows
- Lowers stream flood elevations
- Reduces flow velocity
- Prevents damage downstream
- Avoids costs of levees and flood control reservoirs



## Why Riparian and Wetland Setbacks?

- Filter and settle out pollutants
- Effectiveness directly related to width
- A 100 foot setback reduced sediment transport up to 90%
- An 82 foot setback reduced phosphorus, sediment and suspended solids and nitrogen 80%



## Why Riparian and Wetland Setbacks?

- Protect and enhance habitat
- Shade maintains stream temperature critical for aquatic species
- Migratory bird species in riparian areas is 10-14 times upland habitat
- Minimum amphibian and reptile core habitat is 400 to 900 feet from edge of riparian systems!



## Riparian setback in a conservation development



## Wetland Protection in a Conservation Development



## Examples of Riparian Setbacks in Communities

- 49 communities and 4 counties have adopted setback regulations in NE Ohio
- Data pending in rest of Basin
- Auburn Township, 25 to 120 feet
- City of Independence, 25 to 300 feet
- City of Aurora, 25 to 120 feet
- City of Green, 25 to 300 feet
- Lake County, 25 to 120 feet

## Storm Water Management and Erosion/Sediment Control

- Storm water management reduces quantity, and improves quality, of runoff in the watershed
- Site based approach reduces long term costs to community



## Why Storm Water Management and Erosion/Sediment Control?

- Required by EPA Phase II!
- Protect health, safety and welfare
- Reduce flood impacts
- Reduce impacts to property
- Reduce pollution in streams, rivers and Lake Erie



## Low Impact Development

- Low impact development works at individual sites to reduce surface flows, filter storm water, and disperse storage areas
- Many solutions are lower cost than engineered approaches



## Meadow Protection

- Allowing natural meadows instead of horticultural lawns, especially in larger open space areas, helps to reduce surface water flows, filter storm water, and enhance the rural environment
- Controls are needed to ensure landscape quality





### Step Slope Protection

- Generally protect areas over 12% slope, most often along stream and riparian corridors
- Provides for riparian area protection, reduces erosion, and helps with flood control



### Woodland Protection

- Filtering and manage storm water
- Reduce erosion
- Protect steep slopes, wetlands and riparian areas
- Critical to scenic site character
- Enhance property values





## Agricultural Lands Protection

- Are a non-renewable resource
- Provide for food-producing capacity
- Help achieve a balance of pervious and impervious surface, open space and development in a community
- Zoning protection ranges from very limited development to value-added commercial uses



## Historic Preservation



- Retains original character of small towns and central cities
- Creates sense of place
- Spurs economic development
- A comprehensive historic preservation plan will include inventory, evaluation and prioritization of sites
- Ordinances address boundaries, design guidelines, reviewing body



## Scenic Protection

- Generally works along roadways to protect rural and scenic character through control of signage, landscaping, uses
- Increases property values
- Encourages tourism and economic development
- Ordinances establish boundaries and guidelines within those boundaries, establish reviewing body



## Transfer of Development Rights

- Voluntary public/private partnership working on the private real estate market
- “Sending” landowner swaps “development credits” with “Receiving” developer
- Can range from simple to complex programs

## Benefits of TDR

- Provides for open space protection by transferring development to designated sites
- Provides financial return to “sending” landowner, and compact densities to “receiving” landowner
- When implemented across a watershed, can affect the pervious/impervious surface balance, and stormwater characteristics, of the watershed

## Examples of TDR in Ohio

- Hiram Township
- Hiram Township and Village
- Hinckley Township
- Orange Village
- These involve simple swaps between landowners, with variances granted by community
- Legislation is needed for counties and townships to implement more complex, flexible programs

## A Few Resources

- Ohio Lake Erie Commission, Balanced Growth Program [www.epa.state.oh.us/oleo](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/oleo)
- Ohio Planning Conference [www.ohioplanning.org](http://www.ohioplanning.org)
- Smart Growth Online [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org)
- EcoCity Cleveland, [www.ecocitycleveland.org](http://www.ecocitycleveland.org)
- The Countryside Program, [www.countrysideprogram.org](http://www.countrysideprogram.org)

Questions?