

August 1, 2018



CHANGE MAKERS: [REVIEW LIVINGSTON'S MASTER PLAN HERE](#) THEN USE THIS LETTER TO INSPIRE YOUR OWN COMMENTS

Kathleen Kline-Hudson, Director
Livingston County Planning Department
304 East Grand River Ave.
Howell, MI 48843

Dear Kathleen,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Livingston County Master Plan draft. The county plan touches on many issues that are important to watershed health. HRWC is pleased to see these issues addressed in ways that will maintain and improve watershed health if implemented by the county and the local governments within it.

HRWC applauds the attention the plan gives equal credence to both the maintenance of "rural character" and the creation of "urban, walkable communities." One of HRWC's key messages is that to maintain the Huron River watershed's health in the face of increased population, we must change current patterns of development by encouraging higher density where infrastructure already exists, and holding onto our natural areas so they can continue to provide the ecological services necessary to maintain quality of water, air, land, and life. This draft plan provides many goals and strategies that support both livable, sustainable communities and ecologically functioning natural areas and viable farmland.

The plan has resulted from input from residents and officials of the county's 20 local governments. A word cloud derived from public input events around the county emphasizes rural and natural area protection ideas like trails, growth management, and even more so sustainable urban concepts like mixed use, walkable and vibrant communities, small stores and farmers markets.

HRWC is happy to see all of the following elements addressed in the master plan:

- The intent to inventory greenways, natural areas, and other features that make up the county's "green infrastructure." This inventory will help the county plan development in concert, not conflict, with natural areas and working lands.
- The intent to create county-wide master plan and zoning maps. Having a county-wide view will help develop capital improvement, transportation, and other plans.

- Promotion of preserving waterway buffers, with Hamburg and Green Oak townships as models. Natural vegetation buffers are the number one way to keep our rivers and streams clean.
- Support for Wellhead Protection overlay zones over all of Livingston’s municipal water sources. This is important for drinking water protection.
- The intent to encourage non-motorized access in downtown areas. HRWC supports connecting the county with pedestrian and bike paths and utilizing complete streets planning.
- The furthering of Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development efforts. HRWC can provide assistance to the county and its local governments with natural and constructed Green Infrastructure opportunity maps on township county scales. HRWC has created natural GI maps/plans for Unadilla and Putnam townships, and a GI workshop and visioning session is planned for Hamburg Township.
- The goal to create model ordinance language addressing impervious surface and stormwater.
- Language addressing protection of shorelines.
- The inclusion of the LID evaluation tool from the Center for Watershed Protection, and HRWC’s *Citizens Guide to Land Use Planning*, although the guidebook has been updated and is now called *Land Use for a Healthy Watershed* (<https://www.hrwc.org/wp-content/uploads/HRWC-CGLUP-spiral-bound-11118-sm.pdf>). The guidebook also includes updated checklists that are mentioned in the second bullet on page 57. Here are suggested edits for that section:
 - “HRWC encourages.....they have published a guidebook called “Land Use for a Healthy Watershed” (link) that providesThe guidebook covers a myriad of subjects such as watersheds, groundwater, and impervious surface, and provides checklists similar to the Code and Ordinance Worksheet listed above, for planning commissioners and citizens to review their zoning ordinance and master plan for water quality and natural area protections.
 - “HRWC also provides workshops for local governments to create Green Infrastructure natural area networks (link: <https://www.hrwc.org/what-we-do/programs/green-infrastructure/green-infrastructure-planning-for-local-governments/>) to help target land preservation and planning efforts. Unadilla, and Putnam [and maybe Hamburg by the time of publication] have already created Green Infrastructure maps through these workshops.”
- Promotion of environmental conservation and clean energy.
- The goal of mixed use, affordable housing, and equity. HRWC has a similar goal of encouraging local communities to adopt such smart growth policies, which further water quality and natural area protection with smaller lots, reduction of impervious surfaces, and walkability.
- Promotion of clean energy. Climate change is a major threat to the watershed; communities must turn to clean energy to stave off rising temperatures and increased flooding we are already seeing.

HRWC is gratified to see information from our web site in the plan. Here are updated links:

- Guide to LUP: <https://www.hrwc.org/wp-content/uploads/HRWC-CGLUP-spiral-bound-11118-sm.pdf>
- Recommended master plan and zoning ordinance elements:

- <https://www.hrwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/HRWC-Recommended-Master-Plan-Elements.pdf>
- <https://www.hrwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/HRWC-Recommended-Zoning-Ordinance-Elements.pdf>
- Bioreserve map: <https://www.hrwc.org/what-we-do/programs/natural-area-assessments-and-protection/>

HRWC would be happy to work with the county and its local governments to meet these goals. HRWC can provide resources for:

- Mapping for the county-wide approach to land use opportunities and constraints
- Developing innovative land use tools for land protection and water quality. For instance, HRWC has had discussions with some communities about creating Transfer of Development Rights programs. HRWC is creating a tool kit for local communities considering enacting natural area and farmland millages.
- Furthering stormwater Green Infrastructure. HRWC has created a Stormwater GI Opportunities map for Washtenaw County. A similar map for Livingston County could be created.
- Developing a model Stormwater/impervious surface ordinance
- Mapping for parks and recreation and greenways and other conservation lands
- Creating a conservation/park/trail collaborative
- Infrastructure and place making efforts
- Hazard mitigation. HRWC can provide guidance on incorporating hazardous mitigation planning to address vulnerability to climate change impacts (flooding, heat, drought)

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to review the county plan.

Sincerely,



Kris Olsson