



1. First, let me tell you a little about myself since it might explain my particular point of view.

I wasn't well educated about the importance of natural features as a social worker and had a been a city dweller all my life. But I married a landscaper and we needed to get out into the country, which we did in 1986. And when my dog was run over on the road by a truck whizzing by while I was walking him, I began to take an interest in what was going on around me in my rural community.

Unbeknownst to me at that point, I was the beginning of a wave of folks moving away from cities to their vision of rural paradise, which was, in reality, the beginning of sprawl in my rural township.

When a development was being threatened in a property on my road next to Independence Lake which was largely made up of wetlands, I got involved as a NIMBY in Webster Township land use planning.

To give you a broader perspective, between 1990 and 2000 the population of

Webster Township doubled from 3000 to over 6000 residents and some have called this migration “white flight”.

Our township board and planning commission were totally unprepared for such rapid growth, being made up of old farming families for the most part, who believed in providing good stewardship over their land. Again, from their point of view, wetlands were useless un-farmable land and land north of Territorial fell largely into that category. Most of Webster Township is on well and septic and the native WT folk never had cause to be concerned about these systems.

I began to realize that I needed to get more educated so I attended Sunday session at the HRWC with Joan and Susie and began to have my mind broadened, and it was due to their urging that I agreed to become a planning commissioner.

I had no idea that we had a valuable natural river designated creek much less other natural features and neither did our township officials. The rapid increase in our population and increasing difficulties in farming the traditional way had our aging discouraged farmer officials resigned to thinking that agriculture in Webster Township was dead.

This is how it was when I stepped so inadequately into the scene of Webster township officialdom. I saw a great divide between the newcomers and the old-timers. Community input was not considered in traditional Webster Twp politics so I saw that a shift needed to take place to incorporate all needs and points of view.

As I go through this presentation, I I invite Kris who has played an integral part to much of the following to jump in. I also have another presentation on an entirely different topic in a few hours in Detroit, which I will need to leave for pretty quickly.

When I stepped into the planning commission, we were suddenly hit with a huge development company wanting to take a 200 acre farm in the middle of our inadequate gravel roads and turn it into a mobile home park. That struggle launched us seeing that we needed more in our MP and ZO to better control land use planning in a rural township. And we were very lucky to be given a reprieve from so many proposed site plan applications when Michigan suffered

it's major economic slump the first decade of the 2000s.

We began to avail ourselves of expertise from University of Michigan Urban and Regional Planning department and from the Huron River Watershed Council. We looked to other more educated townships and found strategies like the PDR option for farmers to get paid to not develop their land.

And we began to reach out to our residents for their input. After all, if they wanted our township to not become a bedroom community of Ann Arbor, they needed to be educated and have a voice. I am proud to say that three PDR millages passed with flying colors due to our residents willingness to put their tax money where their mouths were.

# Webster Township

Figure 1: Categorized Responses from 2014 Master Plan Survey Concerning Things to Keep, Obtain, Eliminate, and Avoid in Webster Township.



2. Our planning commission got new members, we saw we needed continuing community input, especially as we revised and revamped our MP, which is required every 5 years. So our smart PC Chair put together a survey that we sent out in our tax mailings to learn about resident priorities regarding land use planning. The results of that survey plus the 3<sup>rd</sup> renewal of millage for our PDR program gave us clear indication that our township wanted to remain rural and to preserve its natural features. I am going to give you a minute to see what people wanted to eliminate and avoid and what they wanted to keep and obtain. The larger the words, the more it represented many points of view.



3. it was time to start working on renewing and revising our master plan and one of our planning commissioners contacted the Huron River watershed council for input. It was serendipity that they had just received a grant to help with Township master planning vis-à-vis natural features preservation and water protection and we got Kris to work with us for a year.

**Master Plan 2015**

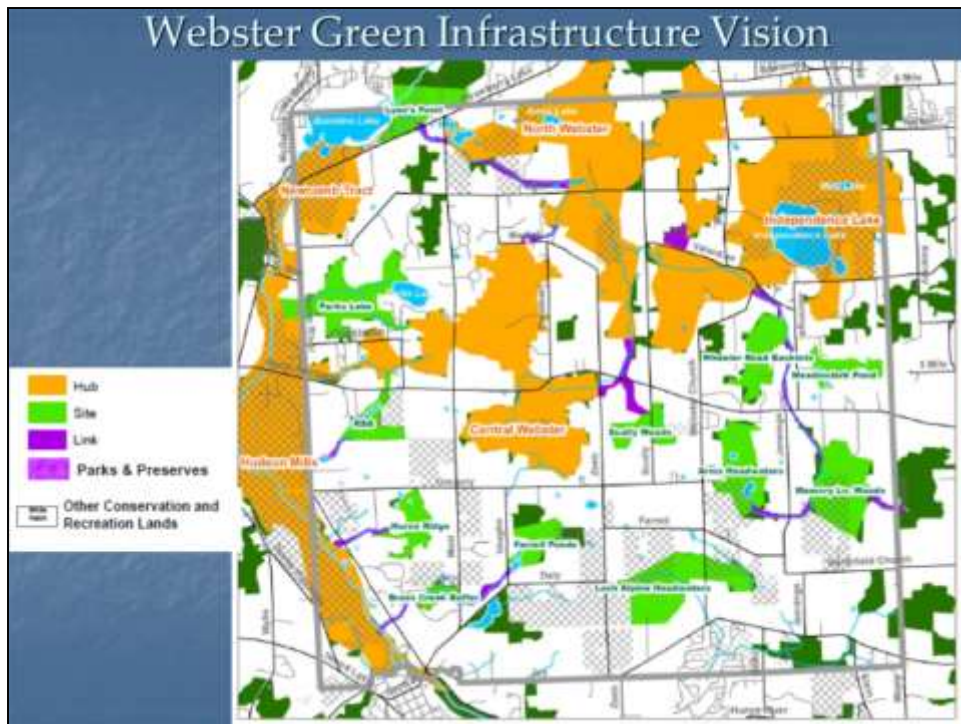
## Green Infrastructure, HRWC

- Green infrastructure is the interconnected network of open spaces, natural areas and waterways
- Focusing on conservation values and the services provided by natural systems in concert with, instead of in opposition to, land development
- Gives us an opportunity to Identify, Protect & Enhance our Natural Assets

Thanks to funding from the Knight Foundation, HRWC is providing GI planning services

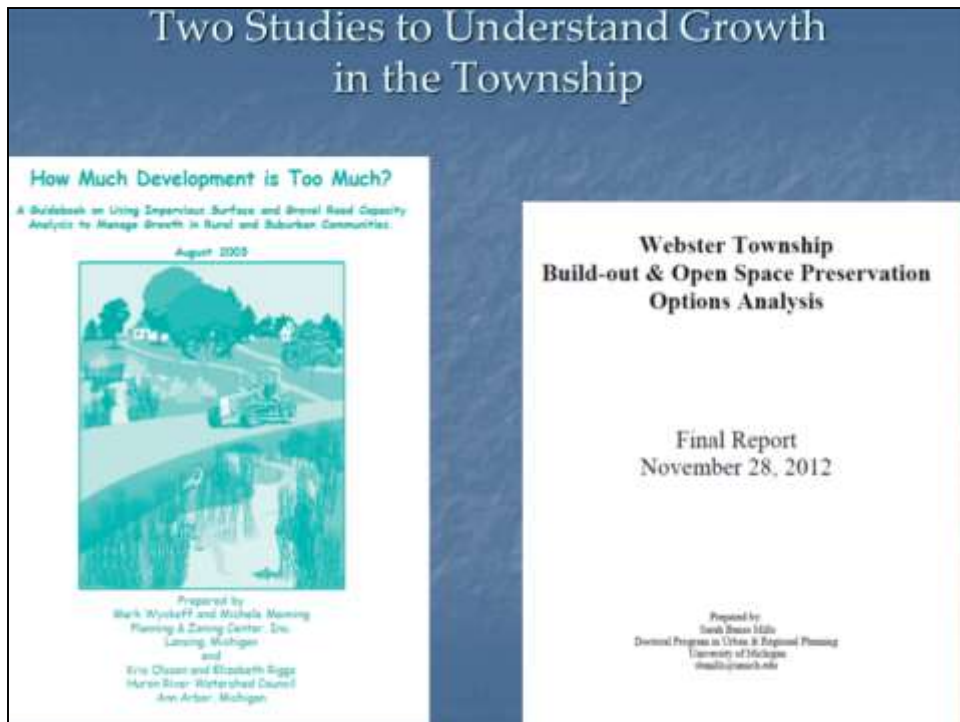


4. For purposes of educating, heightening community awareness and getting community input, Kris and we put together a community visioning workshop regarding potential green infrastructure. Residents helped delineate natural features linkages and hubs.



5. This is the GI map that we developed – a far cry from how we viewed land 25 years ago!





6. Kris proceeded to review our MP and shared what other twps have done to protect their natural features and water. The HRWC had already done one study on Webster Township gravel road capacity and how it relates to density which we

included as a resource in our MP. We also had research from a grad student in Urban and Regional Planning, Sarah Mills, who provided us a Build-out analysis with regard to Open Space Preservation. Again, the concept of Build Out have never occurred to WT officials prior to the 1990's.

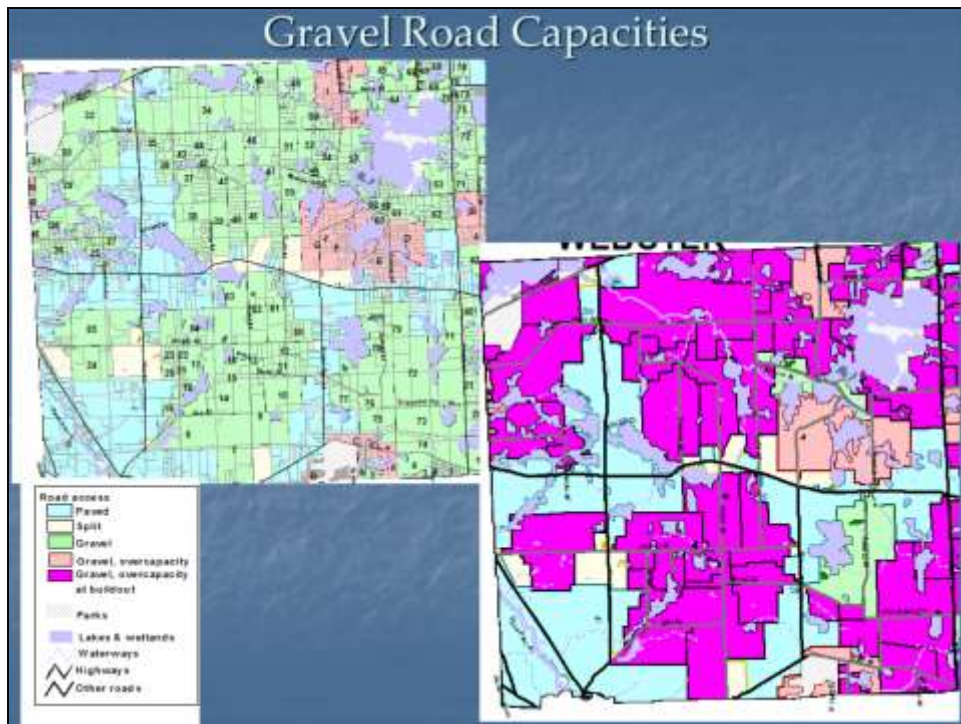
From these two studies, Kris took data and performed a consolidated analysis of the impact of various growth scenarios on gravel road capacities.





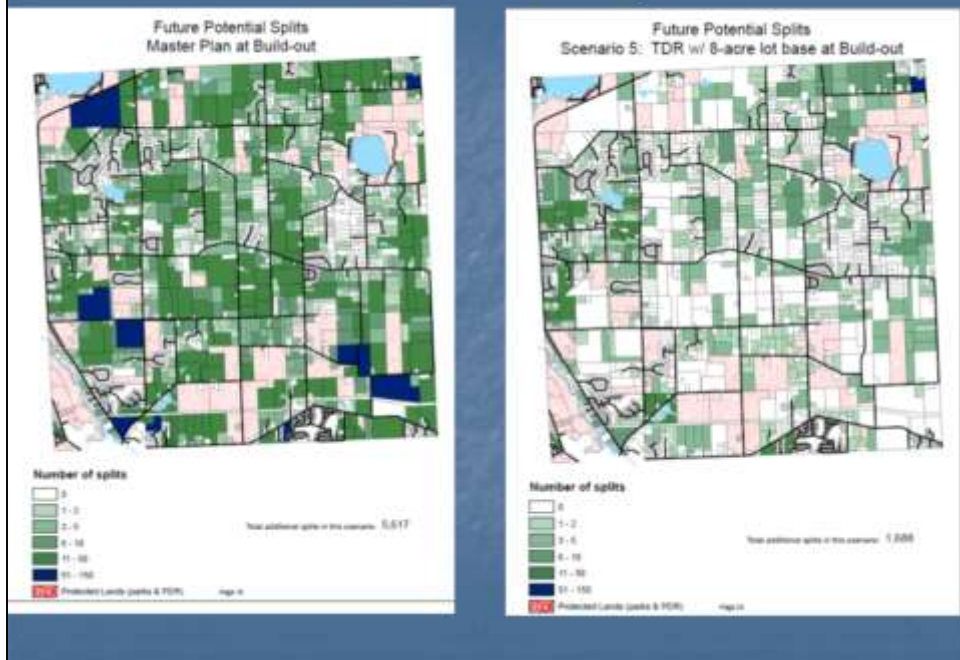
7. One of the studies did a build out of impervious surfaces to be expected in the township given the current land use designations in the master plan.

Impervious surfaces (currently very low) will probably increase to levels that will begin to degrade water quality in Arms Creek, and contribute more runoff to the Huron River.

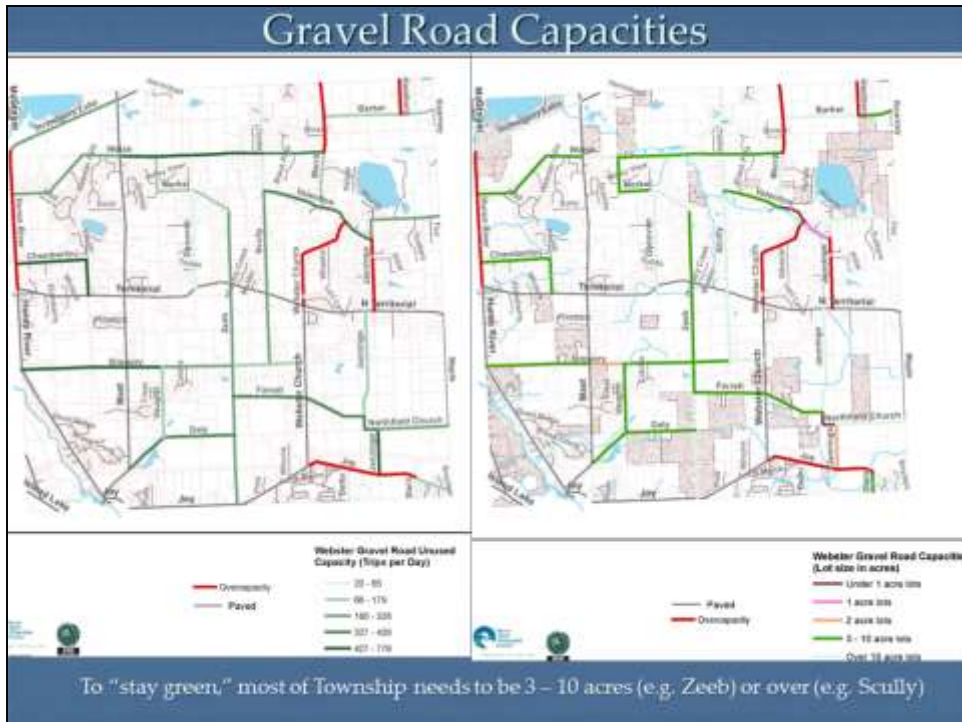


8. The 2003 study also did a build out related to impacts on the township's gravel roads – similar to the impervious surface projections, gravel roads in the township are expected to become overcapacity under the master plan's land use designations

# Sarah Mills' Study



9. Sarah's 2012 study ran a series of scenarios (2 shown above) to show the amount of lot splits, increase in population, and increase in impervious surface resulting from the master plan and under various potential land use strategies.



10. HRWC combined the 2003 gravel road data with the 2012 land use pattern data to determine the current capacity for development the township's gravel road have.

## Gravel Road Capacities at Master Plan Buildout

Many roads will be overcapacity at build-out according to current Master Plan:

- Donovan, Walsh by a lot
- Jennings, Northfield Church, Chamberlin, Barker, Merrill, south Scully by a bunch
- Zeeb, Vaughn, Daly, etc. also overcapacity
- West Gregory, south Zeeb, west Northfield Church, Valentine, north Scully will be okay.



11. This slide just shows how many roads will be over capacity at buildout.



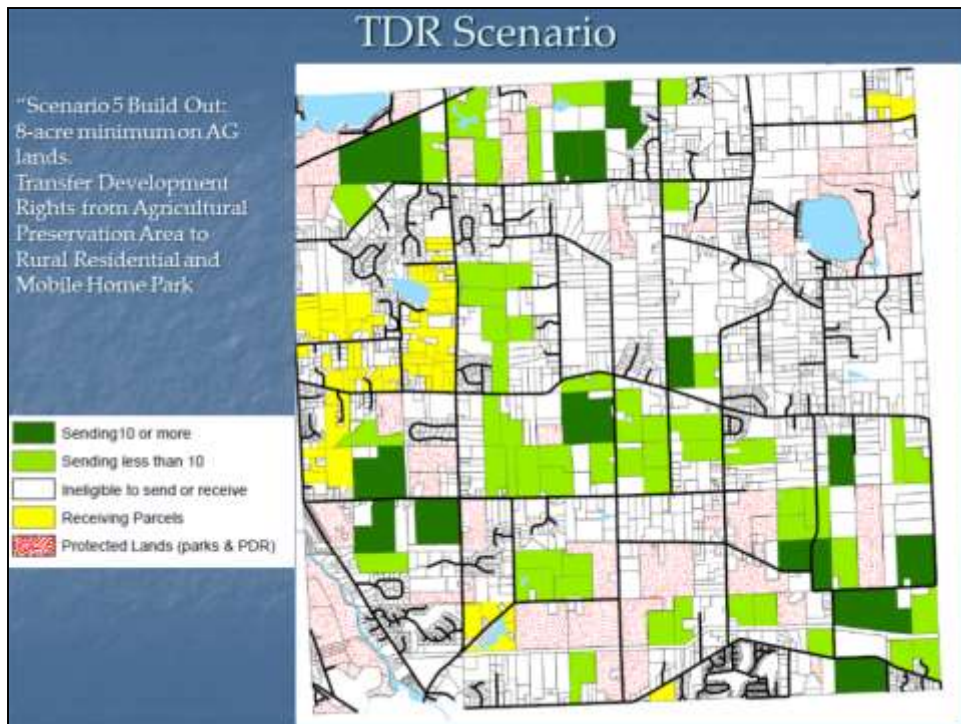
## Gravel Road Capacities with TDR

Scenario 5 Build Out:  
 8-acre minimum on AC lands.  
 Transfer Development Rights from  
 Agricultural Preservation Area to Rural  
 Residential and Mobile Home Park

- Donovan now only slightly overcapacity.
- Walsh stays green
- Jennings, Northfield Church, Barker, Scully stay green.
- Chamberlin stays orange
- Zeeb, Vaughn, Daly, stay green
- south Zeeb, west Northfield Church, Valentine, north Scully stay green.
- West Gregory becomes slightly overcapacity



12. This slide shows how different land use planning can affect road capacity.



13. Using TDR, land use planning in Webster would look like this.





14. go through quickly

# Master Plan, not yet built

Sarah's receiving area larger than available unbuilt rural residential

## Not-Yet-Built Designations

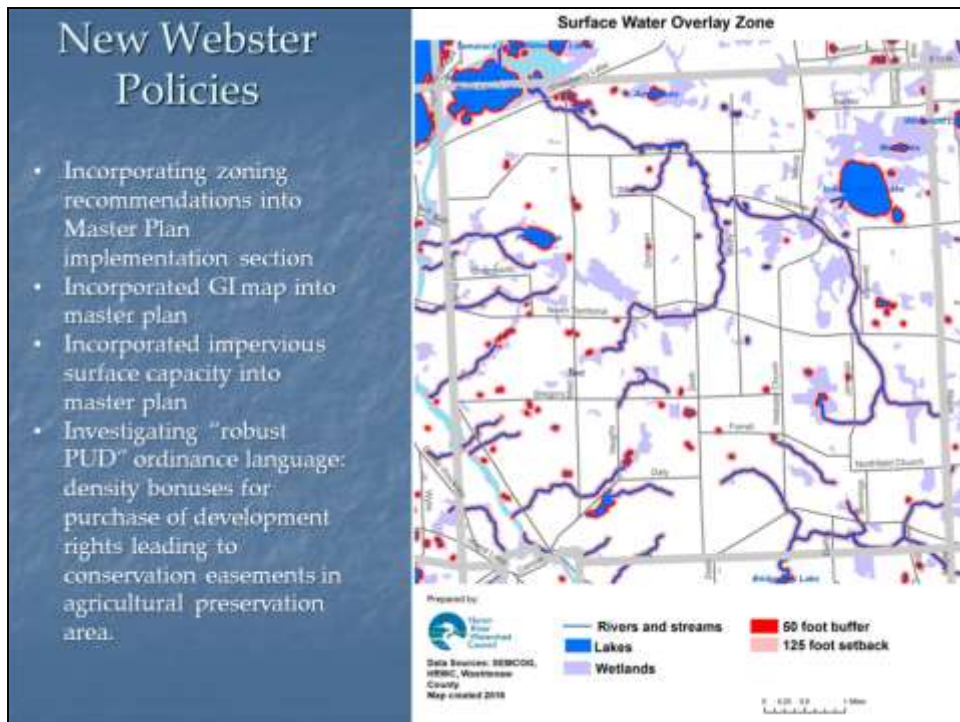
- Agriculture
- ParksAndFire service
- RuralResidential
- LightIndustrial
- UrbanResidential
- MobileHomePark



14. go through quickly



16. After the workshop we went through an “audit” of the master plan, zoning ordinances, and other policies, and give recommendations. Kris provided the township with sample language and going through the approval process.



17. Partly as a result of the HRWC audit, Webster added language in our master plan about green infrastructure (including the map), Impervious surfaces, and have an implementation matrix in the master plan to add more ordinance language to protect water quality, farmland and natural areas.

And this map shows the latest ordinance changes we are close to making which creates an overlay zone on our waterways that sets a 125 foot building setback and a 50 foot vegetated buffer for all lakes, rivers, and streams. This will help us to regulate our own natural rivers district – the Huron river and Arms have a Natural Rivers designation by the State of Michigan.

**PART 12: IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**  
**Subsidiary, Natural Features, and Easements**

Item	Group Responsible	Priority/Timing
Amend Zoning Ordinance to encourage transfer of Development Rights reference Parts 5.07 & 10.01	Draft and recommendation by Planning Commission; Approval by Township Board	High

**Subsidiary and Natural Features**

Item	Group Responsible	Priority/Timing
Purchase Development Rights of Agricultural and natural features to the Township. Leverage matching funds from other organizations (e.g. Federal and Ann Arbor), reference Parts 5.06 & 10.01	Township Board and FOPs	Ongoing
Amend Zoning Ordinance to provide for single scale zoning and/or lot-split incentives reference Parts 5.07 & 10.10	Draft and recommendation by Planning Commission; Approval by Township Board	Medium

**Natural Features**

Item	Group Responsible	Priority/Timing
Amend Zoning Ordinance to provide for a Natural Features Protection Overlay District reference Part 10.05	Draft and recommendation by Planning Commission; Approval by Township Board	High
Create Green Infrastructure Plan reference Part 10.05	Planning Commission	Medium
Amend Zoning Ordinance to provide for open-space setbacks for non-residential lots reference Part 10.03	Draft and recommendation by Planning Commission; Approval by Township Board	High
Amend Storm Water Management portion of Zoning Ordinance to provide for drainage via protection reference Part 10.03	Draft and recommendation by Planning Commission; Approval by Township Board	Medium

18. We have begun the last part of MP work by prioritizing NRD protection in our implementation matrix work schedule for 2016.

When I look at what more we have to do, like working on TDR, it is intimidating. And yet, when we compare where we are to where we were, I see a lot of movement.

Thanks all.