

Section **5.0**

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSES OF THE MASTER PLAN

The art of planning a community lies in the focus of wise, rational land use and the provision of public services and utilities. The Master Plan strives to improve the quality of life within the Township through proper and logical planning for the preservation of rural agriculture land, the orderly development of vacant land and the creative redevelopment of existing areas. In order to achieve this goal a Master Plan must be many things. It should be comprehensive, yet at the same time be flexible and practical. It must be general as well as long range to include being regional in scope where necessary.

The Master Plan is general enough so as to permit progressive refinements as well as to allow for the unforeseen contingencies and circumstances and should not be viewed as “the precise blueprint for the future”. Nonetheless, generally speaking, the Master Plan should not be deviated from without good reason and cause that is well documented. The Master Plan must serve as both a narrative and graphic framework within which decisions that are related to land use and development can be made both logically and realistically as well as with practicality of application. The graphics and mapping contained therein are both spatial distributions and relationships that are closely aligned with the goals and objectives that have been chosen by the Township.

Riley Township enjoys the visual and environmental benefits of a rural landscape that have not been significantly impacted by urban development. As the limits of urban growth continue to move northward, slowly but surely, it is starting to be impacted by this growth, and is losing some of its very special physical features that contribute so greatly to the Township’s high quality of life.

The Master Plan suggests limits on growth in those areas of the Township where development threatens environmentally sensitive areas (such as the River Conservation District) or where development would result in the premature, uncontrolled loss of prime, productive farm land. The Master Plan further identifies areas of the Township that are most capable of supporting future development based on suitability of access, proximity to existing development, soil conditions and the existing and potential availability of urban services and infrastructure.

POLICY BASIS

Only through careful analysis of existing conditions and the forces which have brought them about, can the Township understand their interrelationship, identify their underlying purpose, anticipate future problems, and devise solutions.

Accordingly, the Township identifies its goals and objectives by relating them to current problems and issues and to tangible alternative solutions; at the same time, the

Township must attempt to anticipate future problems and recommend the steps necessary to prevent their development or reduce their severity.

No statement of policy or set of objectives, however carefully and analytically developed, will be equally relevant at all times. Movements of people and the stimulation of activities relieve one set of problems and leave others in their wake. For example, when the automobile replaced the horse, the streets became cleaner but the air dirtier. As our production rises, distribution, rather than production of consumer goods, becomes the problem. As urbanization continues, flooding becomes a problem in previously well drained areas because of increased water runoff. Increases in population and income affect recreation demand and create weekend traffic congestion in areas usually free of such conditions.

While policy formation in practice is not as tidy and logical as it is in theory, it is important to note that policy decisions tend to move in sequence from the general to the specific. In this report, less emphasis is being placed on the very general goals because it is presumed that they reflect community accepted values (i.e., create a community of the highest quality in which to work, live and recreate, ensuring optimum protection of health, safety, welfare, etc.).

This section attempts to reflect the community structure and quality of community life which the Township desires. Decisions cited in this report and the resulting objectives are translated in a Master Plan that reflects Riley Township's key decisions in selecting future development patterns.

In this report, objectives mean those necessary steps, put into words, that amplify and implement broad policy and relate it to "short range decisions," specific recommendations and finally, to detailed regulations.

POLICY PURPOSE

Administration by Township officials, legislative action by the Township Board, quasi-judicial rulings by the Zoning Board of Appeals, and administrative action and recommendations by the Planning Commission are sometimes criticized as being capricious and arbitrary. Clear statements of policy can go far to minimize the perceived arbitrariness of certain planning and planning-related actions. They can guide and substantiate honest, intelligent decisions. They can also serve the community planner and the Planning Commission as an anchor of objectivity. Another useful function performed by policy statements is in the area of informing the public about the thinking of the Planning Commission with regard to land use decisions.

DETERMINING POLICY

The Master Plan is not just a series of maps. Rather, it is first a series of policy statements or objectives. Such objectives cover:

- Residential Use
- Commercial Use
- Industrial Use
- Environment and Quality of Life
- Traffic and Transportation
- Recreation and Public Facilities
- Natural Features and Agriculture

CONCEPTUAL

Statement: Riley Township has a unique setting. Its abundant natural features make it an attractive place to live, especially for persons living in more densely developed urban areas. The Township's proximity to 2 major transportation corridors, M-19 and I-69, may result in competing land use demands from self interest groups and individuals.

Goal: Aware that the accumulation of a number of short-range decisions may result in a patchwork development pattern, the Master Plan encourages the development of an attractive, balanced community in which to live, work, shop and recreate.

1. Place the general welfare of the community as a whole ahead of the purely economic interest of development.
2. Select and promote a defined direction for development from the array available to the Township.
3. Discourage development and policies that could be detrimental to the rural/agricultural character of the Township.
4. Preserve those historic and natural features of the Township whenever possible.

NATURAL FEATURES

Statement: Riley Township is located in an area that has an abundant supply of environmentally significant and aesthetically pleasing natural features that enhance the quality of life for Township residents.

Goal: All future development should carefully integrate the Township's unique features into the development process, preserving these features and, thereby, enhancing the character and appearance of the built environment.

1. Recognize the relationship between the Township's natural features and the abundant variety and supply of wildlife that inhabit the Township.
2. Acknowledge the contribution that natural features play in defining the visual quality of the community and the relationship of these features to quality of life.
3. Work to ensure that the visual character of the Township in the year 2020 is no less than it is today.
4. Institute measures that ensure accessibility to the functional natural features of the Township for the general citizenry.
5. Recognize the importance that the Township's river and wetlands play in providing proper drainage.
6. Encourage the establishment of forest preserves and conservation easements in the Township.
7. Discourage residential development near wetlands, streams, and the Belle River.
8. Encourage the use of the Township's natural features, (the Belle River, streams, wetlands, woodlands, etc.) for recreation purposes.
9. Protect natural resources from intrusions by development that would jeopardize their delicate balance.
10. Preserve the topography and the wetland areas of the Township.
11. Keep the natural and man-made environment in balance.
12. Promote measures that will encourage the protection and preservation of natural wildlife habitat.

AGRICULTURE

Statement: Productive farmland is being converted to urban forms of development at an accelerated pace across the region. As suburbanization continues its path northward, the pressure to convert farmland to other uses will increase in Riley Township over the course of the next decade.

Goal: Recognizing that Riley Township possesses physical characteristics and documented prime farmland that supports productive agriculture, the

Master Plan encourages the long-term survival of farming as a viable and economically feasible land use.

1. Recognize that productive agricultural land is an irreplaceable asset that is forever lost when converted to urban uses.
2. Recognize the diversity of the Township's agricultural base and the contribution that farming makes to the local and State economy.
3. Minimize the premature conversion of productive agricultural land for urban uses.
4. Provide opportunities for agriculture to exist compatibly with single-family homes.
5. Promote the preservation of active farming through the use of purchase or transfer of development rights, conservation easements and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Depending on community preference, this Ordinance may allow sales of ancillary goods not grown on the farm or may also allow for haunted hayrides or other non-farm related activities.
6. Maintain existing large parcels of land which readily lend themselves to continued agricultural use and discourage land divisions that serve to prematurely retire productive agricultural land.
7. Provide some flexibility to farmers recognizing their need to convert some farmland to other uses, but which does not compromise the long-term viability of existing agricultural operations.
8. Discourage utility extensions that would lead to the conversion of farmland for urban uses.
9. Consider a range of appropriate alternative measures for preserving existing farmland.
10. Recognize that agriculture as a proper utilization of a natural resource.
11. Continue to recognize that Riley Township has a strong agricultural tradition

RESIDENTIAL

Statement: Riley Township is experiencing an increased demand for housing to accommodate persons who find the Township a desirable place to live. This demand can be expected to increase in the future.

Goal: In order to accommodate the needs and desires of existing and future residents, the Township encourages the development of sound, high quality housing that meets the community’s demographic characteristics.

1. Maintain the Township’s present low-density, rural residential character.
2. Plan for medium and higher density residential development only in those areas of the Township that are suited for such uses based on availability of major roads and utilities.
3. Restrict the placement of higher density residential development in areas where it would negatively impact existing single-family development.
4. Encourage quality housing in all forms.
5. Encourage a high percentage of home ownership for all forms of residential development.
6. Protect residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of incompatible uses.
7. Encourage the use of innovative planning and zoning techniques such as Planned Unit Developments, cluster development and zero lot line that preserve environmentally sensitive areas of the Township, increase the quantity of open space and promote diversity and quality development.
8. Require that open space and recreation be provided for all forms of residential development and that these improvements be related to the type of households that will reside in individual projects.
9. Strengthen medium and high density design standards as they relate to site layout and building design.

COMMERCIAL

Statement: Commercial development needs are related to the market needs of those households located in the Township, suitability of access, and the availability of existing retail and service opportunities of nearby locations.

Goal: Recognizing the problems created by inappropriately located and an excessive quantity of commercial development, the Township will provide appropriate locations of sufficient size to accommodate anticipated retail and service needs of the Township’s market area.

1. Do not let commercial development detract from the Township's rural residential character or negatively impact existing residential uses.
2. Provide opportunities for commercial uses meeting the daily retail and service needs of Township residents.
3. Encourage commercial development only where it can be demonstrated that there exists a sufficient market area population or adequate draw from the region to support the development.
4. Upgrade commercial development standards to improve the curb appeal of all new commercial development in the Township as they relate to signage, landscaping and building appearance.
5. Discourage spot or marginal strip commercial development.
6. Place commercial uses at locations of easy access where ingress and egress will not impede traffic flow.
7. Encourage the continued upgrading of the Riley Township Village District as a focal point for Riley Township as a whole.
8. Offer alternative mechanisms that allow for commercial development at appropriate locations, yet which maintain maximum control over the form of development.

INDUSTRIAL

Statement: Industrial uses are an important land use element that may provide the Township with a measure of autonomy and independence by providing a source of jobs and contributing to the community's tax base.

Goal: Although Riley Township desires to be primarily a rural residential, agriculturally based community, the Township should encourage a limited amount of industrial development at those locations suited for such use.

1. Recognize the Township's role in St. Clair County's regional economy.
2. Avoid unnecessary competition for industry with neighboring communities or duplication of services to attract industry that may be more cost effectively provided elsewhere in the region.
3. Plan for a limited expansion of the Township's industrial base that does not detract from the rural character of the community.
4. Support the development of non-nuisance light industries that do not have adverse environmental impacts or are offensive because of noise or visual characteristics.

5. Recognize the contribution that industrial development makes to the community's tax base and the relationship of a stable tax base to maintaining the overall quality of life in the community.
6. Concentrate industrial uses only at those locations that are capable of supporting such development based on the availability of suitable transportation access.
7. Utilize existing properly located industrial sites as a base for future expansion.
8. Concentrate industrial uses and buffer them from residential uses.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Statement: Parks and undeveloped open space areas make an important contribution to the quality of life in a community that is frequently overlooked. The loss or conversion of open land to a developed state occurs gradually; thus the loss of these assets often goes unnoticed until only marginal or no suitable land remains available for recreation purposes.

Goal: Enhance the Township's quality of life by utilizing and preserving the community's natural features (the Belle River, streams, wetlands, woodlands, etc.) for recreation and open space purposes.

1. Incorporate both active and passive recreation activities at the Township park site.
2. Avoid the duplication of recreation facilities and programs that are available elsewhere in the region.
3. Encourage the use of the Township's natural features for various passive recreation activities provided by the private sector.
4. Explore all opportunities that will promote the open accessibility of the River Conservation District to the general public.
5. Provide adequate park and recreation space as an integral part of any consolidated residential development, including single-family subdivisions, multiple-family developments and mobile home parks.
6. Encourage well-designed and well-operated commercial recreation facilities.
7. Acquire scenic easements and open space agreements that preserve the appearance of the community.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Statement: One important consequence of population growth and development is the corresponding need to provide necessary public services to meet the needs of the Township's residents and which are in scale with the Township's ability to provide.

Goal: Carefully plan for the extension of public services to correspond to the increased development of the Township in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible.

1. Encourage cooperation with surrounding communities relative to the shared responsibility of providing public services that cannot be realistically provided by individual communities.
2. Consider the development of a limited sanitary sewer system only if it will not detract from the rural residential character of the Township and only if the development of such a system can be accomplished in a cost- effective manner.
3. Stage any utility extensions to provide efficient growth and revenues to fund the system.
4. Plan for the most efficient method of providing local fire protection and emergency ambulance services.
5. Continue to maintain the existing Township cemeteries.
6. Encourage the use of existing recycling centers for residents.

STREETS AND ROADS

Statement: Access is important to all forms of development and the quality and arrangement of road improvements is a key factor conditioning the land use pattern.

Goal: Aware of its limited influence in directing improvements in the Township's major road system, the Township will plan a network of safe roads to assure proper local access and movement in the community.

1. Require the construction of limited access service roads, shared driveways and parking lots as a prerequisite for all development along I-69.

2. Encourage local participation in the regional transportation planning process, especially as it may relate to the coordination of access improvements along M-19 and I-69.
3. Encourage the use of innovative technologies that limit the reliance on fossil fuels.
4. Obtain right-of-way dedications and reservations consistent with local and county plans.
5. Correct hazardous and unsafe areas by improving street alignments, where possible.
6. Assure major traffic generators (and land uses), have proper and adequate feeder service, and ingress and egress.

