

Chapter Two

PLANNING ISSUES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Introduction

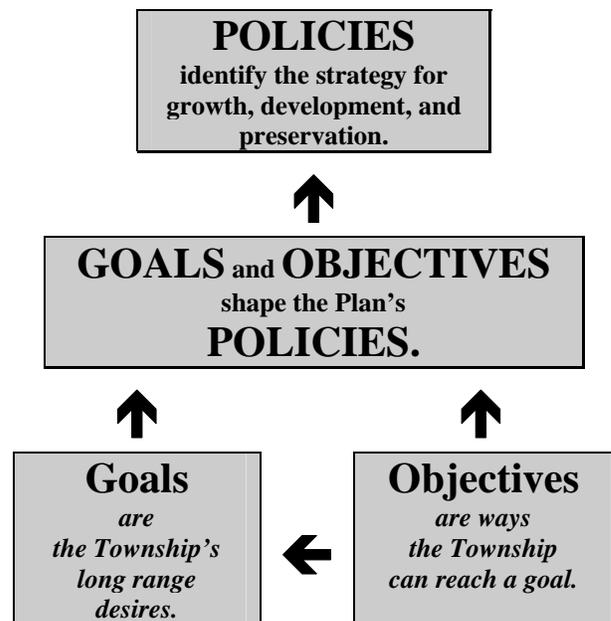
The purpose of this Plan is to establish a basis for future land use and public services in Locke Township. The Township wants to guide and shape future growth and development and not allow the community to evolve merely by chance. To effectively plan for the Township's well being with regard to future land use and public services, it is necessary to identify key goals and objectives in response to important planning issues facing the Township. The following is a summary of these planning issues and related goals and objectives.

The goals and objectives are important for several reasons:

- The goals and objectives provide current and future residents of Locke Township with an overview of the intended future character of the community.
- The goals and objectives identify and outline the basic parameters which should be used in guiding land use and public services policies.
- The goals and objectives serve as references upon which future rezoning, land development, and public services decisions can be evaluated.

Planning Issues, Goals & Objectives

Each issue presented in this Chapter is followed by a set of goal and objective statements. Planning goals are statements that express the Township's long range desires. Each goal has accompanying objectives which are general strategies that the Township can pursue to attain the specified goal. For example, Mr. Jone's goal may be to establish a riding stable in the community. To achieve this goal, two of his objectives may be to seek a bank loan and meet with a real estate agent to discuss the purchase of a suitable parcel.



Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Plan

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

- Growth Management
- Community Character and Environment
- Housing
- Commercial and Industrial Development
- Circulation
- Regional Coordination

The planning issues presented in the following pages are not intended to be all inclusive. Rather, they are presented as the primary issues that Locke Township should address at this time as it establishes a future for itself. These issues will evolve over time and should be reexamined periodically and the appropriate modifications made.

Growth Management

Locke Township's population has grown from 921 in 1930 to 1,671 in 2000. While the total population change in the community may be comparatively low, it should be recognized that the Township's growth rate has surpassed that of the county and state for the past 30 years. Locke Township is a very desirable place to live, with abundant natural resources and open spaces, easy access to highways and regional employment centers, an overall rural character, and nearby retail and other urban services. It is reasonable to anticipate that the population of the Township may increase by 500 persons or more during the next 20 years (see Appendix C). Based upon an average household size of 2.9 persons, such a population increase would yield approximately 172 new households. The development of a single 80-acre parcel alone, as a platted or condominium subdivision, could potentially yield 40 – 60 new dwellings and 180 new residents.

The character and quality of life will be impacted by the way the Township chooses to manage future growth and development. Managed growth can minimize unnecessary loss of natural resources including farmland; preserve the Township's existing character and environmental integrity; encourage orderly land development; assure adequate public services and wise expenditures of Township funds; provide varied housing opportunities, and limit traffic hazards and nuisances.

Tax revenues dictate, in part, the extent and quality of public services. Although development will increase the Township's tax base, the same development will place additional demands upon public services. Contrary to traditional planning wisdom and thought, recent research has shown that development does not necessarily "pay its way," particularly as it applies to traditional single family residential development.

In this regard, it is advantageous to maintain a compact form of growth and development and, to the extent it is practical, locate higher density and intensity development near or adjacent to areas currently being served with higher levels of public services or anticipated to be served by such services in the future. Current police and fire protection services, and the roadway network, appear to be meeting the present needs of area residents. High growth rates that may be brought on by market conditions and zoning provisions will necessitate greater expenditures of Township funds. Maintaining the current quality of public services, let alone the pursuit of improvements, can be very difficult in the face of unmanaged growth and development.

This Plan must provide a strategy for effectively shaping and guiding future growth and development in a feasible manner, consistent with the aspirations of the citizenry of the Township and the opportunities and constraints presented by its natural and cultural characteristics. The accommodation of growth and development should assure compatibility between land uses and the preservation of the dominant rural character of the community.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT GOAL: *Guide future development in a manner that assures land use patterns compatible with public facilities and services, the cost-effective use of tax dollars, and the preservation of natural resources and rural character.*

Objectives

- 1) Identify locations in the Township by sound planning and zoning that are appropriate for agricultural, residential, and non-residential use, taking into account the constraints and opportunities presented by the Township's natural features and the availability of public facilities and services (including road infrastructure).
- 2) Preserve the Township's natural resources through a coordinated future land use strategy and related implementation tools that permit reasonable use of land while discouraging unnecessary destruction or loss of natural resources, including farmland resources, wetlands and woodlands.

- 3) Establish and administer effective land use and development review regulations to ensure development is compatible with the policies, goals and objectives of this Plan.
- 4) Guide development into areas where public facilities and services have adequate capacity to accommodate the growth and increased development intensities, and where the provision or expansion of public facilities is cost effective.
- 5) Prohibit new growth and development that requires levels of public facilities and services not available, until the time such levels of services become available.
- 6) Explore options to address identified public service and/or facility needs and pursue strategies to address such needs.
- 7) Wherever legally permissible, local regulations should require new developments to pay to the Township the direct and indirect public services costs associated with that development. These costs should not be imposed on existing residents except where public interests and benefits may be at stake.
- 8) Discourage public services improvements that will have the effect of encouraging development at a rate beyond the Township's ability to ensure adequate public health, safety, and welfare, or development in areas of the Township not designated for such growth.
- 9) Separate incompatible land uses by distance, natural features, or man-made landscape buffers that adequately screen or mitigate adverse impacts.
- 10) Monitor local attitudes about public facilities and services, including police and fire protection, water and sewer, and recreation.
- 11) Provide regular opportunities for public input on growth and development issues facing the Township.

Community Character and the Environment

The protection of the Township's rural character and natural resources is extremely important to the residents of Locke Township. "Rural character" is a subjective quality, but is typically associated with an overall perception of abundant open spaces comprised of farmland and/or other open landscapes including woodlands, wetlands, fields, and suburban and urban development of an appropriate scale and form compatible with this overall perception. These open space elements are important in shaping the character of the Township, and provide vital environmental roles including wildlife habitats, flood control, water purification, groundwater recharge, and air quality. The Township has abundant natural resources and sensitive environmental areas including the Red Cedar River and its tributaries. Preservation of these resources can be very difficult because the process of encroachment can occur slowly. Substantial damage to an entire

ecosystem frequently occurs incrementally over a long period of time.

Residents strongly support the existing rural character of the community and its resources, and want these features to be important parts of the Township's future. Effective protection of rural character and the natural environment does not require the prohibition of growth and development. Managed growth and development encourages the continuation of the Township's overall rural character. The preservation of rural character and environmental resources in the face of growth and development is dependent upon site development practices that actively incorporate the protection of open spaces, natural resources and environmental ecosystems in the development plan. Limitations on the extent to which suburban and urban development patterns are permitted to encroach into more rural and resource-rich areas are an important part of the equation.

Increased environmental knowledge, awareness, and education, when incorporated into a comprehensive planning strategy, can minimize the potential for environmental degradation. Establishment and protection of interconnected systems of natural/environmental areas, including wetlands, woodlands, stream corridors, and open fields can provide a diverse and viable habitat for wildlife and native plants.

Zoning and related development regulations can encourage the protection of the Township's natural resources and rural character.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER and ENVIRONMENT

GOAL: *Preserve the dominant rural character of Locke Township and the abundance and integrity of its environmental resources.*

Objectives

- 1) Encourage land development designed in scale with existing developed areas and the dominant rural character of the community through reasonable standards addressing density, building size, height, and other development features.
- 2) Encourage land development that actively strives to preserve open spaces as part of a development project (woodlands, wetlands, fields, and streams), by use of such tools as conservation easements, land trusts, and more flexible development standards.
- 3) Encourage the maintenance of historically significant structures and a structurally sound housing stock, and the rehabilitation or removal of blighted structures and yard areas.
- 4) Encourage development patterns that preserve the natural beauty and rural character of existing road corridors, including scenic vistas.

- 5) Ensure that the quantity and quality of new development does not unreasonably create increases in air, noise, land, and water pollution, or the degradation of land and water resource environments including groundwater.
- 6) Limit development densities and intensities near or adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas.
- 7) Ensure all development complies with local, county, state and federal regulations intended to ensure environmental protection.
- 8) Encourage development patterns and site improvements that minimize disturbances to natural features including woodlands, wetlands, streams, topographic features, and important wildlife corridors.
- 9) Encourage the establishment of natural buffer areas between environmentally sensitive areas and development activities.
- 10) Assure development proposals to comply with all applicable regulations pertaining to on-site sewage disposal and potable water, including the requirements of the Ingham County Health Department and the Michigan Department of Community Health.
- 11) Encourage septic fields to be placed as far away from water and wetland resources as reasonably possible.
- 12) Review proposed development in light of its potential impact upon wetlands, woodlands, and other natural resource areas.
- 13) Establish an interconnected township-wide network of open space areas that facilitate natural drainage, wildlife habitat corridors, and nature interpretive and recreation trails.
- 14) Recognize the special environmental role of the Red Cedar River, Squaw Creek, Wolf Creek, and other key drainage corridors and discourage development that will disrupt their natural character including the wetland, woodland, and other wildlife habitats of these corridors.
- 15) 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 use and development practices.

Farming

Farming has historically been a dominant component of Locke Township and the Township continues to be a strong agricultural community today. However it is important to note that the number of farms in the Township has declined over the years, as has the total acreage devoted to farming. Still, this decline has not been as pervasive as in other areas of Ingham County and Michigan as a whole.

There exists a demonstrated and increasingly critical need in the state for land devoted to agricultural use. Farm operations produce the food and fiber that our society relies on as well as the society of other countries. Agriculture has long been recognized for contributing to the economic stability of local communities and is the second leading industry in Michigan. Studies undertaken in 1995 by the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University (Dr. Robert Burchell, Fiscal Impacts of Alternative Land Development Patterns in Michigan) found that farmland and open space typically produce more revenue than the cost to provide such land with public services. The same finding was reached by a 1996 University of Michigan study that focused on Scio Township in Washtenaw County.

Agricultural resources are being consumed at an alarming rate by residential sprawl. According to the U.S. Census, Michigan lost 10 acres of farmland every hour between 1982 and 1992. Competing land uses, particularly residential uses, are escalating land prices in the Locke Township area beyond the range of economic viability for farming. This is especially critical for the next generation of farmers who may not be able to afford to buy land to farm. These trends emphasize the importance and need for appropriate farmland preservation strategies. This importance is further illustrated by the considerable legislation being considered in Michigan to stabilize the farming industry and heighten its economic viability.

Permitting a comparatively high level of residential development in a community's agricultural area will encourage residential encroachment of farmlands, increased land use conflicts between farm and non-farm residents, and higher property assessments resulting in a decreased long-term business environment for agriculture – all of which collectively hinder the long term economic viability of farm operations.

Effective farmland preservation is dependent upon the management of the number and size of new non-farm lots, to avoid excessive encroachment and the wasteful conversion of excess tillable land for each home site. In the last few years there have been efforts to establish a number of local and state programs and initiatives to provide other options to landowners. One such important program is the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), whereby a landowner can voluntarily sell the development rights to a

governmental body in turn for placing an easement on the land prohibiting future non-farm development. Another program is the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). This program enables a landowner to transfer (through purchase) the farm parcel's development rights to another parcel in an area planned for growth and development. Both the sale and transfer of development rights provides landowners the opportunity to realize the development value of their land without having to actually develop it. Under both programs, the other private property rights remain in tact. The protected land remains in private ownership and can be sold to anyone at any price. However the land cannot be developed for residential, commercial or industrial purposes.

The Township recognizes the economic and other challenges facing the local farming community. The Township also recognizes the economic benefits of local farm operations not only for their productive capacity and contribution to the local economy, but also for their limited demand on public services, infrastructure, and township revenues. If Locke Township can provide viable preservation options to owners of farmland, it can stabilize and strengthen the industry long-term and benefit the community as a whole.

FARMING GOAL: *Encourage the continuation of local farming operations and the long-term protection of farmland resources.*

Objectives:

- 1) Identify areas that are supportive of long-term farming, and minimize land use and other hindrances to agriculture through complementary zoning provisions.
- 2) Minimize potential land use conflicts in designated agricultural areas by limiting the encroachment of non-farm land uses, while similarly providing flexibility for the conversion of farmland to reasonable alternative uses.
- 3) Establish a Right-to-Farm disclosure program designed to ensure that new builders/owners of homes in designated agricultural areas are aware that the primary and preferred use of land in such designated agricultural areas is agriculture. The statement should provide notice to new homeowners to expect certain odors, noises, dust, and use of crop food and crop protection products.
- 4) Discourage large residential parcels, and its associated wasteful consumption of farmland resources, as the only means to control development densities in designated agricultural areas.

- 5) Encourage development patterns that minimize disturbances to, and premature destruction of, farmland areas by responsible and innovative site planning including clustering/open space zoning –residences clustered on only a portion of the parcel and the balance is preserved for agriculture.
- 6) Encourage buffer areas between new residential developments and abutting agricultural areas.
- 7) Support P.A. 116 farmland preservation agreements.
- 8) Support the establishment and funding of voluntary Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs administered at the county or regional level.
- 9) Discourage the extension of municipal utilities (such as sewer and water) into designated agricultural areas.

Housing

Residential development will be the major land use change in the coming ten to twenty years. Locke Township is a very attractive place to live for many prospective residents. The Township has abundant natural resources and open spaces, an overall rural character, close proximity to desirable urban services and retail centers, and convenient regional access to near and distant employment centers. Principal limitations to new residential development include its environmentally sensitive areas, the ability of area soils to accommodate septic drain fields, comparatively limited public services, the ability of the Township to provide adequate public services to meet the demands of the increased residential development, balancing residential growth with farmland resources protection interests, and limited employment opportunities and consumer services in the community.

Locke Township and surrounding areas are desirable places to live because of the quality of life that is offered, and provide opportunities for accommodating new households desiring to reside in the area. Locke Township is in a position to offer varied housing opportunities. Rural residential lifestyles are readily available. The proximity of Williamston and Webberville provide potential opportunities for more suburban and urban lifestyles in designated areas of the Township through the extension of public sewer and water. Establishing suburban and urban residential development areas can be important as part of the Township's interests and efforts to provide varied housing opportunities for current and future residents and limit the extent of residential encroachment into agricultural areas. Public studies during the past 10 years have consistently documented that higher density residential development typically generates lower services costs than traditional low-density single family dwellings.

It must also be recognized that areas allocated for suburban residential development need not be extensive nor facilitate excessive high density development as might be associated with large scale multiple family (three or more units per building) and manufactured housing community developments. Growth patterns in Locke Township and the surrounding communities do not suggest the need to accommodate large high-density residential areas. Further, according to the Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services and the U.S. 2000 Census, and the 588 dwellings recorded in Locke Township in that year, it would take only approximately 90 multiple family dwelling units and 30 manufactured housing community dwellings to equal the proportion of such units state-wide (15.4% and 4.8% respectively).

The proper placement of residential development of a more suburban and urban character, including multiple family dwellings, is critical if such development is to have limited impact upon the character of existing more rural residential areas, the community's dominant rural character, the cost-effective delivery of public services, and farmland preservation.

The location and character of residential development can have the greatest negative impact on local farming operations. However, farmland concerns should not be the sole consideration in the location and character of new residential development. Inappropriate development can occur where development densities exceed the natural carrying capacity of the land, where public facilities are not adequate to handle increased demands, and where nearby development may reflect a very different character.

Of equal concern is the efficiency in which the Township's land resources are utilized. Future residential development can be efficiently accommodated and need not consume unnecessary farmland acreage and other natural resources, and open spaces. The actual land area needed for future residential development is comparatively small. If Locke Township's population grows by 500 persons by 2020, approximately 300 acres of undeveloped land and/or farmland would require conversion to residential use to accommodate the additional 172 dwellings (based on an average lot size of 1.5 acres and a household size of 2.9 persons). As noted previously, the development of a single 80-acre parcel alone could potentially yield 40 – 45 new dwellings and 130 new residents – accommodating more than one-quarter of this anticipated growth.

Alternatively, the same 172 dwellings can consume as much as 2,500 acres (approaching 10% of the entire Township) if located on large lots of ten acres or more. This less efficient development pattern can dramatically accelerate the rate at which farmland and other undeveloped lands are converted to residential use and undermine the long term economic viability of local farming operations. When large land splits occur

throughout the community, one by one, the cumulative impact upon the Township's agricultural base can be devastating.

However, small acreage zoning across the Township such as one-acre zoning, without any density limitations, provides for a build-out population (the population resulting from all land being developed at a density of 1 dwelling per acre, exclusive of wetlands and future road rights-of way) approaching 35,000 persons or more. Such a growth pattern will have dramatic effects on farming, community character, taxes, and public services demands.

HOUSING GOAL: *Accommodate new residential development in a manner that recognizes the opportunities and constraints of the Township's public services, infrastructure, and natural features; preserves the overall rural character of the Township and its farmland resources; and accommodates a range of densities and lifestyles.*

Objectives:

- 1) Encourage the continued dominance of low density housing as the principal housing option.
- 2) Provide opportunities for alternative housing options to meet the varying housing preferences of current and future residents, including small-lot single family dwellings and multiple family housing.
- 3) Identify limited areas in the Township where higher density residential development, including multiple family development, can be adequately accommodated due to heightened levels of road infrastructure and public services.
- 4) Discourage strip residential development along the frontage of existing state and county roads, to minimize traffic safety hazards and the "land-locking" of interior acreage, and encourage rural character preservation.
- 5) Encourage innovative residential development that incorporates the preservation of natural resource systems and open spaces, and the preservation of the Township's rural character. One such initiative, where multiple lots or dwelling units are created, should include the development of only a portion of the original parcel, relying on comparatively small lots, and thereby enabling the balance of the parcel to be maintained in a permanent open space status (commonly referred to as "clustering" and "open space zoning").
- 6) Discourage commercial encroachment into established residential neighborhoods, including home occupations that undermine the essential character and desirability of residential areas.

Commercial and Industrial Development

The most visible signs of commercial development in Locke Township are along M-52 between Haslett and Bell Oak Roads. The northwest corner of the M-52/Haslett Road intersection includes a small convenience store. The northeast corner of the M-52/Bell Oak Road intersection includes a vehicle repair and truck rental service. The balance of the Township's commercial uses, excluding its farm operations, consist of business operations in conjunction with residences. Industrial uses in the Township are also limited to businesses operated in conjunction with residences.

Addressing commercial and industrial development effectively requires consideration of need, location and character. At present, there is little apparent demand or need for significant expansion of either in Locke Township. Public sentiment does not suggest such expansion to be important to area residents. The Township's current population base can support only limited commercial development. In fact, a 1989 study by David Van Horn, focusing on four counties in Florida, California, and Tennessee (including rural areas), found that the average number of acres devoted to commercial use on a county-wide basis was 7.2 acres per 1,000 population (Urban Land, 1989). It is reasonable to expect that a significant lower ratio exists if all cities and villages are excluded. Locke Township's current 10 acres of commercial development (including certain home occupation establishments) yields a ratio of nearly seven acres of commercial development per 1,000 population. According to the 1985 Shopping Center Development Handbook published by the Urban Land Institute, the Township's population of approximately 1,700 is not adequate to support the smallest of the classifications of commercial centers – the neighborhood center. A neighborhood center is considered to require a base population of 3,000 – 4,000 persons.

While M-52 provides a basis for accommodating commercial development that caters to the highway traveler and that need not rely solely on the local population for economic viability, the Plan also recognizes the proximity of Williamston, Webberville, Perry and other nearby communities including Lansing, where commercial development is considered particularly appropriate.

While the American Planning Association (APA)-published studies (1983) found that an approximate average of 8% – 12% of the land in both large and small cities was devoted to industrial use, more rural communities, particularly those without extensive public sewer and water, have more often exhibited land use ratios of less than 2%. Locke Township's approximately 10 acres of industrial development comprises approximately 0.2% of its total developed land area. According to Planning Design Criteria (DeChiara and Koppleman, 1969), a general guideline for the ratio of industrial acreage to a

community's population is 12 acres of industrial land for each 1,000 population. Locke Township's current 10 acres yields a ratio of 6.0 acres of industrial development per 1,000 population.

Still, the economic stability of Locke Township directly affects the quality of life experienced by its residents. Economic stability is a function of many elements including property tax revenues, public services costs, employment, and consumer spending. As noted previously, traditional planning wisdom that supported the position that development "pays its way" has been replaced by considerable research to the contrary, suggesting that commercial development typically generates equal or more revenue than its increased public service costs. Thus, accommodating opportunities for commercial and industrial expansion has important benefits.

The viability of commercial and industrial development is typically linked to access and improved levels of public services. In the case of commercial development, visibility plays an important role. Locating future development with recognition of these factors will improve its long term viability, minimize additional public costs, lessen negative impacts upon the local agriculture industry and residential areas, and avoid inefficient development patterns. To this end, and to the extent additional development of this character is accommodated in the community, special attention should be directed to the M-52 corridor.

Commercial uses can vary significantly in character, ranging from retail to office, professional and other services, and ranging in size and scale from a small local hardware store to a large department store or multi-plex movie theater. As commercial uses are of varying character, so are their needs and impacts in association with public services and infrastructure, abutting land uses, the community as a whole, and neighboring municipalities. The character of Locke Township, including existing development patterns, public services, and community attitudes, does not support extensive or intensive commercial development but rather development that is a local flavor and scale, and tied to the day-to-day consumer needs of the local population. These same community conditions suggest future industrial development be of a comparatively light character

Given the strong agricultural and rural character of Locke Township, opportunities for commercial and industrial uses may be able to be successfully accommodated in association with home occupations where such operations will not undermine the quality of life in the surrounding area nor require improved levels of public services.

COMMERCIAL and INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: *Provide opportunities for the limited expansion of commercial and industrial development in a manner that encourages businesses of a local character that cater to local needs, compliments the predominant rural character of the community, minimizes new public service costs, and protects the viability and desirability of the Township's residential areas.*

Objectives

- 1) Determine if there are locations in which commercial and/or industrial development are appropriate, taking into consideration such factors as existing land use patterns, public services, accessibility including M-52, and designate such areas as may be applicable.
- 2) Provide opportunities for home-based occupations under conditions that will support the residential character, appearance, and quality of life experienced by surrounding residents.
- 3) Discourage the encroachment of commercial and industrial development into planned agricultural and residential areas except as may be successfully accommodated as home occupations.
- 4) Encourage commercial and industrial development to be in character and scale with surrounding land uses, considering such features as building size and height, architectural design, setbacks, signage, and open spaces.
- 5) Provide opportunities for a mix of commercial uses that predominantly target local day-to-day consumer needs within buildings that compliment the character of the community.
- 6) Limit industrial uses to those predominately characterized by assembly activities and similar "light" operations that do not require added levels of public services or negatively impact surrounding land uses or the community as a whole.
- 7) Encourage industrial uses to locate in industrial parks, characterized by adequate open spaces, landscaping, and buffering.
- 8) Establish landscaping and screening measures to ensure commercial and industrial development is sensitive to the dominant rural character of the community and minimizes adverse impacts on the normal use and enjoyment of adjoining land.
- 9) Enhance the character of commercial and industrial development through complementary open spaces, landscaping and buffering, signage, architectural design and related site features.
- 10) Encourage the upkeep of commercial and industrial properties and the rehabilitation of blighted and deteriorating areas.

Circulation

As new residential and non-residential land uses are introduced into the Township, demands upon the road network will increase. This increased traffic may cause congestion along some of the Township's roads. Conversely, it must be recognized that road improvements may attract new development that will place additional demands on the network. This can be particularly true in the case of commercial and industrial development. Increased traffic demands can be minimized by adequate road maintenance and the coordination of road improvements with the planned future land use pattern.

Good land use management can maximize the potential of the Township's road system and minimize adverse impacts to other road segments. Locating higher intensity land uses close to key thoroughfares will minimize future maintenance costs and traffic levels on the Township's other roads. Improperly managed, the Township's principal thoroughfares have the potential to evolve into corridors of strip residential and commercial development, with excessive signage and lighting, driveways and curb cuts, and expansive parking areas. Such a development pattern will undermine the function of these corridors, encourage congestion and traffic hazards, and alter the essential perception of the dominant rural and small-town character of the Township.

Proper land use management and site development plans along important corridors can enhance the entry experience into the Township, strengthen its identity and charm, and improve economic stability.

The future pattern of residential lot splits and subdivisions will have a significant impact upon the future quality of life in the Township. Much of the residential development in the Township today is of a strip pattern -- residences are "stripped" along the existing county road frontages. This pattern of lot splits can be debilitating because: 1) the increased number of driveways directly accessing the county roads increases the level of congestion and safety hazards; 2) travel times are increased; and 3) the Township's rich rural panoramic views of woodlands, fields, and other open spaces, as experienced from the roads, may be reduced to images of driveways, cars, and garages.

Affording bicycle and pedestrian movement throughout a community, and between communities, has long been identified as an important goal in improving quality of life. The past 20 years have witnessed an unprecedented surge in interest in trail systems on the local, state, and federal level as their value is better understood. These trails can limit the reliance on the automobile, improve the health of local residents, improve the quality of leisure time, facilitate economic activity, and encourage a vibrant community. Locke Township faces unique challenges in the cost-effective and practical development of a comprehensive network of trail systems due to its low population, the lack of existing population centers and the

wide expanses of farmland, and financial constraints. However, smaller trail systems may well be feasible in association with evolving neighborhoods.

CIRCULATION GOAL: *Provide and maintain a transportation network throughout the Township that encourages efficient and safe travel consistent with the rural character of the community and coordinated with the planned future land use pattern.*

Objectives

- 1) Identify priority road segments for systematic maintenance and improvement, based upon the planned future land use pattern and existing and projected traffic patterns.
- 2) Discourage high-traffic generating land uses and development patterns along the Township's secondary roads until the time when such roads have been improved to accommodate the development.
- 3) Practice access management to minimize the potential for traffic congestion and safety hazards along adjacent roadways, including limitations on the number, size, and shape of new land divisions; the discouragement of "strip" development; limitations on curb cuts; the use of combined service drives; and appropriately located road intersections.
- 4) Practice access management to ensure reasonable, safe, and efficient internal circulation between abutting residential or neighborhood areas, including the establishment of stub roads to abutting vacant parcels for future extension at the time such parcels are similarly developed.
- 5) Require all future roads to be designed and constructed to Ingham County Road Commission standards except upon a finding that, in specific instances, such standards do not justify the impact on the natural environment and rural character of the community or are otherwise unnecessary, and lesser standards will not undermine public safety and welfare.
- 6) Include non-motorized circulation systems (sidewalks, trails, etc.) between neighborhoods, and between neighborhoods and important activity centers such as schools, parks, and other public gathering areas, to facilitate efficient, safe, and environmentally-friendly travel.
- 7) Discourage road improvements that will increase growth and development pressures in areas not specified for growth.

- 8) Evaluate all proposed future road construction for local and regional impacts on traffic flow, congestion, and public safety, and coordinate new road construction with other local and regional road improvements to address traffic movement in a unified and comprehensive manner.
- 9) Maintain regular communications with the Ingham County Road Commission regarding local and regional transportation trends and conditions, and road maintenance and improvements.

Regional Coordination

Locke Township must recognize that it exists within a regional network of communities, none of which are islands unto themselves. The Township abuts the Townships of Perry, Conway, Leroy, and Williamstown, and the City of Williamston. The Township and nearby municipalities can greatly benefit by cooperatively pursuing common goals in the areas of land use and public services. In terms of township preservation goals, strategies administered and coordinated on a county or regional basis may provide more viable and effective opportunities for both landowners and the Township as a whole.

Planned land uses, public services and preservation efforts should take into consideration conditions in these abutting communities. These conditions vary, from the more suburban and urban features of the Williamstown Township and Williamston, to the more agricultural and rural features of Perry and Conway Townships. Appendix A provides a review (Neighboring Conditions) of existing conditions in these abutting communities.

Land use planning efforts should seek to establish a land use pattern compatible with surrounding conditions provided the goals of the Township are not undermined. To this end, the Township must recognize the potential for annexation efforts and give careful consideration to the location of new commercial and industrial development and targeted farmland protection areas and the protection of its tax base.

REGIONAL COORDINATION GOAL: *Guide future development and public services in a manner that recognizes the position of Locke Township within the larger region, and the mutual impacts of the planning programs of Locke Township and surrounding municipalities.*

Objectives

- 1) Where practical, identify a planned future land use pattern that seeks to ensure compatibility along municipal borders.
- 2) Where practical, identify a planned future land use pattern that does not risk the loss of important agricultural, commercial and industrial property tax dollars through annexation.

- 3) Work with officials of surrounding communities to coordinate land use planning efforts for preservation and development objectives and minimize the potential for undesirable annexation and land conflicts.
- 4) Maintain a meaningful communication program with area municipalities and county agencies to discuss

local and area-wide public facilities and services needs, land use conditions and trends, preservation goals and objectives, contemporary planning issues, and other mutually beneficial strategies to address short and long-term needs.

