

Chapter 5

Goals for the Future

Introduction

This section of the Master Plan presents the goals and objectives that have been developed to provide a strong, coherent direction for the future development of Jonesfield Township and the Village of Merrill. The formulation of these statements evolves from the desire to remedy existing problems, to maintain positive features, and to provide an attractive and functional community environment in the future. These goals and objectives form a key element of the community's Master Plan. Desired land use arrangements and proposed implementation strategies are a natural outgrowth of established goals.

Some additional benefits of establishing these goals and objectives (policies) for the Village and the Township are:

Consistency – A comprehensive list of statements concerning a variety of planning issues can help avoid arbitrary decision-making in the future.

Efficiency – Clearly stated policies help to reduce the time spent on individual topics while

providing sound planning principles to assist in the process.

➤ **Coordination** – Established policies provide a single framework to guide actions by the Township Board and Village Council, Township and Village Planning Commissions, the private sector, and the public.

➤ **Stability** – Policies tend to be general and long-range in nature. As such, they remain stable under a variety of changing community conditions.

➤ **Basis for Decisions** – Established policies are necessary to provide a reasonable basis for adopting local land use controls such as zoning. Furthermore, clearly stated policies are helpful to the courts if called upon to judge the fairness of specific land use regulations.

Most of the goals and objectives apply to both Jonesfield Township and Merrill. However, some statements apply more specifically to the Village or the Township on a

separate basis, and these are noted where appropriate

The goals and objectives for the Merrill-Jonesfield community are presented in the remainder of this section.

1. *General Development Goal*

Promote a healthy and sustainable level of growth in Jonesfield Township and the Village of Merrill by carefully establishing future land use patterns.

Objectives:

a. Regularly evaluate the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance every 5 years as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act 33 of 2008 in both the Township and the Village to determine their effectiveness, and update the documents as needed.

2. *Agricultural Land Development and Open Space Goal*

Maintain Jonesfield Township as a rural residential community that is characterized by productive farmlands and attractive open space areas.

Objectives:

a. Encourage the preservation of agricultural lands and existing farming operations.

b. Encourage the preservation of natural features and open space.

c. Encourage the placement of land uses that are compatible with existing natural features and the Future Land Use Map.

d. Work closely with any future factory type dairy, beef or hog farms to insure operations blend into the current agricultural setting by establishing berms, tree and hedge plantings and to insure transportation access is adequate.

e. Insure renewable energy facilities represent a balance between property owners and other residents within Jonesfield township.

3. *Residential Development Goal*

Ensure that adequate land is reserved for a variety of types of residential development.

Objectives:

a. Identify areas within the Township and the Village that can support various types of residential development.

b. Zone the designated land appropriately and promote the areas for residential development.

c. Ensure that utilities, infrastructure, and public services can support the planned development.

Preserve the character of existing residential areas by encouraging compatible development in and around the neighborhoods.

Objectives:

- a. Encourage infill development of vacant lots within neighborhoods with compatible residential housing units. (*Village*)
- b. Encourage compatible development of vacant land adjacent to existing residential areas through appropriate zoning of the vacant lands.
- c. Develop appropriate criteria and definitions for all types of dwellings in the Zoning Ordinance.

4. Commercial Development Goal

Encourage sound commercial development in appropriate locations identified by the Future Land Use Map to serve the needs of the community. Maintain and improve the viability of the Central Business District. (*Village*)

Objectives:

- a. Provide for planned commercial development through appropriate land use planning and zoning.
- b. Encourage commercial development in compact clusters and planned centers, not randomly

scattered throughout the community.

- c. Encourage appropriate standards for commercial buildings to ensure that development is in harmony with the desired image of the community.
- d. Promote the reuse and redevelopment of vacant commercial land and buildings.
- e. Identify Brownfield locations. Investigate options for pursuing “brownfield” redevelopment and site reclamation opportunities for eligible properties.
- f. Encourage commercial development to inquire about local, state and federal tax relief and State Economic Development Funds.
- g. Encourage new construction to use traditional style that seek a pleasing blending of the “old and the new.”

5. Industrial Development Goal

Promote the development of a diversified industrial base that provides relatively higher income employment.

Objectives:

- a. Encourage and support the development of village/Township industrial attraction programs that will identify those industries which

are most compatible with the community's resources and establish strategies for attracting those industries [through zoning and/or rezoning practices if needed.](#)

b. Pursue state and federal grants to assist in the development of infrastructure needed for new or expanded industries.

c. Promote well-designed and landscaped industrial buildings with appropriate site development and environmental performance standards.

6. *Public Facilities and Services Goal*

Provide cost-effective public facilities and services that contribute to the overall quality of life in the Merrill-Jonesfield community.

Provide adequate utilities and infrastructure so that the community may ensure managed and responsible growth.

Objectives:

a. Plan development in a manner that best utilizes the Village's existing utility system.

b. Continue to explore opportunities for cooperation between the Village and Township for the provision of services.

c. Extend and phase future utility services at a pace that is consistent with area growth.

7. *Transportation Goal*

Promote the development of a complete transportation system that includes the following major components:

➤ **Well-designed and maintained local streets that adequately serve residential areas.**

➤ **Major thoroughfares and collector streets that efficiently move traffic and minimize conflicts between truck and automobile traffic.**

➤ **Sidewalks and pathways that separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic.**

Objectives:

a. Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Saginaw County Road Commission to ensure that a proper relationship exists between road improvements planned by the state or county and the community's desired future land use pattern.

b. Consider limiting vehicle points of entrance and exit on major roads.

c. Look for opportunities for pedestrian circulation and non-motorized paths along existing and planned road systems.

d. Pursue State Transportation Economic Development funds to entice/keep job creating enterprises in the community.

e. Maintain a current community recreational plan in accordance with state requirements and continue to carry out the recreational improvements identified in the plan.

8. *Quality of Life Goal*

Foster an enhanced sense of community pride among residents and businesses. Encourage the development of diversified and expanded recreational opportunities to meet both current and future service demands from area residents.

Objectives:

a. Promote fix-up and clean-up programs for residential, commercial, and industrial areas to increase community cooperation and pride.

b. Encourage community volunteer programs and ensure that volunteers are recognized for their efforts.

c. Encourage quality local attractions and community events that will promote citizen and business participation.

d. Work with area recreation providers to identify ways to improve recreation opportunities in the area, including entertainment events, cultural activities, and outdoor recreation opportunities.