

CHAPTER 6

PLANNING GOALS

Under Michigan's Township Planning Act (Public Act 168 of 1959, as amended), Corwith Township is empowered to make and adopt a master plan to guide future development within the community. Before undertaking such a process, it is essential to set out goals and objectives for planning which meet the particular needs and aspirations of the Township's citizens. It is also important that planning goals reflect the type of community and lifestyles desired by Corwith Township residents. The goals must be realistic and attainable from a social and economic standpoint.

Public Outreach

Several methods of encouraging public involvement in the planning process may be utilized. The Corwith Township Planning Commission chose to conduct a written citizen survey as the primary tool for garnering citizen opinions. The survey was conducted in 2002 as the beginning of the master planning process.

Because the Township wanted to reach as many respondents and reach all geographic locations, it was decided to mail the survey to all property owners, regardless of residency or voter registration status. However, the Township decided to separate the returned responses based on residency status, so the Planning Commission could determine if the year-round, part-time or non-residents had differing viewpoints about development and land issues. Mailing addresses for survey distribution were taken from the property tax records since computerized mailing labels could easily be produced from existing digital files.

Subject matter for the survey questions covered a broad range of topics, including community identity and government, natural resources and environment, land use and zoning, community services, recreation and social activities, and economic and local business development. In addition, respondents were asked a number of questions about themselves, such as residency status, length of time in the Township, age group and whether or not there where children at home. Finally, the survey included a number of open ended questions where respondents could "sound off" about their points of view.

The citizen survey received a good response. Of the 1,289 survey booklets mailed to Township property owners, 239 were returned for a response rate of 18.5 percent. Response rates for communities of similar size normally average less than ten percent. The higher than average response rate shows that Township property owners take special interest in their community and wish to be involved in decisions which affect its future.

Number of Survey Booklets Mailed	1,289
Number of Survey Booklets Returned	239
Household Response Rate	18.5%

The survey booklet was designed so that up to three persons could express opinions. A total of 390 responses were tallied from the 239 booklets returned. The following table is provided to demonstrate the residency status of respondents. More than 60 percent of the respondents were year-round residents. Part-time residents and non-residents made up 22.6 percent and 17.2 percent of the total respondents, respectively.

Residency Status	# of Respondents	% of Total
Year-Round Residents	235	60.3%
Part-Time Residents	88	22.6%
Non-Residents	67	17.2%
Total Respondents	390	100.0%

Full results of the citizen survey are attached at the end of this document as Appendix A. The citizen survey, along with a review of the previous five chapters and planning officials input, were utilized in the development of the following goals and objectives for this master plan.

Goals and Objectives

NATURAL RESOURCES AND RURAL CHARACTER

GOAL:

To protect the quality of life of Corwith Township residents by protecting its natural resources and rural character.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Coordinate the intensity of development with the environmental integrity and limitations of the land.
2. Identify areas of existing or potential pollution problems and develop measures which will rectify those problems.
3. Evaluate proposed developments for environmental impacts.
4. Preserve scenic views and open space, especially along roadways and shorelines.
5. Limit off-premise signage along roadways.
6. Protect wildlife and waterfowl habitat.
7. Maintain adequate farm and forest lands to meet economic, recreational and environmental needs of the Township.
8. Assist local citizens in communicating with State agencies on land use and environmental issues, such as wetlands regulation and forest management practices.
9. Keep abreast of Federal and State programs oriented toward environmental protection and attempt to secure funds from appropriate sources for this purpose.
10. Support State and County development standards insuring minimum negative environmental impacts resulting from residential, commercial and industrial land use activities.
11. Support Otsego County land use controls to insure open space preservation.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL:

To provide for orderly residential growth within the Township that maintains environmental quality and protects property values and rights of individual citizens.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain citizen involvement in the planning process.
2. Maintain a majority of the Township's residential area in low density development consistent with current development patterns, as well as the public's stated desire to retain the Township's rural character.
3. Create less dense development along lakes and waterways to protect water quality while still allowing people to enjoy waterfront living.
4. Encourage housing opportunities for all income and age groups.
5. Encourage a continued high rate of owner occupancy to maintain housing quality, while meeting local needs for rental units.
6. Consider adopting a junk/blight ordinance as a general law ordinance.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL:

Provide limited commercial and industrial development at specific locations in the Township, thus avoiding unnecessary sprawl into rural locations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Designate specific areas for small-scale commercial and industrial development where all-season roads are available.
2. Because Corwith Township does not have the infrastructure (sanitary sewer and public water) generally needed by large scale industrial uses, the Township should orient such uses to the planned industrial districts in and near Gaylord.
3. Corwith Township recognizes that the community is abundant with natural gas and oil reserves and that Township residents benefit financially from the extraction of these resources. The Township promotes the continual extraction of these resources. However, the Township should work with Otsego County to develop reasonable procedures and standards for mineral extraction and site reclamation when such activities cease.
4. Avoid conflicts between adjacent incompatible land uses.
5. Encourage businesses that cater to outdoor recreation.

PUBLIC SERVICES, TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOALS:

Provide appropriate public facilities and services to support the residential, commercial and recreational activities of residents and visitors.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Work proactively with the Otsego County Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation on road improvements and road maintenance.
2. Limit commercial truck traffic to designated routes within the Township.
3. Incorporate the goals and objectives of the *M-32 & Old-27/I-75 Business Loop Corridor Study* that pertain to Corwith Township into the planning goals of this master plan. Chapter 7 of the study is attached as Appendix B.
4. Incorporate the goals and objectives of the *I-75 Scenic Corridor Plan* that pertain to Corwith Township into the planning goals of this master plan. Chapter 4 of the plan is attached as Appendix C.
5. Direct development to areas where appropriate public services and utilities exist.
6. Insure adequate parking facilities for commercial and public attraction areas through site plan review.
7. Require that new road and utility improvements be made to coincide with new development.
8. Continue operation of the transfer station and annual clean-up program.
9. Continue availability of the Township Hall for community and private functions.
10. Support and encourage the existing fire department and First Responder programs.
11. Support and encourage private civic groups which provide educational and social programs of importance to local residents.
12. Support public transportation services Otsego County to assist those with limited mobility and to conserve energy.
13. Identify and apply for appropriate grant funding for public projects.
14. Cooperate with State efforts to designate recreational trails in areas accessible to Township residents.