

The *Comprehensive Plan* includes a broad range of proposals for the future improvement and development of our community. We seek to enhance the quality of life for both existing and future citizens of our community, by improving our existing built-up areas and by assuring that new developed areas appropriately accommodate anticipated population growth.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The implementation of these proposals will result in unavoidable impacts on the environment, the significance of which will depend on one's definition of environment. For instance, if we restrict the assessment to include only impacts on the natural environment, there is little hope that the character and quality of the soil, grass, trees, rocks, streams, air or sunshine will be enhanced by the construction of new homes, schools, parks, roads, stores or industries. How do we minimize the environmental impact of urbanization?

ALTERNATIVE GROWTH POLICIES

"No-growth" is impractical

The only urbanization policy remotely consistent with a minimum impact on the natural environment would be a "no-growth" policy, which might be reasonable if our nation's population level and movement were to stabilize. But this policy is impractical so long as our nation is ever growing and mobile. Many communities must continue to accommodate urban growth. Our community generally believes that urban growth should be accommodated and that appropriate growth means progress for Owensboro, Whitesville and Daviess County. If we are to accommodate the needs of a growing population, and better serve the vital needs of an existing population, we must expand and alter our urban areas. This will necessarily impact both the natural and built environments.

Therefore, for the present and foreseeable future, a real world environmental assessment must deal with the most appropriate means for accommodating growth by expanding and improving our built environment without doing irreparable damage to the natural environment.

"Unplanned growth" is unacceptable

One growth alternative is "unplanned growth." This is a decidedly negative policy and in the past has led to adverse impacts on both the natural and built environments. Growth without regard for community planning and environmental standards has been one the major causes of polluted streams, unsafe highways, inappropriate use of septic tanks, strip commercial development, and urban sprawl. Growth without plans reduces the livability of our built environment and the quality of our natural environment, and we deem it unacceptable for the future of our community.

"Planned growth" is our best hope

Therefore, Owensboro, Whitesville and Daviess County citizens have chosen the only remaining, logical alternative: a policy of "planned growth." By anticipating population growth, we can adopt and implement community plans and environmental standards to guide where and how urban development and enhancement occur. Community planning provides our best hope of accommodating the necessities of urban living -- streets, housing, schools, parks, business centers, industrial sites, etc. --

while striving for the best possible long-term compatibility between the natural and built environments.

PLANNED GROWTH MINIMIZES IMPACT

Under the planned growth approach, we have established land development policies to minimize long-term impacts on the natural and built environments. Fragile areas of the environment (flood plains, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.) are either recommended for no urban-type uses or for limited, appropriate urbanization.

Agricultural and other natural areas of our county are recommended for maintenance, by encouraging higher density urban growth to occur within the Owensboro Urban Service Area and Whitesville Growth Area, and limiting the rural areas of Daviess County to lower intensity development, concentrated near established Rural Communities. This concept of concentrating urban development, and discouraging leap-frog and sprawling types of growth, provides more efficient containment of sanitary sewage disposal and storm water runoff, which could otherwise harm the natural environment and create unhealthy living conditions. It also encourages the conservation of fuel, energy and movement.

From the standpoint of the environmental quality of existing and future urban areas, the plan encourages the intensity and character of new development or redevelopment in each area to be compatible with the pattern of existing area development, and with the level of urban services available or planned within the area. All proposed sites for community facilities are located to be convenient and accessible to the majority of persons being served.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL CONTROLS

Most of the federal and state constraints that apply to physical proposals in this plan pertain to water and air pollution, noise control, historic preservation, wetlands protection, and major highway improvements. Generally, similar constraints also apply to agricultural and natural resource practices. We encourage all development, agricultural, and natural resource practices to be consistent with the objectives and requirements of these laws and their administrative regulations, as discussed in Section 430: Land Development Policies. For information regarding these programs, refer to the appropriate sections of Part 600: Community Facilities and Part 700: Environment.

Local and state controls that are administered primarily at the local level also apply to the maintenance of environmental quality. They regulate the purposes for which land and buildings may be used; establish minimum standards for development, buildings and property maintenance; and limit the creation of environmental nuisances and hazards. They include:

- ◆ Zoning Ordinance
- ◆ Land Subdivision Regulations
- ◆ Public Improvement Specifications
- ◆ Access Management Manual (driveway spacing on streets)
- ◆ Building, electrical, plumbing, housing, and property maintenance codes
- ◆ Nuisance codes (noise and other hazards)
- ◆ Onsite sanitary sewage disposal regulations
- ◆ Other public health codes