

Environmental Policy For DuPage County



**Adopted by Robert J. Schillerstrom, DuPage County Board Chairman
And the Members of the DuPage County Board
Drafted by the DuPage County Environmental Commission**

2006 Edition

ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

On August 12, 1992, DuPage County Board Chairman Aldo E. Botti and the DuPage County Board established the Environmental Commission due to increasing concern that DuPage County, like many counties and municipalities throughout the state, frequently made decisions that would impact the environment.

The Commission was charged with creating a long-range, well-reasoned environmental policy for all of DuPage County. The DuPage County Board adopted the Environmental Policy on April 26, 1993, Resolution CB-003-93. The intent was to provide guidelines for improving air, streams, and land.

In 2002, County Board Chairman, Robert J. Schillerstrom, the DuPage County Board and the Environmental Committee reconstituted the Commission and created a new and revitalized mission for the Commission. One of the missions was to consider, review and recommend amendments to the Environmental Policy.

Over the past 12 years, DuPage County has made significant progress in developing programs to protect the environment and improve the quality of life for DuPage residents and businesses. The future holds more promise for the County's commitment to limit environmental degradation while continuing to improve the overall environment. In consideration of these accomplishments and the expansive growth and changes in governmental organization the policy must be updated to reflect more accurately the future of DuPage County.

The purpose of this document is to provide renewed guidance and focus to County elected officials and County staff in regard to decisions that affect the region's air, land and water. The County will also continue to consider sustainability, uniqueness and stewardship when policies and activities are undertaken.

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

Taking sustainability into account ensures the long-term health of our environment in balance with the economy. Continuing to consider the future effects of our decisions will be a valuable method of protecting the environment. The County will continue to weigh the uniqueness of the existing climate, soils, geology, water resources, flora and fauna of DuPage County. Lastly, the County should carry on a stewardship mentality when considering development.

The policy provides a standard by which actions regarding environmental issues can be measured or modified. The policy will succeed if:

The DuPage County Board adopts the policy and conducts its business consistent with the principles and guidelines.

These principles are adopted and disseminated by municipal governments, businesses, financial institutions, industries, schools, private organizations, and individuals.

Inter-governmental and private sector partnerships are established to adhere to its guiding principals.

Federal, state and local organizations are made aware of the policy and are guided by it.

The policy and its principles are distributed as broadly as possible among the citizenry and the media to foster discussion, debate, and acceptance.

ENVIRONMENTAL PREMISE

Fundamental to our present lifestyle choices and values are certain assumptions we hold about the nature of the world and our relationship to it. These tacitly held beliefs are so ingrained that they are seldom questioned. Commonly accepted assumptions which drive decisions impacting our environment include:

- *We will never run out of resources.*
- *Increased consumption is essential to maintain a viable economy.*
- *The environment is separate from us and is “out there” somewhere.*
- *There is an “away” where we can dispose of waste.*
- *Technology can solve all environmental problems.*
- *What I do doesn’t matter; individual actions are insignificant.*
- *We can ignore natural realities and subdue nature.*

Actually:

- *Non-renewable resources such as gene pools and fossil fuels are limited; the renewability of other resources such as air, soils, and water depends on careful stewardship.*
- *A balance between consumption and resource reuse and recycling can maintain a sustainable economy.*
- *The quality of human life and the quality of our environment are inextricably related.*
- *Everything must go someplace; our “away” is somebody else’s “here.”*
- *Technology can provide the tools to remedy certain environmental problems if the users of the tools are guided by sound environmental values.*
- *Progress and community action can occur only as a result of the aggregate behavior and choices of individuals.*
- *We must respect our dependence on nature and accommodate natural laws.*

CATEGORICAL GUIDANCE

The following recommendations are intended to guide the county in its efforts to make environmentally sound choices on a wide range of issues. While the commission may focus on individual issues in order to gain significant accomplishments, the total vision should not neglect the importance and inter-relationship of all environmental issues. The Environmental Commission anticipates that this policy and its underlying principles will remain instructive and relevant well into the future.

(i) AIR QUALITY

As the County has been determined to be an area of non-attainment by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (“IEPA”) for air quality, one focus of decisions will be their affect on minimizing air pollution. This can be addressed by the decisions made in regard to reducing traffic congestion, increasing mass transit options and overall traffic policies. Other considerations should be made for the emission of particulate matter, emission of other toxins, potential for carbon sequestering and indoor air quality. Since the IEPA is the regulatory body for air emissions, the County’s role will be limited to advisory when considering properties other than its own.

Air quality being a regional issue, the County should support participation in regional programs to limit and reduce air pollution. This includes the use of transit oriented design, congestion reduction, encouraging reduction of miles driven, researching emissions filters and cutting back vehicle idling. Other effective approaches are being developed and may be considered in the future.

Intelligent and hard analysis in this area is critical. Increasingly congested highways require imaginative solutions rather than more or wider roads. Greater consumption of oil means increased carbon emissions, acidic precipitation, smog, and oil spills. Costs associated with emissions are now borne by DuPage County residents in the form of higher property upkeep,

health costs, and property taxes. All decision makers should strive to protect and improve air quality by considering all reasonable alternatives that reduce or eliminate emissions.

- Adopt environmentally sound transportation programs, encouraging a variety of energy-efficient alternative modes of transportation.
- Work toward meeting and exceeding state and federal air pollution standards through use of existing or innovative technologies.
- Reduce reliance on the automobile and coordinate highway planning with mass transportation options.
- Offer incentives for car and vanpooling, bicycling, walking, and other transportation alternatives.
- Set aside corridors for greenways, walking trails, and bicycle paths.
- Develop telecommuting alternatives to vehicular travel.
- Support controls on vehicular equipment emissions.
- Control levels of hazardous or toxic air emissions in buildings.
- Eliminate traffic slowdowns and engine idling at tollbooths and other preventable stoppages.
- Encourage cogeneration of electric and heat energy to optimize fuel efficiency.

(ii) **LAND MANAGEMENT AND USES**

This category includes natural resources, land use and land preservation. The County currently advocates for native landscaping, protection of wetlands, waste reduction, limited reliance on non-renewable resources and preservation of open space, and overall health of our land.

The County will support conservation easement programs and preservation conducted by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and other organizations. It will consider its consumption of natural resources by encouraging the purchase of recycled products, minimizing energy use, pursuing more efficient vehicles and equipment.

Land within the county is finite. Present land use revolves around the concept that all development is progress. Failure to provide for a diversity of land use needs creates unsustainable and unimaginative land use patterns, which result in sameness, urban sprawl, and environmental degradation. Ethical and self-sustaining land use planning must replace current trends in order to ensure a productive and balanced economy, environment, and society.

- Minimize the amount of solid waste generated, maximize reuse and recycling, and manage residuals within the county.
- Collect household hazardous waste to prevent the improper disposal that might affect water and land.
- Establish greenways and strategic open spaces in the existing urban pattern and recognize that remaining arable land is an irreplaceable resource.
- Move from non-renewable, polluting, or unsafe sources of energy to more sustainable, cleaner, and safer sources.
- Continue to support localized recycling facilities.
- Maximize source reduction through public and private educational programs aimed at improving purchasing decisions.
- Promote procurement programs that help select recyclable products.
- Make highway systems friendly/ compatible with the surrounding environment.
- Cluster development and redevelopment to save space for other land use needs.
- Offer economic incentives to redevelop derelict or delinquent property rather than despoiling remnant lands which preserve original features such as original soils, vegetation, or otherwise unique resources.

(iii) WATER QUALITY

In the past, the County has been a strong advocate of reducing water pollution and destruction of native habitats through the County's programs including but not limited to the following: Appendix J of the DuPage County Stormwater Ordinance; Sanitary Sewer and Water Main Improvement Programs; Residential Drainage Assistance Program; Streambank Stabilization; Wetland Banking Program; Wetland Delegation Program; Flood Control/Voluntary Buyout Projects; Water Quality Education Program; Stormwater Economic Redevelopment Zones; Private Well Sampling Program, Abandoned Well Sealing Program and the Healthy Roads Initiative.

The County will continue to make best efforts to manage runoff, preserve natural areas, floodplains and wetlands and improve the quality of the water not only within the County borders but the water that runs downstream to other communities.

- Manage and enhance natural areas, floodplains, and wetlands.
- Encourage intelligent use of pesticides and fertilizers as their use relates to the quality of stormwater runoff.
- Redesign county landscapes and architecture to detain and retain precipitation and recharge and discharge clean water.
- Reduce stormwater runoff by using a diversity of native vegetation in landscapes to purify water and release it clean.
- Allocate land areas to accommodate floodwater, to provide treatment of stormwater runoff, to reclaim and recycle wastewater.
- Integrate greenways, floodplains, wetlands, remaining natural areas, and open land in balance with development and redevelopment.
- Ensure that all new highway construction be designed to incorporate provisions to eliminate the discharge of pollutants into our waterways.

(iv) **ENERGY USE**

A variety of external factors limit the county's ability to select and use wise energy sources. The county should take reasonable steps to change or remove these limitations. The county should also explore and encourage the use of market or tax incentives for converting to wise energy sources.

- Provide incentives for energy conservation and efficiency in public and private buildings.
- Establish and maintain programs for monitoring and analyzing energy consumption.
- Amend ordinances to encourage use of sustainable, clean, and safe energy sources.

IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy provides a framework for an enlightened, forward-looking and workable environmental decision-making DuPage County. The principles do not provide ready answers to every question about the environmental impact of an activity. Rather, they are intended to bring environmental considerations into policies and decisions.

The Environmental Commission will continue to serve as an advisory body to the DuPage County Board and staff. It will continue to periodically review the County's efforts and effectiveness of implementing policies and identifying new areas that merit consideration.

APPENDIX A

DUPAGE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTALLY RELATED ORDINANCES

DuPage County Countywide Stormwater and Flood Plain Ordinance

DuPage County Stormwater Management Plan

Ordinance Prohibiting the Open Burning and Illegal Disposal of Landscape Waste in Unincorporated DuPage County

DuPage County Waste Management Ordinance

DuPage County Water Supply and Distribution and Wastewater Treatment Ordinance

Private Water Supply Ordinance

Private Sewage Disposal Ordinance

DUPAGE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTALLY RELATED PROGRAMS

Bus Rapid Transit Corridor Study

DuPage Area Transit Plan

Energy Efficiency Program

Environmental Education Program

Flood Control Projects/Voluntary Buyout

Healthy Roads Initiative

Latex Paint Recycling Program

Lead Hazard Reduction

LED Traffic Signal Upgrade

Mobile Household Hazardous Waste Program

Native Landscaping Ordinance

Regional Bikeway Plan

Regional Household Hazardous Waste Program

Residential Drainage Assistance Program

Sanitary Sewer Improvement Projects

Stormwater Economic Redevelopment Zones (SERZ)

Stormwater Permitting

Stormwater Management Plan – Appendix J: Water Quality Enhancements

Streambank Stabilization Program

Trail System Improvement Plan

Transportation Coordination Initiative

Waste Collection Events

Water Main Improvement Projects

Water Quality Improvement Program

Water Quality Education Program

Wetland Regulation and Banking