



Chapter 6 Land Use

Overview

This chapter will analyze existing conditions and trends to explain the current land use picture in Summit County. The chapter will also discuss current planning issues in Summit County.

This chapter will examine the Summit County 2030 land use forecast data developed by AMATS. Some alternative options to current land use policies will be presented. Land use planning and growth management techniques will also be discussed.

The goals and recommendations set forth in this chapter are intended to support Smart Growth development principles. The majority of vacant land left in Summit County is zoned for residential uses. With proper planning, there is a real opportunity to use Smart Growth housing and development options to promote quality development and preserve the natural resources and special places which define Summit County. Smart Growth development principles promote infill development both for industrial, commercial, and residential uses, and the reuse of brownfield sites after proper clean-up. In this chapter, the relationship between extension of public infrastructure/utilities and land use development is discussed. A key Smart Growth principle is to encourage future development in locations where public infrastructure and facilities already exist.

Key Land Use Issues

In October 2003 a community survey was sent to each township, village, and city in Summit County to gather opinions and identify key issues.

The following is a list of key issues and concerns that were repeatedly raised.

- Preserve open space and existing natural areas
- Address environmental concerns in general, through stormwater management, riparian setbacks, and greenway connections
- Increase effectiveness of economic development to balance the tax base burden. Retention and expansion of existing businesses, and revitalization of existing downtowns, town centers and other shopping areas were emphasized
- Control growth and reduce sprawl
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Improve partnerships and cooperation between communities



In addition, from a series of meetings with Summit County Planning staff and local governmental and planning officials the week of September 20, 2004, several key land use issues were identified. There was a concern regarding how local planners can provide for the best balanced development between residential/ commercial and industrial uses. Other issues questioned how to control growth, preserve open space, maintain rural character, protect the environment and preserve natural resources. Additional issues were how to best promote open space conservation design and link green space between residential developments and parks. There was also a concern for preserving the remaining farm land.

Other concerns included how to limit retail development, and promote quality office and light industrial development. There were concerns regarding protecting existing residential development from commercial pressures. Other planning issues included concerns with traffic congestion and some communities are interested in preserving low residential densities. Other communities are concerned about encouraging the redevelopment of older commercial areas and there were some who wanted to develop more of a Central Town Center.

Smart Growth Principles

The goals in this Chapter support the major principles of the Smart Growth Movement, which are listed below.

1. Mix Land Uses
2. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
4. Create Walkable Neighborhoods
5. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas
7. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
9. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective
10. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions



Existing Conditions and Trends

Generalized Land Use

1979 land use data from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources was compared with 2004 parcel data from the Summit County Auditor. These data were used to analyze trends and determine noteworthy changes. Maps 6.1 and 6.2 display the land use classifications for these years, respectively. The reader must be cautioned that the maps are employing data from different sources. Map 6.1 uses more generalized classes for 1979 land use. Map 6.2 is much more precise and detailed, since it displays land use classes at the parcel level. Although the units of analysis are different, the maps still accurately show the major land use trends that have occurred in the last 25 years.

The comparison between the two maps shows two significant trends over the past 25 years. The first is the large increase in commercial and residential land use. The second major trend is the large decrease in vacant land and farmland. 50% (49,858 acres) of the vacant land was developed, and 24% (6,588 acres) of the farmland was lost. The vacant land is indicated in white for both maps. According to 2004 Summit County Auditor Parcel data, there are 49,427 vacant acres and 20,764 agricultural use acres remaining in Summit County.

Although population in Summit County only increased by 3.5% between 1982 and 1997, the urbanized land increased by 42.6 % during this same time period.¹ This results in a decrease in density of approximately 27%. In other words, essentially the same number of people consumed much more land.

¹ The Exurban Change Project, Ohio State University (data from the National Resource Inventory (NRI), U.S. Department of Agriculture).



Insert 1979 Land Use Map 6.1



Insert 2004 Land Use Map 6.2 .



Zoning Analysis

As Table 1 illustrates, most of the County is zoned for residential use. According to County 2004 generalized zoning data compiled in the Summit County Department of Community and Economic Development GIS – 83% of the County is zoned for residential use. See Map 6.3, Generalized County Zoning Map (2004)

Table 1:

<i>Summit County Generalized Zoning Classifications</i>		
	Acres	%
Residential	217,484	83.0%
Commercial	19,437	7.4%
Industrial	23,460	9.0%
Government	1,387	.5%
Total	261,768	100%

Source: Summit County Auditor



Insert Map 6.3, Generalized County Zoning Map (2004)



Table 2. Vacant Land by Zoning Classification below shows the vacant land left in the County by generalized zoning category. Table 2 was generated by taking the vacant land parcels from the County Auditor’s parcel database and then cross-referencing these data with the Department of Development zoning data. This table indicates that 76% of the remaining vacant land is zoned for residential use. Approximately 10% of the vacant land or 4,760 acres is zoned for commercial uses and approximately 15% or 7,157 acres of the vacant land is zoned for industrial uses. See Table 3 below for explanation of the various residential zoning categories, such as rural residential, etc.

Table 2: Vacant Land by Zoning Classification

<i>Vacant Land by Zoning Classification</i>		
General Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total Vacant Land
Rural Residential	3,968	8.05%
Low Density Residential	12,701	25.76%
Medium Density Residential	15,287	31.00%
High Density Residential	5,369	10.89%
Commercial	4,760	9.65%
Government	63	0.13%
Industrial	7,157	14.52%
TOTALS	49,305	100.00%

Residential Zoning Analysis

The densities are based on standard zoning classifications of various minimum lot size requirements for single-family dwellings.

Table 3:

<i>Generalized Residential Zoning Classifications</i>		
	Density	Approximate Lot Size
High Density Residential	> 1 dwelling unit/ = or <.21	< 8,999 sq.ft.
Medium Density Residential	> 1 dwelling unit/ >.21 acre	=/> 9,000 sq.ft. and < 43,559 sq.ft.
Low Density Residential	< 1 dwelling unit/ per acre	=/> 43,560 sq.ft. and < 217,799 sq.ft.
Rural Residential	< 1 dwelling unit/per 5 acres	=/> 217,800 sq. ft.



Residential development pressures have been coming from Cleveland with people moving to the northern part of Summit County and commuting to work to Cleveland. From 1990 to 2000, the northern Summit County communities experienced an average 25% to 50% dwelling unit increase. This rapid growth has been shown in Sagamore Hills Township, Boston Heights Village, Macedonia, Northfield Center Township, Twinsburg City and Township and Hudson. Between 1990 and 2000 Summit County's population grew 5.4% overall, however in the northern part of the County, the population growth rate was 29.8%.

Planning Issues

Redistribution of Population

According to U.S. Census data, the population was 553,371 in Summit County in 1970 and in 2000 the population was 542,899. In Summit County, extensive development has occurred, even with a slight decrease of population between 1970 and 2000. This is the result of a serious decline of the number of persons per household, the desire of families for more land and larger houses, increasing wealth among some sectors of the population, and the redistribution of homes, businesses, and industries from existing cities to outlying areas of the region.

In recent decades both Summit County and the surrounding region have experienced significant development without significant real growth. While infrastructure has expanded to serve new areas, the infrastructure in older areas is often underutilized. For example, many schools have been built in outlying sectors of the county while many schools have been closed in older cities. The duplication, or underutilization, of infrastructure further increases per capita costs.

The average household size in Summit County decreased from 2.72 in 1980 to 2.45 in 2000. Summit County added 30,514 new housing units between 1980 and 2000, while during the same time period, the population only increased by 3.5 %.

Higher incomes, relatively inexpensive land, the expansion of infrastructure, lower interest rates, and the tax advantages of a large mortgage provided the incentives for many people to move from older neighborhoods to new homes in outlying locations. Most of this new residential development that has taken place since 1970 is in the form of single family housing on large lots. Lots and home sizes are quite a bit larger than they were a generation ago. The national average in 1970 for the size of a new home was approximately 1,200 square feet.² Today it is about 2,000 square feet. According to the American Housing Survey, the median new house size grew from 1,725 square feet in 1993 to 1,928 square feet in 1999, an 11 percent increase in just six years, despite a shrinking average household size of just 2.61 persons. Some of this growth is the result of consumer demand, but some of it is also due to nonmarket incentives such as zoning and tax breaks, that encourage or require larger homes. Similarly, in the last 30 years, the amount of retail space has grown four-fold from five square feet per person to 20 square

² The New York Times, February 27, 2003, from "High, Wide and Transomed"



feet.³ These consumptive patterns consumed nearly 49,858 acres or 50% of the remaining developable land within the county between 1979 and 2004.⁴

These consumptive development patterns require a lifestyle with higher land and building maintenance costs and longer distances to be traveled using more cars. All of this requires greater infrastructure expenditures in the form of schools, roads, sewer/water and utilities. This growth is not self-sustaining and in fact, must be subsidized by other members of the community. Dispersed low-density growth is subsidized partly because utility pricing is based on average – rather than the actual costs of providing services. Residents in more urban, higher density areas in effect subsidize those in edge areas.

Running Out of Land Suitable for Development

According to 2004 Summit County Auditor parcel data, there are approximately 49,427 vacant acres remaining in Summit County. Not all of these acres are considered developable.

A shortage of suitable land places more pressure on developing land that is not suitable for development, e.g. wetland areas and steep slopes. While some lands designated as unsuitable for development were developed in recent years, there will be greater temptations to build on unsuitable land as land becomes scarcer. Development on sensitive lands could result in very costly maintenance and significant damage to the natural environment. Rapid development would also quickly diminish the County's remaining rural character and the little land that is still used for agricultural purposes. The existing rural character is greatly valued by local residents and agricultural uses are also prized by some. Although Summit County no longer has the support infrastructure that exists in more rural counties, there is significant community support for small-scale production and sale of locally grown food. Community policies should support and preserve such small-scale farms.

The random redistribution of population in recent years has produced patterns of development that have consumed much of the county's remaining developable land. It has put greater pressure on developing land that is not suitable for development due to its sensitive natural conditions. Wetlands have been filled in, riparian corridors for wildlife have been severed, woodlands have been reduced, and scenic areas have been destroyed. Agricultural uses within the county have almost disappeared. Many previously natural areas have been replaced with hard surfaces; this has increased storm water runoff and created flooding problems.

Redistribution of Wealth

Wealth is concentrated in outlying areas. Stores and shops follow residents to locations with the greater buying power. Industries too are attracted to outlying locations because of lower land costs, room for expansion, tax incentives, better educated work force, and fewer development controls. Such changes in land use often result in disinvestment in older cities. They also leave people with below average incomes in the city with a diminished tax base. Older housing stock, mostly located in older cities, often results in a "trickle down" effect that puts the poorest people in housing units that require the greatest maintenance. The growing disparity between the rich

³ *Getting to Smart Growth- 100 Policies for Implementation.*

⁴ *Summit County Department of Development Land Use Data.*



and poor often results in fewer housing choices for the most needy.

The redistribution of the population has produced social impacts. The gap between rich and poor has become greater. Generally, only wealthier people can afford to move to new large homes on large lots in outlying areas. Therefore, older central cities have become increasingly poor. The demand for services is great in older cities but fewer tax dollars are available because wealth has moved out, and the poor have remained.

There is also concern about social issues among those who have moved to suburbia. Large lots consume much time in maintenance. Large lots also mean that the driving time and distance to go for services are much greater. When land uses are distributed over a wider area, the catchment area for stores, schools, and other community facilities increases. As distance between these facilities and homes increase, people become more dependent on their cars and spend more time in them. This creates a demand for more roads or increases congestion on existing ones. It also consumes more energy and more time, and increases air pollution.

The dispersion of the population and the separation of uses from one another and from other uses contribute to a greater demand for parking. For example, when commercial uses are built as stand alone buildings and scattered along highways, people can no longer walk to stores, walk between stores, or complete several tasks from a single parking location. Because there are no sidewalks or places for chance meetings with other people, residents living in outlying locations often experience a feeling of social isolation and yearn for a sense of community and place.

Health Effects of Sprawl

The Vermont Forum on Sprawl defines sprawl as “dispersed, auto-dependent development outside of compact urban and village centers, along highways, and in rural countryside.” Available evidence supports the concept that sprawl is associated with more driving, less walking and less transit use.⁵

Akron Children’s Hospital hosted a Conference on January 12, 2005 entitled “Preventing Childhood Obesity: A Summit County Community-Wide Planning Conference.” One of the options discussed during a morning brainstorming session was implementing zoning and planning practices that promote walking or biking.⁶ The public health community has become more interested in promoting planning to create more walkable communities. This interest has been sparked by the soaring rates of obesity nationwide. There is a current planning effort underway by the Summit County Health Department to work with the Village of Lakemore to plan for better access of residents to Springfield Lake for more walking and recreational opportunities. The Summit 2010 Quality of Life Study completed in 2004 by the Summit County Executive’s Office and the Social Services Advisory Board directed this planning effort by the Summit County Health Department. As part of this Summit 2010 Quality of Life Study, the Village of Lakemore developed recommendations to improve the quality of life of their residents and these recommendations included the notion of improving recreational opportunities by adding walkway trails around Springfield Lake.

⁵ *Urban Sprawl and Public Health.*

⁶ *Akron Beacon Journal*, Jan. 13, 2005.



According to an article entitled “Suburban Sprawl and Physical and Mental Health” by Roland Sturm and D.A. Cohen,⁷ it was found that people who live in areas with a high degree of suburban sprawl are more likely to report chronic health problems such as lung disease, abdominal illnesses, arthritis and headaches than those who live in urban areas. The study results propose that suburbanites’ dependence on cars to get around may be responsible for their higher rates of health problems. “We know from previous studies that suburban sprawl reduces the time people spend walking and increases the time they spend sitting in cars, and that is associated with higher obesity rates,” says researcher Roland Sturm, a health economist at the RAND Corp., in a news release. “This probably plays an important role in the health effects we observe.” These results point to the possibility that urban form is a determinant of the physical health of the population.

Inactivity seems to encourage people becoming overweight and associated conditions such as diabetes have emerged as major public health challenges. There is growing evidence that the physical features of urban sprawl discourages physical activity thereby contribute to the epidemic problem of obesity.⁸ Research has identified many determinants of physical activity. These include density, land use mix, the presence and quality of sidewalks and footpaths, enjoyable scenery, and the presence of other people who are physically active and healthy.⁹

According to the book Urban Sprawl and Public Health, to the extent that Smart Growth changes current development patterns into new development patterns that encourage “walkability”, it can be considered a public health paradigm. Smart Growth principles promote mixed land use; a balance of density and preserved greenspace; a balance of automobile transportation with walking, bicycle and transit – these and other strategies offer the potential to increase physical activity and decrease air pollution.

There are numerous changes that can be made to zoning ordinances or regulations to create neighborhoods where residents have more opportunities to be active.¹⁰ One option is to revise ordinances to permit more compact traditional neighborhood developments with front porches, and sidewalks to encourage walkability. Other tools include:

- Increasing development densities
- Requiring sidewalks and trails in new developments
- Retrofitting already developed area with sidewalks, trails and bike paths
- Linking open spaces
- Requiring street connectivity
- Instituting traffic calming measures such as narrower streets and roundabouts

⁷ *Journal of Public Health*, May 2004.

⁸ *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*.

⁹ *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*.

¹⁰ *Zoning Practice*, June 2004 “Zoning to Promote Health and Physical Activity.”



Need for More Compact Development Patterns

In recent decades most builders have constructed big houses on big lots in suburban areas that are attractive to families with children. However, in 2000, the traditional family (i.e., a married couple with kids) represented less than one in four households. With household growth concentrated in older age groups, the traditional family is projected to account for only one in five households in 2025.¹¹ In 2000, the national average household contained 2.6 people (down from 3.6 as recently as 1970) and only 68 percent of them were families (down from 81 percent). Nationally single person households now account for over 25 percent of all households. These national trends are consistent with Summit County trends. Locally the percentage of people living alone has increased by 42% between 1980 and 2000. There were 42,891 single person households in Summit County in 1980 and 60,913 in 2000.¹²

The vast consumption of resources for land development without the equivalent level of population growth is not the most productive use of local assets. In recent years a significant portion of money has been spent to expand infrastructure and services that have enabled more private citizens to have larger lots and bigger homes. Instead of development patterns that spread out and use large amounts of land, the Smart Growth movement promotes more compact development patterns, which could be compatible with the trend in smaller household sizes. One of the principles of Smart Growth is to take advantage of compact building design. Communities could incorporate more compact building design as an alternative to conventional, land consumptive development. Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a type of neo-traditional mixed-use neighborhood design promoted by architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk that has implemented these compact building design principles.

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use developments are developments that are patterned often after traditional villages, and that usually include a mix of retail, residential and office uses, and pedestrian friendly sidewalks. A mixed-use development contains different land uses that are in close proximity, planned as a unified complementary whole, and functionally integrated to the use of shared vehicular and pedestrian access and parking areas. Mixed-use developments are often cited as ways to reduce traffic generation, particularly where homes and jobs are planned and developed within easy commuting distance and shopping is located close to residences.¹³

There is a positive relationship between encouraging more compact patterns of development and making it more feasible for mixed use developments to occur. Land use mix is a measure of how many types of uses – offices, housing, retail, entertainment, services, etc. are located in a given area. A high level of land use mix should reduce the need to travel outside of that area to meet one's needs.¹⁴ Mixed-use developments often encourage more walking and less dependence on automobiles.

¹¹ Issue Papers on Demographic Trends Important to Housing: "How Changes in the Nation's Age and Household Structure will Reshape Housing Demand in the 21st Century" by Martha Farnsworth Riche, Prepared for: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, February 2003

¹² U.S. Census

¹³ *The New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions*.

¹⁴ *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*.



The City of Englewood, Colorado, developed a mixed-use transit oriented development on 55 acres of land formerly occupied by the Cinderella City Mall. A central aspect of the development includes a two-acre public square, including a civic center. The civic center houses a library, Municipal Court and the Museum of Outdoor Arts for the City of Englewood. This City Center development includes apartments and adjacent to them and the public square is a steel truss bridge that creates a gateway into City Center from the light rail station. The City Center development includes a good mix of civic, cultural, retail, office and residential uses, and is a transit oriented development (TOD) as well.

City of Englewood, Colorado, Transit-Oriented Village, with light rail station. This is a mixed-use development that contains a civic center, retail, office and apartments.



A new mixed-use development opened in 2004 in Summit County in the City of Hudson, called First & Main. This project has been a joint public - private partnership. The City of Hudson provided land, public improvements, and both off-street and on street parking.

City of Hudson, First & Main mixed use development

The developer produced the site and architectural plans, purchased land, constructed buildings and recruited and leased tenants. The City sought a development firm to buy the land and create historically compatible layout and buildings, since this First & Main development increases the size of Hudson's downtown. The First & Main buildings that make up the nearly 200,000 square feet of retail, dining, residential and office space are built in the same unique New England style in which the adjacent historic Hudson downtown buildings were crafted. Also, provided in the new mixed use development are sidewalks, green spaces, retail stores, restaurants, and a new library.



Preservation Issues

There has been a previous discussion of various ways to encourage densities and development in certain areas in a planned fashion. There are also land use tools that can be used to preserve rural character, open space and farmland areas. One growth management tool is to control the extension of water and sewer infrastructure and road infrastructure. One way of maintaining and promoting a “rural” atmosphere in those communities that desire that rural character is to limit infrastructure expansion. This often requires residential development to occur on larger lots and makes large-scale commercial development difficult.

It was indicated through the results of the Summit County Community Survey for Government Officials in the fall of 2003 and again in the Land Use Meetings held in September 2004, that loss of open space, farmland and natural resources are major concerns.

The concern about the loss of open space is understandable, especially in an urban county that is already so developed. The remaining open space becomes even more precious because it is so scarce. Open space can provide scenic views that shape the special places of a community. Open space can also provide separation and buffers between communities so a community boundary is clear and attractive gateways to the community can be provided. Open space can be a design element in a community’s design toolbox, and can be used as an organizational element. Open space can assist in structuring the form of urban development.

Open space can be preserved in some cases as parkland through local efforts working with local park boards and Metroparks Serving Summit County. There are currently many local efforts underway to implement the Summit County Trails and Greenways Plan. Many of the areas that are being proposed for preservation in the Summit County Trails and Greenways Plan are narrow linear areas that would provide links for trails.

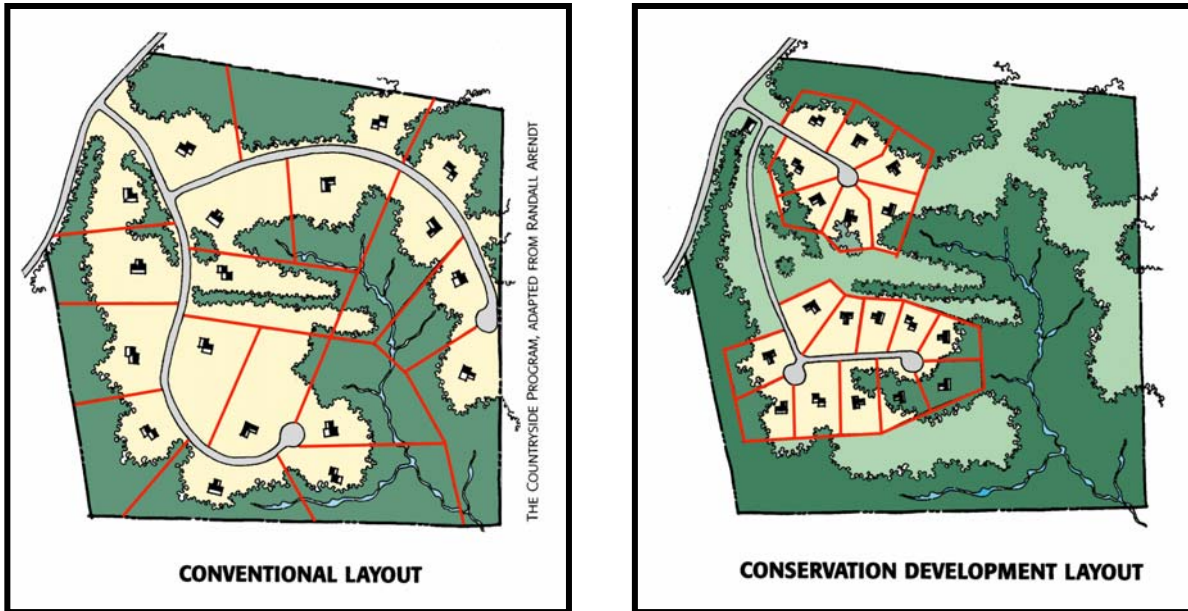
Farmland can provide open space as well as the value of continued agriculture to the local economy and rural amenities to the community.

Open space can also be preserved as a community develops through open space conservation developments where a developer clusters the houses and preserves 40 to 50% of the site in permanent open space. One can cluster homes to preserve significant wooded areas, wetlands, other natural features or farmland by the flexible arrangement of permitted units. This also will reduce road length, which reduces the amount of impervious surface, thereby reducing flooding and stormwater management problems.

If each community in Summit County would promote this type of open space conservation development design (that preserves 40 to 50% of the total site in permanent open space), many acres of the total remaining open space could be preserved in Summit County. In addition, Summit County, in conjunction with local communities, could develop a County wide Open Space Plan that would complement the Summit County Trail and Greenway Plan to provide a County wide vision for preservation of open space areas to form a County wide open space network. A County wide open space map could conceptually indicate how residentially zoned areas, as they are developed, could form greenways that could be linked together through the provision of permanent open space provided when residential Conservation Development becomes reality. In addition, natural resources, including wetlands and wildlife habitat could be



preserved. See the following graphic that compares an open space conservation development subdivision with a conventional subdivision.



<i>Area</i>	<i>36 acres</i>
<i>Lots</i>	<i>18 lots</i>
<i>Undisturbed Open Space</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Road Length</i>	<i>3,808 feet</i>

<i>Acres</i>	<i>36 acres</i>
<i>Lots</i>	<i>18 lots</i>
<i>Undisturbed Open Space</i>	<i>53%</i>
<i>Road Length</i>	<i>2,072 feet</i>

In local community comprehensive plans, communities need to identify areas where open space conservation development would be suitable. This can be based on a number of factors, including potential open space linkages, and the identification of natural resources such as forest, meadows or wetlands that the community would like to see preserved.

After communities identify the areas where they want open space conservation development to be located, then they may use ORC 519.021 (C) to be able to identify in their zoning codes certain areas of the community where the open space conservation development option can be a permitted use. The use of this option can be attractive to developers because the development plan is not subject to referendum, saving time and avoiding conflict. Using this option, the developer must meet with the zoning standards with administrative approval by the Zoning Commission.

In addition, open space conservation development subdivisions are on the USEPA’s national menu of Best Management Practices for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Phase II. This is because they preserve large open space areas that are more effective in stormwater management because compared to conventional developments,



they reduce impervious cover, storm water pollutants, construction costs, grading, and the loss of natural areas. Another reason why open space conservation development subdivisions are promoted for better storm water management site design is because they are more effective in imitating closely pre-development conditions than are conventional subdivisions.

Land Use Meetings

In a series of meetings with Summit County Planning staff and local governmental and planning officials the week of September 20, 2004, there was discussion of various land use issues. There was a Land Use Survey handed out that asked a question whether they thought that certain areas of the County should remain rural and unsewered: out of 21 respondents, 18 agreed that certain areas of the County should remain rural and unsewered.

There was also a question asked whether they thought that certain areas of their community should remain rural and unsewered and the majority of planning officials answered yes to this question as well. The location of water and sewer infrastructure is an important growth management tool and should be utilized in conjunction with local land use planning efforts in the County.

Another question on the Land Use Issues Survey was do you have farms in your community that you would like to see preserved? Over half of the respondents answered yes to this question. Some of the planning officials were from cities and villages that do not have any farmland left.

Farmland/ Open Space Preservation Techniques

Farmland can be preserved by the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). The State of Ohio's PDR program is officially known as the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP). Ohioans have access to the AEPP as a result of the Clean Ohio legislation (that will end in a few years if not put forth again as a new bond issue for Ohioans to vote on). With the purchase of development rights program, the farmer sells the right to develop his/her land and a permanent conservation easement is placed on the land. If development rights are sold then the land should be valued accordingly for property taxes. This provides an additional incentive for farmland preservation.

A conservation easement is a deed restriction landowners voluntarily place on their property to protect resources such as productive agricultural land, stream corridors, wildlife habitat, historic sites or scenic views. Typically easements are held by governmental agencies, land trusts or other nonprofit organizations designed for this purpose.

A land trust is a nonprofit organization that protects land from development by purchasing or accepting donations of land and by purchasing or accepting donations of conservation easements. Some local land trusts active in Summit County include the Medina-Summit Land Conservancy, Hudson Land Conservancy, and the Tinkers Creek Land Conservancy. National land trusts that have Ohio offices include the American Farmland Trust and the Trust for Public Land.

Agricultural zoning is another tool that can be used to protect farmland. This type of zoning establishes where farming is the primary land use and discourages non-agricultural uses. There is no agricultural zoning currently being used in Summit County.



Transfer of development rights (TDR) is another possible farm or land preservation tool that could be explored. TDR allows landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land (sending area) to a different parcel of land (receiving area). It is designed to shift development from agricultural areas to areas that have the infrastructure capacity to support increased development. The benefits to this type of program is that it offers permanent protection, is a voluntary – market driven process, and farmers can retain equity without developing their land. The Ohio Revised Code currently lacks specific language to authorize counties and townships to participate in TDR. Work is being done on legislation that will ensure that all communities in Ohio can participate in TDR programs.

Summit County 2030 Forecast Characteristics

AMATS recently completed a 2030 Planning Data Forecast in 2004. AMATS forecasts population, dwelling units, household vehicles, employment, and non-residential floor area in order to prepare the 2030 AMATS Regional Transportation Plan. The main input for this process is the Ohio Department of Development Office of Strategic Research (OSR) 2005-2030 county projections. When NEFCO convened the local planning agencies in the fall of 2003 to assist in developing the 2030 population forecast for the area's political units, it was with the understanding that the results would conform as closely as possible, to the OSR county totals. These population projections are based on past trends and an analysis of available vacant land.

Planning Area Analysis

For the purpose of analysis, the AMATS forecast analysis data have been divided into the three Summit County General Plan planning areas of north, central and south Summit County (see Map 4.1 in Chapter 4).

The North Planning area consists of the following communities:

- Boston Heights Village
- Boston Township
- Hudson
- Macedonia
- Northfield Center Twp.
- Northfield Village
- Peninsula Village
- Reminderville Village
- Richfield Twp.
- Richfield Village
- Sagamore Hills Twp.
- Twinsburg
- Twinsburg Twp.



The North Planning Area is expected to lose 5,864 acres (a loss of 27.5%) of vacant usable land between 2000 and 2030. The residential land area will be increased by 3,986 acres or 19.3% during this same time period. The total housing units is expected to increase by 7,124 units or by 23.4% in the North Planning Area between 2000 and 2030. The total population in the North Planning Area is expected to increase by 19.3% or by 15,385 persons.

Table 4: North Planning Area

	<i>2000</i>	<i>2030 (PROJECTED)</i>	<i>CHANGE 2000 - 2030</i>
POPULATION	79,541	94,926	19.3%
TOT HOUSING UNITS	30,448	37,572	23.4%
LAND AREA (ACRES)			
RESIDENTIAL	20,610.5	24,596.8	19.3%
VACANT USABLE LAND	21,310.8	15,446.5	-27.5%

The Central Planning Area consists of the following communities:

- Akron
- Bath Twp.
- Copley Twp.
- Cuyahoga Falls
- Fairlawn
- Munroe Falls
- Silver Lake Village
- Stow
- Tallmadge

The significant increases that were projected for the North Planning Area are not projected for the Central Planning Area for this same time period. Actually there is a projected decrease in population of 1.4% with a projected loss of 5,013 persons in the Central planning area between 2000 and 2030. The number of total housing units is expected to increase by 2,349 units or by 1.5%. The residential land area will be increased by 1,944 acres or by 5.2% between 2000 and 2030. During this same time period the Central Planning Area is expected to lose 3,183 acres of vacant usable land or -12.7%. Compared with the North and South Planning Areas, some of the projected differences for the Central Planning Area can be explained by the loss in population projected for the City of Akron. Akron is expected to lose 7.7% of its population between 2000 and 2030.

Table 5: Central Planning Area

	<i>2000</i>	<i>2030 (PROJECTED)</i>	<i>CHANGE 2000 - 2030</i>
POPULATION	357,007	351,994	-1.4%
TOT HOUSING UNITS	155,943	158,292	1.5%
LAND AREA (ACRES)			
RESIDENTIAL	37,127.8	39,071.6	5.2%
VACANT USABLE LAND	25,062.7	21,879.9	-12.7%



The South Planning Area consists of the following communities:

- Barberton
- Clinton Village
- Coventry Twp.
- New Franklin
- Green
- Lakemore Village
- Mogadore Village
- Norton
- Springfield Twp.

The South Planning Area projections are, in general, a middle ground between what is projected for the North and Central planning areas. The South Planning Area is expected to lose 4,040 acres of vacant usable land between 2000 and 2030, a loss of -15.3%. The residential land area is projected to increase by 3,010 acres or by 13.4% during this same time period. The 3,010 residential acre increase is fairly close to what is projected for the North Planning Area with a projected increase of residential acres by 3,986 acres. The number of total housing units is expected to increase by 5,952 units or by 13.4% between 2000 and 2030. The total population in the South Planning Area is expected to increase by 9.0% or by 9,702 persons. The City of Barberton is projected to lose .2% of its population, during this same time period.

Table 6: South Planning Area

	2000	2030 (PROJECTED)	CHANGE 2000 - 2030
POPULATION	107,259	116,961	9.0%
TOT HOUSING UNITS	44,489	50,441	13.4%
LAND AREA (ACRES)			
RESIDENTIAL	22,493.0	25,503.3	13.4%
VACANT USABLE LAND	26,468.3	22,428.6	-15.3%

Alternative Direction

If development was encouraged to occur in areas that already have infrastructure and in locations with urban services, then perhaps the future development patterns would be projected differently.

Smart Growth principles would direct development towards communities already served by infrastructure, seeking to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer. By encouraging development in existing areas, communities benefit from a stronger tax base, closer proximity of jobs and services, increased efficiency of already developed land and infrastructure, reduced development pressure in fringe areas, and preservation of farmland and open space.

Regional Tax-Base Sharing

A range of options exists to begin to “level the playing field” between greenfield and infill development and to help direct new investment dollars to strengthen existing neighborhoods. One of which is to institute regional tax base sharing to limit regional competition and to support schools and infrastructure throughout the region. When one community underwrites a new mall with costly incentives like undeveloped land, tax discounts or road projects, other communities in the same region are forced to offer incentives of an equal scale to their malls in order to remain competitive. This type of regional competition can spur development at the edge, because in most cases, the new mall or retail outlet will use undeveloped lands, thus requiring new roads, infrastructure and larger parcels for construction.

Regional tax-base sharing allows the revenues collected (most often property tax assessments or sales tax revenues) to be distributed both to the locality where they were generated and to other localities in the region based on their size, population, or other measures of disparity. By minimizing regional competition for large commercial projects and business, such as malls and corporate headquarters, tax base sharing can ensure that new development occurs where it makes the most sense, not for the sole purpose of raising the tax base of one jurisdiction.¹⁵

Providing Incentives

Another option is to create economic incentives for businesses and homeowners to locate in areas with existing infrastructure. For example, communities can offer favorable lending terms through dedicated bond issues, direct grants or loans through tax-increment financing or from special assessments, tax abatements, credits or waivers, density bonuses or other zoning waivers or expedited permitting treatment.¹⁶

Modify Average Cost-Pricing in Utilities

Another option to encourage development in communities already served by infrastructure, is to modify average cost pricing in utilities to better account for costs of expanding infrastructure in greenfield areas. Low-density, dispersed developments generally enjoy subsidized utility costs because utility pricing is based on average - rather than the actual costs of providing services. Because all customers pay average costs, residents in more urban, higher density areas in effect subsidize those in edge areas. Linear utilities such as cable television, water and sewer, phone service and even mail delivery fail to reflect the efficiencies associated with clustered development. The City of San Diego has created service areas designed for impact fee financing, in which impact fees are lower for areas served by existing infrastructure and higher for those without. This “step” approach to calculating impact fees encourage development to occur in existing service areas by offering lower impact fees to the builders of new units. Conversely, higher fees (that more closely approximate the true cost) discourage development in unserved areas.¹⁷

Residential Build-Out Capacity Analysis

¹⁵ *Getting to Smart Growth - 100 Policies for Implementation.*

¹⁶ *Getting to Smart Growth - 100 Policies for Implementation.*

¹⁷ *Getting to Smart Growth - 100 Policies for Implementation.*



A build-out analysis was performed for all of Summit County communities based on existing residential zoning classifications (see Table 7). For each political jurisdiction, undeveloped residential parcels greater than or equal to the largest minimum single family residential lot size were identified and summed. The unbuildable land area was subtracted according to Scenario 1 or Scenario 2 parameters (see below) to determine buildable land. Total buildable land area was multiplied by the maximum permitted density in each residential zoning district to determine potential dwelling unit capacity. The potential total dwelling units were multiplied by the 2000 Census average persons per household for each community to determine potential population. The following build-out population calculation is an estimate, as it does not incorporate small lot infill opportunities, nor does it take minimum open space requirements into consideration.

- Under Scenario 1, land is deducted if it is unbuildable due to riparian areas and water bodies. Riparian areas are only included if covered under community or county regulation.
- Under Scenario 2, land is deducted if it is considered unbuildable due to the following environmental constraints: riparian areas, water bodies, slopes greater than 12%, wetlands (same environmental constraints as the Summit County Natural Resources Study)

The intent of the data is to guide the decision-making process of the County with respect to future development. The results demonstrate the linkage between zoning regulations and land use policies and the impacts such regulations and policies may have on the long-range development of the community. The County may choose other growth simulation scenarios and the conclusions, of course, will vary accordingly.

In essence, this current build-out analysis reflects that a balance of single-family residential development and environmental protection may be reasonably accommodated. However, the realities of development are that as communities reach the build-out stage, there is more pressure to develop environmentally sensitive lands. So communities need to plan and implement natural resource protection measures before development is proposed, if they wish to preserve natural areas and the public health and safety functions they provide. It also demonstrates that for many communities, build-out is to be expected within 25 years or so. For many communities, the build-out projections and the NEFCO 2030 projections are fairly equivalent.



Table 7:

<i>Summit County Residential Build-Out Capacity Analysis</i>							
	Capacity Scenario 1			Capacity Scenario 2		2030 Projection ¹⁸	
<u>Community</u>	<u>2000 Census Population</u>	<u>Increase from 2000 Census</u>	<u>Build-Out Population Estimate 1</u>	<u>Increase from 2000 Census</u>	<u>Build-Out Population Estimate 2</u>	<u>Increase from 2000 Census</u>	<u>2030 Population Projection</u>
Akron	217,074	12.8%	244,872	9.8%	238,340	-7.7%	200,275
Barberton	27,899	16.3%	32,434	8.2%	30,186	-0.2%	27,845
Bath Twp	9,635	13.5%	10,937	9.9%	10,586	13.9%	10,972
Boston Heights	1,186	62.7%	1,929	57.2%	1,865	12.6%	1,335
Boston Twp	1,062	10.9%	1,177	9.3%	1,161	3.5%	1,099
Clinton	1,337	24.8%	1,668	16.1%	1,552	13.3%	1,515
Copley Twp	13,641	37.8%	18,801	28.3%	17,504	29.4%	17,647
Coventry Twp	10,900	10.3%	12,019	6.6%	11,619	3.7%	11,305
Cuyahoga Falls	49,374	5.2%	51,944	3.9%	51,305	2.7%	50,718
Fairlawn	7,307	11.4%	8,138	6.5%	7,785	3.6%	7,568
New Franklin	14,530	34.8%	19,582	30.1%	18,904	7.2%	15,569
Green	22,817	31.2%	29,943	23.6%	28,196	26.4%	28,837
Hudson	22,439	28.6%	28,856	17.8%	26,430	8.6%	24,369
Lakemore	2,561	145.6%	6,291	113.3%	5,463	3.5%	2,650
Macedonia	9,224	52.5%	14,063	47.6%	13,614	27.1%	11,722
Mogadore	2,951	43.2%	4,227	25.5%	3,705	-6.5%	2,758
Munroe Falls	5,314	9.1%	5,796	8.1%	5,744	4.1%	5,532
Northfield	3,827	9.5%	4,192	7.2%	4,104	-6.3%	3,587
Northfield Ctr. Twp	4,931	11.9%	5,519	4.9%	5,171	13.2%	5,581
Norton	11,512	85.1%	21,304	73.2%	19,940	8.7%	12,509
Peninsula	602	3.5%	623	3.4%	622	4.8%	631
Reminderville	2,347	102.1%	4,743	27.4%	2,991	11.3%	2,613
Richfield Twp	2,138	92.0%	4,105	82.8%	3,908	65.7%	3,542
Richfield Village	3,286	25.6%	4,128	24.0%	4,075	24.7%	4,097
Sagamore Hills Twp	9,340	11.9%	10,452	10.5%	10,319	15.4%	10,783
Silver Lake	3,019	1.2%	3,056	0.9%	3,045	-7.0%	2,807
Springfield Twp	15,168	32.2%	20,051	24.3%	18,850	8.6%	16,472
Stow	32,139	17.6%	37,785	9.9%	35,334	11.4%	35,814
Tallmadge	16,180	38.7%	22,446	28.5%	20,788	14.8%	18,577
Twinsburg	17,006	11.6%	18,973	8.2%	18,402	25.3%	21,308
Twinsburg Twp	2,153	164.1%	5,687	89.2%	4,074	93.9%	4,175
Summit County	542,899	20.8%	655,740	15.2%	625,583	3.9%	564,012

¹⁸ NEFCO Draft 2030 Projections



Summit County Natural Resources Study Modeling

A similar build-out projection was done in the Summit County Natural Resources Study (2003). The Natural Resources Study model looked at changes in land use by projections of acres of vacant land converted to residential, commercial and industrial uses. The same natural resource constraints were used to develop Scenario 2 – Build-out with current land use controls and protection of environmentally constrained areas, for the Natural Resources Study and this Plan (which were riparian areas, water bodies, slopes greater than 12%, and wetlands). It was found in the Natural Resources Study model that thirty-six percent more land (23,600 additional acres) was preserved when environmental land use controls were in place.

For the Natural Resources Study a model was used called the “What If Model”, in this model, two scenarios were presented, one with the existing land use controls and the second with more protection of natural resources. In the second scenario, called Scenario Using Environmental Land Use Controls, higher densities and infill development was assumed. In this Scenario Using Environmental Land Use Controls, the same amount of residential, industrial and commercial growth was accommodated using less land because the growth was at higher densities in urban centers that had existing infrastructure. In the Scenario Using Environmental Land Use Controls, there was 10,176 farmland acres preserved between 2000 and 2030, compared to 2,594 acres with the Scenario no change in land use controls. In the Scenario Using Environmental Land Use Controls, there was 24,667 vacant land acres preserved between 2000 and 2030, compared to 5,662 acres with the Scenario no change in land use controls.

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the land use element is that smart growth management techniques should be practiced in the county so as to balance development with the preservation of critical, sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, riparian corridors and prime farmland.

Allowing for higher density development, if coupled with natural resource and open space protection programs, can reduce the impact of the built area on the environment. By concentrating development and people within a smaller geographic area, density reduces land consumption and allows communities to protect valuable open space, habitat, farmland and ecologically sensitive areas.

The Ohio Department of Development’s Office of Strategic Planning has projected Summit County to grow by 3.9 % between 2000 and 2030. According to the U.S. Census in 2000, Summit County had a population of 542,899, the Ohio Department of Development’s Office of Strategic Planning has projected the Summit County population will be 564,212 in 2030.

- In contrast to the population patterns that have evolved over the last thirty years, the goal for future population distribution is to direct a greater percentage of population growth to areas that are already served by centralized utilities, near existing transportation facilities, and in close proximity to employment centers. Accommodating the same number of housing units on less land enables communities to shift construction away from sensitive areas to areas more suitable for development.



- To conserve resources, reduce initial building costs, and diminish the long range cost of services, greater consideration should be placed on restoring, rehabilitating and reusing existing structures, and finding sites suitable for infill development in locations near existing services.
- Fewer homes should be constructed on clear and open sites in outlying locations where urban services are not available.

The objectives listed below are intended to guide townships, villages and cities in the preparation of specific local land use goals, priorities and policies. In addition, the objectives provide a policy framework for county decision making.

Land Use Planning Objectives:

- A. Land should be developed efficiently, keeping in mind that it is a finite resource.
- B. Through local zoning, encourage higher density development in urban centers and villages and maintain lower density in the unincorporated areas.
- C. Zoning resolutions should be in accordance with local land use plans.
- D. Guide commercial and industrial development into areas already zoned for it.
- E. Develop and adopt service area plans as a means to manage existing and future infrastructure improvements.
- F. Encourage the preservation of prime agricultural land.
- G. Encourage the conservation of open space, particularly those areas containing sensitive land such as jurisdictional wetlands, floodplains, river corridors and woodlands.
- H. Support local zoning based upon a land capability analysis.
- I. Periodically review all county regulations pertaining to development activity.
- J. Update local land use plans on a continuing basis to ensure that such plans and zoning are in harmony. The County Planning Commission may provide technical assistance in guiding communities during the plan update process.

The majority of vacant land left in Summit County is zoned for residential uses. There is a real opportunity to use Smart Growth housing and development options to preserve many of the current existing natural resources and “special places” that define Summit County. Also utilizing these options will promote quality development. The following are the recommended Smart Growth Development Options:

Smart Growth Development Options:

1. **Open space conservation development** – This type of development provides for the same overall densities on a site that would be permitted with the underlying residential zoning but provides for the clustering of the houses in order to preserve a substantial amount of the site in open space (at least 40% - 50% of the total site). This usually reduces the cost of providing infrastructure as well. Access to quality open space areas with woodlands, meadows or water courses is incorporated into the design of the open space conservation development. Pedestrian circulation is a primary design objective providing opportunities for passive recreation, such as biking, walking, etc.
2. **Compact development:** This is development that provides for higher intensities or densities of use. Instead of development patterns that are spread out, the Smart Growth movement promotes more compact development patterns which can be compatible with the trend in smaller household sizes. Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a type of neo-traditional mixed use neighborhood design that has implemented these compact building design principles.
3. **Mixed use development:** Mixed use developments are developments that are patterned often after traditional villages, and that usually include a mix of retail, residential and office uses, and pedestrian friendly sidewalks. A mixed use development contains different land uses that are in close proximity, planned as a unified complementary whole, and functionally integrated to the use of shared vehicular and pedestrian access and parking areas. Mixed use developments are often cited as ways to reduce traffic generation, particularly where homes and jobs are planned and developed within easy commuting distance and shopping is located close to residences.

There is a positive relationship between encouraging more compact patterns of development and making it more feasible for mixed use developments to occur. Well designed mixed use developments encourage more walking and less dependence on automobiles.

4. **Transit oriented development:** Transit Oriented Development (TOD) refers to residential and commercial areas designed to maximize access by transit. A TOD neighborhood has a center with a rail or bus station, surrounded by relatively high density development, with progressively lower density spreading outwards. Encouraging compact, denser types of development promotes transit oriented development.
5. **Infill development/ Revitalization of older urbanized areas:** Infill development is the economic use of vacant land in urban areas where water, sewer, and other public improvements and services are in place and available for immediate use. – Infill development is one of the main antidotes to suburban sprawl. Infill development tends to be more compact than conventional development patterns, so the same number of dwelling units, stores or offices, takes up much less land.



Implementation Strategies

Discussion

Implementation of these goals, objectives and policies should be coordinated with elements described in other Chapters of this General Land Use Development Plan.

NEFCO, AMATS, Summit County, Cuyahoga Valley National Park and other regional agencies must work together to provide information and educate the public about the importance of coordinated planning at the regional level.

At the local level, communities should consider regional issues and consult the General Land Use Development Plan when deciding on local matters. In particular, many local planning and zoning commissions need to understand that they may take more than a passive role in determining their community's future. In addition to reviewing and acting upon requests for zoning changes by others, they are encouraged to become more pro-active in promoting good planning. For example, they may undertake planning studies or initiate zoning changes on their own initiative.

While the quality of local planning activity varies considerably among the county's communities, some communities react principally to proposals by individual owners and developers rather than focusing on the creation of a public vision that is in the interest of the entire community. Cities, villages and townships need to develop comprehensive plans if they have none. Once comprehensive plans are adopted the zoning ordinance or resolution should be amended in a timely fashion to implement the plan. These plans should be used in formulating capital improvements plans, budgets and serve as a guide in making local development decisions.

Implementation Strategies

- A. Natural resources should be protected and utilized as part of the County's "green infrastructure."
- B. Regulatory tools such as zoning and subdivision regulations should be utilized to guide development.
- C. Encourage development in communities already served by infrastructure.
- D. Encourage a lower density of population in locations without existing urban services and where urban services are not likely to be provided within the next two decades.
- E. Create walkable neighborhoods and communities.
- F. Preserve open space, farmland, natural resources and critical environmental areas.
- G. Encourage open space conservation development zoning to conserve natural resources and create livable neighborhoods.
- H. Work with local nonprofit land trusts and affected government agencies to preserve sensitive land through the acquisition of conservation easements.



- I. Promote tax incentives such as the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV), agricultural districts and the forestry program. The CAUV program allows owners of farmland the opportunity to have their land taxed according to value in agriculture rather than full market value.
- J. Utilize the State of Ohio farmland preservation program so farmland can be preserved by the purchase of development rights (PDR).
- K. Provide incentives to encourage the extension of central sewer and water utilities according to Smart Growth principles and discourage haphazard and unplanned growth.
- L. Encourage infill development and the revitalization of existing cities and villages.
- M. Encourage transit oriented development and coordinate land use and transportation planning.
- N. Encourage low-impact development techniques to protect Summit County's natural resources where possible and practical.
- O. Institute regional tax base sharing.
- P. Create economic incentives for businesses and home owners to locate in areas with existing infrastructure.
- Q. Modify average cost pricing in utilities to better account for costs of expanding infrastructure in greenfield areas.