

# POSITIONS ON LAND USE IN PORTAGE COUNTRY AND OHIO

## Northern Portage County League of Women Voters (updated 2013)

Support Land Use policies that recognize that land is a finite resource requiring stewardship. Such policies must balance social, economic and environmental needs.

Development of a comprehensive Land Use policy which would provide for the orderly development of the State, in a manner which assures an environment beneficial to life, equal opportunity for housing, employment and education and the wise use of natural resources.

Support county-wide planning and cooperation with adjacent counties when not in conflict with other land use policies. (Portage County Regional Planning Commission)

Support of long-range Land Use planning for all areas within Portage County which provides for efficient transportation, efficient delivery of services and protection of environmentally fragile areas such as steep slopes, flood plains, scenic areas, river corridors and wetlands.

Meaningful public involvement of stakeholders and citizens, especially neighborhoods and school systems, affected by Land Use decisions of local, state and federal government entities.

The State of Ohio, with consideration of the will of the governed, should have final authority over land use decisions involving critical areas and critical activities within the State.

## Kent League of Women Voters

*History: The League's position on this issue was adopted in 1959 and was updated in 1985 and 1996. A third update began in 1999 was completed in 2003.*

The League supports:

- Development of a countywide comprehensive plan that incorporates principles of sustainable growth and is consistent with existing land use plans of local governmental subdivisions. This planning process should be undertaken with representation of all governmental subdivisions under the guidance of the Portage County Regional Planning Commission.
- Updating of the county's subdivision regulations to include encouragement of sustainable development.
- Adoption by governmental subdivisions of zoning ordinances which are based on the county's comprehensive plan and include:
  - Prescribed setbacks with appropriate vegetation requirements that would establish adequate buffer zones to protect wetlands, floodplains, wildlife habitat, and other environmentally sensitive areas.
  - Conservation development overlay districts that permit higher density cluster homes while designating common open space and wooded lots.
- Implementation of the Portage County Farmland Preservation Plan that:
  - Establishes growth centers determined by the availability of water, wastewater treatment, and other utility infrastructures.
  - Provides for public financing of PDR's (purchase of development rights).
  - Encourages use of conservation and agricultural easements as well as developer's purchase of TDRs (transfer of development rights).
- Development of a transportation system throughout the county that is intermodal in nature, including networks of pedestrian and bicycle trails and greenways connecting communities and providing regional transit and rail alternatives to major commercial and employment centers.
- Meaningful public involvement of stakeholders and citizens, especially neighborhoods and school systems, affected by land use decisions of local government entities.

**Recommendation: Update to include more modern zoning regulations.**

## **League of Women Voters of Ohio**

Support both urban revitalization and farmland preservation and the curbing of urban sprawl.

### **Position in Brief**

Support both urban revitalization and farmland preservation and the curbing of urban sprawl. Support the role of the state in providing authority and incentives for local governments to plan regionally and to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as suggested in the full position. Support use of eminent domain as a last resort under conditions specified in the full position. Support an enforcement system for appeals or arbitration where conflicts exist. (Adopted March 1977, May 1999; amended May 2003)

### **Position in Detail**

1. LWVO supports both urban revitalization and farmland preservation and the curbing of suburban sprawl.
2. The State of Ohio should provide authority and incentives for local governments to plan together regionally as well as to exercise innovative additional land use planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit developments, purchase and transfer of development rights, limited development ordinances, scenic easements, agricultural districts, cluster development, conservation reserves and land trusts, urban enterprise zones, environmental impact assessments, impact fees, tax abatement, and zoning efforts.
3. There should be an enforcement system that includes a method of appeal or arbitration where conflicting land use needs exist.
4. Eminent domain shall be used by the appropriate governmental or “quasi” governmental body as a means of acquiring land for the following purposes, providing that good land use planning and decision- making procedures have been instituted and provided that such application is used only after all other methods of acquisition fail:
  - highways and railroads;
  - parks and open spaces;
  - utility corridors;
  - power siting;
  - public developments (i.e., schools and hospitals);
  - urban renewal;
  - transportation terminals; and
  - areas of critical concern such as fragile or historical lands.