

GRASS LAKE CHARTER TOWNSHIP
Goals, Policies and Objectives

I. Community Vision:

Grass Lake Charter Township will be defined by its rural, agricultural surroundings, with planned areas of commercial and industrial development designed in keeping with that character.

Goals and Policies:

II. Community Charter Goal:

New development will generally reflect our rural character, while offering a variety of commercial and industrial uses suitable for the shopping and employment needs of our residents.

A. Community Character Policies:

1. The principal land use in the township will be residential, with varying densities situated in appropriate locations. Infrastructure will play a key role in determining suitable types and densities of development. Generally, more intensive development will be directed to planned areas, generally in or near the Village or near 1-94, while other areas will remain as low density residential development accompanied by related uses.
2. The encroachment of commercial and industrial uses into residential areas will be discouraged by using appropriate land use patterns and zoning practices, such as landscapes and open space buffers.
3. Site plan review standards and zoning regulations will be adopted to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the township.

III. Residential Development Goals:

Development will be encouraged which reflects, and preserves, the community values and character of Grass Lake Charter Township by supporting existing developed areas and promoting a variety of new residential development in locations that support the Community Vision.

A. Residential Development Policies

1. A variety of housing densities and choices will be encouraged in locations appropriate for the type and density of housing required to satisfy the varying needs and incomes of the residents of the area.
2. Development of residential areas will be encouraged to provide adequate open space buffers from adjacent roadways to preserve rural views.

3. Residential densities will be appropriate to the level of public services available. Moderate and higher densities will generally be located in areas where public water and sewer services can ensure a healthy living environment. Where public utilities are not available, low density development will be permitted, with a strong emphasis on the preservation of groundwater quality, support for existing agricultural operations, and rural character.
4. Where appropriate, planned development will be encouraged, with open space or cluster development, to recognize the importance of preserving natural features, agricultural lands, with the intent to maintain our rural character.
5. Where development is permitted along major roadway emphasis should be placed on providing internal roadways, rather than allowing direct access to the roadways for individual lots.
6. The separation of dissimilar land uses through adequate landscaping, the provision of open space or buffer areas, and other means to limit conflicts between uses will be encouraged. Residential areas will be protected from encroachment of industrial and commercial uses.

IV. Farmland Protection Goal:

The Township will encourage the protection of active farmland as a valuable resource for the community and take measures to ensure that farming operations are adequately buffered from residential development.

A. Farmland Protection Policies

1. Land use decisions will support the desires of individual property owners who wish to keep their land in active agricultural production.
2. The Township will continue to be aggressive in its efforts to educate landowners about the advantages and drawbacks of farmland preservation techniques.
3. Applicants for approvals of residential development in agricultural areas will be informed of the importance of agriculture to the community and the need to adequately inform new residents of activities related to farming operations.

V. Natural Features Goal

The natural beauty and features that make this area a desirable rural/village community will be preserved and enhanced by encouraging responsible development that respects the small town and rural character of the area.

A. Natural Features Policies

1. Higher density residential development and commercial and industrial land uses will only be permitted where public sewer service is available, within the designated service boundary, so that the potential for ground water contamination or any other adverse environmental effects may be limited.
2. Greenbelts, or buffer zones, should be used in transition areas between development and a natural feature or between two potentially incompatible land uses to protect the integrity of the area's natural resources.
3. The Village and Township will pursue the preservation (through acquisition, donation, easements, or other similar means) of areas that merit permanent protection from development, such as sensitive natural features, desired park lands, or public open spaces.
4. Development in the area will be evaluated through zoning, site plan review and other available means to encourage site and building design that take into account natural features, such as soils, topography, steep slopes, hydrology and natural vegetation.

VI. Business and Industry Goal

Business locating in commercial areas of the community will be of a scale appropriate to the small town and rural character desired by our residents. Commercial and industrial uses will be located in areas that provide sufficient infrastructure and where they do not infringe on existing or planned residential areas.

A. Business and Industry Policies

1. The Township, in conjunction with surrounding communities and countrywide organizations, will encourage new businesses in appropriate locations that will promote employment opportunities and economic stability.
2. New commercial and industrial uses along major roadways will utilize access management techniques to minimize traffic congestion and hazards.
3. Commercial development will provide needed goods and services to area residents. Development will be encouraged to locate in existing buildings and zoned locations whenever possible. Where this is not feasible, new construction will be consistent with the character of the area and will not encroach upon residential uses.

VII. Community Facilities and Services Goal

Update and manage facilities and services in an economically efficient manner that

closely associates types and densities of development with infrastructure capacity and capability.

A. Community Facilities and Services Policies

1. The Township will continue to work together with Jackson County and other appropriate agencies to delineate where public infrastructure would be most appreciated.
2. Future land use patterns should reflect densities appropriate for areas served by public services. Utility services should not be provided where the Township intends to encourage the preservation of rural character, extensive.
3. An assessment will be undertaken by the Township of the feasibility of building and maintaining an expanded community water and sewer facility, potentially involving multiple townships.
4. Transportation considerations will be of primary importance during site plan review, particularly the use of access management techniques to limit the number and placement of drives along major roadways.

VIII. Community Cooperation Goal

Promote community cooperation to provide an adequate level of services that do not duplicate efforts, that conserve Village and Township funds, act to improve the quality of life of both communities, and ensure that growth follows the direction established by the Master Plan.

A. Community Cooperation Policies

1. A formal coordinating committee will be created whose primary objective will be to ensure that the Master Plans of each community are consistent and followed by both the Village and Township.
2. Membership should represent both elected officials and planning commissioners from each community, Specific duties should include:
 - Advocating implementation of the Master Plan;
 - continuation of dialogue regarding common issues;
 - review of requests for alterations to service area boundaries;
 - recommendations for future implementation steps; and

- review of projects of significance to both communities.