

# TOWNSHIP OF WILSON

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## COMMUNITY PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Michigan Society of Planning Officials exists to promote quality community planning through education, information and advocacy, statewide. With this as its mission, MSPO offers the following planning principles for consideration to all cities, villages, townships, counties and regions in Michigan. The principles define what constitutes quality community planning.

### GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. The community planning decision-making process should, first and foremost be concerned with the long-term sustainability of our communities, environment and economy.

2. The community planning process should involve a broad-based citizenry, including public and private sector leaders, community interest groups and multi-disciplinary professionals. A positive relationship between development and the making of community should be established through a citizen-based participatory planning and design process.

3. Public policy and development practices should support development of communities that are:

- diverse in land use, population and character;
- designed for pedestrians and non-motorized transit as well as for motorized transit;
- shaped and physically defined by parks open space and other natural resource areas;
- structured by physically defined, accessible public space and community institutions; and,
- based on local history, climate, ecology, and building practices.

4. Physical solutions by themselves will not solve all problems. A coherent and supportive physical framework should be established to provide economic vitality, community stability, and environmental health.

5. Common challenges that should be addressed by community planning are:

- increasing opportunities for reinvestment in established urban centers;
- encouraging appropriate intensity and location of new development served by adequate public facilities;
- minimizing the spread of low density, noncontiguous development;
- encouraging a wide range of housing opportunities which serve all segments of our diverse population;
- recognizing the value and encouraging the preservation of agricultural lands and natural resources;
- encouraging the preservation and/or restoration of our natural and built heritage environments;
- encouraging development in accordance with the adopted community master plan; and,
- recognizing that land use decisions may have impacts beyond community boundaries.

6. The quality of life for the citizens of Michigan can be enhanced by developments that:

- support and restore existing community centers,
- reconfigure existing low density, centerless communities into communities of diverse neighborhoods and districts;
- preserve and protect natural environments;
- maintain and build a positive, social and strong economic climate; and,
- improve the physical design and condition of our region, cities, villages, townships, neighborhoods, districts, corridors, parks, streets, blocks and homes.

# PRINCIPLES

## COMMUNITY

1. Development should be encouraged in existing city, village and township centers.
2. Historic city, village and township centers should be preserved.
3. New development or redevelopment in existing communities should respect local historical patterns, precedents and boundaries.
4. Viability in established or developing downtowns and community or village centers is strengthened by street-level retail, on-street parking, downtown residential, the maintenance of an appropriate street pattern, street-level activity, the retention of historically significant buildings, and the provision of parking structures.
5. Civic buildings and public gathering places are important and require prominent accessible sites.
6. The scale and configuration of streets and open spaces (parks, greens, squares) should be attractive and comfortable to pedestrians.
7. The design of streets and buildings should result in safety and security, as well as be accessible and open to the public.
8. Architecture, building placement and landscaping should result in the physical definition of streets and other public spaces.
9. Neighborhoods should include a variety of public spaces (tot-lots, village greens, ballfields, community gardens, etc.) that are strategically distributed and physically well defined.
10. New investment along highway corridors should complement investment in existing community business centers.
11. New development should be seamlessly woven into the physical fabric of its surroundings, regardless of differences in size or architectural style.
12. Design is important and should contribute to the community's safety, security and attractiveness.
13. Complete communities have defining edges with an identifiable center. A center should consist of a full and balanced mix of residential, commercial, office, recreational, cultural and civic uses.
14. Complete communities should contain housing alternatives available to people of all incomes.
15. Complete communities should provide convenient access to public transportation as well as non-motorized options.
16. Community planning should recognize that regions are composed of urban areas, suburban areas, farmlands, water features and natural open spaces, all contributing to their diverse character.
17. Community planning should involve balances between physical, environmental, economic, social, and cultural conditions within the region.
18. Strategies encouraging development and redevelopment of communities should include previously developed sites (brownfields), infill development and reuse of existing facilities rather than continuing outward expansion.
19. Community planning should create an efficient and cost effective system of public services, transportation, recreation, cultural institutions and housing to achieve a viable, sustainable region.
20. Intergovernmental cooperation is necessary for achieving a viable, sustainable region.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

1. Community planning should recognize that natural resources are system-dependent, not limited to jurisdictional boundaries.
2. Lands with unique or sensitive resources should be preserved in their natural state.
3. The health and quality of the natural resource base are directly related to public health, welfare and economic growth.
4. Natural resource areas, farmlands and open space characterize the rural landscape. They are important and useful in shaping development and maintaining and establishing a rural community character.
5. To preserve rural community character, site design should encourage clustering of development and preservation of open space.
6. To preserve rural community character, site design should include desirable views and vistas across water features and farmlands.
7. Natural resources are limited in their ability to accommodate development without incurring damage. Development within our natural environments should occur in a balanced and sustainable manner.
8. Sensitive and fragile lands should be protected from degradation.
9. Wildlife habitat corridors should be interwoven with development to achieve environmental balance and maintain biodiversity.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

1. Development should be directed to areas serviced by adequate roads, water, sewers, and utilities.
2. Expansion and upgrading of public roads, water and sewer services should be planned to strategically direct growth.
3. Public transportation should connect homes to jobs, community center and cultural, recreational, educational and institutional facilities.
4. A comprehensive transportation plan should support a unified, long-term vision of how the land is to be used.
5. New and expanded public transportation systems should be located to attract urban reinvestment.

6. Non-motorized transportation should be accommodated in new road corridors and strategically retrofitted into existing transit corridors and greenway linkages.

7. The number and frequency of automobile access driveways along road corridors should be minimized.

## **PLANS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

1. A broad-based citizenry should be involved during the development of local comprehensive master plans, including representation from neighboring and impacted jurisdictions. Local plans should consider and address the impacts of neighboring communities land uses, planned uses, goals and objectives.

2. Local planning decisions which affect neighboring communities should consider multi-jurisdictional impacts.

3. Local comprehensive master plans should be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to remain viable documents.

4. Local zoning ordinances should be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure they are consistent with the comprehensive master plan.

5. Local zoning ordinances should be consistent with the comprehensive master plan.

6. Local zoning decisions should be consistent with current local comprehensive master plans.

7. Local comprehensive master plans should be accompanied by an action strategy that specifies individual tasks, timing, and responsibilities for implementation.

8. Comprehensive master plans and zoning ordinances should include interpretive graphics conveying standards and design guidelines.

9. All communities should prepare realistic Capital Improvement Programs as a means of making municipal improvements consistent with their comprehensive master plan.

10. Communities should have an administrative structure that provides clear direction throughout the development process. This structure, including information on the status of projects, should be equally accessible to citizens, developers and local officials.