

2007 Northfield Township



Growth Management Plan Amendment

Adopted by the Northfield Township Board of Trustees
August 28, 2007

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PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

This document represents an amendment of the 1998 Northfield Township Growth Management Plan (the “1998 Plan”). Many of the goals, objectives and policies of the 1998 Plan remain relevant and are either updated and incorporated into this amendment, or remain valid as part of the 1998 Plan. In other words, this document (the “2007 Amendment”) serves as an addendum, limited in scope, of the 1998 Plan. This 2007 Amendment contains updated goals and objectives, a new series of planned ‘character areas’, and new implementation strategies the Township plans to pursue in the coming years. This 2007 Amendment is designed to supplement and serve together with the existing 1998 Plan, and shall be considered collectively with the 1998 Plan to comprise the 2007 Northfield Township Growth Management Plan (the “2007 Plan”). While the greatest part of the 1998 Plan remains intact, certain topics are superseded where specifically noted in this 2007 Amendment.

This 2007 Amendment expresses the community's vision and goals, and is responsive to land use changes in the Township, shifts in economic or demographic conditions, and the will of the residents. The development of a community is a dynamic and fluid process; therefore these documents will themselves be dynamic and fluid. Using this format, the Township’s growth management and preservation plans can be revised as frequently as necessary to maintain an up-to-date plan and set of policies that most accurately reflects the wishes of the community.

1.1 1996 Survey of Northfield Township Residents

The Urban Institute of Washington, D.C., has concluded that surveys of citizens are “possibly the most, if not the only, efficient way to obtain information on . . . citizens’ opinions on various community issues. Such information can be very useful for local governments in setting priorities for resource allocation and the determination of actions to improve existing programs”.

During the months of May and June 1996, a survey of Northfield Township residents was conducted to help inform proposed revisions to the Township’s Land Use Plan. The Township hired a professional consultant (Gregory B. Markus, PhD, of the University of Michigan) to design the survey. Before it was distributed, the questions on the survey were reviewed by the Whitmore Lake Chamber of Commerce, School Board and Elementary School, Youth League, Kiwanis Club, Township Police Chief, Planning Commission and Board of Trustees. Details of the process and complete results of the survey are available in the 1998 Plan and on the Township’s website. Dr. Markus has confirmed that the 1996 survey results should remain fundamentally valid unless the Township has experienced a marked change in the mix of housing and other development or in the population mix, including the types of people who reside in the Township and/or their reasons for moving here or choosing to continue to live here, which would not appear to be the case.

The 1996 survey showed that Township residents rate as “very or somewhat important” the Township’s:

- *Rural, small-town atmosphere* - 91%
- *Natural environment; woods, wetlands, open space* - 84%
- *Lower taxes than other areas* - 76%

Northfield Township residents as a group placed “high or very high priority” on:

- *Preserving undeveloped, natural areas - 77%*
- *Preserving agricultural use of land in areas planned for such use - 66%*
- *Improving the appearance of the downtown hamlet area - 62%*
- *Providing more, and safer, sidewalks and bike paths – 56%*
- *Providing a safe public beach on Whitmore Lake – 54%*

Events since 1996 demonstrate that Township residents continue to value preservation of the Township’s rural, small-town atmosphere, agriculture and natural features, while permitting limited, managed growth. In 2003, a referendum election was called to address a rezoning issue. It drew an unprecedented 42% of voters to the polls during an off-year election. The rezoning from AR-1 (1 house per 5 acres) to SR-1 (4 houses per 1 acre) was overturned by a margin of greater than 2 to 1.

1.2 2004 “Futuring Session”

In September 2004, a “Futuring Session” was held as part of the process of updating the 1998 Plan. Participants were encouraged to pick which of a number of possible responses they found most important in each of several different categories. Below are the top four responses to the topics raised during the session, listed in order of priority given by the respondents:

“Strengths and/or Positive Aspects of the Township”

- *Rural Environment*
- *Lack of Light Pollution*
- *No Malls or Fast Food Restaurants*
- *Natural Resources*

“Opportunities for the Township”

- *Preserve Rural Character*
- *Use Commercial Tax Base to improve US-23/N. Territorial Interchange*
- *Buy into the Ann Arbor Greenbelt Plan*
- *Establish Design Standards for Innovative Future Development*

“Threats to the Township”

- *Pressure from Developers*
- *Dependence on Residential Tax Base*
- *Rush to Growth*
- *Rezoning of Agricultural Areas*

“Weaknesses and/or Negative Aspects of the Township”

- *High Taxes*
- *Lack of Commitment to Preserve Farmland*
- *Poor Industrial/ Commercial Tax Base*
- *Lack of Non-Motorized/ pedestrian Trail System*

The 2004 “Futuring Session” reinforces the conclusion drawn by Dr. Gregory B. Markus in the 1996 survey regarding “Development”, “. . . that Northfield Township residents see a need for limited, managed development (particularly with regard to improving the downtown area, streets and traffic flow), but do not want development to occur at the cost of the small-town atmosphere and natural environment that are the Township’s strengths”.

1.3 What is planning?

Planning is a process that involves the conscious selection of policy choices relating to land use, growth, development and preservation in a community. A growth management plan is the primary township document that sets forth growth, development and preservation policies for the future of the community. Townships derived their authority for the preparation of a plan from the Township Planning Act, P.A. 168 of 1959. Section 6 of the Act states, in part:

"The township planning commission shall make and approve a basic plan as a guide for the development of unincorporated portions of the township."

Today, townships are required by P.A. 263 of 2001 to review their plans every 5 years, at a minimum, and follow new procedures designed to encourage coordinated planning with surrounding jurisdictions. This amendment is also designed to bring the Northfield Township Growth Management Plan into full compliance with P.A. 263 of 2001.

1.4 How is the 2007 Plan to be used?

The 2007 Plan serves many functions and is to be used in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. The 2007 Plan is a general statement of the Township's goals and policies and provides a single, comprehensive view of the community's vision for the future.
- B. The 2007 Plan shall serve as an aid in daily and long-term decision making. The goals and policies outlined in the 2007 Plan shall guide the Planning Commission and Township Board in their deliberations on zoning, subdivisions, capital improvements, and other matters relating to land use, development and preservation.
- C. The 2007 Plan provides the statutory basis upon which zoning decisions shall be based. The Township Zoning Act (P.A. 143 of 1943, as amended) requires that the zoning ordinance be in accordance with a plan designed to meet the residents' needs for natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, services, and other uses, and to insure that these uses are situated in appropriate locations. However, it is important to note that the 2007 Plan and accompanying 2007 Policy Map do not replace other Township ordinances, specifically the Northfield Township Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map. Zoning is only one of the many legal devices to be used to implement the 2007 Plan.
- D. Finally, the 2007 Plan serves as an educational tool and gives citizens, property owners, developers, and adjacent communities a clear indication of the Township's direction for the future.
- E. The 2007 Plan will not satisfy all short-term objectives of the numerous conflicting positions of citizens and Township officials. It is a long-range statement of general goals and policies aimed at achieving unified and coordinated development while preserving the small-town quality of life of the

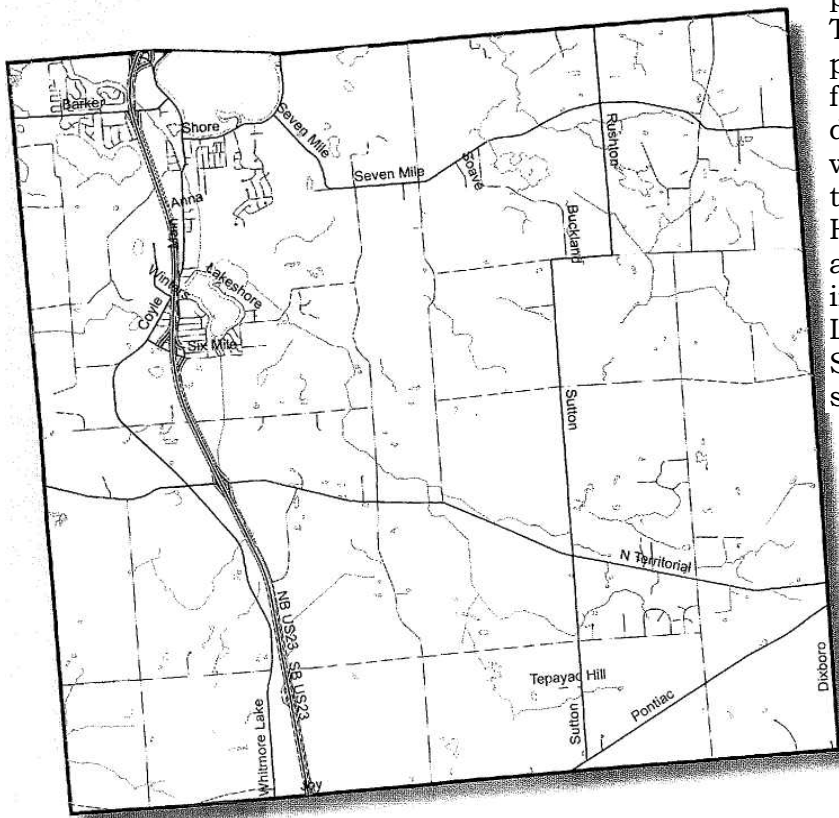
Township. As such, it provides the basis upon which long-term zoning and land use decisions shall be made.

1.5 The planning area

The planning area for the Growth Management Plan is delineated on the map shown on page 13. This area includes all portions of Northfield Township. The total acreage of the planning area is 23,190 acres or 36.2 square miles.

1.6 Organization of the 2007 Amendment

This 2007 Amendment is comprised of six parts. The first, titled "Introduction", discusses the existing 1998 Plan and approach for the 2007 Amendment, establishing a baseline from which planning may begin. The second, "Objectives", outlines strategies or policies that provide a framework for Township policies. The third, "Character Areas", outlines the anticipated physical development patterns necessary to make the goals and objectives a reality. The fourth, "Agricultural Preservation", provides for the creation of an 'agricultural preservation area' within which the Township will strive to promote the preservation of agricultural land. The fifth, "Horseshoe Lake Protection Area", discusses the need for stringent storm water management guidelines to assure that the properties surrounding Horseshoe Lake will not be impacted by additional runoff created by development in the upstream watershed of Horseshoe Lake. The sixth, "Implementation Strategies", provides a number of suggestions for moving the 2007 Plan forward.



The fifth, "Horseshoe Lake Protection Area", discusses the need for stringent storm water management guidelines to assure that the properties surrounding Horseshoe Lake will not be impacted by additional runoff created by development in the upstream watershed of Horseshoe Lake. The sixth, "Implementation Strategies", provides a number of suggestions for moving the 2007 Plan forward.

1.7 The 1998 Plan

The 1998 Plan remains an important part of the Northfield Township land development regulation and preservation strategy. The following are the principal characteristics of 1998 Plan, taken from its introduction, which will continue to apply to the 2007 Plan:

- A. The Plan is a policy type plan; that is, it describes the Township's policies regarding the future nature and character of the Township. The policies are aimed at the fundamental issues that the Township expects to face in the future.
- B. Since the Plan concentrates on policies, it is general in nature. That is, the Plan shows how the Township Board and Planning Commission intend to respond to various issues, and the approaches that will be followed in those responses. The Plan does not prescribe nor predict uses for specific parcels

of land, except in a few circumstances. Instead, the Plan describes the intended uses of general areas. The Plan is not intended to be a "blueprint" or a picture of the Township at some future date and it should not be interpreted in this fashion. Similarly, the Plan does not dictate that a specific action will be taken at a future time. The Planning Commission may amend any part of the GMP, or the overall GMP as necessary and appropriate.

- C. The Plan provides guidelines for making decisions or recommendations in the future. For example, the Plan will provide the framework for Planning Commission recommendations to the Township Board on rezoning petitions and subdivision plats, and for Board decisions on those matters. It will provide guidelines for Planning Commission decisions on site plans. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis at the time necessary and within the context of the Plan.
- D. The Plan recognizes that the future is uncertain and cannot be predicted, and that current perceptions of future conditions might change. The major issues also might change over time, and policies designed to respond to them might have to be modified or replaced with new ones. The Planning Commission intends to periodically review, refine, and otherwise modify the Plan as events unfold. Refinement might be in the form of restating, deleting, or adding to the issues, goals, or policies set forth in the following pages. It might also be in the form of detailed policies for specific areas of the Township. These changes might result from:
 - 1. An analysis of a specific development proposal, such as a rezoning petition.
 - 2. A capital improvement proposal by Northfield Township or other government entity.
 - 3. A periodic review of the Plan by the Planning Commission.
 - 4. From the detailed study of a part of the Township by the Planning Commission.
- E. The Plan is an overall guide to decisions, but continual use of the planning process, not just use of the Plan itself, will assure that decisions regarding land uses, development, and facilities will be the best possible. It is the Township Board's and Planning Commission's intent to continually improve the planning process as well as the Plan.
- F. In preparing this Plan, the Planning Commission decided to indicate "ultimate" uses for all parts of the Township, even though such a designation would extend well beyond the normal fifteen to twenty year time frame for the Growth Management Plan. The Plan designates future land uses for the entire Township rather than projections for a specific time period.
- G. The maps in the Plan are intended only to illustrate some of the policies described in the Plan. The maps are generalized and show general locations of uses and features. The text of the Plan should be consulted for a description of policies that apply to specific areas, features, or subjects.

1.8 Roles of the Planning Commission and Township Board in the planning process

The Township Planning Act, as amended by P.A. 263 of 2001, gives the Planning Commission the authority to prepare and adopt a growth management plan. Unlike the rules in effect when the 1998 Plan was adopted, however, the Township Board now has the ability to elect to make itself the final adopting body of a growth management plan. If the Board does not assert this authority, the Planning Commission remains the final approving body, with several procedural changes. First, the Planning Commission is required to notify all adjacent communities, the county, and railroads and utilities that request notification, and in some cases, regional planning agencies. Downtown development authorities, tax increment finance authorities, school boards, road commissions, and other local units of government are also empowered to register with the Township to receive notice. The parties on this "notice list" should be encouraged to cooperate and participate in the preparation of the plan.

Upon completion of a draft document, the Planning Commission must formally request the permission of the Township Board to distribute the draft plan. The process may not move forward until the Township Board authorizes the Planning Commission to distribute the plan and the members of the "notice list" have all received copies of the draft document. Upon receipt of the draft, all entities (except the county) have up to 65 days to submit their comments. Any comments must be submitted back to the Township and to the county. The county may not comment less than 75 days from receipt of the draft, and then has until 95 days from receipt to submit its comments back to the Township.

Following the mandatory review and comment periods, but before approving the proposed plan, the Planning Commission must hold a public hearing. The hearing must be held after the expiration of the deadline for comment. The Planning Commission must publish notice of the hearing twice in a newspaper of general circulation in the Township. The first publication must not be more than 30 days or less than 20 days before the date of the hearing. The second publication must not be more than 8 days before the date of the hearing.

At or after the public hearing, the Planning Commission may approve the proposed plan by a majority vote of its membership.

Approval of a plan by the Planning Commission is the final step for adoption of the plan, unless the Township Board by resolution has asserted its right to approve or reject the plan, as described above. In that case, after approval of a plan by the Planning Commission, the Township Board shall approve or reject the plan.

PART 2 - OBJECTIVES

Objectives are the heart of a growth management plan. They provide the framework for establishing policies and the measurements against which policies are evaluated. Objectives are derived from an assessment of existing and future conditions that the Township faces, and from citizens' desires for their community in the future. The following are the general Township objectives as stated in the 1998 Plan, but updated to provide great clarity and to reflect changes since 1998.

The order of listing of the following objectives does not imply relative importance.

2.1 Strengthen the identity of Northfield Township

Northfield Township contains an urbanized yet charming lake community surrounded by a significant amount of rural open space and agricultural activity that has been somewhat fragmented by large-lot residential development. Residents enjoy both the peaceful, small-town sense of place found in the lake community and the pastoral quiet of the surrounding rural countryside.

The Township is split geographically by a major north-south highway, US-23, the City of Ann Arbor to the south and the City of Brighton to the north. The Township's unique location and many charms are attracting significant development pressure.

It is the goal of the 2007 Plan to safeguard the exceptional quality of life found here and to let the community flourish and evolve in a well-designed fashion, by preserving and enhancing the unique characteristics of the community.

2.2 Preserve and enhance natural features

The natural features in the Township consist of its topography, wetlands, stream corridors, fencerows, meadows, and wooded areas. It is the intent of the Township to preserve and enhance these areas. Numerous woodlands are scattered throughout the Township and are a reminder of the woodlands that once covered the area before agricultural settlement occurred in the 1800's. Wetlands and stream corridors are interrelated; they are frequently found together. Stream corridors, and to some extent fencerows, provide an opportunity to tie the various natural features together, to preserve and in some cases establish continuity among natural areas. Continuity and connectivity are important to the objective of preserving natural features.

Natural features are important as visual amenities and are critical elements in establishing and maintaining the Township's identity. Natural features also provide substantial economic benefits to the community by improving air and water quality, providing storm water management, sustaining wildlife for hunters and fishermen, and increasing surrounding property values, among others. Most communities have these features to varying degrees, but the patterns that they collectively create are unique to each community. Protection and preservation of these features have an even more important purpose: they are vital elements in the natural system. They perform many interconnected functions and disruption of one can have adverse effects on the others and subtract something from the quality of life in both the Township and its neighboring areas.

The Township will seek not only to preserve its natural resources, but to enhance them for future generations by encouraging innovative, sustainable site design techniques,

landscaping using native trees, shrubs, grasses and perennials, and natural storm water management techniques such as vegetative swales and rain gardens.

2.3 Maintain a balance in the community's housing opportunities

A balanced mixture of housing types is an essential ingredient for a stable community. A balanced housing supply allows the community to retain its aging residents, attract young families, and house everyone else in between. A homogeneous housing stock inevitably leads to a loss in population as the largest demographic groups in the community evolve out of their current housing.

2.4 Preserve a majority of Northfield Township for rural uses

With the exception of the Whitmore and Horseshoe Lake areas and the adjoining sewer districts and the commercial areas identified in the North Territorial and US-23 area, nearly all of Northfield Township boasts the bucolic spirit of a rural, agricultural community. A prime objective is to preserve those qualities by identifying and protecting from development those areas most suitable for natural preservation or agricultural activity and promoting a wide variety of farming efforts, including small family farms and other low-impact agricultural land uses such as hobby and specialty farms, horticultural nurseries, Christmas tree farming, and small organic crop and livestock farming, and preserving and enhancing the rural community's appearance in recognition of the inherent economic and spiritual value found in open spaces, idyllic farm vistas and unspoiled landscapes. As such, residential housing development will be encouraged to locate within other areas of the Township where the existing infrastructure supports the impact caused by this type of development. Zoning and other methods of preserving agricultural lands, open space and natural features should be considered on an ongoing basis.

2.5 Streets should be consistent with and subservient to the character of the community

The street pattern is well established in Northfield Township. To some extent, the character of the community as it evolved has adapted to the framework established by US-23 and other major roadways. Many of these roadways may require improvements in the future, especially the North Territorial/US-23 interchange, to handle the increase in traffic caused by new development in neighboring communities and projected development within the Township near the interchange. The overall roadway system should be managed and improved in such a way as to serve, not dominate, the people of Northfield Township and neighboring communities.

2.6 Expand the Township's employment base, especially in the light industrial and research/development sectors

The Township has an excellent opportunity to achieve this objective. There is ample undeveloped land suitable for such uses, good access to the freeway system, public sanitary sewer services, and an educated and skilled labor force in the area. New developments have emerged along the North Territorial corridor since the Township adopted this objective in the 1998 Plan, and the Township continues its commitment to supporting and promoting job creation in the Township. By further expanding the employment base, the Township will continue to achieve major benefits, such as increased job opportunities, expansion of the tax base, and support for community identity and stability.

2.7 Preserve the stability of residential areas

Residential neighborhoods are the foundation of a community. Yet in a growing community such as Northfield Township, they can face destabilizing forces. These forces might be in the form of an increase in density in the vicinity of existing lower density housing, or development of open land in adjacent areas. The Township will continue to establish policies that will protect existing residential areas from the adverse impacts of changing conditions and thereby secure the stability of residential areas.

2.8 Provide expanded recreation opportunities in the community

Recreation opportunities will have to expand to meet the needs of a growing and changing population. There will be an increased need for senior citizen recreation facilities as well as additional parks and playgrounds for children. The expanded opportunities will be in the form of land, such as parks or playgrounds, new facilities, a non-motorized trail network, and public lake access. Both land and facilities will be provided by public agencies and private residential developments.

2.9 Preserve open space throughout the Township

It is the continuing goal of the Township to preserve permanently significant areas of open space, visual assets, agricultural lands and natural features throughout the Township. Some of this open space will be in recreation areas, either public or private, and thus accessible for use. However, not all open space need be accessible to be of benefit to residents. Open space and natural features provides visual, environmental and economic benefits, and should be available to all residents of the community.

2.10 Interconnect residential areas with streets, sidewalks, and paths for non-motorized uses

Interconnection of streets, sidewalks, and paths provides convenience for residents and helps establish a sense of community that is elusive if individual residential areas are physically isolated from each other. This is a very important objective for a growing community such as Northfield Township, because it requires long-range planning for extensions of such facilities in new developments. It is essential that interconnection of streets be planned so that through or non-residential traffic is not attracted into residential areas.

2.11 Improve streetscapes of existing major streets

Streetscapes, especially those of major streets, convey an image of a community to visitors and even impart a self-image to the residents of the community. Such images might not be wholly accurate, but accurate or not, they have their effect. Much of the appearance and character of a streetscape can be established by the development review process and by careful planning and implementation of street improvement projects.

Entrance zones are an especially important part of the overall streetscape. Such zones as freeway interchange areas and where major streets intersect the Township's boundaries offer special opportunities to express the image or character that the community wishes to convey, and special attention should therefore be paid to the design of these areas so as to preserve and enhance the Township's uniquely historic, rural character.

2.12 New development should be of high quality

Development that is conceived creatively, includes significant architectural character, reflects the unique character of the community, respects and enhances existing natural features and observes the principles of sustainability helps to strengthen the Township's identity and to prevent physical and economic deterioration. Sustainable structures are developed to make them eligible for multiple uses, therefore preventing their obsolescence as uses evolve, and to protect the natural environment. Furthermore, sustainable development recognizes the importance of conservation of natural and energy resources. This type of development is considered to be of high quality. The Township has pursued such development in the past and intends to pursue it even more aggressively in the future.

2.13 Manage growth

Northfield Township is growing. New types of urban and rural development are anticipated due to many factors, especially the growing costs and limited availability of non-renewable natural resources. Furthermore, a new sewer district (7 Mile Road) has been completed that may open additional areas of the Township for urban development. Developers are encouraged to seek development and redevelopment opportunities in already established urban and suburban communities where infrastructure already exists. It is the goal of the Township that its growth management policies will make growth orderly and sustainable, and ensure that such growth is adapted to existing development patterns and character. The challenge is to incorporate improvement in planning, design, execution and best practices in order to prevent or at least substantially minimize the adverse effects of growth on neighboring properties and the community at large.

2.14 Development Cost

To the extent permitted by law, developers of new developments should pay for the initial costs of new public infrastructure, and costs associated with identifying and minimizing all potential adverse environmental impacts. Construction of proposed public improvements shall be collateralized by performance guarantees to ensure proper completion of all such improvements.

2.15 Coordinate the policies of Northfield Township closely with those of neighboring communities

The increasing integration of the social and economic life of Northfield Township with its neighboring communities, together with the growing proximity of new development, requires coordination of land use, transportation, and other policies. Northfield Township will continue to coordinate its policies with those of neighboring communities and to recognize the interests of those communities while promoting and protecting its own interests in the formulation and implementation of its policies.

2.16 Updates to the 1998 Plan objectives

The objectives stated in the 1998 Plan remain those of the Township. Much progress has been made in implementing these objectives. For instance:

- with respect to the goal to expand the Township's employment base in the light industrial and research/development sectors, several substantial new businesses have been constructed along North Territorial Road in the RTM Research/Technology/Manufacturing District;
- with respect to the goals of strengthening the identity of Northfield Township, preserving natural resources in the planning area, preserving a majority of Northfield Township for rural uses, preserving the stability of residential areas, providing expanded recreation opportunities in the community, interconnecting residential areas with streets, sidewalks and pedestrian/bicycle paths, improving the streetscapes of existing major streets, and ensuring that new development is of high quality, the Northfield Township Zoning Ordinance has been updated in a number of significant ways, including the introduction of provisions governing the design of large scale retail establishments, allowing for clustered development and the preservation of open space and agricultural lands, the preservation of natural features, and the introduction of landscaping requirements; and
- with respect to the goals of preserving the natural resources in the planning area, preserving a majority of the Township for rural and agricultural uses, and preserving the stability of residential areas, the Township has supported applications for the purchase of development rights and resisted efforts to build high-density housing in rural open space and agricultural areas.

However, much work remains to be done to achieve the objectives of the 1998 Plan and the ongoing objectives of the 2007 Plan. The Township will continue to update and clarify these objectives as part of the plan monitoring program, as described in Part 15 of the 1998 Plan.

PART 3 - CHARACTER AREAS

This section of the 2007 Amendment introduces the use of “Character Areas”, each of which is delineated on the policy map shown on page 13 (the “2007 Policy Map”). As shown on the 2007 Policy Map, the Township has been divided into the following character areas:

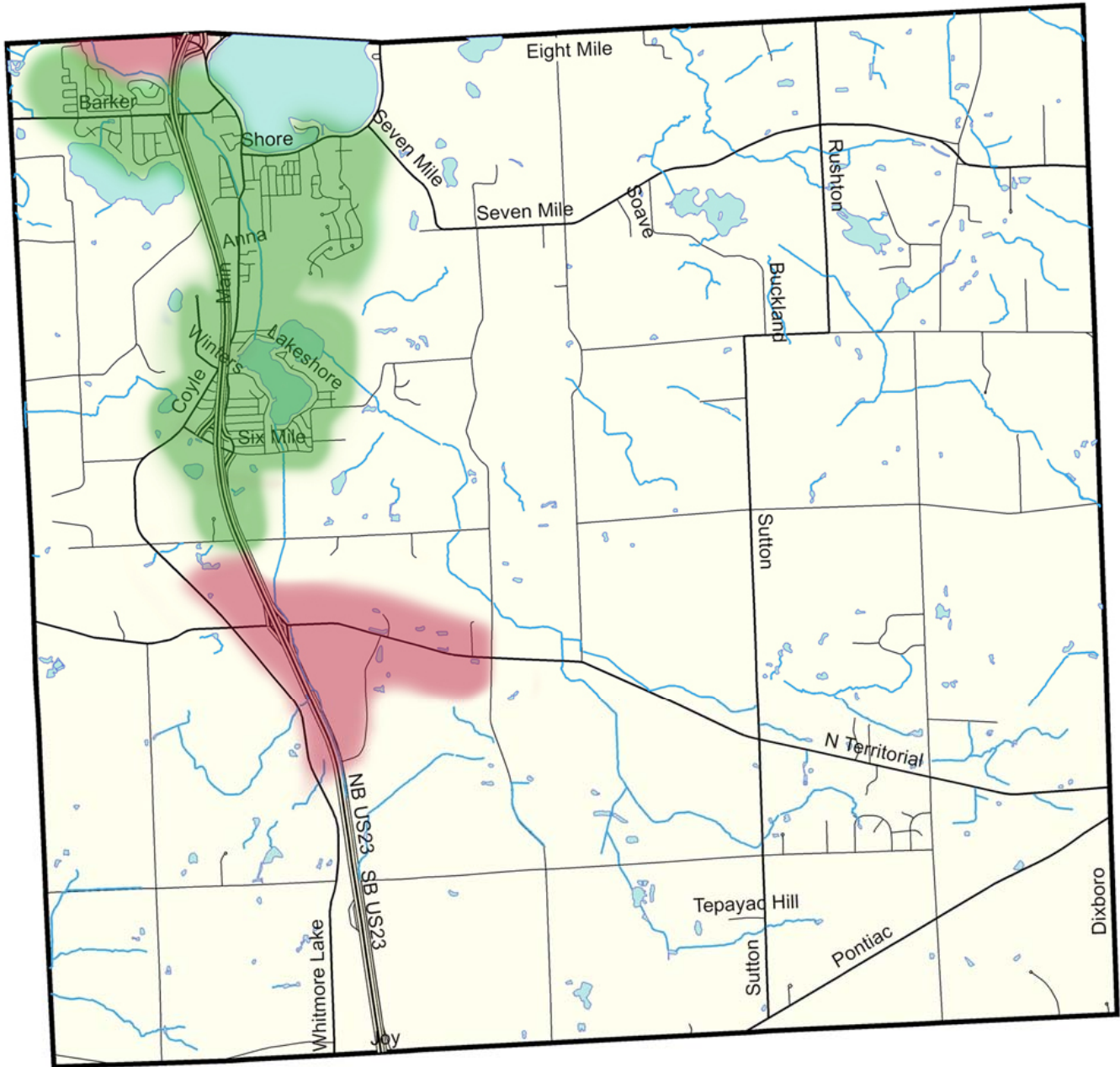
1. Rural Residential and Agricultural;
2. Town Center and Neighborhood Residential; and
3. Mixed-Use Activity Center.

Each of these character areas describes the unique and distinctive qualities that exist and are to be developed within the specific areas delineated on the 2007 Policy Map. Objectives are provided for each individual character area in order to preserve and enhance each area of the Township. Ultimately, it is intended that each of these character areas will be supported by sub-area master plans, site and architectural design guidelines, or other measures designed to provide detailed guidelines for the styles and patterns of future development. For the purpose of this 2007 Amendment, however, the character areas will be described by area-specific goals and objectives that are in part original to this document and in part adapted from Parts 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the 1998 Plan, which governed agricultural land use, residential land use, commercial land use and industrial land use, respectively. This 2007 Amendment shall be deemed to replace in full Parts 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the 1998 Plan.

Note that the 2007 Policy Map does not allocate specific uses or zoning districts on a parcel-by-parcel basis, but represents a graphic illustration of the character areas, for which the objectives are described herein.

The 2007 Policy Map

by Carlisle-Wortman



Agriculture & Rural Residential
(Agricultural Preservation Area)



Town Center &
Neighborhood Residential



Mixed Use
Activity Center

3.1 Rural Residential and Agricultural

The Agriculture and Rural Residential Character Area consists of farms, rural housing, open space, wetlands, woodlands, and other rural uses. The primary goal of this area is preservation of open space and agricultural-related activities. It is the intent of the 2007 Plan to permit limited residential development while preserving significant areas of agriculture, open space, natural features and rural character. To this end, the following area-specific goals are established.

The order of listing of the following goals does not imply relative importance.

- A. Protect and enhance the ability of current and future landowners to continue current farming operations and to develop new farming operations, whether large or small;
- B. Protect and retain the agricultural use of prime agricultural soils, and promote soil conservation;
- C. Protect rural landowners from residential development pressures, which threaten the sustainability of the rural area for agricultural activities;
- D. Limit the intensity of use, density of population and type and amount of development in order to protect and enhance open space and natural features;
- E. Direct non-agricultural uses away from areas of the Township ideally situated and conditioned for agriculture;
- F. Encourage ownership of land by farmers or entities committed to long-term agricultural use of the land and open space preservation.
- G. Encourage and support open space and agricultural operations through preservation programs;
- H. Discourage extension of public sewer or water service into areas of the Township ideally situated and conditioned for open space and natural features preservation and agriculture;
- I. Keep traffic at a low level in the Rural Residential and Agricultural Character Area for the safety and convenience of residents, in order to protect against accidents
- J. Encourage and support programs that will maintain the viability of agriculture through new and expanding markets for locally grown products, and explore other mechanisms to improve value and profitability of agricultural operations in the Township.



- K. In order to preserve open space and agricultural activities and natural features, permit residential development only when residential lots are, to the greatest possible extent:
- clustered to allow continued recreational, open space preservation and agricultural use of the remainder of the acreage; and
 - landscaped with native trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses so as to provide a buffer between open spaces and residential uses and to preserve the environment.
- L. Create permanent agricultural, open space and wildlife reserve and corridors through deed restrictions or easements.
- M. Where new developments have access to existing paved roads, those developments, wherever feasible, should be encouraged to use solely those paved roads for access to the development.
- N. Provide a mix of housing types and prices.
- O. Protect and enhance natural features, including wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, streams, hedgerows, slopes, and agricultural lands, from adverse developmental impact, both during and after construction.
- P. Consider land and roadway capacity when determining the appropriate density of development. The density shall be established at a level that will neither damage environmental features nor intrude upon open spaces.
- Q. Allow and encourage dwelling units to be placed on those portions of individual sites most suited to development in order to preserve natural features and to promote the other objectives listed herein, provided any increase in density is well-buffered from public roads and neighboring properties with native trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses.
- R. Ensure that new residential development is compatible in density and character to existing residences and neighborhoods in the immediate area, and to provide for smooth, logical transitions in density along the edges between the Rural Residential and Agricultural Character Area and the Town Center and Neighborhood Residential and Mixed-Use Activity Center Character Areas.
- S. Encourage residential development to be organized around and at the edges of natural features or recreational amenities (rather than through them), with site and architectural design that will create neighborhoods of lasting value and stability.
- T. Preserve open spaces, visual assets, agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive natural resource areas and rural community character by strongly encouraging



clustered residential development through the use of planned unit development, density bonuses, creative landscaping and other measures.

- U. Preserve contiguous open spaces, natural features and wildlife corridors, and otherwise protect and enhance wildlife and its natural habitat.
- V. Promote innovation and greater flexibility in the design of rural residential developments.
- W. Encourage sustainable, environmentally-conscious and energy-efficient development.
- X. Ensure compatibility of density, use and design between neighboring properties.
- Y. Protect the natural storm water storage capacity of the land in the Rural Residential and Agricultural Character Area and to help prevent flooding in more densely populated areas of the Township.
- Z. Prevent further degradation of air and water quality, purity and clarity, and hopefully even improve them.
- AA. Protect existing recreational uses of the Rural Residential and Agricultural Character Area, including hunting and fishing, and create new recreational uses such as an interconnected system of pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trails and parks.
- BB. Protect and stabilize the essential characteristics of the Rural Residential and Agricultural Character Area in order to promote and encourage suitable environments for very low-density family life.
- CC. Protect the economic value of the rural area's open space, natural features, and air and water quality from uncoordinated development that may adversely pollute, destroy or otherwise impair its beneficial use and preservation.
- DD. Protect historic, rural character of the Rural Residential and Agricultural Character Area by promoting the preservation and restoration of historic structures, including historic farm houses, barns and other farm buildings, and schoolhouses.
- EE. Protect the nighttime use and enjoyment of property by minimizing excessive and careless exterior light usage.
- FF. A comprehensive approach of planning, maintenance and development of best management practices will be employed to protect and improve the quality of the Township's natural resources.

3.2 Town Center and Neighborhood Residential

The Town Center and Neighborhood Residential Character Area is designed to foster orderly redevelopment of the hamlet area of the Township. The hamlet area, located around two lakes, Whitmore Lake and Horseshoe Lake, was originally settled as a Victorian lakeside resort area filled with hotels and summer cottages. The hotels are long gone and the summer cottages have become year-round homes, but the area maintains a quaint, small-town atmosphere. The hamlet boasts a mix of medium density residential and small-scale commercial, office and service-oriented uses centered around beautiful Whitmore Lake.



The primary goal for the Town Center and Neighborhood Residential Character Area is to preserve and strengthen the existing character of the hamlet area as a historic pedestrian-scaled community, with traditional site and architectural design that will be an aesthetically memorable place with vibrant streetscapes and community spaces that engage the waterfront. To this end, the following goals are established.

The order of listing of the following goals does not imply relative importance.

- A. Develop a plan for the Town Center and Neighborhood Residential Character Area to create a safe, unique, pedestrian-friendly, small-town environment. The plan should provide for mixed uses, including both residential and small commercial uses. It should provide for site design and architectural guidelines in keeping with the area's historic small-town ambience.

The plan should provide for community spaces to encourage interaction, and for the infrastructure necessary to support these uses.

The plan should provide for buffering (landscaped or otherwise) between these rather high-density mixed uses and the surrounding lower density uses, enabling smooth transitions between these areas. The plan should ensure that any growth will be appropriate and sensitive to the area's natural features and to existing development, in terms of scale and style.

Such plan might include the redevelopment of the hamlet waterfront area to include a mixed-use project with pedestrian amenities, community open space, marinas, fishing piers, public parking, and numerous community facilities. The plan might include the relocation of Main Street in this area to maximize public use of waterfront property.

- B. Concentrate neighborhood commercial development into a compact, unified development area that complements the scale and character of the waterfront and the hamlet area.

- C. Encourage development of traditional neighborhoods that include a mix of housing types and pedestrian-scaled institutional, office, or commercial uses, and open space. In these areas, developments should:
 1. incorporate clustering that maintains overall site density in order to provide permanent open space for recreational or environmental conservation use;
 2. provide comprehensive vehicular and non-motorized circulation systems;
 3. organize residential development around focal points such as open spaces, lake views and village greens designed to promote community interaction and recreation;
 4. include creative landscaping designed to preserve and enhance natural features and promote effective storm water management and improved filtration and water quality; and
 5. provide landscaped buffers using native trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses between new development and adjacent suburban, rural, or agricultural land uses.
- D. Promote small businesses, including specialized retail, and discourage strip commercial development.
- E. Enhance the hamlet's historic, lakeside charm by promoting the preservation and restoration of historic structures and ensuring a consistent architectural theme without restricting innovation.
- F. Promote long-term economic viability in the established hamlet area.
- G. Integrate public gathering areas with a pedestrian or non-motorized circulation system.
- H. Provide a land use transition between the hamlet area and adjacent areas of the Township.
- I. Parking areas paved with impervious surfaces should be minimized and landscaped so as to avoid the adverse effects associated with impervious surfaces, including storm water runoff, drainage, water quality and increased temperatures.



- J. Landscaping utilizing mostly native plants should be required to preserve and enhance the area's small-town charm, provide effective storm water management, promote infiltration, protect water quality, provide summer shade, reduce the adverse effects of paved surfaces and, when commercial sites abut residential sites, create visual and sound barriers for protection of the residential areas.

- K. All development should be accessible by sidewalks or non-motorized paths.
- L. Outside lighting should be designed to be energy-efficient and safe for commercial properties, customers and residents, while avoiding the creation of light pollution in the general neighborhood.
- M. Commercial uses should be located only in the sanitary sewer service area.
- N. Main Street is intended to have general commercial and office uses to serve primarily the residents of Northfield Township, mixed with residential uses. Commercial uses within these designated areas shall be designed to establish an attractive corridor and entrance to the Township, to facilitate pedestrian and non-motorized access, to maintain the area's small-town charm, and to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent residential and agricultural areas. The residential appearance and character of the Main Street corridor will be emphasized. Office uses that are compatible with a single family residential character may be included in this corridor, but additional commercial uses will be discouraged.
- O. Expansions of commercial land use areas should be allowed only when and if existing or planned commercial developments, including those in adjacent communities, no longer adequately serve the needs of Township residents. Such locations shall be convenient to urban and suburban neighborhoods and/or employment centers and have existing infrastructure to handle the expansion.
- P. Circulation patterns shall be integrated with the circulation systems (vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian) of adjacent properties.
- Q. In and around the hamlet area, urban housing should be encouraged at a density greater than 1 dwelling unit per acre, including single-family and multi-family in subdivisions, planned unit developments, site condominiums, or traditional neighborhood developments, having public water and sewer, and paved roads and sidewalks should be encouraged.
- R. Provide a variety of dwelling units, in terms of types, sizes and cost ranges, in the Town Center and Neighborhood Residential Character Area. This will ensure a choice of dwelling unit types and prices and a socioeconomic mix of the population.
- S. Coordinate with governmental and civic organizations to enhance the existing sense of community and to coordinate improvements to the hamlet area.
- T. Develop a plan for completion of the 7 Mile Road extension project and surrounding area.
- U. Develop a comprehensive approach for planning, maintenance and development of best management practices to protect and improve the quality of the Township's natural resources.

3.3 Mixed-Use Activity Center

The Mixed-Use Activity Center Character Area is designed to encourage development of commercial and employment-based uses, including light industrial and research/development, along with small-scale commercial uses and medium-density residential uses primarily along the US-23 corridor that runs through the township. These uses serve an important role in the local and regional economy, but also threaten to damage the Township's historic rural atmosphere and adversely impact existing development in the Horseshoe Lake floodplain. As such, development in the Mixed-Use Activity Center Character Area demands high standards for site and architectural design, environmental sensitivity, and use characteristics. To this end, the following goals are established.

The order of listing of the following goals does not imply relative importance.

- A. Develop a sub-area master plan for the North Territorial Road/US-23 interchange that includes mixed uses (including a combination of residential, light industrial and research/development, commercial, office, and other uses, similar to the mix of uses found in a traditional downtown area), site design and architectural guidelines, community spaces, provisions for infrastructure, and buffering between this area and the surrounding low density residential and agricultural uses.



- B. Establish a complementary and integrated mixture of housing, employment, shopping, entertainment and civic uses that create a walkable area with less reliance on automobile travel.
- C. Promote long-term viability and sustainability in the Mixed-Use Activity Center Character Area.
- D. Create clear boundaries for commercial uses, which should be visually buffered from public roads and neighboring agricultural and residential sites with native trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses. Expansion of strip commercial development will be discouraged, and additional commercial uses will also be discouraged unless public sanitary sewer services and other local and regional infrastructure already exist.
- E. Future commercial uses will continue to be concentrated in this Character Area, located at intersections of major streets or freeway interchanges.

- F. Increases in traffic volume along North Territorial Road and Whitmore Lake Road should be accompanied with selected widening, intersection or traffic signal improvements, and construction of a system of internal streets and well-spaced access points to access new development, while respecting landmark trees and other significant natural features.
- G. Any construction of new roads or expansion of existing roads and bridges will be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly in scale and design, and will be landscaped to protect and enhance the Township's natural resources and historic, rural character.
- H. Plan for future transit service to the Mixed-Use Activity Center Character Area to provide access to future employees and customers.
- I. Vehicular and pedestrian interconnections should be required in new developments to permit travel between adjacent parcels, where such movement is considered appropriate. Driveways should be combined and existing extra driveways eliminated to reduce the number of turning locations on access streets.
- J. Parking areas paved with impervious surfaces should be minimized and landscaped so as to avoid the adverse effects associated with impervious surfaces, including storm water runoff, drainage, and water quality and increased temperatures.
- K. Landscaping for all new development should use native plants designed to complement the Township's historic rural character and to enhance and protect the site's natural features and area watersheds. Landscaping should provide effective storm water management, promote infiltration, protect water quality and temperature, provide substantial areas of shade (particularly in paved areas), screen the development and parking areas from view from public roadways, and, when commercial sites abut residential or agricultural sites, create visual and sound barriers to protect the residential and agricultural areas. The overall design of each commercial center should be in keeping with the existing and planned future visual character of the surrounding areas, and should respect and enhance the site's natural features and protect watersheds.
- L. All development should be accessible by sidewalks or pedestrian/bicycle paths. The interior of shopping centers and larger commercial sites should be attractive and convenient for pedestrian movement, both between the parking lots and stores, and between stores, sidewalks along abutting streets, and adjacent properties, where appropriate, and should be designed to resemble and function as a traditional small town rather than a modern shopping center.
- M. Outside lighting should be designed to be energy-efficient and safe for commercial properties, customers and residents, while avoiding the creation of light pollution in the general neighborhood.
- N. The Township recognizes its regional role and that adjoining communities already provide large-scale regional commercial shopping opportunities.
- O. Commercial and residential uses should also be permitted and encouraged in mixed-use areas that have industrial and office uses.

- P. Areas of Northfield Township that have proximity to major highways and freeway interchanges will be the only areas open for highway commercial development.
- Q. Commercial development shall be organized into compact, unified commercial centers that complement the scale and character of existing development or that promote the desired character for areas where new development is planned.
- R. Piecemeal or scattered development should be avoided and uncoordinated commercial strip development should be discouraged. Where individual parcels of land are to be developed for commercial uses, coordination with adjacent properties, including common parking and driveways, shall be encouraged in order to reduce the number of access points to public roads.
- S. Industrial and commercial uses will be required to locate in the sanitary sewer service area so that effluent can be monitored and controlled. Industrial effluent may not be discharged into septic tanks and drain fields. Therefore, no industrial or commercial sites will be permitted outside the sanitary sewer service area boundary.
- T. Industrial operations that use large amounts of water in processing are discouraged because individual well and public sanitary sewer systems do not have capacities to handle such high volumes. Therefore, uses will be limited to research, fabrication and assembly, and the light, high technology types of industrial operations that do not use large volumes of water.
- U. A combination of mixed-use and park or campus type settings will be encouraged for new industrial areas, with infrastructure and landscaping provided for each development.
- V. Industrial uses should not create dangerous, injurious, noxious, or otherwise objectionable conditions, either within the industrial areas or in neighboring areas.
- W. Where industrial areas abut residential or agricultural property, buffers should be provided to protect the residential and agricultural areas. The buffers may consist of topography and distance, along with native trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses. Existing natural features are to be utilized as part of the buffering system where possible.
- X. Residential or mixed-use development (including residential) will be encouraged as a buffer between adjacent residential and agricultural areas and other uses in this Character Area. Such uses shall not create hazards to the environment or adverse impacts on existing or proposed residential or agricultural uses, and will be scaled, designed and landscaped so as to complement and enhance the adjacent properties.
- Y. Light and high-tech industrial uses are encouraged in the Mixed-Use Activity Center to provide employment opportunities and to expand the local tax base.
- Z. A comprehensive approach of planning, maintenance and development of best management practices will be employed to protect and improve the quality of the Township's natural resources.

PART 4 – OPEN SPACE/AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION



One of the many agricultural viewsapes that make up the majority of Northfield Township

Northfield Township has a rich tradition of agriculture. The Township's open space and agricultural land account for a sizable share of the undeveloped land that defines the Township's scenic beauty and rural character.

Residential development in open space and agricultural areas imperils the long-term viability of agriculture and the significant reduction in open space. Residential development increases land values which, in turn, makes it difficult to preserve open space and keep land in agricultural use. It also

leads to potential conflicts between farmers and rural residential property owners over agricultural practices, increases traffic congestion on rural roads, and generally makes it more difficult to farm and diminishes the rural character of the community.

In consideration of the desire to preserve, continue, or establish open space and agricultural activities within the Township, an open space/agricultural preservation area is hereby established.

The 2007 Plan promotes the preservation of sufficient agricultural land to retain the local agricultural resource, maintain the long term viability of the agricultural industry, preserve the rural character and agricultural heritage that define the community, and protect the quality of life enjoyed by Township residents.

The preservation area coincides with the Rural Residential and Agricultural Character Area. These areas are outside the planned areas for commercial, industrial, or traditional residential development, and are consequently the most important to the long-term preservation of open space and the viability of the agricultural industry. The 2007 Policy Map on page 13 shows the lands included in the agricultural preservation area.

Factors considered in selecting the open space/agricultural preservation area includes:

1. The vast majority of parcels in the area are zoned AR;
2. The majority of soils in the area are rated by the USDA Soil Conservation Service as Class II, which are the highest ranking soils for crop production in Washtenaw County;
3. To ensure that the area is non-exclusionary for potential interest in a PDR option;

4. To coincide with the areas indicated by Township demographics to be the most likely to able to be preserved for ongoing or new agricultural activities;
5. To recognize that lands contained within the preservation area are highly sought-after tracts for development; and
6. To underscore continuity with adjoining communities which have also designated similar open space/agricultural preservation goals, and to recognize that the success of other townships' agriculture and open space preservation strategies rely to some extent on land use decisions made within Northfield Township.

Lands selected for preservation may overlap other zoned uses. The preservation designation means that these lands should be prioritized for preservation as opportunities arise.

There are a number of strategies to preserve farmland, including the use of zoning (for instance, by limiting the uses permissible in agricultural areas, requiring ten or twenty acre lot sizes, or regulating the number of splits available on large lots) and development rights agreements that provide for the purchase or transfer of development rights. It is recognized that zoning alone will not preserve farmland. As residential development pressure rises, applications will be made to rezone agricultural properties to other, higher-impact zoning designations. The Township recognizes that a successful open space/agricultural preservation strategy also requires working to improve the economics of farming, particularly in the fast-growing rural area found in north Washtenaw County.

The 2007 Plan promotes the use and continued development of zoning approaches in the open space/agricultural preservation area to encourage clustering, and conservation design strategies that will minimize the impact of any residential development on agriculture and natural features. The Township will require buffers between open space/agricultural and residential and commercial areas, and encourage any proposed development to be carried out using planned unit development or open space development options. The Township will require an impartial community impact analysis to determine the potential costs and benefits of any new residential developments on Township services and finances, the environment and the community.

The Township also recognizes that development rights agreements (i.e., transfer, leasing, donation, or purchase of development rights) can play an important role in farmland preservation. As development rights options become available, the Township should encourage their use to preserve open space and farmland in the preservation area, and work with public and private entities to raise money for the purchase of conservation easements within the preservation area.

Finally, the Township shall support applications for P.A. 116 protection.

PART 5 – HORSESHOE LAKE WATERSHED PROTECTION

The Horseshoe Lake Protection Area comprises the upstream watershed of Horseshoe Lake, and is being developed in response to the concerns of the Township and the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner that development anywhere in the upstream watershed of Horseshoe Lake will cause additional runoff that will adversely impact properties within the floodplain surrounding Horseshoe Lake.

Horseshoe Lake represents a sensitive and important area of the Township. The area surrounding the lake is within a designated floodplain, and commonly experiences flooding during rain events. As a consequence, the Washtenaw County Drain Commission has established a policy which requires a high level of scrutiny for all projects within the upstream Horseshoe Lake watershed and which elevates the submittal requirements for

Drain Commission approval to include storm water modeling and infrastructure beyond that usually required by the Drain Commission. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all new development in the area can be constructed without impact to the existing properties and natural features in close proximity to Horseshoe Lake.



The Township will work with the Drain Commission and environmental experts to develop policies to encourage creative site design and storm water management practices so as to maintain and even improve storm water infiltration within the upstream Horseshoe Lake watershed, and to limit rezoning or development if necessary to achieve these aims. Any development in this area should proceed only with a positive recommendation or approval from the Drain Commission. All rezoning or other amendments to the Township Zoning Ordinance or Zoning Map in this area shall be done so only with the review and comment of the Drain Commission.

PART 6 - IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In furtherance of the objectives set forth in the 2007 Plan, the Planning Commission and Township Board shall work to implement the following measures. The Planning Commission shall prioritize these implementation measures on an annual basis and determine the extent to which the Township is actually implementing the policies of the 2007 Plan, as part of the plan monitoring program, as described in Part 15 of the 1998 Plan. The order of listing of the following measures does not imply relative importance, and may not be all-inclusive as the Township moves forward with implementation of the objectives and goals specified in the 2007 Plan.

6.1 Hamlet Sub-Area Master Plan

Consider preparing a sub-area master plan for the hamlet area and rezoning, amending current zoning regulations or developing an overlay district in order to effectuate the following:

Improve the appearance of the hamlet area.

- A. Promote high-quality design through the use of design standards to ensure that new development is complementary to and in keeping with the unique, lakeside resort character of the hamlet.
- B. Encourage preservation and restoration of existing historical architecture.
- C. Encourage a lively, small-town atmosphere
- D. Limit overall building sizes to maintain the existing small-town character.
- E. Encourage traditional, mixed-use commercial/residential buildings.
- F. Create public spaces and sidewalks to encourage community interaction.
- G. Provide a public beach on Whitmore Lake.
- H. Protect and enhance the hamlet's natural features (especially Whitmore and Horseshoe Lakes).
- I. Provide for safe pedestrian, bicycle and, ideally, equestrian transit around and through the hamlet.

6.2 Mixed-Use Activity Center Sub-Area Master Plan

Consider preparing a sub-area master plan or overlay district for the Mixed-Use Activity Center Character Area in order to effectuate the following:

- A. Improve safety and circulation of existing roads and plan for new streets that will allow for safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle and, ideally, equestrian transit around and through the entire area.
- B. Explore potential amendments to current zoning regulations to encourage a walkable, small-town atmosphere, to include mixed use uses (including a combination of residential [including affordable housing], light industrial and research/development, commercial, office and other uses, similar to the mix of

uses found in a traditional downtown area) along with natural areas that will be sustainable over the long term.

- C. Ensure that the most effective, environmentally sensitive storm water management methods are employed to protect the existing residents of the Township (particularly those within the Horseshoe Lake floodplain) from flooding and degradation of water quality.
- D. Protect and enhance the area's significant natural features.
- E. Protect existing open space/agricultural uses in the vicinity.
- F. Explore means to create a logical edge between high-density, mixed-use areas to neighboring agricultural areas.
- G. Encourage the highest-density uses only along existing paved roads.
- H. Protect lower-density properties from higher-density uses by substantial buffers to be planted as greenbelts.
- I. Provide for an integrated, non-motorized connection between the North Territorial Road/US-23 interchange area, the new high school, and the hamlet area.

6.3 Rezoning of Agricultural Land

- A. It is preferred that any development of properties currently zoned AR be achieved through the use of the "Rural Open Space Option" as provided in the Zoning Ordinance.

Rezoning for higher density is discouraged in the AR districts. Any future rezoning of property currently zoned AR will be considered to allow for orderly transitions in density from regions where Township sewer is currently provided.

Such rezoning will be considered when designed to protect and promote open space and agricultural uses throughout the Township; to preserve and enhance the natural features of the area, and to avoid detrimental effects to other properties within the Township, especially those within the Horseshoe Lake floodplain.

- B. Consider developing expanded density bonus provisions rather than permitting the re-zoning of property so as to allow for greater density than is currently permitted, provided that the land is developed so as to allow for the preservation of natural features, open space and agricultural viability and to encourage better, more energy-efficient design in keeping with the Township's unique historic character.
- C. Maintain significant natural corridors between new developments and existing large lot residential areas.

6.4 Sustainable Open Space and Agricultural Areas

Consider methods to help promote the value and profitability of agricultural operations in the Township, whether large or small, including:

- A. The purchase of development rights.
- B. Buffering between agricultural uses and residential (or other) uses.
- C. Clustering of any new residential developments so as to maintain relatively large tracts of undivided land suitable for recreational or agricultural uses and wildlife preservation.
- D. Promotion of local markets, value-added agricultural operations, recreational agriculture, agri-tourism, hobby and specialty farming stressing organic and sustainable farming practices, and local farm awareness.
- E. Identify existing land being actively farmed and other properties recognized as high-quality crop land based on soil conditions.

6.5 Density Graduation in Residential Development

Ensure that new residential development is compatible with existing open space and agricultural and residential uses in terms of density, lot sizes and building types. Density graduation, buffer uses or areas and natural features should be used to create a gradual transition.

6.6 Planned Unit Development (PUD) Review

Consider improvements to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions of the zoning ordinance to promote the objectives of the 2007 Plan, including the preservation of open space and natural features.

6.7 Transfer of Development Rights

Consider adoption of density transfer provisions within the township in order to allow development in the most appropriate areas while preserving those areas in which development would be detrimental to the community.

6.8 Natural Resource, Watershed and Groundwater Protection

- A. Organize a means of gathering of information regarding the Township's natural features, including wetlands, stream corridors, drains, lakes, floodplains, woodlands, steep slopes and ground water recharge areas, and develop policies to protect and enhance these valuable natural resources.
- B. Create policies to limit impervious surfaces, maintain or improve air and water quality, improve storm water management, encourage groundwater recharge and otherwise protect the Township's current and future residents and natural environment.
- C. Consider policies to protect the Huron River, Horseshoe Lake and Johnson Creek watersheds.

- D. Work with the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner to develop policies to protect the residents of the Horseshoe Lake Protection Area from flooding and other damage caused by storm water.
- E. Consider policies to protect and conserve the Township's groundwater so as to ensure that the Township's residents will have safe and abundant drinking water in perpetuity.

6.9 Developer-Financed Improvements

Consider policies to ensure that, to the extent permitted by law, developers and or the residents/occupants of new developments will pay for the initial costs of new infrastructure and the identification and minimization of all potential adverse environmental impacts, which shall be collateralized by performance guarantees to ensure proper completion of all such improvements.

6.10 Land Development Standards

Consider the adoption of land development standards.

6.11 Trail System

Consider the creation of a system of pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian paths throughout the Township, with links to those being created in neighboring townships, as well as any other opportunities for recreation, such as parks, gardens and community farms.

6.12 Dark Skies

Define practical and effective measures by which the obtrusive aspects of excessive and careless exterior light usage can be minimized while promoting safety, security and the nighttime use and enjoyment of property.

6.13 Community Impact Assessments

Enact policies to ensure that the Planning Commission and, where relevant, the Township Board are provided with such non-biased information from sources acceptable to the Township as necessary to discern and assess the potential developmental, ecological, social, economic, physical and traffic impacts of a proposed project on the natural environment and neighboring properties.

6.14 Landscaping

- A. Consider policies to ensure that new developments are landscaped so as to protect existing residents from undesirable impacts (including those of storm water runoff and degradation of water quality), to promote an atmosphere of small-town charm in the Town Center and Neighborhood Residential Character Area and the Mixed-Use Activity Center Character Area, and the rural atmosphere of the Rural Residential and Agricultural Character Area.
- B. Develop programs to educate the community regarding landscaping methods that help to preserve air, water and soil quality and help to limit storm water runoff and improve infiltration. Seek grant money and community involvement

to create demonstration gardens on Township property surrounding the Township Hall, Public Safety Building and the North Territorial firehouse.

6.15 Open Space Preservation

Continue with policies designed to protect open space and the protection and continuity of natural features, and to promote clustering.

6.16 Site Plan Review

Consider improvements to the site plan review process to help ensure that the proposed developments will meet certain established standards of the Township, neighboring property owners are informed of and involved in the review process, developers and Township officials can work together to tailor each development to the specific site and immediate neighborhood, that the Township's natural features are protected, and that potential detrimental effects on existing residents are considered.

6.17 Character Preservation

Consider updates to existing setback and landscaping requirements to ensure that new developments will be well-integrated into their sites with minimum disruption to neighboring properties, and that the Township's historic rural character is maintained.

6.18 Brownfield Redevelopment

Consider policies to encourage the redevelopment of previously developed properties (particularly those left vacant or which do not satisfy current standards) and to ensure the long-term sustainability of all new developments.

6.19 Design Guidelines

Consider adoption of design guidelines in order to promote the implementation of high-quality architectural and site design for all new construction within the Township, whether on a Township-wide basis or by character area.

6.20 Discouraging Expansion of Commercial Zones

Consider policies to discourage the creation of any new commercial areas within the Township. Those properties already zoned for commercial uses allow for more commercial development than is necessary to serve the commercial and service needs of all existing and future residences, businesses and institutions in the Township, especially given the vast range of commercial services already available nearby.

6.21 Blight

Consider policies designed to address blighted areas within the Township that pose environmental and other safety concerns or cause a degradation of neighboring property values.

6.22 Historic Preservation

Consider policies to preserve and rehabilitate historic structures within the Township, and to protect and promote the historic rural and lakeside resort character of the Township.

6.23 Sustainability

Consider policies to promote the sustainability of all new developments within the Township, including energy efficiency and low impact design, such as providing incentives for developers that achieve Energy Star or LEED certification.

6.24 Community Involvement

Promote community involvement, including that of business and residential associations, to help with visioning sessions and implementation of the objectives of the 2007 Plan.

6.25 Regional Cooperation

Coordinate with neighboring communities, the county and regional groups to develop regional policies to help achieve the Township's goals.