Environmental Health
Action Team

ACTION PLAN

Plan Review September 10, 2007
HEALTH: a state of complete well-being, physical, social and mental - not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
PUBLIC HEALTH and PLANNING – renewing an old connection with public health, safety and welfare. Environmental Health Action Team at the cutting edge.
EHAT

- Formed as part of Blount County Community Health Initiative – partnership of Chamber of Commerce, Health Department and Blount Memorial Hospital.
- Action Teams formed to address priority issues.
- Environmental Health was one priority issue identified in community dialog.
EHAT

- Used Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE/EH) to identify and address priority environmental health issues – including a community survey.

- Grant from National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

- Volunteer effort over five years.
EHAT

- Three priority issues identified –
  1) air quality,
  2) water quality, and
  3) land use, growth and development.

- Subgroups gathered information, assessed situation, and formulated action plans to address environmental health issues.

Land Use, Growth and Development
Action Plan

8 Sub-issues
Growth and Sprawl Issue

- Scattered and dispersed pattern of development
- Separation of uses
- Linked to lack of exercise (walking and biking)
- Consequent issues of weight gain linked to health problems – heart disease, diabetes, cancer
Growth and Sprawl Standards

- Less sprawl is better than more sprawl
- New development should be concentrated in and around the urban center of Maryville and Alcoa (UGB)
- Track subdivision approvals and building permits
Growth and Sprawl Action Plan

- Review 1101 Growth Plan for appropriateness.
- Encourage urban development concentration.
- Discourage rural development dispersion.
- Map and track development over time.
- Cities and County work together to address growth and sprawl.
Loss of Rural Land Issue

- No consensus on links to health
- Depends on possible psychological link
- No clear and definitive link in research
- Implied health linkages were based more on personal values and preferences than on objective health outcomes
Loss of Rural Land Standards

- Less loss of rural land – likely to occur if sprawl standard is met
- Program to preserve rural land would address issue directly
- Track subdivision approvals and building permits
- Track rural acres directly preserved
Loss of Rural Land Action Plan

- Identify measures to directly preserve rural land.
- Encourage and support public and private efforts to preserve rural land.
- Increase awareness on programs and incentives to preserve rural land.
- Map and track rural land conversions to development, and rural land preserved.
- Consider also preservation of rural land as part of quality of life and environmental concerns.
Roads and Traffic Issue

- Supported by existing research (AASHTO)
- An inadequate or unsafe road with growing traffic can lead to both automobile and pedestrian accidents resulting in bodily injury and death
- Much growth in the county spreads onto once rural roads that are inadequate for new urban and suburban development
Roads and Traffic Standards

- Minimum 18 feet of pavement with 2 foot shoulders – Blount County Planning Commission
- Greater width and shoulders for major roads in proportion to traffic as identified in the Blount County Roadway Needs Study (2000 and 2004).
Roads and Traffic Action Plan

- Improve deficient roads.
- Apply sound engineering standards for safe roads.
- Address also pedestrian and bicycle safety.
Air Quality Issue

- Increased use of automobiles related to growth and sprawl
- Automobiles linked to air pollution
- Air pollution – ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter - linked to respiratory health problems and heart disease
- Air Quality Subgroup to address indicators and standards
Air Quality Action Plan **

- Support actions recommended by EHAT Air Quality Subgroup **.
- Assess development pattern to determine measures to decrease total vehicle miles traveled.
- Encourage and support programs that will reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Include air quality considerations in land use plans.
Water Quality Issue

- Most development on private septic tank and leach field
- Failing septic systems can lead to exposure to disease causing pathogens
- About 200 septic systems fail each year
- Water Quality Subgroup to address indicators and standards
Water Quality Action Plan**

- Support actions recommended by the EHAT Water Quality Subgroup **.
- Reduce pollution load in 303(d) listed impaired streams to remove them from the list.
- Support activities of the Little River Watershed Restoration Initiative and other watershed improvement activities.
- Continue implementation of the Stormwater Phase 2 program.
- Review regulations and permit procedures to better address water quality issues.
Commercial & Industrial Use Issue

- Intensive land use – can have external effects on nearby residential uses – stress factors
- Industrial uses can lead to exposure to hazardous chemicals
Commercial & Industrial Use Standards

- In relation to sprawl, clustering of commercial and industrial use in the cities where urban services are present.
- In relation to community design, greater pedestrian and bicycle access to neighborhood commercial uses, implying a greater integration of commercial and residential uses.
- In relation to external impacts, regulatory measures to reduce the impact of commercial/industrial uses on neighboring residential uses.
Commercial & Industrial Use
Action Plan

- Encourage urban development concentration and integration of commercial with residential development.
- Review plans and regulations to provide pedestrian and bicycle linkage between residential and commercial areas.
- Identify measures to reduce the impact of commercial and industrial development on residential areas.
Development Design Issue

- Preference for cluster (village) design with green or open space
- Integration of sidewalks and trails for exercise (walking and biking)
- Better design of developments can at least provide the opportunity for a more active and healthy lifestyle, and can provide opportunities for relieving the stresses of urban and suburban living
Development Design Standards

- Traditional Neighborhood Development and New Urbanism design models
- Direct requirement of open space set asides and pedestrian/bicycle improvements in new developments
- Integration with a plan for community wide open space and recreation
Development Design Action Plan

- Incorporate innovative development design and practice into regulations.
- Integrate open space and pedestrian/bicycle improvements into new development.
- Integrate a plan for community wide open space and recreation into existing plans.
Tree Preservation Issue

- Some possible long term links to health from global warming – fewer trees leads to lesser carbon dioxide sequestration
- Immediate links to heat island effects of impervious surfaces – trees can provide shade to cool surfaces and mitigate ozone formation
Tree Preservation Standards

- No net loss of trees in conversion of land to urban and suburban development
- Tree replacement regulations (City of Alcoa model)
- Add more tree cover in areas of impervious surface
- Reforestation after harvesting
- Tree City USA Program – tree board; tree care ordinance; community forestry program; and arbor day observance and proclamation
Tree Preservation Action Plan

- Adopt Tree City USA programs for all jurisdictions.
- Adopt regulations to preserve tree cover, and integrate landscape trees into commercial development.
- Increase tree cover in built-up urban areas.
- Encourage best management practice in tree harvesting.
Air Quality
Action Plan
Ozone and Particulate Matter
Pollution.

- Conduct co-relation study between pollution levels and emergency pulmonary health outcomes.
- Identify what others are doing to address air pollution locally and support such actions.
- Regularly exchange information and data with the Regional Clean Air Coalition (RCAC).
Educate at-risk populations, such as those with lung or heart disease, on personal behavior during air quality alert days.

Raise community awareness about air quality.

Continue support of Blount County’s Air Fest activities.

Support air quality recommendations of the EHAT Land Use Subgroup.
Water Quality
Action Plan
Failing Septic Systems

- Continue current protocol for failing septic systems.
- Provide financial assistance to low-income families for septic system repair.
- Follow current county standards for septic system lot size requirements.
- Form a County Wastewater Board for oversight of sewer utilities outside municipal systems.
Pollution of Water Wells

- Provide educational materials on well maintenance and safety for those on well water.
- Maintain well water database created by the EHAT/Water Quality Subgroup.
- Publish information on well maintenance in Daily Times and county website.
Sewer Overflows

- Continue sewer rehabilitation and maintenance program in Alcoa and Maryville.
- Follow state-approved (TDEC) response plan for sanitary sewer overflow incidents.
- Submit yearly overflow data to the county director of environmental health.
Water Contact Advisories

- Continue advisories for water bodies where contact and/or consumption of fish would be unhealthy.
Impaired Streams

- Add all stream miles in the county for testing under the 305 (b) report: The Status of Water Quality in Tennessee.
- Fully implement Phase 2 of the county’s Storm Water Program.
- Encourage and provide incentives for adoption of best management practices for water quality in farming operations.
- Provide homeowner education on water quality issues.
- Target one stream in the county for an intensive mitigation program every three years.
Bacteria at Intake of Utility Water

- Submit yearly E. coli results from water system intake tests to the county director of environmental health.
General Water Quality

- Fully implement the Little River Watershed Restoration Initiative.
- Create, update and distribute an Annual Water Quality Report for Blount County.
- Support water quality recommendations of the EHAT Land Use Subgroup.
Who Will Git-R-Done?

- EHAT
- City and County Governments
- Individuals
- Ad Hoc and Interest Groups
- Civic Groups
- Business and Industries
- BUILD ON WHAT WE HAVE
Questions?

Comments