



# Focus on Linking Land Use, Air Quality, and Transportation Planning

## Urbanizing Areas and Rural Communities

### Background information

Citizens in urbanizing and rural communities in Washington enjoy clean and healthy air. Sound planning practices acting as preventive measures will ensure that air quality stays healthy, and will also reduce the number of future nuisance complaints. As communities develop, emissions from additional motor vehicles or industrial sources can degrade air quality. Land use incompatibilities can also aggravate air quality issues between neighbors, as housing developments intrude on agricultural lands. Wise planning can help to lessen air quality impacts and keep rural and small communities in Washington clean, healthy places to live and work.

### How are land use and transportation planning related to air quality?

Transportation serves an important role in the economic vitality of developing communities, both in moving goods and getting people to and from work. Increasing the number of vehicles on the road also increases the amount of pollution that we pump into the air that we breathe. Excessive automotive emissions can irritate lung tissue and inflame breathing passages, causing coughing and wheezing. The young, elderly, and those with asthmatic conditions are most sensitive to pollution.

In urbanizing or outlying areas of larger urban centers, providing a choice of alternative modes of travel can help reduce the number of vehicles on the road. Incorporating greenways, bike trails, and walking paths in developing areas can also help to preserve the natural features and beauty of the land. Developing areas that locate jobs, housing, and recreation in close proximity increase the use of alternative forms of travel, such as walking or biking. Some simple requirements for land development that encourage a variety of travel options preserve both cultural and land values, while keeping the air clean for all of us.

### *Helpful Suggestions for Planning to Keep Our Air Clean*

- Make air quality one of the criteria for determining priority of road paving and maintenance programs. Give higher priority to projects near schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and more densely populated areas. Reduce road dust by recommending that roads be paved in order to be accepted into the public road system.
- Recommend “Transit Stop” and “Park and Ride” facilities as part of the plans for major developments.
- Recommend that construction and agricultural project plans include dust control for projects in or near urban growth areas (UGAs).

- Encourage development patterns that prevent the use of adjoining properties for incompatible purposes. This can help to reduce conflicts between pre-existing agricultural uses and expected future growth in Urban Growth Areas.
- Consider zoning and covenants that would discourage or eliminate outdoor burning, wood burning stoves and fireplaces, and excessive diesel idling.
- Through a zoning or use permitting process, discourage land uses that are incompatible due to odor or emissions.
- Encourage and promote best management practices for wind erosion control on agricultural lands.
- Encourage large scale industrial and agricultural operations to control odors by adopting sound waste treatment and waste disposal practices.
- In some areas, preservation of native trees and vegetation along roadways can provide a cost-effective way to reduce windblown dust, while enhancing the aesthetics of the landscape.

## For more information

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