

**Date Received:** November 10, 2008

N-26-2008

**VILLAGE:** Village of Manchester

**LOCATION:** The 22.0 acre site is located along Union Road, east of downtown Village of Manchester. The Douglas Schaffer Trust, the property owner, is applying to the Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP), requesting that the County purchase this property under NAPP.

**REASON FOR PAB REVIEW:** Natural Areas Preservation Program Committee Ordinance No. 128 requires that the Washtenaw County Planning Advisory Board provide an advisory opinion on the applications submitted to the program.

**BACKGROUND:** The Douglas Schaffer Trust Property site proposed for the NAPP program totals 22.0 acres. The Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission is considering the opportunity of buying this parcel.

## **STAFF COMMENTS**

### **1. The application's impact on long-range planning**

According to the Village of Manchester Plan (Village Plan), the long-range planning for this parcel is Conservation and Low Density Residential. *A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County* (County Plan) designates this parcel as Open Space. Staff believes that the use of this site for passive recreation and/or open space does not conflict with the long range planning for the area.

### **2. Existing land use of the property and adjacent properties**

According to SEMCOG 2005, the land use on this parcel is currently grassland/shrubland. The surrounding land use around this parcel includes active agriculture to the north and west, adjacent woodlands/wetlands to the northwest, and woodland/wetland and single family residential to the east. According to the application, there are no easements on the property. Staff believes that an open space use on this parcel does not conflict with surrounding land uses.

### **3. Current zoning of the property and surrounding properties**

The zoning designation for this site is Single Family Residential Medium Density. The surrounding zoning designations are Residential to the east, agriculture to the north, and low density residential to the west.

According to Village of Manchester Zoning Code (Village Ordinance), the intent of the Single Family Residential Medium Density District is to provide single family housing where public sewer and water services may be present. Permitted principal uses include single family dwellings, and public parks and playgrounds. Other non-residential and public uses may be permitted through conditional approval of the Village.

While the use of this property either for passive recreation, open space, or a conservation area does not appear to conflict with the Village Ordinance, a better zoning designation for this area would be Agriculture District, which has a permitted use of "public and private recreation and conservation areas, such as: forest preserve, game refuge; recreation parks and reservation; and similar public and private uses of low intensity."

#### **4. Compliance with Master Plans**

The Washtenaw County Land Use Plan maps the area as Open Space. Open Space areas, according to the County Plan, "can refer to grasslands, stands of trees, swampy lowland, or a park." Further, the County Plan states that "preserving large tracts of natural ecosystems and linkages between these ecosystems are an important part of developing an open space plan. Preserving these areas has positive impacts on air quality, ecological systems, habitats, natural corridors, scenic vistas and water quality. Corridors and natural connections between ecosystems provide a natural flow that stands in stark contrast to small isolated pockets of open space leftover from developments that disrupt natural water systems or trap wildlife."

According to the Village Plan, the site is designated as both Conservation and Low Density Residential. The Conservation category is described as the following: "to provide areas for public uses, public and private parks, and recreation and open space systems which preserve and enhance the character of the Village. This includes lands within a floodplain or wetland, especially important is the River Raisin corridor, which should be conserved." Low Density Residential is meant to provide "lower density, single family detached dwellings, along with other related facilities such as schools and parks."

Staff concludes that overall, the passive recreational and open space use on these parcels do not conflict with either the County land use policies or the Village Plan.

#### **5. Impact on fragile lands/natural resources**

According to Washtenaw County data, most of the site contains wetlands and woodlands along the River Raisin corridor. The Village Plan specifically sets the goal of preserving areas near the river to protect natural features. According to the application, surveys by recognized experts or an environmental assessment by a qualified consultant have not been performed.

## **6. Impact on infrastructure and community as a whole**

According to the Village zoning ordinance, this district may be served by public water supply and public sewer.

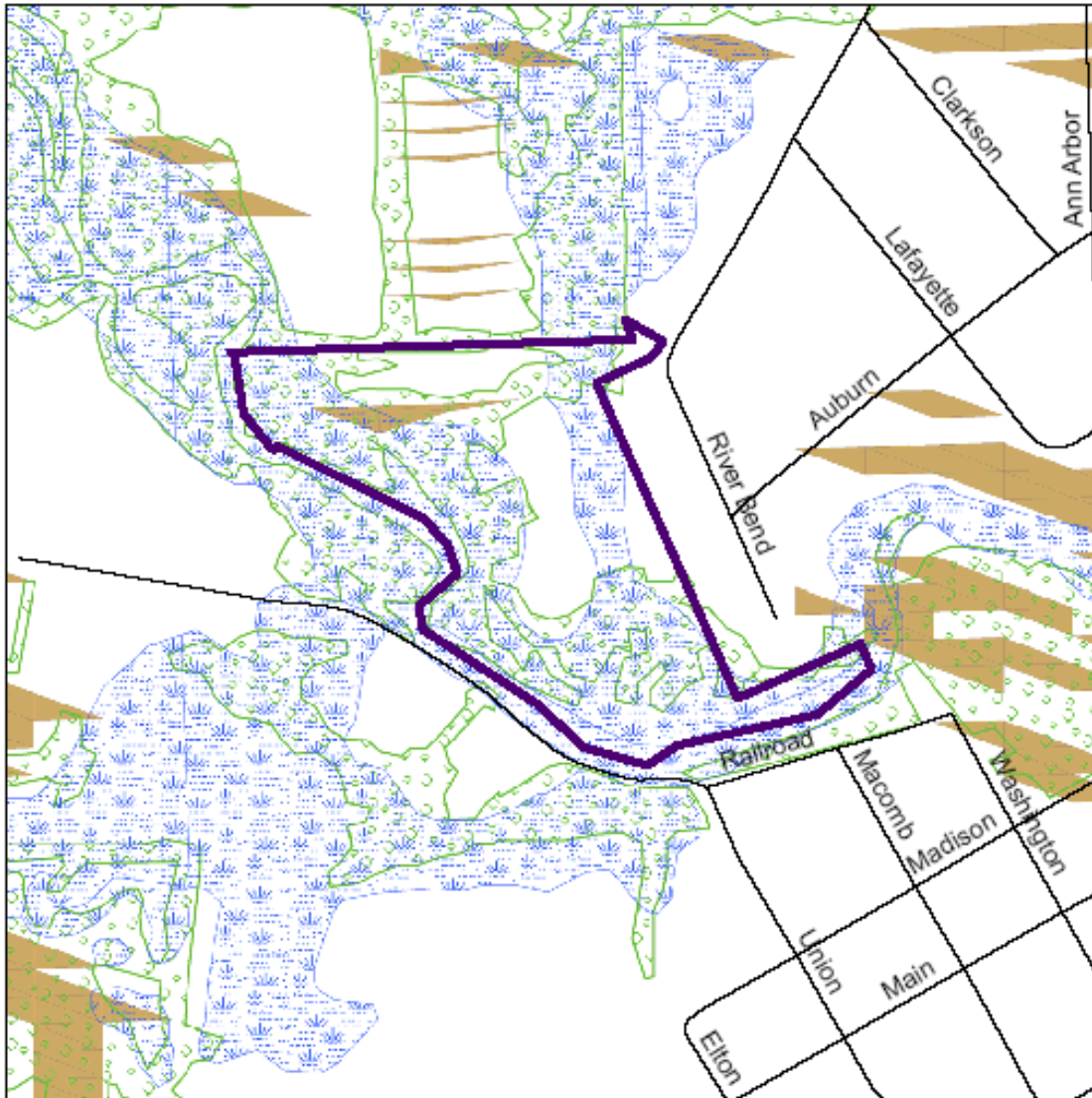
The Village contracts with the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department for service. Manchester Village is served by the Manchester Village Fire Department, whose fire station is located on south Macomb Rd just outside the village. Access to the site would be provided from Union Rd. This parcel appears to be significant for its natural feature value and does not appear to impact on public and community services.

### **Conclusion**

This area is very important for water quality and stormwater management, due to the significant amount of wetlands on the parcel, and for the preservation of the woodlands and general open space.

In conclusion, based on the observations above, it is the opinion of the Washtenaw County Planning and Environment Department Staff that this parcel for the Natural Areas Preservation Program does not conflict with any land use plans nor the zoning ordinance.

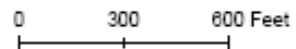
# Douglas Shaffer Trust



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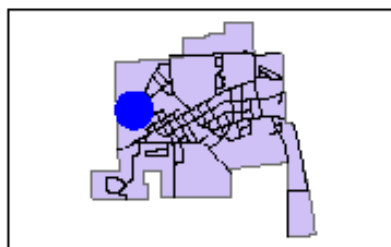
Washtenaw County Department of Planning and Environment

VILLAGE OF MANCHESTER -- NATURAL FEATURES



## Legend

- Roads
- Wetlands
- Woodlands
- Steep Slope



Village of Manchester

