

LOCAL

There have been several events in the past few years that have brought people together to focus on changing land use patterns. Several have been held in our region, and others have occurred at the state level. The concern with the conversion of rural lands to urban and suburban uses is nationwide. In this section, we provide a brief description of recent local and state events and activities, and a sample of activities in other states and of national programs that influence land use patterns in Northwest Ohio.

The Northwest Ohio Managing Change Conference was held in Deshler in March 1995. Attended by over 200 people, the conference featured ten speakers who addressed topics including, "The Tools of Farmland Preservation," "Planning for Orderly Growth," and "Rural Open-Space Residential Communities."



In November 1996, the Farm-City Forum held an event entitled, "Whose Land Is It, Anyway? Public Needs Versus Private Rights" at Lourdes College in Sylvania, in which 16 speakers addressed topics ranging from the economic pressures of development to the highest and best use of the land. Attendance exceeded 250.

In May 1997, the newly-formed Black Swamp Conservancy sponsored its first educational event, a talk by James Howard Kunstler (author of Geography of Nowhere and Home from Nowhere) and Robin Green, the developer of an innovative environmentally-sensitive development west of Columbus. About 200 attended. This was followed by a conference on "Options for the Preservation of the Family Farm" in November (see page 48, "Competition for land rooted in population" by Julie Carle, *Sentinel-Tribune* article, November 6, 1997).



In 1996, the Governor's Farmland Preservation Task Force was formed to study the loss of agricultural lands in Ohio. The Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG), in cooperation with the Northwest Ohio Managing Change Coalition and the Farm-City Forum, arranged for one of the task force's public hearings to be held in Toledo on February 18, 1997. Over 200 attended, and 36 people provided testimony to the task force. TMACOG adopted a resolution on October 15th urging the Governor and the General Assembly of Ohio to address the land use and economic development needs of rural, suburban, and urban Ohio (see page 42, *TMACOG Resolution*).

In the summer and fall of 1997, TMACOG invited participation in the development of its 10-year strategic plan. Adopted in January 1998, the plan contains a land use element calling for the development of a regional strategy on land use and establishes a Growth Strategy Council to facilitate that process. Also, the Action Group on Open Space and Wetlands Protection of the Maumee River Remedial Action Plan (Maumee RAP) continues to meet monthly and work on numerous educational and preservation projects. Other action groups include agricultural runoff, the Ottawa River, and Swan Creek.

STATEWIDE

Lucas, Wood, and Fulton County are engaged in revisions of their comprehensive plans. The Toledo Metroparks levy passed by a large margin on November 4, 1997. On October 5, 1997, the Wood County Park District opened its new W.W. Knight Nature Preserve in Perrysburg Township. That District will place its levy on the ballot in May 1998.

At each of these local activities, speakers and members of the audience have called for increasing public awareness of land use issues and policies. Event evaluations and follow-up questionnaires have indicated a desire for more information on landowner options, practical methods for local officials to control sprawl, ideas for long-term environmental and economic sustainability, family farm preservation, lot size regulatory reform, zoning, and the costs of converting rural land to suburban use. This feedback led to the development of this directory.

Beginning with a Southwest Ohio event in 1994, Managing Change groups were formed in several regions of the state. Managing Change conferences were held in Dayton in 1994, and in Deshler, Kent, and Columbus in 1995. Members of each group met at Otterbein College during 1995, 1996, and 1997 to exchange news and ideas, and to discuss what state-level policies and assistance would best improve the ability to guide growth at the local level.

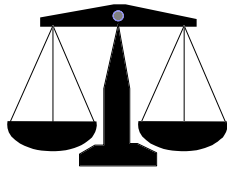
As mentioned, the Governor appointed 21 people to serve on the Farmland Preservation Task Force in 1996. The task force studied the issue over the course of the year and held hearings across the state. Its recommendations were released in June 1997. One result has been the establishment of the Office of Farmland Preservation within the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Legislation based on the task force recommendations was introduced (HB 645 - Farmland Preservation - Krebs) in December 1997 and is in the Local Governments and Townships committee. Another bill was introduced in February 1998 (SB 223 - Conservation Easements - Drake) dealing specifically with the conservation easements portion of the task force recommendations and was referred to the Senate Ways and Means committee.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) sponsored a Comparative Risk project during 1995, which combined scientific and technical analyses with the risk perceptions and concerns of Ohio citizens. One finding of this project was that Ohioans were very concerned about changing land use patterns. In response, OEPA



and OSU Extension sponsored a 2-day conference in March 1997, "Growth and the Future: A Land Use Conference for All of Ohio," that featured numerous perspectives on agriculture, the environment, development, planning, and the needs at the local, municipal, and regional levels to address land use issues. At this conference, a meeting was held to discuss the possibility of a state-wide advocacy coalition modeled along the lines of growth management groups in states such as Oregon, Florida, Maryland, Wisconsin, and Colorado. A non-profit organization called "Ohioans for Smart Growth" was incorporated at the end of the year.





One of the biggest statewide issues to emerge in 1997 was the need for school finance reform, made clear by the Ohio Supreme Court decision on March 24. Related to this ruling is the study of Ohio's economic development programs and activities, in particular to learn the impact of programs aimed at luring industries and aiding the expansion of businesses on school districts and local governments. The Urban Center at Cleveland State University has been selected to conduct the study, which is due to be completed by November 1998. The study will address the Enterprise Zone program and other programs, including Community Reinvestment Areas, Job Creation Tax Credits, Machinery and Equipment Tax Credits, 166 Regional and Direct Loan Programs, 629 Roadwork Development Grants, 412 Business Development Grants, and Ohio Industrial Training Grants. The preliminary findings were presented to the Senate's Economic Development, Technology & Aerospace Committee in February 1998.

OUTSIDE OHIO

One impetus for state and local interest in developing farmland preservation programs is contained in the 1996 Farm Bill. Through a Farmland Protection Program, the bill provides matching money for states and regions that have established farmland preservation programs such as purchase of development rights (PDR) and other measures. Toledo-area U.S. Representative Marcy Kaptur, who testified on behalf of farmland preservation at the Governor's Task Force public hearing in Toledo, is strongly encouraging regional action to take advantage of this program (*see page 39, "Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur's Testimony Before the Ohio Farmland Preservation Task Force"*).

One of the most prominent national nonprofit organizations involved in farmland and open space protection is the American Farmland Trust (AFT), which sponsors research and publications, encourages development of farmland protection policies and programs. AFT opened an Ohio office in Columbus in November 1997.

As mentioned, several other states have groups that promote growth management legislation and programs. One of the most experienced is 1000 Friends of Oregon, which is given much of the credit for the implementation of the urban growth boundary. Groups in Maryland have encouraged the development of the recent "Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative" in their state. For more information on state growth management initiatives see *Highlights of State Efforts Towards Growth Management - Excerpts* starting on page 24.

The following sections contain a directory of contacts in northwest Ohio, commonly used preservation tools, discussions, studies and reports of issues related to land use changes in Northwest Ohio and elsewhere.

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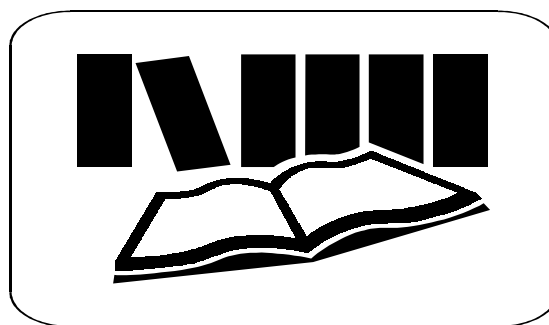
- a) Center for Governmental Research & Public Service (CGRPS), Bowling Green State University
- b) Ohio State University - C. William Swank Chair in Urban & Rural Policy
- c) OSU Extension - Community Development
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