

Chapter Three

Issues, Goals, & Recommendations

**FORMAT OF
CHAPTER**

A primary purpose of the Master Plan is to give direction to the future use of land in the City of Fenton. For the plan to work effectively, it must reflect the views of the people who live and own property there. This involves obtaining a consensus on a wide variety of issues through an aggressive citizen participation process. Issues of concern are identified, discussed and potential solutions reviewed. A common set of goals and recommendations are then developed for inclusion in the plan which expresses these desires.

Issue Statements

An issue is a statement of a problem, a situation for which corrective action is recommended.

Goal Statements

A goal statement indicates what is to be accomplished pursuant to each issue identified above. In addition, the goals statements give the Planning Commission an agreed upon framework by which the planning process is to follow.

**ISSUES, GOALS, &
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendation Statements

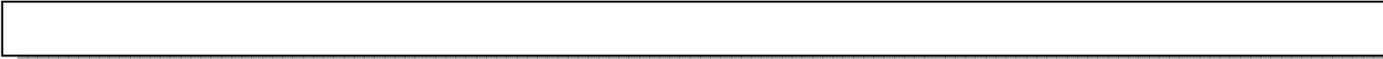
In the early stages of master plan development, it is beneficial to develop and have available a set of general goals to follow. As the plan develops, however, there is a greater need to become more specific in how the various issues will be addressed. Recommendations must be formulated that indicate how each of the goals will be attained. For example, a goal of the City might be to ensure that adequate industrial land is available in the future. The related recommendation is to investigate the feasibility of acquiring additional land for creation of a new industrial park.

Land Use

Issue. There are several cases and trends of land use conflicts or incompatibility throughout the City.

Goal. Eliminate or minimize impacts of existing land use conflicts and prevent new conflicts from occurring through sound planning and zoning.

Recommendation.



- A. Encourage those businesses which have been identified as non-conforming uses to use screening or other aesthetic measures to mitigate their impact on surrounding development.
- B. Encourage the relocation of non-conforming industrial buildings into one of the industrial parks. This may involve purchase of the building, offering a tax abatement on a more suitable site or other relocation assistance. Once the business is relocated, the site can then be redeveloped for a use that is compatible with the surrounding area.
- C. Pursue a course of action that will eventually eliminate all serious land use conflicts within the City. This would involve rezoning parcels for a more compatible use, so that such uses will not be allowed to expand, and establishing zoning requirements which restrict the expansion or reconstruction of a non-conforming use.

Issue. The landscaping for many commercial and industrial sites tends to be unattractive and, at times, ineffective.

Goal. Provide guidance to developers and property owners with regard to site landscaping design.

Recommendation.

- A. Expand upon the Landscaping Section of the Zoning Ordinance to include landscaping standards for site plan review.
- B. Develop a street tree plan that will recommend certain species for the various commercial and industrial areas of the City.
- C. Encourage the use of a variety of plantings on each site so that all developments do not have the same appearance.
- D. Require that detention basins have a pond-like shape and landscaping.

Issue. The intrusion of commercial uses into the residential area along North Leroy just north of the CBD should be contained and not be allowed to connect to the commercial district further north.

Goal. Contain the commercial districts on North Leroy Street through appropriate master planning and zoning.

- A. Ensure that the Future Land Use Map clearly differentiates the commercial and residential zoning districts.
- B. Limit the expansion of non-conforming commercial uses in residential districts.

Natural Features

Issue. The potential for adverse development impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.

Goal. Maximize the preservation of unique and valuable natural resources from the impacts of development.

Recommendation.

- A. Through zoning and flood plain ordinances restrict and manage development within the shoreline conservation district and other flood plain and wetland areas throughout the City.
- B. Use the natural features information in this plan during site plan review. Knowing if there are environmentally sensitive areas within a site being reviewed will allow the Planning Commission to evaluate whether the proposed plan maximizes preservation of natural features.
- C. Investigate the feasibility of passing a millage to acquire environmentally-sensitive land.

Issue. Some of the natural feature areas in the City have limited visibility and/or access for recreational purposes.

Goal. Make improvements to areas adjacent to natural features that will improve public visibility and access.

Recommendation.

- A. Continue to develop the Shiawassee Riverwalk project to improve access to the Shiawassee River. This can be accomplished, in part, by acquiring easement rights for a trail system along the entire length of the Shiawassee River and Mill Pond.
- B. Implement the Action Plan identified in the City of Fenton Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Housing

Issue. Establishing an appropriate mix of housing types.

Goal. Allow for a variety of housing types in the appropriate zoning districts, but retain a strong single-family residential orientation.

Recommendation.

- A. Due to the large number of multiple-family units that have been constructed in recent years, Fenton should focus new residential development toward owner-occupied units. A variety of owner-occupied housing types are available, including those aimed at empty nesters and seniors.

- B. With the pending large future demand for senior housing, the City should encourage a variety of new senior developments. This can be accomplished through innovative planning and zoning techniques

Issue. Conversion of large single-family homes into multiple-family units.

Goal. Permit the conversion of single-family homes on a limited basis with strict controls.

Recommendation.

- A. Conversion should only be permitted under a special use permit process. Standards should be set up which would have to be met before the conversion would be approved; for example the number of units could be limited to two or three units per home, a minimum unit size could be established, on-site screened parking could be required, or converted units could be limited to no more than 20% of the homes on a block.
- B. The City should consider the implementation of a rental property maintenance code. This code would set interior and exterior maintenance standards which would have to be met by all rental properties. Inspection could be conducted on an annual or bi-annual basis.

Issue. Historic Preservation for Housing

Goal. Encourage the preservation of individual historic homes as appropriate.

Recommendation.

- A. The City of Fenton should utilize the planned unit development option to preserve historic houses in and around the downtown area
- B. Any housing rehabilitation efforts should place a priority on historic homes. A priority should also be placed on historic areas for public infrastructure improvements.

Issue. Housing opportunities for low/moderate income persons.

Goal. Continue to provide and improve housing opportunities for low/moderate income individuals and families.

Recommendation.

- A. The City Administration should work with the Board of Realtors and local banks to establish a home ownership program for low/moderate income persons. This program can begin with home ownership workshops and develop into a down payment assistance and property maintenance program.
 - B. Ensure that areas of Fenton are zoned to permit the construction or redevelopment of affordable housing.

Commercial

Issue. Parts of Downtown Fenton lack the vitality typically associated with successful small city downtowns.

Goal. Improve the image, design, cohesiveness and vitality of Downtown Fenton.

Recommendation.

- A. A redevelopment plan should be prepared to guide the future development of Downtown Fenton. This plan should evaluate and make recommendations in the following areas: market strategy, land use, traffic circulation, building location and obsolescence, architecture, landscaping, on-site circulation, signage and entry treatments.
- B. A long-term approach should be taken toward redeveloping Downtown Fenton rather than a quick fix. This will help ensure that improvements will last into the future and that another redevelopment effort will not be needed.

Issue. The North Leroy Street commercial corridor (from North Road to the northern City boundary) is unattractive and lacks a cohesive identity.

Goal. Upgrade the mixture of businesses and create a quality image for the North Leroy Street commercial corridor.

Recommendation.

- A. Adopt and begin to implement the design guidelines set forth in both the North Road/North Leroy Street Plan and the North Leroy Street Subarea Plan.
- B. Continue to make streetscape improvements along the North Leroy Street corridor including the installation of street trees and ornamental lighting.

Issue. There is an unsightly appearance from U.S. 23 of certain commercial buildings.

Goal. Improve the appearance of both existing and new buildings from U.S. 23 through existing and proposed zoning regulations.

Recommendation.

- A. Upgrade Zoning Ordinance standards for the screening of rooftop mechanical units and parking from U.S. 23.
- B. Improve the Ordinance lighting standards to ensure that the nighttime view of sites from U.S. 23 is not overpowering or obtrusive.
- C. Retain existing vegetation along U.S. 23 to the extent feasible.

Industrial

Issue. Zoning Requirements for the Industrial Park district.

Goal. Establish zoning requirements which will provide a foundation for quality light industrial development and address the aesthetics of development as viewed from the U.S. 23 freeway.

Recommendation.

- A. A setback of at least 100 feet should be maintained along the U.S. 23 freeway along with buffer landscaping.
- B. Loading areas should be designed or screened to limit views from U.S. 23 to the maximum extent possible.
- C. Upgrade Zoning Ordinance standards for the screening of rooftop mechanical units and parking from U.S. 23.
- D. Improve the Ordinance lighting standards to ensure that the nighttime view of sites from U.S. 23 is not overpowering or obtrusive. Recommendations A, B, C, and D can be achieved through Zoning Ordinance amendments.
- F. The Zoning Ordinance should permit only light industrial uses in the industrial parks to ensure that the adjacent residential neighborhoods will not be negatively impacted by heavy industrial uses.

Issue. The eventual development of all available buildable industrial land in Fenton.

Goal. Ensure that adequate industrial land is available for future development when the existing industrial parks are full.

Recommendation.

- A. Investigate the creation of an additional industrial park to the northwest of the City of Fenton to meet the needs of businesses once the available industrial land is fully developed. This land should only be developed and rezoned when the infrastructure is available to create an industrial park.

Issue. The potential encroachment of commercial uses into the industrial parks.

Goal. Maintain the current amount of industrially-zoned land in the industrial parks and prevent any further encroachment from commercial uses. In addition, designate a portion of an industrial park for non-retail oriented office uses only.

This land use planning strategy is important for the following reasons:

- Commercial uses are incompatible with industrial uses within an industrial park setting. The commercial uses compromise the industrial image which is important for attracting new industry and the creation of future permanent jobs in the City.

- Industrial uses will generate considerably less traffic in the area, thus reducing traffic congestion impact on Silver Lake and Owen Roads.
- Aesthetically, industrial uses will be less offensive than the commercial activities. Commercial uses depend to a large extent on extensive signage to attract customers.
- The industrial area, located adjacent to U.S. 23 freeway (between three interchanges), is an ideal location for potential industrial development. Improved sites, ready access to the freeway system and excellent visibility are only a few of the assets of this location.
- Some of the concerns with the development of commercial uses in this area include the eventual conflict of commercial and industrial traffic, the poor access to the commercial uses along Alloy Drive and the mixing of commercial and industrial uses, which creates considerable congestion for both uses.

Recommendation.

- A. Protect the integrity of uses in the industrial parks through adequate zoning regulations.
- B. Create an office park district in the Zoning Ordinance for the area identified as AOffice@ on Alloy Drive near Silver Lake Road.

Traffic

Issue. Presently Fenton does not have well defined north-south routing through the City.

Goal. Improve north-south routing through the City.

Recommendation.

- A. Continue to employ the access management guidelines in the Zoning Ordinance along North Leroy Street. This will help control the number, design and placement of driveways, thereby preserving the street=s traffic capacity and safety as properties redevelop.
- B. Examine the feasibility of acquiring Gravel Pit Road from the City line northward to Owen Road and developing as a City street.

Issue. Future residential development in the northeast area of the City and commercial development along North Leroy Street may create traffic congestion on adjacent roads and streets.

Goal. Ensure that the integrity of the road system and related capacity is maintained in this area of the City.

Recommendation.

- A. Develop a circulation plan that addresses the potential growth in this area of the City. This can be accomplished, in part, by conducting a buildout analysis to predict potential development and related traffic generation.
- B. Construct a collector street in the City's developing northeast section as development occurs. This route could link Dauner Road with North Lemen, connect the gap in Lemen, and thereby provide alternate routing to Leroy and Main Streets. The City should consider a Precise plat (under the Subdivision Control Act of 1967) to identify the road alignment.
- C. Through the use of site plan and subdivision review, ensure that each new development has adequate access to collector streets.

Issue. Downtown circulation is circuitous, confusing, and inefficient.

Goal. Improve the efficiency and design of the circulation system in and around the Downtown area.

Recommendation.

- A. Connect Silver Lake Road with Main Street to ease traffic congestion at their intersections with North Leroy Street. This will require acquisition of right-of-way and the cooperation of the Grand Trunk Railroad Corporation to allow an additional crossing of the rail line.
- B. Remove the short east-west connection between Roberts Street and Silver Lake Road (just west of South Leroy Street) thereby forcing traffic to use the 90-degree intersection.
- C. As part of a redevelopment plan for Fenton Square, identify changes that will improve traffic flow throughout Downtown Fenton.

Issue. There are sight difficulties at the Torrey Road/South Long Lake intersection. The problem intensifies at night when some motorists confuse northbound U.S. 23 traffic with northbound Torrey Road.

Goal. Improve sight visibility and eliminate confusion over traffic patterns.

Recommendation.

- A. Plant landscaping along the west side of Torrey Road so that motorists on South Long Lake Road can more easily distinguish vehicles on U.S. 23 from those on Torrey Road.

Issue. There is a history of traffic operation problems and accidents at all rail crossings.

Goal. Improve traffic safety at all rail crossings.

Recommendation.

- A. Work toward the installation of warning lights at all at-grade railroad crossings.

Issue. As development throughout the City continues, there continues to be a need to maintain access to vacant tracts of land and preserve roadway capacity through regulation rather than street widening.

Goal. Maintain public access to vacant tracts of developable land and improve traffic operations/preserve capacity through the development and adoption of a driveway design ordinance. These design and construction standards would be a separate ordinance outside the Zoning Ordinance.

Recommendation.

- A. Require that the access management standards in the Zoning Ordinance apply to all major traffic routes.
- B. Maintain road access, both present and future, through the preservation of rights-of-way and access easements.

Community Facilities

Issue. With construction of a new fire station, an alternate use will be needed for the architecturally-significant old fire station building.

Goal. Find an alternate use for the old fire station building that complements the character of the civic center area of downtown.

Recommendation.

- A. Conduct a building condition evaluation to determine the ability to accommodate various uses.
- B. Contact various real estate developers/agents to assess potential interest in the building.
- C. Prepare a Request for Proposals to solicit the best re-development proposal.

Miscellaneous

Issue. Not all public facilities and programs are accessible to persons with disabilities and meet ADA requirements.

Goal. The provision of barrier-free access to all public facilities and programs.

Recommendation.

- A. Prepare a transition plan to address accessibility to all government facilities.
- B. Implement the barrier-free access recommendations in the City of Fenton Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- C. Through site plan review, bring all existing commercial, industrial and multiple-family housing projects into compliance with barrier-free access standards.