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MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA 
Date: March 23, 2024
Re: Revisions to the Residential Uses Chapter to Address Mining Operations

Pursuant to your direction at your March 14, 2024 meeting, attached are revisions to the Residential Uses Chapter to address mining operations. These revisions are a result of draft changes provided by the Township Legal Counsel. Proposed additions are shown in underlined text. No deletions are proposed.

The proposed revisions are scheduled for your discussion at your April 9, 2024 special meeting at 8:00pm.

Next Steps

As you know, following your completion of the draft, the Planning Commission shall schedule and hold a public hearing on the draft Plan and transmit the draft Plan to the Board of Trustees for consideration of adoption.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Planner

Attachment

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 percent (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 to multi-family residential development was provided 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.

While Robinson Township is a rich agricultural community 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, the following goals are identified as 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 (Rural Residential District)¹

Goals

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

¹ Reference to the Rural Residential Zoning District is for convenience only. Refer to Chapter Ten for more details.

- 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
- Discourage residential "strip" development and promote interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon by residential 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
- Require a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns

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, applying at least to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which development 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 (Residential One-Family District)²

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
- Residential uses should be restricted to areas of soil with good percolation, where public water is not present, unless the residential uses are located where public water already is present or can be easily extended in order to allow residential uses that are clustered or on small lots that encourage the preservation of open spaces

Recommendations

- Protect wetlands on-site to ensure that they are not encroached upon by residential 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
- Require a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns
- 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 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. [Exceptions shall be considered for the](#)

² Reference to the Residential One-Family Zoning District is for convenience only. Refer to Chapter Ten for more details.

residential end use of a mining operation, and for property which has already been approved at the time of this Master Plan for residential development.

- 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, applying at least to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which development 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. Exceptions shall be considered for rezonings to address the residential end use of a mining operation, and to address residential developments already approved at the time of this Master Plan.
- 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 (Residential Multiple-Family District)³

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

³ Reference to the Residential Multiple-Family Zoning District is for convenience only. Refer to Chapter Ten for more details.

- 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 by residential 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
- Require a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns
- 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, applying at least to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which development 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