

Preserving the Landscape: Dublin Style

Franklin County, OH

Dublin, OH – While this is a city with an excellent flood mitigation program in place, the original intent of Dublin’s City management was to preserve as much of the original landscape as possible. The by-product of strong tree-preservation measures, protection of existing tree lines, wooded areas, and wide welcoming green belts is natural flood control. The Scioto River watershed functions naturally, and with few barriers to impede flow, the potential for flooding throughout the area is lessened.

From early days, Dublin’s focus has been on the preservation of the beautiful landscape in this former farming area. Dublin City Engineering Manager, Barb Cox explains that the gently sloping and flowing landscape is required by city ordinance to minimize the sight of large parking lots, huge corporate buildings, and other urban infrastructure. As the NFIP regulations began to take on more and more importance, Dublin was already half way there due to this beautification and preservation focus.

Parking lots are constructed with drainage systems, allowing storm water to flow into picturesque settling ponds, some with fountains, becoming a haven for the protected geese and other waterfowl. From the ponds, the water flows into the existing waterways such as the Indian Run, and eventually into the Scioto River, with greatly reduced rates of flow.

Developers are required to adhere to a number of restrictions – no more than 4-5 residents per acre for housing, land deeded back to the city for open space on residential projects, protection of any tree whose trunk diameter is 6 inches or more, protection of existing tree lines, protection of wooded growth along waterways, etc. Residential areas are also protected by requiring settling ponds and drainage systems that cause storm water and snowmelt to travel harmlessly through the watershed to the river. While all of this is essential to the beautification and protection of Dublin, the City has also made extensive studies of upstream and downstream effects to protect neighboring properties.

Area golf courses provide built-in green spaces near water. While there are many houses nearby, no structures are built where the golf course designs allow high water to flow harmlessly over and around the course.

Dublin has realized some additional benefits from their floodplain management and preservation practices. A neighboring wetlands protection project within the Glacier Ridge Metro Park has been enhanced due to Dublin’s efforts to contain and direct storm water through natural and manmade channels. The wetlands have not been affected by nearby developments with the potential to change the water flow patterns.

City ordinance requires residential developers to dedicate 0.025 acres per residential dwelling unit to the City for parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities. As a result of these efforts “Dublin can offer nearly 1,000 acres of parkland, with 56 developed parks ranging from wooded natural areas and river frontage to active, athletic facilities.” (City of Dublin Parks website)

The result of Dublin’s effort to preserve its natural heritage, and reduce the impact of urbanization, has proven to be the highlight of its flood control efforts. This city with its large welcoming green



spaces is a model in landscape preservation, while attracting large corporations. Throughout the City's 30-percent population increase and corresponding land development, they have preserved the natural flood controls.