Land Use Tools for Small Towns & Rural Areas

Ohio Department of Health
Creating Healthy Communities Webinar Series
Wednesday May 22, 10:00 – 11:00
Agenda

- Introductions
- Upcoming Events
- Land Use and Health 101 Recap
- What Is Rural?
- Land Use Tools for Small Towns & Rural Areas
- Implementation
- Q&A
Introductions

Presenter: Wendy Phelps, AICP
Project Planner, Toole Design Group
Funding Support

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity
Upcoming Events

Webinars
- June 13 – Urban land use policies and public health outcomes

Workshops
- June 19 – Dayton
- July 23 – Marietta
- August – Lima
- August – Central Ohio
- September – Southern Ohio
Land Use and Health Best Practices Report

- Land use 101
- Ohio case studies
- Implementation toolkit
- Equity considerations
Did you attend the first Land Use 101 webinar?

Go to menti.com and use the code 26 45 40

Remember to click “submit” when your response is ready
Land Use for Small Towns and Rural Communities
Land use is the practice of how communities manage and modify their physical space. Its main purpose is to ensure a community’s economic, social, and environmental strength.
In Ohio, land use is the responsibility of village, township, city, or county governments.

Decisions about land use are often made as part of an extensive public process with input from community members.
Recap from Webinar #1
Land Use 101

- Land use policies can determine where different kinds of activities, such as living, working, and recreating, best fit in a community.
- These policies can also regulate how buildings and sites should be laid out and configured.
The Intersection of Land Use and Public Health

- Land use planning is a crucial opportunity for local governments to shape public health outcomes.
- It shapes the way that people live, what forms of transportation are available to them, and what amenities they can access.
Land use contexts

- **Suburban**
  - Areas outside large or medium-sized cities

- **Small Town/Rural**
  - Small towns, villages, isolated development

- **Urban**
  - Large or medium-sized cities
## Health issues in different land use contexts

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<th>Common Health Challenges</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Small Town/Rural</th>
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The Intersection of Land Use and Public Health

- Land use can also affect environmental health
- Allowing noxious land uses to locate near developed areas can cause major hazards to community and environmental health
What type of community do you live in?

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What Is Rural?

Agriculture

Natural resources

Small towns

Ohio Farm Bureau

DNR

Flickr-Jon Dawson
Definitions

- **US Census** – Areas with less than 500 people/mi²; places with fewer than 2,500 people

- **USDA** – Metro/micro/non-metro counties, based on regional-economic model
In the United States

Counties

Population

Land Area

Majority of U.S. counties are rural, especially in the Midwest

59.9 million (2010 Census)

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of National Center for Health Statistics Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties.

Rural

Urban
In Ohio

Counties

Population

Land Area

2.4 million (USDA)

[Map showing counties and population distribution]

[Pie chart showing land area distribution]

Rural
Urban
What are the challenges for small towns and rural communities?

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Rural Challenges

- Aging Population
  - In 2010, one-quarter of all Americans age 65 or older lived in small towns and rural communities
  - Aging in place can be difficult in regions where services are spread out and there are few alternatives to private vehicles

- AARP
Rural Challenges

Percentage of Population with a Disability

Chronic Disease Death Rate

Age-Adjusted Rate of Deaths from Chronic Diseases
- 360.8 - 467.9
- 468.0 - 506.8
- 506.9 - 558.5
- 558.6 - 678.8
Rural Challenges

- Physical Barriers
  - Hilly terrain
    - Steep grades, winding roads
  - Waterways
    - Few crossings/limited connectivity
  - Active rail lines
    - Difficult/unsafe to cross
  - Rural highways
    - Limited access ROW
    - No bike/ped access, limited crossings
Rural Challenges

Low-Density Development Patterns

Auto-Oriented Transportation Networks

Provision of Public Services
Rural Challenges

- Impacts from Productive Lands
  - Noise
  - Air pollution
  - Water pollution
What are the benefits or strengths of small towns and rural communities?

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Rural Strengths

- Vibrant Communities
  - Social and Cultural Resources
  - Sense of Place
  - Community Pride

Historic Downtown Millersburg
Rural Strengths

- Tourism / Recreation
  - Destination for outdoor activities
  - Agritourism
  - Cultural Trails
Rural Strengths

- Economically Attractive
  - Availability of land and resources
  - Affordable

Four Seasons Land Co.
Rural Strengths

- Environmental benefits
  - Source of food
  - Carbon sink
  - Protect water quality
3 Goals Of Rural Land Use Practices

Preserve the rural landscape
Help existing places thrive
Create great new places
Land Use Tools For Small Towns and Rural Areas

- Comprehensive Plan
- Land Use Planning
- Zoning
- Design Standards
Comprehensive Plan

Economic Development

Land Use

Future Needs
Urban Growth Areas
District Plans

Capital Facilities

Water
Sewer
Parks
Fire District
Stormwater
Schools

Housing

Demographics
Inventory
Affordable Housing
Housing Forms

Utilities

Electricity
Natural Gas
Telecommunications

Transportation

Inventory
Forecasts
Systems
Financing
Projects

City of Ferndale, WA
Knox County Example

- Major Themes
  - Ensure responsible growth
  - Prioritize education
  - Strengthen quality of life
  - Preserve environmental character
- Financial assistance for plan development
Land Use Planning

- How communities manage and modify their physical space
- Residential, commercial, industrial, and other broad categories form the basis of land use
- Classify existing developments, and may also guide future growth
Subdivision

- Refers to the division of land
- Subdivision regulations ensure adequate provision of access, streets, storm and wastewater facilities, utilities, and other critical infrastructure
Zoning

- Regulates the intensity of a particular existing land use and carries the force of law
- Used to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of residents
Zoning in Ohio

- Land use is responsibility of townships, with assistance from counties
  - 59% of townships use zoning (2003)
- Townships can consider the adoption of zoning by a majority vote from residents
- Citizen support or opposition for zoning was the #1 factor
Does your community have zoning?

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Zoning Tools: Agricultural/Conservation Districts

Agricultural Zoning Districts
- Prohibit all non-agricultural uses to preserve agricultural landscape
- Can reduce nuisance complaints from non-compatible uses

Conservation Zoning
- Protects open space while permitting concentrated development in certain areas
Zoning Tools: Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

- Protects one area of undeveloped land by transferring rights to develop to another area.
- Developers who purchase rights are allowed to build at higher densities in areas where development is desired.
Zoning Tools: Planned Unit Developments (PUD)

- Can be used to concentrate development in growth areas and preserve open space
- Allow more flexibility in allowable land uses and design than traditional zoning or subdivision regulations
- PUDs are often used for large areas that are master-planned by single or multiple property owners or developers
Zoning Tools: Historic Preservation Districts

- Used to protect aesthetics of neighborhoods without dictating allowed uses
- Development proposals go through an architectural review process to ensure designs fit the character of existing structures

City of Hudson, OH
Zoning Tools: Development Standards & Guidelines

- Complement existing comprehensive plans or zoning ordinances
- Apply on public and private projects
- Design Guidelines Example: Essence of Athens
  - Design inspirations
  - Sets expectations
  - Celebration of Athens
Implementation
Do your research

- Does your community/county have a comprehensive plan?
- When was it last updated?
- Which townships or villages have zoning?
- When does the planning commission meet?
Build relationships between public health and land use officials

- Meet them where they are and find common ground
- Speak the language of land use
- Become an expert they trust
Regional Transportation Planning Organizations

- Funded by ODOT to conduct regional transportation planning in coordination with local stakeholders, Ohio MPOs, and ODOT
- Six organizations cover 41 non-metropolitan counties in Ohio
Influence the locations of community facilities

- Investments in public facilities represent one of the largest capital outlays that many local governments make.
- Integrating public facility planning with broader community plans, visions and goals can benefit the environment, health and well-being in many ways.
Webinar #1 Recap
4 Principles for Designing for Health

- Design to increase physical activity
- Design for mental health
- Design for children
- Design for environmental justice
Marion YMCA

- Old location on East Church Street
- New location is ~3 miles outside of town, limited sidewalk network
- Members now rely on on-demand transit to access classes and services that were once accessible in town
OU Proctorville

- Campus located about ½ mile outside of town
- No sidewalks, bike lanes or wide shoulders for active transportation
- Lacking neighborhood connections
Campbell’s Market, McArther

- No grocery store in Vinton County since 2013
- Residents would drive 30+ miles for fresh food
- Market opened with assistance from the Healthy Food for Ohio initiative
Resources

Essence of Athens

Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes

Model County Subdivision Regulations

Ohio’s Regional Transportation Planning Organizations
- http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/SPR/StatewidePlanning/Pages/RTPO.aspx

Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities
- https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/putting-smart-growth-work-rural-communities
Thanks! Questions?

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