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MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
Date: January 24, 2022
Re: Second Revisions to Chapter Two – Agricultural Uses & Chapter Three – Residential Uses,
Newly Drafted Chapter Four – Environmental

Pursuant to your direction at your January 11, 2022 meeting, attached are revised drafts of Chapter Two – Agricultural Uses and Chapter Three – Residential Uses. As you will recall, you directed us to perform the following:

Chapter Two – Agricultural Uses

- Introduction – Revise according to notes provided by Commissioner Maschewske
- Goal #7 – Revise according to notes provided by Commissioner Maschewske and additionally revise “convert” to “transition”
- Recommendation #6 – Add language regarding soil erosion and sedimentation control
- TBD Development Boundary language – Return to the document

Chapter Three – Residential Uses

- Residential Classifications – Reorganize the goals, recommendations, and strategies in each classification
- Add “and or planting” to each classification provision regarding tree preservation
- High Density Residential Recommendation #1 – separate “of” and “variety”
- High Density Residential Goal #3 – Change “discharge” to “recharge”
- High Density Residential Goal #5 – Change “provide” to “require” and strike “adequate”
- Groundwater – make sure all “groundwater” occurrences are as one word
- Keep all TBDs
- Change “groundwater” study to “hydrogeological” study
- Low Density Residential Strategy #1 – add “private water well”
- High Density Residential Strategy #7 – return the word “the”

We have performed these revisions accordingly and believe the changes to the chapters are self-explanatory. In addition to your direction, we propose relocating a high Density Residential Strategy to a Recommendation to better achieve the structure intended by the Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies. We anticipate you will agree with its relocation. If not, we will be prepared to return it to its original location within the text.

The changes are shown from the previous versions of the text. Additions are shown in bold text and deletions are shown in strikethrough text. Also attached is a clean version of the chapters.

Chapter Four – Environmental

Accompanying those chapter revisions is the first draft of Chapter Four – Environmental, which is intended to coordinate with the E-1 Lowland Resource Conservation Overlay Zoning

District. We will provide that direct correlation to the E-1 Zoning District during the composition of the Zoning Plan within the future Implementation Chapter. Similar to the revisions for Chapter Two and Chapter Three, additions are shown in bold text and deletions are shown in strikethrough text. We also reference language in parentheses that was maintained from the current Master Plan. Also attached is a clean version of the chapter.

Planning Commission Considerations

As the Planning Commission deliberates regarding the proposed revisions to Chapter Two and Chapter Three, and the new text of Chapter Four, we believe the following warrant your review and consideration. They are listed in no particular order:

- The reorganized residential subsections in Chapter Three – Residential Uses
- The draft of Chapter Four

We will be prepared to discuss these items further at your February 8, 2022 meeting. If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Principal Planner

Attachments

cc: Frank Johnson, Supervisor

Chapter Two Agricultural Uses

Introduction

The amount of land which is vacant or used for agriculture has played a significant role in the development of the character of the Township. The large, open areas create a feeling of spaciousness and provide a tranquil surrounding. Agriculture is one of the major reasons that many of the current residents moved to the Township and continues to be a factor in attracting new residents.

Agriculture continues to be the dominant use of land within the Township and is widely appreciated by residents. Sixty-three percent (63%) of current residents within the Township who responded to the Master Plan Update Community Survey indicated that they agree that it is extremely important to preserve agricultural lands within the township. In addition, sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents indicated that the Township should promote agricultural growth. Further, sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents indicated that the Township should support and promote agricultural land conservation programs. While public support is strong to prevent the development of agricultural properties, **Agricultural Stakeholder meetings indicated that some farmers recognize that they farmland may want to convert their properties to other** ~~be converted to residential, commercial, or industrial uses in the future. This may be appropriate in some areas where public utilities, land prices, property divisions, and growth pressures have made farming difficult, or impractical, or where marginal conditions exist for productive agriculture. However,~~ It must be recognized that farming can be as much of an industry as manufacturing. Farming provides jobs and a product for sale in the marketplace and creates a significant portion of income for Michigan residents. Acknowledging farming as an essential industry can have a profound effect on the programs developed for its preservation and continuation. The agricultural resources of Ottawa County and Robinson Township are particularly significant in Michigan. ~~That said, this Plan recognizes the interest of our farmers to convert their land for development in the future.~~

As a result of the Agricultural Lands public workshop, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for agricultural uses in Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Preserve agricultural lands
- Protect agricultural lands from urban and suburban encroachment
- Use of prime and/or uniquely suited agricultural lands as farms should be encouraged

- Promote agricultural services and uses as a means of preserving agriculture
- Preserve rural character
- Support agricultural operations
- **Recognize the interest of some farmers to transition their land to other uses in the future**
- ~~Obtain a balance between development and agriculture by planning for the gradual transition of certain existing agricultural and open space lands into developments while minimizing the impacts of such development on ongoing farming operations~~

Recommendations

- Urban encroachment on agricultural lands should be prevented, especially on those prime and/or uniquely suited agricultural lands
- Farms of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Encourage crop production and livestock use to minimally impact existing natural resources
- Encourage proper soil management, to ensure soil conservation and to prevent erosion and sedimentation
- Encourage all farm building construction to be designed in a central or same location within an agricultural property to preserve the most farmland as possible and minimally impact existing open spaces
- Encourage the design of a “no-cut” zone along right-of-ways to protect the natural landscape, maintain open space and rural character, as well as preserve the natural drainage system **to provide soil erosion and sedimentation control** and reduce flooding
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Investigate ordinance language to support wedding venues or similar ancillary uses of existing agricultural operations
- Reduce or investigate the minimum setback for all farm buildings, so as to protect the greatest amount of open space and or farmland as possible, while avoiding conflict with adjacent uses
- Encourage the preservation of any trees within the right-of-way and within 30 feet of the right of way, so as to protect the natural vegetation (any naturally deceased trees may be removed) and drainage system
- Strengthen ordinance language to prohibit private roads in the Agricultural Zoning District or on prime farmland
- Investigate a millage or alternative Township program for land acquisition to provide for the preservation of rural character and or open space in perpetuity

- **[TBD]** Create a development boundary that protects prime and unique farmland soil by generally restricting residential neighborhood development, commercial development, and industrial development within that area
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area

Chapter Two Agricultural Uses

Introduction

The amount of land which is vacant or used for agriculture has played a significant role in the development of the character of the Township. The large, open areas create a feeling of spaciousness and provide a tranquil surrounding. Agriculture is one of the major reasons that many of the current residents moved to the Township and continues to be a factor in attracting new residents.

Agriculture continues to be the dominant use of land within the Township and is widely appreciated by residents. Sixty-three percent (63%) of current residents within the Township who responded to the Master Plan Update Community Survey indicated that they agree that it is extremely important to preserve agricultural lands within the township. In addition, sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents indicated that the Township should promote agricultural growth. Further, sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents indicated that the Township should support and promote agricultural land conservation programs. While public support is strong to prevent the development of agricultural properties, Agricultural Stakeholder meetings indicated that some farmers recognize that they may want to convert their properties to other uses in the future. It must be recognized that farming can be as much of an industry as manufacturing. Farming provides jobs and a product for sale in the marketplace and creates a significant portion of income for Michigan residents. Acknowledging farming as an essential industry can have a profound effect on the programs developed for its preservation and continuation. The agricultural resources of Ottawa County and Robinson Township are particularly significant in Michigan.

As a result of the Agricultural Lands public workshop, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for agricultural uses in Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Preserve agricultural lands
- Protect agricultural lands from urban and suburban encroachment
- Use of prime and/or uniquely suited agricultural lands as farms should be encouraged
- Promote agricultural services and uses as a means of preserving agriculture
- Preserve rural character
- Support agricultural operations

- Recognize the interest of some farmers to transition their land to other uses in the future

Recommendations

- Urban encroachment on agricultural lands should be prevented, especially on those prime and/or uniquely suited agricultural lands
- Farms of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Encourage crop production and livestock use to minimally impact existing natural resources
- Encourage proper soil management, to ensure soil conservation and to prevent erosion and sedimentation
- Encourage all farm building construction to be designed in a central or same location within an agricultural property to preserve the most farmland as possible and minimally impact existing open spaces
- Encourage the design of a “no-cut” zone along right-of-ways to protect the natural landscape, maintain open space and rural character, as well as preserve the natural drainage system to provide soil erosion and sedimentation control and reduce flooding
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Investigate ordinance language to support wedding venues or similar ancillary uses of existing agricultural operations
- Reduce or investigate the minimum setback for all farm buildings, so as to protect the greatest amount of open space and or farmland as possible, while avoiding conflict with adjacent uses
- Encourage the preservation of any trees within the right-of-way and within 30 feet of the right of way, so as to protect the natural vegetation (any naturally deceased trees may be removed) and drainage system
- Strengthen ordinance language to prohibit private roads in the Agricultural Zoning District or on prime farmland
- Investigate a millage or alternative Township program for land acquisition to provide for the preservation of rural character and or open space in perpetuity
- [TBD] Create a development boundary that protects prime and unique farmland soil by generally restricting residential neighborhood development, commercial development, and industrial development within that area
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area

Chapter Three
Residential Uses
Low Density, Medium Density, & High Density

Introduction

While Robinson Township is primarily an agricultural community, and because of the rural character that agriculture provides in the Township, the desire for residential uses within the Township continues to grow. Despite this, sixty-six (66%) of current residents within the Township who responded to the Master Plan Update Community Survey indicated that they agree or strongly agree that the Township should maintain the current density limits within residential developments. When asked about the methods to provide for residential development, eighty-seven percent (87%) of survey respondents indicated that clustered residential lots are an appealing residential design, which create open spaces and can preserve farmland. Further, ninety-two percent (92%) of survey respondents indicated that large lots are an appealing residential design. Significant opposition was provided for multi-family residential development by survey respondents. Finally, approximately fifty-one percent (51%) of survey respondents indicated that growth is “about right,” and thirty-eight percent (38%) of survey respondents indicated that growth is “too fast.” Overwhelmingly, survey respondents as well as workshop participants expressed the need to preserve rural character, protect agriculture, and provide buffers between residential land uses and farming.

Given this, and while Robinson Township is a rich agricultural community and residential uses comprise a relatively small percentage of the total land area, the Township recognizes the need to accommodate residential development concurrently with the preservation and protection of its agricultural heritage.

As a result of the Residential Lands public workshop, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for residential uses in Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Low Density Residential

Goals

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character
- Maintain the rural character of the community
- Protect and preserve the floodplain and wetlands in order to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater discharge recharge areas, which have important aesthetic and scenic value

- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Residential uses should be restricted to areas of soil with good percolation and be on multi-acre lots, where public water is not present
- Discourage residential "strip" development and promote interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon within the development
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Utilize the incorporation of existing vegetation, topography, and other natural features into the design of new residential developments
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Buffer residential uses from agricultural land
- Require the preservation **or planting** of trees between the public street and dwellings
- Require new residential developments to be sited in a manner that protects the rural character and scenic views by maintaining proper setbacks and providing landscape screening as appropriate

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Require the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should minimally apply to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans.
- Conduct a **hydrogeological groundwater aquifer quality** study, if existing evidence reveals water quality **and or quantity** concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area
- Review and strengthen density standards that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems **and private water wells** and which promote the preservation of the rural character of the Township

Medium Density Residential

Goals

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character
- Maintain the rural character of the community

- Protect and preserve the floodplain and wetlands in order to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater ~~discharge~~ **recharge** areas, which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Discourage residential "strip" development and promote interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods
- Concentrate the density of residential land uses to protect rural character, open spaces, and agriculture

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon within the development
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Utilize the incorporation of existing vegetation, topography, and other natural features into the design of new residential developments
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Provide a range of densities to accommodate a variety of dwelling types meeting the needs of diverse family sizes, age groups, and income levels
- Buffer residential uses from agricultural land
- Require clustering of housing, where appropriate
- **[TBD]** Require connection to public water and public sanitary sewer
- Require the preservation **or planting** of trees between the public street and dwellings
- Require new residential developments to be sited in a manner that protects the rural character and scenic views by maintaining proper setbacks and providing landscape screening as appropriate

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Require the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should minimally apply to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans.
- Conduct a **hydrogeological groundwater aquifer quality** study, if existing evidence reveals water quality **and or quantity** concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area
- Require development to utilize open space preservation techniques, clustered housing techniques, and other amenities and features to preserve rural character, protect agricultural property from negative impacts, and protect the environment

- Rezoning to the R-1 Zoning District should not occur without public water and public sanitary sewer present at the property
- **[TBD]** Require public water and public sanitary sewer connection for all Planned Unit Developments, Site Condominium developments, and Plat developments where the underlying zoning district is the R-1 Zoning District

High Density Residential

Goals

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character
- Maintain the rural character of the community
- Protect and preserve the floodplain and wetlands in order to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater discharge recharge areas, which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- ~~Provide~~ **Require adequate** public utility services and facilities within residential development
- Discourage residential "strip" development and promote interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods
- Concentrate the density of residential land uses to protect rural character, open spaces, and agriculture

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon within the development
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Utilize the incorporation of existing vegetation, topography, and other natural features into the design of new residential developments
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Provide a range of densities to accommodate a variety of dwelling types meeting the needs of diverse family sizes, age groups, and income levels
- Buffer residential uses from agricultural land
- **Rezoning to the R-2 Zoning District shall not occur without public water and public sanitary sewer present at the property (Moved from Strategies)**
- Require clustering of housing and connection to public water and public sanitary sewer
- Require the preservation **or planting** of trees between the public street and dwellings

- Require new residential developments to be sited in a manner that protects the rural character and scenic views by maintaining proper setbacks and providing landscape screening as appropriate

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Require the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should minimally apply to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans.
- Conduct a **hydrogeological groundwater aquifer quality** study, if existing evidence reveals water quality **and or quantity** concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area
- Require development to utilize open space preservation techniques, clustered housing techniques, and other amenities and features to preserve rural character, protect agricultural property from negative impacts, and protect the environment
- ~~Rezoning to the R-2 Zoning District shall not occur without public water and public sanitary sewer present at the property~~
- Require public water and public sanitary sewer connection for all Planned Unit Developments, Site Condominium developments, and plat developments where the underlying zoning district is **the R-2 Zoning District**

Chapter Three
Residential Uses
Low Density, Medium Density, & High Density

Introduction

While Robinson Township is primarily an agricultural community, and because of the rural character that agriculture provides in the Township, the desire for residential uses within the Township continues to grow. Despite this, sixty-six (66%) of current residents within the Township who responded to the Master Plan Update Community Survey indicated that they agree or strongly agree that the Township should maintain the current density limits within residential developments. When asked about the methods to provide for residential development, eighty-seven percent (87%) of survey respondents indicated that clustered residential lots are an appealing residential design, which create open spaces and can preserve farmland. Further, ninety-two percent (92%) of survey respondents indicated that large lots are an appealing residential design. Significant opposition was provided for multi-family residential development by survey respondents. Finally, approximately fifty-one percent (51%) of survey respondents indicated that growth is “about right,” and thirty-eight percent (38%) of survey respondents indicated that growth is “too fast.” Overwhelmingly, survey respondents as well as workshop participants expressed the need to preserve rural character, protect agriculture, and provide buffers between residential land uses and farming.

Given this, and while Robinson Township is a rich agricultural community and residential uses comprise a relatively small percentage of the total land area, the Township recognizes the need to accommodate residential development concurrently with the preservation and protection of its agricultural heritage.

As a result of the Residential Lands public workshop, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for residential uses in Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Low Density Residential

Goals

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character
- Maintain the rural character of the community
- Protect and preserve the floodplain and wetlands in order to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater recharge areas, which have important aesthetic and scenic value

- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Residential uses should be restricted to areas of soil with good percolation and be on multi-acre lots, where public water is not present
- Discourage residential "strip" development and promote interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon within the development
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Utilize the incorporation of existing vegetation, topography, and other natural features into the design of new residential developments
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Buffer residential uses from agricultural land
- Require the preservation or planting of trees between the public street and dwellings
- Require new residential developments to be sited in a manner that protects the rural character and scenic views by maintaining proper setbacks and providing landscape screening as appropriate

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Require the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should minimally apply to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans.
- Conduct a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area
- Review and strengthen density standards that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems and private water wells and which promote the preservation of the rural character of the Township

Medium Density Residential

Goals

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character
- Maintain the rural character of the community

- Protect and preserve the floodplain and wetlands in order to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater recharge areas, which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Discourage residential "strip" development and promote interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods
- Concentrate the density of residential land uses to protect rural character, open spaces, and agriculture

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon within the development
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Utilize the incorporation of existing vegetation, topography, and other natural features into the design of new residential developments
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Provide a range of densities to accommodate a variety of dwelling types meeting the needs of diverse family sizes, age groups, and income levels
- Buffer residential uses from agricultural land
- Require clustering of housing, where appropriate
- Require connection to public water and public sanitary sewer
- Require the preservation or planting of trees between the public street and dwellings
- Require new residential developments to be sited in a manner that protects the rural character and scenic views by maintaining proper setbacks and providing landscape screening as appropriate

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Require the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should minimally apply to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans.
- Conduct a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area
- Require development to utilize open space preservation techniques, clustered housing techniques, and other amenities and features to preserve rural character, protect agricultural property from negative impacts, and protect the environment

- Rezoning to the R-1 Zoning District should not occur without public water and public sanitary sewer present at the property
- Require public water and public sanitary sewer connection for all Planned Unit Developments, Site Condominium developments, and Plat developments where the underlying zoning district is the R-1 Zoning District

High Density Residential

Goals

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character
- Maintain the rural character of the community
- Protect and preserve the floodplain and wetlands in order to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater recharge areas, which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Require public utility services and facilities within residential development
- Discourage residential "strip" development and promote interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods
- Concentrate the density of residential land uses to protect rural character, open spaces, and agriculture

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon within the development
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Utilize the incorporation of existing vegetation, topography, and other natural features into the design of new residential developments
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative
- Provide a range of densities to accommodate a variety of dwelling types meeting the needs of diverse family sizes, age groups, and income levels
- Buffer residential uses from agricultural land
- Rezoning to the R-2 Zoning District shall not occur without public water and public sanitary sewer present at the property
- Require clustering of housing and connection to public water and public sanitary sewer
- Require the preservation or planting of trees between the public street and dwellings
- Require new residential developments to be sited in a manner that protects the rural character and scenic views by maintaining proper setbacks and providing landscape screening as appropriate

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Require the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should minimally apply to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans.
- Conduct a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area
- Require development to utilize open space preservation techniques, clustered housing techniques, and other amenities and features to preserve rural character, protect agricultural property from negative impacts, and protect the environment
- Require public water and public sanitary sewer connection for all Planned Unit Developments, Site Condominium developments, and plat developments where the underlying zoning district is the R-2 Zoning District

Chapter Four Environmental

Introduction

Waterways, wetlands, and tree cover are important natural resources within the Township. Many of these areas are not conducive to development and therefore require significant protection. The most well-known waterway in Robinson Township is the Grand River, which runs the entire width of the Township. The Grand River flows from East to West and empties into Lake Michigan. The Grand River system includes many wetlands and areas that are **within** the 100 year floodplain. The Grand River is also the home to many varieties of flora and fauna. Stearns Creek flows into Stearns Bayou, which is located ~~at~~ **within** the northwest part of the Township. Other creeks are Wolf Creek, Bear Creek, and Bass Creek. All other drains are under the control of the Ottawa County **Water Resources Drain** Commissioner.

The majority of wetlands **within** the Township are found adjacent to the Grand River, ~~the Township~~ creeks, and drains. There are, however, several scattered areas of shrubs and lowland hardwoods that include wetlands throughout the Township. **Along with wetlands, trees** play a significant role in the environment by providing a habitat for wildlife, by holding soil and preventing erosion, by absorbing storm water, and by providing a visual screen. **(Moved from Chapter 2, page 18)**

Proper regulation of these areas will serve to maintain and improve water quality, both ground and surface; prevent flood damage; protect wildlife habitat; protect natural watershed; protect the water-based recreational resources of the Township; minimize flood damage to land, buildings and structures; and protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Township. (Copied from Chapter 9 of the Zoning Ordinance)

As a result of public workshops, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for the protection of the environment within Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- **Protect wetlands from development**
- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character **(Previously moved from Chapter 4, page 29)**
- Protect and preserve the floodplain and wetlands in order to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater recharge areas, which have important aesthetic and scenic value **(Previously moved from Chapter 4, page 29)**

- ~~Limit areas of frequent flooding should be used for to only~~ agriculture, recreation, driveways, parking lots and other open spaces, ~~or uses that would not be subject to flood damage~~ **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)**
- ~~As the Grand River is an area wide resource that can seriously affect downstream and upstream conditions,~~ **Protect** proper use of ~~this resource~~ the Grand River to prevent **negative affects downstream** ~~should be encouraged~~ **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)**
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative **(Duplicated from previous chapters)**

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon within the development **(Previously moved from Chapter 2, page 18)**
- Development in wetland areas should be ~~discouraged~~ **prohibited** **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)**
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction **(Previously moved from Chapter 2, page 18)**
- Building construction in the floodplain should be discouraged to avoid damage and health hazards created by flood conditions **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)**
- The floodway of the Grand River should be protected to eliminate obstructions to flow and navigability, and not be developed except for marine purposes **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)**
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative **(Duplicated from previous chapters)**

Strategies

- **Adopt or enhance** policies and regulations in the floodplain area ~~should be that are~~ in conformance with Federal guidelines **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)**
- Conduct a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns **(Duplicated from previous chapters)**
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area **(Duplicated from previous chapters)**

Chapter Four Environmental

Introduction

Waterways, wetlands, and tree cover are important natural resources within the Township. Many of these areas are not conducive to development and therefore require significant protection. The most well-known waterway in Robinson Township is the Grand River, which runs the entire width of the Township. The Grand River flows from East to West and empties into Lake Michigan. The Grand River system includes many wetlands and areas that are within the 100 year floodplain. The Grand River is also the home to many varieties of flora and fauna. Stearns Creek flows into Stearns Bayou, which is located within the northwest part of the Township. Other creeks are Wolf Creek, Bear Creek, and Bass Creek. All other drains are under the control of the Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner.

The majority of wetlands within the Township are found adjacent to the Grand River, creeks, and drains. There are, however, several scattered areas of shrubs and lowland hardwoods that include wetlands throughout the Township. Along with wetlands, trees play a significant role in the environment by providing a habitat for wildlife, by holding soil and preventing erosion, by absorbing storm water, and by providing a visual screen.

Proper regulation of these areas will serve to maintain and improve water quality, both ground and surface; prevent flood damage; protect wildlife habitat; protect natural watershed; protect the water-based recreational resources of the Township; minimize flood damage to land, buildings and structures; and protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Township.

As a result of public workshops, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for the protection of the environment within Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Protect wetlands from development
- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character
- Protect and preserve the floodplain and wetlands in order to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater recharge areas, which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Limit areas of frequent flooding to only agriculture, recreation, driveways, parking lots and other open spaces, or uses that would not be subject to flood damage
- Protect proper use of the Grand River to prevent negative affects downstream

- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon within the development
- Development in wetland areas should be prohibited
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Building construction in the floodplain should be discouraged to avoid damage and health hazards created by flood conditions
- The floodway of the Grand River should be protected to eliminate obstructions to flow and navigability, and not be developed except for marine purposes
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance policies and regulations in the floodplain area that are in conformance with Federal guidelines
- Conduct a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area