

Chapter Three

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The “*vision statement*” and planning issues presented in the previous chapter provides an initial goal. The following goals and objectives provide greater clarity and specificity.

The following goals and objectives are important for several reasons:

- The goals and objectives: 1) provide current and future residents of Hillsdale Township with an overview of the intended future character of the Township, 2) The goals and objectives identify and outline the basic parameters which should be used in guiding future land use and public services, 3) The goals and objectives serve as references upon which future rezonings and land development decisions can be evaluated.

The goals and objectives are divided into the following major categories:

- Growth Management
- Community Character and Environment
- Farmland
- Residential Development
- Commercial & Industrial Development
- Roads & Public Services

These goals and objectives objectives follow.

OBJECTIVES

Growth Management

Goal: Guide future development in a manner which is consistent with the natural limitations of the land, the preservation of natural resources and rural character, the availability of necessary public facilities and services, and the cost-effective use of tax dollars.

Objectives

- 1) Preserve Township natural resources.
- 2) Encourage expansion of public facilities and services.
- 3) Encourage development of areas that have capacity to accommodate growth.
- 4) Local regulations may require new developments to pay for the direct or indirect public service costs.
- 5) The Township will maintain an open communication with other municipalities and County agencies to plan growth.
- 6) Encourage public input on growth and development issues.

- 7) Establish effective land development review procedures to assure new land uses are designed to minimize negative impacts upon existing uses, protect important natural resources, and assure public health, safety, and welfare.

Community Character and the Environment

Goal: Preserve the rural character of Hillsdale Township and its environmental integrity.

Objectives

- 1) Assure that future land development be designed in scale (i.e. height, size) with existing developed areas.
- 2) Encourage land development which actively strives to preserve open spaces as part of a development project (including on-site woodlands, wetlands, lakes, and fields) while still providing a land owner with reasonable use of his or her land, including the use of such tools as conservation easements, land trusts, and density bonuses for projects designed to permanently preserve important open spaces. Development densities and intensities in environmentally sensitive areas will be limited and all development and land uses will be in compliance with applicable local, county, state, and federal regulations.
- 3) Encourage the maintenance of historically significant structures but remove blighted structures and yard area.
- 4) Separate incompatible land uses by distance, natural resources, or by landscape buffers which adequately screen or mitigate the adverse impacts.
- 5) Efforts will be made to educate the public about waste management and the Township's fundamental reliance upon groundwater resources for potable water supplies and the potential detrimental effects of irresponsible land development and refuse disposal practices.

Farmland

Goal: Encourage the continuation of local farming operations and protection of farmland resources.

Objectives:

- 1) Designate areas which support long term farming and encourage the continuation of agricultural operations through complimentary zoning provisions.

- 2) Minimize nuisance problems in designated agricultural areas by limiting the encroachment of incompatible land uses and requiring disclosure as provided in Michigan Seller's Disclosure Act.
- 3) Limit the amount of non-farm residential development permitted in designated agricultural areas without necessarily requiring large lot sizes.
- 4) To the extent that residential development occurs in agricultural areas, encourage such development to be placed on less productive farmland.
- 5) Support and maintain P.A. 116 farmland preservation agreements.
- 6) Provide buffer areas/zones between residential and agricultural areas.
- 7) Allow for and encourage conversion to open area, wildlife/hunting preserves, woodlands, etc. Encourage other unused areas zoned differently (residential, industrial, commercial) to similarly convert.
- 8) Encourage education on farm issues.
- 9) Promote developmental right buy-ups subject to feasibility.

Residential Development

Goal: Provide opportunities for residential development of a primarily low density character and in a manner which is compatible with the Township's rural character, natural features, and public infrastructure and services.

Objectives:

- 1) Encourage the continued dominance of single family low density housing as the principal housing option in the Township and identify land areas, through planning and zoning, most appropriate for single family housing. Such areas should not encroach indiscriminately into designated agricultural areas.
- 2) While maintaining single family low density housing as the primary housing option, seek to assure housing alternatives to meet the varying economic, family stage, and lifestyle needs of the Township's current and future persons and families. These alternatives should provide for higher density living arrangements.

- 3) Identify limited areas in the Township where higher density residential development, including multiple family development and mobile home parks, can be adequately accommodated. Priority should be given to locations which have access to major thoroughfares and necessary public services.
- 4) Land capacity should be an important consideration when determining the appropriate density of development, and development densities should not undermine important environmental features.
- 5) Discourage haphazard lot splits resulting in long narrow parcels or parcels with substantial amounts of undeveloped land to the rear, unless the low density residential development is consistent with other standards and ordinances of the Township. A maximum lot length to lot width ration of three to one is recommended.
- 6) Discourage residential development along the frontage of existing county roads to minimize traffic safety hazards and the “landlocking” of interior acreage.
- 7) Encourage innovative residential development which incorporates the preservation of natural resource systems and open spaces, as well as the preservation of the Township’s rural character, within the site planning process. One such innovation, where multiple lots or dwelling units are created, should include the development of only a small portion of the original parcel and placing the balance of the parcel in a permanent open space status for farming or other open space use. Density and other bonuses could be used to provide a stronger incentive for “open space protection” development.

Commercial and Industrial Development

Goal: Provide opportunities for limited expansion of commercial and industrial development which minimize negative impacts upon adjacent land uses, respond to the rural character of the community, and are compatible with available public services and infrastructure.

Objectives:

- 1) Identify locations in the Township, through planning and zoning.
- 2) Recognize the significance of the M-99 corridor and the existing urban character of the City of Hillsdale as potential opportunities for the location of new commercial and/or industrial uses.

- 3) Provide opportunities for new commercial and industrial land uses which assure such uses are in scale with surrounding land uses, including such features and building size and height, setbacks, and open space areas.
- 4) Require landscaping and screening measures to assure commercial and industrial uses do not adversely impact the normal use and enjoyment of adjoining land uses.
- 5) Provide opportunities for home-based occupations within residential dwelling units under conditions which will not negatively impact the residential character, appearance, and quality of life experienced by surrounding residential properties and neighborhoods.

Road Network and Public Services

Goal: Provide and maintain a road network which moves vehicular traffic in an efficient and safe fashion, and maintain and expand other public facilities and services in support of the planned future land use pattern and as necessary to assure public health, safety, and welfare in a cost-effective manner.

Objectives

- 1) Identify those areas of the Township which, due to existing conditions and the planned future land use pattern presented in this Plan, may be in need or will be in need of improved public services including police and fire protection, potable water, and roads.
- 2) Establish a realistic schedule of improvements which identifies the timing, cost, funding source, and need for each planned road and public facility and service improvement. Improvements will be planned in a priority based manner.
- 4) Identify priority road segments for maintenance and improvement, based upon the planned future land use pattern presented in this Plan and existing and projected traffic patterns.
- 5) Minimize the potential for traffic congestion and safety hazards along roadways by limitations on the number and/or frequency of curb cuts and on the number and size of new land divisions along county roads.
- 6) Continually monitor local attitudes toward recreational facilities in the Township and take appropriate

planning and capital improvement actions to acquire and develop local park land and/or recreational programs should a demonstrated need arise.

- 7) Develop and maintain a regular meaningful communications program with adjoining municipalities and regional agencies to discuss and investigate public facilities and services needs, opportunities for shared facilities and services, and alternative strategies for improving local public services, including contracted services, shared services, and Township-operated services.