

# MUNICIPAL ACTION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Septic System Design** can provide stricter standards than the state minimum standards. For example, local ordinances can require greater distances between septic systems and water courses or can require reserve septic fields to insure replacement if septic fields fail.
- **Shade Tree Protection** requires shade tree protection and replacement to maintain the tree's evapotranspiration function so important to the water cycle and stormwater control.
- **Site Plan/Subdivision**
  - **Checklists** list all required application submission items before an application is declared complete (For example; wetland delineations, steep slope analysis).
  - **Landscape** requirements (street trees, native plants, lighting).
- **Soil Movement** regulates disturbance, removal, or fill to minimize erosion, changes in grade, or importation of contaminated soil.
- **Steep Slope Protection** protects slopes over 15%, with prohibition of use above 25% to minimize erosion and sedimentation.
- **Stormwater Control** requires structural and non-structural techniques to control stormwater runoff.
- **Stream Corridor Protection** protects land along streams as an easier and more economic way to protect water quality than dealing with stream corridor degradation impacts.
- **Tree Protection** ordinances regulate tree removal, set standards for replacement and reforestation.
- **Useable Lot Area** ordinances require that a minimum buildable area of a site plan tract or a lot being created for subdivision be free of environmentally critical areas and easements.
- **Well Head Protection** ordinances protect land areas influencing well water and prohibit uses likely to pollute wells.
- **Zoning Densities** set densities based on natural carrying capacity to protect critical areas (lower densities reduce impacts).

Ordinances available at:  
[www.anjec.org/WaterEnvirLandUse.htm](http://www.anjec.org/WaterEnvirLandUse.htm)

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Protecting local natural resources is in everyone's best interest. Whether we are in a city or town, the suburbs or fast-vanishing rural areas, we need clean drinking water, clean air, and preserved open space. While it is often difficult to preserve our most important natural resources in the face of expanding development, a number of New Jersey municipalities are being effective environmental stewards by managing growth.

It is important to recognize the connections between how we use our land and the quality of our environment. Most people support discouraging sprawl, revitalizing cities and towns, using existing infrastructure and protecting natural resources, air and water quality. To reach these goals, we have to engage in good planning, strong regulation and well-organized land conservation. Pro-active, comprehensive municipal planning that encompasses land preservation as well as development and infrastructure is crucial to manage growth and protect natural resources effectively. Once a plan is in place, then regulations to implement that plan are needed.



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## MUNICIPAL PLANS and PREPARATION

- Build-out Analysis is an examination of the impact on a town if all development allowed under the zoning is put in place.
- An Environmental or Natural Resource Inventory is a compilation of text and data about the natural resource characteristics and environmental features of a town.
- Master Plan is a guide for the use of land in a municipality and the basis for local zoning.
  - \* The Goals and Objectives state the principles, policies and goals on which the town's planning is based.
  - \* The Land Use Element sets out different uses for different areas and densities for those uses.
  - \* A Conservation Element describes actions to preserve natural resources
  - \* A Utility Service Element analyzes the need for future water supply, wastewater, drainage and other utility needs.
  - \* An Open Space Element is a guide for open space preservation in a municipality.
  - \* Greenway/Stream Corridor Plan establishes a buffer or corridor adjacent to a waterway or to provide undeveloped, passive connections to open space parcels.

## PUBLICATIONS FROM ANJEC

Most publications are available on ANJEC's web page, [www.anjec.org](http://www.anjec.org)

*Acting Locally, Municipal Tools for Environmental Protection*  
(147 page manual)

*Municipal Options for Stormwater Management*

*Open Space Plan*

*Open Space is a Good Investment*

*The Environmental Resource Inventory*

*Septic System Management for Clean Water*

*Site Plan Review: Procedures for Environmental Analysis*

*Clean Water- Sewers, Septics and Sprawl*

## ORDINANCES

ANJEC has developed a database of over 700 environmental and land use ordinances from municipalities throughout New Jersey. These ordinances are examples of approaches that have worked in other municipalities. A municipal government should modify them to reflect local environmental conditions, current regulations, and state-of-the-art knowledge in the environmental field.

- **Aquifer Recharge Area Protection** controls the uses on lands that provide recharge for groundwater supply.
- **Board of Health** ordinances can cover topics such as septic maintenance, Certificate of Septic System Reuse.
- **Clustering** allows development to be arranged on smaller than zoned lots on part of a site allowing the remaining land to be permanently preserved as open space; no increase in density over that allowed under the conventional zone designation is required.
- **Critical Area Protection** ordinances exclude defined environmentally sensitive areas from minimum lot size.
- **Environmental Impact Statement** requires evaluation of impacts of a development proposal, exploration of alternatives and ways to minimize those impacts. Effective if done by independent consultant paid for through an escrow account.
- **Impervious Cover Limitations** limit the amount of land that can be covered by buildings, roads and other impervious uses.
- **Limestone Protection** offers special protections to groundwater in limestone areas.
- **Lot Size Averaging** allows lots to be of variable size so that critical environmental areas can be avoided.
- **New Well Drawdown** ordinances require drawdown tests to ensure that new wells will produce sufficient volumes of water to serve their intended users.
- **Noncontiguous Development** ordinances enabled under state law, allow cluster development on noncontiguous lands under common ownership. For example, density can be concentrated on one parcel while the noncontiguous parcel remains preserved as open space.