Oakland County’s Green Infrastructure Vision

L. Brooks Patterson
Oakland County Executive
Southeast Michigan
20 miles northwest of Detroit

Consists of 910 square miles

Population of 1.2 million

More than 1,400 lakes

Headwaters of five major rivers

Nearly 96 miles of regional trails

And 60,000 acres of parkland
• Green Infrastructure Visioning effort started in 2005
• Held over 100 meetings and hosted 25 community work sessions
The community work sessions followed a 9 step GI planning process developed with the help of our Natural Areas Advisory Group.
Instant Benefits – by just going through the exercise

- Placing conservation efforts within the context of a larger ecosystem
- Coordinating projects with surrounding communities
- Supporting grant applications by outlining addition open space/recreation linkages (MNRTF)
- Identifying new partnerships & resources
The process enables a true partnership approach, by blending state-of-the-art natural resource information with the local knowledge base.
Michigan Natural Features Inventory (Potential Natural Areas)

Tremendous Resource:
- Grant Applications
- Enhances Wetland & Woodland Coverage
- Park Plans/Master Plans
- Preservation (Land Trust) Focus
Michigan Natural Features Inventory (Potential Natural Areas)
The work session is key in building relationships and trust......
Focuses on identifying opportunities, matching interests, and providing timely support.

**Community GI work Group**
- Planning Commission
- Elected Officials
- Parks & Rec. staff
- Citizens
- Consultants
- Building Department
- Local Business

**Resource Team**
- County Planning Staff
- Local Conservancy
- State or County Parks
- MDNR - *Urban Forestry*
- DEQ - *Wetlands*
- Watershed Council
- Wildlife Habitat Council

Process (Based on science & community knowledge)
The key to a successful comprehensive GI approach is looking for multi-scale opportunities.
Communities are using the information in many different ways...including:

- Master Plan
- Open Space Millage
- Wetland Mitigation
- Grant Support
- Recreation Plan
- Park Acquisition Target
- Conservancy Coordination
- Promote Native Landscaping
- Partnership Building
Commerce Township - Recreation Master Plan

How is it being used
Springfield Township - Conservation Subdivision

How is it being used

Milford Schools – Native Landscaping
Conservation Priority Assessment Modeling at the Parcel Scale

**Priority Modeling**
- High
- Medium
- Low

**Criteria**
- Ecological Quality
- Resource Connectivity
- Create of Expand Open Space/Corridor Areas
- Blending the Natural & Built Environment

How is it being used
Green Infrastructure as it relates to the urban landscape

- Native Landscaping
- Green Buildings
- Rain Gardens
- Stream Buffer
- Urban Forests
- Restoration
- Trail Connections
- Recreation Opportunities

Promoting green infrastructure as a Low Impact Design Strategy

How is it being used
C. Green Infrastructure - Proposed project is part of a green infrastructure plan for the community, region, or eco-region.

20 Points

How is it being used
Work session
Over Thirty Years of Natural Resource Identification & Preservation

Our Roots Run Deep...

1974: The Model Environmental Ordinance to Protect Woodlands provides language for local community planning and zoning documents.

1980: Conserve Oakland County's Natural Resources! Exploring ways to conserve natural resources through community land use planning.

1987: Identifying Our Natural Heritage explores and identifies Oakland County's existing, intact natural areas.

2000: The Shewaans & Huron Headwaters Resource Preservation Project delineates significant natural resource systems and focuses on planning integrated strategies to protect the identified resource systems.

2002: The 2002 Oakland County Potential Conservation/Natural Areas Report identifies and ranks potential natural areas in Oakland County.

2004: The 2004 Oakland County Potential Conservation/Natural Areas Report is an update to the 2002 document and it also identifies and ranks potential natural areas in Oakland County.

2007: Planning for Green River Corridors is designed as a guide for community leaders and stakeholders to identify the resources associated with riparian areas and maximize known resources as community assets.

2009: The Oakland County Green Infrastructure Vision highlights the network of connected open space and the associated benefits in Oakland County.
- Attendee List
- What is Green Infrastructure?
- Resource Maps
- Green Infrastructure Process
- Draft Green Infrastructure Map
- Natural Area Advisory Group Contact Information
- Check List for Master Plan & Zoning Ordinance

Workbooks
The Economic Impact of Oakland County's Green Infrastructure
Impact of Oakland County’s Green Infrastructure on the Local Economy:

Green Infrastructure is defined as an interconnected network of open spaces, natural areas, and waterways.

Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Services (PEDS) worked with Michigan State University’s Land Policy Institute to estimate the impact that proximity to green infrastructure amenities (e.g., lakes, recreational lands, etc.) has on residential property values.

PEDS also worked with Public Sector Consultants to document, and quantify where possible, how green infrastructure (water resources in particular) benefits Oakland County’s residents and businesses.

Residential Property Values:

- Lakes add over $1 billion in value to Oakland County’s residential properties.
- Parks and Recreational lands add over $425 million in value to Oakland County’s residential properties.

Household Recreation:

- Water resources generate about $200 million annually to county residents.
- About 40% of County residents use recreational resources at least once per week.
- More users (80%) visit parks than any other recreational resource.

Tourism:

- The County attracted an estimated 394,514 pleasure trips from Michigan, neighboring states, and the province of Ontario during 2007, generating an estimated $177 million in spending.
- About 1.3 million people visited Oakland County on these trips, spending an average of 3.5 days.
- Over 40% of these trips involved outdoor recreation at some point and 20% involved water-based recreation in particular.

Business Location and Employee Attraction/Retention:

The term New Economy is defined as a global, entrepreneurial, and knowledge-based economy in which the keys to success lie in the extent to which knowledge, technology, and innovation are embedded in products and services.

In terms of business decisions, research indicates New Economy firms tend to place more importance on quality-of-life factors than do other types of firms.

Ecosystem Services:

Ecosystem Services are defined as the processes by which the environment produces resources that people often take for granted such as clean water, timber, habitat for fisheries, and pollination of native and agricultural plants. Ultimately, ecosystem services help to sustain, enrich, and fulfill human life.

Oakland County’s freshwater ecosystems (i.e., wetlands, rivers, streams, and lakes) are estimated to produce $806 million annually in services to county residents.
2009: City of Novi
2010: Springfield Township
2011: ????

Find out at the
Oakland County
Green Infrastructure Celebration
October 6, 2011
Springfield Oaks County Park
at the
Historic Ellis Barn
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THANK YOU!!!!