Chapter 11
Implementation and Policy

Introduction

The Summit County General Land Use Development Plan is meant to be a working document that results in changes to the way Summit County and local jurisdictions manage growth. In a sense the Plan presents a blueprint for action that provides direction and assists decision makers over the next ten to twenty years. The intent is to fulfill the goals, objectives and strategies that embody the civic contract that is a result of this effort.

The Summit County General Land Use Development Plan seeks the further implementation of Smart Growth land use planning principles in Summit County.

The main idea behind smart growth is to direct development to older, underused sites that have existing infrastructure and thereby preserving green space and watersheds. Smart Growth has four straightforward goals:

1. Support existing communities by targeting resources to support development in areas where infrastructure exists;
2. Save our most valuable natural resources before they are forever lost;
3. Save tax payers from the high cost of building infrastructure to serve development that has spread far from existing population centers
4. Provide Summit County residents with a high quality of life, whether they choose to live in a rural community, suburb, small town, or city.

The National Smart Growth Network formed in 1996. The Network was formed in response to increasing community concerns about the need for new ways to grow that boost the economy, protect the environment, and enhance community vitality. The Smart Growth network is comprised of 32 organizations including the National Association of Counties, the United States Conference of Mayors, Institute of Transportation Engineers, Joint Center for Sustainable Communities, National Association of Counties, National Association of Realtors, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Maryland. The State of Maryland has been a leader in implementing the principles of Smart Growth. Many planners and land use professionals have proposed that the principles of smart growth provide a solution to the dispersed land use patterns that have created sprawl, and have contributed towards the country’s increasing obesity related health problems.

There is a Smart Growth Education Foundation that was formed in 1999 in Northeast Ohio that represents homebuilder association members in the 11 county region of Summit, Portage, Medina, Geauga, Cuyahoga, Erie, Huron, Ashtabula, Lake, Lorain, and Stark Counties. One of the major goals of this organization is to educate Northeast Ohio communities concerning

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1 See the Maryland State Department of Planning website, [www.mdp.state.md.us/smartintro.htm](http://www.mdp.state.md.us/smartintro.htm)
planning and development concepts and the principles of smart growth in urban and suburban settings. They are also striving to promote smart land-use planning and present such options to local governments.

The Smart Growth Community Excellence Awards Program presents annual awards to Smart Growth projects in Northeast Ohio; this program is sponsored by the Smart Growth Education Foundation. “The Smart Growth movement promotes and stimulates responsible land use planning, so the new development can be accommodated, while preserving open space and natural resources, protecting the environment, and not over extending our infrastructure.” (Beacon Journal, Oct. 29, 2005) quoted from John Galehouse, chairman of the Smart Growth Education Foundation and Home Builders Association past president.

Local Health Departments and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are also recognizing that the principles of Smart Growth can be applied to encourage healthier life styles by encouraging more compact forms of development that provide more opportunities for walking and biking. According to the publication, Increasing Physical Activity Through Community Design, A Guide for Public Health Practitioners (May 2002), physical inactivity combined with overeating has made us a nation of overweight and out-of-shape people. The incidence of overweight or obesity among adults has increased from 47% in 1976 to 64% in 2000. This is a concern because obesity is a significant risk factor for developing chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Physical inactivity and obesity now rank second only to tobacco use in their contribution to total mortality in the United States.

Health Departments are now promoting Active Living Communities or Smart Growth communities that are designed with a pedestrian focus and thereby will provide opportunities for people to engage in routine daily physical activity. In this model, government leadership should promote policies that support active living such as:

- Bicycle and pedestrian oriented design
- Mixed use development
- Ample recreational facilities
- Locating schools in walkable neighborhoods

The Summit County Combined General Health District is increasingly interested in the health effects of urban sprawl and how the design of our communities affects health habits. The Division of Community Health Services has several grant projects. Within these grant projects, it has been established as a grant objective to further pursue the environmental links of urban planning and design to health outcomes. The Summit County Combined General Health District has most of its programming around chronic disease prevention and the lifestyle behavior choices involving physical activity and nutrition. Additionally, the Health District works with local communities to assist with GIS mapping for green space use planning efforts.

So there is a certain amount of synergy and agreement between the development community, health department community, government officials and planners, that these Smart Growth principles should be applied to promote growth that is healthier for people, that can also reduce traditional infrastructure costs, as well as help to preserve fast diminishing open space by promoting more compact development.
Smart Growth development is already occurring in Summit County. For example, the City of Akron has been partnering with the Home Builders Association serving Portage & Summit Counties (HBA) to construct new infill housing on vacant lots in the City of Akron. Past housing projects included Coburn Street in 1999 (9 homes), Blake Place in 2000, Cityview and Bisson Avenue in 2003-2004 (28 homes), and Newton Crossings Phase I in 2004 (20). Once completed, Newton Crossings will offer 38 new homes. Newton Crossings is part of a larger development district, the Seiberling Neighborhood Development Area, which includes street improvements and technical and financial assistance for existing home rehabilitation. The project brought together 15 builders to work on 38 homes in phases one and two. This was a private – public partnership with the City of Akron investing monies in property acquisition and in roadway improvements. This is a good example of Smart Growth because it supports a couple of Smart Growth principles, including directing development towards existing communities by promoting infill construction as well as taking advantage of compact building design.

Another prime example of Smart Growth being implemented in Summit County is the First & Main project done in the City of Hudson in 2005. This mixed use infill development project was recognized at the Ohio Planning Conference in September, 2005 and won an OPC award for Contribution and Excellence. First & Main is a planned 200,000 square-foot mixed-use development includes retail, restaurants, office space, library and town homes. (This project is described in more detail in Chapter 6). Mixed use developments provide more opportunities for walking between home and shopping, and encourage less reliance on automobiles. This project supports the Smart Growth principles of creating walkable neighborhoods, fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place, and mixing land uses.

The Summit County Trail & Greenway Plan is another example of a Smart Growth initiative in Summit County. It is a Smart Growth initiative because it supports the Smart Growth principle of preserving open space, natural beauty and critical environmental areas. Some of the main goals of the Summit County Trail & Greenway Plan (2001) are to make connections to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and its associated greenway by extending linkages throughout the County and to identify trails and greenways of regional significance as a framework for expansion by local communities. The Summit County greenway trails (once constructed), also will provide opportunities for physical exercise and thereby support active living.

**Land Use Decisions**

Various boards, commissions, and other appointed officials make land use decisions on a regular basis in the County. The Summit County General Land Use Development Plan may be utilized whenever a decision involves a land use issue or has an environmental impact. In this context, some examples of potential uses for the Plan may include the following.

- Is the development proposal generally in harmony with the Plan's land use component?
- Is adequate infrastructure available to serve the intended use or is it within a service area planned for the installation of infrastructure?
- Is the development proposal providing opportunities for a healthy lifestyle by providing sidewalks or trails for walking or bicycling?
In addition, this General Plan can provide a framework for local planning efforts. The General Plan can provide guidance for communities as they draft their own comprehensive plans. In addition, a community that doesn’t have a Comprehensive Plan or Land Use Plan could also adopt the Summit County General Land Use Development Plan as a guide for their community.

**Infrastructure Improvements**

Decisions made with respect to infrastructure may have a profound effect on a community’s growth pattern. The Summit County General Land Use Development Plan recommends an initiative to guide (to the extent possible) more intensive residential, commercial and light industrial growth to the municipalities and to those areas with existing or planned infrastructure (central sanitary sewer in particular). A more compact development pattern within such areas may allow for a reduction of infrastructure costs to users and may limit some of the negative side effects associated with intra-county, and ultimately, regional sprawl. In essence, community based service area plans in harmony with local zoning should be adopted to contain the unwarranted spread of infrastructure. Decisions pertaining to the installation of central sanitary sewer and water lines should be conducted on a comprehensive basis, as opposed to simply reacting to a particular development proposal.

In that vein, it is recommended that the County, through the Department of Environmental Services (DOES), should begin sewer master planning in 2006. Such planning should provide incentives to encourage extension of public utilities according to smart growth principles and discourage haphazard or unplanned growth. In addition it is recommended that an annual roundtable be convened of Summit county officials, local agencies, community representatives and JEDD officials to discuss issues related to smart growth planning, JEDD issues, utilities and land use. Further, it is recommended that this attendance should be encouraged for those communities who wish to receive SCIP/ LTIP funds, CDBG or other county-distributed funding for infrastructure improvements, by giving them extra incentive points for attending such roundtable meetings.

There is also a need in terms of transportation planning for the County to develop and adopt a Summit County Thoroughfare Plan. It is recommended that the County develop a County Thoroughfare Plan based on Smart Growth principles in 2006 in cooperation with the Summit County Engineer, and the cities, villages and townships. This Thoroughfare Plan should provide incentives to encourage the extension and improvement of roads according to smart growth principles and to discourage haphazard or unplanned growth.

**Economic Development Programs**

The land use and the economic analysis components of the Summit County General Land Use Development Plan should be examined as a basis for the allocation of economic development programs. For instance, businesses seeking assistance should locate in areas that are in harmony with the land use policies. Requests for assistance may include an assessment of land use compatibility with nearby properties, infrastructure availability and capacity, environmental limitations, current zoning, and related matters.
Private Sector Decisions

The private sector may use the Summit County General Land Use Development Plan to forge decisions regarding the development or redevelopment of land. Information on the environmental constraints involving development sites, either from the Plan or from the County’s GIS internet mapping system, may assist in subdivision design. Actions by the private sector consistent with the Plan’s recommendations should be encouraged.

Future Revisions

The Summit County General Land Use Development Plan should be subject to periodic updates. It may be reviewed annually for any minor adjustments and should receive a more substantial overhaul at ten-year intervals consistent with the census. The level of development activity may be a driving force toward updating the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies in the Plan.

Implementation

The leadership capabilities of the Summit County Executive and County Council will be necessary to carry out many of the policies outlined in the Plan. The Summit County Planning Commission and County Council should formally adopt the General Plan. A cooperative effort among county departments, townships, and municipalities is warranted to successfully implement the General Plan as well.

The Summit County Planning Commission will be looked upon to assist in implementing the Summit County General Land Use Development Plan through its own responsibilities and decisions. The Commission should use the Plan’s land use recommendations and information on natural constraints to suggest modifications to subdivision proposals, in line with the Plan’s policies. In addition, the General Plan can be used to provide guidance on planning issues where a local comprehensive plan has not been done for a locality.

To assist the Commission in these responsibilities and to provide additional consistency following the conclusion of this planning effort, the Plan recommends that members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee be appointed by the Planning Commission to a special subcommittee of the Commission. The subcommittee would meet on a regular basis with the full Commission to consider the status of Plan implementation. The full Steering Committee would also be convened annually to review implementation progress, forecasts and recommended changes to Plan policies.

In addition, a Smart Growth Subcommittee could be formed to work with local communities on these issues. For example, the County Health District is interested in promoting walking trails in each community in the County. This work could be better accomplished if coordinated with the work of other groups in the County such as the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, Metro Parks Serving Summit County, Summit County Planning Commission staff and the local Home Builders Association (HBA) group.
Another issue that has been raised is the lack of conservation open space design in residential developments (that cluster development and preserve abundant open space on the remaining land being built in the County). More work could be done in terms of developing conservation open space design residential development types of zoning and adopting it in the local political subdivisions. The County has recently sponsored a Summit County Township Environmental Planning Education Program Report which provides environmentally sensitive zoning models for townships and other political subdivisions to consider adopting.

An educational team could be formed to promote how more of these conservation open space design residential subdivisions could be developed in the County, in partnership with the HBA group, the Summit County Planning Commission and the Township Association of Summit County. In conjunction with this effort, the Summit County Planning Commission could partner with other communities, and Metro Parks Serving Summit County to develop a Countywide Open Space Plan. Such open space areas that are preserved in these Conservation Developments could then be linked together to provide an open space network.

**SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES**

The following is a summation of the major strategies to implement the Plan.

**Quality of Life Issues**

Promote Smart Growth principles in the County to ensure livable, walkable communities and to maintain the existing high quality of life.

**Cultural/ Historic Resource Preservation**

**Implementation Policies**

- Ensure infill development is compatible with the positive character and development patterns of the local community or neighborhood
- Encourage rehabilitation and reuse of vacant, historic structures (i.e., surplus schools, warehouses/ industrial buildings, old homes).
- Create, adopt and utilize local enforcement tools such as local historic preservation ordinances, historic zoning district or overlay district regulations, and design guidelines encouraging the preservation of and sensitivity to historic resources.

**Housing**

**Implementation Policies**

- Increase the supply of affordable, owner-occupied housing
- Educate homebuyers (particularly low-to-moderate income persons) and local officials about the public and private homeownership assistance programs available.
✓ Adopt and implement a property maintenance and point-of-sale inspection program to insure that Summit County’s housing stock is properly and safely maintained.

✓ Review and update local zoning and building codes to permit a wider variety of housing types at a range of price points

Land Use Implementation Policies

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:

Recommended Overall Smart Growth Development Options

1. Open space conservation development
2. Infill development
3. Compact development
4. Mixed-use development
5. Transit oriented development
6. Revitalization of older urbanized areas

Recommended Land Use Implementation Policies

✓ Conservation open space design residential development is encouraged as a means to preserve permanent common open space. Such open space areas may be linked to protect environmentally sensitive land and river corridors.

✓ Large lot zoning within the unincorporated areas of the County without central sanitary sewers should be retained as a means to maintain the semi-rural atmosphere and to protect the environment from potential negative effects of development. Conservation open space design should be easily permitted by local zoning to allow these developments to maintain the same overall low density as the underlying zoning but preserve more of the remaining open space (such as 40%) by clustering the houses. The County has recently sponsored a Summit County Township Environmental Planning Education Program Report that provides environmental zoning models for use and adoption, including a Conservation Design Planned Unit Development zoning model.

✓ 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.
- 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.

- Create walkable neighborhoods and communities. Develop review processes that ensure new development plans include pedestrian and bicycle friendly elements.

- Encourage transit oriented development and coordinate land use and transportation planning. Stimulate development of mixed-use projects, reduce parking requirements, and create more open spaces and parks. Creating incentive programs and changing zoning requirements are a few ways to achieve these goals.

- Encourage higher-density, mixed use development along major roads and within walking distance of public transit, using a transit-oriented development (TOD) ordinance or an overlay zone.

- Where mixed uses are appropriate, encourage communities to adopt a traditional neighborhood development (TND) ordinance or overlay zone that encourages an environment built to the human scale (narrow streets, interconnected streets and paths, mixed uses, and smaller lot sizes). Commercial strip development along roads should be avoided.

- Zoning regulations should be based upon comprehensive land use plans that are periodically updated.

- Institute regional tax base sharing to create economic incentives for businesses and homeowners to locate in areas with existing infrastructure.

- Modify average cost pricing in utilities to better account for costs of expanding infrastructure in greenfield areas.

- Natural resources should be protected and utilized as part of the County’s “green infrastructure”.

- Utilize the State of Ohio farmland preservation program so farmland can be preserved by the purchase of development rights.

**Natural Resources Implementation Policies**

- Local governments should adopt environmental zoning measures to protect natural resources in their communities. Summit County has recently sponsored a Summit County Township Environmental Planning Education Program Report that provides environmental zoning models for use and adoption.
To ensure that adequate open space is provided for this and future generations, each local community should formulate an open space plan. Metroparks Serving Summit County should help facilitate this process by helping to coordinate between communities for possible connections.

Communities and local organizations should continue to cooperate to implement the recommendations found in the Summit County Trail & Greenway Plan (2001).

Encourage all the communities in the County to adopt the County riparian setback regulations, if they have not already done so. Riparian areas reduce flow velocity, increase the storage of water, and minimize downstream flood impacts.

Since the County has experienced flooding problems and so little of the original wetlands remain, it is recommended that communities adopt a policy of requiring that there be no net loss of wetlands permitted in any watershed.

Local governments should develop land use controls so isolated wetlands (of a certain size) be retained in their natural state to assist in flood control, pollution abatement, and to protect wildlife habitat.

Floodplain regulations in the County should be strengthened so that there is a stronger policy for redirecting development away from the 100 year floodplain. By preserving floodplains in a natural vegetated state, land use controls can reduce flooding risks to downstream properties.

Development on steep slopes can create erosion and landslide problems. Therefore, communities should adopt environmental review measures to try to limit development on steep slopes.

Local governments should consider and develop programs and policies to protect its woodland resources by providing incentives for tree preservation on private property during development.

Local governments should encourage more use of native plants in landscaping because this reduces water and energy consumption and provides habitat for wildlife.

Encourage setbacks in the new developments to protect floodplains, wetlands, and river corridors.

Strictly regulate erosion, sedimentation, and storm water runoff from new developments.

Provide integral open space within newly developed areas, especially through a mandatory dedication of local open space in the development process.

Improve air quality by minimizing sprawling land use patterns and promoting compact development.

Encourage energy conservation and the use of cleaner burning fuels.
Local communities should support farmers markets and the growing market for high quality, locally grown food, and thereby support local farms.

The Center for Farmland Preservation in Northeast Ohio, the Ohio State University Agricultural Extension Office, or Summit County should add an Economic Development staff person that works with rural land owners to promote rural economy uses just in Summit County. This targeted effort should help to preserve some of the remaining agricultural uses and open space in the county.

It is important to preserve biological diversity and protect wildlife habitat. There should be more review of proposed new development to ensure long term survival of key wildlife habitat and movement opportunities to minimize wildlife fragmentation and disturbance.

A County wide study should be done to determine what and where is the key critical wildlife habitat left that should be preserved. This Wildlife Habitat Study could be done in cooperation with Metro Parks Serving Summit County.

Preserve the priority areas for preservation identified in the Natural Resources Chapter. Habitat protection for plants and wildlife insures a strong ecosystem that can support an abundance of wildlife, and also provides passive recreational opportunities. Form a Countywide Open Space Committee that will work on developing a county open space plan based on the priority areas for preservation that have been identified in this Plan.

Public parks and recreational facilities should be fostered. The need for more trails for walking, running and bicycling should be examined.

Metro Parks, Serving Summit County should take the lead in wetlands preservation, enhancement, restoration and creation.

Utilities & Stormwater Management Implementation Policies

Use the 208 Clean Water Plan prescriptions prepared by NEFCO to direct sewer extensions and plan for future services.

In addition, it is recommended that the County, in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Services (DOES), should begin sewer master planning in 2006. Any sewer master planning that is done should provide incentives to encourage extension of public utilities according to Smart Growth principles and discourage haphazard or unplanned growth.

Ensure local comprehensive plans and zoning regulations reflect community goals for development. Zoning densities should not be based only on availability of central sewer/water utilities.
- Encourage communication and coordination between local governments, county government and related agencies regarding provision and extension of public utilities, particularly when the creation of JEDDs is being considered.

- Convene an annual Smart Growth Planning Annual Roundtable Meeting to discuss issues related to smart growth planning, JEDD issues, utilities, land use, and community goals and objectives. Participants should include Summit County officials, local agencies (i.e. NEFCO), community representatives, JEDD officials, etc.

- Utilize and implement the 208 Clean Water Plan recommendations for proper management of home sewage and semi-public sewage disposal systems.

- Inventory and map existing onsite septic systems and wells.

- Develop fair and consistent countywide policies and incentives to eliminate failing septic systems in urbanized areas and encourage connection to available central sewer systems. This should be done on a cooperative basis with Summit County, local communities and local health departments.

- Utilize and implement the 208 Clean Water Plan recommendations and the Summit County Stormwater Management Plan for management of nonpoint source pollution and storm water management.

- Ensure commercial site plan review in all communities involves planning and engineering representatives at the community and/or county levels.

- Encourage the use of low-impact development techniques to protect Summit County’s natural resources and water quality where possible and practical.

- Utilize regional storm water detention basins to reduce potential for and impacts of flooding.

- Develop storm water/water quality guidelines for Summit County.

- Utilize and implement the 208 Clean Water Plan recommendations to protect regionally important water resources and to facilitate urban stream restoration.

**Economic Development Implementation Policies**

- Ensure local comprehensive plans are in line with and support local economic development goals. Update and/or prepare local plans as necessary.

- Create, update and/or enhance brochures, websites and other information products to market the amenities and potential growth sites in a community.

- Inventory available business properties and make information readily accessible via community, county and industry websites.

- Encourage start-up, home-based businesses and facilitate establishment of small, local businesses. Pool resources and technology to increase competitiveness of small, local businesses.
-update and adjust local zoning to accommodate small, home-based or start-up businesses with concepts such as live-work and mixed-use zoning.

-Utilize GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to identify customer locations and build customer profiles. Establish website with basic information necessary (i.e., tax forms, business name registration, permits, etc.) on how to establish a small business in Summit County.

-Capitalize on unique resources or features of community (i.e., proximity to National Park, historic resources, natural resources, etc.) to encourage appropriately-scaled development.

-Continue and expand Summit County Business Partnership visitation program to encourage communication among business owners/executives, community officials, local agencies, and other interested parties.

-Focus economic investment and assistance in areas identified as preferred growth areas by local communities, and in areas with existing or planned infrastructure. Give priority to economically disadvantaged areas.

-Concentrate government subsidies and funding on programs that support Smart Growth principles. Require accountability and transparency whenever economic development assistance is provided to a company.

-Recommend new jobs be created (not just transferred from one local community to another). Agree, together with other Northeast Ohio communities and agencies, to respect this qualification measure when offering economic development assistance to companies.

-Encourage development of industries that support Northeast Ohio’s industry clusters as identified by the “Clusters Project.” (Such as metalworking, polymers, chemical, motor vehicles, biomedical, insurance, electronics (ICE), information technology).

-Research, explore and discuss regional tax base sharing alternatives with Northeast Ohio political and business leaders. Establish a pilot tax base sharing program to test effectiveness.

-Aid employers in improving work force equality through educational programs, employment counseling, and social services such as day care, and health services.

-Coordinate housing and transportation planning with economic development efforts.

**Transportation Implementation Policies**

-Utilize the AMATS Regional Transportation Plan and other regional and local plans to direct and prioritize transportation improvements.

-In addition, it is recommended that the County develop a County Thoroughfare Plan in cooperation with the Summit County Engineer in 2006 that is based on Smart Growth principles. This Plan should provide incentives to encourage extension and improvement of roads according to smart growth principles and discourage haphazard or unplanned growth.
Continue implementation of the Summit County Trail & Greenway Plan.

Properly maintain existing roads to ensure safe driving, biking and walking conditions.

Interconnect major roads to provide multiple routes for drivers.

Improve problem intersections and coordinate traffic signal timing.

Use traffic roundabouts and other intersection improvement techniques to improve safety and facilitate traffic flow.

Reduce the number of cars on the road by making public transportation, biking and walking safe, easy and affordable alternatives.

Reduce the number of cars on the road during peak travel times by encouraging flex time, telecommuting, variable work hours, carpooling and use of park-and-ride lots.

Ensure site design and land use decisions don’t exacerbate traffic congestion.

Closely examine access management issues when approving new development and explore ways to address access management issues for existing development.

Require appropriate paving widths for the function of the road, neither too wide nor too narrow.

Improve road signage with the use of advance signing, larger sign lettering, better lighting, and more highway identification signs.

Provide adequate on and off-street facilities and utilize traffic-calming techniques to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Expand and improve public transportation to encourage increased utilization.

Install bike racks and other bike facilities on METRO buses and at major destinations.

Establish Safe Routes to School pilot program(s) in Summit County.

Planned pedestrian walkways, trails and bikeways should be provided for in new developments and an overall plan devised to link them.

**SUMMARY**

The Summit County General Land Use Development Plan is meant to guide the decision-making process with respect to growth management and related development issues. The Plan represents a framework for action, as set forth in the Implementation Strategies as listed above, and at the end of each Chapter.

The expected total lifespan of the Plan may be twenty years; however, during intervening years certain components should be revised and updated. For example, it is recommended that Summit County adopt a County Thoroughfare Plan. As elements are reviewed and adopted, the General Plan can be amended to include these elements.

It is the responsibility of the policy makers in the County to address and implement the goals and objectives. At the County level, the County Executive and County Council, the Planning
Commission, the County Engineer, Environmental Services, the Health District, the Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Building Department, are some of the key departments and agencies that play a role in the execution of the Plan.

The municipalities and townships in the County, however, have a part in the implementation of the Plan as well. There should be a bottom-up approach to growth management, with the Summit County General Land Use Development Plan being a framework for discussion and general guidance on development issues. In addition, the Summit County General Land Use Development Plan may be a catalyst for local communities to review and update their land use plans. Such plans should complement the recommendations set forth in the County General Land Use Development Plan.

The following summary is offered for review.

**General Recommendations**

**Redirect and Concentrate Development:** The plan seeks to guide future high-density development to the urban centers and villages to reduce the overall amount of land consumed by development. The result may be savings in land otherwise developed, less intra-county sprawl, and reduced public expenditures for infrastructure.

**Encourage Economic Development:** The need for a strong and diverse local economy should be recognized as integral to the plan. Economic considerations should be integrated into the various elements of the plan.

**Plan for Future Parks Needs:** Preserve open space that can be used and developed for passive and active recreational opportunities. As the County develops there will be a need for more park and community facilities.

**Utilize more Innovative Development Patterns:** It is recommended that communities develop plans which integrate “smart growth” principles in all development programs to increase opportunities for walking, bicycling and transit use. Create transportation options by mixing development and land uses within existing downtowns and new town centers. Make positive public health impacts a priority in land-use planning and development decision making. Utilize innovative development patterns such as open space conservation development, compact and mixed use development and transit oriented development design. Coordinate thoroughfare planning in harmony with desired land use patterns.

**Coordinate Infrastructure Expansion:** The relationship between water and sewer service extension and land use development patterns must be coordinated to implement Smart Growth principles.

**Specific Objectives**

The planning process is dynamic an ongoing. The next phase of the comprehensive planning process will concentrate on specific plans for three crucial elements needed to control and direct growth:
1). Sewer system infrastructure expansion and extension

2). County thoroughfare planning

3). County open space plan

**Sewer System Planning:** Develop goals, objectives, priorities and strategies for sewer system expansion and infrastructure extension as a guide to future land use development in cooperation with the Summit County Department of Environmental Services.

**County Thoroughfare Plan:** Assist the Summit County Engineer to develop a County Thoroughfare Plan which designates road classifications in harmony with desired land use patterns.

**Open Space Planning:** In the General Plan’s Natural Resources Chapter there are areas that are identified as being ecologically important within the County. More work should be done to identify these and other significant natural resource areas as part of developing an overall Open Space Plan for the County.