

Chapter Eleven



IMPLEMENTATION

I Introduction

This chapter identifies priority action statements and describes the available tools that can be used to implement them. Action statements relate to the goals and objectives in the Natural Systems and Infrastructure and Land Use sections of the Plan. The actions include some that can be quickly implemented and others that may take more time. Additionally, some actions pertain to a specific initiative, such as revising a section of code. Other actions are ongoing, such as those actions that should be regularly implemented during site plan review. Due to the large number of actions and the limited resources available to complete all of the actions at once, it is necessary to identify those that should be implemented first. After the highest priority action items are addressed, it will be important to implement action items that have not been included. Additionally, as planning conditions change, it might be necessary to implement action items not included in this section.

II Highest Priority Actions

The following actions are considered to be of the highest priority in implementing the goals and objectives of the city of Ann Arbor. The priority action items below are categorized by chapter heading and are considered especially important to achieving a high quality of life in the city of Ann Arbor. Many of the priority actions should be implemented on an on-going basis. Other actions recommend the implementation of a new policy that will require specific tools to complete. These tools are listed under the section, "Implementation Tools" of this chapter. The following action items are not listed in order of importance.

A. Natural Systems

Ongoing:

1. Periodically evaluate City ordinances (i.e., natural features, wetland, and soil erosion control ordinances) to determine code sections that could be improved to better protect natural systems.
2. Support the Parks & Recreational Open Space Plan with regard to establishing open space linkages.
3. Encourage developers to use innovative designs (e.g. "green construction") and best management practices for storm water detention to improve water quality.
4. Encourage stewardship of water resources by providing educational materials to decision-

makers, developers and the general public regarding watershed and urban storm water management issues to raise awareness of the value of watersheds and the impacts of everyday activities on water quality.

Work Program:

1. Consider adopting City ordinance language that requires developers to identify and remove invasive species on sites proposed for development.
2. Continue to research and implement methods to reduce impervious surface areas, such as providing development incentives for private parking structures; establishing a maximum number of parking spaces for each use; encouraging alternative parking designs, shared parking, and pervious materials, where appropriate; and reducing street right-of-way widths and driveway lengths.
3. Develop incentives for employers who encourage alternatives to single passenger automobiles, such as mass transit, high occupancy vehicles, and other techniques that reduce vehicular trips.

B. Land Use

Ongoing:

1. Ensure that safe opportunities for non-motorized modes of transportation are established between residential developments and common neighborhood services.
2. Encourage the proper long-term stewardship of natural areas.
3. Periodically evaluate and update development standards as necessary to help minimize impacts to natural systems, reduce impervious surfaces, encourage transit, and encourage a variety of housing types including affordable housing.
4. Ensure that development proposed along Huron Parkway preserves the natural and scenic character of the parkway.

Work Program:

1. Develop regulatory incentives that encourage the reduction of impervious surfaces proposed with new development (structured or below-level parking, multiple-level buildings, "green" rooftops, etc.).
2. Develop regulatory incentives that encourage the enhancement of natural areas on sites proposed for development (i.e., removal of invasive species and the introduction of native species, restoring a wetland, improving floodplain function, etc.).
3. Develop regulatory incentives, such as density bonuses, for developments that provide affordable housing units.
4. Revise code to reduce minimum and establish maximum setback requirements in appropriate zoning districts to help shorten driveways and sidewalks.
5. Zone all University of Michigan-owned land to "Public Land" (PL).

III Implementation Tools

A number of tools are available to implement the actions of this plan. Some actions could be included in the City of Ann Arbor Capital Improvements Plan, particularly those items related to public facilities and infrastructure. Some of the items, such as special studies, could be added to the annual Planning Commission work program. Other items might need public or private grants to accomplish. The following is a list of planning techniques that can be used to implement the action statements of this plan:

Planning Commission Work Program

The Planning Commission work program is adopted annually and should include one or more priority action items from this implementation section. The Planning Commission works with the Planning Department staff to identify projects to include in the annual work program. Such projects typically include updating various sections of city code, undertaking special studies and improving planning procedures. The Planning Department provides quarterly and annual reports of the work program to the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission should add items from the Priority Actions section of this plan to annual work programs after the adoption of the plan. Work programs over the next five years should include the following priority action items:

1. Develop regulatory incentives that encourage the reduction of impervious surfaces proposed with new development (structured or below level parking, multiple-level buildings, “green” rooftops, etc.).
2. Develop regulatory incentives that encourage the enhancement of natural areas on sites proposed for development (i.e., removal of invasive species and the introduction of native species, restoring a wetland, improving floodplain function, etc.).
3. Develop regulatory incentives, such as density bonuses, for developments that provide affordable housing units.
4. Annually develop and adopt a six-year Capital Improvements Program that adequately addresses the needs for the sanitary sewer and public water systems.
5. Revise code to reduce minimum and establish maximum setback requirements in appropriate zoning districts to help shorten driveways and sidewalks.
6. Analyze zoning nonconformities related to area, heights and placement regulations for Central Area neighborhoods and determine if amendments are needed to make the regulations more consistent with established development patterns.

Revising Development Standards

The following development standards should be updated to encourage sustainable land use practices:

1. Setbacks should be reduced to encourage pedestrian access and use land more efficiently.
2. A new single-family zoning district should be created to allow for small lot single-family homes.
3. Maximum height restrictions should be re-examined to encourage the efficient use of land, diversity of housing types and understructure parking.
4. Language on live/work space should be more clearly articulated in code to encourage live/work uses where appropriate.
5. Mixed-uses should be encouraged in appropriate circumstances. Mixed housing types should also be encouraged.
6. Open-space buffers should be re-examined to encourage best practices in environmental stewardship.
7. Open space requirements should be re-examined to describe the functions desired in the open space (e.g. open space with environmental or recreational value).
8. “Conservation design”, or clustering development to preserve natural features, should be evaluated to encourage best practices of sustainable land use planning.
9. Citywide design guidelines should be developed to encourage sustainable land use practices.

Special Studies

A number of action statements require detailed analysis by Planning Department staff, other city departments or a consultant. Such studies may include among others, land use, transportation, infrastructure and watershed studies. Studies should address the Work Program items identified in this chapter such as analyzing ways to reduce imperviousness, developing incentives for employers to

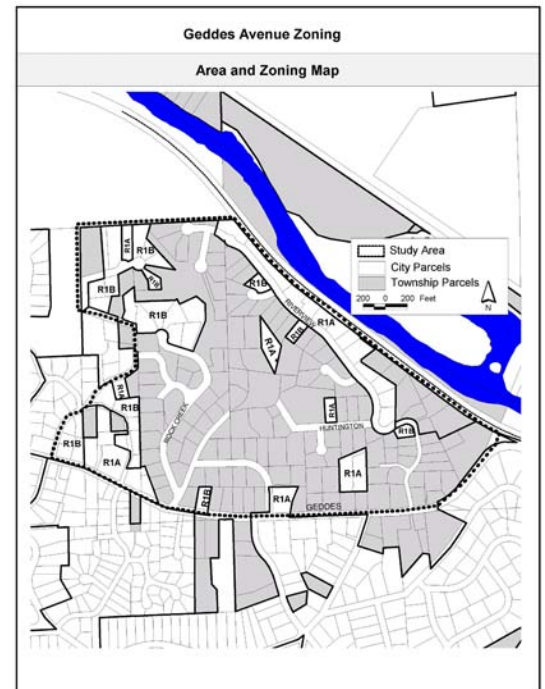
reduce vehicular trips and developing incentives to encourage the enhancement of natural areas.

Capital Improvements Plan

City Code requires the Planning Commission to annually prepare a Capital Improvement Plan for the ensuing six fiscal years for approval by City Council. The CIP identifies capital improvement projects that should be undertaken to address infrastructure and transportation needs throughout the City. The Planning Department works with other City departments to develop the CIP. The CIP provides for large, physical improvements that are permanent in nature, including basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of the community. These include transportation systems, utilities, municipalities and other miscellaneous projects.

Zoning in Geddes Avenue Area

In November 2000, the City Planning Commission discussed the appropriate zoning for parcels within the Geddes Avenue study area (see map) that annex from Ann Arbor Township to the City. The Commission concluded that the R1B zoning district would be recommended for these parcels upon annexation. The R1B zoning district will allow more lots to conform to the minimum lot size and setback requirements than the R1A district. The district could slightly increase the number of homes in the area, if some of the larger lots were split, which may help to encourage a greater diversity of housing and promote a more efficient provision of utility services (distribution of costs per household). The intent of the R1B, which is similar to that of the R1A, is to provide an environment of predominantly low-density, single-family homes. City parcels currently zoned R1A within the study area would remain R1A unless the property owner pursued a petition with the City to rezone the land R1B.



Updating the Zoning Maps

A number of parcels in the City have been developed with a use that is different from the underlying zoning designation. The Future Land Use Maps in Chapter 5 recommend land uses that are consistent with the existing site conditions. The zoning maps should be updated to reflect the existing conditions on the site.

Brownfield Authority

The City should continue to participate in the Washtenaw County Brownfield Authority to encourage the cleanup of contaminated, blighted, or functionally obsolete brownfield sites in the City.

Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation

The City should identify ways to increase and improve inter-jurisdictional cooperation with public agencies that impact and are impacted by planning decisions in the City. Such agencies include Washtenaw County, surrounding townships, the University of Michigan, the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study, the Washtenaw County Drain Commission, the Metro Alliance, and other public entities. Such cooperation can facilitate improved decision making regarding regional land use and transportation planning issues and can help maintain and improve the quality of life for area residents. Periodic meetings should be scheduled between City staff and the planning commission and representatives of surrounding jurisdictions.

The Zoning Plan: Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, M.C.L. 125.3801 et seq. requires that approved master plans include a zoning plan. The Act indicates that, "if there is zoning, then the plan shall include a zoning plan for the various zoning districts and an explanation of how the land use categories (on the future land use map) relate to the zoning district map". This analysis has taken place and has determined that the future land use map is substantially consistent with the zoning district map. The following is a summary of issues regarding the relationship between zoning and the master plan.

History of Master Planning and Zoning – Since the early part of the 20th century, the City of Ann Arbor has adopted a zoning ordinance and multiple master plans. The elements of the zoning ordinance include: definitions, use regulations, area, height and placement regulations, application of the zoning ordinance, planned projects, supplemental regulations, nonconformance, administration, zoning board of appeals, special exceptions, violations & penalties, amendments, and legal status provisions and effective date. The elements of the master plan include Land Use (last land use plan was updated in 2006), Transportation (last updated in 2009) and Parks & Recreation Open Space (last updated in 2006) and are regularly updated. The zoning ordinance is also updated on a regular basis as needed (last updated in 2008).

Goals of the City – The master plans identify a number of critical goals of the City including the protection of high quality natural features, an efficient transportation system, high quality parks, recreation and open space systems, and a diversity of a land uses that all help foster a high quality of life for City of Ann Arbor residents and visitors.

Established Zoning Districts – Chapter 55 of the City of Ann Arbor Code of Ordinances (Zoning) identifies and describes all zoning districts and includes sections on intent, principal permitted uses, and principal accessory uses for each zoning district as well as required conditions, special exception uses, and permitted accessory uses for districts in which such standards apply. Zoning districts include: agricultural-open space, single-family dwelling, two-family dwelling, two-family and student, multiple-family dwelling, motel-hotel, mobile home park, parking, office, public land, research, local business, campus business, community convenience center, campus business/residential, central business, commercial/residential, business service, business service/residential, fringe commercial, limited industrial, limited light industrial, heavy industrial, planned unit development, and office/research/limited industrial. These are long-standing zoning districts in the city and provide extensive opportunities for residential, retail, office, industrial and public uses. Residential neighborhoods are typically zoned for residential uses, retail districts are typically zoned for retail uses and employment uses are typically zoned with appropriate zoning employment districts (e.g. office, research, industrial). Chapter 55 also includes a schedule of area, height and placement regulations (see appendix). The City's Downtown Plan addresses zoning and master plan issues in downtown Ann Arbor and includes a zoning plan.

Future Land Use and Zoning Maps – This master plan includes future land use maps which recommend proposed land uses for each parcel in the City of Ann Arbor. The Plan also includes an existing zoning map indicating the zoning district for each parcel in the City (see appendix). The zoning map is substantially consistent with the future land use maps. The Plan also includes a recommendation in the Implementation section for zoning maps to be updated to reflect the future land use maps where discrepancies exist. The City will continue to determine where inconsistencies exist and make appropriate changes to ensure that zoning remains consistent with the master plan's future land use map. This Plan also recommends that the existing zoning districts identified in Chapter 55 remain unchanged; no existing districts are proposed to be eliminated.

Proposed Revisions to Chapter 55 (Zoning) – The City regularly updates sections of Chapter 55 to improve clarity, remain current with best zoning practices, and encourage sustainable development patterns. The City is currently undertaking a planning exercise to determine the feasibility of amending the schedule of area height and placement in Chapter 55 regarding required setbacks, height and density to encourage more sustainable land use practices. Examples include the proposed increase in height and floor area ratio and the reduction of front setback requirements to encourage the more efficient use of land and infrastructure. The City is also undertaking a process to examine the zoning requirements of the R2A and R4C zoning districts to determine if they are consistent with master plan recommendations.