

CLEAN WATER 2000

208 Water Quality Management Plan for Northeast Ohio

Executive Summary

What does the 208 Plan mean?

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) was designated by the Governor of Ohio under Section 208 of the federal Clean Water Act to perform areawide planning. Together with local public officials throughout the region, NOACA has formulated a draft of the 208 Plan which addresses both municipal wastewater treatment issues and nonpoint source pollution management and control. This version of the 208 Plan incorporates changes from the public review process and is presented for action by the NOACA Board.

The first 208 plan for Northeast Ohio completed in 1979 focused considerable attention on public investments in wastewater treatment facilities and point sources of water pollution, which produced a remarkable recovery in the quality of water throughout the region. However, the most widespread threat to water quality in 2000 is from the rapidly developing areas of the region. The threat comes from a variety of potential sources, including non-point discharges from residential and commercial developments.

As a consequence, this draft 208 Plan focuses on:

- issues of planned sewer expansions in the suburban counties;
- better management of home sewage systems;
- more vigorous attention to the control of nonpoint source pollution; and
- protection of the region's critical water resources.

What is the problem?

Recent court decisions resulting from the "Reynoldsburg vs. Ohio" and the "Scioto vs. Ohio" court cases, in conjunction with changes in the Antidegradation Rule application in Ohio, stipulate that the Director of Ohio EPA may not process an application for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit or a Permit-to-Install (PTI) that is in conflict with any Water Quality Management Plan developed under Section 208 of the Clean Water Act. This means that all local wastewater treatment plants need to coordinate their planning with the region's 208 Water Quality Plans.

Local Implications

Future sanitary sewer extensions must be consistent with the Plan.

Home Sewage management regulations will mean regular inspections and mandatory septage pumping programs.

Stricter requirements and stronger enforcement of Storm Water Management Programs and other Nonpoint Source Control Recommendations could increase regulation of development.

Riparian Zone protection program may limit streamside access for buildings.

Road salt minimization program will mean less road salt is used.

Local officials will be able to better protect critical water resources from pollution sources.

The advantage of the 208 Water Quality Update is that it will establish the basis for evaluating all sewerage plans in a manner which will ensure that future development occurs as each community envisioned. Local governments will be able to help guide land use decisions in a manner that is protective of the environment and water quality.

In areas where sanitary sewers are to be excluded as an option, local communities must develop and implement more effective programs to make sure that individual on-site sewage treatment systems are properly installed, operated, and maintained. If this does not occur, and a water quality problem results, the Ohio EPA may be forced to require the extensions of sewers to rectify the problem.

Introduction

NOACA's Clean Water 2000 Plan is the first major update to Northeast Ohio's 208 areawide water quality management plan (WQMP) in twenty years.

The Clean Water 2000 planning area encompasses NOACA's five county area and includes the five river basins tributary to Lake Erie in Northeast Ohio. From west to east these are the Black River in Lorain and Medina counties, the Rocky River in Cuyahoga, Lorain, and Medina Counties, the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga and Geauga Counties, the Chagrin River in Lake, Geauga and Cuyahoga Counties and the Grand River in Lake and Geauga Counties. The planning area also includes portions of the Ohio River basin in southern Medina County. See Figure on page 18.

NOACA collaborated with NEFCO in developing elements of this plan. The two agencies share planning responsibilities for several watersheds in northeast Ohio. Together they created a joint force of local and state officials with water quality management planning responsibilities to assist in plan development.

Authority for preparing this plan comes from Section 208 of the Clean Water Act requires the preparation of areawide management plans for water quality by regional agencies designated for the purpose. NOACA was designated in 1975 as the planning agency for the five counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina under Section 208, and produced the initial Section 208 plan in 1979. The Ohio EPA is responsible for overseeing updates to and implementation of Section 208 plans.

Northeast Ohio's Water Quality Problems Today

Twenty years ago when it was first adopted, the 208 plan for Northeast Ohio provided the regional planning framework for federal funding of publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities. Construction of these was seen as absolutely critical to restoring water quality to northeast Ohio's urbanized areas. The public investments in wastewater treatment anticipated in the initial plan have produced a remarkable recovery in the quality of water and in the return of aquatic life to many of the region's streams, lakes and rivers and to Lake Erie itself. In spite of these improvements, significant water quality problems remain in the old urban areas of the region largely due to storm water and combined sewer overflows.

However, the most widespread threat to water quality today is occurring in the rapidly developing areas of the region on the periphery of the existing urban areas. This threat comes from a variety of potential sources, including nonpoint source discharges from residential and commercial developments, but most significantly from the combined effects of land disturbances to construct these new developments. This transformation is threatening critical water resources once thought relatively secure from water pollution threats (upland drinking water reservoirs, headwaters areas, and high quality streams once far removed from urbanization). Thus, while the perceived water pollution problems of the 1970s have largely been addressed, there remains a whole new set of water pollution challenges at the turn of the century to be confronted. The continuing dispersal of people and jobs is the most significant threat to northeast Ohio's future water quality. Population growth and the associated demands for newly constructed housing will result in the continued disturbance of undeveloped lands precisely in those watershed areas most

vulnerable to these changes. The locations of new homes will influence many businesses to relocate to be closer to their employees or their customers. Land uses will continue to change from a predominantly rural character to urbanizing uses, and this will affect how water runs off the land surface seeps into the ground. These trends will degrade water quality, habitat for aquatic life and aquatic life itself. Moreover, much of the future regional population growth will occur in watershed areas that feature current relatively high water quality. See Figure on page 19.

Focus of the Clean Water 2000 Plan

A primary focus of the Clean Water 2000 plan, therefore, is to manage the threats to water quality posed by the rapidly developing areas of the region. The plan addresses issues of planned sewer expansions in the suburban counties, on better management of home sewage systems, on more vigorous attention to the control of nonpoint source pollution, and the identification of and protection of the region's critical water resources. If action on the Clean Water 2000 Plan is not taken, regional water quality is expected to decline, reversing the gains of the last twenty years.

The Clean Water 2000 plan is also concerned with persistent water quality problems of the region's already urbanized areas. In these areas water pollution problems associated with point source discharges from sewage treatment plants and industrial sources have been largely addressed. However, these established urban areas have significant water quality problems remaining. These include storm water problems, failing home sewage disposal systems, degraded riparian corridors, sediment conditions from redevelopment and a variety of other sources of urban nonpoint source pollution.

Vision and Goals of Clean Water 2000

The 208 Plan represents a vision of the region's future to balance development and economic growth with a sustainable quality of the water environment. The policies and recommendations of the 208 Plan were formulated using the following goals as guidelines:

- 1) The plan should take a watershed approach that coordinates agencies addressing point and nonpoint pollution sources as the basis for management planning;
- 2) The plan should optimize use of the existing investment in infrastructure with infill development, not encourage public investments in new infrastructure;
- 3) The plan should be protective of what has been gained in environmental quality and outline measures needed to be undertaken to meet designated uses with particular attention to enhanced protection of critical water resource areas;
- 4) The plan should provide a regional framework for locally determined development density that is protective of water quality;
- 5) The planning process should be a tool for educating local public decision makers on regional water quality management issues; and
- 6) The plan should be an educational tool to elicit support of the general public for plan implementation.

Eight areas addressed by 208 Plan

The Clean Water 2000 plan addresses water quality management planning improvements in eight areas:

- Area 1) Wastewater Management Facility Planning:
- Area 2) Management of Home Sewage and Semi-Public Sewage Disposal:
- Area 3) Nonpoint Source Pollution and Storm Water Management:
- Area 4) Protection of Critical Water Resources:
- Area 5) Urban Stream Restoration Plans:
- Area 6) Watershed Planning:
- Area 7) Ongoing Areawide Water Quality Planning: and
- Area 8) Coordinated Infrastructure Planning.

Steps to Plan Certification

Early in Year 2000 the draft plan was circulated for public review and comment to local jurisdictions and agencies, the general the public and Ohio EPA. A number of public meetings were held for this purpose. The final draft plan includes revisions based on the public review process. With approval of this document by the Board, the final plan will be submitted to Ohio EPA for certification and to USEPA for approval. Once approved, the plan will become effective.

Area 1: Wastewater Management Facility Planning

The 208 Plan updates wastewater management facility planning areas (FPA) and identifies local jurisdictions to be designated as management agencies (DMA) for wastewater management facility planning within a FPA. Each FPA has identified wastewater management options which represent current judgments about where sewers will be extended and where areas will remain unsewered over the next 20 years.

Once adopted by NOACA, certified and approved by the Ohio EPA, these options will be part of the region's water quality management plan (WQMP). Decisions by the Ohio EPA concerning certain permits and State Revolving Loan Fund loans for wastewater treatment must be consistent with this Water Quality Management Plan. Designated management agencies for wastewater treatment facilities are listed in Chapter 4. This chapter also provides county level maps of wastewater treatment plans.

Significant Policies: One of the objectives of Section 208 of the Clean Water Act was to establish integrated and coordinated facility planning for wastewater management. In order to accomplish this objective in urban areas where competition for service areas was expected to be a concern, the Clean Water Act called for the designation of areawide planning agencies to assist in the resolution of such conflicts as they might arise. All future changes to boundary definitions and creation of new facility planning areas must be approved by the NOACA Board. Any applications to the Ohio EPA for a permit to discharge pollutants into the waters of the state or a permit-to-install must be consistent with the adopted WQM Plan. Wastewater management options within facility planning areas must comply with requirements of the Clean Water Act and adopted with the advice of affected local jurisdictions. Ohio EPA will not approve decisions concerning certain NPDES permits, permits to install (PTI) and State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans for wastewater treatment unless they are consistent with the WQMP.

Detailed policies governing how changes to wastewater management plans will be made are included in Chapter 4.

Recommendations for Local Officials: Land use plans should conform to the wastewater management options within the 208 Plan. Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) or Community Economic Development Agreement (CEDA) procedures should be considered to address potential conflicts among local jurisdictions over the extension of wastewater services to currently unserved areas.

Area 2: Management of Home Sewage and Semi-Public Sewage Systems

The Clean Water 2000 Plan anticipates that large areas of northeast Ohio will remain unsewered and be serviced by individual home sewage disposal systems over the next twenty years. Our planning has also disclosed that these systems have a high rate of failure and can adversely impact water quality. The reasons for this are complex and tied to deficiencies in the home sewage management system.

The plan makes a series of recommendations for improving the management of home sewage disposal systems by local health departments. These are the work of a committee of seven county health departments, Ohio EPA, the Ohio Department of Health, NOACA and NEFCO which labored for over a year to produce it.

The recommendations have been organized in a “cradle to grave” fashion that begins with improvements to site evaluation procedures, includes improved procedures for system installation and site inspections, homeowner maintenance requirements and regular inspections by local health departments, regular pumping requirements and homeowner education and training.

Local health department implementation of the recommendations is critical for maintaining decent water quality in unsewered areas of this region. Communities wanting to avoid the costs and developmental impacts of centralized sewers must actively support and encourage full implementation of these recommendations.

Recommendation for State Legislation

The Clean Water 2000 Plan also makes a strong recommendation that legislation be enacted in Ohio that would set standards for the management of home sewage disposal systems including regular inspections by local health departments, and provide a mechanism for local accountability to state standards through a process of state certification of local agencies. It is clear from the deliberations of the committee, charged with addressing the issue of home sewage disposal management recommendations for this plan, that the absence of a state statutory authority in this area is a severe impediment to adequate regulation of this pollution source.

Another important recommendation is that local health departments prohibit any new development the installation of any system which will produce an off-lot discharge. The recommendation goes further to say that off-lot discharging systems should only be allowed in repair or replacement cases where no other alternative is technically or economically available.

Federal Requirement for Control of Illicit Discharges

New federal regulations promulgated to control illicit discharges to municipal stormwater systems will constrain the approval of new off-lot discharging systems by requiring state enforcement of standards defined as “best available demonstrated control technology” as outlined in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745-1-05: Antidegradation Rule (Ohio EPA Correspondance of August 11, 2000). These standards will also apply to existing systems which may effectively eliminate the option to repair or replace many off-lot discharging systems with similar systems in the future. (USEPA Stormwater Phase II Final Rule (November 1999)). Ohio EPA and ODH are currently negotiating with USEPA over the terms and conditions of

permitting authority that complies with the new federal regulations. The Clean Water 2000 Plan includes the recommendation that local health departments continue to serve as the permitting authority for these systems.

What Local Agencies Need to Do

Under the 208 Plan, local health departments agree to: adopt the plan recommendations; pursue implementation of these recommendations over a five year period; pursue implementation of the plan recommendations as a priority in areas identified as tributary to critical regional water resources; and report their progress to the NOACA Board.

Recommendations for Management of Home Sewage Systems:

- 1) Site evaluation forms should be uniform; comprehensive site plans should be submitted with applications and fees should reflect the actual costs of the evaluation.
- 2) Sewage disposal systems that utilize soil for the treatment or disposal of wastewater should not be approved for use in soils that are not capable of providing adequate treatment and dissipation of sewage system effluent.
- 3) Any system that produces an off-lot discharge for any new development should be discouraged.
- 4) Regulations that permit the revocation of installer registration based on unsatisfactory work or deviation from regulations must be enforced.
- 5) Each county should adopt Operational and Maintenance Programs which includes owner education, operational permitting process, regular system inspection, adequate staffing and fees, system records management, and mandatory pumping programs. These programs should be designed to comprehensively address existing and new systems. Systems should be inspected regularly to ensure maximum effectiveness in treating wastewater. The O&M Program should be staffed at a level that ensures that each system is inspected at least every five years. A mandatory septage pumping program should be implemented that educates, tests, registers, and regulates pumpers/haulers, maintains pumping records, and determines pumping schedules for each system.
- 6) A septage management and disposal plan should be developed with leadership by the Board of County Commissioners to address septage disposal.

Detailed recommendations are included in Chapter 5.

Area 3: Nonpoint Source Pollution and Storm Water Management

The threats to surface and groundwater resources are changing. Historically, point sources were viewed as the primary threat. However, point source problems are well on their way to being controlled, and now it is nonpoint pollution and storm water effects, which appear to provide the greater threat to our water resources. Nonpoint problems are both water quality and quantity based. There is an emerging realization that unchecked storm water runoff from impervious surfaces is a major threat to water resources. The solutions to these problems are watershed specific and therefore must be pursued using a watershed approach involving multiple government jurisdictions.

Recommendations for Nonpoint Source Control

Six nonpoint source management programs are recommended for implementation by local and county agencies. The plan provides model legislation for consideration. These programs are as follows:

1) **Storm water runoff management from development and redevelopment activities.** Municipalities and counties are encouraged to adopt and implement Storm Water Management Programs for all development and redevelopment activities that affect an area equal to one acre or more as part of a common development. These programs need to address the management of both storm water quality and quantity. The plan also recommends state legislation in this area.

2) **Construction site erosion and sediment control programs.** Municipalities and counties are encouraged to adopt and implement Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Management programs for all nonagricultural land disturbance activities, which affect an area equal to one acre or more as part of a common development.

3) **Riparian zone protection program.** Developing communities are encouraged to adopt and implement Riparian Zone Protection Ordinances, while developed areas are encouraged to protect existing vegetation in riparian corridors and work to restore the integrity of the zone in disturbed areas. A riparian buffer ordinance minimizes or prevents the alteration of the riparian zone along stream segments to ensure that functions provided by the riparian area are protected. The riparian zone generally covered by a buffer ordinance includes the vegetative corridor adjacent to a perennial or intermittent stream usually up to the 100-year base flood level. The ordinance requires building setbacks in new subdivisions and major redevelopment areas that necessary to protect the riparian zone. These building setbacks range from 25 to 300 feet depending on the size of the stream. The plan also recommends state adoption of a model ordinance.

4) **Conservation design for storm water management.** Developing communities are encouraged to foster the use of Conservation Design Development which concentrates development on limited areas of a property while maintaining tracts of open space surrounding it. This minimizes infrastructure needs, preserves the natural character of the land, reduces soil erosion and lowers storm water management costs.

5) **Road salt minimization and storage program.** Road salt management programs seek to use only the amount of salt needed to provide the desired level of safety and to apply that amount of salt at the time when it will deliver the most good. Under some conditions, substitutes for road salt should be considered. Communities that are tributary to surface water or groundwater drinking supplies are particularly encouraged to implement and maintain Road Salt Minimization and Storage Management Programs.

6) **Non-point source management plans for low interest loan programs.** Soil and Water Conservation Districts are encouraged to take the lead in developing non-point source pollution management plans which would allow local watershed organizations to participate in the Ohio EPA/ Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) Linked Deposit Program. This program requires completion of a watershed management plan that identifies needed non-point source controls and provides targeted implementation.

What local officials need to do:

Compare existing laws to model regulations and identify inconsistencies or shortcomings. Where substantial change is needed, decide whether it is better to upgrade the existing law to eliminate deficiencies or to adopt the model ordinance as a replacement for the existing codes. Train all personnel who implement the adopted regulation.

The plan also spells out a series of strategies addressing emerging nonpoint source program opportunities which are included in Chapter 6.

Area 4: Protection of Critical Water Resources

A series of environmentally sensitive water resource categories have been identified as candidates for priority protection. Resources that met these conditions include surface drinking water supplies, ground water drinking supplies, regional resource waters, and riparian zones/flood plains.

Clean Water 2000 proposes five changes in Ohio EPA policy to enhance the protection of critical water resources.

The Ohio EPA is requested to:

- 1) Adopt changes to its Permit to Install (PTI) application procedure for new or increased discharges to areas identified as critical areas in the 208 Plan that would require assessment and mitigation of potential off-site impacts of discharge.
- 2) Broaden the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Process so that local officials could augment state-initiated set asides for the Regional Resource waters within their jurisdictions by petition to the Ohio EPA with set asides implemented through Ohio EPA's antidegradation and PTI review process.
- 3) Amend its policies regarding the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to give priority to the protection of critical water resources identified in the 208 Plan through enhancements to its financial incentives program.
- 4) Prioritize the enforcement of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for construction site activities in developing communities that are tributary to Regional Resource Waters and Surface Drinking Water Supplies identified in the 208 Plan.

Detailed recommendations are included in Chapter 7.

Area 5: Urban Stream Restoration Plans

Clean Water 2000 proposes a strategy for urban stream restoration as a way to start or restart processes of stream restoration for streams whose land use is predominately urban and which, generally, are not attaining current standards. These urban stream restoration plans would be individually tailored to a specific stream or stream segment with the help of substantial public participation. This is expected to result in outcomes which reflect community goals. Traditionally, resources devoted to stream protection have been focused on pollution abatement. While pollution abatement remains a necessary activity, other measures to protect or restore streams can often more effectively restore water quality.

There is a strong need for initiatives to consider the establishment of reasonable standards for restoring urban streams. Currently, aquatic life water quality standards are based upon “reference streams” from undeveloped areas. Urban ecosystems, in particular, are at risk from a wide range of stressors beyond point sources of pollutants. Modified land use patterns in urban areas typically impact nonpoint pollutant loads to surface and ground waters, alter the hydrology of a stream, and destroy the biotic and abiotic functions of stream corridors. While a wide range of significant stream stressors are well documented, we continue to invest our resources in narrow solutions that have little chance of effecting desired change. Pollutants are just one of many factors which affect an ecosystem.

There is a pressing need to focus on two areas where urban streams typically fall far short of meeting existing standards -- the biological criteria for aquatic life uses and the bacteria criteria for “contact recreational” use. A process that sets attainable goals in these areas could greatly further watershed restoration by prompting action as well as focusing attention and resources toward underlying stream problems.

Model of proposed urban watershed planning process

A regulatory program that encourages community-developed urban use designations (i.e., stream goals) could be the catalyst for community work to define and address problems at the heart of urban stream impairments. If flexibility is allowed in setting goals, communities are likely to respond with ideas that are efficient in increasing the value of the resource. If resources for pollution abatement could be re-targeted, many communities would likely be interested in addressing the root causes of urban stream problems with measures such as habitat protection, stream restoration and storm water management.

The development of an Urban Stream Restoration Plan (USRP) would follow a planning process that initially focuses on the root causes for the condition of the urban stream segment in question. This would be followed by a community goal-setting process. Alternative sets of actions to restore the stream segment to chosen goal levels would be created and evaluated to lead to a recommended set of actions. The product would include an implementation plan outlining responsibilities for achieving both short and long term stream goals.

The proposed USRP, including the proposed supporting water quality standards, would be submitted to the designated WQMP planning agency for consideration and adoption as part of the area’s Water Quality Management Plan. The review process would look at the issue of protection of

downstream uses and assure that appropriate best management practices have been included to protect stream health. Additionally, the WQMP would consider measures of technical and institutional support for the USRP. The amended WQMP would be forwarded to Ohio EPA for incorporation into the state's Water Quality Plan. Incorporation of the amended WQMP into the state's Water Quality Plan would likely be accompanied by a schedule for Ohio EPA rulemaking.

Ohio EPA would undertake a rulemaking process to consider the proposed water quality standard component of the proposed USRP. (The state would also consider Total Maximum Daily Load plan and initiate any associated NPDES permit actions needed to achieve consistency with the plan. It is hoped that the state would also adopt policies that would help to direct available resources to priorities set forth in the USRP.)

The named implementing authorities in the USRP would be responsible for carrying out measures called for in the plan in a coordinated fashion. It is anticipated that a coordinating organization may be designated to provide overall direction to the implementation effort.

At appropriate intervals, specified in the plan, there would be a re-evaluation of the overall goals of the USRP. This is envisioned as a community process similar to the initial process used to establish goals for the USRP. This process might involve formal revisions of the goals of the USRP and, as appropriate, might involve consideration of formal revisions of the area WQMP and the state's Water Quality Plan. At a minimum, evaluation of future goals should benchmark with the attainment of the fishable/swimmable goals established by the Clean Water Act.

Opportunities for Land Use Changes

The process of adoption of a proposed USRP as a part of the area's WQMP may also offer an opportunity to require consideration of changes in land use practices. Specifically, as a matter of policy, the designated planning agency may consider requiring that certain best management practices related to land use be considered in the development of any USRP which it considers for adoption.

Finally, one of the most powerful tools in affecting land use is capital to obtain easements or actual ownership of critical natural features that support the integrity of water resources. Ohio is fortunate to have a powerful new program that makes available the capital strength of the state's SRF fund for protection and restoration efforts. The Water Resource Restoration Sponsor program, put into place in 2000, is designed to assist protection and restoration projects that directly benefit water quality. It accomplishes this objective by offering reduced interest rates on traditional SRF loans when a loan recipient agrees to use the financial benefit of the reduced loan rates for the specified restoration/protection efforts. This program can produce substantial capital resources for these efforts. For example the benefit of a zero percent interest rate on a \$10 million dollar loan could be used to fund a restoration or protection effort costing in the range of \$5 million.

Detailed policies and recommendations are included in Chapter 8.

Area 6: Watershed Planning

During the 1990's organized watershed planning groups have emerged in four of the five major river basins in the Northeast Ohio 208 Lake Erie Basin planning area. Local, county and state water quality management agencies are encouraged to participate in and support the major watershed planning groups currently existing in the area. Of the three major watersheds in Cuyahoga County, watershed groups exist for the Cuyahoga River (Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan Coordinating Committee) and the Chagrin River (Chagrin River Watershed Partners). Taken together the emergence of these groups constitutes a significant and valuable regional planning resource for advancing coordinated approaches to watershed issues by public management agencies and other stakeholder groups, and for building public awareness and responsibility for water quality.

Watersheds are becoming recognized as a new form of community or 'neighborhood' around which citizens and public agencies can organize to address environmental problems.

Under the Clean Water 2000 Plan, NOACA pledges to pursue the formation of a watershed group for the Rocky River.

This WQMP recognizes the importance of Northeast Ohio's watershed groups, and recommends actions to sustain and enhance their varying roles.

Detailed policies and recommendations are included in Chapter 9.

Area 7: Ongoing Regional Water Quality Management Planning

The NOACA Governing Board will continue the ongoing 208 Plan administration responsibilities and organizational structures of the agencies involved in the planning process. This involves updating the regional plan for wastewater treatment facilities, promoting local implementation of recommendations for home sewage management, and nonpoint source controls, promoting state rules to protect critical resources and encourage urban stream restoration, maintain water quality information and facilitate coordination of data, and serve as a regional forum for addressing water quality management issues. Staff and financial support will be needed to sustain ongoing planning activities. With the adoption of this plan update, the NOACA Board reaffirms its intention to sustain this effort.

Detailed policies and recommendations are included in Chapter 10.

Area 8: Coordinated Infrastructure Planning at the Areawide Level

NOACA will provide information and planning services that encourage the coordination between regional water quality planning efforts and highway infrastructure investment decisions. It is the intent of the Clean Water 2000 Plan that regional planning for transportation and water quality be synchronized to encourage efficient, compact land use development that facilitates mobility, saves infrastructure costs, preserves environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands, and enhances the economic viability of existing communities within the region.

Urban sprawl is one major regional land use issue that has generated a considerable amount of debate in Northeast Ohio and on the NOACA Board. Urban sprawl surfaces as a public problem because it results in significant costs for the region. These include direct costs such as increased taxes to pay for a larger public infrastructure investments and indirect social costs such as increased consumption of land, degradation of air and water resources, loss of open space, increased tax burden on older urban areas experiencing population loss and loss of tax base, the shifting of jobs away from older urban areas and increasing difficulty of access of urban residents to these jobs. Urban sprawl also contributes to the isolation and impoverishment of old neighborhoods in the core urban areas.

In 1993, the NOACA Board adopted a statement of planning principles that, among other things, expresses the intent “to encourage efficient, compact land use development that facilitates mobility, saves infrastructure costs, preserves environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands, and enhances the economic viability of existing communities within the region.” In 1999 the NOACA Board adopted its Framework for Action 2025, which will guide transportation investments in the region. The goal of this plan is to encourage “the region’s competitiveness based on a sustainable development approach.” Similarly, one goal of this 208 Plan update is to ‘optimize use of existing investment in infrastructure, not encourage public investments in new infrastructure.’ Coordinated areawide infrastructure planning is a method for advancing these regional public policy goals.

Several planning strategies have been identified for enhancing value of areawide planning for local public agency decision-makers:

- 1) Enhancing coordination of the Transportation Plan and the Water Quality Plan Development processes including technical planning coordination and policy development coordination; and refining NOACA project planning review procedures for federal aid transportation improvements to take into account a project’s impact on the environment.
- 2) Compiling and reporting regional information on trends in impacts on tax base, the environment, the population, etc., that can inform land use and planning decisions made

by local governments; and conducting and encouraging research to explore the impact of land use decisions on the integrity of water resources with the goal of identifying effective intervention strategies.

3) Developing case studies on the effects of uncoordinated land use and infrastructure planning decisions to better understand the environmental and urban sprawl consequences.

4) Developing models of how local land use and infrastructure decisions are typically made, discussing the current role of areawide planning bodies in these decisions, and how this relationship can be enhanced.

5) Encouraging uniform practices at the county level on the use of community level data and forecasts for use in county and local comprehensive plans.

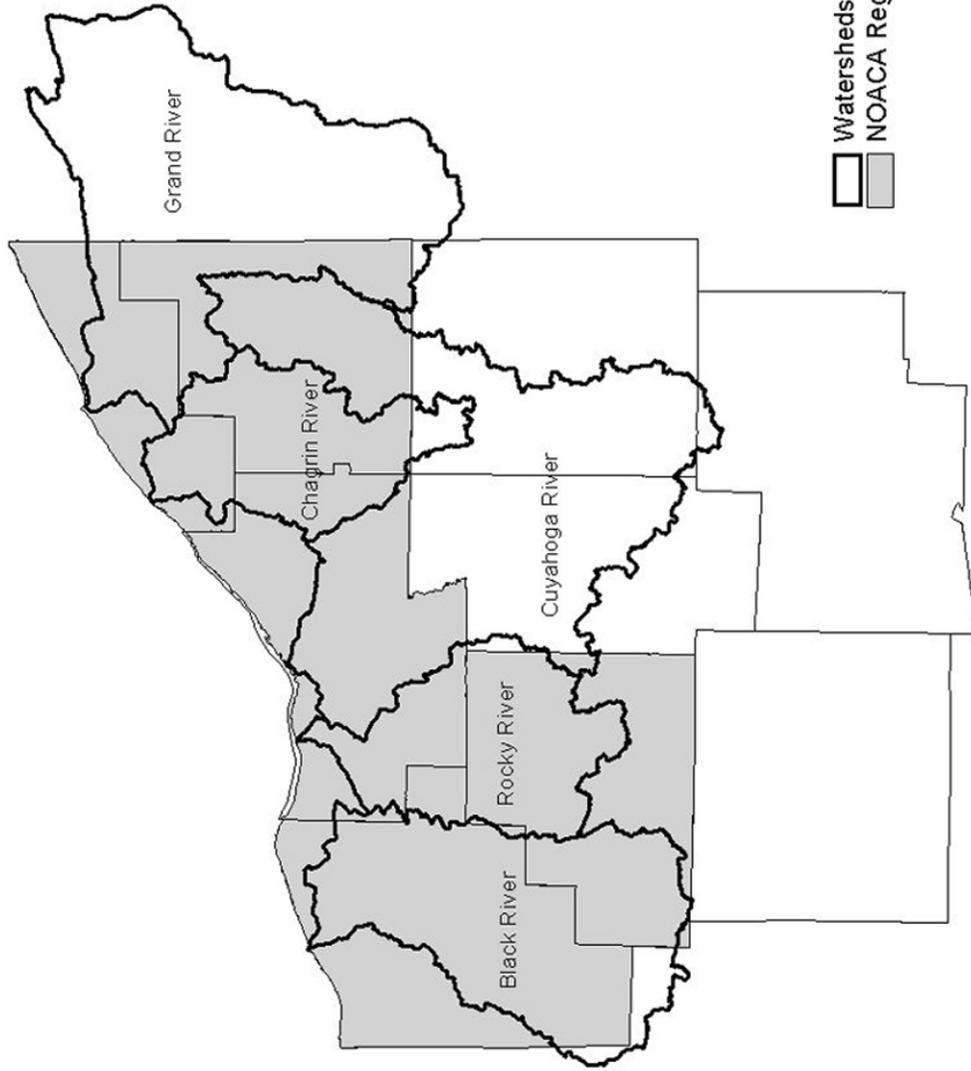
6) Developing and facilitating use of uniform urban sprawl and environmental impact evaluation criteria for use in county and city comprehensive plans.

7) Developing and coordinating GIS based infrastructure planning tools for use in county and city comprehensive planning.

Lake Erie Wastewater Management Planning Area

Northeast Ohio 208 Water Quality Management Plan

Prepared by:
Ohio
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Coordinating
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November
2000

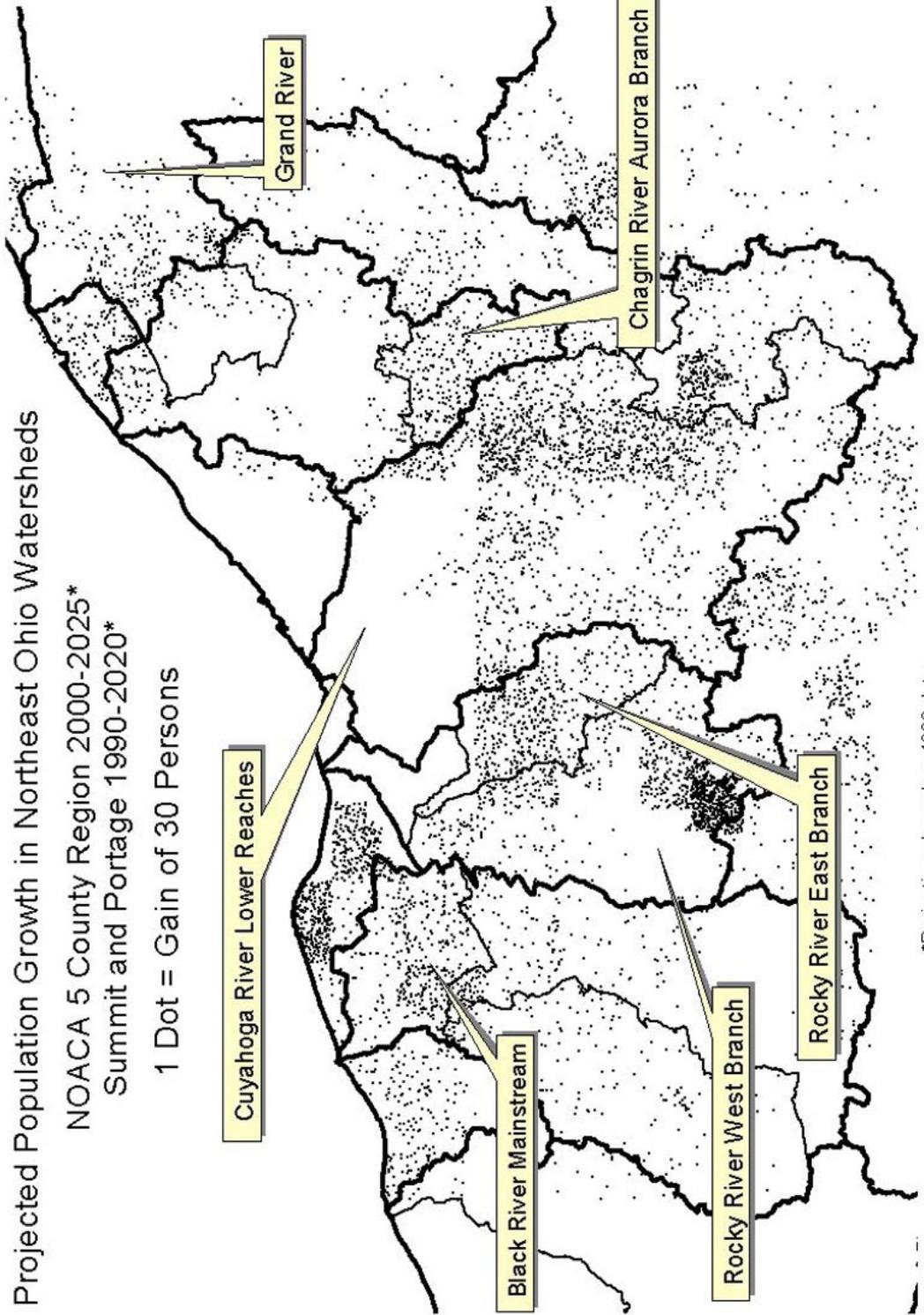


Areas Expected to Grow Rapidly during the Next 25 Years

Projected Population Growth in Northeast Ohio Watersheds

NOACA 5 County Region 2000-2025*
Summit and Portage 1990-2020*

1 Dot = Gain of 30 Persons



*Projections based on 1990 data.