



# Local Land Use Impacts

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There are many ways to evaluate the effectiveness of an educational program. While the ultimate measure is a healthier community with fewer pollutants and cleaner air and water, it is nearly impossible to demonstrate with any degree of scientific certainty the connection between those objectives and a series of workshops conducted years earlier for a community's land use planning officials. For that reason, NEMO programs track their effectiveness in terms of the actions communities take to improve their land use practices, procedures, and decisions as they work toward that ultimate measure of a healthier community.

While NEMO programs raise the "capacity" and "knowledge base" of local officials, this report does not focus on those aspects. Rather, this report documents how that increased knowledge is translated into actions—real changes to land use policies and practices.

On the following pages, this report highlights examples of such local actions that NEMO programs have helped put into motion. It should be noted that while NEMO programs served as a catalyst, volunteers serving on local planning boards and commissions created these changes and deserve to be recognized for their efforts.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all NEMO program impacts, but rather a representative sample of the types of changes NEMO programs are helping to bring about from coast to coast.

For more details on what individual NEMO programs are doing, and routing to member's websites, visit the Network website at [nemonet.uconn.edu](http://nemonet.uconn.edu). Or use the Network Members Directory on pages 37 and 38 of this report to speak to a real live NEMOid in your state!



**The impacts in this report are divided into six categories to represent the various stages of local land use planning.**



**Changes to Land Use Plans ..... page 8**

Plans constitute the backbone of local land use decision-making by setting out long term goals and a vision for how a community will grow.



**Changes to Land Use Regulations ..... page 12**

Regulations and ordinances give “teeth” to plans and dictate the specifics of how, where and when development may occur. Changes here provide direct protection for priority community resources.



**On the Ground Changes ..... page 16**

Where and how development occurs. From “low impact” subdivisions to permanently protected open space, changes to the actual landscape are an ultimate indicator of impact.



**Changes to the Decision Making Process ..... page 20**

The players and specific steps involved in local land use decision-making can make a huge difference. These changes create a decision making structure that is more conducive to proactive planning.



**Changes to Research & Information Gathering ..... page 24**

These initiatives help provide the local data upon which rational land use plans, regulations and decisions can be based.



**Beyond Local Impacts ..... page 28**

NEMO programs focus on local impacts. However, as an innovator, NEMO programs often create or inspire changes to state or regional plans, policies and programs.