

## **IMPACT FEES: Comments from County Farmland Preservation Plans, 2000**

The following are comments taken from reports from the 2000 County Farmland Preservation Plans submitted to the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Department of Agriculture. The intent is to learn what the reports included with an emphasis on the recommendations. All county reports were not available, but relevant comments are included from those reports that were reviewed. Prepared by Allen Prindle. March 2001. Please feel free to address any questions or comments to him at 614-823-1481 or [AMPrindle@otterbein.edu](mailto:AMPrindle@otterbein.edu).

Municipalities (through home rule) may impose an impact fee to fund services that result from increased demand. These impact fees must be held separately for these services, and must be assessed according to the costs for those services. Following a court decision in 2000, municipalities are increasingly evaluating impact fees as a funding source for water and sewer, for police, fire, EMS, for libraries, for roads, etc. Townships, counties, and schools do not have authority to establish impact fees at this time.

- **Butler County:** Lobby for and work toward enabling legislation which would allow counties to impose impact fees on development. Some funds generated from these fees could be used for purchase of development rights.
- **Champaign County:** “In order to facilitate communication and cooperation between the various levels of local government, use the Champaign county Planning Commission or other representative body to ...encourage development in appropriate areas and make development in rural areas pay the actual cost of that development to local governments.”
- **Delaware County:** Recommendation to “seek authorization to use impact fees to support community services. Current Ohio law allows cities and other incorporated areas to impose impact fees, but counties, townships and school districts do not have this authority. Impact fees are assessed on new development to help pay for added costs of community services required of the new residents. Counties, townships, school districts and other providers of public services in rapidly growing areas have limited resources to offer the services. The Ohio legislature should provide a more equitable method of recovering costs of new growth in these unincorporated areas.”
- **Geauga County:** Protecting farmland represents sound fiscal policy. The public service and facility costs of farms and farmland are low. Recommendation: Provide concise statistics in the form of an article, brochure to the general public relative to the economic impacts and benefits of agriculture in the county.
- **Henry County:** In a Survey Question: “Should new rural lots pay an impact fee for costs incurred to the community (such as roads, schools, utilities, etc.)?” 178 responses: Yes 78%, No 22%.
- **Huron County:** Recommendation to increase the function and operation of the planning commission. “Obviously, providing professional staff would cause the county to incur significant new costs. One method to approach this cost would be through the imposition of impact fees, where public customers would pay reasonable fees for the provision of services by the Commission. County officials may wish to research how nearby, similar counties are covering staff costs.”

- **Madison County:** “The county should determine what are appropriate technical review fees for person wanting to change land use.” Permits and technical review fees are a fair way for development to be held accountable for county providing these services. Impact fees, a one-time initial charge for new lots to go into the general fund to offset costs for infrastructure maintenance were rejected because legal authority has not been proven.
- **Mahoning County:** New county fee structures should be proposed and adopted to at least cover the county and municipal costs of any proposed new developments.
- **Medina County:** Reexamine the county fee structures to represent the true administrative cost of services. “A proper fee structure will allow for additional staff or contractual assistance to meet these current planning needs and will reduce dependence on the General fund line item of the county to meet new development support expenses.” “Create a commission to review available cost recovery policies related to development.” Concurrency requirements provide a rational decision making structure for expensive capital improvements and provides a funding mechanism that relates development to it’s true cost.
- **Morrow County:** “We recommend that the Morrow County Commissioners encourage and support Federal and State Legislation to permit counties to impose impact fees to offset costs of community services.”
- **Portage County:** Prior to extension of future sewer and water lines, political subdivisions must evaluate the likely impacts on the conversion of viable farmland. Current policy for Portage county is to allow extension of lines if the developer is willing to pay for said extension, and provided EPA approves. This policy will need to be modified, particularly for those areas that are targeted for agricultural preservation.
- **Ross County:** The Infrastructure Subcommittee stated a goal of “Review how rural sewer needs and development interact. Establish sewer policies and solutions that encourage positive development. Ensure that new developments pay their fair share of improvements and reevaluate county transportation and access plans. The Development Subcommittee recommended: Encourage growth around the villages with current infrastructure.” The county conducted a Cost of Services study with data from two townships.
- **Sandusky County:** Recommendation “Explore the development of user fees to help support those applicable activities mentioned above that would involve significant implementation costs.” “Encourage cost of community services review of any proposed development, so that local governments can ensure that developments pay their own way through projected property taxes and use fees to cover the costs of utilities, fire and police protection, education and other public costs.”
- **Seneca County:** Action point includes to support legislation that permits... impact fees. Propose the enactment of a farmland impact fee for development that takes prime soils out of farm production (Crumrine Mitigation Model).
- **Shelby County:** “Investigate programs or grants to help fund development costs in villages and Sidney. Investigate the establishment of infrastructure user fee districts in the county.”
- **Union County:** “Recommend that the Ohio legislature authorize townships and counties to impose impact fees.” “Recommend that Union County and communities

within the county impose impact fees on new development to compensate for increased costs of services.”

- **Vinton County:** Recommend to the community... encourage through economic incentives, new business and industry to locate in designated areas of the county close to existing infrastructure and public services such as industrial parks and villages. If land is to be converted to residential use the private and public developers should be required to provide for the necessary infrastructure and public services.
- **Wayne County:** “We recommend an increase in user fees to cover administrative costs. Increases to Planning Subdivision Fees and Building Permit Fees as recommended by their appropriate departments would serve administrative self-sustainability. Conveyance fees now assessed at the rate of \$2.00 per \$1000 valuation would be increased to the maximum allowable rate of \$4.00 per \$1000 valuation, yielding approximately an additional \$450,000 annually.
- **Wood County:** Recommend (State) Adopt legislation authorizing impact fees. Establish other impact fees for conversion of farmland to not-farmland use.