

APPENDIX B ISSUES SUMMARY

“The purpose of these issue meetings (was) to introduce the work of the Stewardship Team, and to hear thoughts and ideas about critical issues that will affect the future of the Watershed.”

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

- A. Can be saved only by purchase
- B. Zoning needed to protect farmland
- C. Land divisions are removing active farmland
- D. Farmers need to have another occupation/business to support them
- E. The land division act helped rural communities in the watershed better track land divisions and farmland loss
- F. There is a lot of leased farmland
- G. Pro-active preservation approaches needed
- H. Agricultural zoning used to limit density of development
- I. What is prime/unique farmland?
- J. Satellite and GPS technology being used to conserve on amount of fertilizer used.
- K. Subsidize farmland to keep it viable and open - like in Europe
- L. Fruit and vegetable orchards are a prevalent agricultural use
- M. Preservation of prime farmland should be done by directing development to marginal farmland
- N. Plans need to be regional involving multiple communities
- O. Need for more assistance/leadership from the State of Michigan
- P. Education should be used to promote preservation
- Q. Land is the farmer's retirement - Will the next generation carry on? In most cases, no.
- R. Incentives needed for preservation, not regulation
- S. A lot of farmland is better used for agricultural purposes than for development purposes due to high water table and other soil characteristics
- T. There is not currently a general recognition of the value of farmland, except by farmers

OPEN SPACE PROTECTION AND NATURAL FEATURES

- A. Open space should be designated in land use plan and preserved in the following locations:
 - Wetlands
 - Along river and other drainage areas
 - Woodlands
 - Farm drains
- B. Land use impacts on wetlands needs to be considered with all building activity

- C. Open space zoning district in Wayne Township used in sensitive areas along river to limit amount of disturbance to natural feature - residential is a conditional use in open space zoning district
- D. Gravel mining is an issue because it disturbs what was flat farmland. Some townships now require reclamation in their new ordinance.
- E. Need to involve business community in conservation
- F. Cottages are being converted and expanded for year-round use which has resulted in pressure on the lakes due to development impacts and increased boating
- G. Views of the lakes are negatively impacted as shoreline is being converted from a natural state to a developed character
- H. Should consider lot coverage restrictions to limit impervious surface
- I. Floodplain areas should be preserved as open space
- J. The area along the river should be maintained as wooded
- K. High nitrates in agricultural run-off has had an impact on groundwater quality
- L. Nitrogen costs for fertilizer has increased. Should work with people to seek alternatives.
- M. Locate development where utilities available - control sprawl
- N. Flexibility and discretion on development with open space
- O. The following features need to be preserved:
 - River and Creek
 - Floodplain adjacent to river
 - Wetlands and woodlands
 - Visual diversity
 - Agricultural interspersed with fence rows
 - Rolling topography
- P. There has been pressure for development along waterfront, including large/smaller lakes and the Mill Pond.
- Q. A number of significant parks were identified including: Newton's Woods, Dodd Park, State Game Area, Dowagiac Woods Nature Preserve, Clasby Woods
- R. Important activities for open space include natural trails and canoeing on the river, recreation, educational, environmental
- S. Nature conservancy and conservation clubs are key players with open space preservation
- T. Floodplains are important
- U. Preservation of wetlands is important. There should be compensation to landowners to encourage preservation.
- V. Manage growth by concentrating, or clustering, higher densities/intensities to hamlets/villages
- W. Improve and reinvest in cities to encourage infill and redevelopment as opposed to sprawl
- X. Investment in infrastructure is important to concentrate development in core areas
- Y. Commercial development outside of town is a problem
- Z. American Dream - house on 10 acres

- AA. Need to encourage community involvement
- BB. On-site detention areas should have a natural design
- CC. Homes not associated with farms look out of place in rural landscape. Planning needs to emphasize elements that make up rural character - not out of place single family or commercial sites.
- DD. There needs to be a defined edge between town and country. Development should be confined to “settlements.”
- EE. Purchasing conservation easements is another alternative to open space preservation
- FF. Need to restore parks to pristine conditions
- GG. Waterfront park through the City - would need to seek funding for improvements
- HH. Mill Pond is a key resource and should be open for recreation
- II. Providing facilities within the city will help to serve surrounding communities
- JJ. Trees and woodlands along and within roadway (right-of-way) need to be preserved - should be a tax credit
- KK. Areas for preservation in and adjacent to the City
 - Riverside Drive
 - Division Street
 - Rudolphie Woods
 - Mill property
- LL. There are multiple meanings to open space - active and passive recreation
- MM. Everyone values open space
- NN. Little recognition of the value of natural features
- OO. Views valued
- PP. Realtors need to be involved and educated about open space preservation
- QQ. Everyone except the owners value open space
- RR. Difficult to tell landowners they cannot develop their land
- SS. Wetlands should be high priority
- TT. Fence rows are disappearing
- UU. Purchasing is the way to preserve it - like farmland
- VV. To be valued, open space must be defined and identified
- WW. CULTURAL FEATURES may be most valuable
- XX. LAKES may be most highly valued
- YY. HIGHLY UNIQUE AREAS will be valued
- ZZ. Farmland is open space

**WATER QUALITY
(SURFACE AND GROUND WATER)**

- A. Farm conservation practices, including no-till, integrated pest management, etc. have improved water quality, more could be done
- B. Caddis flies and mayflies observed in upper watershed in the past, but have decreased in the last 15 years
- C. Runoff into river in upper stretches has covered sandy bottoms with muck which is ankle to knee deep along the shore from the Headwaters to Dodd Park
- D. Livestock in river is better but still a problem

- E. Use education, not laws, to increase water quality awareness
- F. Chemical use on farms has decreased, but still is a concern
- G. Farmers need up-to-date information about the Watershed and water quality
- H. Area need for farm and household hazardous waste disposal options
- I. More development is occurring along lakes, causing an increase in impervious surfaces and runoff
- J. People do not understand water (hydrologic) cycle
- K. Hamilton Township is working on an anti-keyholing ordinance
- L. Water testing is needed in the watershed
- M. Phosphorus was a problem according to tests in 1990
- N. Land preservation along waterways needed
- O. Septic systems are a concern - are they failing?
- P. Surface runoff is a concern in agricultural areas - buffers need to be used
- Q. Sludge spread on agricultural fields a concern, especially along private drainage
- R. Ditches 1 foot to 18 inches filled with sediment on Dewey Lake Road
- S. Recreational use of water is important but there needs to be protection from overuse
- T. Boating impacts natural quality of lakes
- U. Groundwater recharge areas need to be preserved
- V. Watercraft is destroying weed beds where fish spawn
- W. Nitrate problems in some wells, many have had to dig deeper wells to get to cleaner water
- X. Concern with availability of water with drought conditions, many are digging more and deeper wells
- Y. Lawn chemicals, especially in lake communities, are a concern. Lawn chemicals should be banned or restricted in lake communities.
- Z. Polluted runoff from parking lots and roads a concern
- AA. Runoff at dirt road crossing a concern with sediment entering rivers and streams
- BB. Frog populations have decreased (do not know if it is because of drought, water quality, or loss of habitat)
- CC. Direct development into areas that will have the least impact on water quality and hydrology
- DD. There is concern about health department issuing permits in areas that should be "unbuildable"
- EE. Concern with alternative wastewater treatment techniques being allowed
- FF. Concern that the Potawatomi Indians will acquire and develop many acres in the Watershed