

**Oil and Gas Drilling** - The City of Dexter has experienced increased interest in oil and gas exploration and development, which the City will balance with other community goals for existing and planned land uses, including natural resource protection.

## County Planning Initiatives

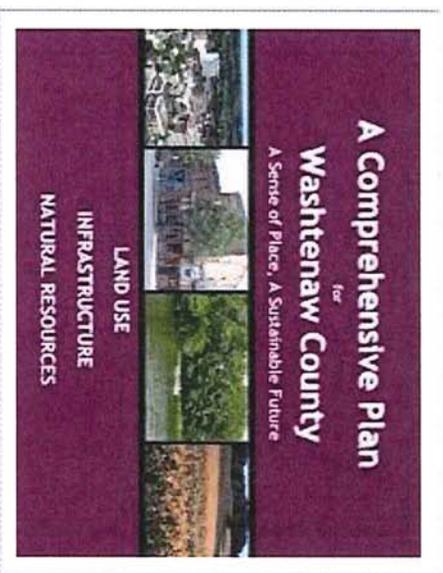
A number of planning initiatives recently took place in Washtenaw County and the City of Dexter which have relevance to the current Plan. Elements of these various plans and initiatives are incorporated throughout this document.

**2004 Washtenaw County Comprehensive Plan** – While the County Plan is now becoming dated, there are elements of this plan that remain relevant for the City of Dexter. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County recommends a development pattern for the City of Dexter described and illustrated below as follows:

- \* Sustainable small city and village development encouraging social interaction and environmental health;
- \* Reduce negative impacts and made future development more livable by changing existing land use patterns in areas surrounding villages;
- \* Development within one-half (1/2) mile of existing village limits should be developed at higher densities, and a grid system of roads with sidewalks should be required to provide convenient and alternative vehicle and pedestrian access to downtown main streets;
- \* Encourage infill development opportunities, particularly by encouraging urban service districts; and
- \* Develop model ordinance to ensure desired character of community is retained such as architectural guidelines, landscaping, signs, lighting and parking standards.

**Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS)(Updated 2011)** - The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study has updated a long-range transportation plan for the County. The plan includes goals and capital and operating improvement projects which involve reconstruction or resurfacing, transit improvements, intersection and widening projects, as well as non-motorized projects (see Transportation Plan (pg. 49) for additional information).

**Washtenaw County Non-Motorized Plan (2006)** - WATS was also involved in the Washtenaw County Non-Motorized Plan which inventoried existing County-wide, non-motorized transportation facilities, identified missing links and provided



# Community Goals and Objectives

The City of Dexter is a growing community that faces the difficult challenge of accommodating increasing growth and development, and private land uses and values, while retaining its small town character, protecting natural resources, including air, water and public land. A key component of the City of Dexter Master Plan is the articulation of a vision for the City's future growth and the formulation of community goals which reflect the community desires regarding how to respond to future development.

The goals of the community attempt to balance the various interests and ensure that each development decision is consistent with the overall vision for the City. They help convey preferred development strategies and outline development policies for the City.

The goals were developed with input from residents, property and business owners, the Planning Commission, the City Council and other City officials. Public participation was sought through an on-line survey of residents. A summary of the survey findings can be found in the Appendix.

## Public Participation

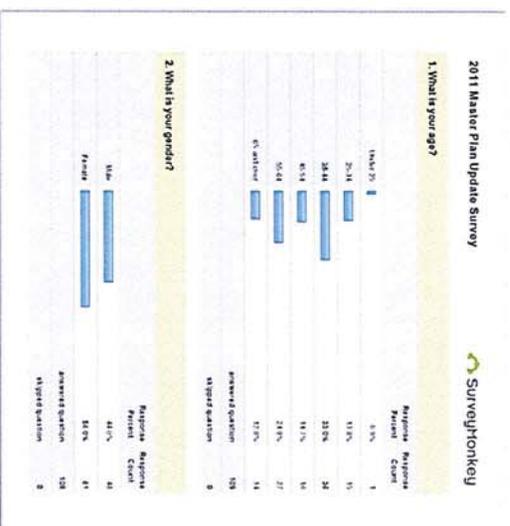
### Master Plan Update Survey

In early 2011, the City of Dexter began a comprehensive survey of its residents. Surveys are an important tool in obtaining the input of participants on many important issues facing the community. This input will assist the City's elected and appointed officials in the process of preparing a Master Plan. The responses provided will help guide the City in the process of preparing land use and transportation, arts and culture, recreation and leisure activities and other City policies.

An on-line community survey was made available to residents in early 2011. A total of 162 people participated in the survey which concluded in spring 2011.

The survey included four (4) sub-topics of questions:

- (1) *Demographics* – inquired about age, gender, educational attainment, household income, employment status, etc.
- (2) *Strengths and Weaknesses* – these questions were primarily open-ended in nature. They asked respondents what they like best/least about the City of



- \* Encourage development in the Baker Road and Dexter-Ann Arbor Road corridors that is separate and distinct from the Downtown that serves the needs of Dexter's growing population.
- \* Encourage common design elements, such as: architecture, streetscape, signage, and landscaping that promote continuation of the downtown theme along the Baker Road corridor.
- \* Provide commercial areas that meet the needs of City residents in terms of location and services offered.
- \* Promote quality, job producing economic development within the City that serves the needs of the City residents.
- \* Provide a variety of safe, efficient modes of transportation to meet the needs of City residents and visitors.
- \* Provide timely, efficient and quality governmental services to City residents.
- \* Assure that new development, and existing residential, commercial and industrial areas, protect the City's small town character, open space, natural resources and recreational values of the City from activities and land uses related or ancillary to mineral, sand and gravel, and oil and gas exploration and development.

## Natural Resources

*Protect and maintain the City's natural resources, particularly the Huron River and Mill Creek areas.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Guide development to foster the responsible use of land, preserve natural features, and to make the best use of existing public services, utilities, and infrastructure.
2. Protect and enhance the Huron River and Mill Creek. Collaborate with Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, Washtenaw County Water Resources, Huron Watershed Council and Washtenaw County, when possible to improve water quality.
3. Promote protection and maintenance of the City's natural landscape.
4. Protect and preserve existing trees and wooded areas within the City.



5. Promote street tree planting to help preserve the residential character and tree-lined streets of the City.
6. Promote safe management of disposal of all waste materials, both hazardous and non-hazardous, which are generated within or transported through the City through coordination with state and local agencies to ensure that contaminated sites are returned to an acceptable environmentally safe condition.
7. Reduce noise and air pollution and site lighting levels so as to minimize their impact on residential areas.
8. Continue to concentrate efforts on wellhead protection and groundwater quality to protect this vital community resource through the protection program initiated by the City.
9. Protect the water quantity and quality of the City's rivers, streams, groundwater, springs, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and creeks, particularly the Huron River and Mill Creek, as a single interconnected hydrologic system.
10. Continue to monitor and improve the City's wastewater treatment and stormwater management systems to minimize negative impacts on City residents, the Huron River and Mill Creek.
11. Utilize progressive stormwater management and erosion control techniques to ensure that development will not adversely impact natural resources and surrounding property. Incorporate Federal Phase II Stormwater Requirements and Guidelines into planning review process of the City.
12. Encourage the use of best management practices and low impact development (LID) strategies to minimize stormwater run-off.

### Recreation / Open Space

*Provide various passive and active recreational opportunities for all residents of the City including programs and activities offered by the City and other agencies.*

#### **Objectives:**

1. Meet present and future community needs for parks, greenways, trails and recreation by planning and developing a system of parks, greenways, open space and recreation facilities and encouraging the preservation of green space and the development of new parks and/or recreation assets when opportunities arise.

## Transportation

*Provide a variety of safe, efficient modes of transportation to meet the needs of City residents and visitors.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Maintain a transportation network that maximizes the capacity of existing roads while maintaining roadways and facilitating safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians throughout the Village.
2. Continue to evaluate and resolve issues with Village “through traffic” constraints by coordinating and cooperating with the County Road Commission.
3. Evaluate the impact of traffic generated by existing development and new or expanded land uses, including extractive uses, and work toward improvements, compatibility with other existing and planned uses, and safety concurrent with new development and uses.
4. Continue to implement access management standards for new development in order to improve the function and appearance of local streets, streetscapes and alleys; providing adequate rights-of-ways and appropriate improvements for traffic volume.
5. Encourage new streets to be designed in an interconnecting network with flexibility within the neo-traditional residential pattern, similar to the existing street network.
6. Coordinate transportation improvements with the County Road Commission and state agencies, including participation in Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS).
7. Provide a variety of transportation choices including public transit and non-motorized transportation, and areas for bike parking.
8. Expand upon existing connections to create a City-wide, non-motorized network to provide opportunities for pedestrian activity such as walking, jogging and bicycling.

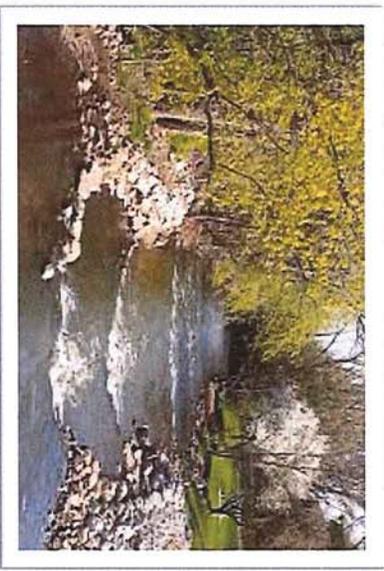


## Community Facilities + Services

*Provide timely, efficient and quality governmental services to City residents.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Provide and maintain open space, parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of Village residents as formulated in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
2. Work with adjacent municipalities and Washtenaw County to provide area residents with high quality community services and facilities.
3. Provide adequate level of services regarding police, fire and safety services.
4. Provide adequate and affordable sewer and water service for Village residents.
5. Provide a public restroom facility in the Downtown area.
6. Provide adequate storm and seasonal services to Village residents.
7. Initiate stormwater upgrades as necessary and investigate whether a stormwater utility would be cost-effective for the Village.
8. Work with adjacent communities, Washtenaw County Water Resources Department, and the Huron River Water Shed Council to protect the area watershed.
9. Evaluate impact of new development and new and expanded land uses on community services and facilities, such as police, fire, and parks, and work to ensure there are adequate regulatory tools and resources available to support new development and uses while protecting existing and planned uses and environmental quality, in particular where uses involve a higher risk of release, discharge, or spill of hazardous substances, pollutants, or similar substances.



## Light Industrial

**Intent:** The Future Land Use Map establishes only one (1) area for Light Industrial use. This designation is intended to allow the continued operation of the current industrial uses.

**Description:** The Light Industrial area is located along Huron River Drive in the northeast corner of the City.

**Relationship to Physical and Natural Features:** Direct access to this area is provided via Huron River Drive. Municipal sewer and water are also available within this area.

**Appropriate Uses:** Desirable land uses and elements of the Light Industrial category are:

- \* Light manufacturing, assembly, packaging, and testing facilities that provide:
  - Abundant landscaping
  - Screening of services and loading areas
  - Landscape buffering to protect adjacent residential uses
- \* Oil and gas exploration and development, and similar extractive activities, to the extent the activities and uses are: sufficiently setback from incompatible uses, such as residential, office, commercial, recreation/conservation, and environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources; and the ancillary activities and uses generating potential nuisance effects such as traffic, lights, vibration, and noise will not be incompatible with surrounding existing or planned uses.



Land intensive industrial uses should not be permitted within the City limits due to the associated off-site impacts that have the potential to significantly detract from the quality of life in the City's residential neighborhoods.

**Compatible Zoning Districts:** The I-1, Light Industrial zoning district is compatible to the Light Industrial future land use classification.

## Research/Development

**Intent:** The Research/Development land use classification provides for a diverse range of wholesale, parts assembly, high-tech industry, research facilities, laboratories and light fabrication operations.

*Description:* The Future Land Use Map designates two (2) areas for Research/Development use. The Dexter Business and Research Park is located south of Dan Hoey Road and is a subdivided industrial park targeted toward research and development activities. A second Research/Development area is located between Second Street and the Railroad. In this area, the Research/Development designation is intended to allow the continued operation of its current uses.

*Relationship to Physical and Natural Features:* Utilities are available throughout the Dexter Business and Research Park development area, and soils are generally good for building construction. A woodlands buffer exists to the south of the industrial park providing screening from uses within Scio Township.

The area between Second Street and the railroad has access via Second Street with proximity to rail available to the rear. Municipal sewer and water are also available within this area. Additional screening of the existing facility is appropriate due to its proximity to an established single-family neighborhood.

*Appropriate Uses:* Desirable land uses and elements of the Research/Development category are:

- \* Wholesale, parts assembly, high-tech industry and light fabrication operations that provide:
  - Well-designed circulation systems
  - Supportive facilities such as utilities
  - Abundant landscaping, screening of services and loading areas
  - Landscape buffering to protect adjacent residential uses.

\* Oil and gas exploration and development, and similar extractive activities, to the extent the activities and uses are: sufficiently setback from incompatible uses, such as residential, office, commercial, recreation/conservation, and environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources; and the ancillary activities and uses generating potential nuisance effects such as traffic, lights, vibration, and noise will not be incompatible with surrounding existing or planned uses.

*Compatible Zoning Districts:* The RD, Research and Development, zoning district is compatible to the Research/Development future land use designation.

### Public/Semi-Public

*Intent:* The Future Land Use Map designates uses such as existing and planned municipal buildings and facilities, parks, churches, cemeteries, public schools, and other uses providing public or semi-public services within this category. The Master Plan also designates areas for additional neighborhood parks in the City to assist in meeting the recreational needs associated with future population increases and the

2010, a Tree Replacement Account was set up with a significant contribution from the United Methodist Retirement Community for tree removal that occurred as part of the Cedars of Dexter site development. When considering land to be annexed, saving existing natural features and protecting habitats should be a priority.

The Village's northeastern border along the Huron River remains the most naturally preserved. This section of town is within the Village's Public Park Zone, as can be seen in the City zoning map. The Public Park Zone has the greatest potential for becoming a link to the Washtenaw Counties regional greenway system due to its location adjacent to the Huron River and the abundant natural resources and recreation opportunities available.

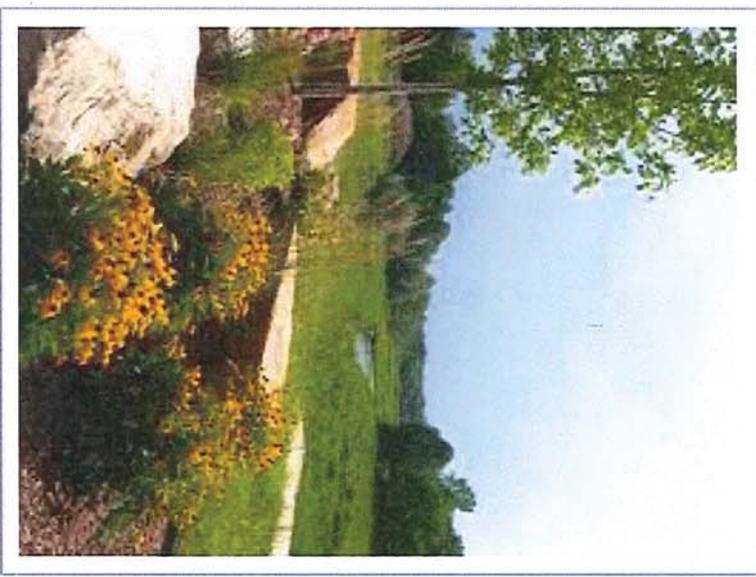
The Mill Creek within the City provides residents with considerable access to natural resources. The Mill Creek, just west of downtown, was re-established in 2008

following the removal of the dam built by Henry Ford in 1932. In 2011-12 the City will begin the process of reclaiming the former dam impoundment into the Mill Creek Park with assistance from several grants, general funds and Washtenaw County Parks. Stream restoration efforts, habitat enhancement, boardwalks, fishing and observation decks, boat launches, an amphitheater and stone seating areas will be constructed within Mill Creek Park. Washtenaw County Parks and Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) will also complete a portion of the Border-to-Border Trail north of the City by the fall of 2012. A subdivision connector to the Westridge Subdivision will also be completed in 2011. The combined trails north and east of the City will compile over fifteen (15) miles of non-motorized pathways around the Village's borders. The Mill Creek Park and the newly accessible areas will remain a place for wildlife to subsist and for residents and visitors to enjoy.

The City of Dexter is within the scenic and natural open areas of the Middle Huron River Watershed, which consists of plans to further develop the existing natural areas within the City to enhance the small town feel. The Village's goal is also to provide wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities for City residents and guarantee that the resources that exist today continue to be preserved into the future.

#### Water Resources

The Huron River and its largest tributary, the Mill Creek, encircle the City of Dexter. The Huron River constitutes primarily the northern border of the Village, with some minor exceptions. The Mill Creek is the west border of the Village, although a site condominium project (Westridge of Dexter) was also annexed beyond the Mill Creek. It is essential to the health of these water bodies to conserve and protect



water quality and quantity and to regulate in a manner that recognizes that groundwater, springs, creeks, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands are a single interconnected hydrologic system.

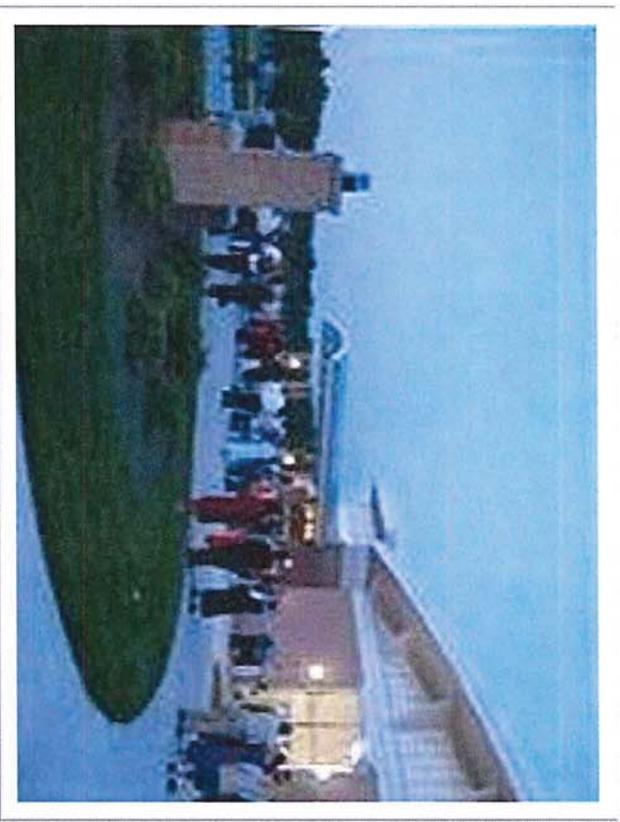
The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) is staffed with experts in the fields of watershed management, river ecosystems and river habitats. The HRWC provides information on watershed management and protection and organizes community groups and volunteers for river clean-up days and other habitat monitoring and restoration projects. The HRWC is a regional organization that the City participates with and is a member of, although the HRWC has taken the lead in the conservation and education of the river and its tributaries.

The Village, as well many communities along the middle stretch of the Huron River, is under a total maximum daily load for phosphorous into the Huron River. The City is working to address this through a cooperative effort with other impacted municipalities to reduce loading.

### **School Facilities**

Dexter Community Schools are ranked in the top twenty percent (20%) of schools within the State of Michigan. The Dexter Community School District campus size has also dramatically increased in the past decade along with the Village's population. In 1998, two (2) new schools were built, Cornerstone Elementary and Mill Creek Middle School, and in 2002 a new high school opened.

Dexter Community School facilities include: two (2) kindergarten through second grade elementary schools (Bates and Cornerstone); one (1) third and fourth grade elementary school (Wylie); one (1) fifth and sixth grade intermediate school (Creekside); one (1) seventh and eighth grade middle school (Mill Creek); and Dexter High School for grades nine through twelve. The City collaborates with the school district on many initiatives given that a majority of the school's campus is located within the City limits.



# Implementation

The Master Plan is essentially a statement of goals and objectives designed to accommodate future growth and redevelopment. As stated in the introduction of this document, the Master Plan is the officially-adopted document that sets forth an agenda for the achievement of goals and policies. It helps develop a balance of orderly change in a deliberate and controlled manner that permits controlled growth. As such, it provides the basis upon which zoning and land use decisions are made.

The Plan forms the philosophical basis for the more technical and specific implementation measures. It must be recognized that development and change will occur either with or without planning, and that the Plan will have little effect upon future development unless adequate implementation programs are established. This section identifies actions and programs that will be useful if the Plan is to be followed.

A variety of programs or administrative tools are available to allow the Plan to succeed. These include:

## Zoning Requirements

Zoning is the development control that has been most closely associated with planning. Originally, zoning was intended to inhibit nuisances and protect property values. However, zoning should also serve additional purposes that include:

- \* To promote orderly growth in a manner consistent with land use policies and the Master Plan.
- \* To promote attractiveness in the Village's physical environment by providing variation in lot sizes, architectural design guidelines and appropriate land uses.
- \* To accommodate special, complex or unique uses through mechanisms such as planned unit developments, overlay districts, or special land use permits – specifically within the areas designated for mixed use in order to allow complimentary uses and design guidelines.
- \* To guide development away from conflicting land uses (i.e. industrial uses adjacent to residential areas).
- \* To preserve and protect existing land uses, natural resources, air, land, water, and other significant natural features in accordance with the Master Plan.
- \* To promote the positive redevelopment of underutilized areas of the Village.

\* To balance the increased interest in activities and land uses related or ancillary to oil and gas exploration and development with other community goals to ensure the uses occur in a manner consistent with other existing and planned uses, and in a manner that protects the open space, natural resources, recreation, and other priorities in the City.

The Zoning Ordinance and Future Land Use map by themselves should not be considered as the major long range planning policy of the Village. Rather, the Master Plan should be regarded as a statement of planning policy, and zoning should be used to assist in implementing that policy.

## Zoning Adjustments

Certain areas of the City have been designated for a land use classification in the Master Plan which conflicts with either existing zoning or existing land uses. These designations were developed in order to guide the desired development of these areas. Certain areas may benefit from a Village-initiated rezoning in order to provide more consistency. Additionally, other areas may continue with an existing zoning designation that, although currently conflicting with the Future Land Use designation, may be rezoned in the future once the existing use terminates or conditions change. It is at this future time the land use recommendations will provide guidance as to the proper zoning. The City Planning Commission should further study and make decisions with regard to which areas warrant Village-initiated rezoning. The following should be considered for Village-initiated rezoning:

1. Encourage new residential developments to provide contiguous internal recreational amenities.
2. Modify the CBD zoning district to ensure redevelopment, increased viability, adequate parking, walkability and the reuse of the upper floors of the existing structures.
3. Create a tree preservation ordinance.
4. Create a Huron River, Mill Creek overlay zone to ensure natural feature preservation.
5. Evaluate the adequacy of the noise, air and light standards of the Zoning Ordinance.
6. Create provisions requiring bike parking for government, commercial and educational institutions.
7. Evaluate likely potential effects of mineral, sand and gravel, and oil and gas exploration and development, on the public health, safety, and welfare; and review existing zoning and other police power ordinances to ensure they balance the need for those uses with their effects on other existing and planned uses in a manner that furthers and protects community goals and priorities, including land use, land preservation and

the protection of natural resources and water quantity and quality, transportation, and safety and community facilities and services.

Adopt land development regulations that provide standards and regulations specific to various elements within the Village:

1. Develop Stormwater Management Regulations that comply with Phase II and encourage use of Best Management Practices.
2. Adopt regulations that recognize the connection of groundwater and surface water, and include limitations that protect, and prevent pollution, impairment or diminishment of, the quantity and quality of available water resources, including aquifers, springs, rivers, creeks, ponds, and wetlands, for existing and future water needs for residential recreation, commercial, industrial, and for protection and preservation of water bodies and their natural resources and uses.
3. Review City Ordinances to ensure the City is sufficiently reviewing and collecting data and information regarding the likely effects of land uses on the public health, safety, and welfare, including the effects on the City's environmental and natural resources.
4. Review ordinances to ensure the City requires sufficient disclosure of information and permits, with sufficient conditions, to allow the fire and police to provide an emergency response adequate to protect the public health, safety, and welfare to the spill or other release of hazardous or other dangerous substances or pollutants during transport of use.
5. Create development design guidelines as a means of preserving the existing architectural character of the Village. The emphasis of the guidelines shall be placed upon major renovation projects and new construction.
6. Work to create incentives for the maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing residential structures, such as Rental Rehabilitation and Façade Rehabilitation programs through the MEDC.
7. Continue coordination with the Washtenaw County Brownfield Authority and upon identifying a site, adopt a Brownfield Redevelopment Plan.
8. Pursue a property maintenance ordinance, a component of which would recognize property owners who further the historic character of the Village.
9. Continue to coordinate a Village-wide path system that requires developers to construct a pathway and/or contribute to the system which links new residential developments to downtown, local parks and/or schools.