

2.15 FUTURE GROWTH AND POTENTIAL RISK AREAS

The second edition of this plan has the added requirement to address future growth throughout Ohio and what impact natural hazards will have upon it. To determine growth patterns, the Ohio Office of Strategic Research published cumulative county statistics were reviewed. The profiles cover a broad range of characteristics ranging from demographics to taxable land value. The percentage of population growth or decline was calculated for the current planning period in counties where change was indicated. Since the approval of the original mitigation plan, the State of Ohio has had very little change in population between increases from births and decreases from out-migration.

Two counties were found to have double-digit population growth in Ohio; Delaware (Columbus Metropolitan Area) and Warren (Cincinnati Metropolitan Area). The Delaware county multi-jurisdictional mitigation plan clearly describes the problems associated with double digit increases in population and the associated growth of the built environment. Large sections of farmland are being developed into residential housing, retail commercial facilities and office parks with the associated roads and parking areas. As a direct result, older neighborhoods adjacent to local waterways have experienced a marked increase in water levels and flows during rain events. The county has a clear understanding of the problems, their implications and is working to address them through mitigation planning and educational outreach. Part of the difficulty in addressing the situation is that the growth areas are creating high value real estate for Ohio, while the impacted areas range from mobile home parks to older structures built in or close to the floodplain. Over time the size of the 100 year regulatory floodplain can be expected to increase due to development. Two other greater Columbus counties, Union and Fairfield, showed moderate growth, however no adverse impacts were observed.

The Warren County Regional Planning Commission has planned for structured growth which has resulted in minimal adverse impact. The Warren County multi-jurisdictional mitigation plan outlines the program objectives to:

- Discourage small, isolated subdivisions where soil conditions and lot size are not conducive to on-site wastewater disposal systems, where applicable.
- Encourage a logical pattern of residential development where future growth would occur in proximity to existing residential areas, within the designated Urban Service Areas of the township.
- Build multi-family housing at a scale that can accommodate the need, combined with prudent use of the Planned Unit Development process, to accomplish quality development, mitigating the impact of county utilities and other public services.
- Develop adequate, well designed and affordable housing for the elderly population, the handicapped and families with children.
- Give a stronger emphasis to establishing open space/green belt areas, separating developing residential areas from incompatible uses.

- Establish a system to encourage housing maintenance through a coordinated, ongoing inspection program by county and local officials.
- Encourage the repair or removal of dilapidated/substandard structures.
- Identify, document and protect older homes or residential areas of historical and/or architectural significance from unwanted, incompatible land uses.
- Explore the establishment of an historical zoning district to protect individual structures or neighborhoods of historical and/or architectural significance.