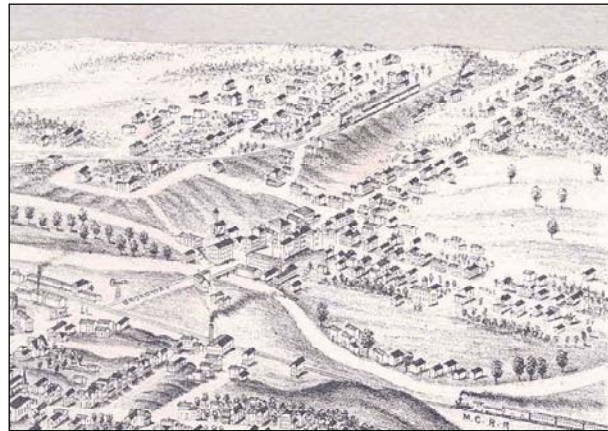


# Chapter One



## Introduction

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### I. Purpose

A master plan is an official document adopted by a local government to establish long range, general policies for the physical development of the community. The purpose of the Northeast Area Plan is to provide information and guidance to City of Ann Arbor residents, decision-makers, developers, and property owners about planning issues that face the Northeast Area. The Northeast Area Plan addresses one of four planning areas in Ann Arbor and is an element of the City's Master Plan.

### II. Description of the Northeast Area

The Northeast Area is bounded on the north by M-14; on the east by US-23, on the south by Washtenaw Avenue and on the west by the Huron River and M-14 (see Map 1). The total land area of the Northeast Area is approximately 6,298 acres. Although most land in the Northeast Area is within the jurisdiction of the City of Ann Arbor, some land is in the jurisdiction of Ann Arbor Township. As a result of a 1994 agreement between the City of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Township, the ultimate northern and eastern boundary of the City was established at M-14 and US-23 respectively. Ann Arbor Township agreed that it would not contest the annexation of township parcels within the Northeast Area after December 31, 2007.

The Northeast Area contains a variety of landforms, the most prominent being the Huron River valley. Other landforms include steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, meadows, fens and six creeksheds that flow to the Huron River. Elevations of the Area range from approximately 749 feet above sea level near the Huron River to about 975 feet above sea level in areas near Green and Dhu Varren Roads.

The Northeast Area consists of a wide variety of neighborhoods, including some of the oldest and newest in the City. Housing types include single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, cooperative housing, apartment buildings and dormitories. Five public elementary schools, two middle schools and Huron High School as well as various private primary and secondary schools allow children who live in the Northeast Area to attend school near their homes.

Commercial centers in the Northeast area are primarily located along Plymouth Road, Washtenaw Avenue and Broadway Street. Major employment centers are located primarily along the Plymouth Road Corridor and at the University of Michigan's Hospital and North Campus. Dozens of City parks are scattered throughout the Northeast Area (including two City golf courses) that provide extensive recreational opportunities. Freeway access to US-23 is

available at Plymouth Road, Geddes Road and Washtenaw Avenue; access to M-14 is available at Barton Drive.

### **III. Planning Process**

In 1998, the City Planning Commission directed staff to initiate the planning process to develop a new land use plan for the Northeast Area. Work began in early 1999. The Planning Commission and Planning staff developed a process that emphasized public involvement. The Planning Commission sought applicants for a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). A total of 20 individuals were selected to provide a broad representation of the Northeast Area. This representation included Northeast Area residents, members of Northeast Area neighborhood organizations, environmental groups, developers, business owners, major employers, and the University of Michigan. Two Planning Commissioners and two City Council members also were appointed to the CAC. The CAC met approximately once per month and provided advise and feedback on the public workshops, planning principles, goals and objectives for each section of the Plan, land use recommendations, and the draft plan.

During the planning process, a total of 13 public workshops were held. The workshops included the following topics: background/demographics; visioning; issues/problems; natural systems; infrastructure; land use; Lower Town; and transportation. Each public workshop was designed to provide information on various planning issues and to obtain feedback from members of the public. Many of the workshops allowed participants to work in small groups to encourage greater individual participation and to provide an opportunity for problem-solving issues relating to specific sites in the Northeast Area. The small groups were asked to summarize their conclusions and report back to the larger workshop group. The summaries were used by staff and the CAC to help identify problems and develop draft goals, objectives and action statements for each major issue of the Plan. The workshops allowed participants to make specific land use recommendations for individual sites in the Northeast Area. The workshops also produced a list of planning principles that reflected public comments on major planning issues. The planning principles helped guide the development of the goals and objectives of the plan.

The Planning Commission assigned the initial review of the draft plan to the Master Plan Revisions Committee. The committee reviewed and edited the document. The plan was then brought before the full Planning Commission for review. A public hearing was held to receive public comment on the draft plan. Planning Commission discussed the public comment and directed staff to make a minor change to the plan. The Planning Commission approved the plan on March 7, 2006. City Council held a public hearing on the draft plan and approved it on April 3, 2006.

### **IV. Vision Statement**

The vision statement below provides a framework for the Plan's goals and objectives by describing a community vision for the future of the Northeast Area. The vision statement was derived from public workshop feedback and discussions with the Citizen Advisory Committee. It was used as a guide throughout the planning process.

“The Northeast Area will be a dynamic community, providing a safe and healthy place to live, work and recreate. It will be an area where planning decisions are based, in part, on the interconnectedness of natural, transportation and land use systems. Natural systems,

including air and water, natural features, native flora and wildlife habitats, will be improved and protected. It will be a place where the Huron River is a cherished part of the community and a focal point for recreation. Transportation systems will include enhanced opportunities for public transit, extensive opportunities for alternative modes of travel and improved management techniques to reduce the impact of traffic on existing streets and neighborhoods. Land use systems will be compatible and complementary, and will include residential, recreational, commercial, office, educational, institutional and industrial uses, which will provide extensive choices in housing (including low cost housing), shopping, employment and recreational activities. Historically significant buildings and neighborhoods will be preserved. The quality of life in the Northeast Area will be characterized by its diversity, beauty, vibrancy and livability and ultimately will depend upon the positive interaction of these systems.”

## **V. Area Plan Goals**

The following is a summary of the Northeast Area Plan goals that can help achieve the vision for the plan. The goals address issues related to natural systems, infrastructure, land use and transportation found in Chapters 4-7. The goals correspond with objectives and action statements that establish a roadmap to achieving the vision.

### **Natural Features**

**Natural Systems Overall Goal: To manage, maintain, protect, restore and enhance natural systems to assure biodiversity and provide a sustainable ecological balance between urban and natural systems in the Northeast Area.**

**Goal A: To protect woodlands, landmark trees, steep slopes, endangered species habitats, the Huron River, creeks and native flora and fauna from the impacts of development.**

**Goal B: To achieve and maintain high quality of the area’s watersheds to protect the health and welfare of the community and maintain the balance of natural systems.**

**Goal C: To improve air quality to protect the health and welfare of the public.**

**Goal D: To reduce and prevent soil contamination to protect the health and welfare of the community and maintain the balance of natural systems.**

### **Infrastructure**

**Goal A: To provide adequate, cost-effective and efficient public utility services, including water, sanitary sewer and storm water, to the Northeast Area to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents.**

**Goal B: To allow a system of private utilities, such as electricity, natural gas, telephone, fiber optic, cable television, cellular communication, and other similar utilities, to be installed in a manner that minimizes environmental and community impacts.**

**Goal C: To integrate public schools, parks and libraries with the surrounding community and to be sited and designed in a manner that is consistent with the land use goals of the Northeast Area Plan.**

## **Land Use**

**Goal A: To ensure that development projects are designed and constructed in a way that preserves or enhances the integrity of natural systems.**

**Goal B: To promote land use designs that reduce reliance on the automobile.**

**Goal C: To provide a full range of housing choices (size, price, design, accessibility, etc.) that meets the existing and anticipated needs of all Northeast Area residents.**

**Goal D: To support the continued viability, health and safety of Northeast Area residential neighborhoods.**

**Goal E: To encourage commercial and employment centers that promote pedestrian activity, de-emphasize the use of the automobile, and provide a sense of balance with surrounding land uses.**

**Goal F: To encourage cooperation between the City and the University of Michigan and between the City and Townships that surround Ann Arbor (Ann Arbor, Pittsfield and Scio) on development issues that affect each other.**

## **Transportation**

**Goal A: To provide appropriate access and mobility, with minimal negative impacts for all people and goods.**

**Goal B: To protect and enhance the natural environment and the human, residential and built environment.**

**Goal C: To promote a safe and secure transportation system.**

**Goal D: To invest in transportation infrastructure in a manner consistent with other goals.**

**Goal E: To promote cooperation between the City of Ann Arbor and other governmental entities, particularly the surrounding townships and municipalities and the University of Michigan, in a manner consistent with the other goals.**

**Goal F: To ensure that meaningful public involvement will be part of any transportation project in the Northeast Area.**