

**Walnut Creek Watershed Planning Partnership
Meeting of Wednesday, February 9, 2011
Canal Winchester Community Center
22 South Trine Street
Canal Winchester, OH 43110
Meeting Summary**

Steering Committee Meeting Attendees:

Partner Communities

John Reef, Greenfield Township
Eric Sandine, Lithopolis
Brian Baker, Madison Township (Pickaway)
Andrew Dutton, Canal Winchester
Brenda VanCleave, Pickerington
Matt Brown, Franklin County EDP
William Yaple, Violet Township
Larry Craig, Carroll
Susan Crotty, Pickerington
Gary Weltlich, Violet Township

Stakeholders

Holly Mattei, Fairfield County Regional Planning
James Mako, Fairfield County Regional Planning
Richard Miller, Canal Winchester
Kelly Thiel, Division of Surface Water
Gary Bumpus, Canal Winchester Street Tree Board
Jill Snyder, Metro Parks
Kim Martin, Metro Parks
Max A. Luehrs, Walnut Action Group
Judy White, Southeast Community Coalition
Jeff Anderson, POD Design
Vicki Garrett
Ruth Palmer

MORPC Staff

Joseph Kitchen, Associate Planner
Erin Grushon, Associate Planner
Brandi Whetstone, Outreach Coordinator

For the most up to date information including the next meeting date, time and location, previous meeting slides and minutes, please visit our website at <http://balancedgrowthplanning.morpc.org> and click on your watershed.

Joe welcomed the Walnut Creek Planning Partnership (WCPP) to the February meeting. Joe discussed the overarching timeline for the project and explained that the partnership would need to vote to adopt the Priority Area criteria list at this meeting so that MORPC could begin creating the draft Priority Area maps for the Walnut Creek Balanced Growth Plan communities. Joe also noted that this is only the beginning of the discussion and communities will have the opportunity to review the draft maps and suggest revisions. Attendees were also reminded that we would be hosting an educational opportunity after the business meeting and Brandi Whetstone provided a brief overview of the planned education session. Next, the partnership proceeded with a round of introductions.

Joe briefly reviewed key elements of the Balanced Growth Planning process, highlighting the goals and definitions that had been adopted by the Walnut Creek Planning Partnership at a previous partnership meeting. Joe then discussed how the Priority Area criteria would be used to create the initial maps for the Walnut Creek Balanced Growth Plans, explaining that MORPC staff would conduct a technical analysis using GIS software and the criteria list the partnership adopted. The analysis would score every parcel in the watershed based on each of the 3 criteria lists (PCA criteria, PDA criteria, and PAA criteria). High scoring areas would be highlighted as Priority Areas on the draft maps. Joe reminded the group that each community would have an opportunity to review the draft maps and make changes. He also explained that there is a little bit of flexibility built into the weighting system. The partnership has established weights (low, medium, or high) for each criterion. Those weights will be translated into scores ranging from 1-3 for criteria weighted low, 4-6 for criteria weighted medium, and 7-9 for criteria weighted high. Initially, MORPC's technical staff will use the middle of each scoring range (2 for low, 5 for medium, and 8 for high). However, if the maps need some adjustment, we may ask the Walnut Creek Steering Committee to meet again to review the progress and to assist MORPC staff in adjusting the individual scores within the established scoring ranges. All of the criteria would maintain scores within the range related to the weight established by the partnership. For example, the Steering Committee could suggest changing the score of a criterion weighted as medium from 5 to 6, but could not change the score to anything in the low (1-3) or high (7-9) ranges. Joe noted that this process is slightly different than what we used in the Olentangy watershed, but should help us avoid some of the initial problems we had with the Olentangy maps and should prevent us from having to bring together the full partnership multiple times to make minor tweaks during the analysis.

The group moved on to review, discuss, and adopt the recommended criteria list. Joe started by pulling up the PCA criteria list recommended by the Walnut Creek Planning Partnership at their last meeting. He mentioned that we were unable to get data on the 500 year floodplain and the floodway for the entire planning area, but that we were able to get data for all of the other recommended PCA criteria. Joe asked the meeting attendees if they were comfortable with the recommended criteria list. A participant suggested changing the stream buffers weight from medium to high. Others in the room agreed and the change was made.

There was a question raised by a partner about how the recommended 100' stream buffer was decided and whether there was a total buffer of 100' or 100' on either side of the river. Joe answered that the 100' buffer was recommended by the WCPP steering committee. Also, it was noted that the buffer would be 100' on each side of the river. The same participant asked if we could include calculated riparian buffers instead of the stream buffer because the calculated riparian buffers would be more precise. Unfortunately, MORPC does not have the staff capacity to calculate riparian buffers for the entire planning area for this project. A participant also voiced a concern that the buffers will pick up entire parcels even if only a small portion of the parcel is in the buffer area. Joe agreed that this is a possibility and indicated that partners would have the chance to make adjustments to the maps during the local review process.

The partnership group also discussed the recommended 500' buffer for scenic roads and decided that the buffer was too large. The partners decided to instead use a buffer of 1 foot (or all parcels adjacent to scenic roads).

The partnership moved on to view and discuss the recommended PDA criteria. Joe told the group that the MORPC technical staff had suggested separating out the different types of major roads and applying a smaller buffer to collectors than to the arterials and weighting the two types of roads differently. Attendees agreed with this suggestion. Joe also mentioned that the GIS technical staff recommended an additional potential criterion that we have data for. The suggested criterion was improvement to land value ratios of less than 1 within urbanized area. This criterion, if adopted, would give additional consideration to vacant or underutilized land within urbanized areas. A participant agreed with this suggestion, noting that the more criteria we have, the more specific the maps will be which will simplify the review process. Others in the audience also agree and decided to include the suggested criterion and give it a low weight.

One participant raised a concern about too much land getting picked up, due to the major roads criteria, in their rural community. Joe noted that, during the review process, communities could remove Priority Development Areas without providing any justification.

The group then moved on to view and discuss the PAA criteria list recommended by the Walnut Creek partnership at the last meeting. Joe mentioned to the group that MORPC staff had been working to come up with additional potential PAA criteria in order to be able to conduct a better analysis. The MORPC technical staff found data for century farms, which are farms that have been in the same family for 100 years and had applied for "century farm" status. Joe asked the group if they wanted to include this additional criterion. The participants said that they did want to include century farms and wanted to give them a medium weight. The group also discussed the possibility of separating out the combined criterion of Agricultural Districts (ADs) and ASAs, but ultimately decided to leave them together. The group also agreed to weight the ADs and ASAs criterion lower than the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP) because ADs and ASAs are temporary and AEPP is a permanent designation.

Joe asked if anyone had any additional comments or questions regarding the recommended criteria list and there were none. Eric Sandrine made a motion to adopt the criteria list, as modified during the February 9th, 2011 full Walnut Creek Planning Partnership meeting. Matt Brown seconded the motion and the criteria list was unanimously adopted.

Joe briefly reviewed the next steps, explaining that MORPC would analyze the criteria the partnership adopted using GIS and create draft maps for local review. Joe also mentioned that MORPC would plan a public meeting in the future to allow for public review and gather some initial public feedback. Joe noted that participants at the public meeting would not be viewing community scale maps, but would be looking at more generalized maps of the full watershed. Brandi Whetstone, the Outreach Coordinator for the Balanced Growth Plans, also mentioned that partnership members should let us know if there are specific individuals or groups who should be invited to the public meeting so that we can make sure to add them to our contact list.

Joe reminded the meeting attendees that they were invited to stay for the Watersheds 101 presentation directly following this meeting to learn more about the Walnut Creek watershed. The Walnut Creek Planning Partnership meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.