

**Little Cuyahoga River
Balanced Growth Plan Meeting**
Friday, March 22, 2013

Goodyear Branch Library
60 Goodyear Boulevard
Akron, OH 44305

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions; Eric Akin - NEFCO

- The meeting began with a review of what was covered at the February meeting.
- Introduction of all meeting attendees.
- NEFCO's Maia Peck was introduced. She will be assisting in the development of the Little Cuyahoga River Balanced Growth Plan. She recently completed the fully State endorsed Middle Cuyahoga River Watershed Action Plan.

II. Balanced Growth Plan Update

Website

- NEFCO said the information on the Balanced Growth Plan will be posted on the NEFCO website at http://www.nefcoplanning.org/little_cuy.html.
- The website will have the maps, meeting materials, presentations, and other documents produced for the Plan.
- An image of the current webpage for the Little Cuyahoga River plan was shown.

Maps

- NEFCO staff did a quick review of the maps 17 draft maps already produced for the Little Cuyahoga River Watershed.
- The draft maps are available for viewing on the website.
- NEFCO will be producing more maps and posting them as the Balanced Growth Plan proceeds.
- The maps will be used as a tool in determining priority conservation and (re)development areas.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Conservation Priority Areas

- Liz Mather from the Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC) discussed their Mapping Conservation Value project they have completed.
- She provided maps of the probability of Natural Areas Conservation Value and Agricultural Conservation Value for the watershed.
- They worked with over 60 expert partners and participants to determine high-value areas for conservation. The effort also allows for coordinating efforts among the partners.

- NEFCO will incorporate this information into the Balanced Growth Plan mapping for the Little Cuyahoga River.

Missing or Needed Data/Mapping

- NEFCO asked the group what information is still need to assist in the Balanced Growth Planning efforts.
- Suggested data/mapping:
 - Summit & Portage County Wetland Data
 - Existing Protected Areas (publicly owned lands, conservations easement, etc.)
 - Vacant Housing/Demolished Houses
 - Land Bank Holdings
 - Natural Areas Along Camp Brook
 - Large Parking Lots
 - Large Storm Water Retention Basins
 - Areas with Comprehensive Plans
 - Trails and Greenway Plans
 - Hydric soils

III. Work Session - Determining Priority Areas

Community Survey

- NEFCO distributed a draft list of community survey questions for determining priority conservation and priority development areas.
- The group eliminated questions that were repetitive, not relevant to the watershed, and/or confusing.
- The group rephrased several questions for clarity and/or accuracy.
- The group decided the surveys should be written for a person with limited knowledge on watershed and land use planning. The technical terminology should be limited.
- It was suggested that the survey could be distributed before NEFCO speaks with a group or community representatives and then another have them complete another survey after NEFCO speaks with them to see if their priorities changed as the presented information.
- The group suggested providing some type of incentive for a stakeholder to complete a survey. Suggestions included coupons, gift certificates, or drawing for a prize.

Community Engagement

- The group discussed the best way to engage each community in the Little Cuyahoga River Watershed. NEFCO will highlight specific benefits of the Balanced Growth Plan for each community.
- NEFCO will attempt to meet individually with representatives from each city, village, and township in the watershed.
- For public outreach, organizing an event for River Day was suggested.

- The Sierra Club said they would like to hold another Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Festival. They are looking at potential locations. They held the inaugural event at Springfield Lake in 2012.
- Providing information to be included in a community's newsletter was suggested.
- Contacting Cascade Village Homeowner Association was recommended.
- In general, the group believed that linking with existing environmental events was the best outreach strategy.

General Priority Conservation, (Re) Development, and Agriculture Areas

- The group discussed including priority agricultural areas in the Balanced Growth Plan. Most believed it might be useful for the Portage County townships. There are few remaining agricultural areas in the Summit County portion of the watershed. The Summit County agricultural areas that do remain are probably not viable for long-term production due to development.
- Priority Conservation Areas can include both existing natural areas to be protected and natural areas to be restored.

Specific Priority Areas

- NEFCO had a large aerial photo map for the attendees to mark priority areas.

V. Watershed Updates

- This agenda item was skipped due to time constraints.

VI. Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be in late-April or May. NEFCO will send out an email of potential meeting dates.