

Southwest Region | Public Workshop
 Washtenaw County Comprehensive Plan
 Thursday, December 11, 2003
 Manchester Middle School Cafeteria

**Regional Public Comments
 on
 Issues & Opportunities in Washtenaw County**

LAND USE OPEN SPACE	
Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the development where the services are already located • “Rural” subdivisions ruin true rural character. • Improve education on land use • Need for innovative planning techniques over what has been done in the past • Too much sprawl • Only allow land use if infrastructure is in place to accommodate it • Mitigate NIMBY (Not-In-My-Back-Yard) attitudes. Reduce NIMBY power to maintain status quo once NIMBY is already living in area where development is not wanted • Tax-base erosion and infrastructure shortcomings because of tax structure of manufactured home communities • Cluster development zoning issues – need for efficient use of land and preserving open space • Too easy to deviate from township master plans by developers • Need for more government controls over land uses – What guarantee is there that preserved areas stay preserved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve building codes to take advantage of low impact environmental building procedures • Link communities together- Common pedestrian paths that pass from community with a growing park system from community to community. • Promote cluster zoning, open spaces, shared drain field options. Inform and educate! • There is opportunity to protect the size of our villages and or towns (the charm and uniqueness) • “Human scale living” for seniors and others. Village housing with things needed within walking distance – groceries, etc. As many things as possible within walking distance. • Life on a more human scale, don’t need to drive everywhere Utilize existing land and buildings before expanding more “Greenfield” redevelopment. • We have land in some villages/urban areas which can still be used for development. We must focus on the best use for this land to prevent sprawl outside of any remaining viable rural community, CBD, residential areas • Plan residential and commercial growth to “fit” into current landscape in SW Washtenaw county • Focus on integrating with village rather than individual developments • Condensed housing PUDs • Planning growth. Allow people to live where they want. Don’t overzone or over plan. Even Hamlets can be cool.

TRANSPORTATION TRANSIT	
Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much traffic on M-52 • Improve quality of roads • High traffic congestion • Too long without public transportation • Too much local control of speed limits • Lack of public transit options between cities and developed areas • Poor condition rural roads • Need for alternative transportation to alleviate traffic congestion on roadways and/or incentives for ride-sharing (i.e. return to rail instead of truck traffic for freight) • US-12 is a main congestion roadway • Need for improved motor vehicle traffic management • Need for local resident’s input in changes to roads or traffic patterns • Too much traffic noise • In the future there will be more traffic concerns (especially in Dexter-Chelsea corridor) • Today: Traffic on Zeeb Road @ Ann Arbor-Dexter Road backs up during rush hours • Use of “smart” traffic lights to improve traffic flow • Consistent road maintenance • Concern with congestion on M-52 thru Manchester and Chelsea but DON’T think a loop around the towns is the best plan necessarily (Loops around a town tend to hurt downtown business, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to maintain roads • Incorporate brief passing lanes on rural state highways in order to relieve traffic congestion, and preserve rural character of area • Opportunities for public transportation for commuters, i.e. buses, light rail, etc • No cars within the cities, just public transit • Increase bike paths out to parks and employment centers • Increase bike use to decrease use of motorized vehicles • Proactive traffic control and planning. i.e., public transit, traffic calming, make the road commission politically responsible, and green corridors • Washtenaw County would be improved if outlying areas of the county were serviced with alternative transportation and more practical transport (ridesharing, commuter buses and trains, etc) • Washtenaw County would be improved if all road corridors were beautified with trees and plantings (seeing less cement, asphalt, billboards, etc). This applies mostly to entranceways to townships and cities. • Increase satellite parking lots served by commuter buses to Ann Arbor • Post reasonable speed limits on rural gravel roads

HOUSING	
Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase supply of affordable housing • Manufactured housing communities and their lack of tax base • Lack of affordable housing – spectrum of housing i.e. lower income, workforce housing, homeownership opportunities • Dedicate resources to identifying the right location of future manufactured housing communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing diversity in our communities. Based on age needs • Provide affordable housing

NATURAL RESOURCES AGRICULTURE HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic preservation. Manchester village has a unique character, would like to see it preserved • Manchester is being swallowed by suburbia rather than maintaining its “village” character. • Protect rural environment and character. • Southwest Washtenaw area more like Lenawee and Jackson Counties, not Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Detroit suburbs. Plan and 2020 Project need to recognize this • Keep our rural areas rural • Maintain rural character of townships such as narrow dirt and gravel rural roads, farmland preservation, etc • Assess impact of manufactured housing communities on rural townships • More people creating less of a small town, community environment – loss of a sense of place • Increase wildlife refuge areas. Too many animals are getting killed on the roadways because they have no place to go. • Preservation of farmland, open space and food grown locally • Reduce loss of farmland • Maintain/Increase open space • Maintain/Increase protection of wetlands • Regulate groundwater contamination • Southeast Michigan is a changing area for farming. We need to get beyond the idea that we need to preserve all farmland • Loss of open space/natural areas/ag lands. • Increase protection of the environment • Increase watershed protection and capacity utilization. • Perform hydrology studies. • Need to address future landfill space, water resources and accessible open space • Water quality deterioration and availability i.e. wetlands protection, and aquifers • Preserve open space and natural areas such as wetlands • Maintain/Increase open space and farmland preservation • Everyone believes we need to preserve farmland, when we already have too much 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Reduction - More emphasis on recycling. Offer more recycling, increase cost of trash pick up • Build on existing water resources to attract new bio-tech industries • Preserving open space and natural areas for the future. Leisure, environmental quality, etc • Look at light pollution issue, seek guidance and information from established organizations like Dark Skies • Resource management tools. i.e. protect wetland, reduce paved roads, protect aquifers and recharge areas • Preserve farmland, open space and road view sheds. (Use of PDR, funding issues, transfer development rights, green corridors, parks, wild animals) • Adopt TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) county-wide to distribute and direct growth. Now. • Protect our rivers and lakes for recreational use and/or just to have as is. • Keep open areas and farm lands • True preservation. Guarantee that if land is put into preservation, the land will not be altered in any way. No placement of future prison on preserved farmland. • Regulate groundwater protection • Protect parklands, nature preserves, etc • Washtenaw County would be improved if every township, village and city dedicated more space for community parks and preserved natural areas. • Promote/support historical preservation activities • Parks and recreation. Manchester has a nice combination – hope it retains them • Adequate recreation areas in Washtenaw County

NATURAL RESOURCES AGRICULTURE HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
Issues	Opportunities
<p>farmland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much “light” in the evenings means less opportunity for “starry nights” • Reduced open spaces and farms and visual beauty (especially on Webster Church Road) • Lack of oversight of ag land to commercial and/or industrial usage, when not wanted • What is our impact on the environment? Need to assess • Identify effects of outdoor lighting on quality of life and energy consumption • Create more community and County parks 	

PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE	
Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure development and maintenance as a planning tool, capacity dictates place of development close in to existing city/village and keeping growth in village/city. • No sewers in agriculture areas. • Lack of utilities i.e. sewer, water, etc • Infrastructure deterioration • Focus on communication infrastructure • Poor advanced telecommunications infrastructure • Reduce energy production • Increase intergovernmental cooperation. • Provide services for seniors including transportation. • Assess cost to provide services (i.e. police) • Loss of local input and controls • Legislate fair taxing on manufactured housing communities • Maintain/Increase quality of schools • Increase coordination of intergovernmental activities • Presence of uninformed and unconcerned township offices and have lack of tools to deal with growth • Lack of consistent law enforcement • State and county laws overruling local zoning ordinances i.e. manufactured home communities • Give township power to financially defend their zoning ordinances from large developers • Concerned about reduced road patrol – Lack of funds to support police services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure infrastructure is planned to attract the right kind of growth (i.e. high speed internet lines) • Consolidate infrastructure to force density in desired areas • Coordinate County, Southwest Washtenaw Region, Townships and Village resources to counter excessive development or commercializing forces. • Assist rural areas in future planning to protect open space • Improved social services and supports for rural areas • County needs to pay more attention to the smaller townships • Create incentive, assist with legal challenges, and help implement regional plan • Provide support and incentives for “work together” municipalities • Right now county dollars and budgets have set line items, some of which may not apply to all areas in the county (unless county wants us to be the same) Can there be local control or budget items unique to different area needs. Divert tax dollars for our needs. • Opportunity to look at what we have and plan before outside forces, interested solely in monetary gain, move in. Not much time • Combine planning by township governments • Less taxes, better use • Increase regional planning, the recent trend is for larger cities and townships to determine

PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE	
Issues	Opportunities
	what the small communities can do <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washtenaw County would be improved if they would facilitate workshops for township and village officials in community planning and access management. Become Urban Planning Experts. • Promote townships consolidating shared services. i.e. police, assessing, etc • Increase funds to improve public school systems

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of regional economic planning reduces opportunities in some areas while increasing in others • Continuous growth, if growth continues in rate and type all services will be stressed i.e. rural vistas lost and atmosphere gone • Renewed urban areas and denser housing in cities and villages • Increase quality employment • Decreasing commercial viability in rural/village • Growth and economic development to promote growth is always good • Create more local job opportunities • Limit CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feedlot Operations) permitting • Reduce high property taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washtenaw County would be improved if there were more efforts to renew downtowns, increase housing density in an attractive way in cities and villages and create jobs within the cities and towns (people can walk or bike to work) • Allow for/Increase local food production • Increase local energy production • Attract/Create a Minor League Baseball Team • We still have significant agricultural business in SW Washtenaw here to keep it economically viable. Small agricultural business growth ideas and support. Keep this industry economically viable and farmland will stay farmland • Recruit more businesses all over the county not just Ann Arbor. Advertise the entire county • Stronger local opportunities for locally owned businesses than providing local jobs • Stop Economic development corporations. They promote new companies and attract new business then they don't want people or traffic. • Locate or centralize industry to specific areas in the County. • More events to bring the community together. i.e. "Bite of Washtenaw County" "Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Jazz Fest" Street Fairs in Manchester, Chelsea, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Northfield Township, and Augusta. • Washtenaw county would be a better place if not a single CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feed Operations) were sited here • Washtenaw County should be a growth county