

CHAPTER 3

**GOALS, ACTIONS, AND PLANS**



The purpose of this Master Plan is to establish goals, actions, and plans that will help to guide the future growth and development of the municipalities which comprise Jackson County from a procedural and countywide perspective. While each municipality is vested with the responsibility for planning and zoning, Jackson County is responsible for reviewing and providing independent recommendations regarding proposed amendments to township zoning ordinances, and all municipal master plan updates, based upon its understanding of municipal plans and ordinances/regulations. The following goals and actions, established at the countywide level, are intended to assist municipalities as they develop, amend, and implement their master plans and zoning ordinances.

## Goals and Actions

This section of the Master Plan identifies land use issues and the goals and actions proposed to address them from a county-wide perspective. These issues, although grouped for continuity, are not presented in any particular priority order.

### Open Ethical Governance and Citizen Participation

If municipal master plans and zoning ordinances are to be successful, strong support must be evident from citizens. Citizens must be involved in municipal planning and zoning decisions. Decisions which affect municipal land use should be free from conflicts of interest and conducted in open forums.

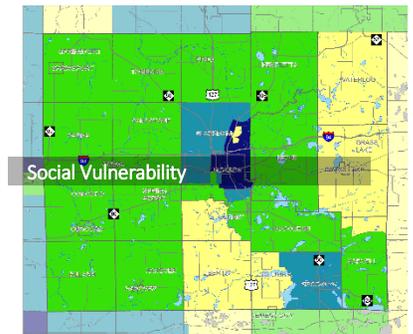
**Goal.** Citizen involvement in municipal planning and development decisions is critical to the development of vibrant communities and such decisions should be made in an open municipal forum designed to engage the participation of citizens, [including the socially vulnerable](#).

**Actions.** The following actions are recommended to aid in the implementation of the goal:

1. Forums for public involvement should be developed and promoted on any policy and plan, regulation and ordinance, or project proposal in order to gather and document public input ([including the socially vulnerable](#)) that will then be used to inform the recommendations and/or decisions of the county and municipal planning commissions and other county and municipal agencies and boards.

Those agencies and boards are also encouraged to develop and consistently follow a public involvement plan or policy which identifies: (a) the pertinent segment(s) of the public to be solicited (i.e., the general public, [the socially vulnerable](#), and/or particular stakeholder groups), and (b) the range of activities/tools that might be used to reach them.

2. Public meetings and/or hearings (when pertinent) should be held for all decisions which impact upon municipal growth and land use, including the adoption of master plans and other plans, zoning ordinances (i.e., text



amendments and rezonings) and other ordinances or regulations; public infrastructure improvements (e.g., sewer and water systems, roads and streets, etc.); and improvements to other community facilities (e.g., fire stations, schools, parks, etc.).

3. The county and municipal planning commission must follow the public hearing requirements of Michigan's *Open Meetings Act* (PA 267 of 1976, [MCL 15.261 et. seq.](#)), Article III of the *Michigan Planning Enabling Act* (PA 33 of 2008, [MCL 125.3831 et. seq.](#)), Sections 103 and 202 of the *Michigan Zoning Enabling Act* (PA 110 of 2006, [MCL 125.3103](#) and [MCL 125.3202](#)), and any other pertinent bylaws and legislation.
4. County and municipal [planning](#) commissioners and other governmental officials should help to educate the public regarding ethical and open decision-making in local government.

### Planning Coordination

There is an important need for coordination and communication in municipal planning among Jackson County and its local units of government. Such an approach to planning will minimize the artificial *seams* that exist as boundaries between municipalities and promote a *seamless* county-wide community. Such an effort should also reduce conflict among municipalities resulting from development and help to address countywide concerns and issues.

**Goal.** Municipalities should coordinate their planning and zoning efforts with their neighboring local units of government and Jackson County.

**Actions.** The following actions are recommended to aid in the implementation of the goal:

1. Municipal planning commissions are encouraged to send notices of their meetings and public hearings to adjacent local units of government [if not required](#).
2. Zoning ordinance recommendations generated by township planning commissions will continue to be reviewed by the Jackson County Planning Commission (JCPC), per the requirements of Section 307 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006, [MCL 125.3307](#)). The JCPC will attempt to resolve potential conflicts between municipalities through its review of text amendment proposals and rezoning requests, especially in the proximity of local unit boundary lines.
3. When zoning actions (e.g., rezonings, conditional/special land use permits, etc.) require the notification of citizens for public hearings and the boundary required for notification extends into adjacent municipalities, the owners, residents, and occupants of property in the adjacent local unit of governments must also be provided notice.
4. Municipal master plans will continue to be reviewed by the Jackson County Planning Commission (JCPC), per the requirements of Section 41(e) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, [MCL 125.3841](#)). The JCPC will attempt to resolve potential conflicts between municipalities through its review of the proposed future land use map and associated text.

5. Local units of government should be aware of the opportunities for coordination offered through the Joint Municipal Planning Act (PA 226 of 2003, [MCL 125.131](#)).

### **Innovative Planning and Zoning**

New and innovative planning and zoning techniques and implementation measures continue to be developed that offer municipalities a greater range of flexibility to address complex planning issues and to implement local plans. New state legislation and decisions made by various courts also continue to be made.

**Goal.** Innovative trends in urban and rural planning, pertinent changes in state statutes, and court rulings should be monitored and made available to local planning commissions.

**Actions.** The following actions are recommended to aid in the implementation of the goal:

1. When a municipality develops innovative measures which address common planning and zoning issues, they should be shared countywide (and beyond) with other local units of government. The Jackson County Planning Commission (JCPC) is available to be the channel through which that information is distributed.
2. The JCPC will continue to develop and promote *Planning and Zoning Notes* which address common planning and zoning issues in conjunction with the Lenawee County Planning Commission (LCPC). Those publications (and other resources) can be downloaded from the [Jackson County Planning Commission](#) webpage on [www.region2planning.com](http://www.region2planning.com). The JCPC will also consider developing and holding workshops on common planning and zoning issues for municipal planning commissioners and other interested officials on its own and/or in conjunction with the LCPC and the Region 2 Planning Commission (R2PC).
3. Form-based regulations offer an alternative to conventional zoning, which fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form, rather than separation of uses, as their organizing principle. The JCPC promotes the use of form-based zoning regulations designed to maintain aesthetically-pleasing/pedestrian-focused downtowns and other traditionally developed areas (as well as areas municipalities wish to develop traditionally).
4. Breathtaking views of the night sky are not the same today as in the past any many now strain to see the few stars visible to the naked eye. This is due to light pollution caused by poorly designed outdoor lights that not only mask the beauty of the night sky, but also cause negative effects to environmental and human health. The JCPC encourages municipalities to adapt their regulations to meet the standards set by the International Dark-Sky Association. The development of facilities and educational programs regarding the adverse effects that artificial lighting has on the environment, safety, energy consumption, and public health is also promoted.

5. Many governments, utilities, and consumers are turning to renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind, and geothermal) with the aim of reducing reliance upon fossil fuels (e.g., coal, oil, natural gas) and/or helping preserve the environment. Locating those facilities in agricultural areas can also help maintain active farms by supplementing their incomes. Conversely, they can also prevent access to prime agricultural soils and/or become a nuisance (e.g., noise, light, and views). The JCPC encourages municipalities to include standards/incentives that limit the effect of any nuisances on the surrounding area and/or preserve agriculturally productive soils when they create/modify regulations that allow development of renewable energy facilities.
6. A few municipalities have passed zoning and other legislation to allow the development of various commercial marihuana facilities and continue to rezoning land for those uses. The JCPC will map those facilities in order to assess their impact on communities (i.e., the costs associated with roads, utilities, police protection, social services, etc.) overtime. In 5-10 years, the JCPC will use that data when making recommendations on future rezoning requests associated with commercial marihuana facilities.

### **Nonmotorized Facilities**

The automobile is firmly embedded in our culture. It simultaneously offers a measure of freedom; and yet also limits the freedom of movement both for the younger and older segments of the population, and citizens generally, through traffic congestion. In developed areas, space is consumed for parking which negates the possibility for the creation of compact pedestrian-oriented development patterns. The automobile allows us freedom to work in distant places and live in rural areas, but also requires an expansive network of roads and highways to get us there.

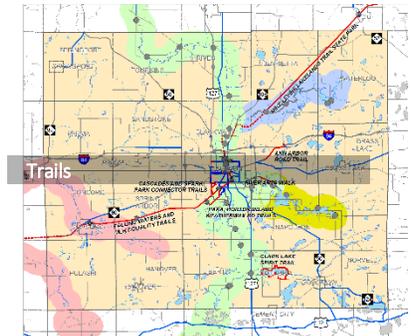
Considerable attention has been focused recently on the health of our citizens. Physical inactivity and the obesity of citizens has been defined by health professionals as a serious threat to community health and wellbeing. While it is acknowledged that every citizen is free to make individual choices regarding means and mode of transportation, there is a need to insure that our communities are walkable. Indeed, within the concept of community, social contact and interaction, the sense of human scale, and municipal identity, are elemental.

Section 10p of State Trunk Line Highway System (PA 51 of 1951, [MCL 247.660p](#)) mandates the goal of 'Complete Streets' which "means roadways, planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a manner that promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle". The Parks and Recreation section in Chapter 2 provides information on the emerging regional trail corridor already traversing the County. The *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan*, the *Jackson County Recreation Plan*, the *MDOT University Region: Regional Non-Motorized Plan* (which includes Jackson County), and various municipal recreation plans also provide guidance in the development of nonmotorized transportation facilities within Jackson County.

**Goal.** County and municipal plans and development decisions, and ultimately the shape and form of our communities, offer the opportunity for employment, commerce, recreation, and social interaction within and between municipal centers and neighborhoods which are accessible from nonmotorized facilities.

**Actions.** The following actions are recommended to aid in the implementation of the goal:

1. Jackson County will implement the state mandate regarding 'Complete Streets by advising municipalities, the Jackson County Department of Transportation (JCDOT), and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) on future road and street projects regarding the inclusion of appropriate nonmotorized facilities (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, paved shoulders, trails, etc.) as part of road projects. Municipalities are encouraged to include a similar action in pertinent plans.
2. The *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan* and the *Jackson County Recreation Plan* are adopted by reference as part of this Master Plan. The various municipal and other plans which provide additional guidance regarding the development of nonmotorized transportation facilities within Jackson County will also be consulted. More detailed nonmotorized networks are also encouraged to be developed which link subdivisions, neighborhoods, local business districts, downtown areas, recreational areas and connect to a system of regional pedestrian and bicycle trails.
3. Municipalities should review their commercial zoning regulations to ensure that uses which thrive on pedestrian traffic are grouped together (i.e., traditional downtown and local commercial areas), and to group uses which are oriented toward vehicular traffic in separate commercial zoning districts.
4. Compact development which fosters higher densities should be promoted within those downtown and local commercial areas and other places. Sidewalks and/or other nonmotorized facilities should be encouraged in those areas. Parking shall be encouraged to be located in areas that do not impede pedestrian travel.
5. Communities should review their patterns of residential distribution and attempt to promote and strengthen neighborhoods which offer parks, elementary schools, and commercial areas within walking distance.
6. The Jackson County Department of Transportation designates segments of its road network having outstanding/unusual natural beauty by virtue of native vegetation and/or natural features as natural beauty roads in order to preserve them in a natural/undisturbed condition. They can be shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists; offer connections between trails; and save county road maintenance



dollars. The JCPC encourages the designation of new natural beauty roads, when pertinent/feasible, and their promotion as nonmotorized facilities (see the Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan).

7. Natural features (e.g., diverse wetland areas, drainage ways, and forest lands) that help assure high quality surface water and native species/wildlife habitat are also often key in creating comfortable and interesting stretches of nonmotorized trails. The JCPC encourages municipalities to protect and incentivize the protection of natural features along their trails.

### Community Facilities

The concept of a community implies more than simply a place to live, work, engage in commerce, and play. Downtown and local commercial areas and other places and community facilities (e.g., municipal halls; schools, libraries and museums; public and private parks and recreation facilities; etc.) are places of social interaction where people meet face to face. They provide the infrastructure necessary for cultural growth and development and are often the places where governance occurs and information and ideas are exchanged. Consequently, community facilities are elementally important, acting as clearinghouses for all that makes people human, and the Master Plan should support these important roles. Plans for enhancing and promoting these resources should be developed and/or implemented.

**Goal.** Community facilities, which help define municipal character, facilitate social interaction and assemblage, and provide spaces for culture, should identified and maintained/improved.

**Actions.** The following actions are recommended to aid in the implementation of the goal:

1. Natural features which help to define municipal character and may limit development should be identified, mapped, and protected.

Municipalities are encouraged to use the natural features identified in Chapter 2 and Appendix C of this Master Plan as the beginning point for natural resources survey to be included in their master plan.

2. Community facilities which enhance our culture (e.g., municipal halls; schools, libraries and museums; public and private parks and recreation facilities; and other community facilities) should be identified, mapped, promoted, and improved/maintained.

Municipalities are encouraged to use the facilities identified in Chapter 2 and Appendix C of this Master Plan as the beginning point for the community facility survey that should be included in their master plan.



3. The *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan*, the *Jackson County Recreation Plan*, and the *Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan* are adopted by reference as part of this Master Plan. The various municipal and other plans that provide additional guidance regarding the development of community facilities within Jackson County will also be consulted.

### Natural Resources

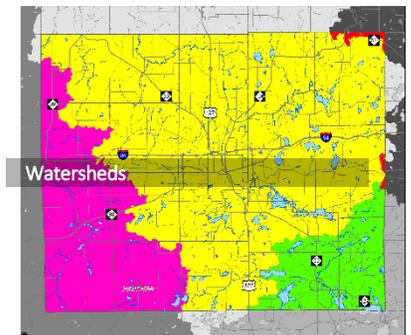
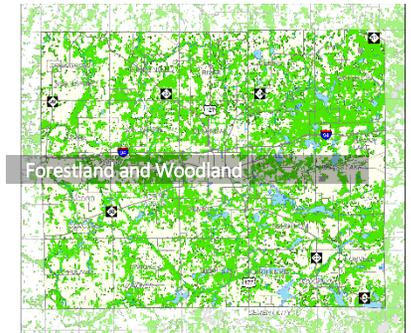
The county's natural resources contribute to municipal identity and identify areas where development (or certain types of development) should not occur. The maintenance of ground and surface water quality is strongly related to enhancement of quality of life of Jackson's citizens. Surface water in the form of Jackson County's lakes, rivers, and streams afford residents recreational opportunities and aesthetic appeal. Ground water offers a potable municipal and individual water supplies which are important to health and property values. Finally, [forests and wetlands](#) are deemed [important](#) to the proper functioning of the natural system. [They serve](#) as aquifer recharge areas; [impede](#) the flow of storm water and thereby act to reduce flooding; [serve](#) as wildlife habitat areas; [filter](#) pollutants from surface waters; [contribute](#) to the natural diversity of flora and fauna; [provide](#) natural open space; and [contribute](#) to municipal character and identity as a result of their impact on development patterns.

Management plans have been developed by the watershed councils for the Upper Grand River, the River Raisin, the Kalamazoo River, and the Huron River. Each plan proposes a series of actions to promote surface water quality specific to a watershed or sub-watershed. Wellhead protection areas have also been delineated for public and municipal wellheads throughout Jackson County. Finally, the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) provides the general location of many wetlands within Jackson County and flood zones were designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**Goal.** The measures proposed in the management plans for the Upper Grand River, the River Raisin, the Kalamazoo River, and the Huron River should be implemented within each watershed; the wetlands, flood zones, and wellhead protection areas identified in this Master Plan ought to be respected; and some other countywide measures should also be taken.

**Actions.** The following actions are recommended to aid in the implementation of the goal:

1. The measures advocated for the various watersheds and sub-watershed management plans should be applied as appropriate.
2. An education program to inform citizens of practices that have the potential to positively or negatively impact ~~on~~ surface water quality should be prepared and presented to Jackson County citizens.



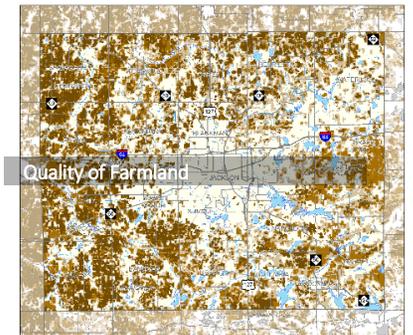
3. The Jackson County Health Department should continue to evaluate water quality in surface and ground water supplies to assure the health safety and welfare of county residents. As problems are identified a determination should be made as to whether additional land use regulation is necessary.
4. Abandoned or unused wells should be plugged.
5. Municipal planning commissions should attempt to preserve wetland areas and flood zones as they review development proposals and to adopt ordinances to protect wetland areas of less than five acres. The location of flood zones and wetland areas, as identified in the Master Plan, should be used as they prepare future land use plans. Local units of government are also encouraged to use open space provisions within zoning ordinances to preserve existing wetland areas.
6. Wetlands and forests should be preserved. Wetland mitigation, while possible, should as a matter of policy be reserved only for rare instances when preservation is not possible or in instances where the proposed improvement or modification to the land is necessary to assure public health, safety or welfare.

### Farmland and Open Space Preservation

To many Jackson County citizens, its rural areas are appealing because of the open space which exists therein. Consequently, many residents have selected home sites in rural areas because of the open rural quality such areas afford. Obviously, with additional development in rural areas comes a loss of open space and the values which attracted rural development in the first place.

Most of the rural areas within Jackson County are forested or used for agricultural production and many of them are nationally significant and among Michigan's best agricultural land (as defined by the American Farmland Trust). Farmers have generally been good stewards of the land, and the water and other resources under their control, which provide residents throughout the County an economic livelihood and result in the production of significant quantities of agricultural products. The sale of these products also contributes to the health and vitality of Jackson County's economy.

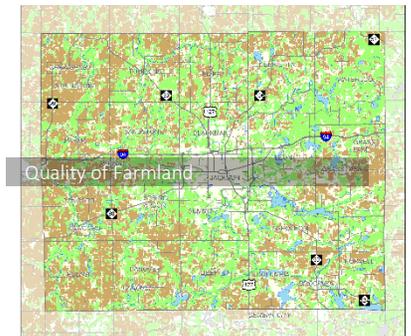
There is inevitably conflict between commercial agriculture/forestry and rural residents. Consequently, agriculture should be protected from the challenge of people who reside in the rural areas, as provided in the Michigan Right-to-Farm Act PA 93 of 1981, MCL 286.471) and the various Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices GAAMPs) issued by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development under its authority. The following GAAMPs have been developed by MDARD as of the adoption of this Master Plan:



- Manure Management/Utilization
- Site Selection (for Livestock Facilities)
- Care of Farm Animals
- Nutrient Utilization
- Irrigation Water Use
- Pesticide Utilization/Pest Control
- Cranberry Production
- Farm Markets

Conversely, the preservation of [farmland/forests](#) should not [prevent landowners from selling](#) their property freely. A balance must be struck between preservation activities based upon voluntary participation and regulation, and the private property rights of the farmer in any successful agricultural preservation policy.

Agricultural land preservation has prominence in several townships while others, due to the quality of their soils or their existing development, prefer less of a focus on conserving agricultural lands and more on preserving rural character. [The county and its townships may take action on the preservation of valuable farmland, forests and/or other open space individually or collectively.](#) These actions may include the purchase of development rights (PDR); agricultural districting where large contiguous tracts of prime agricultural land may be identified; and the use of conservation easements and other legal agreements in which the landowner retains ownership of the property but conveys development rights to a land conservation organization or public body. Each of these techniques, to the extent authorized by law, is endorsed by this Master Plan within the municipalities which wish to use them. Consideration should also be given to the use of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (MDARD's) [Agri-cultural Preservation Fund](#) for use in the purchase of development rights and enrollment of farmland in MDARD's [Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program](#).



**Goal.** Encourage the preservation of agriculture and valuable farmland/[forests](#) through a range of techniques that identify, promote, protect, and preserve [farmland/forests](#) and [agricultural](#) operations.

**Actions.** The following actions are recommended to aid in the implementation of the goal:

1. Jackson County municipalities should make their developed areas healthy, safe, attractive, and vibrant, and provide sufficient services to them in order to reduce the pressure for the development of prime farmland, [forests](#), and [other](#) open space.
2. New development should be encouraged within and adjacent to existing developed areas whenever possible and higher densities should be considered and implemented where pertinent.

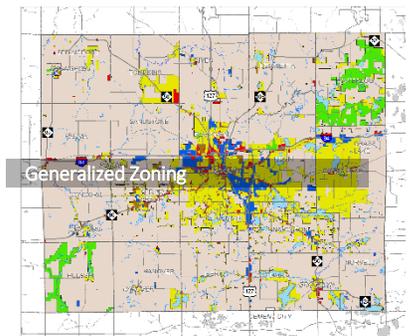
3. Cluster housing options within agricultural and other rural areas should be supported through local planning and zoning measures which allow small pockets of densely developed residential areas, offset by appropriate areas of open space to preserve open space and agricultural lands; and to promote compatibility between these land uses.
4. Municipal planning commissions [that](#) desire to preserve prime agricultural lands, [forests](#), and [other](#) open space are encouraged to consider all available planning and zoning techniques. [Those efforts include](#) the purchase of development rights (PDR); agricultural districting where large contiguous tracts of prime agricultural land [exist](#); and the use of conservation easements and other legal agreements in which the [landowner](#) retains ownership of the property but conveys development rights to a land conservation organization or public body.

The County Planning Commission should review available agricultural and/or open space preservation plans and ordinances and adapt and compile pertinent sections for use in Jackson County. Farmers should be involved in any farmland preservation programming and appropriate regulation to assure that farmland preservation occurs within the constructs of private property rights. They should also consider enrolling their farms in MDARD’s Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program.

5. Industries that have the potential to use agricultural/[forest](#) products produced locally should be encouraged to locate within the County. Existing zoning ordinance provisions should also be revised to permit uses which support agricultural activities (e.g., grain elevators, agricultural supply stores, agricultural equipment and machinery and repair, etc.) in proximity to large areas of active farmland.
6. Municipal zoning ordinances should be reviewed and amended to permit Farm Markets, as addressed in the Farm Market GAAMPs developed under the authority of the Michigan Right to Farm Act, and to eliminate any other conflicts with the legislation and associated GAAMPs.

### **‘Over Zoning’ and ‘Strip’ Commercial Development**

In some cases, the municipal plans and zoning ordinances include very large areas, or [linear](#) areas that are located along major roadways for homogeneous land uses. The purpose of master plans—and their primary implementing tool, the zoning ordinance—is to direct future growth into [areas that](#) are appropriate to accommodate [it](#). These areas typically have the necessary infrastructure including: roads; sewer and water facilities and other utilities; police and fire protection and other services; and schools to accommodate additional development. If the areas shown on the future land use map (a master plan element) and/or districts on the official zoning ordinance map are excessively large, or extend for considerable distances along thoroughfares, their ability to direct growth into areas, is diminished.



**Goal.** Local units of government are encouraged to review their land use plans and zoning ordinances to assure that the size of areas proposed for future land uses are contained to a degree necessary to appropriately direct growth.

**Actions.** The following actions are recommended to aid in the implementation of the goal:

1. Municipalities should determine the amount of land necessary to accommodate anticipated future population levels.
2. Local units of government are also encouraged to review their ordinances to reduce the land area designated for various uses in cases where growth projections indicate that actual development will occupy smaller areas of land. In cases where lengthy stretches of development, particularly commercial, are located along major roadways, and the area proposed for commercial use exceeds substantially the area projected to accommodate future population levels, reductions in length are recommended.